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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned**.

SOCIOLOGY

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 2251/01
Paper 1

General comments

Candidates displayed a reasonable level of knowledge and understanding of society and social change. Some areas were generally well understood e.g. family change and gender, though even here candidates let themselves down by not reading the question thoroughly enough, thus spoiling their responses.

Other areas were much less well understood, e.g. politics, power and poverty. Much more work needs to be done in developing candidates in these areas, as well as overall equipping them to deal with questions relating to the nature of social change and to be able to give reasons for it. Much of the syllabus and thus the mark scheme deals with this and yet too many candidates struggle to account for it. Unless this is done, too many candidates will not have been sufficiently prepared for the examination and will not properly understand the questions.

Generally, candidates need to give more careful attention to reading the question, seeking to understand what each part is asking and answering accordingly. Too often candidates wrote in very grand terms about the topic without referring to the specific question. Answers tended to be too generalised and as a result, lacked focus. It needs to be emphasised to candidates that they should take their time to stop and think and consider what the question is asking rather than ploughing on because they have seen a key word or concept. They should be encouraged to look for and respond to key pointers in the questions such as *Why, Social measures, What factors, How etc*.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

The mark scheme required essentially an explanation for changes in the family structure. It was a popular question and reasonably well done with reasonable understanding of the development of changes to the family structure. The main weakness was in not saying *why*, but instead mainly giving an overall description of extended families, i.e. *Not* saying what caused change, but describing the changes themselves.

Question 2

This question required candidates to give reasons for variable divorce rates and their effects. Few candidates could define divorce rate and candidates need reminding that when the question refers to social factors, then that is what is required, not generalised comments about the break up of marriages. The emphasis, as in the mark scheme, was on the significance of custom, religion, law etc.

Question 3

This question required an appreciation and awareness of what impacts peoples' limited social and economic progress, but few candidates displayed this. Fairly generalised answers were the norm and answers displayed an overall lack of focus.

Question 4

The mark scheme required an awareness of problems faced by refugees. This was fairly well met and most answers were sympathetic in tone. Answers to parts **(b)**, **(c)** and **(d)** could get repetitious and candidates do need to direct their responses to the particulars asked, i.e. *Why* residents might have negative views, not a list of such views.

Question 5

Candidates needed to display knowledge of changing gender roles and the reasons why. It was a popular and generally well done question with awareness of the issues demonstrated. Candidates have been well prepared in this area of the syllabus. However proper reading of the question would have helped candidates, i.e. when it says 'governments', it means that, rather a range of other organisations.

Questions 6

Candidates found this a difficult question in the sense that too many didn't read deeply enough into the question. Parts **(c)** and **(d)** stress "for a society", not therefore, the individual. Candidates need more understanding of social change, the factors influencing it and its implications as a whole rather than concentrating on the impact on the individual. Sociology seeks to examine the former and the mark scheme reflects that.

Question 7

Given that the mark scheme required knowledge of industrialisation and its processes and effects, this question was reasonably well done. Most were aware of the differences between rural and urban life but were much less aware of the causes of poverty and few mentioned the concept of relative poverty. More emphasis in the subject's delivery is perhaps needed here. Again some problems were caused by not reading the question thoroughly enough, i.e. part **(b)**, *why* industrialisation tends to lead to increasing numbers of people living in large cities, rather than other factors which too many candidates described.
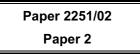
Question 8

This question sought to look at the concept of power and its relationship to the social structure. This was not a popular area of the syllabus, few candidates attempted this question and general understanding was limited. The nature of social and political change was only marginally understood and the answers suggest the concept of power needs more emphasis and consideration within the classroom.

Question 9

This question assessed political awareness and democracy in particular. Only a few candidates attempted this and had weak understanding of the matter. One almost felt that it was attempted by weaker candidates struggling to find a question to answer. The sociology of politics is evidently an area of the syllabus requiring more substantial preparation from candidates.

Question 10

The mark scheme sought to assess how candidates accounted for social change, in particular, changes in the social structure. Many candidates found this question difficult. The fault again seemed to lie with an insufficient focus on the social aspect as in part **(d)**, for example, "what social factors", yet candidates adopted a generalised approach which too often became an "I'll write all I know about something" approach, without real reference to the question asked. Exam preparation must pick this out and direct candidates accordingly.

> **Paper 2251/02**
>
> **Paper 2**

General comments

It is pleasing to report that the standard of the scripts overall was once again very high. The majority of candidates and Centres are extremely well prepared for the requirements of the examination. Answers are detailed and thorough, with good knowledge and understanding of the relevant subject matter demonstrated. A small minority of candidates, however, continue to underachieve because they provide answers that are rather too skeletal or 'list-like'. Candidates should be reminded that valid points in an answer need to be developed within a complete sentence and, in some cases, further marks are available for using supporting examples and/or evidence. The questions of the family, education and population were once again the most popular.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

(a) Accurately defined by most candidates, though a few confused the term with the extended family.

