

A LEVEL

Sample Candidate Style Answers and Commentary

SOCIOLOGY

H580

For first teaching in 2015

Component 3

Version 2



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Introduction

This resource has been a collaborative production and checked by a senior member of the A Level Sociology examining team to offer teachers an insight into how the assessment objectives are applied. Please note that this resource is provided for advice and guidance only and does not in any way constitute an indication of grade boundaries or endorsed answers. The sample assessment material for these answers and commentary can be found on the A Level Sociology web page and accessed via the following link: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-sociology-h180-h580-from-2015/>



SECTION A

Globalisation and the digital social world

Question 1 With reference to the Sources, explain how social media might extend social networks. [9]

Low band – Sample answer

Source A refers to the positive use of social networks such as Facebook. People can upload messages to each other so that family and friends can stay in touch with each other's news. Fans can connect with each other online and make social contacts. Some evidence argues that people use social media to develop their face to face relationships. For example, in a study by Michelle Kempson, people who write Fanzines/"Zines" (self-published magazines that are written for people to share their views on their favourite bands/music genre) make use of social networks as an extension to their existing contacts in life. Kempson finds evidence that Zine makers combine online contact with local interactions where they meet each other. However, this source was very unrepresentative, based on a snowball sample that Kempson started based on personal contacts.

AO1 – 3 out of 5 marks AO2 – 3 out of 4 marks

Total = 6 out of 9 marks

Commentary

This answer demonstrates some detailed knowledge of the Kempson study and uses the source at the opening. There is a line of reasoning but the candidate has let one source/study dominate too much: Kempson is useful but students need to show examiners a good range of material. Therefore this answer has detailed knowledge, but not a range. The Kempson study does not need any AO3 skill as it does not get rewarded for marks in the mark scheme for this question. 3 marks for application because the answer is relevant and has some focus on the question.

The answer references: Kempson, M. 2015. "I sometimes wonder whether I'm an outsider" Negotiating Belonging in Zine Subculture. *Sociology*. Volume 49, Number 6. Pages 1081-1095.
<http://soc.sagepub.com/content/49/6/1081.short>

High band – Sample answer

Social media refers to mass forms of communication that occur over mobile connections to the internet using websites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Source A refers to how people can message information to others. The concept of social capital can link to this trend: that people can gain useful personal connections via social networks. Marche argues that social networks do create broader social connections. For example, people can share information and messages regardless of geographic location, especially as the levels of data that can be sent and received via devices has increased. Research from UCL finds that 90% of teenagers in Europe are active users of Facebook and that the majority have access to smart phones. In a 2011 TED talk, Ghonim argues how social networks were a way in which people could make connections with each other in the lead up to what became the Egyptian social revolution. The extent of Facebook's use everyday is quantifiable with statistics such as 350 million new photos loaded up to it every day.

AO1 – 5 out of 5 marks AO2 - 4 out of 4 marks

Total = 9 out of 9 marks

Commentary

The answer is well focused with an excellent range and depth of knowledge and understanding. It refers to Source A well and contains a very good amount of wider sociological evidence (studies, statistics, concepts) in a logical and well structured manner.

The answer references: Marche: "Is Facebook making us lonely?", Article for "The Atlantic", May 2012, <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2012/05/is-facebook-making-us-lonely/308930/>

UCL evidence from Miller et al at: <http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/global-social-media/>

Ghonim from: https://www.ted.com/talks/wael_ghonim_inside_the_egyptian_revolution?language=en

Question 2 With reference to the Sources, to what extent has digital social communication weakened social relationships? **[10]**

Low band – Sample answer

Source B refers to how social relationships may be limited by online networks that we belong to. When people are sharing posts and messages they do not meet in person so they have an anonymous relationship that can lead to people stating very cruel comments and ideas. One case of this was in recent years when the woman who campaigned for Jane Austen to be the new person featured on the £10 note received rape and death threats from the public. It became hard for websites such as Twitter to chase up which users sent the abusive messages as people can sign in for an account very easily without genuine real details of names and contact points that can be followed up. At the moment, the law regarding what people can and can't state online is catching up with social media. Danah Boyd found some evidence of what source B refers to as cyberbullying such as young people using My Space website to regulate the definition of what is "cool" or not which leads to some users being ridiculed or excluded in some way. However, this study is rather dated as MySpace use has significantly declined in light of the websites that have overtaken it as the main choice of use.

AO1 - 4 out of 4 marks AO2 – 2 out of 2 marks AO3 - 1 out of 4 marks

Total = 7 out of 10 marks

Commentary

Generally accurate but a broader range of points needed for the higher levels. Source material is used and wider sociological knowledge. There is only one very brief evaluative statement so the answer scores low for AO3. The answer could have been improved with reference to key names/sociologists (see the mark scheme for details).

The answer references: Danah Boyd: 2007, "Why Youth (Heart) SNS: The role of networked publics in teenage social life" Youth Identity and Digital Media. MIT press.

High band – Sample answer

Source B takes a cynical view on the value of digital social communication referring to “young people’s conversations rarely going beyond a few sentences.” Digital social communication tends to be less formal and more in need of immediate dissemination which can lead to an abbreviation of language use e.g. text-speak and emoticons. Marche would support such a view as he argues that digital social communication is shallow and lacks any real deep human contact. For Marche, although the internet can give us more connections with others, we feel less “bonded” and lack true confidants in our lives. Turkle would support Marche: in her book, “Alone, Together” she argues that internet connections are not the “ties that bind”. Source A refers to an increase in quantity of connections: “we are reaching a much wider range of people” but perhaps at the expense of quality of relationships. Indeed, source B refers to the potential of cyberbullying in which people use digital social communication to abuse others. Research by Aoyama et al describes that a third of a sample of high school students reported victimisation online.

However, source B is generally full of un-evidenced statements. Evidence that correlates Facebook use to higher levels of reported loneliness fails to consider that Facebook may be attractive to people with higher than average levels of loneliness in the first place. Other research suggests that social networks lead to stronger social relationships such as promoting cooperative behaviour (Christakis). Others argue that online relationships are a “pure” form of relationship in which people can converse free of any judgements being made about the social group that the person belongs to (Wang).

To conclude, research on the effects on the public of digital social communication is still in its infancy and requires more representative samples to draw conclusions from.

AO1 - 4 out of 4 marks AO2 - 2 out of 2 marks AO3 – 4 out of 4 marks

Total = 10 out of 10 marks

Commentary

This answer is focused and has wide ranging knowledge and understanding. The information is accurate and detailed on the whole, using the source and wider knowledge. There are a range of evaluative points made with an attempt at a credible conclusion.

The answer references: Turkle: 2011, “Alone, Together” book.

Aoyama, Brak and Talbert: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/220465648_Cyberbullying_Among_High_School_Students_Cluster_Analysis_of_Sex_and_Age_Differences_and_the_Level_of_Parental_Monitoring

Question 3 'Digital social communication has reduced social inequality'. Evaluate this point of view. [16]**Low band – Sample answer**

The technology needed to participate in digital social media has become cheaper for many in the UK society. This allows people to express their views in their own way: anyone can now find an audience for their views or their artwork or music. This has removed the dominance of the large publishers of the past so that the mass media is now something that many different people can shape and influence. Post-modern theory refers to how post-modern society is characterised by greater freedom, choice and diversity. Websites such as Soundcloud allow people to share their music with the public without the need of a signed record deal. The public can now respond to news events with their own opinions, as seen in the "comments" section underneath most news feeds such as the BBC.

