

**CARIBBEAN EXAMINATIONS COUNCIL**

**REPORT ON CANDIDATES' WORK IN THE  
CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION  
MAY/JUNE 2008**

**SOCIOLOGY**

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**CARIBBEAN STUDIES**  
**CARIBBEAN ADVANCED PROFICIENCY EXAMINATION**  
**MAY/JUNE 2008**  
**GENERAL COMMENTS**

Assessment for both Units 1 and 2 is based on three papers. Paper 01 (30 per cent), Paper 02 (50 per cent) and Paper 03 (20 per cent). All three modules of the syllabus were tested in each paper. Paper 01 consisted of nine compulsory short answers, each carrying 10 marks, for a maximum of 90 marks. Paper 02 consisted of three sections, with two questions each. Candidates were required to answer three questions, one from each section, with each question marked out of 25. In Paper 03, the internal assessment, candidates were required to undertake a research project for both Units 1 and 2. Candidates were allowed to carry forward their Internal Assessment marks from Unit 1 to Unit 2. The Internal Assessments were marked by the teacher and samples forwarded to CXC for moderation.

**UNIT 1**

**PAPER 01**

**MODULE 1**

Question 1

This question was based on the sociological perspectives, more specifically on the development of sociology as a discipline, sociology as a science, and the data collection techniques used in sociology. While the majority of candidates were able to name the sociologist who gave the discipline its name, very few candidates were able to state the three stages through which society evolves. There is need for greater focus on the preparation of candidates who are knowledgeable about the development of sociology as a discipline. Parts (c) and (d) of the question were generally well done as candidates were able to accurately identify methods of observation used in sociological research and explain how natural science methods are used in sociological research.

Question 2

This question focused on the fundamental concepts in sociology as a discipline. Most candidates were able to accurately identify the integrationist/interpretive sociological perspective and define society. In Part (c) most candidates were able to identify three examples of social groups and explain how any one of the groups was formed in Part (d). This question was generally well done by most candidates.

Question 3

This question was based on ethical issues in research. Generally, Part (a) of the question was not well done, as some candidates had difficulty in identifying valid ethical issues. However, Parts (b), (c), and (d) were well done as candidates appeared to be sufficiently familiar with the types of documents used in sociological research and the associated advantages and disadvantages of their use.

**MODULE 2**Question 4

This question focused on the family. All parts of this question were generally well done. Candidates were able to identify Caribbean family types other than the nuclear family and outline the reasons for their prevalence. Most candidates were able to explain how the family performs its functions.

Question 5

This question focused on religion. Candidates generally experienced difficulty identifying two conflict theorists, and outlining the main features of secularization. However, most candidates were able to explain how religion contributes to social solidarity in society.

Question 6

This question focused on education. Candidates were generally able to state the similarities between the conflict and consensus perspectives on education. This question was generally well done and most candidates were able to identify the reasons for girls outperforming boys in school and the consequences of male underachievement.

**MODULE 3**Question 7

This question was based on social stratification. Parts (a), (b) and (c) of this question were generally well done as most candidates were able to state the features of “open” and “closed” stratification systems respectively, and name one conflict or consensus theorist associated with social stratification. However, some candidates experienced difficulty explaining “horizontal mobility”. This suggests the need for some focus on comparing contrasting concepts of stratification.

Question 8

This question was based on gender as one of the main concepts of stratification. All parts of this question were generally well done. Most candidates were able to define the term gender and explain how it is socially constructed. The gender roles assigned largely to males and females were well known and most candidates were able to explain the reasons why male gender roles tend to be associated with greater power than females roles.

Question 9

This question was based on class, social change and attempts by Caribbean governments to bring about greater equality in society. Most candidates were able to answer Parts (a), (c), and (d) of this question adequately. However, some candidates were unable to identify the factors which have led to the changing stratification in the Caribbean.

**PAPER 02****MODULE 1**

Candidates were required to write three essays (one from each module), in two and a half hours. While most candidates exhibited the general understanding and knowledge requirements for each question, there seems to be some difficulty with applying the knowledge and understanding the process of evaluation in the context of previous studies of Caribbean society. There is need for development of appropriate samples to guide students on the expectations for their performances.

