

**GCE**

**Sociology**

Advanced GCE **H580**

**OCR Report to Centres June 2017**

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- areas where students were more successful
- main areas where students may need additional support and some reflection
- points of advice for future examinations

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## H580/01 Socialisation, culture and identity

### General Comments:

This is the first examination of the new A Level Sociology specification and overall the standard of responses was good. There was a wide range of responses, suggesting that the paper differentiated effectively. The vast majority of candidates attempted to answer all questions on the paper and managed to time their responses well. There were very few rubric errors and candidates seem overall well prepared knowing the assessment objectives of each question. Saying that, it was apparent that some candidates did not evaluate in the questions which specifically asked for evaluation; that is, question 3 on Section A and the 16 and 24 mark questions on Section B. Do remind candidates of the importance of addressing all three assessment objectives, particularly when the question asks to 'Assess the view' or to 'Briefly evaluate'. In Section A, there was a clear difference between candidates in the use of sources; some candidates made very little reference to the sources and consequently could not be awarded AO2 marks for application. There is further discussion regarding use of sources in the individual question (question 2) below. In Section B, Families and relationships was the most popular option, but this was very closely followed closely by Youth subcultures. Few centres chose the Media option.

With every question, in order to achieve marks in the highest mark band, candidates need to include a range of sociological evidence and to discuss these with some depth. A large number of responses, particularly for the 20 mark questions in Section A and the 24 mark question in Section B did not include the required range and depth of sociological evidence. 'Evidence' can include studies, theories, concepts and contemporary examples, although it should be noted that responses which rely heavily on contemporary examples will not score very highly as, on their own, contemporary examples are not good sociology. It is also worth noting that there is a difference between contemporary examples and anecdote. Contemporary examples mean events in society that can inform sociology but may not have been formally researched or studied; or events that are happening as sociologists are carrying out their research. For example, some candidates referred to the recent resurgence in national identity following the Manchester bombing as evaluative evidence for question 3. Anecdotal evidence, on the other hand, is bordering on 'common sense' knowledge and this is not rewarded in the examination; for example, by claiming that 'national identities are not significant because nobody waves a union jack flag anymore'. Responses which were wide-ranging in their use of sociological studies, particularly in question 3 (Section A) and the 16 and 24 mark questions in Section B, tended to score highly and there are some examples of good practice in the individual question section below.

On the whole there was a clear difference between the high and low achieving candidates. At the top end, there was a range of sociological evidence contained in answers to all of the questions. Such responses included relevant and detailed explanations including sociological studies, concepts and theories where appropriate. The lower achieving candidates were often unable to provide sociological knowledge and understanding and their answers became very anecdotal and common sense like. Candidates must be encouraged to back up their answers with sociological evidence; be it concepts, studies, relevant contemporary examples or theory. For example, in answers to question 4, candidates who discussed studies of ethnicity and family structure, such as Berthoud or Ballard, scored much more highly than those who made unsupported statements such as 'Afro-Caribbean families are more likely to be single parents'.

In terms of assessment objectives, Knowledge and Understanding (AO1) remains the strongest area; good candidates were able to offer a whole range of sociological knowledge, mainly in the form of concepts and studies, but sometimes making relevant use of contemporary examples and theory.

AO2 (Application) seemed to be the most difficult skill area for candidates; whilst many have been trained to evaluate evidence and arguments, they are less successful at interpreting knowledge and applying it to the specific question or context. For example, in question 9, candidates were able to offer a range of knowledge related to theories of deviant sub-cultures but were less able to relate the theories to the focus of the question around lack of status.

In terms of AO3 marks (Analysis and Evaluation), as mentioned earlier, some candidates did not evaluate at all; this was particularly true for questions 3 and 8. On both of these questions, there are 4 marks for evaluation and candidates can reach the top level by offering one well developed point, supported by sociological evidence. However, some candidates did the opposite; they spent too much time explaining evaluation points when there were only four marks available. This was particularly prevalent with question 5 and question 11. Such responses tended to score low marks because there was not enough range or depth of knowledge which was proportionately worth the vast majority of the marks. It is also noteworthy that many responses only evaluate by juxtaposition; that is, rather than directly evaluate the view in the question, candidates just offered a different theoretical explanation. Teachers should encourage students to use evaluative techniques which directly address the view in the question; for example 'This theory/study/view can be criticised because...'. Or 'Functionalists/Marxists/interactionists criticise this view for...'.

It must be noted that AO3 now contains reference to a conclusion and to reach Level 4 of the mark scheme it was expected that candidates would be able to offer a reasoned and critical conclusion, particularly in the questions where the evaluation marks were worth 8 marks (questions 6, 9 and 12). However, the vast majority of candidates struggled to offer a critical conclusion and most were just summaries of the debate outlined in the main body of the answer. It is recommended that teachers spend some time developing the skill of conclusion writing to enable the top of the highest mark for AO3 to be used. It's worth noting that candidates who offered a range of detailed and substantiated evaluation points could still access the top mark band for evaluation marks, without a detailed and critical conclusion.

