



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GCE (NEW)
SOCIOLOGY
AS/Advanced**

SUMMER 2017

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**WJEC
GCE SOCIOLOGY (NEW)**

Summer 2017

UNIT 1 ACQUIRING CULTURE

General Comments

The majority of candidates responded well to this paper. Indeed there were many excellent responses and teachers and candidates should be congratulated on the quality of work produced.

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

When constructing discussions some candidates made good use of empirical evidence and contemporary debates and examples. Many essays were well structured, logical and focused.

Centres are advised to remind candidates to take careful note of command words so that they respond appropriately in their answers. This is especially true of the essay questions. Where a discussion is required the answer should not be descriptive in tone. Candidates are sometimes disadvantaged by offering a juxtaposed range of points only.

The most popular option by far was Option1 Families and Households. The standard of the responses was similar between both options. In Option 1 the most popular of the essay question was question 2c. In Option 2 a similar number of candidates attempted questions 3b and 3c.

There were very few rubric errors and candidates had generally used their time effectively.

**Question 1 - Compulsory
Part (a)**

Most candidates had some understanding of the term culture and many were awarded full marks for this question. The stronger candidates gave a clear definition of the term and provided two or three knowledge points to support their understanding. Candidates should be reminded that they are required to refer to the item. Those who failed to do this or just copied part of the item could not score full marks for AO2. Examiners were looking for evidence that candidates had processed the information in the item in order to demonstrate their understanding. Weak answers often lost focus and drifted into an explanation of socialisation rather than culture.

Part (b)

The focus of this question is on the process of socialisation. However, examiners reported that a number of candidates wrote in very general terms about what socialisation is rather than **how** it happens. Candidates should be encouraged to use terms such as role models, sanctions, imitation in their answers. Many of the stronger responses focused on the family as one of the agents of socialisation and on media as the other agent. Education, and peer groups were also discussed but sometimes in less detail and with less focus on the process of socialisation. Candidates need to take note of the particular focus of the question, which in this case was 'how any two agents of socialisation influence young people'. The stronger candidates gave specific examples of how the process of socialisation can influence young people. Candidates who wrote generic answers that took no account of this focus failed to score top marks. Similarly, a significant number of candidates who were able to demonstrate sound knowledge of the process did not always use the item effectively to illustrate their answers and some made no reference to it at all. This meant that they could not score full marks for AO2. In this instance it would have been wise to use media as one of the two agents of socialisation.

Some candidates referred to primary and secondary socialisation but failed to identify and write about two specific agents. They therefore failed to gain high marks.

Option 1 - Families and Households

Compulsory question

- Q.2. (a) (i) As with question 1(a) examiners were looking for an accurate definition and 2/3 knowledge points for AO1 marks. AO2 marks were awarded for examples and/or evidence to support the points. Many candidates failed to offer a clear definition of the term household. These candidates often gave descriptions of family diversity. Weaker answers were often vague and assertive. The stronger answers supported an accurate definition with examples of different types of households and recent trends in households in the contemporary UK.
- Q.2. (a) (ii) The stronger responses referred to two different reasons for the increasing involvement of grandparents in caring for their grandchildren and supported the reasons with detailed sociological evidence and examples (AO1). They also gave a clear explanation of the reasons and supporting evidence / examples (AO2). Many referred to reasons such as increased life expectancy, improved health of older people, high cost of childcare, high participation rates of women with dependent children in the workplace. Weaker answers often gave overlapping reasons or lost focus on the question. Many weaker answers also failed to include appropriate evidence to support their reasons. When statistical evidence is used the source of the evidence should be cited.
- Q.2 (b) There were some excellent answers that demonstrated a clear understanding of the New Right view of the family. Relevant evidence and examples were used to explain this view consequently these responses were awarded marks in the highest band for AO1. The stronger responses were also able to use other perspectives, with supporting evidence and examples to explicitly assess the New Right view of the family (AO2 and AO3).

However, there were a number of candidates who only had a superficial knowledge of this view and these candidates often failed to refer to relevant sociologists. Murry was often the only sociologist cited. Many candidates failed to differentiate clearly between the New Right and functionalist view of the family.

