

Sociology

Answers and commentaries

A-level (7192)

Paper 2: Topics in Sociology

Marked answers from students for questions from the June 2022 exams. Supporting commentary is provided to help you understand how marks are awarded and how students can improve performance.

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Answers and commentaries

Please note that these responses have been reproduced exactly as they were written and have not been subject to the usual standardisation process.

20 mark question

This 20 mark extended writing question is the final of three questions on Families and Households.

The assessment objectives for all 20 mark questions on paper 2 are: 8 marks for AO1, 6 marks for AO2 and 6 marks for AO3.

The stem for this question begins: 'Applying material from Item D and your knowledge, evaluate...'

Question 6

Read Item D below and answer the question that follows.

Item D

Marxist sociologists argue that families continue to perform a key role in maintaining capitalism. Families support the economy and play an important part in transmitting ideology that helps to legitimise the capitalist system.

However, some sociologists argue that Marxists place too much importance on the role of families in supporting capitalism and that families are beneficial to individuals and society as a whole.

Applying material from Item D and your knowledge, evaluate Marxist explanations of the role of families in society today.

[20 marks]

Mark scheme

Level 5: 17–20 marks

- Answers in this band will show sound, conceptually detailed knowledge of a range of relevant material on Marxist explanations of the role of families in society today. Sophisticated understanding of the question and of the presented material will be shown.
- Appropriate material will be applied accurately and with sensitivity to the issues raised by the question.
- Analysis and evaluation will be explicit and relevant. Evaluation may be developed, for example through a debate around how far families in today's society still support capitalism, or by contrasting Marxism to other perspectives such as functionalism, feminisms or post-modernism. Analysis will show clear explanation. Appropriate conclusions will be drawn.

Level 4: 13–16 marks

- Answers in this band will show largely accurate, broad or deep but incomplete knowledge. Understands a number of significant aspects of the question; good understanding of the presented material.
- Application of material is largely explicitly relevant to the question, though some material may be inadequately focused.
- Some limited explicit evaluation, eg of different Marxist explanations such as traditional Marxism and Marxist-feminist and/or some appropriate analysis, eg clear explanations of some of the presented material.

Level 3: 9–12 marks

- Answers in this band will show largely accurate knowledge but limited range and depth, eg a broadly accurate, if basic, account of Marxist explanations of the role of families in society today.
- Understands some limited but significant aspects of the question; superficial understanding of the presented material.
- Applying listed material from the general topic area but with limited regard for its relevance to the issues raised by the question, or applying a narrow range of more relevant material.
- Evaluation will take the form of juxtaposition of competing positions or to one or two isolated stated points. Analysis will be limited, with answers tending towards the descriptive.

Level 2: 5–8 marks

- Answers in this band will show limited undeveloped knowledge, eg two or three insubstantial points about Marxism.
- Understands only limited aspects of the question; simplistic understanding of the presented material.
- Limited application of suitable material, and/or material often at a tangent to the demands of the question.
- Very limited or no evaluation. Attempts at analysis, if any, are thin and disjointed.

Level 1: 1–4 marks

- Answers in this band will show very limited knowledge, eg one or two very insubstantial points about the family in general.
- Very little/no understanding of the question and of the presented material.
- Significant errors and/or omissions in application of material.
- No analysis or evaluation.

0 mark

No relevant points.

Indicative content

Concepts and issues such as the following may appear: economic function; ideology; ideological control; ideological state apparatus; monogamy; nuclear family; inheritance of property; private property; unit of consumption; social control; class conflict; hierarchy; power; bourgeoisie; proletariat; legitimisation; primary socialisation; inequality; exploitation; reserve army of labour; reproduction; patriarchy; stabilisation of adult personalities; stabilisation of sex drive; gender roles; family diversity.

Sources may include the following or other relevant ones:

- Althusser
- Ansley
- Benston
- Engels
- Murdock
- Oakley
- Parsons
- Somerville
- Zaretsky.

