

Specimen Paper Answers

Paper 2 – The Family

Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology 9699

For examination from 2021



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Introduction

The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology for examination from 2021. In this booklet, we have provided high grade answers for Section A, questions 1, 2 and 3, and Section B, question 5.

Each response is accompanied by a brief commentary explaining the strengths and weaknesses of the answers. Comments are given to indicate where and why marks were awarded, and how additional marks could have been obtained. In this way, it is possible to understand what candidates have done to gain their marks and how they could improve.

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9699 Sociology 2021 Specimen Paper 02

9699 Sociology 2021 Specimen Paper Mark Scheme 02

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Assessment overview

Paper 1

Socialisation, identity and methods of research 1 hour 30 minutes
60 marks
Candidates answer four questions.
Section A: three compulsory questions
Section B: one essay (26 marks) from a choice of two
Externally assessed
50% of the AS Level
25% of the A Level

Paper 3

Education 1 hour 15 minutes
50 marks
Candidates answer four compulsory questions. Question 4 is an essay (26 marks).
Externally assessed
20% of the A Level

Paper 2

The Family 1 hour 30 minutes
60 marks
Candidates answer four questions.
Section A: three compulsory questions
Section B: one essay (26 marks) from a choice of two
Externally assessed
50% of the AS Level
25% of the A Level

Paper 4

Globalisation, Media and Religion 1 hour 45 minutes
70 marks
Candidates answer two essay questions (35 marks each).
Section A: Globalisation
Section B: Media
Section C: Religion
Each section has two essay questions. Candidates select one question from two different sections.
Externally assessed
30% of the A Level

Assessment objectives as a percentage of Paper 2

AO1 Knowledge and understanding	40%
AO2 Interpretation and application	30%
AO3 Analysis and evaluation	30%

Section A

Question 1

1 Describe two functions of the family

[4]

Specimen answer

One function of the family is primary socialisation. The family is the first place where children learn the norms and values of society from their parents.

Another function of the family is the stabilisation of adult personalities. The family provides emotional support and a place where adults can act out childish elements of their own personalities while playing with children.

Mark awarded = 4 out of 4

Examiner comment

The candidate provides two different functions of the family (*primary socialisation and stabilisation of adult personalities*), both of which are clear and have been explained well demonstrating AO1 to earn full marks.

Question 2(a)

- 2 (a) Explain two ways in which the family supports capitalism, according to Marxist theory. [8]

Specimen answer

One way the family supports capitalism is by performing an ideological function. This means the family teaches beliefs and attitudes that support capitalism. Cooper argues that within the family children are taught to submit to authority – by learning to obey their parents they are trained to be part of the obedient workforce that capitalism requires.

Another way in which the family supports capitalism is through providing comfort and support. The family is a safe haven which soothes the frustration of being exploited in the capitalist workplace. Ansley describes the family as a ‘safety valve’ as the wife will absorb the frustration of her exploited husband meaning that his frustration is not turned against the system and so capitalism is not threatened.

Mark awarded = 8 out of 8

Examiner comment

This answer is laid out in a clear and structured way. The candidate provides two different and well explained ways the family supports capitalism using relevant Marxist material demonstrating AO1 and applying it appropriately (AO2). In each response the candidate clearly:

- makes a point by identifying a way in the opening sentence, e.g. “*performing an ideological function...*” and “*providing comfort and support...*”
- explains the point identified, e.g. “*This means the family...*”
- supports the point made with relevant and correct sociological material, e.g. Cooper / Ansley
- brings the response back to the point made by explaining how the sociological material supports the point / way identified in the opening sentence. This demonstrates application of relevant material to answering the question (AO2).

Therefore the candidate has, for each response, fulfilled the four elements laid out in the mark scheme twice. This response is awarded full marks.

Question 2(b)

2 (b) Explain two limitations of the Marxist view of the family.

[6]

Specimen answer

One limitation of the Marxist view of the family is that it ignores the positive aspects of the family. Marxists focus on the fact that the family controls the ideas of workers to make them accept their oppression. According to functionalists, this does not take in to account the benefits that the family offers to its members and society. The family provides positive functions such as providing economic support for its members.

Another limitation of the Marxist view of the family is that it is unable to account for family diversity. Marxists argue that the family exists simply to support capitalism. However, sociologists recognise that there are lots of different types of families and family structures and this diversity is growing. It is hard to explain this growing diversity if the family is there simply to perform one function.

Mark awarded = 6 out of 6

Examiner comment

The candidate provides two clear (“*One limitation...*” / “*Another limitation...*”) and accurate limitations of Marxist views of the family, well laid out and structured in a way that reflects the mark scheme. For example in the first response, the candidate:

- explicitly identifies the limitation (“*ignores the positive aspect of the family...*”), AO1 (1 mark)
- explains *why* the theory has this limitation (“*Marxists focus on the fact...*”), AO3 (1 mark)
- explains *why* this is a limitation by applying a functionalist perspective to illustrate how Marxism ignores the positive aspect of the family, AO3 (1 mark).