### **Comments on individual questions:**

#### **Question 1**

The majority of candidates were able to offer a core definition of the concept 'popular culture' as referring to the culture of the majority or masses. Some candidates struggled to explain the meaning without using the word 'popular'; some even stated that 'popular culture is self-explanatory. Without further elaboration, this was not awarded any marks. Teachers must encourage students to learn the definitions of these core concepts which are listed in the specification. The best responses offered a core one sentence definition and then offered further development by, for example, discussing a theoretical interpretation of popular culture (such as Adorno) or by comparing it to other types of culture, such as high culture, or by making links with global culture. Most candidates were aware that this question asked for examples to illustrate the concept. The most popular examples given were watching football, watching soaps on television, and listening to pop music. Weaker responses offered a confused definition, often mixing it up with consumer culture or high culture or didn't include examples. It is worth noting that 4 out of the 4 marks available are for application (of further knowledge and of examples).

#### **Question 2**

This question required candidates to offer an accurate definition of cultural hybridity, referring to the fusing together of different cultures AND the creation of new ones. Many responses confused hybridity with multi-culturalism, cultural diversity or assimilation. The best responses to this question offered a definition of cultural hybridity, backed up by some sociological evidence, for example Johal's research of BrAsian culture. Most candidates attempted to interpret the sources, but there were varying degrees of success. The best responses interpreted the sources in their own words and then offered wider sociological knowledge in the

form of theories (e.g postmodernism) or studies of cultural hybridity (such as Nayak's study of 'White Wannabes' or Burdsey's study of Asian footballers. Weaker responses only referred to one source, or their interpretation of sources was brief and basic or inaccurate; for example, a number of candidates interpreted the female Asian in the photo as being male. This question will always ask candidates to refer to the sources and their wider sociological knowledge, so it is worth training students on the skill of source interpretation and application.

### **Question 3**

Overall, this question on national identity was not as well answered. The best responses were able to offer a range of three or more sociological studies or theories relating to the decline of national identities, such as Sadar, Kumar and Waters. The work of Stuart Hall's responses to globalisation was well used, often gaining both knowledge and evaluation marks. Good responses were also able to develop the part of the question relating to globalisation, including for example, McLuhan's work on the global village and offering further explanations of the impact of cultural hybridity in the decline of national identities. In terms of evaluation, the best responses used a range of evidence, supported by relevant contemporary examples, such as the Manchester bomb attack or the Olympics, to demonstrate that national identities are not in decline. Candidates need to remember that there are only four marks available for evaluation for this question. One fully developed evaluation point with evidence can achieve full marks. Some weaker responses tried to turn the question away from a focus on national identities by arguing that there is a rising significance of identities other than national identity, such as social class or gender. Such responses tended to lack focus on the question and predominantly only reached Level 2 of the mark scheme for AO1 and AO2.

## **OPTION QUESTIONS**

### **Option 1 Families and relationships**

#### **Question 4**

The majority of answers marked for this question focussed on comparing South Asian and African-Caribbean families in the UK. This could be on family structure, family size, traditions etc. Some answers did have the first reason/way focusing on how South Asian families are different to British families and then the second reason/way focusing on how African-Caribbean families are different to British. To gain marks candidates needed to develop reasons - stating and explaining without making reference to sociological evidence is not sufficient. The best responses were able to back up their response with studies and evidence, including Berthoud and Ballard.

#### **Question 5**

Few candidates were able to draw upon more than one piece of legislation which affected divorce rates. Even when they were able to cite the 1969 Act, many responses lacked the detailed explanation of this act, or got it confused with the 1857 act or 1923 Act. A common response was to cite a divorce law and link it to divorce becoming 'cheaper and easier' or 'equality between the sexes'. Not all divorce laws were linked to these factors. Another feature of weak responses was too much focus on evaluating the question; often candidates wrote a length about how factors other than legislation affected divorce rates, such as secularisation or the changing role of women. Unfortunately, there are only 4 marks available for evaluation so much of these answers went un-credited.

#### **Question 6**

This was generally a very well answered question and candidates were able to locate the view in the question within a Marxist or Marxist-Feminist framework. Candidates were able to draw upon the writings of Engels, Zaretsky, Cooper, Benston, and Ansley with detail. The best evaluative responses used alternative theoretical frameworks to argue that the family doesn't support capitalism, such as functionalism, feminism and postmodernism. Weaker responses misinterpreted the question and were confused about which theory/ies would argue that the



nuclear family supports capitalism. A common approach among weaker responses was to argue that functionalists and New Right agree that the family supports capitalism, taking capitalism to meet society as a whole. These responses did not score highly and they also left very little room to evaluate.