Evaluation was often juxtaposed. These answers often gave a brief description of the New Right view followed by a description of other views of the family. Consequently these answers could not be highly rewarded for AO3.

- Q.2 (c) There were some excellent responses. In these answers candidates used sociological perspectives, contemporary studies and evidence to develop a discussion. This discussion was often clearly focused on the degree of equality in the contemporary UK. These answers also referred to the roles of women and men and sometimes children.

Weaker answers often cited sociological perspectives and evidence but failed to develop a discussion regarding the degree of equality. A common problem was the lack of historical understanding. There was no clear understanding of how things have changed over time. The work of Wilmott and Young was often discussed as being contemporary.

Despite having an understanding of sociological perspectives, especially feminist and functional weaker answers failed to use evidence and examples to apply these perspectives to the contemporary UK.

Option 2 - Youth Cultures

Compulsory question

- Q.3 (a) (i) As with question 1(a) examiners were looking for an accurate definition and 2/3 knowledge points for AO1 marks. AO2 marks were awarded for examples and/or evidence to support the points. Most candidates were able to offer a definition of the term. Weaker answers were often vague and assertive and often failed to differentiate between youth culture and youth subcultures.
- Q.3 (a) (ii) The stronger responses referred to two different social changes that influenced the formation of early youth subcultures. These answers were supported with detailed sociological evidence and examples (AO1). They also gave a clear explanation of the changes and supporting evidence / examples (AO2).

Many referred to changes such as increased economic power of young people, the impact of American culture, the decline of working class communities.

Weaker answers often gave overlapping social changes or ignored the word 'early' in the question. Weaker answers also failed to include appropriate evidence to support their answers.

- Q.3 (b) The features of these answers were very similar to those for question 2(b). There were some excellent answers that demonstrated a clear understanding of the functionalist view of youth culture. Relevant evidence and examples were used to explain this view consequently these responses were awarded marks in the highest band for AO1. The stronger responses were also able to use other perspectives, with supporting evidence and examples to explicitly

However, there were a number of candidates who only had a superficial knowledge of this view and these candidates often failed to refer to relevant sociologists. In this instance Parsons was often the only sociologist cited. Evaluation was often juxtaposed. These answers often gave a brief description of the functionalist view followed by a description of other views of youth culture. Consequently these answers could not be highly rewarded for AO3.

- Q.3 (c) Most candidates recognised this as a Marxist perspective. Many had detailed knowledge of this perspective and relevant sociologists. Consequently these responses were awarded marks in the highest band for AO1. The stronger responses were the ones that were able to use their knowledge in terms of the question. They were able to use evidence to discuss the view that there is a close link between youth subcultures and social class and to evaluate this view usually with reference to other perspectives (usually feminism and postmodernism), again with supporting evidence (AO2 and 3). The best responses discussed the relevance of class in contemporary youth subcultures/cultures.

Weaker responses often gave a description of the relevant perspective / perspectives but surprisingly often failed to link this to the notion of class. These responses often gave detailed descriptions of youth subcultures but failed to apply their knowledge effectively. In these responses evaluation was often juxtaposed and not explicit.

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UNIT 2 UNDERSTANDING SOCIETY AND METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY

General Comments

The majority of candidates responded well to this paper having been effectively prepared by their centres.

Candidates were generally able to demonstrate some knowledge and understanding across the range of questions. In the very best answers, candidates were confident in manipulating previously unseen data – both prose and numerical, in addition to demonstrating proficiency in all three skills areas in essays: AO1, AO2 and AO3.

Centres are advised to remind candidates to manage their time carefully as a significant number of candidates were hindered by poor time management and ran out of time in the final essay question which attracts 30 marks. Conversely some candidates allocated too much time to questions 1a, 2/3/4 a (i).

Candidates should be encouraged to engage in sustained rather than juxtaposed evaluation in the 20 and 30 mark essay questions.

There were very few rubric errors. The level of English and, where appropriate, Welsh was good. Calculators are not a requirement for this paper.