Xie argues that social media allows the Government to monitor trends in the public that can then inform effective public policy. This can be particularly relevant in times of public emergency when the phone cameras available can provide up to date information from ground level. This argument links to the TED talk by Shirkey in which he describes how members of the public were sharing photos and messages concerning an earthquake in China, an event that Shirkey argues may have been censored by state run media in the past.

However, other theories may suggest that access to publish on digital social communication is controlled by the powerful in society. For example, power lies with the owners of the websites to remove/edit comments that the public share. We could take a Marxist view on search engines such as Google which would be that wealthy corporations pay Google to be sponsored links at the top of the page when people are searching for goods and services.

AO1 – 3 out of 4 marks AO2 – 3 out of 4 marks AO3 – 5 out of 8 marks

Total = 11 out of 16 marks

Commentary

The answer shows good knowledge and understanding with a good range of points, making good use of two named references. Though the material used was relevant, it could have been more explicitly applied to the wording of the question. The depth on the 'against' side of the argument is a little lacking, for example the answer would have benefitted from a wider range of evaluation points.

High band – Sample answer

Digital social communication refers to messaging others via technology such as the internet. Some argue that the increase in use of digital social communication can widen participation in democracy and has the potential to help people in their pursuit of life chances.

For example, digital social media is a means in which the public can participate in the democratic system. Members of the public can contact their MPs through email, Twitter or create an online petition that can be shared through social networks. Jurgenson argues how social networks were a useful tool in which people could make connections with each other in the lead up to what became the Egyptian social revolution. This links to the pluralistic theory of mass media: that the wider the range of media providers, the wider the range of opinions being shared which leads to a more equal political system.

Some argue that when people communicate through digital social media, they are not face to face, and therefore, the interaction is free of anyone being pre-judged based on how they appear. This was true in the research by Bloustein and Wood: Second Life research, in which there seemed to be a post-modern opportunity to create a self-identity free from being judged on appearance. For example, research by the charity group SCOPE (2000) found that the leisure habits of 11-15 year olds were similar between people with and without disabilities e.g. online activities such as social gaming. This point links strongly to Goffman's presentation of the self: as the players of online games never meet in person, a person who may face prejudice and discrimination due to their body or the way they look, might feel empowered by the greater control of the presentation of their self to others.

However, other researchers are less optimistic about the equalising effects of digital social communication. For example, access to digital social communication does rely on the means to pay for online access. Although the price of devices has come down over time, the more affluent will be more privileged in using digital social communication.

The data that can be collected from the use of digital social media can lead to greater surveillance and therefore manipulation of the public. Foucault argued that over time, Governments and powerful institutions would develop sophisticated means of surveillance over the population. Websites such as youarewhatyoulike.com and a TED talk by Golbeck, 2013, regarding "Why Social Media Likes Say More Than You Think", might lead to a more unequal society in the sense that those in power gain even more control over the public. This point has strong links to Marxist ideas that the state manipulates the public in order to maintain the power of the bourgeoisie.

Digital social media may also be criticised from a feminist point of view as there is a large amount of evidence describing the level of patriarchy that is online. Many examples of misogyny exist online shown by the work of Ringrose et al (2013) who found evidence of how sexting between teenagers led to a traditional control and exploitation of girls via the possession of photos stored on mobile phone devices.

To conclude, digital social communication can be used in ways to both reduce and further social inequality. If we took a global view on this question, the gap in internet access between different countries around the world suggests that the global village is an unequal one.

AO1 – 4 out of 4 marks AO2 – 4 out of 4 marks AO3 – 7 out of 8 marks

Total = 15 out of 16 marks

Commentary

Excellent knowledge and range of material: wide variety of key studies referred to, as well as logical and accurate theoretical links. A good balance of a 'for' and an 'against' side. The answer could have more sustained evaluation such as evaluating the specific arguments on the 'for' side more directly, for example what detail was there behind the evidence found by SCOPE charity regarding how people with disabilities may engage with other people online? The conclusion does make a judgement but could be more developed: only a brief mention of global inequalities in internet access etc. This could be improved with an example or study evidence. Improve wider reading with:

Jurgenson reading "When Atoms Meet Bits: Social media, the Mobile Web and Augmented Revolution" <http://www.mdpi.com/1999-5903/4/1/83/htm>

Section B

Option 1: Crime and Deviance

Question 4 In what ways is deviance socially constructed?

[10]

Low band – Sample answer

Deviance can be socially constructed, because it depends on where you are in the world. For example in some countries it would be deviant if you were not dressed appropriately. We tend to dress modestly in the UK, however in places like Africa some tribes don't wear many clothes at all. That would be deviant in the UK but not in Africa. Also it depends on the time of the deviance. In the UK homosexuality was a deviant act in the 1980s however it is not deviant now.

Labelling theory looks at who gets labelled in society, and then it would be the media that is responsible for deciding who is deviant or not as it's the media that write all of the stories. The media do tend to stereotype certain groups into looking more deviant than others. So deviance is decided by the media. Mostly it's young people that are presented as being deviant, the media always show them as doing things wrong. Also people from ethnic minorities are shown to be deviant and the media present negative stories about them, for example Asians are seen as deviant after 9/11 linking them to terrorism.

AO1 - 3 out of 6 marks AO2 - 2 out of 4 marks

Total = 5 out of 10 marks

Commentary

This answer demonstrates a basic knowledge and understanding of the social construction of deviance. The response presents two arguments as to how deviance is socially constructed but they are underdeveloped and lack supporting sociological evidence. There is a basic ability to apply examples and whilst there is an attempt at referencing labelling theory this is generalised and lacks depth.

How the answer could be improved?

The answer would benefit from more supporting evidence to show how deviance may be socially constructed. For example by using examples of moral panics and folk devils to support points made about the media, or linking in the concept of Islamophobia, and possibly Abbas' ideas to support the point on Asians. The points made in the first paragraph did not go much beyond 'common-sense' examples. The social construction of homosexuality as a deviant identity could have been supported with evidence, such as Plummer or Weeks, and other theoretical links, to interactionism for example, could have been made.

High band – Sample answer

The social construction of deviance means that it is a product of society. Society will create what is deviant and what is not.

Marxists would argue that the most powerful groups in society will socially construct deviance to benefit themselves. The bourgeoisie make sure that their own values are reflected in the social construction and define behaviour which has no benefit to them as deviant such as rioting. This makes sure that they can maintain power and control.

Furthermore, labelling theorists such as Becker would argue that the mass media has a role to play in the social construction of deviance as the mass media control the news values and decide what to publish, and, in turn what the general public will see. Becker showed how moral entrepreneurs are responsible for defining the realms of acceptable behaviour. For example a moral crusade occurred over fox hunting and as such it was seen as a deviant act and then later criminalised under the hunting act of 2004.

We also cannot discount the role of the police in socially constructing deviance as they are our main agent of formal social control. As the police are on the streets making arrests they can focus on some groups more than others making them seem more deviant. Waddington discussed the canteen culture as part of police workplace norms and values: one of the values was racism. This means the police have developed racist cultural practices which focus on ethnic minorities, which then makes the statistics show that ethnic minorities are more deviant. This is therefore a socially constructed statistic based on police assumptions and may not be true.

