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# **GCE AS EXAMINERS' REPORTS**

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**SOCIOLOGY  
AS**

**SUMMER 2017**

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**EDUQAS  
GCE AS SOCIOLOGY**

**Summer 2017**

**COMPONENT 1 – SOCIALISATION AND CULTURE**

This is the second year that this component has been available. The numbers were down and this was almost certainly as a result of the decoupling of the Eduqas AS and A Level qualifications.

For the most part candidates followed the rubric but there were more rubric errors than might have been expected. Those who followed the rubric were able to use their time appropriately and many had been well prepared for the demands of the paper.

**Section A**

The two parts of question one in this section are compulsory.

- (a) In order to access the higher mark bands candidates must explain what the term means, in this case identity, and make reference to the item and to sociological knowledge. The better responses included a clear definition of identity often using the item as a starting point. Some candidates identified primary and secondary identities. Reference was also made by some candidates to the social construction of identity. Candidates should be aware that they must use the item rather than simply repeating it.
- (b) Candidates were asked to explain how any two agents of socialisation transmit national identity. Most candidates were able to identify two agents of socialisation though a surprising number demonstrated they did not understand what is meant by an agent of socialisation. The question asked for the process of how two agents of socialisation transmit national identity. Those who did not consider how they did it and simply described national identity in relation to agents of socialisation were unable to access the higher mark bands. Candidates are advised to read every word in a question and not make assumptions. The most commonly used agents of socialisation were education and the family. The best answers used terms such as imitation, role models and rewards. They used examples such as singing the national anthem, waving the flag, dressing in national costume and language. The question asked candidates to use the item and also their sociological knowledge. Once again it is important that candidates pay attention to the command/s of the question. Candidates must use the item, not just repeat what the item says.

## Section B

The majority of candidates chose option 1- Families and Households, Youth Cultures was chosen by about a third of the candidates.

### Option 1 Families and Households

#### Question 2(a) (i) and (ii) is compulsory.

2. (a) (i) The question asked candidates to describe the features of an extended family. Some were able to identify a number of features including horizontal, vertical and modified extended families. Some identified beanpole families and others referred to dispersed extended families. Yet others made reference to cultural differences. However as indicated in the report on this paper last year there are no marks for evaluation on this question and therefore those candidates who did that were wasting valuable time. Surprisingly some candidates were only able to identify one feature.
2. (a) (ii) Candidates were asked to explain two reasons why there has been an increase in the number of people who have never been married. Therefore candidates who decided to explain why people get divorced could not access marks in any mark band since they were not addressing the question. Some candidates decided to go back to the last quarter of the C20th as a starting point for their explanation/s demonstrating they had not read the stimulus piece before the question which referred to a more recent period. The question clearly asked for two sociological reasons so more than two could not attract more marks and citing a third reason was wasting valuable time. The question asked for sociological reasons, weaker candidates tended to offer common sense rather than sociological responses. Those who cited the work of Gittens as evidence of disillusionment with the ideology of marriage were rewarded as were those who referred to work/career opportunities using the work of Scarse.
- Candidates then had the choice of an essay either 2 (b) or 2 (c). These questions are essay style and as such candidates are expected to write a clearly structured discursive response. In order to access the higher mark bands candidates are expected to use sociological evidence. There were some excellent answers where candidates demonstrated detailed and wide ranging knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological material. Weaker candidates tended to offer generalised answers.
2. (b) Many of the candidates who did 2(b) used the work of the Marxist feminists to good effect as well as the work of Engels and Zaretsky and were rewarded accordingly. Those candidates who made a passing reference to Marxist explanations and then wrote an essay on functionalist explanations were not addressing the specifics of the question and were unable to attract marks in the higher mark bands. Candidates should be advised that where the command in a question is to evaluate a theory then they should start by providing a detailed exposition of the theory. In doing so the stronger candidates will evaluate the theory from the start whilst maintaining a focus on the specifics of the theory.

2. (c) The emphasis in this question was on the role of males and whether they are changing, in the context of families. There were some very good responses to this using the wide range of relevant sociological material now available. However some candidates wrote fairly generalised responses based on common sense and anecdotal evidence rather than sociological research. Candidates must be reminded that they should cite relevant sociological research to support claims they make.