The candidate repeats this approach in the second response to achieve full marks.

Question 3(a)

3 'Family diversity is positive for society'.

(a) Explain this view.

[10]

Specimen answer

One way in which family diversity is positive for society is that it provides individuals with greater freedom and choice. Family diversity means individuals are able to choose from a range of different ways of living. Without one dominant family type, there is the opportunity to have greater freedom due to the fragmented range of structures. For example, individuals can choose whether to marry or have children. Beck and Beck-Gernsheim argue that we are now able to live in 'families of choice' or 'negotiated families'. One example may be cohabiting couples who choose to live together but without being married. Another example is friends of parents being considered as aunties or uncles despite having no blood relation. Choice and freedom are key elements of postmodern society and postmodernists see these as vital in a society based on individualism.

Another way in which family diversity is positive for society is that it increases tolerance and encourages people to be accepting of different ways of living. Exposure to new ideas makes people question traditional ways of thinking and so exposure to family diversity means that people no longer see the traditional nuclear family as the only 'right' type of family. Roseneil describes how the 'heteronorm' – the belief that relationships between heterosexual couples are the normal form for intimate relationships to take – is breaking down in many societies due to the increase in gay and lesbian families.

Mark awarded = 10 out of 10

Examiner comment

In this response the candidate provides two different points (reflected in the mark scheme) to explain the statement (*greater freedom and choice / increases tolerance and acceptance of different ways of living*). These two points are clear, developed (including examples to illustrate) and supported with relevant sociological material such as sociologists (*Beck and Beck Gernsheim / Roseneil*) and concepts (*'negotiated families' / heteronorm*) demonstrating AO1.

This material is appropriate and focused on the question, with the candidate making its relevance clear by linking back to the issue of diversity being positive for society, demonstrated in the final sentence of each response (AO2).

Question 3(b)

3 'Family diversity is positive for society'.

(b) Using sociological material, give one argument against this view. [6]

Specimen answer

New Right theorists argue that family diversity is not positive for society because the traditional nuclear family is the best family structure for society, and that other structures, particularly lone-parent families, lead to poor socialisation and welfare dependency. New Right theorists argue that lone-parent families are unable to adequately socialise children as they lack a male parental figure and so children grow up without discipline and clear moral guidance. This, they argue, leads to delinquency and criminality. Similarly, as they lack a male wage earner, single parent families are often reliant on financial support from the state. Children grow up in families without a wage earner and see welfare dependency as normal. Charles Murray argues that state support for lone-parent families through welfare benefits has resulted in an 'underclass' which poses a threat to society through rising crime and welfare spending.

Mark awarded = 6 out of 6

Examiner comment

The response provides a very detailed and focused argument against the statement that family diversity is positive for society, by arguing that it could "*lead to poor socialisation and welfare dependency*", explicitly basing the argument around the New Right perspective, and demonstrating a very solid grasp of relevant sociological material.

The response begins by stating why diversity is not positive for society, then develops this through a thorough explanation of the point made by examining the negative impact on society of lone parents in particular (as an example of family diversity), e.g. criminality, state financial support, referring to sociologist Murray and concepts such as 'underclass' to support the argument (AO2 and AO3).

Section B

Question 5

- 5 Evaluate the contribution of different feminist perspectives to our understanding of the family. [26]

Specimen answer

Feminists argue that the family oppresses women. There are a range of different feminist views, but all agree that there is gender inequality in society and that this is also present in the family. Different feminist views focus on different ways in which women face oppression in the family, liberal feminists look to campaign for equal rights, Marxist feminists argue capitalism oppresses women and radical feminists see the family as the root of women's oppression.

Liberal feminists believe that a change is possible both in society and the family. Their view is that for women to have a better position in both society and the family, women need to campaign for changes to attitudes and to the law. Liberal feminists note that there have been improvements for women for example in employment where legislation such as the Sex Discrimination Act has meant women have better opportunities in society. With these better opportunities, liberal feminists suggest that women can improve their position in the family. Like the march of progress theory of Young and Wilmott, liberal feminists suggest that although there is not equality in the family there has been progress. Evidence for this is that men are taking on more domestic labour and childcare duties.

However, the view of liberal feminists would be criticised by black feminists, in their view the progress made by women is often confined to white, middle-class women. Black feminists suggest that rather than the family being a site of oppression for women it can actually be a haven against the racism of wider society. Black feminists note that the experience of black women in society is often very different to other women and that there cannot be one version of feminism that explains women's experience of the family.