AO1 - 6 out of 6 marks AO2 – 4 out of 4 marks

Total = 10 out of 10 marks

Commentary

This answer displays excellent knowledge and understanding of a range of sociological material. It is accurate and presents three detailed points supported by sociological evidence, including theories, studies, concepts and contemporary examples. The candidate shows excellent ability to apply relevant material to the question, staying focused throughout. The clear definition at the beginning helps set up the response.

Question 5 To what extent are police recorded crime figures useful in measuring patterns and trends in crime? [20]

Low band – Sample answer

There are many ways of getting information about the amount of crime in society. One way is to use police recorded statistics, published by the Government. This quantitative data is reliable because it can be used again and again. So the police recorded statistics are a good thing. We can also get all of the figures from each police force in the UK which means the crime statistics we have are representative of the UK. Positivists like the use of numbers but interpretivists would say they do not have enough validity because they don't tell us why people commit crime.

Also the police crime statistics do not cover the dark figure of crime. This is all of the crimes that don't make it into the police recorded statistics. Marxists argue that most of the police time is spent in working class areas policing working class people so the statistics will show that working class people are more criminal when they are not. White collar crime doesn't feature in the police recorded statistics because the police ignore it.

Sometimes the public do not report a crime to the police because they think it is too petty or they might not trust the police so they don't think the police will do anything. This means that all of the incidents will not make it into the police crime figures. Adding to the dark figure of crime and showing us the crime statistics are not accurate.

What the police recorded figures can show us is patterns and trends over time which is a good thing as we can see which crimes are increasing and where the police need to focus more on. This is a positive thing for society which functionalists would like because they focus on the positive aspects of our society and we shouldn't have too much crime because it isn't functional.

Overall police recorded statistics are good and the government need them, but they don't show us all of the crime.

AO1 - 4 out of 8 marks AO2 - 3 out of 4 marks AO3 - 5 out of 8 marks

Total = 12 out of 20 marks

Commentary

This answer demonstrates basic knowledge on police recorded statistics but lacks range and depth. Relevance is not always made explicit and points are not supported. A theoretical debate is attempted, using Marxists and functionalists, and evaluative points about the dark figure are made, but points made are underdeveloped and not supported with evidence or fully applied to the question. The conclusion is summative and adds little value.

How the answer could be improved?

The answer requires more evidence to support the generalised points which are made. The types of crimes which may be in the dark figure could be discussed, and linked to points about policing. More development of ideas on policing, with examples of police discretion could have been used. Supporting evidence for both the Marxist critique and the functionalist support for crime statistics could be applied, such as Box or Croall on white collar crime, supporting the Marxist point, or examples of functionalist based subcultural studies which accept the police view of the typical criminal and base their research on this. A more reflective conclusion, perhaps reflecting on alternative methods of measuring crime, would have improved the AO3 mark.

High band – Sample answer

The police recorded crime figures include all crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales. The police figures are easy to access and have already been compiled, saving crime researchers significant time. They are up-to-date and go back for many years, so patterns and trends can be easily identified. They are not based on a sample, unlike most other measures of crime, but include all police records from England and Wales, so are more representative than other measures. A main use of the police figures is that they give us a consistent patterns of the most common crimes and of the 'typical criminal', which some sociologists find very useful as a starting point for their theories of crime. Functionalists find the police figures useful because they believe there is a value consensus in society, and so the figures give a trustworthy reflection of actual crimes which are accurately recorded by the police. They also believe that crime can be measured scientifically, trusting the quantitative, representative data provided by statistics. Durkheim argued that official statistics were a good starting point for studying all kinds of human behaviour. Police statistics help to show where we need harder policing, and show that most crimes are solved and punished. This all helps prevent anomie and reinforces the boundaries.

However, there are limitations of the police figures. They do not include undetected or unreported crime. The 'dark figure' of crime also includes unrecorded crime, which the police have found or been told about, but have not recorded. The dark figure will include minor offences, but also victimless crimes such as drugs and underage offences. Also, rape, sexual offences and domestic violence are all likely to be in the dark figure. It is impossible to even estimate the size of the dark figure, and this undermines the usefulness of the police recorded crime figures.

Another limitation is police discretion. The police make decisions about whether to record crime, often due to the pressure to meet targets, so crimes which are unlikely to be solved are often not recorded. Whistle-blower James Patrick, an ex-policeman, revealed the extent of these problems within the police and lost his job over it. This has led many to lose faith in the usefulness of the police recorded figures.

Interactionists argue that the police label groups such as the working class and black males, which results in more frequent stopping and searching and more arrests. This will skew the statistics, since crimes committed by other groups are less focused on. Marxists would agree and would see the figures as a way of scapegoating the powerless and distracting attention from the crimes of the powerful. Box argues that the police figures are a tool used to scare people and to justify more control.

In conclusion, despite their many flaws, a case can be made for the usefulness of the police recorded crime figures. For example, realists accept that they are not perfect, but do have their uses, and do tend to reflect real crimes. The police figures, supplemented with data from other measures of crime, such as victim surveys, can start to give us a useful picture of the main patterns of crime.

Marks: AO1 - 8 out of 8 marks AO2 - 4 out of 4 marks AO3 - 8 out of 8 marks

Total = 20 out of 20 marks

Commentary

This answer shows excellent knowledge and understanding of the use of police recorded crime statistics to measure crime. Material is both accurate and detailed, and very well focused. Both practical and theoretical points are presented to discuss the usefulness of the police figures, and there is a clear and logical structure throughout. Excellent ability to apply sociological material to the question which is both relevant and contemporary. Excellent ability to evaluate a range of strengths and weaknesses, using functionalism, Marxism and interactionism, and bringing in a realist view into the conclusion, supported with concepts and other evidence. A fully supported critical conclusion ensures this answer is worth full marks.

Question 6 Outline and evaluate Marxist explanations of crime and deviance.**[40]****Low band – Sample answer**

The Marxist theory likes to focus on the middle and upper class as they think they are ignored. Marxists would argue the police spend their time looking into working class crime like street crime and robbery and that the middle class crimes like white collar crime get ignored.

Marxists would also argue that the upper classes use the law to their advantage because there are lots of laws that protect the interests of the ruling class, about property and wages. The upper classes are the ones who own lots of property and pay the wages so they benefit from it. Functionalists would say that this isn't true and actually laws are in place to protect everybody like murder. Functionalists think that there are six positive functions of crime and deviance and that some crime can be good for our society. Durkheim said one of the functions is bringing people together because if there is a crime people come together to help each other. Durkheim also said that too much is bad because it causes anomie.

White collar crime is crime that is committed in the workplace. A doctor could commit occupational crime because a doctor could mistreat a patient but Marxists would say that this sort of crime goes unnoticed because it is a doctor and they are middle class and they are trusted and respected. This means that they get away with all of the crimes they commit but if a working class person commits crime they will be arrested. Marxists argue this is not fair. Working class crime is focused on to make them into scapegoats.

Overall the Marxist perspective of crime tells us why working class crime is the focus in our society.

Marks: AO1 = 7 out of 16 marks AO2 = 4 out of 8 marks AO3= 5 out of 16 marks

Total: 16 out of 40 marks

Commentary

This answer shows a basic knowledge and understanding of sociological material. There is little detail or supporting evidence on Marxist ideas, and a lack of range and depth. The candidate demonstrates a basic ability to evaluate with one underdeveloped evaluative statement, lapsing into juxtaposition. The conclusion is summative.