## **Option 2 Youth subcultures**

### **Question 7**

This was a generally well answered question. Most candidates were able to outline two ways in which subcultures are linked to class, often locating this within a Marxist framework. The most common ways of answering this was to use specific examples of working class subcultures (such as Punks; Skinheads) or to identify a theme, such as resistance to capitalism, or being anti-school. Another successful way of approaching this question was along the themes of 'resistance' or 'lack of status' and then including a range of studies / theory in their explanations. Many candidates drew upon the work of the CCCS and Clarke, Hebdige and Cohen in particular to add depth to their answers. Weaker answers didn't explicitly focus on the link to social class, instead just describing two different subcultures.

### **Question 8**

The vast majority of candidates understood what a moral panic was, although many could not offer the level of developed explanation needed to reach the highest mark band. Candidates could often cite examples of moral panics; most commonly the mods and rockers and hoodies moral panics, but were unable to put these in the context of a sociological study. The best answers could clearly offer two detailed sociological accounts of moral panics and how they cause an increase in youth deviance, often with a theoretical framework of interactionism and/or neo-Marxism. A number of candidates didn't notice the evaluative element of this question and there were four potential marks missed. Stronger responses were able to use other theories in evaluation, such as the functionalist view that it's not moral panics which cause an increase in youth deviance; rather it's status frustration, or the postmodernist view that moral panics are so prevalent in a media saturated society, that they have lost their ability to panic.

### **Question 9**

A generally well answered question although, as noted earlier, some candidates didn't link their knowledge to the specific part of the question around a reaction to lack of status. For example, many candidates interpreted this as a straightforward functionalism question and discussed the work of Merton in depth. But Merton did not argue that deviance was due to a lack of status faced by young people. Strong responses were able to draw on the work of A Cohen from a functionalist view point and contrast this with a Marxist view of low status (such as the CCCS or Willis). Other strong responses discussed how joining gangs was linked to status, citing the work of Nightingale, and / or Cloward & Ohlin. Evaluation had a tendency to be juxtaposed, but where explicit, candidates either focused on evaluation from within (e.g. using Functionalism to criticise) or used the Marxist criticism about resisting and rebelling. The higher marked answers would also use the Interactionist critique. A few answers, generally weaker ones, did also include females joining subcultures with links to bedroom culture. Few made this explicitly relevant to lack of status.

## **Option 3 Media**

### **Question 10**

This was a well answered question with the vast majority choosing to cite the two-step flow model and the cultural effects model to explain how the media affects the audience in an indirect way. As with the other 12 mark questions, the differentiator was often in how much developed explanation was included in the answer. Stronger responses were able to illustrate their answers with relevant contemporary examples.

**Question 11**

This was a well answered question, with strong responses drawing on a range of relevant studies including Ferguson, Gauntlett, Tuchman, McRobbie and the concept of the 'male gaze' (Mulvey). The best responses focused well on the specific question of whether media representations of femininity are *still* based on traditional stereotypes and were able to evaluate this well with a range of contemporary research and examples.

**Question 12**

This question required candidates to offer a range of pluralist views and evidence that the media reflect a diverse range of interests and views. The strongest responses were able to offer detailed paragraphs of knowledge, often backed up with relevant contemporary examples. Evaluation was often from a theoretical viewpoint, using Marxism and feminism to explain how the media does *not* reflect a diverse range of interests and views.

## H580/02 Researching and understanding social inequalities

### General Comments:

There was a good range of responses, which suggests that the paper differentiated effectively. In general, the majority of candidates answered all of the questions in the time given. There was a mix between those who did Section B first and those who answered Section A. For candidates who answered Section B first, it was clear that they had less time for the methodological section, in particular question 4. All questions were accessible to the full range of candidates.

In the source questions, in order to achieve marks in the highest band, candidates needed to fully engage with the source. A number of responses only paid lip service to the source rather than using it as a starting point on which to build their argument / idea. To achieve the highest mark band for question 4 candidates needed to include a wide range of methodological concepts and theory. A large number of responses tended to drop in concepts such as validity and reliability rather than developing how or why the research method increased or decreased them. For questions 5 and 6, candidates needed to include a wide range of sociological evidence and to discuss these in depth. Evidence can include studies, theories, concepts and contemporary examples, although it should be noted that responses which rely heavily on the use of contemporary examples will not score very highly, as on their own, contemporary examples are not good sociology. In these questions responses were more successful in their explanations.

