

SOCIOLOGY

Paper 2251/12
Paper 12

Key messages

- In **1(c)** candidates should *first* identify their points from the source and then develop them in description. The answers must contain information from, and be clearly linked to, the source.
- Candidates should be encouraged to use sociological concepts throughout their extended answers (Questions **1(f)**, **1(g)**, **2/3 (c) – (e)**) as their mark will be affected by such use.
- Candidates should organise their points into distinct paragraphs for the extended answers. They should also develop each point in a paragraph to fully explain the meaning. This evidence includes explanation of the point, examples and/or sociological studies, sociological theory or empirical evidence.
- Candidates should answer part **(a)** of **Questions 2 and 3** in a clear and concise manner, presenting two core elements to provide a comprehensive definition and avoid repeating the word from the question as part of their answer.

General comments

Overall, there were some high quality responses across the range. The candidates demonstrated some good engagement with both the questions and the assessment objectives. There were few non-responses or timing issues and almost no rubric errors.

Section A ‘Methodology’ was a good test of candidates’ knowledge of key research concepts and methods. Some impressive theoretical knowledge of positivism and feminism was seen, though less prominent aspects of the specification, such as non-official statistics and types of question, were not dealt as confidently. Analysis and interpretation of the source material was good. Many candidate responses made clear and confident use of methodological terms but there is a tendency to conflate validity and reliability.

In the optional questions the ‘Culture, identity and socialisation’ option was slightly more popular than ‘Social Inequality. In both optional questions most candidates showed good and, in some cases, excellent knowledge and understanding of the key theories, concepts and arguments within the topics.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Theory and methods

Question 1

- (a)** Nearly all the candidates identified two ways Zimbardo tried to make the experiment realistic from Source A. The most common responses included stating that a part of the building was turned into a pretend prison and that the prisoners were arrested by real police, were fingerprinted and wore prison clothes etc. The small number of candidates who did not score full marks selected parts from the source that did not relate to the experiment being made more realistic.
- (b)** Candidates were asked to identify two types of question used by sociologists when conducting research. Some candidates correctly identified types of question such as open, closed, scaled, multiple choice and pre-coded. However, a substantial number of candidates wrote two *specific* questions a sociologist might ask during their research. For example, how can I maintain ethics, or what sample should I have? Other candidates incorrectly identified two research methods, e.g. questionnaires, rather than types of question.

- (c) This question required candidates to use information from Source A to describe two problems with the way the research was conducted. Most candidates identified one and, more commonly, two problems. The best answers selected an aspect of the research, for example, that the sample was only composed of males, and then briefly described what the problem with this was, i.e. that it does not include females and is therefore unrepresentative of the population. There were multiple issues with the sample – for example it only had 21 people and all were male university students – and candidates could choose to focus both points on the sample. By far the most popular answer was the abuse that the prisoners suffered from the guards with most candidates then describing how this was an ethical issue in sociological research. Less successful answers identified possible problems without developing them; while others discussed issues that were not present in the source and thus could not be credited.
- (d) This question asked candidates to describe two limitations of using non-official statistics in sociological research. While many candidates understood what non-official statistics are, the answers given were frequently generalised and vague. For example simply asserting that non-official statistics are likely to be inaccurate/false/lack validity/biased/costly/not representative. Whilst this may be true in some cases, it may not be true in others. For example, some prominent and reputable charities, non-governmental organisations and research bodies often conduct research using professional researchers and statisticians. So, candidates needed to give a context if they were to advance such points. For example, many gained credit for saying that some organisations lack the kind of resources that governments have and therefore struggle to do large scale research and hence their statistical findings may lack representativeness. The most common successful responses described points such as they may be biased because they may have been carried out by charities or political organisations who want to further their own interests, or non-official statistics produce quantitative data which is limited in terms of depth and detail as no qualitative data is gained. Another creditable point was that the statistics may not be entirely relevant for a sociologist as they have been created for another, possibly non-sociological, purpose.
- (e) This question asked candidates to describe two strengths and two limitations of a positivist approach to sociological research. It drew many good quality answers. The strengths most cited were that positivists gather quantitative data that can be turned into statistics and used for comparing trends and patterns; they adopt a scientific approach which aims to be objective due to non-interference by researchers; that they aim to control variables and hence produce findings that are more likely to be reliable; and, finally, they adopt a macro approach using large scale samples which are more often representative and generalisable. The limitations presented most frequently included the lack of qualitative data and in-depth explanation/understanding, thus lack of validity, verstehen, etc. Another common answer was that sociology cannot be modelled on science and that researchers need to admit the inevitability of bias and the need for researcher's subjectivity as a legitimate part of research. The better answers identified four points with enough development for suitable descriptions. Responses that scored less well focused on issues such as that respondents may lie or that it is cheap, easy and quick. These are generic points that are too vague to credit as points specific to positivist approach.
- (f) This question required candidates to explain why feminists believe that society is based on conflict. It drew high calibre responses from some candidates who had a thorough knowledge of feminist arguments. The most successful band three answers (8 – 10 marks) developed three substantial points. The best approach is to write in paragraphs ensuring that the point is made in the first sentence and then this is backed up by relevant evidence, often in the form of explanation, examples and sometimes a study (e.g. Oakley). Many candidates made more than three points but not all were fully developed. Hence many answers scored in band two (4 – 7 marks). Popular points included: the idea that society is patriarchal with status, power and resources being dominated by men. Some candidates separated their treatment into different areas such as the conflict between women and men in the family, in education and in the workplace. In the family many candidates pointed out that men continue to make the main decisions with women in a subordinate role, sometimes being subjected to domestic violence and segregated conjugal roles. Inequalities in education were frequently alluded to such as gendered subject choices and a lack of education for girls in some cultures. The workplace offered many examples including vertical and horizontal segregation, the glass ceiling and glass cliff, the gender pay gap and sexual harassment. Less successful answers were often list-like with undeveloped or underdeveloped points and common-sense arguments with little sociological evidence given in support. Some candidates offered descriptions of the different strands of feminism or discussed how feminists were fighting for equal rights, both of which were somewhat tangential to the question.