**Question 1**

This question was based on the major sociological research methods. While most candidates were aware of the advantages and disadvantages of using quantitative methods in sociological research, they were unable to apply this knowledge in the context of Durkheim's study of suicide. Most candidates were not familiar with the main tenets of Durkheim's work, the period in which the study was conducted, or the particular methods used by Durkheim in arriving at his conclusions. The need for more in-depth focus on the work of the founding fathers as a basis for some of the later sociological studies conducted is suggested. More emphasis on synthesis and evaluation is needed in this regard.

**Question 2**

This question was based on the functionalist perspective in sociology and the application of its main tenets to the study of contemporary Caribbean society. Candidates were required to apply their knowledge of how society works using examples of studies conducted in the Caribbean. Most candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of the functionalist perspective, but experienced some difficulty in applying it to the analysis of either creolization or stratification, as examples of processes in Caribbean society.

**MODULE 2****Question 3**

This question was based on the family in the Caribbean and the extent to which the family today could be described as dysfunctional. This was a popular question in the examination, attempted by three quarters of all candidates. While most candidates demonstrated knowledge of the studies conducted in the region, they were generally unable to apply that knowledge. Most were only able to offer general commentaries and there was evidence of the use of statistical data that could be questioned. Attempts at evaluation and synthesis were also problematic for most candidates.

**Question 4**

This question was based on male marginalization and required reference to studies on education in the contemporary period. It was generally well done by the few candidates attempting. However, reference to studies on gender and education were largely not evident.

### MODULE 3

#### Question 5

This question was based on social class and the relevance of analyses of social class to the study of social stratification in the Caribbean. This was one of the least popular questions on the paper and was not generally well done. Knowledge and understanding were demonstrated in most of the answers; however, candidates were generally not familiar with the supporting studies. Attempts at application, synthesis and evaluation were generally weak.

#### Question 6

This question was based on educational achievement in the context of gender or class. While most candidates performed well on this question, some of the responses lacked depth and there needed to be greater emphasis on the use of existing studies to aid in the synthesis and evaluation requirements. This was one of the popular questions on the examination.

### INTERNAL ASSESSMENT

The internal assessment was for the most part poorly executed. The major weaknesses demonstrated in the samples submitted were the introduction, statement of the problem, the aims and objectives of the study and the literature review.

There is need for focus on greater understanding of what is required in the introduction. Candidates must provide a short background in the context of the problem/issue under investigation. This can be done in two to three paragraphs that focus on providing general information on the problem/issue, including the need for more information or to promote clarity on the topic, the current state of knowledge on the topic and some historical background to the study. Most candidates simply restated the topic in a sentence or two and did not provide adequate background to the study. In addition, most of the samples were devoid of any theoretical consideration or an appropriate sociological framework that would place the study in context.

The introduction should be followed by the problem statement, which identifies the rationale for the study and sets the parameters of the project. This statement should be presented in one or two paragraphs which state the research problem or research issue under consideration and identifies what the candidate proposes to do in the study, as an extension of the background to the study and the theoretical or conceptual framework. The problem statement is not the topic restated. The topic is a guide to the candidate in determining which aspect of the topic can be reasonably developed into a problem statement as an area for study.

The next section of the report should lay out the aims and objectives. The aims are broad in scope and identify the general aspect of the problem/issue that the study is seeking to determine, understand, explain or explore. On the other hand, the objectives are specific and usually incorporate the variables that are to be discussed in the study. Most candidates did not have clearly stated aims and objectives indicated in their work and therefore it was difficult to obtain an understanding of the specific nature of the study and what it was expected to achieve. This is a direct outcome of the lack of depth noted in the introduction to most of the submissions and the lack of a clear theoretical or conceptual direction.

The literature review was another of the weak aspects of the internal assessment and this is particularly troubling as it signals that candidates are undertaking their projects with limited knowledge of their topic. In some cases no studies, books or articles were cited in the literature review, with anecdotal evidence put forward based on the candidates' experiences. There is need for

candidates to be better guided in the review of literature and to cite sources appropriately in the body of the study.

The bibliography section of the study also left a lot to be desired. Candidates should be introduced to bibliographic styles to assist in proffering a better prepared report for assessment.

Last, but not least, plagiarism seems to be creeping into the process. There is need for alertness on the part of the teacher and for better guidance of candidates if the internal assessment process is not to be compromised.

## **UNIT 2**

### **PAPER 01**

#### **MODULE 1**

##### Question 1

This question was based on population and population change. Most candidates were able to provide satisfactory definitions for population change and the associated “pull factors”. Most candidates were also able to demonstrate knowledge of the impact of a twentieth century disaster on population change and were able to distinguish between “life expectancy” and “dependency ratio”. This question was generally well done.