Overall, there was a clear difference between the high and low achieving candidates. At the top end, there was a range of sociological and methodological evidence contained in answers to all of the questions. Responses illustrated a depth and breadth of explanations using accurate sociological evidence where appropriate. The lower achieving candidates were more likely to achieve higher marks in Section A than in Section B. Section A was likely to include methodological evidence, but lack in depth of explanation and understanding. In Section B, they were more likely to rely on contemporary examples, with some generalised sociological theory which was not fully applied to the question or displayed a lack of clear understanding.

In terms of assessment objectives, AO3 (Analysis and Evaluation) was the strongest area; good candidates were able to offer a wide range of sociological and/or methodological evidence to evaluate the question, using a range of sociological theory and concepts, although at the weaker end this tended to slip into juxtaposition. AO1 (Knowledge and Understanding) for Section A for the higher achieving candidates was strong, using a wide range of evidence that they were able to develop. Weaker candidates were often unable to fully or accurately explain the sociological and/or methodological evidence they were using. AO2 (Application) was the most difficult skill area for candidates. Where candidates have been trained to evaluate evidence, they are less successful at interpreting source material or explicit application to the specifics of the question. For example, in question 2, candidates were able to offer two clear problems of representativeness but were unable to move past lip service when it came to application to the source.

In some instances, candidates did not make it clear that they had returned to questions later in the response booklet, it would be helpful to examiners if they made it clear. For example, a number of candidates simply used an asterisk, if candidates number the asterisk it is clear which question the response relates to.

## Comments on individual questions:

### Question 1

Candidates that answered the question well were succinct. They focussed on the word 'summarise' and explained the overall picture the data painted. They focussed on overall trends and patterns, substantiated their ideas with data from the table and made a clear and accurate comparison between the two groups in Source A. To achieve full marks, candidates needed to address both age groups and then to make a comparison between the two. Some candidates struggled to be succinct and others did not understand the data, stating errors such as 'there were more working age people' (instead of the amount in poverty). Those who were not succinct, merely stated that 'Source A is a comparison between pensioners and working age in regards to levels of poverty' or by merely re-writing the title of the source / copying.

Candidates would benefit from greater experience of a range of quantitative data and practice summarising correlations etc. Using a range of key terms would also be advisable, for example trend or correlation. In addition, this is a 4 mark question, in a minority of cases candidates were writing very lengthy answers which then left little time for the final questions.

### Question 2

The majority of candidates were able to accurately identify two problems with the representativeness such as age or ethnicity. Candidates were awarded 1 mark for each correct problem identified. The differentiator for this question was seen in the AO2 marks for application to Source B. Most candidates were able to 'lift' information directly from Source B such as '91% of respondents were between the ages of 18 and 21' or '99% of respondents indicated their ethnicity as White'. Those who achieved full marks for AO2, engaged with the Source and representativeness for example, '91% of respondents were between 18 and 21 which is not representative of all age ranges and gaming as older people are less likely to play video games, therefore it cannot be generalised to all women'.

Some candidates misinterpreted the meaning of a 'representative sample' and focused on issues with validity and reliability, or issues when using questionnaires or interviews. Some failed to understand the purpose of the research and made incorrect statements such as 'using females that don't game, made the research unrepresentative'. As the hypothesis included seeing if women game, this is therefore not an issue with representativeness.

### Question 3

The vast majority of candidates were able to correctly identify an advantage and a disadvantage from the source. Strong answers explicitly stated if they were discussing an advantage or disadvantage starting their paragraph with 'One advantage is...' There were 10 marks available for this question: 4 marks for application (AO2) and 6 marks for analysis and evaluation (AO3). In this question, marks were awarded for explicit use of Source B. The best answers identified their advantage or disadvantage, explained it, and then used the source to substantiate their point. For example, if the strength was clarity for finding patterns and trends they used the data to show how easy it was to see who suffered more poverty over time, quoting statistical patterns. For the top level, many responses used both methodological theory and concepts although a range was not required for this question. Weaker answers, were unlikely to use methodological theory and/or concepts or these were left undeveloped (simply thrown in) / lacking a clear or accurate explanation. In addition, application was likely to be no more than lip service or simply dropping in the word 'poverty'.

### Question 4

There was a range of answers within this question. The majority of candidates were able to offer at least one strength and one weakness of using questionnaires and/or in-depth interviews. There were 25 marks available for this question: 5 marks for knowledge and understanding (AO1), 5 marks for application (AO2) and 15 marks for analysis and evaluation (AO3).

In this question, AO1 marks were awarded for range and depth of methodological theory and/or concepts which had well-developed lines of reasoning. AO2 marks were awarded for application to Source B and AO3 marks were awarded for the depth and range of strengths and weaknesses discussed in relation to mixed methods, questionnaires and in-depth interviews. A minority of students were able to focus on a 'combination' of methods with some depth.