Student responses

Response A

Marxism is a structural theory. Marxists believe that the family performs functions which benefits capitalism rather than individuals. Therefore they view the family as a negative institution.

Marxist sociologists Althusser argued that 'families continue to perform a key role in maintaining capitalism' item D by 'transmitting ideology that helps to legitimise the capitalist system'. Althusser argued that the family is an ideological state apparatus which transmits norms and values in favour of capitalism. For example, the family socialises children into accepting hierarchy by exerting parental control over children their whole lives. Children are taught to respect authority and listen to what they are told without complaint which helps ~~them~~ ~~act as~~ prepare them for alienating jobs in society without complaint, children don't question the ruling class bases because they are used to hierarchy in the home*. Functionalists would criticise marxists by saying that the family is an institution which benefits its individual members as family life can be fulfilling and enjoyable. *in this way the family reproduces workers for capitalism.

Zaretsky stated that the family legitimises capitalism and allows it to continue by acting as a safe haven. The family is a place where the working proletariat man can be de-stressed by their wife. This is done through the domestic division of labour where the expressive role helps relax instrumental 'breadwinner' role. ~~When the man is de-stressed~~ This is called the warm bath theory. When the instrumental role is de-stressed from alienating and oppressive job they are able to return to work the next day which is beneficial for capitalism because without people to do labour capitalism wouldn't be able to continue and this also avoids a revolution from taking place as proletariat workers anger is released. Feminists criticise Marxist ~~as~~ Zaretsky for ignoring the inequalities that women face in the family by focusing too much on social class inequalities. ~~When the working proletariat man is de-stressed at home women have to perform a triple shift as they~~. Feminists point out that women are doubly exploited by patriarchy and capitalism as they are 'takers of shit' Ansley since they have to absorb husbands anger and they also are exploited for their labour as they are paid less than men for the same job.

Functionalists argue the family is beneficial because it performs essential functions such as the reproductive and stabilisation of sex drive functions. Functionalists say this is positive as it allows social order to be maintained and keeps morality levels high by sleeping with one partner. Engels argue that the whole idea of monogamous relationship was not to maintain social order but rather to maintain capitalism. Pre-industrialisation there was no private property all resources were shared but after a few wealthy men got their hands on private property they wanted to ensure their wealth was passed on to their rightful heirs which is how the monogamous relationship came about. Men could be sure that children were theirs if only slept with one person. Therefore the family helps maintain capitalism by keeping the rich, rich and the poor, poor, through inheritance of private property. The relevance of this argument can be questioned in modern society because status is no longer ascribed as it was in the past. Proletariat workers do have access to a middle class life if they work hard according to meritocracy principle so the inheritance of property may be outdated.

Marxists mention that the family performs a key role in maintaining capitalism since it is a unit of consumption. The family is targeted by adverts to get the latest products and 'keep up with Jones'. Children use pester power to encourage their proletarian parents to spend all their money on overpriced products which capitalists make a profit from as they underpay staff for labour. As the family consumes so much they allow capitalism to survive by regulating profits for them. Functionalists may oppose this view by arguing that buying toys/games for your children can be quite fun rather than being this miserable process of making profits for capitalists. Increasing more and more parents buy from small businesses and thrifting is now a trend. So families may actually be cutting back on profits they regulate for capitalists by going to other places.

In conclusion, the marxist explanations of the role of the family is good as it sheds light on inequalities that ~~people face~~ social structures like capitalism which can be negative. Helps inform people of false class consciousness so they can be more aware and know their rights e.g. ~~to~~ get paid properly for labour. However, feminists would say

by focusing on the role of families in supporting capitalism marxists pay little attention to the role the family plays in supporting patriarchy. functionalists would also criticise marxists for their overly negative view on the family as it can be both beneficial to individuals and society as a whole.