Compulsory Question

- Q.1 (a) Many candidates had some understanding of the term quantitative data and many were awarded close to full marks for this question. The stronger candidates defined the concept and provided two or three knowledge points to support their understanding with references to methods such as questionnaires that generate quantitative data, positivists preference for quantitative data and the potential of reliability. While the majority of candidates used the item a significant number of candidates were not able to use the item to explain a point about quantitative data and this precluded them from achieving full marks.
- Q.1 (b) The majority were able to identify at least one reason why sociologists choose to use secondary sources in social research. Teachers should be advised that encouraging students to write in a clearly structured way usually enhances the clarity of their answers. For example 'The first reason for choosing secondary data is...'. There is no requirement to provide an opening paragraph defining secondary data, the definition can be embedded within the two reasons. Most candidates discussed quantitative sources, such as government statistics, ONS, the Census and the Crime Survey for England and Wales. Very few gave qualitative sources of data as examples. Candidates who supported their knowledge with clear examples were more likely to achieve the highest AO2 marks. Some candidates did not refer to, or made very brief references to the item resulting in lower marks.

- Q.1 (c) The majority of answers showed awareness of reasons why many researchers choose to carry out interviews that collect qualitative data, but the answers varied significantly in breadth and depth. The majority of candidates understood what is meant by qualitative data. However, many answers described different types of interviews rather than focussing those that generate qualitative data.

This prevented these candidates developing a debate in terms of AO3 marks. Candidates who achieved well identified unstructured interviews as generating qualitative data and also discussed the benefits of using semi-structured and/or group interviews. A significant minority confused validity and reliability. The concepts representativeness and generalisability were often assumed to be characteristics of the method rather than the sample. A lot of evaluation was 'juxtaposed' and underdeveloped. The stronger candidates referred to studies to illustrate the points that they were making. Furthermore these candidates made effective use of the item. There were missed opportunities for candidates to achieve higher marks for AO2 as often just one study or the item was mentioned and this was the most consistent reason for scoring low marks.

SECTION B

Option 1 - Education

Compulsory question

- Q.2 (a) (i) Most candidates understood the data and gave good answers. Stronger answers referred to an overall difference between the groups and then made accurate references to other trends. However, not all gave the comparative points which would enable them to access Band 3 marks. A significant number of candidates tried to work out 'differences', rather than 'percentage point differences' between groups and this resulted in mathematical errors. It was sometimes assumed that the different groups contained the same number of students. A significant number of candidates gave reasons for the trends, which was not required. The best answers identified relationships between social characteristics and the statistics. Those who scored lower marks just quoted the percentages for each ethnic group resulting in descriptive answers. In most cases points were supported with reference to the data.
- Q.2 (a) (ii) The good answers clearly identified two 'reasons'. The best answers referred to sociological reasons which were outlined, explained and supported with reference to writers or studies, for example Sewell, Chau, Wright. Candidates could draw on their knowledge and understanding required in the debates section of the specification to answer this question. Teachers should be advised that encouraging students to write in a clearly structured way usually enhances the clarity of their answers. For example 'The first reason for the relationship between ethnicity and educational attainment is...' There is no requirement to provide an opening paragraph describing trends. Lower achieving candidates often described a number of reasons in insufficient detail. Some candidates did not focus specifically on ethnicity and drifted into generic reasons for underachievement such as material deprivation without reference to specific ethnic groups. Furthermore there was an assumption by a significant minority that White British students were middle class.

- Q.2 (b) This was an accessible question which required candidates to examine and make a judgement on the Marxist view of the role of education in society. Lower scoring candidates focused on Marxist explanations for underachievement rather than focussing on the role of education in society. Those who scored the highest demonstrated higher order essay writing techniques with high level evaluative and analytical style. Unfortunately in many answers evaluation continues to be characterised by juxtaposition. For example Marxism was described, followed by functionalism, then feminism. The best answers examined the Marxist explanations of the role of education in a detailed evaluative way, utilising evidence and examples effectively to enable a judgement to be made about the accuracy of the view. There were accurate references to Althusser, Bowles and Gintis and Willis. Candidates should be advised to take time to read the questions carefully so that they accurately interpret what they are required to do in their response; a sound understanding of command words is essential.
- Q.2 (c) This was the most popular essay question with a variety of responses. Those who scored highly demonstrated a range of sociological explanations of the achievement of boys in education. Some candidates drifted into lengthy explanations for the underachievement of girls, suggesting that candidates should be advised to take time to read the questions carefully so that they accurately interpret what they are required to do. Some lower achieving answers included quasi-common sense. The majority of evaluation was juxtaposed and candidates would benefit from further practice of this competency. There were nevertheless some very high quality responses which drew upon a range of studies such as Mac an Ghail, Sewell, Connell, Carrington and Frosh.