How the answer could be improved

The ideas presented, such as white collar crime and the creation of laws to benefit ruling class interests, could have been developed much more and supported with evidence. More focus on corporate crime, which is more of an issue for Marxists, could have been made, with supporting studies and examples, such as Slapper and Tombs, Box or Croall. Additional range could be added, using ideas from Bonger or Gordon for example about the way that Capitalism drives people to crime. A greater range of evaluative points were needed. The point from functionalism needed to go beyond juxtaposition: Evaluation must stay focused on criticising the view in the question, rather than simply describing what other theories may say. A more reflective conclusion, which goes beyond a statement about Marxism, recognising some of the influences of the Marxist view on more recent theories, for example, could have been developed.

High band – Sample answer

Marxist explanations of crime focus on a range of related ideas, including the selective creation and enforcement of the law, showing how the criminal justice system can benefit the ruling class.

Chambliss argues that laws are created in the interests of the bourgeoisie. He explored vagrancy laws in England. When the plague had wiped out many of the population, the poor could have demanded higher wages. However vagrancy laws stated any able bodied man had to accept work for a low fixed wage, benefitting the ruling class. Eventually, he argued, vagrants came to be defined as criminals – criminalising the poor. However functionalists have pointed out that most laws do not benefit the ruling class, but all of our society. A good contemporary example of this was the ban on smoking in public places, a law which the public wanted and arguably benefitted everybody.

In the early twentieth century, Bonger considered the link between capitalism and crime. Capitalism is based on values such as greed and self-interest which encourages deviant behaviour. Those at the bottom of the system are deprived and therefore may turn to crime as a result of their desperate circumstances. This was supported many years later by Gordon, who argued that crime is a rational response to the situation many working class people find themselves in, and the 'dog-eat-dog' nature of capitalist society. This has been criticised though, as it fails to explain why most of those at the bottom of society still don't commit crime.

A third element of Marxist criminology focuses on the way in which law enforcement is biased. Most police time is spent in working class areas. Phillips and Bowling discuss the over-policing of black neighbourhoods for example, which is a way of controlling a working class and potentially rebellious section of the population. In evaluation, it could be argued that all areas of society are policed. In 2011 many of Great Britain's MP's were arrested for fraudulent expenses claims, suggesting that the police focus on everybody not just working class people.

Neo-Marxists have focused on how crime can be used as a form of social control. Hall's study 'Policing the crisis' showed that when capitalism was failing in the early 70s due to high unemployment and industrial disputes, the public attention needed to be diverted away from the problems of the capitalist society and control needed to be regained. Hall focused on the scapegoating of African-Caribbean people who were blamed for a rise in muggings. This moral panic about black muggers diverted the public's attention from the real problems presented by capitalism.

One of the strengths of Marxist views is their focus on corporate crime, questioning the moral responsibility of large companies for the damage they cause, for which they are not held accountable. An example is the Bhopal disaster, when a gas leak killed almost 4,000 people and injured many others. Union Carbide, the chemical company, were eventually found responsible, but never really paid for the damage they caused. Pearce and Tombs give the example of the manufacturers of cigarettes and alcohol, both linked to high levels of illness and death, who earn huge profits, to show that such 'crime' is not always even illegal. Box argues that such crimes are not socially constructed as crime, so we don't think of avoidable workplace deaths as murder, for example, because of the ideological control of the ruling class. Large companies that evade employment, environmental and taxation laws have a major impact on the workers, the environment and the economy but because their owners are part of the ruling class, governments turn a blind eye. Marxists have also focused on state crime which often has a huge impact on populations. State crime would include war crimes which can have thousands of victims. It is mostly the governments that are responsible for this like in the Rwandan genocide, yet people are rarely punished.

Although Marxist approaches do provide us with some reasons as to why crime appears to be a working class problem, the theory can be seen as contradictory, with some Marxists showing why poorer people are more likely to commit crime, and other Marxists denying that this is the case. Feminists are critical of the Marxist perspective as Heidensohn would state it is malestream and ignores the involvement and treatment of women, both as offenders and victims. By assuming that crime is a response to capitalism and social class, gender issues get ignored. Functionalists argue that the Marxist perspective ignores some of the positive aspects of crime. Durkheim suggested that crime helps create bonds between societies and reinforces norms and values within a society. Right realists accuse Marxists of romanticising criminals and placing too much focus on crime as a response to poverty. Instead they suggest that we should enforce crime more rigorously by more surveillance and policing in crime-ridden areas. Left realists, though partly supporting some ideas such as over-policing and social causes of crime, argue that Marxists don't pay enough attention to working class criminals and the damage they do in working class communities. Lea and Young argue that most victims of working class crime are other working class people, so its significance should not be ignored by focusing only on corporate crime.

In conclusion, the Marxist perspective does not suggest realistic policies to solve the problem of crime and it does not

fully explain why not all individuals in a capitalist society commit crime, but it does explain why the police focus on working class areas, and the study of white collar crime does go some way in trying to give a fuller picture of crime by exploring how issues of power can relate to the creation and enforcement of crime, which has to be seen as a positive thing.

AO1 – 16 out of 16 marks AO2 – 8 out of 8 marks AO3 – 16 out of 16 marks

Total = 40 out of 40 marks

Commentary

The candidate demonstrates an excellent knowledge and understanding of the Marxist perspective of crime using both classical and contemporary Marxist arguments. A range of different Marxist points are made. The material is accurate and detailed supported with sociological evidence, including studies, concepts and examples. The answer is logically structured and there is an excellent ability to analyse and evaluate sociological material. Though most of the theoretical evaluation was in a paragraph towards the end, evaluation is also sustained throughout. There is a fully supported critical conclusion. Even with a slight lack of development in places, in the time allowed, this is enough to reach full marks.

Option 2: Education

Question 7 In what ways does home background contribute to social class inequality in education? [10]

Low band – Sample answer

Parents can influence their children's progress in education by paying for private education, if they can afford it. Private schools tend to achieve higher grades for their pupils than state schools. For example, Roker found evidence of private school girls developing very high academic targets for the influence of their private school. The classic longitudinal study of 7UP showed how private school attendance led to the strong academic career of John, Andrew and Charles. John Humphreys visited a private school in his documentary, "Unequal Opportunities" and found that the class size was very low, especially for post 16 subjects, something that parents would not receive from the state sector for their children.

Hyman and Sugarman argue that working class families influence the values that their children receive through the socialisation process. They argue that working class culture is characterised by the need for instant gratification which then means they cannot see the worth in investing long periods of time studying without earning money.

Educational maintenance allowance was introduced to support the lower income student who stayed on in education. It was cut during the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition Government. Marxists would criticise such a decision as it harms the chances of the proletariat in succeeding in education.

AO1 – 4 out of 6 marks AO2 – 3 out of 4 marks

Total = 7 out of 10 marks

Commentary

Some good detail offered with evidence relating to the private school influence. Most of the work is relevant to the question, except the last section on EMA policy which has drifted away from the focus of the question which should be the role of parents. Also, the first paragraph on private education could have more explicit links to home background. Improvements would be to focus on other studies concerning parents influence on education, for example Murray, Bourdieu, Douglas, Reay.

High band – Sample answer

Home background refers to family influence. Some argue this is the cause of why the percentage of students from the higher social classes obtaining 5 A*-C grades at GCSE is around 40% higher than the students from the lower classes. Evidence from the Sutton Trust shows that students from wealthier backgrounds dominate the places at the highest level Universities.