- (g) This question asked about the extent to which secondary data is useful for sociological researchers. Many candidates provided responses which scored in band 2 (5 – 8 marks) or band 3 (9 – 12 marks). Most presented balanced answers providing more than one argument for each side of the debate with a conclusion at the end. Candidates are encouraged to not limit themselves from only listing the strengths and limitations of secondary data but should rather unpack both sides of the argument conceptually. The most successful answers developed a wide range of points on both sides of the debate with some effective use of concepts, theories and examples. A vital element in the best answers was that candidates linked points to specific examples and types of secondary data. Examples included official statistics, historical documents such as old newspapers and personal documents such as diaries and letters. A few candidates cited famous examples such as the diary of Anne Frank. Using examples was important as the category of ‘secondary’ data is broad and includes both qualitative and quantitative types. Therefore, candidates who wrote in generic terms about ‘secondary data’ being valid or reliable, without specifying examples, were usually only able to achieve minimal credit, as such statements depend upon the kind of secondary data being referenced. A few responses were one-sided or lacked adequate organisation of points into paragraphs with the result being that points merged.

Section B: Culture, socialisation and identity

Question 2

- (a) Most candidates scored at least one mark for their definition of ‘custom,’ identifying it as an accepted norm or tradition in a society or culture. Many responses, however, did not offer a complete definition. For example some did not mention that customs carry on over time. A few candidates provided specific examples such as celebrating Eid or Christmas or customs centred around greeting such as shaking hands.
- (b) This question asked candidates to describe two examples of informal social control. Overall, the question was answered well, with most candidates describing at least one example. Popular answers included ostracism from peers, being grounded by parents and various rewards or punishment by teachers at school. A few candidates simply named agents of informal social control with no unpacking of how the social control was done.
- (c) The questions asked candidates to explain how males are socialised into masculinity. This question was answered well overall, with some good conceptual knowledge being supported by examples. Many candidates described how males are socialised into masculinity by the family (primary socialisation, imitation, canalisation and manipulation), by education through the hidden curriculum, by peer groups in terms of peer pressure and by media in terms of role models and influencers. There were many references to Ann Oakley’s study on gender socialisation. The agencies of religion and the workplace featured less prominently but were deployed effectively by some candidates. Candidates who scored less well often wrote about *what* males were expected to do, or be, without reference to the *how* element in the question. Candidates who talked in vague terms about ‘expectations’ and males being ‘taught’, with no further reference to the techniques of socialisation, achieved less credit than those who focused their discussion on techniques such as verbal appellations or role modelling from parents.
- (d) This question asked candidates to explain why age affects an individual’s social identity. Most responses scored in band two rather than band three. Many candidates showed some understanding of the demands of the question. However, in many cases answers lacked a sociological dimension. Responses often included description of different age cohorts in general, often stereotypical terms, relying on commonsense material which linked to the key word ‘identity’ only implicitly. More successful candidates focused less on describing different age groups and more on identifying three or more core points about how identity is affected by age and then supporting such points with examples. Such as the idea that age affects the rights a person has (as indicated by age-related laws), how individuals are seen and treated by others in society (for example the labelling or discrimination against young and old) and the responsibilities that are expected of them (for example the job and family responsibilities of adults).
- (e) This question required candidates to discuss the extent to which the media helps individuals to learn social expectations. Many candidates provided well-argued, balanced answers, offering a range of reasons to cover both sides of the debate. Most answers focused on new media. Celebrity influencers often featured as examples of role models who set social expectations around fashion