The best answers were using a wide range of methodological evidence such as validity, reliability, verstehen, positivism and interpretivism. Some were able to use realism effectively. Some focused on the idea of mixed methods, which was needed to achieve the highest marks for AO3. For Level 4 candidates needed to have both a range of methodological theory and concepts, as well as a range and depth of ideas with balance, for example a minimum of two strengths and two weaknesses. Application to the source for these answers was explicitly engaged with the strength or weakness, for example, 'through the rapport built with respondents, the interviewer was able to find out that women did not see gaming as theirs, this could have been due to gaming being perceived as a male dominated activity'.

Weaker responses tended to initially focus on describing each research method. Although in these responses there may have been a range of strengths and weaknesses these tended to be underdeveloped or lacking focus. Methodological theory and concepts were dropped in rather than explained, in particular 'validity and reliability' were chunked together, although acceptable when explicitly discussing mixed methods, when discussing individual research methods it illustrated a lack of understanding. Some candidates tended to focus on sampling and representativeness in general which had moved away from the question. For AO2, Application, this tended to be lip service such as dropping in 'to research women and gaming' rather than explicit engagement with the source. At the lower end, there was confusion between quantitative and qualitative, positivism and interpretivism, and reliability and validity.

### **Question 5**

There were 20 marks available for this question: 12 marks for Knowledge and Understanding (AO1) and 8 marks for Application (AO2).

In this question, AO1 marks were awarded for a range of areas within which there should be some breadth and some depth of sociological evidence. For the top level, at least two age groups needed to be addressed. For AO2, candidates needed to show explicit application to age inequalities.

Those achieving the highest mark band were identifying three or more areas of social life such as workplace, media, health and poverty. It would be beneficial for candidates to signpost their answers, for example 'One area where age inequality is evident is in the workplace', then using at least two pieces of sociological evidence with developed explanations to illustrate age inequality. In these answers, candidates were explicitly identifying the social area in their opening lines and then using evidence such as dual labour market, disengagement theory or the digital divide to reinforce their ideas. The majority of answers also used sociological theory to support conceptual evidence.

Weaker answers tended to lack the development needed to move into Level 4. Answers which fell into Level 2 tended to lack a range of explicit social areas and used unsubstantiated statistics to support ideas. The majority of weaker answers also tended to focus on contemporary examples such as 'Arlene Phillips' rather than using sociological evidence.

Some candidates included evaluation, such as illustrating where age inequality is declining, but gained no marks for this as there are no marks in this question for evaluation. Also, the question explicitly asked 'in British society' yet a minority of candidates compared British society with alternative cultures and so again this could not be credited.

### **Question 6**

There were 40 marks available for this question: 16 marks for Knowledge and Understanding (AO1), 8 marks for Application (AO2) and 16 marks for Analysis and Evaluation (AO3). In this question, the application marks were awarded for explicit answers illustrating how status and financial rewards are gained either through talents and efforts in AO1 or by alternative means in AO3 such as through ascribed status. Candidates struggled more on AO1 with this question, many only having one or two underdeveloped ideas, using Parsons and Davis and Moore but without a developed explanation, in many cases just re-writing the question. AO3 was much stronger with a range of theory used such as Marxism and feminism to show a range of inequality in regards to status and rewards.

The best answers focused on functionalism (Parsons, Davis and Moore, role allocation and meritocracy) and New Right for AO1. The strongest candidates were also able to apply ideas from a greater range of evidence such as Patterson and liberal feminism (for example, the Sex Discrimination Act to create equality within the workplace). Candidates were expected to illustrate a wide range of sociological evidence in depth. AO3 tended to be the strongest skill across all candidates. The majority were able to offer critical points from a range of sociological theories such as Marxism (focusing on class rather than talents), feminism (focusing on gender rather than talents) and interactionism (labelling rather than talents).

Where a number of candidates were only able to offer one or two underdeveloped AO1 points, they were able to offer a wide range of evaluation which enabled them to gain higher marks, and when explicitly applied to the question also increased their AO2 marks. Weaker AO3 answers tended to juxtapose alternative views rather than explicit evaluative points.

A minority of candidates did not offer any AO1 arguments. Weaker candidates focused on social inequality in general rather than relating their ideas to 'status and financial rewards' and 'talents and efforts. Here the candidates' knowledge was confused and/or inaccurate illustrating a lack of understanding.

Candidates have clearly been working on critical conclusions with those in the top level able to provide an explicit answer to the question. Those lower in the levels tended to repeat arguments stated earlier in their answer.

## H580/03 Debates in contemporary society

### General Comments:

This was the first entry for this component of the new specification, and overall the standard was very good. Candidates in general seemed to manage the timing and paper demands well.

The compulsory Section A on Globalisation and the Digital Social World showed that most centres have clearly embraced this new topic and that candidates have engaged with it. Most used the sources effectively and a wide range of relevant studies, concepts and examples were seen.