Option 2 – Media Compulsory question

- Q.3 (a) (i) Most candidates understood the data and were able to describe the patterns. However, not all gave the comparative points which would enable them to access Band 3 marks. As with the education option some students tried to work out 'differences' rather than 'percentage point differences' and this resulted in mathematical errors. It was sometimes assumed that the different social networking sites contained the same number of users. Several gave reasons for the patterns, which was not required. The best answers identified relationships between social characteristics, and the statistics. In most cases points were supported with reference to the data.
- Q.3 (a) (ii) The good answers clearly identified two 'reasons'. The best were sociological reasons which were outlined, explained and supported with reference to writers or studies, for example Page, Thornton, Haraway, Cochrane. Candidates could draw on their knowledge and understanding required in the debates section of the specification to answer this question. Teachers should be advised that encouraging students to write in a clearly structured way usually enhances the clarity of their answers. For example 'The first reason for the relationship between gender and new social media is...' There is no requirement to provide an opening paragraph describing trends. Lower achieving candidates often described a number of reasons in insufficient detail. A significant number of responses relied heavily on common sense ideas and anecdotal references and examples. Such answers did not score high marks.

- Q.3 (b) This was an accessible question which required candidates to examine and make a judgement on the pluralist view that ownership and control of the media is shared. To do this effectively candidates need to consider the evidence with commentary on what the evidence suggests in relation to the debate. Most candidates were able to construct a debate; while the best answers examined the concept of pluralist ideas of ownership and control in a detailed evaluative way, utilising evidence and examples effectively to enable a judgement to be made about the accuracy of the view that ownership and control of the media is shared. The highest achievers were able to examine writers such as Whale, Williams, Curran and Marroni alongside examples such as The Sun newspaper in Liverpool: Campaine, Meyer. Many candidates used alternative theories and evidence to construct their criticisms of the pluralist views; although evaluation was often characterised by juxtaposition, resulting in lower AO3 marks.
- Q.3 (c) The focus here was on a consideration of a range of sociological explanations of media representations of minority ethnic groups in society. The best answers examined a range of explanations in a detailed evaluative way, utilising evidence and contemporary examples effectively to enable a judgement to be made about the accuracy of the different views. The majority of candidates compared representations of minority groups with the white majority, however lower achieving answers generalised the experiences of minority ethnic groups which led to a more superficial debate. Higher achieving answers considered a range of explanations such as GUMG, Giddens, Van Dijk, Poole. While few were able to examine representations across different media products: Malik, Georgiou. Some candidates were able to engage in high level sophisticated and well supported lines of debate and these were highly rewarded in each skill domain, lower achievers produced common sense answers, assertive answers, lacking reference to empirical evidence and/or theory.