and lifestyle. Another common focus was the role of visual media such as films and TV in representing traditional gender roles and the norms and behavioural expectations attached to those roles. TV news and newspapers were also mentioned in terms of showing how criminals and deviants are punished for going against the law and social values. On the 'against' side, many candidates discussed limitations of the influence of the media, for example in areas or countries where access to the media is minimal. The main approach, however, was to consider how other agencies of socialisation were more important than the media in instilling social expectations, for example family, education, religion, workplace, peers. These evaluation points were often developed more conceptually and with more evidence than the 'for' points. Less successful answers offered only weak descriptions of media influence or did not include development of sufficient points in enough depth to achieve credit beyond band two (5 – 8 marks).

Section C: Social inequality

Question 3

- (a) Many candidates defined the term 'racism' correctly, referring to two elements required for a comprehensive definition, e.g. discrimination or prejudice against a person or group belonging to another ethnicity or skin colour. A minority of candidates correctly identified racism as a form of discrimination but then incorrectly linked it to gender and sometimes social class or age.
- (b) There was a mixed response to the question asking candidates to describe two examples of discrimination against young people. The best answers described how young people were often paid a lower wage rate, given lower positions in the workplace and were negatively represented in the media. Some candidates gave only one example and a significant number of candidates wrote about discrimination linked to a young person's ethnicity, gender and class. Such answers were not credited as they were not about discrimination against young people per se, rather were they about sexism, racism etc.
- (c) Overall, the question asking candidates to explain how gender equality occurs in the workplace was done well. The better answers offered several conceptual points which included vertical and horizontal segregation, the glass ceiling and glass cliff, the gender pay gap and sexual harassment in the workplace. Less successful band one responses tended to include only one developed point and/or were more 'commonsense' than sociological in focus.
- (d) The question as to why poverty exists in modern industrial societies was done very well by many candidates. Many candidates wrote at length, making effective use of concepts such as dependency culture, the welfare state, the poverty trap, fatalism, and the cycle of poverty. Some candidates demonstrated a particularly impressive knowledge of New Right and Marxist theory. A small number of candidates spent time, at the beginning of their answer, defining poverty (absolute and relative) without then applying this knowledge to the question. Less successful answers presented ideas in a more general manner, referring to unemployment and/or low paid jobs and/or lack of education, with limited sociological engagement.
- (e) The essay-style question asked candidates to discuss the extent to which ethnicity is now the main form of stratification. Most candidates presented balanced answers and offered a range of valid arguments for both sides, written with varying degrees of sophistication. Responses demonstrated a good understanding of the debate around the extent of ethnic and racial discrimination in modern societies. Popular answers included the presence and impact of stereotypes and labelling in education, institutional discrimination in housing policies, the workplace and the law via police targeting. Successful responses linked points explicitly to life chances. A few candidates made effective references to older, closed systems such as slavery, the caste system in India and the apartheid system in South Africa although the question suggests a more contemporary focus. The 'for' side of the debate was evaluated largely by reference to gender inequality, ageism, and social class as more pervasive forms of stratification and inequality. Whilst evaluating many candidates drew upon Marxist, interactionist, functionalist and feminist theory. The most successful candidates attempted to address the 'to what extent' aspect of the question in their conclusion. Weaker responses tended to lack both range and detail, some showing only a limited understanding of the terms ethnicity and social stratification.