(b) Well-answered, the extended and single parent families being the two examples most frequently cited.

(c) Good answers covered several textbook factors; poor answers relied on just one or two commonsense points.

(d) There were many solid answers based on 'the retention of functions' argument.

Question 2

(a) Answers mostly focused on the shift from male dominated relationships to those based more on sharing, intimacy and equality to some greater or lesser extent.

(b) Good answers referred to factors such as the changing status of women, the feminist movement, and the strengthening of the notion of romantic love as a basis for marriage.

(c) There were some weak answers that relied on assertion rather than reasoned argument. Better answers made good use of appropriate sociological evidence.

(d) The democratisation of parent/children relationships was documented in the better answers to this question.

Question 3

(a) Most candidates identified two appropriate reasons.

(b) Good answers identified several relevant factors and explained each one clearly.

(c) This was answered well overall, though most candidates focused on negative consequences.

(d) One-sided arguments were generally less impressive than those that considered the arguments for and against the proposition that marriage is in decline.

Question 4

(a) Well-answered.

(b) Good answers considered the influence of both material and cultural factors linked to home background.

(c) Weaker answers relied on a few basic references to labelling by teachers. Better answers covered a range of relevant school factors, including type of school, teaching methods, and peer group influence.

(d) Candidates were rewarded on the basis of the depth of the discussion and/or quality of the suggestions offered.

Question 5

(a) Well-answered.

(b) Answers often lacked focus and were poorly expressed.

(c) Most answers covered both training in specific skills and the development of appropriate attitudes and values. Some candidates particularly impressed with references to the work of Bowles and Gintis.

(d) Answers were sometimes rather too narrow to merit high marks. Good answers identified a range of relevant functions.

Question 6

(a) Well-answered.

(b) Many of the answers missed the point of the question which was to describe two examples of youth groups e.g. mods, rockers, skinheads, hippies, etc.

(c) Weaker answers identified a few factors but with little development of the points. Good answers explained clearly a range of relevant factors.

(d) Answers were often rather vague and lacking in appropriate sociological understanding.

Questions 7 to 9

There were very few answers to these questions.

Question 10

(a) Well-answered.

(b) Most candidates were able to identify several advantages, though in some cases the explanations offered lacked clarity and/or depth.

(c) Good answers focused on factors such as deskilling, job insecurity, alienation, and possible decline in wage rates.

(d) There were some very good answers based on the work of Braverman and his critics.

Question 11

(a) Good answers covered both extrinsic and intrinsic reasons.

(b) Weaker answers described the nature of work in industrial societies without making clear how it contrasts with work in pre-industrial societies.

(c) Good answers demonstrated a sound understanding of how the type of work that a person undertakes may affect his or her life chances.

(d) Good answers often referred to Parker's distinction between extension, opposition and neutral patterns of work/leisure relationship.

Question 12

There were very few answers to this question.

Question 13

(a) Some weak answers simply stated that an ageing population is one where people are getting older. Good answers noted that it actually refers to a society where the birth rate is declining relative to the death rate.

(b) Most candidates identified a range of relevant points.

(c) Candidates who identified a range of both positive and negative social consequences of an ageing population particularly impressed the Examiners.

(d) Most candidates were able to offer a good range of appropriate suggestions.

Question 14

(a) Well-answered.

(b) Good answers identified several potential problems associated with a rapidly growing population.

(c)   Some candidates failed to focus on how modern industrialised societies specifically may be affected by the growth in world population. Thus their answers were too general to justify high marks.

(d)   Most candidates were able to offer a good range of appropriate suggestions.

Question 15

(a)   Well-answered.

(b)   Weaker answers merely listed specific diseases. Better answers explained the particular types of illnesses that lead to death in less industrialised countries.

(c)   Again, weaker answers merely listed specific diseases. Better answers explained the particular types of illnesses that lead to death in industrialised countries.

(d)   Most candidates were able to offer a good range of appropriate suggestions.

Question 16

(a)   Well-answered.

(b)   Religion and the mass media were most often cited as the main sources of social control.

(c)   Good answers referred to the role of the legal system and law enforcement agencies in enforcing social controls.

(d)   Good answers often focused on the debate between functionalists and Marxists about who benefits from social control.

Question 17

(a)   Most candidates were able to identify several appropriate reasons why some crimes may not be reported to the police.

(b)   Answers sometimes lacked focus on the police, concentrating instead on general accounts of the impact of labelling on recorded crime.

(c)   Many of the answers focused on differences in gender socialisation, but some candidates impressed by also considering gender differences in the treatment of suspects/offenders.

(d)   Some answers were poorly informed. Good answers referred directly to victim and self-report studies.

Question 18

There were very few answers to this question.