This is a Level 5 response

The essay shows a sound, conceptually detailed knowledge of a range of relevant material on Marxist explanations of the role of families in society today. The range of concepts appropriately applied and explained include the family as a part of the ideological state apparatus; family helps members to prepare for alienation jobs, warm-bath theory; and the family as a safe haven relieving the stresses of capitalist work, and the families role in raising awareness of false class consciousness.

A sophisticated understanding of the material presented in the Item was shown by for example relating the Marxist view that that family serves to maintain capitalism through Althusser's work on how children are socialised into capitalist values (paragraph 2); and also by Zaretsky's view that the family calms exploited workers so they can return to work revitalised (paragraph 3).

The Marxist view of the role of the family as a unit of consumption within capitalism, where children were persuaded by media to pester parents to buy products, is a good example of an appropriate and accurate issue raised by the question.

Consistent explicit analysis was given through explanations of how specific roles of the family supported capitalism.

Evaluation was developed through a sustained debate comparing Marxist to functionalist and feminist perspectives on this issue, and examples of explicit evaluation include consideration of how roles in society today are achieved rather than ascribed and proleteriate workers can therefore aspire to middle-class life styles (paragraph 4).

20 marks

Response B

Marxists argue that families 'perform a key role in maintaining capitalism'. They believe that the typical nuclear family is the best suited to society for capitalists. They believe that by keeping this stereotypical family and its stereotypes within it, it helps to feed capitalism and stops the lower classes from overthrowing the bourgeoisie. The nuclear family is usually seen to have a mother, a father, and typically 2 children. The father's role is to provide money for his family, go out to work ~~at~~ and ~~can~~ provide the money to live. Whereas the mother's role is to care for her children and take on housework tasks like making food and cleaning the house. Some functionalists may disagree with Marxists and state that the nuclear family suits society best but not due to the power of capitalism but because it creates social solidarity and helps to express the norms and values of society. Parsons would also argue that the mother of these nuclear families are not taking on these nurturing roles due to being inferior to their husbands but rather because they're best suited to be

caring for their family.

Feminists ~~may~~ may argue that 'Marxists place too much importance on the role of families in supporting capitalism' and they do not focus enough on the inequalities within the family. Society ~~is~~ favours the nuclear family due to it maintaining the idea of patriarchy. Females are expected to obey their husbands, provide for them whenever it is expected. They are expected to stay at home care for their children, cook meals, do the laundry, and clean the house; reinforcing the superiority of males. However, sociologists would argue that due to the passing of some laws, for example, the equal pay act and laws on domestic abuse, that there is not longer a patriarchal family. Feminists would disagree and say that there is still a long way to go for women equality.

Post modernists would disagree with Marxists as they believe that even though the preferred family is the nuclear family, in today's society there is a lot more family ~~diversity~~ diversity and equality between men and women. Therefore meaning that ~~capitalism~~ the nuclear family is not the cause for capitalism.

This is a Level 3 response

Largely accurate knowledge is shown with limited range and depth, for example they propose Marxists believe that families play a key role in maintaining capitalism without clearly explaining how this role is performed. Appropriate points are made about the segregated conjugal roles within the family but not explicitly linked to specific features of capitalism.

There is little evidence of understanding material in the Item relating to how families can be seen to maintain capitalism and how they may be seen as transmitting bourgeoisie ideology.

Analysis is mainly presented in explanations of alternative perspectives of the role of the family, such as functionalist, feminist and postmodernist without sufficiently comparing these perspectives to the Marxists. Evaluation takes the form of juxtaposing the Marxist view of the family with those of other perspectives but without explicitly focusing on the key similarities or differences.

11 marks

10 mark question

This is an example of a 10 mark question without an Item for Topic B1 Beliefs in Society.

Most notably the assessment objectives differ from those 10 mark questions with an Item, as follows: 5 marks for AO1, 3 marks for AO2 and 2 for AO3.