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Paper 2251/22
Paper 22

Key messages

- Candidates do not need to write an introductory paragraph, responses should focus on the question from the beginning to maximise marks.
- Many candidates do not write in paragraphs, making it difficult to differentiate between points. It would be beneficial for candidates to write in paragraph form, particularly in the banded **Questions – (c), (d) and (e)**.
- There was a good awareness that **Question (e)** requires a debate, with several points for and against, and a judgement at the end in a conclusion. To further improve performance, candidates should include some form of sociological evidence to substantiate each point made. This could be in the form of examples, statistics, sociological concepts, theory or even a sociological study. This way answers will be better developed and explained.
- Some responses for **Questions (b) and (c)** are overly long. Responses here can be short – perhaps a couple of sentences per point. A couple of words, however, does not meet the requirement to ‘describe’ in **(b)** questions. Understanding the requirements of the command words used is really crucial to candidate success.
- Points in **Questions (d) and (e)** should be developed more fully, sociologically evidenced and always be in paragraphs.
- Candidates’ knowledge of definitions could be further improved. This would enable them to not only obtain full marks in **(a)** questions, but would also help them to understand key terminology in other questions as well.
- Candidates should show their sociological knowledge by using terms, concepts, studies and theories whenever possible. This approach allowed a lot of candidates to achieve good marks in this examination series. However, some candidates could only score lower marks as their answers tended to be based on common sense rather than Sociology.
- Candidates should spend time thinking about what the questions are asking and planning answers to those longer questions before they start to write – this is particularly important in the 15-mark essay questions to ensure that candidate’s remain focused on the specific demands of the question set rather than writing at length but without answering the question set.
- Candidates should use the number of marks per question as guidance for how much should be written and how long should be spent on a particular question. At times, for example, candidates were writing as much for a **part (c)** question worth 6 marks as for a **part (e)** question worth 15. Time management skills and regular practice of timed examination questions in the classroom will really help with this.

General comments

In general candidates showed a good and, in some cases, impressive knowledge of the subject matter, often integrating sociological conceptuality and, in many cases, a range of theory into their answers. **Family and Education** were the most popular questions followed by **Crime, deviance and social control**. Rubric errors were minimal and most candidates appeared to manage their time well.

Many candidates used relevant contemporary, global and localised examples alongside the more traditional ‘textbook’ evidence in order to justify and substantiate several of the points made. This demonstrated both sociological knowledge and the ability to apply sociological concepts and theory to the real world.

Very few rubric errors were seen this examination session, allowing most candidates to maximise their chances of success. Some candidates did not number, or incorrectly numbered their answers, candidates should be aware of the importance of doing this diligently.

In the **part (a)** question, candidates should look to include **two** separate elements in their definition. Examples can be a really useful way of adding a second element to an answer and are thus to be encouraged.

Part (b) needs **two** distinctly different points with some development – candidates should separate these and label them clearly.

In **part (c)** questions candidates should make sure there are more than two sociological points made, evidenced and developed.

For **part (d)** candidates should adopt the same approach as for **(c)** but develop ideas further, consider more range and ensure concepts/theory/studies are used appropriately. Concepts, development, quality of response and explicit sociological engagement tend to be the key differentiator between a **part (c)** and a **part (d)** question.

In terms of the 15-mark **part (e)** question, candidates should organise their answers into paragraphs and develop each idea fully using theory, studies, examples and/or concepts wherever relevant. Responses should include three developed points for and three developed points against the claim in the question. There also needs to be a well-focused conclusion that makes a supported judgement on the claim in the question. Each point made should be directly focused upon what the question is asking and should engage sociologically and conceptually wherever possible. Some candidates are choosing to answer the 15-mark questions first to make sure that they do not run out of time, this worked well for several candidates but ultimately this is the candidates' own decision to make.

Comments on specific questions

Section A: Family

Question 1

- (a) Most candidates achieved both marks on the definition of 'joint conjugal roles'. Many candidates referred to the roles of husband and wife in the family being shared equally. A few candidates gained only one mark due to a lack of precision in their definition: e.g. sharing actions within a family or giving a partially correct example. A few candidates incorrectly described traditional conjugal roles.
- (b) The majority of the candidates showed knowledge and understanding of the concept of a reconstituted family and identified and described at least one reason why they were becoming more common in modern industrial societies. Popular answers included higher divorce rates, changing attitudes, secularisation and feminism. A common error was candidates who did not address the specific question i.e. why reconstituted families are *becoming more common* and instead provided answers that were too general to credit, such as death of a partner.
- (c) The question on how grandparents contribute to family life was an accessible one and many candidates scored well. Typical answers included grandparents giving financial and emotional support, helping dual worker parents with childcare/household chores and socialising children into the norms and values of their culture. A few candidates strayed into a discussion of negative aspects of grandparent's role in the family, such as the financial burden they can become, which was not creditworthy.
- (d) There was a mixed response to the question on why urbanisation has changed family life. The best responses made three well-developed points, with each point explicitly linked to an aspect, or consequence, of urbanisation on the family. Popular points included: the emergence of the nuclear family with geographical mobility, changes in conjugal roles and women's rights, structural differentiation, changing family functions and greater family diversity (e.g. the emergence of lone-parents and cohabitation). A few candidates spent too much time at the start of their answer describing the way extended families had previously lived in rural areas without answering the question set. The best answers explicitly linked the points raised to family life providing sufficient sociological material and development. The weaker responses generally lacked range and/or depth.