One issue which differentiated between candidates on this paper was their ability to fully understand the requirements of the question. This was particularly evident in question 2 where some candidates did not recognise the need to evaluate. The Assessment Objective weightings for each question will not change therefore this question will always require evaluation.

A related point was candidates' ability to focus their response on the question set. For example, in Section A question 2 the focus on identity was sometimes very implicit or absent. In the longer essays in Section B option topics, there was a tendency in some questions to spend too little time discussing knowledge relevant to the view in the question, sometimes giving only two or three sentences on this before moving on to discuss, often at length, opposing views. This was particularly evident in the Education option, in which questions 8 and 9 were very clearly asking for knowledge supporting a particular view, but for which many candidates wrote much more about opposing views. This was also seen in Question 5 and Question 12 in particular. Centres should note that candidates gain very few AO1 marks for discussing material which is not specifically related to the view in the question. Alternative views may be credited for AO3 Analysis and Evaluation, but these points still need to be used to explicitly evaluate the view in the question, since material on alternative views which is just presented with no evaluative link is regarded as juxtaposition and given little, if any, credit.

Analysis and Evaluation was often the weaker skill in the longer essays, with a lack of explicit evaluation being an issue for some candidates. In questions which were potentially quite wide, such as question 6 in the Crime and Deviance option, there was a tendency to present few explicitly evaluative points and merely list a wide range of views on the link between gender and crime. Candidates should be encouraged to make their evaluation more focused and explicit. Using connectives such as 'however' does not necessarily demonstrate evaluation if they are placed at the beginning of a section describing an alternative view. Encourage candidates to fully explain the basis for any disagreement, and how this demonstrates a weakness in the view in question. Evaluation needs to be explicit and relevant, and fully developed.

Some candidates wrote very general introductions, even in the shorter questions, defining key terms, such as identity, digital forms of communication, crime and deviance. Such generalised introductions and generic definitions attract no additional marks.

Conclusions are to be encouraged in this specification, but summative conclusions, which just repeat the arguments already made, gain little or no additional credit, and candidates should be encouraged to reflect on the strengths of different arguments and reach a reasoned conclusion which relates back to the question, with an evaluative tone. Introducing lots of new material is not the purpose of a conclusion, but those who used a specific example or study in their conclusion to help them assess the debate were rewarded for this.

There were no rubric errors, though some candidates ran out of time having spent too long on Section A, which is worth one third of the marks, and writing very little for the 20 and 40 mark essays in Section B. Finally do encourage candidates to clearly indicate the question number they are attempting.

## **Comments on individual questions**

### **Section A**

This section was generally answered well. Many centres had clearly taught a number of studies and concepts, which were well used. Candidates could also access the highest marks by using appropriate specific examples, such as references to countries for question 1, or social media platforms for question 3. In general the sources were referred to appropriately, although some candidates recycled parts of them without expanding or engaging with the points made. Candidates should be encouraged to use the source material as the basis of a much more developed point.

#### **Question 1**

Some candidates spent unnecessary time trying to define globalisation, rather than focusing straight away on the problems involved in defining it. Most were able to identify and explain at least one problem, using the sources to help them. Common points included the idea that globalisation has many different elements (political, economic, social), it is not happening to all countries in the same way/ at the same pace, and the fact that it has both positive and negative impacts. Stronger candidates were able to select these ideas from the sources but to fully explain and develop them, giving examples and/ or supporting with names. For example, some discussed differences between countries, such as developed countries versus less developed, or East versus West – some linked this to ideas of Americanisation or cultural imperialism, and some referred to specific examples of places where globalisation has not had the same impact, such as China, North Korea, Africa or tribal cultures. Weaker responses recycled the material from the sources with no additional development and many candidates appeared to equate globalisation with digital communication and/ or social media, and did not recognise the broader aspects of the process.

#### **Question 2**

This question raised two challenges for candidates: the focus on identity, which was missing in a number of responses; and the view of developments in digital forms of communication having a negative impact on identity, which then needed challenging with ideas about positive impacts. Some candidates just discussed various impacts in a general way, or only focused on negative or positive impacts. The sources were well used, especially Source B, but many quoted the idea of 'fragmented' identities with no clear idea of what this actually meant, and some linked it to the next part in the source, about being difficult to remove old posts, assuming that this was what fragmented meant. Most responses did make good use of evidence, including studies and examples. A successful approach taken by some candidates was to focus on specific aspects of identity such as gender, ethnicity or age, which helped these candidates maintain focus on identity. Weaker responses did not go beyond recycling the ideas from source B. Two points supporting the view that the impact on identity is negative and two challenging this idea was enough to gain full marks, and one explicit use of one of the sources was enough for full marks for AO2 (2 marks). Where candidates did not include evaluation/ an alternative view they could not gain any of the four AO3 marks.