The stem for these questions read: 'Outline and explain two...'

Question 13

Outline and explain two ways in which globalisation may have influenced religious beliefs and practices of minority ethnic groups in the UK.

[10 marks]

Mark scheme

Level 3: 8–10 marks

- Answers in this band will show very good knowledge and understanding of two ways in which globalisation may have influenced religious beliefs and practices of minority ethnic groups in the UK.
- There will be two applications of relevant material, eg increase in migration due to globalisation with ethnic minority immigrants using religion as a cultural transition mechanism; migrants moving in to the UK facing a hostile environment turning to religion for emotional support.
- There will be appropriate analysis, eg the extent to which globalisation may have influenced the religious beliefs and practices of the majority population in contrast to minority ethnic groups.

Level 2: 4–7 marks

- Answers in this band will show a reasonable to good knowledge and understanding of one or two ways in which globalisation may have influenced religious beliefs and practices of minority ethnic groups in the UK.
- There will be one or two applications of relevant material, eg religion providing a sense of community in a rapidly changing world.
- There will be some basic analysis.

Level 1: 1–3 marks

- Answers in this band will show limited knowledge and little or no understanding of the question or the material.
- There will be limited focus on the question, eg drift in to a general discussion of ethnicity or globalisation.
- There will be little or no analysis.

0 mark

No relevant points.

Indicative content

Answers may include the following and/or other relevant points:

- minority ethnic groups renouncing faith (apostasy) to fit in with hostile environment
- religion as a form of cultural defence in a rapidly changing society
- minority ethnic groups rejecting change - reverting to traditional beliefs
- movement of people globally - cultural transition
- migrants with low paid work leading to poverty - religion becoming more appealing
- religious infrastructure providing a sense of social solidarity for minority ethnic groups
- minority ethnic groups in the UK being influenced by global religious changes.

Sources may include the following or other relevant ones:

- Bird
- Brierley
- Bruce
- Butler
- Chryssides
- Davie
- Herberg
- Jacobson
- Johal
- Modood
- Pryce
- Stark and Bainbridge.

Student responses

Response A

One way in which globalisation may have influenced religious beliefs and practices of minority ethnic groups in the UK is cultural defence. Globalisation has caused interconnectedness and a much more ethnically diverse version of the UK. However since moving to the UK some minority ethnic groups will have been faced with racism. Bruce argues the role of religion helps minority ethnic groups deal with racism of wider society. Once in the UK ethnic groups particularly black people set up their own churches as they felt threatened by white ones. Furthermore these churches helped to develop a community away from racism for ethnic minorities. Therefore globalisation has influenced the practices of minority ethnic groups.

Another way in which globalisation may have influenced religious beliefs and practices of minority ethnic groups in the UK is the development of fundamentalism. This means a desire to return to traditional roles and values of religion. Bruce argues monotheistic religions are often fundamentalists because they have a sacred text to which they follow word for word. For example Christianity and the Bible. Few religions are polytheistic such as Hinduism. A lot of ~~minority~~ ethnic minorities will follow a monotheistic religion so may follow a sacred text such as the Bible or the Quran word for word. Globalisation caused fundamentalism.

Therefore it is likely globalisation has ~~changed~~ influenced the beliefs of minority ethnic groups as ~~these groups~~ fundamentalism gains influence.

This is a Level 3 response

This is a very good knowledge and understanding of two ways globalisation may have influenced the religious beliefs and practises of minority ethnic groups in the UK, namely cultural defence theory and the development of fundamentalism.

There are two applications of relevant material: cultural defence arising from racism experienced by minority ethnic groups in the UK, and the desire to return to traditional fundamentalist beliefs and values implicitly bringing ethnic minority groups in the UK closer to the religious traditions.

Appropriate analysis is presented by application of Bruce's studies in explaining how black minority ethnic people in the UK developed a supportive religious community in defence of their experiences of racism.