### **Option 2 Youth Cultures.**

**As with option 1 the first question is compulsory.**

3. (a) (i) Most of the candidates who chose this option seemed to have no difficulty in identifying a number of features of youth sub-cultures. Distinctive styles of dress, music, politics, resistance to capitalism and commitment to the sub-culture. Many were able to refer to the spectacular nature of some youth sub-cultures. Most were able to provide appropriate sociological evidence and examples and cite relevant sociologists thus ensuring their answer was sociological rather than simply common sense or media derivative.
3. (a) (ii) The focus of this question was on ways in which the media may influence some young people. There were a wide variety of responses and so long as they were sociological and offered sociological evidence to support their claims they were rewarded appropriately.

Candidates then had the choice of an essay either 3 (b) or 3 (c).

As with option 1 these questions are essay style and as such candidates are expected to write a clearly structured discursive response. They are expected to support their arguments with sociological evidence.

3. (b) Whilst this was a popular choice a number of candidates misread the question. This was noticeable in terms of centres. Youth sub-cultures as a response to the social and economic conditions of society is featured in all major textbooks and there is considerable evidence to support the view however some candidates chose to consider how youth sub-cultures could solve the social and economic conditions prevailing in society. As mentioned above this seemed to be a centre/centres issue and candidates who responded in this way found themselves writing generalised responses and indeed getting themselves in a muddle. Stronger candidates were able to refer to Marxist and in particular the work of members of the CCCs such as Hebdige, Clarke, Hall and Jefferson and Willis. The work of Brake also featured in many responses. Evaluation of the view tended to come from the postmodernists but the work of feminists and functionalists was also used.
3. (c) This question was less popular but those who knew the work of Parsons and Eisenstadt and the more recent work of Muncie were able to access the higher mark bands. Again this material is readily available in all major textbooks. The question asked candidates to evaluate and once again the work of postmodernists was used to good effect by the stronger candidates as was also the work of Marxists and members of the CCCs.

As with question 2(b) those candidates who made a passing reference to functionalism and then wrote an essay on other explanations were not addressing the specifics of the question and were unable to attract marks in the higher mark bands. Candidates should be advised that where the command in a question is to evaluate a theory then they should start by providing a detailed exposition of the theory. In doing so the stronger candidates will evaluate the theory from the start whilst maintaining a focus on the specifics of the theory.

In essay questions candidates who juxtapose ideas rather than sustain evaluation throughout are unable to access the higher mark bands.

## Section C

As with last year education was by far and away the most popular choice. One/two centres had taught media but there was no evidence of whole centres choosing to do religion as an option.

### Option 1 Education

4. (a) (i) Candidates are expected to read the data and pick out a range of points and then support those points with the statistical evidence. As mentioned last year there is no need to explain the points to do so is to waste valuable time and the explanation is then likely to be repeated in 4 (a) (ii).

There were less errors in relation to percentage differences and percentage points difference than last year. Where candidates confused the two they could not be rewarded. Candidates could be referred to the education data on the ONS website where they will find relevant data and in the commentaries will find the government is able to distinguish between the two.

4. (a) (ii) As with earlier questions candidates are asked to explain two sociological reasons in this question. The two is emboldened at AS and therefore if candidates are reading the question carefully they will not do as some candidates did and provide as many reasons as they could think of. Marks can only be awarded for two reasons. This report should be read alongside the mark scheme where a number of possible explanations are identified. Weaker candidates were only able to explain one reason and then either recycled that reason as if it were different to the first or just left it at one. Thus they were unable to access the higher mark bands. Candidates should be reminded that where a question asks for sociological reasons sociological evidence in the form of named research, named reports or official statistics ensures the response is sociological rather than generalised common sense.

4 (b) (i) and (ii) and 4 (c) (i) and (ii)

The split between those who chose 4 (b) and those who chose 4 (c) was approximately 50:50.

4.(b) (i) and 4 (c) (ii) were tackled equally well by most candidates. They knew the concepts and for the most part were familiar with relevant sociological material and they were therefore able, in both instances, to cite appropriate sociological evidence.

- 4. (b) (ii) Candidates who answered this question were on the whole familiar with the work of Althusser, Bowles and Gintis and other relevant sociologists. The same caveat applies as to question 2(b) and question 3 (c) in relation to the structure of an essay that asks candidates to evaluate a theoretical explanation.
- 4. (c) (ii) A significant number of candidates who choose to do this question tended to lump all BMEs together, others read the question as though it was about minority ethnic groups and seemed to want a question on inside school factors rather than outside school factors. The view in the question was therefore not always specifically addressed. Candidates who did not address the specifics of the question were not able to access the higher mark bands.

## Option 2 Media

As mentioned above, very few centres chose to do this option.