Option 3 – Religion [less popular option] Compulsory question

- Q.4 (a) (i) Most candidates understood the data and gave good answers. However lower scoring candidates misinterpreted the data and were unable to make accurate comparisons between 2001 and 2011. Stronger answers referred to an overall difference between 2001 and 2011, such as the increase in the percentage of people who identified themselves as having no religion and then made accurate references to other trends. However, not all gave the comparative points which would enable them to access Band 3 marks. A significant number of candidates gave reasons for the trends, which was not required. Those who scored lower marks just quoted the percentages resulting in descriptive answers. In most cases points were supported with reference to the data.
- Q.4 (a) (ii) The good answers clearly identified two 'reasons', with the increase in secularisation and an ethnically more diverse society being the most popular. The best answers referred to sociological reasons which were outlined, explained and supported with reference to writers or studies, for example Wilson, Woodhead, Dawkins, Modood, Bird. Candidates could draw on their knowledge and understanding required in the debates section of the specification to answer this question. Teachers should be advised that encouraging students to write in a clearly structured way usually enhances the clarity of their answers. For example 'The first reason for changes in how people identified with a religion between 2001 and 2011 is...' There is no requirement to provide an opening paragraph describing trends. Lower achieving candidates often described a number of reasons in insufficient detail.
- Q.4 (b) This was an accessible question which required candidates to examine and make a judgement on the functionalist view of the role of religion in society. Interpretation of 'role' was well focused and discussed throughout candidates' answers. In lower scoring answers knowledge of functionalism lacked breadth and depth, although most answers contained some knowledge, referencing the work of Durkheim, Parsons, Malinowski and Bellah. Those who scored the highest demonstrated higher order essay writing techniques with high level evaluative and analytical style. Unfortunately in many answers evaluation continues to be characterised by juxtaposition. For example functionalism versus Marxism rather than a sustained debate leading to a judgement about the functionalist view.
- Q.4 (c) The focus here was on a consideration of a range of sociological explanations of the relationship between ethnicity and religion. This was not a popular question and there was a tendency towards answers that lacked breadth and depth of knowledge. There was some awareness of studies such as Modood, but less range such as the work of Bird, Archer, Woodhead and Brierley, which meant the focus on the debate (AO2), was more basic. Finally the evaluation tended to consist of a juxtaposition of ideas, some of which were based on common-sense assumptions.

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UNIT 3 POWER AND CONTROL

General comments

A very pleasing first year for this unit. Candidates are generally very well prepared for the unit. Option 1 – Crime and Deviance is by far the most popular option, with a small number of centres opting for the Health and Disability and World Sociology options. No centres opted for politics.

There were very few rubric errors. Time seemed to be used well with appropriate allocation of time per question in the majority of questions.

In 20 mark and 40 mark questions, there was a relationship between quality and how well an answer was structured into paragraphs. Candidates should be encouraged to avoid ‘walls of text’ and organise their essays into clear ‘points’, logically presented for the highest marks.

One administration issue raised by examiners was that students did not write which questions they had attempted on the front of their examination booklet which then takes examiners some time to complete.

A small but significant number of candidates had near illegible handwriting. Centres are advised to contact the WJEC if they have concerns about a candidate’s handwriting.

Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 (a)(i)

These questions are assessed on AO1 – knowledge and understanding, and AO2 – application of knowledge. Some candidates wasted time by evaluating. The best prepared candidates understood the importance of providing a clear definition of the term/ concept and referred to relevant sociological examples and writers. Direct focus on the question was also essential for top band.

Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 (a)(ii)

This is the ‘new’ question on unit 3 and in general was answered very well. The best answers made reference to and then applied a range of relevant sociological evidence and examples that directly related to the question. Again, some students wasted time evaluating this evidence. A minority of students made assertions and used anecdotal evidence rather than using sociology.

Questions 1, 2, 3, 4 (b/c)

These essay questions are marked on all three skills: AO1 – knowledge (13), AO2 – application (13) and AO3 – evaluation (14). AO3 was the weakest skill. Well prepared candidates demonstrated they understood the importance of using relevant sociological writers, concepts and evidence which was analysed and evaluated appropriately. Most candidates provided a clear introduction and conclusion. However, examples of excellent, sustained, explicit evaluation were few and far between. Also, when attempting to evaluate, points made were often limited in meaning, superficial or ‘rote learned’ and very predictable.

A number of centres appeared to have provided ‘templates’ or ‘model answers’ for students. Examiners found that for the most part, these templates do not allow students to engage fully with the question and as such, penalised the most able students.