9 marks

Response B

Lyotard and Bauman identify how there has been an increased shift towards new religious movements within modern society. This is largely characterised by a pick and mixing of spiritual beliefs and practices. They refer to this as a spiritual supermarket. This has largely grown within postmodern society in which we can pick and mix ideology from different cultures.

Furthermore, many religions provide a shield from racism. This can be evidenced through Rastafarians, who immigrated to Britain, they used their religious identity to create their own communities of resistance against racism. Therefore a growth in differing beliefs across cultures may lead to a resistance identity for minority ethnic groups. However functionalists such as Durkheim argue that religion works to instil social solidarity for everyone instead of separatism.

Another way in which globalisation may have influenced religious beliefs is through the growth of technology. Bruce

argues that there has been a vast increase in technological advancements. This may have allowed for online religion. Davie notes how many choose to practice in private compared to public. This may be ideal for ethnic minorities who were largely shunned from white churches. However Bruce also notes that increased tech has led to a disinterestedness with religion.

This is a Level 2 response

This shows a good knowledge and understanding of one way that globalisation may have influenced religious beliefs and practices of minority ethnic groups in the UK, a shield from racism (paragraph 1), and a reasonable knowledge of a second way, the growth in technology (paragraph 2).

There is a clear application of the first way, religion as a form of resistance against racism, and a less clear application of the second way, minority ethnic groups turning to online religion in response to being shunned by white churches.

Some basic analysis is given in the first way of how immigration to the UK may have had led minority ethnic groups to the UK. However in the second way, no explicit explanation is given of how globalisation may have led to the growth of technology and access for minority ethnic groups to religious beliefs and practices they were not shunned from.

7 marks

10 mark question

This is the 10 mark application question for Topic B3 The Media.

The assessment objectives for all 10 mark questions with an Item on paper 2 are: 8 marks for AO1, 8 marks for AO2 and 4 for AO3.

The stem for these questions read: 'Applying material from Item M, analyse two...'

Question 20

Read **Item M** below and answer the question that follows.

Item M

The content of the mass media is often produced and controlled by professionals who are middle aged or older. It also concentrates on exciting stories and sensational headlines to attract audiences.

The content of the mass media sometimes represents young people in negative ways.

Applying materials from **Item M**, analyse two reasons why the content of the mass media sometimes represents young people in negative ways.

[10 marks]

Mark scheme

Level 3: 8–10 marks

- Answers in this band will show good knowledge and understanding of relevant material on two reasons why the content of the mass media sometimes represents young people in negative ways.
- There will be two developed applications of material from the item, eg media professionals may represent young people in stereotyped ways because they have limited experience of youth cultures; the mass media exaggerate occasional deviant behaviour of a minority of young people.
- There will be appropriate analysis/evaluation of two reasons eg the extent to which negative ways can be countered through young people's use of new media.

Level 2: 4–7 marks

- Answers in this band will show a basic to reasonable knowledge and understanding of one or two reasons why the content of the mass media sometimes represents young people in negative ways.
- There will be some successful application of material from the item eg media professionals do not see young people as an important audience.
- There will be some analysis/evaluation.

Level 1: 1–3 marks

- Answers in this band will show limited knowledge and understanding of one or two reasons why the content of the mass media sometimes represents young people in negative ways.
- There will be limited application of material from the item. Some material may be at a tangent to the question, eg there may be some drift into accounts of representations of other groups.
- There will be limited or no analysis/evaluation.

0 mark

No relevant points.

Sources may include the following or other relevant ones:

- Cohen
- Curran
- Eldridge
- Goode and Ben-Yehuda
- Hall et al
- Philo
- Sutton Trust
- Thornton
- Wayne et al
- White et al.