- (e) The essay-style question on the dark side of the family was another accessible question. Most candidates described the prevalence of domestic violence and child abuse/neglect and the negative consequences arising from divorce. Sometimes answers on the 'for' side of the debate were a little repetitive e.g. only considering different forms of abuse. Other acceptable points that featured included the dual/triple burden upon women, criticism of the 'cereal packet' family and the New Right critique of single parent and dysfunctional families. Some candidates integrated theory with appropriate references to both feminism (patriarchy) and Marxism (critique of the warm bath theory). On the 'against' side of the debate popular points included functionalist arguments about the various functions that the family fulfil such as socialisation and reproduction, the emergence of more symmetrical or joint conjugal roles and the positive aspects of divorce and ensuing reconstituted families. Changing legislation and increased awareness of human rights was also used well in evaluation by many candidates.

Section B: Education

Question 2

- (a) When defining 'social factors' a good number of candidates scored both marks by referring to things that affect educational achievement and then following up with an example such as social class, ethnicity or gender. However, there was a substantial number of vague or incorrect answers given that received only partial or no credit.
- (b) This question asked candidates to describe two sanctions *used by schools* and was accessible to most candidates. Detention and suspension were the most frequent negative sanctions given with praise, certificates and medals/prizes also featuring as examples of rewards. Some candidates did not score full marks as they gave general examples of rewards and sanctions rather than school specific examples, as asked for by the question.
- (c) There were some very impressive answers from some candidates to the question about how Marxists criticise the education system. Many candidates clearly understood that the education system prepares the working class/proletariat to serve the needs of the upper class/bourgeoisie in various ways. A substantial number of candidates therefore gave creditworthy explanations of how Marxists would criticise the education system. Commonly, the responses focused on capitalism, private schools, hidden curriculum, lack of meritocracy, negative teacher labeling and working-class underachievement compared to the upper/middle class. Some weaker responses outlined how Marxists criticise society rather than the education system, showing only tangential relevance to the question. A minority of candidates did not appear to know Marxist theory at all.
- (d) This question asked candidates to explain why a candidate's background may affect educational achievement. The quality of answers varied from more common-sense points to highly conceptual ideas. The few low scoring candidates limited themselves to a discussion of rich versus poor candidates. Other more sophisticated responses utilised material factors, various forms of cultural deprivation/capital, racial discrimination and linguistic difficulties. A few candidates drew upon labelling theory and studies such as Becker, Bernstein and Marx for extra support. Lots of candidates organised their answer into 3 clear paragraphs, each having a clearly different focus.
- (e) The essay style question asked candidates to discuss the extent to which the comprehensive system of education is the best. Common arguments generally referred to comprehensives being non-selective, accepting children of all social groups in the local area, of all abilities. On the 'for' side of the argument some candidates leant heavily on the idea of equal opportunities, arguing that comprehensives serve the functionalist view of meritocracy and allowing ethnic minority candidates to integrate and working-class candidates to improve their life chances. Other points that featured included the promotion of a strong community ethos and the idea that it gave a second chance to 'late bloomers' who may have failed an 11+ exam. In evaluation, candidates typically cited drawbacks such as bright children being held back, behavioural issues resulting from large class sizes and setting/streaming still taking place leading to labelling of less able and often working class or ethnic minority children. Others developed the advantages of other schools such as private schools and faith schools and used this to good effect as evaluation. Some mistakenly cited state schools as a different type of school.