Option 1 – Crime and Deviance

- Q.1 (a) (i) Nearly all candidates were able to provide at least a basic definition of deviance. The best candidates provided a clear definition of deviance and correctly discussed how it differs to crime. They then referred to sociologists that explore the meaning of deviance and types of deviance. Many students ‘drifted’ off topic to discuss areas such as crime, sanctions, theories of crime, and particularly popular subcultures.
- Q.1 (a) (ii) For this question, the best answers selected a range (at least 3) of sociological evidence and examples that directly related to ethnicity, providing detailed explanations of that evidence. Many candidates used examples that are not specifically related to ethnicity e.g. Merton’s strain theory and Cohen’s status frustration and applied these to ethnicity. Although this received some credit, for top band candidates needed to refer to sociology specific to ethnicity and crime. Weaker candidates made assertions (sometimes racist) and used anecdotal evidence. There was some excellent use of statistics of ethnic minorities and different areas of crime but also some dubious numbers were bandied about.
- Q.1 (b) The best candidates demonstrated a detailed knowledge and understanding of both left and right realism and were able to refer to a range of writers from both sides. The best candidates’ main focus was on how both left and right realists explain crime and deviance rather than on their suggested solutions for crime. Relevant writers from both left and right realist standpoints were discussed. Some students brought in different theories throughout the essay to both support and criticise realism – this was sometimes done brilliantly, though sometimes was part of a template and not fully understood by students. Weaker students wrote a little bit about realism and then went to discuss other theories (sometimes in great detail) with no real link to the question.

- Q.1 (c) There were a vast range of answers to this question in terms of both content and quality. The best answers referred to a range of different areas of sociology, for example, Marxism, interactionism, realism, subcultural theories and stayed focused on the link between social class and crime. They also questioned official statistics and acknowledged that crime was not just a working class activity, making reference to white-collar and corporate crime. AO3 was the weakest skill for this question – many candidates seemed to forget the need to make judgements about the theories, evidence etc. that they had discussed. Weak answers tended to talk in a generalised, assertive way about poor education, poverty etc. leading to crime and contained very little sociology. Others wrote a little about class and then quickly moved on to writing about gender.

Option 2 – Health and Disability

- Q.2 (a) (i) There was a range of quality of answers for this question – well prepared candidates provided different definitions of health from various perspectives and made reference to sociology throughout. Weak candidates wrote generalised, non-sociological answers.
- Q.2 (a) (ii) In a very similar vein to question 2ai) answers ranged from excellent to very limited in terms of sociological knowledge. The best students were able to refer to a number (at least 3) of relevant pieces of sociological evidence/ examples and use them to explain the relationship between stigma and disability in society. The weakest answers again lacked any reference to sociology and some did not focus on the question at all.
- Q.2 (b) This was the least popular choice when it came to the essays. A few candidates provided answers which demonstrated a very good wide-ranging and detailed knowledge and understanding of the social model and were able to analyse and evaluate it effectively. However, weaker candidates used this as an opportunity to write a generalised response about different theories of health and illness without linking them directly to the question.
- Q.2 (c) Most students who studied this option opted for this essay. There were several excellent answers that looked at the relationship between gender inequalities and health and illness from a number of different perspectives, with range, depth and sustained evaluation. These answers discussed both males and females, and looked at health and illness in different ways such as gender inequalities in the medical profession. Again, weaker answers lacked sociological content and were much more generalised in nature.

Option 3 – Politics

No candidates attempted this option.

Option 4 – World Sociology

- Q.4 (a) (i) There was a range of quality of answers for this question though the majority lacked sociology that specifically addresses the meaning of globalisation. Many responses were generalised, making minimal reference to relevant sociological writers, concepts etc. The best answers contained a clear definition or alternative definitions of globalisation and referred to at least one relevant sociologist.
- Q.4 (a) (ii) As with question 4ai) answers ranged from excellent to very limited in terms of sociological knowledge. The best students were able to refer to a number (at least 3) of relevant pieces of sociological evidence/ examples and use them to explain why women are more likely than men to face inequality of income in the developing world. The weakest answers again lacked any reference to sociology.
- Q.4 (b) This was the slightly more popular choice when it came to the essays and produced responses of higher quality in comparison to question 4c). A few candidates provided answers which demonstrated a very good wide-ranging and detailed knowledge and understanding of dependency theory and were able to analyse and evaluate it effectively. However, weaker candidates used this as an opportunity to write a generalised response about the different theories that attempt to explain global inequality without linking them directly to the question. A number of students muddled dependency theory with world systems theory.
- Q.4 (c) Responses to this question on the whole tended to be weaker than those for 4b) as a result of being more generalised and less sociological. Several students used sociological research and theory from Unit 2 Education which was, for the most part, unrelated to the context of this question. Very few students thought to explore factors other than education that may also be key in solving the problems of the developing world thus limiting themselves in terms of range.