Student responses

Response A

According to Item M, the content of the media is often produced and controlled by professionals who are middle aged or older. This suggests that one way why young people are sometimes negatively represented is due to the ownership of the media. Older people often see young people as dangerous or a threat to society. Therefore, if the media is controlled by older people, their representations of young people are likely to be exaggerated. Young people are often demonised in the media, such as the Mods and Rockers scandal, which created a moral panic due to the media's owners not having an understanding of youth culture and significantly exaggerating the extent of the issue. This demonstrates how the initial issue as to why the older media owners demonise young people is due to a lack of understanding of youth in contemporary society. However, this can be criticised as there are now more young editors, and many of the older editors have children, and so there should be some level of understanding.

Despite this, ~~there~~ there is a clear lack of experience of youth culture by the older owners, and therefore this may contribute to the exaggeration of youths being negative and demonised within the Media.

Hem M also suggests that the Media concentrates on exciting stories and sensational headlines to attract an audience. This suggests that another reason for the negative portrayal of young people in the Media is due to the News's values, proposed by Galtung and Ruge. They suggest that a story is more likely to be newsworthy if it conforms to values such ~~as~~ as extraordinariness, unambiguity, and continuity. Negativity is also a large factor, which explains why ~~the~~ the Media only ever show the negative traits of young people, as the positive traits are unlikely to attract an audience. This applies to cases such as the London Riots, ~~in~~ in which the Media created folk devils out of young people, and it was a viral media storm, whereas

positive stories are rarely shown. This can however be criticised as there are cases in which young people have been praised by the media, such as those like Billy Monger, who often advocate for charities. Despite this, it is clear that the main reason for the media's negative portrayal of youth is due to young people conforming more effectively to the values of what is newsworthy.

This is a Level 3 response

This answer shows good knowledge and understanding of material by applying two appropriate reasons from the Item of why the content of mass media sometimes represents young people in negative ways. The first reason, that media content material is often produced by professional who are middle aged or older, is developed by explaining that elder owners of the media are less likely to understand youth cultures and more likely to see youth as dangerous and a threat to society. This was supported by S Cohen's study of media demonising the mods and rockers clashes.

The second reason, that media concentrates on exciting stories and headlines to attract audiences, is supported appropriately by the news values proposed by Galtung and Ruge. Appropriate evaluation of each reason has been provided, for example by referring to notable examples of youth gaining press headlines for achievements in charity work.

9 marks

Response B

~~The~~ One reason why the content of the mass media sometimes represents people in negative ways is due to the age differences between people. As it states in Item H, "The content of the mass media is often produced and controlled by professionals who are middle aged or older". People of different age groups usually have different beliefs and hobbies to one another. This will look different in people's eyes depending on their beliefs and age. In the 1970s/80s there was a huge story about two different groups called Mods and Rockers. Mods and Rockers were simply just teenagers of different groups. They may have acted differently and dressed differently, but there was hardly ever conflict between them. A news story was released talking about how Mods and Rockers were gangs who caused trouble and had conflict between each other. A lot of older people believed these news stories in which Mods and Rockers received a bad reputation. They were not doing anything wrong but because of the fact the media is controlled by middle-aged people, they were seen as bad people.

Another reason why the content of the mass media sometimes represents young people in negative ways is due to exciting story headlines. Professionals will only publish stories that seem exciting and interesting. A lot of exciting stories consist of crimes like drugs and violence. Young people are heavily seen to be drug users or dealers due to stories and this gives a reputation to all young people. These stories always emphasise the fact that groups of teenagers and young people are all doing drugs and committing violent crimes like vandalism and arson. It is always said how it is the fault of a young person. Older people will believe these stories and therefore develop their own view on young people.

This is a Level 2 response

A reasonable knowledge and understanding is shown of two reasons taken from the Item for why media content sometimes represents youth in negative ways. The first reason, due to age differences between newspaper professionals and young people, is partially developed by referring to S Cohen's study of mods and rockers.

Some analysis is present, for example by explaining how older people are more likely to believe negative media stories about young people related to drugs and violent crimes.

6 marks

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