OCR
Oxford Cambridge and RSA

GCE

Sociology

Advanced GCE **H580**

OCR Report to Centres June 2018

Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations

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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

It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

The report also includes links and brief information on:

- A reminder of our **post-results services** including **reviews of results**

- Link to **grade boundaries**

- **Further support that you can expect from OCR**, such as our Active Results service and CPD programme

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**GCE Sociology
(H580)**

OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

H580/01 Socialisation, Culture and Identity

1.   General Comments:

Overall, this year, the standard of responses was good. There was a wide range of responses, suggesting that the paper differentiated appropriately. The vast majority of candidates attempted to answer all questions of 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, however, 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 24 mark questions on section B and candidates need to be reminded of the importance of addressing all 3 assessment objectives, particularly when the question asks to "Assess this view" or to "Briefly evaluate".   In section A, the use of the sources was much improved compared to last year. The vast majority of candidates engaged with both sources and interpreted them well, linking the sources to their wider sociological knowledge. There is further discussion regarding use of sources in the individual questions (question 2) below. In section B, the family was the most popular topic, followed closely by youth culture. 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 of 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 examples of gangs in the contemporary UK for question 7.   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 "nowadays young people are given a negative identity" (Question 3). 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 specific 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 the changing role of fathers, such as Dermott and/or Hatter, scored much more highly than those who made sweeping statements such as "Men are giving up the bread-winner role and are spending more time with their children".

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; while 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 6, candidates were able to offer a range of theories in discussion related to the nuclear family, but these tended to be focused on the desirability of the nuclear family rather than on the extent and challenge of family diversity. In terms of AO3 marks (analysis and evaluation), as mentioned earlier, some candidates failed to 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 of a range or depth of knowledge which was proportionately worth the vast majority of the marks.

It must be noted that AO3 now contains reference to a conclusion and candidates are expected 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 band for AO3 to be used. Having said that, candidates who offered a range of detailed and substantiated evaluation points could still access the top mark band for evaluation marks.

2. Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A

Question 1
The majority of candidates were able to offer a core definition of the concept "norms" as referring to expected / acceptable behaviour. Some candidates struggled to explain the meaning without using the word "normal" and teachers must encourage candidates to learn the definitions of these core concepts which are listed on the specification. The best responses offered a core one sentence definition and then offered further development by, for example, discussing the relative nature of norms; or how norms link to values; or how we learn norms through socialisation. Most candidates were aware that this question asked for examples to illustrate the concept. The most popular examples given were queuing and eating with a knife and fork.

Question 2
This question was relatively well answered which is pleasing given it is a new topic area on the specification. Most candidates were able to locate the question within the interactionist theory of labelling, using sociological concepts such as self-fulfilling prophecy, master status. It was good to see some responses referring to Goffman's explanation of stigma, and linking this to both of the sources. Other high level responses gave good explanations of the social model of disability, referring to the writings of Oliver and/ or Shakespeare and also to Zola's research on the negative language surrounding disability. 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. Interactionism) studies of disability (see above) and related concepts.

Question 3
Overall, this question was not very well answered; some students didn't even attempt to answer it or only wrote one short paragraph. Students need to be reminded that as there is no choice on this question paper, they must learn every section on the specification to avoid being faced with a question they are not prepared for.   The best responses were able to offer a range of three or more sociological studies or theories relating to the changing nature of age identity. A good tactic was to formulate paragraphs around the three main age groups and give evidence for changing identities with each one. The most popular studies were Postman's study of the disappearance of childhood, the influence of the media in changing old age identities (Featherstone and Hepworth) and the idea of "active ageing" (Clarke and Warren). In terms of evaluation, it must be remembered that there are only 4 marks available for evaluation in this question; some candidates wrote far too much for four marks. The best responses pointed to evidence that age identities have not changed very much, for example, elderly are still portrayed as dependent / lonely; and youths have always been demonised in the media.   A relatively common approach for evaluation was for candidates to say that age identities are changing, but not as much as gender/ethnicity/nationality etc. Such responses tended to score low marks because they inevitably veered away from the specific question about age identity.

Section B

Option 1 – Families and Relationships

Question 4
This question was not answered very well. There were a large number of responses which did not refer to any specific evidence of the ways in which roles of men and women in the family are changing.   At worst, candidates made sweeping, inaccurate generalisations, about the extent of stay at home dads or mothers as the main breadwinner.   Other weaker responses discussed changing gender roles in society (e.g. women breaking through the glass ceiling) but did not relate these to the family. The best responses were able to back up their response with studies and evidence; for example, The rise of intimate fathering (e.g. Dermott; Hatter et al; Thompson), or women taking on a triple shift (e.g. Dunscombe and Marsden)

Question 5
This question was relatively well answered. The vast majority of responses offered the functionalist view of the role of the nuclear family and related this to how same sex families challenged this. The evaluation of this question tended to be weaker though. Many responses discussed the pros and cons of same sex families without directly relating it to whether it is a challenge to nuclear families.