##### Question 2

This question focused on population statistics and indicators of development. Most candidates were able to state the sources of population statistics and indicate why population statistics may not by themselves be used as indicators of development. Most candidates were able to demonstrate knowledge of development indicators and state the advantages and disadvantages of reducing the rate of population growth.

##### Question 3

This question was based on population theories. Most candidates were able to identify the theory on which the question was based. However, the majority of candidates were unable to adequately outline the factors that contributed to population growth in Europe in the late eighteenth century, and the stages of population growth outlined in the demographic transition theory.

#### **MODULE 2**

##### Question 4

This question was based on social order in society and the role of the family, the school and religion in contributing to the maintenance of social order in society. The majority of candidates were able to adequately explain the ways in which these institutions contribute to the maintenance of social order. This question was generally well done.

Question 5

This question was based on social control and the alternatives to punishment I the family and to imprisonment in the context of the formal agents of social control. This question was generally well done.

Question 6

This question was based on deviance. Most candidates were able to adequately define the concepts of deviance and state one way in which deviance may be beneficial to society. Some candidates experienced difficulty with Part (c) and were unable to state one example of non-criminal deviance.

**MODULE 3**Question 7

This question was based on poverty and the measures that Caribbean governments can adopt to reduce poverty. Most candidates were able to identify the type of poverty addressed by the question and to identify the factors that may cause people to continue living in poverty. Some candidates experienced difficulty with the suggested plan of action

Question 8

This question was based on modernization theory. The majority of candidates were able to define modernization and name two modernization theorists. However, they were unable to provide adequate explanations of why countries of the North are more “modern” than those of the South. Most candidates demonstrated adequate knowledge of the major advantages that people in countries of the North enjoy over others in the South.

Question 9

This question was based on the impact of culture on change and World Systems Theory. This question was poorly done by most candidates. While most understood what is meant by the term “global village” and were able to state at least one feature of World Systems Theory, explanations provided for the way in which the Caribbean can benefit from cultural exchanges with other countries were weak. Most were unable to adequately outline two benefits of regional cooperation in the context of the question.

**PAPER 02****(Region)**

Candidates were required to write three essays (one from each module), in two and a half hours. While most candidates exhibited the general understanding and knowledge requirements for each question, there seems to some difficulty with applying the knowledge and there is need to develop candidate’s abilities in the areas of synthesis and evaluation in the context of previous studies of Caribbean society. Debating competitions or group research projects may provide a basis for developing these abilities in the school environment.

**MODULE 1**Question 1

This question was based on Malthusian theory of population. Candidates were required to assess the relevance of Malthusian or neo-Malthusian theory to population issues in a named Caribbean society. The Malthusian theory was generally well known to many candidates, who were also able to clearly identify features of the named Caribbean society to which the theory could be applied. However, most candidates were unable to adequately assess the relevance of the theory to the named Caribbean society. There is need for development of the ability of candidates to evaluate theories in this context.

Question 2

This question was based on the impact of internal and external factors on population trends. Most candidates were able to identify the factors that would impact trends. However, most demonstrated limited knowledge on the data requirements to determine population trends in a named Caribbean country for the stated time period.

**MODULE 2**Question 3

This question was based on crime statistics and the propensity for some groups in society to be better represented in official crime statistics. Most candidates were able to adequately explain why some groups in society tend to make up a greater proportion of criminal offenders. However, many were unable to provide empirical evidence to support their arguments.

Question 4

This question was on Interactionists theories of juvenile delinquency and relevance for the Caribbean. While candidates were able to explain the theories, they did not demonstrate adequate knowledge of the empirical evidence needed to support their arguments on the relevance of the theories in the Caribbean.

**MODULE 3**Question 5

This question was based on national development strategies in the context of investment in employment and education initiatives. Candidates performed generally well on the knowledge and application components of the assessment criteria. The question was reasonably well done, but arguments needed to be better supported and there was need for more focus on synthesis and evaluation.

Question 6

This question was based on poverty and the “cultural of poverty” as an impediment to any attempt at developing an effective poverty reduction strategy in a named Caribbean society. Most candidates demonstrated adequate knowledge on the concept “cultural of poverty” and were able to apply the understanding to why the strategies will continue to fail. However, knowledge of empirical studies and their application in evaluating the strategies was weak.