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UNIT 4 SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND APPLIED METHODS OF SOCIOLOGICAL ENQUIRY

Compulsory Section A

- Q.1 (a) Most candidates were able to identify reasons why the researchers decided to adopt an ethnographic approach in their research. However, a very significant number of candidates did not know the meaning of an ethnographic approach. Many confused this with longitudinal and this was reflected in the marks awarded. The key to success in this question is context; being able to pick out the specific strengths of the approach which might have been useful in helping the researchers to achieve their research aims. Many students offered generic and often inaccurate answers.
- Q.1 (b) Once again examiners reported that there were a significantly high number of rehearsed, generic research designs. In this examination students were at liberty to select the type of data they would collect [quantitative or qualitative] This was an excellent opportunity to contextualise their justification though only a few seized this opportunity. Whilst research decisions often demonstrated some accurate knowledge, those that were not explained in the context of the design brief had limited value.

Whilst centres appear to have established a sound understanding of the task the same cannot be said for the success criteria. Indeed, the quality of responses to this question was, on the whole, very average. Once again a particular weakness in many designs was sampling. Nevertheless, some answers did demonstrate an excellent understanding of both research procedures and the reasons for the decisions made. Some candidates were able to connect their decisions to the task and to wider methodological issues and these candidates were rewarded accordingly. However, a significant number merely described their research design offering very superficial justifications which were focused more on the generic strengths of the method rather than the reasons why this method was the best for the task. Similarly, the best answers considered most of the stages of research and offered methodologically sound reasons for decisions made whilst weaker answers made either superficial or no reference to some stages of the research design.

Some designs were unrealistic and as such demonstrated a lack of engagement with the task. Some candidates wrote a great deal about why they had not chosen to use other methods which was not required.

Many candidates cited problems but did not consider the impact that these might have as the brief had instructed them.

Candidates should be advised that the best answers are clearly contextualised demonstrating a sound understanding that decisions about research design should be focused primarily on the research aims.

Section B

Q.2(a) and Q.3(a)

Most candidates were able to offer examples of class inequality from two areas of life. It was evident that some centres had misunderstood the task as answers lacked actual empirical evidence or cited statistics. Some evidence cited was not appropriate for illustrating class inequalities. The best answers cited relevant research evidence rather than anecdotal accounts of class inequality. Similarly, the best answers made reference to a range of evidence and this evidence was explained in the context of how it demonstrated class inequality.

Teachers are advised to urge students to read the instructions in the questions very carefully. Where they are asked for two areas of life they need to select two different areas of life. A significant number of candidates relied on examples rather than evidence and this prevented them from achieving Band 4 marks.

Centres should be advised that candidates are not required to explain why the inequality exists. They are required to explain what the evidence shows.

The best answers demonstrated range and detail whilst weaker answers lacked either detail, range or both.

Where the question is broad as in this case, candidates may choose which type of inequality they wish to write about. Some did this well but the same issues that were present in answers to question 2a were also present in answers to question 3a.

Q.2 (b) Most students were able to identify this as the functionalist view. However, the vast majority of answers were merely descriptive accounts of what functionalists say rather than an examination of the value of what they say. Where students referred to alternative views of social inequality they did so in a descriptive way and this meant that evaluation was juxtaposed. Very few candidates utilised evidence or examples as vehicles for evaluation of the theory in question and this meant that their AO2 and AO3 marks rarely reached the top band. Teachers would be wise to focus on the ability of students to effectively demonstrate all three skills as a descriptive account of theories will not enable students to access the higher marks for AO2 and AO3.

Q.3 (b) This question was, on the whole, either answered very well or very badly. Some candidates were able to utilise their wide ranging knowledge effectively in their response to the command in weighing up the usefulness of Weberian ideas about social inequality. Others had a vague understanding of Weberian ideas and some did not address the notion of usefulness in any way. The same problems identified with question 2b were also evident in answers to question 3b.

Teachers are advised to focus on literacy skills with students and in particular the ability of candidates to construct well informed, well supported discussions that are focused on the statement/view/ theory in the question. An increasing feature of some examination scripts is the low level of AO2 skills. Teachers are advised that developing high level AO2 skills in students is the most effective way to achieve high level success in this examination.

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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