Murray would argue that boys who grow up in a fatherless family lack the role model needed in order to be disciplined and well behaved enough to do well at school. Bernstein found evidence that lower social class families speak with a more restricted language code than the elaborated code of the middle classes which would have an impact on educational progress. This was supported in a documentary by John Humphreys for the BBC, entitled "Unequal Opportunities" which found evidence that children from poorer background were already a year behind in the language development at the age of three. Bourdieu's work also links to cultural differences as he argues that middle class families are more successful at raising their children with cultural capital: knowledge of the arts, history and literature which would then be useful in subjects at school.

Ball and Gerwitz also make similar conclusions regarding the idea that middle class parents are more able at getting the best out of the education system through shopping around for their child's education. This active consumerism is known as a parentocracy and refers to the use of school league tables and Ofsted reports.

AO1 – 6 out of 6 marks AO2 – 4 out of 4 marks

Total = 10 out of 10 marks

Commentary

Excellent knowledge and understanding of a range of sociological material. Accurate and thorough detail on all points raised. There is a well developed line of reasoning with a clear and logical structure. All points are evidenced with reference to a relevant study/evidence. The answer keeps well focused on the question set. Notice the quick introduction that describes the scale of the class inequality. Also notice the way that Humphrey's evidence acts as an update to the rather dated evidence from Bernstein.

Further reading on Gerwitz: "Cloning the Blairs: New Labour's programme for the re-socialization of working class parents." <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/02680930110054353>

Question 8 To what extent are attempts to reduce ethnic inequality in education successful?**[20]****Low band – Sample answer**

Education Action Zones were an attempt by the Labour Government to give more money to schools in lower income postcode areas. This was for schools to be able to afford more staff to focus on raising achievement. This was then continued during the Conservative-Liberal Democratic coalition era in the form of Pupil Premium, again money aimed at supporting the lower income student. However, some researchers question this policy's ability to make up for poverty in low income areas. Marxists would argue it is too little, too late.

Teacher Training has improved in order to raise the awareness levels of teachers when they are teaching pupils from a wide range of ethnic groups. Several studies from the past suggest that teachers were guilty of having negative prejudice about British Afro Caribbean boys in school (Mac an Ghail and the "Rasta Heads"). This links to labelling theory and the concept of self fulfilling prophecy: living up to labels. However, perhaps this policy is at risk of failure due to the need to fill teacher posts with Teach First training: this is when a graduate attends a summer school and then finds employment in the classroom the following September. After such a quick period of training, perhaps the training of best practice is limited: John Humphreys seemed to feel this in his BBC documentary, "Unequal Opportunities" where he interviewed a Teach First teacher and was suggesting that his training was not sufficient enough to raise the grades of the pupils in his class.

Universities have attempted to use positive discrimination for students that may come from families that have not yet had any near relatives attend Higher Education. This involves active advertising to underrepresented groups (some of which will be from certain ethnic minority groups) and lowering grade offers for students that pass certain academic programmes and challenges.

AO1 – 5 out of 8 marks AO2 - 2 out of 4 marks AO3 – 4 out of 8 marks

Total =11 out of 20 marks

Commentary

Some good general knowledge of policies that aim to reduce gaps in achievement but many of the points do not explicitly link to ethnicity, for example Education Action Zones. This limits the credit that can be awarded to the answer. Not many explicitly named sources/studies means the AO1 mark is not in the top band, for example there are generic reference to "Marxists", and "labelling" could be improved with a key name reference. No conclusion limits AO3 skill somewhat. Answers must always stay focused on the question: students should keep the keywords in mind for all the points that are written and offer conclusion to end the answer on some form of judgement that can be justified.

High band – Sample answer

Ethnic inequality in education refers to the GCSE gap between ethnic groups in which British Chinese and British Indian students are seen to be the highest achieving ethnic groups at GCSE. British Black Caribbean boys have lower levels of GCSE success and far higher rates of exclusion from school. The lowest achieving group are from Traveller communities. There are also allegations of racism in the curriculum in the form of an ethnocentric curriculum.

Black History Month has been one policy aimed to rectify the latter issue: a time in the school year when subjects are encouraged to highlight the heritage and cultural examples from ethnic minority groups. However, some evidence (Tikly et al) suggests that this can be accused of superficial, “token gesture” treatment and that the bias in the core of subjects such as History has remained unchanged from the ethnocentric focus found in the 1980s by Mac an Ghaill.

In an attempt to reduce the achievement gap between groups, the Government encouraged schools to adopt a Gifted and Talented programme in which the students who are showing evidence of achieving high grades are steered into planning for University and stretched for their academic talent. However, Gillborn argues that although this policy was set up to be a “colour blind” policy, (i.e. applying equally to all ethnic groups), the end results reflected a racist process in which the rate of students from black groups to be selected for this scheme was very low indeed.

Andrews researches the Supplementary School Movement in which parents and communities aim to teach students from ethnic minority backgrounds themselves, and therefore, teach students in a way free of institutional racism. However, Andrews concludes that his sample expressed a view that the latest generation of parents were not as concerned with education as previous ones and this was used to explain the decline in attendance at supplementary schools. This work links to the charity side of Sewell’s work with Afro Caribbean boys. In his charity, “Generating Genius”, work placements and visits to the RAF are designed to inspire learners, and make up for what Sewell sees as the gap left behind by a high rate of fatherless families.

To conclude, the persistent achievement gap remains between different ethnic groups. Exclusion data is still clear that some ethnic groups are excluded more than others. So policies to rectify these inequalities seem ineffective at present.

AO1 – 8 out of 8 marks AO2 – 4 out of 4 marks AO3 – 8 out of 8 marks

Total = 20 out of 20 marks

Commentary

Excellent knowledge and understanding of a range of sociological material. Accurate and thorough detail on all points raised. There is a well developed line of reasoning with a clear and logical structure. All points are evidenced with reference to a relevant study/evidence. The answer keeps well focused on the question set and there are sustained and explicit evaluation points. The tone is reflective and the conclusion is well justified, based on a logical assessment of the evidence used in the answer.

Wider reading: Kehinde Andrews: <http://www.ioe.mmu.ac.uk/making-education-a-priority/resources/Supplementary%20School/Resisting%20racism%20-%20The%20Black%20supplementary%20school%20movement.pdf>

Question 9 Outline and evaluate feminist explanations of gender inequality in education.**[40]****Low band – Sample answer**

Feminism focuses on how girls and boys are treated differently in the education system. For example, Physics and Maths tend to be dominated by boys at post 16 level, whereas girls tend to dominate Health and Social Care subjects and English.

Although girls achieve higher than boys in education, there is evidence that the girls receive less attention from their teachers than boys. This was true in the observation studies of Spender and Stanworth. They both found detailed evidence of this in the sample they studied. Stanworth should be praised for the use of triangulation in her project but both studies are problematic as they used very small samples and therefore the conclusions cannot be generalised. However, Licht and Dweck's more recent evidence does support Stanworth as they found that girls had lower levels of self esteem when being asked about their potential for academic success.

To an extent, the evidence of teachers not prioritising girls for attention may be the cause of the girls' relative success in education. Stanworth finds that girls underestimate their real levels of academic ability and this may lead to them having more motivation to improve. Or it is possible that less teacher attention encourages girls to become more independent at studying which, in the long run leads to very good grades at school. Feminism can be praised for identifying the cultural influences on the differences between the genders at school, rather than relying on an explanation that stresses natural, biological differences.