- 5. (a) (i) This was a data question and the comments regarding 4 (a) (i) apply to this question. Candidates need to identify the evidence in the data to support how people access the news in the mass media. There is no need to explain the data.
- 5. (a) (ii) There were some very good responses to this questions and the stronger candidates were able to support their factors with evidence. There was a temptation on the part of some candidates to offer generalised responses based on their personal use of the media.
- 5. (b) (i) Candidates either knew what media saturation meant or not. It is a term commonly used by postmodernists and as such candidates should be aware of it.
- 5. (b) (ii) Although there were some very good responses to this question some candidates tended to 'lump' all ethnic minorities together rather than discussing the ways in which different groups are represented compared to others.  
As with the other essay questions on this paper candidates should be reminded that this should be a discursive essay. There are more marks available for what candidates do with what they know rather than descriptions of studies.
- 5. (c) (i) Most candidates who chose to do this question were able to explain the term though some in more detail than others.

5. (c) (ii) Candidates should be reminded to read questions carefully. The question asked candidates about ownership and control. There was a tendency by some to evaluate explanations of ownership rather than ownership and control.  
A number of contemporary examples were appropriately used but candidates could not access the higher mark bands if they based their whole answer on examples and anecdotal evidence.

### **Option 3 Religion**

There was no evidence that whole centres had taught this option. Candidates who answered this option tended to be those who had misread the rubric and had answered all of the options.

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**COMPONENT 2 - METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY**

This was the second component 2 paper of the new AS Eduqas specification. It was clear that some candidates had been very well prepared in terms of understanding the demands of this paper especially when it came to contextualising the item in their response. However, this wasn't the case for some centres who gave definitions without linking to the research in the item. The most successful candidates were those who demonstrated a detailed and wide ranging knowledge and understanding of methodological issues and of the key concepts as well as stating why the researchers in the item used the method. They also had a wide ranging and detailed knowledge and understanding of relevant sociological studies and demonstrated the ability to apply them where required in particular in part (d). Weaker candidates tended to use terms randomly and often confused terms such as reliability and validity and this demonstrated a lack of knowledge and understanding of the very basics of sociological enquiry.

- Q.1 (a) This part was answered very well with lots of candidates achieving full marks. Most candidates knew and understood what quantitative methods are and could give examples. However, some weaker answers focused on data rather than methods. Some candidates misread the item and thought McCosker had used quantitative methods which led to some confusion. The best answers could define and explain quantitative methods using key terms, they didn't just mention or copy out the item but used it to explain quantitative methods.

Both parts (b) and (c) of the question require students 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.

- (b) Good answers identified two specific reasons and explained them, some good answers limited themselves by having too much overlap between their reasons. The best answers linked to concepts and used them to explain the consequent impact upon the research. Clear links to the item were in the top answers as well as using terminology such as validity and verstehen. Some candidates spent too much time talking about other research such as Dobash and Dobash and this took the focus away from the researchers in the item.
- (c) This question was more variable, largely due to candidates missing "in this research" and therefore not linking to the research in the item and this meant many excellent answers were limited in AO2 due to this lack of contextualisation. Again, as in b), some candidates looked at pros and cons rather than sticking to the point of the question. The best answers used concepts and gave examples from the item. When discussing time as an issue some excellent answers focused on exactly why qualitative methods take a long time, linked it to McCosker's method in the item and were even able to link this to other issues such as the small scale of the study and generalisability. Sometimes candidates were too general or described two very similar issues.

- (d) This answer varied from centre to centre. Some candidates were able to correctly identify ethical issues as referring to the key areas - consent, confidentiality, avoidance of harm, and avoidance of deception. The best were able to explain, with reference to research, why these issues are important. A significant number of the weaker candidates confused the terms ethnicity and ethics and could therefore not be rewarded. There were frequent references to Psychology, with Zimbardo and Milgram being used as evidence, these were rewarded but clearly reference to Sociology is preferred. In addition, Mark Daly's *Secret Policeman* and Donal McIntyre's *Chelsea Headhunters* were quoted, but few were able to recognise that those are journalistic studies and not strictly sociological. The best responses referred to ethical codes and the BSA. The most popular studies/sociologists were Humphreys, Venkatesh, Pryce, Dobash and Dobash, Willis, Ball, Whyte and, to a lesser extent, Declerq, Winlow, Francis and Lacey. Some students focussed their efforts too much on describing what happened in Humphreys' study rather than explain how/what ethically issues were breeched. A significant number of candidates thought Laud Humphrey's motives were less than sociological and that he betrayed his subjects to the police and/or their wives, destroying their lives and causing them harm. Weaker students had vague references to research and merely said "a researcher studied..."



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