#### **Question 3**

This question required candidates to evaluate the view that global advances in digital forms of communication have had a positive impact on relationships. Most candidates were able to discuss improvements in connectivity, using examples such as Skype and linking to the concept of the global village, or discussing virtual communities. Other commonly used evidence in



support of the view included Carter, Granovetter, Shaw and Gant, and references to theory such as feminism. Some candidates successfully applied ideas such as social networks and social capital, using examples such as LinkedIn. In evaluation, Turkle's 'Alone Together' was frequently referred to and there was also much discussion on cyberbullying and catfishing. A minority of candidates did not evaluate and merely presented a one sided argument, though this was less common than in question 2. Most candidates did include a conclusion, though it was usually just summative and added little. It should be noted that AO3 marks were worth more than AO1 (8 out of the 16 total marks) and therefore evidence which challenged the view in the question carried more weighting than evidence in support of the view.

## Section B

### Option 1 Crime and Deviance

This was the most popular option by some margin. Candidates generally had a very wide range of knowledge at their disposal, although some seemed unsure about how to apply it to the specific questions asked.

#### Question 4

Some candidates had no understanding of the meaning of 'relative' in relation to crime and deviance and some were confused with relative *deprivation* and wrote lengthy answers which gained no credit unfortunately. Another fairly common misconception was that it meant that different groups of people commit different levels of crime, with a discussion of patterns of crime in relation to gender, social class, ethnicity, and age, gaining little if any credit. However, the majority approached this question by discussing relativity in terms of time, place/ culture and circumstance, and if they were able to fully explain these ideas using comparative examples, many gained full marks. Fewer candidates took a more theoretical approach, using interactionist ideas on social construction and labelling, or Marxist ideas about relative power in terms of the creation and enforcement of the law, and some of these responses were really excellent. A range of clear points, supported with developed examples/ evidence, were needed to gain maximum marks.

#### Question 5

Some candidates discussed left realist ideas about relative deprivation and marginalisation at length without a clear link to policies to reduce crime. The most common policies included restorative justice, often linked to Braithwaite's ideas on reintegrative rather than disintegrative shaming, rehabilitation schemes, redistributing measures to alleviate poverty and marginalisation, and changing policing styles. A minority of candidates became confused between left wing and right wing ideas, and many seemed much more confident with explaining right wing policies. In evaluation, many challenged left wing policies using right wing approaches, but in some cases these were simply juxtaposed rather than being used to explicitly evaluate. Other challenges, such as cost, short term effectiveness, being too lenient and lack of political will, were also effectively used. A range of developed points relating to left wing policies, and why they may be effective, gained full marks for AO1, and a range of developed criticisms of the effectiveness of these policies gained full marks for AO3.

#### Question 6

Candidates approached this question in different ways. Some candidates presented all their points as knowledge on explanations of gender patterns, but offered no explicit evaluation, which unfortunately affected their Analysis and Evaluation marks. On a question such as this, candidates should be encouraged to plan how they will organise their material, as either part of the explanation or as explicit evaluation. For example, material on chivalry or liberation theory could have been used as explanations for the patterns of crime, but also as evaluation, challenging the accuracy of the patterns in the OCS for example. If candidates have lots to write for knowledge, they should consider presenting some of that as explicit evaluation instead to ensure a more balanced response. Some candidates spend overlong outlining the patterns of

crime in relation to gender, rather than getting focused on explanations for these patterns. Explanations relating to female and male crime patterns were given equal credit. Weaker responses presented the main theories of crime (Marxism, functionalism, interactionism) and then attempted to apply these to gender, but lacked much specific gender related material. Such candidates tried to apply material which was really more about ethnicity or social class, and struggled to stay focused on gender. Some candidates adopted a different approach, by presenting this material as evaluation – ‘Marxists think social class is more important...’ - but then writing at length about social class, or ethnicity or age, with no link back to gender. Such material gained little if any credit. Candidates must be encouraged to focus on the topic in the question. Commonly used evidence included Heidensohn, Smart, Carlen, chivalry, double deviance, Oakley, Parsons, sex role theory, Pollak, Messerschmidt and Adler. A range of developed points was needed to reach the very top of Level 4 for both AO1 and AO3.

## **Option 2 Education**

This option was not quite as popular as Crime and deviance, but still, was attempted by many candidates.

### **Question 7**

The focus on material factors was an issue for some candidates, who had perhaps prepared ‘in school’ and ‘out-of-school’ explanations, and could not distinguish between material factors and cultural factors. There was a lack of depth in these responses, with candidates mentioning books and computers, or private schools, but seeming unable to support with any evidence or examples. Stronger candidates made links to studies such as Callender & Jackson and debt aversion, or Smith & Noble and barriers to learning, and linked to policies such as EMA and tuition fees, or applied Marxist ideas relating to private schools. Some candidates spent unnecessary time evaluating, perhaps discussing teacher labelling or cultural factors as alternatives, which attracted no credit. Candidates should be aware of which questions attract AO3 marks. A range of points, supported with developed examples/ evidence, were needed to gain maximum marks.