Sue Sharpe finds evidence that although girls are more likely to aim higher for career choices, there is still pressure on them to do the traditional thing. Peer pressure may make it hard for girls to pick subjects that do not match their gender socialisation.

However, feminists don't recognise that girls are doing very well in education. Other studies suggest that school can be a trying time for certain groups of boys. For example, although Willis concentrated on the "lads" in his classic study about working class rejection of school values and ethos, in the same study, the "earoles" were victimised and bullied by the lads. Such a conclusion was found by Mac an Ghaill in the 1990s in which the "Macho Lads" dominated power over other boys that lacked the status needed to be accepted in a macho culture. Mac an Ghaill found evidence that the homosexual boys in his sample felt isolated and marginalised at school. So perhaps feminism overlooks the variety of boys that exist in school: not all groups have a position of patriarchal power.

Other sociologists, especially Marxists such as Bowles and Gintis and Althusser would argue that feminism is too concerned with gender as the issue in educational inequality that they neglect the important role that class plays in reproducing inequality in the education system. To look at gender inequality on its own neglects how other forms of inequality intersect or interrelate with gender.

To conclude, feminist theories have had some validity in the past but it may be that educational inequality is now more complex.

AO1 - 12 out of 16 marks AO2 - 6 out of 8 marks AO3 – 9 out of 16 marks

Total = 27 out of 40 marks

Commentary

There is a range of knowledge of feminist research - Stanworth and Spender with some detail. The answer includes a good range of key names that match the mark scheme well. However, there is a lack of focus on feminist theory and it's not wide ranging enough to get into level 4. Compare this to the higher band answer and you will see that it is much more wide ranging. There is a good range of points covered in a logical sequence reaching a conclusion. The conclusion seems rushed and rather bland. This could be developed to improve the answer on the AO3 skill.

High band – Sample answer

Feminist researchers tend to focus on three main issues regarding gender inequality in education: achievement, subject choice and patriarchy in the educational system. Girls do achieve generally better grades than boys but some argue the reaction to this represents a general patriarchy in society.

For example, Mitsos and Brown argue that the increase in girls' achievement is linked to a general increase in feminist awareness for young women. The feminist movements of the past have raised the career ideas of young women and therefore, the educational ambitions of today's young women. This links to Sharpe's work measuring how the ambitions of girls had become much more careers focused in the 1990s compared to the 1970s.

Weiner et al argue that the media has created a misleading moral panic about the underachievement of boys. They argue that the gap between males and females in achievement is being exaggerated and that the headlines based on the need to do something about the boys is a backlash against a fear that women are gaining equality in society.

Feminists have argued that the education system trains girls/young women to accept patriarchy in society. Lobban argued that reading books used in primary schools reinforce traditional ideas about gender roles in society (e.g. women portrayed in domestic roles). Years later, Best supported Lobban: most of the female characters in reading books are portrayed in family situations, compared to a minority of male characters. Men were shown in a far wider range of occupations than women.

Stanworth interviewed teachers and students in a range of A Level classes in a college and found that girls were more invisible in the classroom, as measured by receiving less attention. Teachers held stereotypical views about the future roles of female students eg: being a personal assistant. Girls consistently underestimated their ability, while boys overestimated theirs. Stanworth concluded that the classroom regenerated a sexual hierarchy, in which boys are the dominant partners. Spender found very similar conclusions: boys dominated two thirds of teacher time and often abused and insulted the girls without the teacher challenging them on this. Spender argued that the formal curriculum was guilty of sexism. Men control the curriculum in order to define men's knowledge and experiences as important.

Feminists would challenge the idea that females and males are "naturally suited" to some subjects more than others. Norman argues that subject choice can be influenced by primary socialisation from the family e.g. canalisation concept (Oakley). Grafton et al found evidence that the enrolment and advice given to comprehensive pupils when picking their subjects at school encouraged very traditional choices along gender lines. Colley found similar conclusions in her work on computer studies: boys dominated the equipment. Colley argues that girls would develop more confidence in working with computers if allowed more opportunities to do group work in class. Colley argues that girls seem more positive about courses like computing if taught in all-girl classes.

Feminist research has served well to focus on the issue of gender in education, leading to better teacher training and awareness. However, feminist explanations can be criticised.

For example, many of the studies outlined above are rather dated: it is possible to argue that teacher training is now better aware of sexism in the interaction between teachers and pupils and in making sure the curriculum is not patriarchal. Indeed, there are policies designed to boost the number of women in subjects that are not traditional for their gender: W.I.S.E stands for Women in Science and Engineering. Having said this, Feminists might argue that this scheme has not had the widespread effect it would hope to have achieved. Indeed, recent research from Francis does support the material from Stanworth and Spender.

Some evidence from the feminist explanation is from unrepresentative samples. For example, Spender and Stanworth found useful conclusions but based them on only one school location. We can't generalise from their findings.

Other researchers would argue that gender inequality is not the most important issue in educational inequality today: the class gap has been very significant over time, so therefore, Marxist thinkers would criticise feminists for not focusing on class. Gillborn would argue that ethnic inequality is the most important issue, backed up by quantitative data from the Gifted and Talented scheme and his own primary research with samples.

Feminists might be accused of being overly deterministic: this is relevant to the evidence on subject choices. Functionalism may argue that girls will pick traditional subjects for their gender such as Health and Social Care as they are more naturally suited to the expressive role in our society. Hakim refers to how women have the power/agency to make choices about the careers they pick, so does the same apply when girls pick their GCSE, A level and career options?

To conclude, Feminism has highlighted the issues of patriarchy in the education system with a range of quantitative and qualitative data. But other sociologists would argue that they are missing important issues by seeing patriarchy in the system, for example the lack of male primary school teachers is seen as evidence of how boys' experience of education is negatively affected compared to girls.

AO1 – 16 out of 16 marks AO2 – 8 out of 8 marks AO3 – 14 out of 16 marks

Total = 38 out of 40 marks

Commentary

This answer displays excellent knowledge and understanding of a range of sociological material and there is an impressive range of sociological names referred to. There is accurate and thorough detail on all points raised. The answer has a well developed line of reasoning with a clear and logical structure. All points are evidenced with reference to a relevant study/evidence. The answer keeps well focused on the question set. There are sustained and explicit evaluation points, with a reflective tone.

The conclusion could be a little more developed, with a lack of detail on male teachers in primary school. This evaluative point and the issue of male achievement could have usefully been explored in more detail earlier in the essay. As it stands, the conclusion is contradictory as it raises a new point not mentioned at all in the main body of the essay.

Option 3: Religion, belief and faith

Question 10 In what ways does social class influence religion in society?

[10]

Low band – Sample answer

Marxists think that religion is the opium of the people. This means that people are brainwashed into doing what the ruling class want. In the hymn All things bright and beautiful it says 'the rich man at his castle the poor man at his gate, God made them high and lowly and gave them their estate.'

Functionalists think that religion creates social solidarity in society. Religion is like a glue holding society together. They see society as based on consensus. Class does influence religion because the rich use religious ideas to control the poor.

AO1 – 3 out of 6 marks AO2 – 2 out of 4 marks

Total = 5 out of 10 marks

Commentary

Basic understanding shown of relevant sociological material. The answer shows some understanding of the Marxist and functionalist approaches, but overall it is partial and undeveloped in relation to the question. In the case of Marxism there is some attempt to link this to the question by mentioning social class. The quote is potentially relevant but could be better applied to the question. The paragraph on functionalism does not add much because it doesn't link to the question. The final sentence rounds off the answer but is really just a repetition of the first sentence and not linked to the rest of the paragraph.