Section C: Crime, deviance and social control

Question 3

- (a) There was a mixed response to the definitional question on labelling. Candidates who scored best included two aspects in their answer – for example referring to the idea of a person or group being named or stereotyped by others and then the idea that this stereotype can cause a reaction. There were several different aspects that could be credited. Some candidates referred to Howard Becker and the idea of a master status or a self-fulfilling prophecy occurring. Others gave a partial definition and added an example such as young males being stopped and searched because of being tagged with a deviant label. Candidates who scored less well usually only identified one element in their answer.
- (b) A wide variety of crimes were creditworthy as examples of urban crimes. Popular answers included shoplifting, mugging, gang crime, vandalism, white collar/corporate crime and bank robbery. Some candidates did less well on this question as they gave examples of crimes which lacked a specific *urban focus* and hence were not creditworthy, such as theft, cybercrimes and murder.
- (c) Many candidates knew and understood the basics of victim surveys and how they are used to measure crime but relatively few scored full marks. There were very few references to classic victim surveys such as the Islington Survey or key feminist surveys. Common points included the idea of victims doing a questionnaire or being interviewed about crimes that had been committed against them, that the surveys helped to measure unreported crimes (the dark figure) and the fact that some surveys are local and therefore useful in identifying crime hotspots both in terms of the frequency and types of crime. Other candidates focused on the anonymity and confidentiality of the survey data and the increased validity this gave the survey results. Some candidates mistakenly thought the police conducted the surveys whilst others talked about self-report studies instead. Another common error was attempting to explain the limitations of using victim surveys which led to answers being at least partially out of focus.
- (d) The question as to why crimes are not always reported to the police was accessible to most candidates. However, whilst many candidates made multiple points these were often only partially developed and often list-like in nature. Popular answers included not reporting crimes because they brought shame and embarrassment, fear of reprisal, no trust in the police, crimes being too trivial or that people did not want to become involved in lengthy police and court proceedings. The better responses integrated sociological language by linking to specific crimes such as domestic violence and/or using concepts such as the dark figure, stereotypes, institutional racism, white-collar crime and ostracism.
- (e) Most candidates gave several points on each side of the debate about the extent to which a lack of status explains criminal behaviour. There were some very good responses demonstrating wide and detailed knowledge of explanations for crime. On the ‘for’ side common points included Cohen’s status frustration, Merton’s strain theory and Cloward and Ohlin’s illegitimate opportunity structure. Some candidates referred to status more generally and included explanations for lower class and ethnic minority crimes. In evaluation, many candidates wrote intelligently about inadequate socialisation, labelling theory, masculinity and the postmodern idea of crime for ‘thrills’. The weaker responses tended to be more one-sided and/or lacked adequate organisation, offering unconvincing arguments and undeveloped or underdeveloped points which could not be fully credited. It was not always clear if some of the points being made were arguing in support of or evaluating the question therefore candidates are strongly advised to signal clearly within their essays.

Section D: Media

Question 4

- (a) A number of candidates who opted to answer this question defined the term ‘citizen journalism’ correctly, giving a comprehensive definition linked to the public distributing information through the internet. Blogging, social media and uploading were often used as examples. The best answers described how members of the public or ordinary people can gather and distribute information.
- (b) This question asked candidates to describe two ways the audience use the media according to the uses and gratifications model. It proved to be an accessible question with popular answers

including people using the media for entertainment, information, education and personal identity. In the descriptions candidates frequently gave relevant examples which were sufficient to pick up both marks per point. Those who scored less well tended to give vague descriptions, left points undeveloped or alternatively did not focus on the 'uses and gratifications' part of the question.

- (c) The question on how the media is biased drew some good quality responses from candidates. Candidates focused on a range of points including the bias of media owners, political bias and examples of propaganda, for example, in Hitler's Germany. Others focused on sensationalism and exaggerated reporting, gender/ethnic stereotyping or other stereotypes such as the pro-western bias in global media content. There was a wide range of different approaches to the question, all equally valid.
- (d) The question on why contemporary media is global posed more of a challenge to candidates. Candidates typically gained marks in this question by outlining how people all over the world have access to the media and consume media from other countries, including how the BBC, Bollywood etc. are not just available in their own nation but on a global scale. Popular points included the explosion in digital technology and online platforms, particularly social media, allowing people from around the world to connect and interact. Other points referred to citizen journalism on the internet and the idea of diaspora communities accessing films and media products from their country of origin e.g. Indians in the UK streaming Bollywood films. Relatively few candidates explored global media ownership or online education.
- (e) The essay style question focused on the extent to which the media influences the audience's values and attitudes. On the 'for' side of the debate, popular answers included the evidence that advertising, scapegoating and propaganda all affect audiences, with relevant examples, and the hypodermic syringe model supported by examples such as copycat violence. Some candidates referenced Bandura's Bobo Doll experiment and research by the Glasgow University Media Group to good effect. In evaluation, candidates made some use of the uses and gratifications model and general pluralist/selective explanations, focusing on the ability of more active and discriminating audiences to choose and even generate their own content for their own purposes with little influence from the media.