Question 6
This was not a very well answered question. The focus of this question is on the extent of diversity whereas many candidates only wrote a theoretical explanation of the desirability of the nuclear family. The best responses cited a range of evidence of family diversity, backed up with sociological studies and relating the evidence to how this shows the nuclear family is no longer the norm. For example, by using Weeks – families of choice, Hart – creative singlehood, or the Rappoports - 5 types of diversity to show that the nuclear family is not the norm. The best evaluative responses used theoretical responses to support the view that nuclear families are still the norm, such as the radical feminist view that patriarchal relations still exist within a

nuclear family context; The neo-functionalist view that many so called alternatives to the nuclear family do not challenge the nuclear family - Chester or the Marxist view that the nuclear family is dominant in all capitalist societies. Three main paragraphs of knowledge and three evaluation points could reach the top mark band as this was considered to be a "range".

Option 2 – Youth Subcultures

Question 7
This was a generally well answered question. Most candidates were able to outline two reasons why young people join gangs; most common ways of answering this was to use specific sociological reasons such as lack of status, or marginalisation, or expression of masculinity. And then to back this up with relevant and appropriate studies.

Question 8
This was generally a well answered question; the vast majority of candidates recognised that this was a functionalist view and drew upon the work of Parsons and Eisenstadt to explain the view. Some candidates failed to evaluate on this question, but those who did tended to draw upon a Marxist framework by arguing that young culture doesn't contribute to order and control; it contributes to capitalism.

Question 9
This was a very well answered question on the whole. The vast majority of candidates related the view that most youth subcultures are based on social class to Neo-Marxist (CCCS), drawing upon the writing of P. Cohen, Clarke, Hebdidge and Brake. However, many candidates also used a functionalist framework, referring to Cohen's theory of status frustration or Miller's focal concerns.   Most candidates were able to offer wide ranging evaluation points, usually basing the criticism on class not being the main basis for subcultures, but rather gender and / or ethnicity. Good use was made of the postmodernist approach by questioning whether subcultures exist anymore and referring to Mafessoli's work on neo-tribes.

Option 3 Media

Question 10
This was a well answered question with the vast majority choosing to cite the mods and rockers and the mugging moral panic. Those responses which chose moral panics which could be backed up by sociological research were able to attain more marks than those which relied on contemporary examples only, as they were more sociological. Some poorer responses cited panics which were not actually moral panics; such as Ebola.

Question 11
This was a well answered question, with strong responses drawing on a range of relevant examples and studies. The vast majority of candidates were able to fully explain the hypodermic syringe model and locate it within the direct media effects model. The best responses used examples of the direct effect of exposure to media violence on children (e.g. Bandura; Newsome); contemporary examples of imitation / copycat violence (e.g. video games); and/or research into the effects of music / song lyrics on behaviour (e.g. Anderson, Hall, Hardcastle).

Question 12
This question required candidates to offer a range of Marxist views about media representations of social groups. The strongest responses were able to offer 3 detailed paragraphs of knowledge, often backed up with relevant contemporary examples. A good tactic was to

organise paragraphs around the different social groups (working class, underclass, minority ethnic groups etc) and explain what the representation was and how this reflects the interests of the ruling class.   Evaluation was often from a theoretical viewpoint, using pluralism and feminism to explain how the media does NOT reflect the ruling class. Weaker responses did not focus on the question; and instead offered a general Marxist view of the media; sometimes relating it to the ownership and control debate, which is not on the specification.

H580/02 Researching and Understanding Social Inequalities

1.   General Comments:

Overall the standard of responses was good. There was a good range of responses, which suggests that the paper differentiated adequately. In general, most candidates answered all the questions in the time given. As in the previous year, there was a mix between those who answered Section A first and those who answered Section B first. For candidates who answered Section B first, as in the previous session, they had less time for the methodological section, in particular Question 4. All questions were accessible to the full range of candidates. There was a clear difference in candidates that were equally prepared for both sections of the paper.

In the source questions, to achieve marks in the highest band, candidates needed to fully engage with the source. Candidates were engaging more than in the previous year and beginning to use it as a starting point to build their argument / idea. To achieve the highest mark band for Question 4 candidates, need to include a wide range ('wide range' is 4 or more) of methodological concepts and theory. Many candidates were confused between validity and reliability or dropping them in 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 types of 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 accurate sociological and methodological evidence contained in answers to all the questions. Responses illustrated a range and depth of explanations using evidence where appropriate. As with the previous session, lower achieving candidates were more likely to achieve higher marks on Section A than Section B. Section A this session illustrated a need to reinforce the difference between validity and reliability and in particular the difference between types of interview.