How the answer could be improved

A greater range of relevant material could have been included. In the first paragraph the candidate could link the quote to the question better by showing how the words of the hymn are part of a wider tendency in traditional Christianity and other religions for religion to support the existing class structure of society. The second paragraph could be made much more relevant by linking it explicitly to the question. For example the candidate could explain how, although social class is potentially a divisive influence, religion has the capacity to unite people around shared norms and values. An example to support this might be Bellah's study of American civil religion.

High band – Sample answer

Social class does influence religion in society but its influence is quite complex. According to Marx, religion is 'the opium of the people' suggesting that while the working class may accept religious ideas they are simply taken in by the false ideology of the ruling class. For example, many religions teach people to accept their position in society and obey the rules in the hope that they will be rewarded in life after death.

Weberian and neo-Marxist sociologists argue that religion is not always an ideology of the ruling class but can be used by poorer or more deprived social groups to solve their problems or even change society. Weber saw sects as the 'theodicy of the disprivileged', in other words as a way in which deprived groups might cope with their situation in society by using a religious viewpoint to give themselves some kind of comfort or compensation for poverty or lack of social status. For example, Beckford studied Pentacostalist churches which particularly appeal to poor black African and African-Caribbean groups. The appeal of such churches to deprived social groups seems to be the way they offer structure and meaning in the lives of people who have very little materially. They also offer the hope of salvation in heaven as a reward for true believers who live a good life on earth.

Some neo-Marxists point to examples of the way deprived or disadvantaged groups have used religion to fight back against oppression and injustice. For example Maduro discusses the example of liberation theology, an offshoot of the Roman Catholic Church which has been particularly influential in Latin America. Some Catholic clergy such as Archbishop Oscar Romero in Nicaragua have spoken out against dictatorial governments and have tried to encourage organisations which help the poor to protest against injustice.

AO1 – 6 out of 6 marks AO2 – 4 out of 4 marks

Total = 10 out 10 marks

Commentary

This answer demonstrates range and depth, covering three main approaches Marxism, Weberianism and neo-Marxism. Each theory is applied well to the question using relevant sociological concepts such as 'opium of the people', and 'theodicy of the disprivileged'. Relevant sociological studies have been applied and further illustrated with examples and evidence.

Question 11 To what extent are measures of religious practice an accurate representation of religious belief? [20]

Low band – Sample answer

Measures of religious practice are not an accurate representation of religious belief because people can believe without belonging. This means that lots of people believe in religion but don't actually belong to religious organisations. People can also belong without believing because people might go to church but not believe in God.

We can't trust church attendance statistics because a lot of them are collected by churches themselves and they may lie about how many members they have to make themselves look good. However, Catholic churches may say they have less members because they have to hand over more money to the main church if they have more members. People may also lie in surveys about church attendance because they want to appear to be more religious than they really are.

Surveys about religion show that less and less people believe in things like God or heaven and hell so this shows that religious beliefs are in decline. Also less and less people are going to church so this shows a decline in belief.

It's hard to measure religious belief because there are so many different beliefs like Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs as well as Christians and some people even believe in new religious movements. In conclusion, some sociologists might suggest that measures of religious practice are an accurate representation of religious belief because if people practice religion they probably believe in it as well.

AO1 – 5 out of 8 marks, AO2 – 3 out of 4 marks, AO3 – 4 out of 8 marks

Total = 12 out of 20 marks

Commentary

This answer shows a good understanding of the extent to which measures of religious practice are an accurate representation of religious belief. The first paragraph uses the relevant concept of believing without belonging but this could have been applied better by using one or two examples and linking the point more clearly to the distinction between practice and belief. The second paragraph makes a relevant point about statistics collected by religious organisations themselves but is a little crudely expressed, for example seeing inaccuracies in statistics as simply due to people lying. The third paragraph is potentially relevant but fails to tie the material in to the question, for example by considering the relationship between a decline in church attendance and changes in patterns of belief. Similarly the point about religious pluralism and diversity could be very relevant but fails to really explain why diversity of beliefs and practice makes it more difficult to measure them. The conclusion offers the only point presenting an alternative viewpoint but is underdeveloped and lacking any supporting evidence or examples.

How the answer could be improved

This answer could be improved with more application to the question. In almost every paragraph a simple sentence or phrase linking the material to the question would gain more marks for application. A clearer development of points suggesting that measures of religious practice do tell us something about the extent of religious belief is needed. Though the answer shows some understanding of sociological concepts, it could be improved by adding references to studies and/ or examples to support points.

High band – Sample answer

Religious practice includes attendance at places of worship, praying, and taking part in religious ceremonies and festivals. However, this is not the same as religious belief as some people may hold religious beliefs while not outwardly practicing. Religious practice has, however, been traditionally used to measure the level of belief in society.

Secularisation theorists, such as Steve Bruce, argue that there has been a significant decline in levels of church attendance since 1851, when about half the population went to church, to about 7% attendance today. They would argue that while some of those who do not attend may still believe or may take part in religions other than Christianity, this is a major shift and shows that Christianity no longer has a central place in the lives of British people. Therefore suggesting that religious practice is still an accurate measure of religious belief.

Against this some sociologists such as Grace Davie argue that there has been a growth of 'believing without belonging'. This implies that fewer people actually belong to churches or other religious organisations and regularly attend but people may still have religious beliefs. The British Social Attitudes Survey found that while only 37% of people believe in God a further 33% believe in some kind of spirit or life force, so the majority of people have some kind of religious or spiritual belief. So Davie may argue that measures of practice alone do not give an accurate representation of religious belief.

Measuring both religious belief and practice is very difficult. For example a study by Hadaway in the USA asked people in a telephone poll how many of them were regular church attenders. They then measured church attendance by counting people as they went into churches on Sunday and found the level of attendance was only about half what the telephone poll suggested. This suggests that actual religious practice is not the same as what people may say they do, showing how hard it is to measure religiosity accurately.

Studies of religious practice mainly focus on attendance at traditional places of worship such as churches. In the Kendal Project Heelas and Woodhead found that people were turning away from this kind of religion, what they called the 'congregational domain'. However, they noticed a growth in what they called the 'holistic milieu' a group of beliefs associated with the New Age Movement whereby people engaged in spiritual practices such as mediation, yoga, faith healing and witchcraft. Whether these practices indicate religious belief is debatable however. This study could suggest that measuring practice in a traditional way is no longer accurate, since our behaviour has changed in postmodern society, but also raises questions as to what constitutes religious belief.

In conclusion, it seems that to get a truly accurate representation of religious belief is very difficult, since belief is a personal thing and demonstrated in many different ways.

AO1 – 8 out of 8 marks, AO2 – 4 out of 4 marks, AO3 – 8 out of 8 marks

Total = 20 out 20 marks

Commentary

This answer shows range and depth of relevant material, which is all clearly applied to the question. It has a well-developed line of reasoning and all points are substantiated and focused. The answer starts by showing clear understanding of the distinction between religious practice and religious belief. A range of points, both for and against the use of religious practice to measure belief, are presented, supported by evidence, and well applied to the question. There is a reflective tone throughout and a credible conclusion related to the discussion.