Specimen answer, continued

Marxist feminists take a different view of the family. Like the Marxist view of society, Marxist feminists look at the role of capitalism in oppressing women. Marxist feminists argue that the family helps to maintain capitalism in several ways. Firstly, women in the family perform unpaid domestic labour and so support the labour force who serve capitalism by selling their labour. Additionally, women in the family relieve the frustration of exploited men. Ansley describes how after a hard day at work a man will return to his family and the woman will help relieve his anger and frustration and prepare him for another day at work. Finally, women also act as reserve army of labour. This means women are available to work of the capitalist system, as and when it requires them. An example was seen during the war when men were away fighting women worked but returned to the domestic role when no longer needed. For Marxists feminists, the only way for women to escape from the oppression of the family is through a socialist revolution to abolish capitalism.

The Marxist feminist view of the family has been criticised by functionalists who see it as overly negative. Parsons would agree with Ansley that the family helps men to be productive members of the workforce. However, where Ansley sees this in negative terms through male dominance and even domestic violence, Parsons argues that this is through the 'stabilisation of adult personalities' – a positive process through which women emotionally support men with love and empathy. Overall functionalists would argue that the family does not simply benefit capitalism but benefits family members too.

Radical feminists see the major division in society as that between men and women. For radical feminists the family is a key institution of the patriarchal society. Men benefit from the domestic work carried out by women and the sexual satisfaction they gain from their wives. The services women perform for their husbands are key to women's oppression according to radical feminists. They see that the only way women can escape their oppression is to escape from the family. Greer, for example, has pointed out that single women are generally happier than married women.

Specimen answer, continued

A common criticism of radical feminism is that it exaggerates the exploitation of women in the family. Somerville, for example, argues that most women value their relationships with men and that the bulk of male–female relationships are based on mutual love and respect rather than exploitation. Radical feminists also ignore that many women see family and motherhood as fulfilling and rewarding.

Overall, there are a range of different feminist views and they differ in their views of the inequalities that women face and the solutions they propose for gender equality. However, the key contribution of all feminist approaches has been to highlight forms of patriarchy and oppression experienced by women and to add a counterweight to the ‘malestream’ theories that have otherwise dominated in sociology.

Mark awarded = 24 out of 26

Examiner comment

What the candidate does well is to discuss in detail and evaluate a range of feminist perspectives (AO1) rather than simply provide a discussion of feminism in general. These different perspectives have then been compared and contrasted against each other; discussing a contrasting perspective (e.g. black feminism) to highlight and demonstrate the limitations of another perspective, e.g. liberal feminism (AO3). Also the candidate has focused on the context in the question – *family*, examining the characteristics of these feminist perspectives in relation to the family – where they have discussed society, this has been brought back to the context of the family very well and was made relevant (AO2). For example, when discussing liberal feminism, the response focuses on society and laws, and then its relevance is made clear by bringing the discussion into its impact on the family.

The response begins and ends by recognising what the various feminist perspectives share in relation to our understanding of the family; gender inequality, patriarchy and oppression. The various perspectives are then examined and their differences recognised. The candidate does this in a way that recognises what the perspective has highlighted and contributed to our understanding of the family, and then recognises what it lacks by comparing to another perspective. The candidate does this in a structured and well laid out way, using paragraphs to distinguish the points made.

Furthermore, the response brings in the non-feminist perspective of functionalism to evaluate the Marxist feminist perspective. This demonstrates a wider understanding and illustrates how this response does not have to be confined to just applying contrasting feminist perspectives to evaluate (AO3).

The response has plenty of AO1 through sociological theories/perspectives and sociologists, with a few concepts used to sociologically support the point being made. Overall this response has very good use of concepts and theory/research evidence (*mark scheme L5*).

How the candidate could have improved the answer

This is an excellent response in which the candidate has examined several feminist perspectives in-depth, discussing what they highlight in relation to our understanding of the family, and illustrating their limitations through the comparison of a different feminist perspective. To improve the response (*this applies to all essay type responses on this unit*), the candidate could have explicitly brought the point made back to the context of the question. For example “...*what this perspective therefore contributes to our understanding of the family is...*”. This contributes to AO2 by explicitly making clear the relevance of the point made and so explicitly answering the question.

Common mistakes (Paper 2)

- Candidates do not answer the question fully, for example by not providing the required number of responses in question 1. In question 2b, this could be that the question asks for one strength and one limitation, however the candidate provides two strengths. This means the candidate can only be awarded marks for one strength and consequently drops marks for not providing a limitation. In question 4 and question 5 this could be not providing an evaluation and just providing a one-sided response.
- Candidates do not support points made with sociological evidence; such as theories, concepts and research.
- Candidates miscalculate the time needed to answer a question, i.e. spending too long answering the shorter questions which results in them not having enough time to complete the essays.
- Candidates write unnecessary introductions within essay responses that do not add anything to the response but take time to write. Candidates should rather get straight into answering the question. The introduction provided in the specimen answer to question 5, above, gets straight into answering the question by stating what these perspectives share in common.

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