**UNIT 2****PAPER 2****(Trinidad and Tobago)****MODULE 1**Question 1

Candidates were asked to give reasons for the reduction in population growth rates in a named Caribbean society over the past thirty years. This was a popular question, in which most candidates demonstrated awareness, knowledge and understanding of the population growth as the interrelation between births, deaths and migration in the named Caribbean society. However, some candidates were unable to apply the information as they chose to use Caribbean countries of which they had little or no knowledge. There is need for reading by candidates on topics such as:

- Increasing levels of social development
- Technological advancements
- Industrial growth
- Urban migration
- Decline in births/fertility in the Caribbean

Question 2

This question was based on the implications for social and economic development in a named Caribbean society in respect to population ageing. Candidates were expected to demonstrate awareness, knowledge and understanding of what is meant by population ageing and the implications (negative/positive) for the named Caribbean society. Most candidates demonstrated a good knowledge of the question and were able to give concise and critical points about the realities of the named Caribbean society. Good interpretation, application skills and synthesis with a fair level of evaluation were shown.

**MODULE 2**Question 3

This question was based on the extent to which the key social institutions – (education, religion, and family) have been effective agents of social control in a named Caribbean society. Candidates were required to demonstrate knowledge or understanding and use this to apply and analyse the situation in a named Caribbean society. This was a popular question, however, most candidates were unable to use the correct sociological studies or theories in the question. Many gave the agents, but failed to develop and evaluate these agents in the application to the named society. In the future more in depth work in Sociology classes should be done on relevant studies in relationship to topics or issues such as:

- Juvenile delinquency
- Drug abuse
- Domestic violence
- White collar crime.

Question 4

This question was based on the extent to which alternatives to imprisonment provided a better approach to controlling crime and maintaining social order in Caribbean societies. Candidates were expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of what was meant by social order, social stability, social consensus or absence of social disorder. Candidates also had to state what was meant by alternatives to imprisonment and provide examples of the alternatives. Most candidates were able to demonstrate a fair knowledge of what is meant by social order, crime and alternatives to imprisonment. Other concepts such as social consensus, social stability and the ability to apply the knowledge of these were absent from answering this question. Many candidates neglected to show counter arguments and hence did not say to what extent these alternatives were better. Both sides of the argument were rarely presented or supported.

**MODULE 3**Question 5

This question was based on how the historical relationship between Britain and the Caribbean led to the advanced socio-economic conditions in Britain today. This was not a popular question. However, many of the candidates concentrated on the period of slavery and neglected the post-emancipation period. Many presented Sir Arthur Lewis' "industrialization by invitation" theory which had impacted on America and not Britain. Many also used the country of Haiti as an example which was incorrect, as France was the mother country and not Britain. Those who provided the sociological theories showed knowledge and understanding of both the dependency theory and world system theories in relationship to the realities of issues in Britain and the Caribbean.

Question 6

This question was based on poverty alleviation policies in relation to the improvement of the quality of the life in Caribbean society. This was a popular question. Candidates were expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the many strategies employed by government to improve the quality of life. Many candidates showed very good knowledge and understanding of strategies by giving strong arguments for or against these strategies to improve the quality of life in Caribbean society. Additionally, many candidates made mention of the "Right Approach" but gave details of the "Basic Needs Approach". Those who provided theories were deficient in the application and evaluation of these. However, most candidates demonstrated that they understood the concept of poverty in the Caribbean society.

**INTERNAL ASSESSMENT**

The internal assessment was for the most part, poorly executed. The major weaknesses demonstrated in the samples submitted were similar to those demonstrated in Unit 1.

**ALTERNATIVE TO THE INTERNAL ASSESSMENT**

The alternative paper for private candidates was generally poorly done. The response to the questions suggests that candidates did not attempt an actual project nor did they seek guidance in doing so. Candidates provided many general, often unclear and inadequate responses to the questions asked and did not demonstrate the knowledge and understanding required at this level. In addition, the submissions reflected a limited understanding of the basic components of research design, including the need for reliance on sociological theory or frameworks to guide research and facilitate analysis of

data. The responses appeared more akin to social studies projects given their lack of depth, or exhibition of understanding of the fundamental guiding concepts associated with social research.

Private candidates must be encouraged to conduct an actual study as stated in the syllabus as a prerequisite to taking the written examination. This is necessary in order to obtain the required practical experience. Alternatively, they should seek proper guidance either from established tests and study of documents prepared as a complement to the syllabus or via class sessions with a tutor.