Question 12 Outline and evaluate the view that religion causes change in society.**[40]****Low band – Sample answer**

Marxists say that religion is a conservative force because religion is the opium of the people. The ruling class use religion to keep the working class under control. Functionalists agree that religion is a conservative force but in a good way because religion helps to create social solidarity.

Feminists think religion is a conservative force because religion is patriarchal. There are lots of examples of this, like in the Bible it blames Eve for tempting Adam so women are seen as less trustworthy than men. In Jewish synagogues women have to sit out of sight of men so they don't distract them from praying and Jewish men say 'thank God I wasn't born a woman' when they are praying. A lot of feminists think Muslim women wearing a veil is a sign of patriarchy but this has been criticised because some women find the veil liberating. It could be argued that feminism isn't relevant anymore because in lots of religions women now have equality, for example in the Church of England there are women priests.

Weber says that Protestantism helped to bring about capitalism. Neo-Marxists also think religion causes social change because of liberation theology. In South America some priests tried to change society so this shows religion can help cause change in society. The civil rights movement in America was led by Martin Luther King who was a church minister.

In conclusion there is a lot of evidence that religion is a conservative force but there are also a few examples to show that religion causes change in society.

AO1 - 8 out of 16 marks AO2 - 4 out of 8 marks AO3 - 5 out of 16 marks

Total = 17 out of 40 marks

Commentary

The answer shows basic knowledge and understanding, lacking range and depth. Points made are undeveloped and lack explicit reference to the question. For example, although the answer describes Marxism, functionalism and feminism seeing religion as conservative, this is not developed or linked to the question. In support of religion causing changes in society, relevant points are referred to but remain undeveloped. Although there is some balance in the arguments the candidate has largely juxtaposed arguments for and against rather than explicitly evaluating theories and evidence. There is a conclusion but it is summative and doesn't really add anything evaluative to what has already been said.

How the answer could be improved

The answer could demonstrate more depth of understanding, for example by explaining what Marx meant by religion being the opium of the people with an example and by explaining more fully what Weber saw as the link between Protestantism and the rise of capitalism, applying these points more explicitly to the view in the question. The section on feminism tends to lose sight of the question and needs to be explicitly linked back to the issue of religion and social change. The answer would also be better structured by starting off with arguments supporting the view and then using material currently in the first two paragraphs more explicitly to criticise the view that religion causes change. The candidate could then round the answer off with a better conclusion which clearly summed up the arguments on both sides but also perhaps come down on one side with reasons.

High band – Sample answer

Many sociological theories see religion as a conservative force inhibiting change in society. However, some have suggested that in certain circumstances religion can help to change society.

One of the best examples of this approach is Max Weber who argued that the Protestant ethic helped to encourage the rise of capitalism. This was because Calvinists and other early Protestants worked hard at building up businesses and instead of spending their wealth on enjoyment reinvested it back in their businesses becoming successful capitalists. Eventually other groups in society followed this pattern without necessarily being Protestants and this became the spirit of capitalism. Weber did not argue that Protestantism alone caused capitalism, there were many other factors, but he suggests that it is significant that capitalism emerged in the Protestant countries of western Europe and north America rather than in societies such as India or China which had more traditional religions. Marxists, like Kautsky, argue that Weber fails to prove that Protestantism caused the rise of capitalism, it can be argued that capitalism already existed before the Reformation and that the ideas of Protestantism simply helped to justify capitalist behaviour in terms of a religious ideology.

It can be argued that religious leaders throughout history have played a part in bringing about changes in society. For example, Martin Luther King and other black Christian leaders were prominent in the American civil rights movement in the 1960s and Archbishop Desmond Tutu and other religious leaders in South Africa helped the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. In Iran the Islamic fundamentalist leader Ayatollah Khomeini led a religiously inspired revolution in 1979 against the Shah who had tried to impose western ideas on a religiously conservative society. Although in this case Islamic fundamentalism brought about a revolutionary change in Iran it was also a very conservative force taking Iran back to a much more traditional way of life and resisting the process of modernisation and westernisation.

Most Marxists have seen religion as a conservative force acting as a form of ideology which justifies inequality and the power of the ruling class, however, some neo-Marxists inspired by Gramsci argue that under certain circumstances religion can be a force for change or even liberation. Gramsci saw religion as part of the hegemony or ideological control exercised by the ruling class but he suggested that intellectuals, including priests, might play a part in encouraging members of the working class to fight against this hegemony with alternative ideas, challenging the inequalities of capitalism.

Maduro argues that one example of this is liberation theology, an offshoot of Roman Catholicism which gained influence in Latin America. Liberation theology teaches that it is the duty of Christians to fight against poverty and injustice and it can be seen as a mixture of Marxist and Christian ideas. Some Catholic priests influenced by this have helped ordinary people to fight for social justice against dictatorial governments. However, not all the Catholic Church have been equally enthusiastic about their ideas. For example, Pope John Paul II strongly criticised liberation theology and tried to prevent priests from encouraging it, so support for radical ideas in religion may exist at the grass roots but receive little support from more powerful religious leaders.

While Weberians and neo-Marxists have pointed to a range of case studies where religion has brought about social change, few sociologists would argue that all religions act in this way. Marxists in particular see religion as a conservative ideology promoting a false consciousness. For example, in the USA Pentacostalist Christianity and gospel music are popular with black Christians. However, for Marxists this is just religion acting as the 'opium of the people', like a drug which makes people feel better about their situation without curing the real problem that black people are often trapped at the bottom of US society facing racism.

Functionalists also challenge the view in the question, and see religion as a conservative force but in a more positive way. Durkheim argues that the main function of religion is to create a sense of social solidarity or unity by offering sacred symbols around which members of society can unite. This could be relevant to modern societies such as the USA where civil religion is important. Bellah argues that most Americans, whatever their religion, subscribe to a form of national religion which celebrates the traditional values of Americanism in rituals such as Independence Day and Thanksgiving with the American flag acting as a totem which represents these values.

In an opposing view focused on non-Western societies, Castells argues that globalisation has undermined people's traditional identities and can provoke a reaction against westernisation and modernisation via religious fundamentalism. This can be seen in countries like Afghanistan where radical Islamic groups such as the Taliban fought first against invasion by the Soviet Union in the 1980s and then against America and her allies after 2001. More recently conflicts in Iraq and Syria have been partially caused by religious divisions. As in the Iranian revolution, fundamentalist groups in these countries are a mixture of revolutionary ideas seeking to overthrow existing governments and ways of living but also seeking a return to the past, for example in Syria ISIS seek a return to the medieval Islamic Caliphate and the imposition of Sharia Law based on traditional Islamic teachings.

In conclusion there is certainly evidence that religion can cause changes in society, religious ideas are still extremely influential in the politics of the Middle East but also in some western countries such as the USA. At the same time many religious ideas such as Islamic and Christian fundamentalisms are distinctly conservative in outlook and could be seen as holding back progressive changes in society.

AO1 - 16 out of 16 marks AO2 - 8 out of 8 marks AO3 -16 out of 16 marks

Total = 40 out of 40 marks

Commentary

This is an excellent answer, with range and depth of knowledge and understanding, using a wealth of supporting evidence.

The candidate starts by offering a clear and succinct summary of Weber and then applies some more modern examples of religion bringing about social change in support, also utilising neo-Marxism, with some additional contemporary examples. Evaluation is sustained throughout the answer with critical points being made about both sides of the argument which leads to a thoughtful and focused conclusion.



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