### **Question 8**

Those who linked the New Right to functionalist ideas on role allocation and meritocracy were credited, in recognition of the slightly narrow focus of this question. Weaker candidates struggled to say much beyond the idea that the New Right argue there should be a link between education and work. Stronger candidates used policies to support their ideas, discussing vocationalism for example. Additionally, some took the approach of the education system running like a business and linked to marketization. Often links were made to the Conservative Party and Margaret Thatcher’s policies in particular. Successfully used evidence included Saunders, Buchanan and Tullock, Chubb and Moe, Davis and Moore. Weaker responses struggled to focus on the relationship between education and work, discussing New Right thinkers such as Murray at length with no link to work. Others spent very little time on New Right ideas, instead writing at length about Marxist or Liberal views. Such material was often just juxtaposed, with no direct evaluative link, so it gained little credit, though some explicit evaluation of the New Right view on the link between education and work, using such material, was seen and fully credited. A range of points relating to the relevance of New Right views on the relationship between education and work gained full marks for AO1, with a range of developed criticisms of the relevance of these views gaining full marks for AO3.

### **Question 9**

There were some excellent responses to this question, although some candidates seemed to struggle to provide supporting evidence relating to ethnicity. Stronger candidates used sociologists such as Platt, Sewell, Murray, Archer and Francis. However, many spent much longer on in-school factors, with little evaluative link, and others focused more on social class or gender and were unable to write much on ethnicity. For example, weaker responses often contained very generalised points about language (using Bernstein) or material deprivation

(using Smith and Noble) with only a tenuous link to ethnicity. The most successful evaluation was that which specifically challenged each explanation. Where there was a tendency by some candidates towards juxtaposition, they wrote lengthy descriptions of in-school explanations, with little attempt to use these in an evaluative way, explaining why they may be more convincing than out-of-school explanations. Do remind candidates that explicit evaluation is much more creditworthy than simple juxtaposition. Some candidates presented the idea that actually gender or social class was more important than ethnicity, and wrote at length on explanations for gender or social class differences in education. This gained little if any credit - candidates must stay focused on the topic in the question.

### **Option 3 Religion, belief and faith**

This option was the least popular. There were some extremely strong responses but also some much weaker/ brief responses.

#### **Question 10**

Most candidates achieved high marks for this question. Common evidence included a discussion of Pentecostalism, Voas, Cashmore and Troyna, Modood, and ideas such as gaining a sense of belonging and identity and a response to racism/ cultural defence. Fewer candidates picked up on the decline amongst White British group as a creditable point and fewer still discussed recent evidence relating to religiosity amongst Eastern European immigrants. Some candidates took a more global perspective, which was creditable as long as it remained focused on the question. Weaker responses were common sense based and unsupported by evidence. A range of points supported with developed examples/ evidence, were needed to gain maximum marks.

#### **Question 11**

Some candidates struggled with the focus on the question, discussed the secularisation debate more generally and explanations for secularisation, rather than discussing whether data suggests that secularisation is occurring. Stronger responses discussed data relating to census data, attendance at places of worship, trends for marriage, baptisms and divorce and patterns of religiosity in relation to social class, gender age and ethnicity at places of worship, also often linking to the ideas of Wilson and Bruce. Some successfully used evidence relating to NRMs and NAMs, such as Heelas to either support or to challenge the view in the question. Other evaluation came from Davie and ideas about believing without belonging, vicarious worship and also global data to challenge secularisation. A range of developed points relating to the link between data on religious practice and secularisation gained full marks for AO1, with a range of developed criticisms of this link gaining full marks for AO3.

#### **Question 12**

This was a narrow question and in recognition of this, neo-Marxist liberation theology, including the ideas of Gramsci and Maduro, were credited as knowledge in support of Weberian views. However, many candidates spent more time on alternative views, which were often merely juxtaposed and thus could gain little credit. Range and depth on Weber's own views, including a discussion of Calvinism and the Protestant Ethic, the theodicy of disprivilege and charisma in relation to religious leaders, were seen in the strongest responses. Weaker candidates sometimes confused Weberian and Marxist views, though Marxist, functionalist and feminist views on the role of religion in relation to social change were presented clearly by some candidates with the strongest being able to use these to explicitly contrast with Weberian ideas. More specific challenges to Weber's ideas, using Kautsky for example, were also often seen. A range of developed points was needed to reach the very top of Level 4 for both AO1 and AO3.

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