In terms of assessment objectives, as with the previous session, 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, with a greater number using statistical evidence to reinforce ideas. At the weaker end, this tended to slip into juxtaposition and/or tangential information. AO1 for Section A, the higher achieving candidates illustrated a wide range of accurate knowledge that they were able to develop. Weaker candidates tended to show confusion around which methods were quantitative or qualitative. AO2 although still a difficult skill area for candidates, was overall stronger this year, particularly for question 4.

As with the previous session, some 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, these need to be numbered so that it is clear which question the response relates to.

2.   Comments on Individual Questions:

Question 1

Candidates that answered this question well were concise and accurately used the source. Candidates focused on identifying and explaining two clear comparisons within the data to create an overall picture. Candidates who scored highly, compared either male and female percentages or females within different positions. To achieve full marks, candidates needed to explain two clear conclusions and use accurate data from the source to support each conclusion. An increasing number of candidates are starting to use sentence starters such as 'one trend' or 'one comparison' this is useful as it explicitly illustrates summaries and reduces the need for lengthy answers.

Candidates who struggled with the question failed to take any accurate data from the source or discussed women / men in one or more categories without summarising the data. Alternatively, candidates wrote lengthy answers discussing issues such as the glass ceiling and feminist views rather than using Source A as the question required. It is important that candidates do not spend too long on this question, there is no requirement to include knowledge that is not provided in Source A.

Candidates would benefit from greater experience of using a range of quantitative data, identifying patterns and trends and explaining them without using additional sociological knowledge. Using a range of key terms would also be advisable for example trend, increase, decrease etc.

Question 2

Candidates struggled with this question. Candidates were awarded 1 mark for each correct reason identified. Many were able to accurately identify one way looking at generalisability. 2 marks per idea are then awarded for application of the source to support each idea.

As with the previous session, which also related to representative samples, candidates misinterpreted the meaning of a 'representative sample' and focused on issues of validity or reliability or discussed how it created quantitative or qualitative data.

Candidates who answered this well focused on two or three reasons (no more are needed to achieve full marks if they are fully developed) which included appropriate concepts and a link to the source. Candidates used concepts such as sampling frame or generalisability. Common reasons were generalisability, a need to save time or money and the need to represent diverse groups by age/gender/ethnicity etc.

Candidates were mainly differentiated by their ability to apply relevant information from the source with weaker responses often giving two reasons but applying only one idea or none to the source data. Some candidates seemed confused by representativeness / reliability / validity for example by claiming that increasing representativeness would make research more reliable.

This question is asking candidates to give reasons why a researcher uses a particular research method, sampling technique or approach; students need to practice this type of question for all these methods / techniques. Candidates need to identify a reason and then explicitly use the source to support their idea, 'lifting' from the source is an appropriate way to achieve the AO2 marks on this question.

Question 3

This question was answered well this year, with most candidates able to clearly identify one advantage and one disadvantage. There was a good understanding of official statistics. 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 A.

Candidates who answered this well identified reasons such as sample size, reliability, use of quantitative data, objectivity, positivism and for disadvantages validity, lack of verstehen and interpretivism. Candidates generally separated ideas into two separate paragraphs, identified the reason, explained why and supported this with key concepts and explicit application of the source material.

Weaker answers often focused on practical issues such as cost, time and/or lacked the use of sociological evidence. Some candidates identified more than one advantage and one disadvantage which meant that ideas were insufficiently developed to achieve high marks. A few candidates failed to make explicit links to the source.

Question 4

As with last year there was a clear range of answers within this question. Many candidates were able to offer at least one strength and one weakness of structured interviews. There are 25 marks available for this question, 5 marks for AO1, candidates need to have a wide range of ideas supported by sociological evidence, to achieve level 4 they must use methodological theory. 5 marks are available for AO2, candidates need a wide range of explicit and relevant applications of the source supporting either strengths or weaknesses of structured interviews. 15 marks for AO3, for full marks candidates need a wide range of ideas (for example this could be 2 strengths and 2 weaknesses) these need to be fully developed.

Candidates who answered this well focused on the minimum number of ideas to have a wide range of ideas (2 strengths and 2 weaknesses) and used their time to fully develop these ideas around methodological theories and concepts applying data from the source throughout. Good answers tended to locate structured interviews in the positivist tradition and used interpretivism to evaluate. They typically referred to validity and reliability in an accurate and appropriate manner. Candidates who successfully used representatives considered how a relatively large sample could be achieved by using structured interviews as they tend to take less time. In evaluation, some candidates pointed to the problem of meaning in interpreting closed questions and possible ethical issues in asking people to confess whether they were ageist. A few candidates considered how the statistical data from such surveys might be used to support campaigns or influence social policy as it showed clear evidence of ageism as a problem.

A number of candidates this year confused structured and unstructured interviews while others wrongly associated structured interviews with interpretivism and qualitative data. Some candidates discussed representativeness but tended to stray into discussing sampling methods rather than structured interviews. Answers must be focused on the method in the question, thus for a number of candidates' explanations of representativeness became tangential to the question.

Question 5

In this question there are 20 marks available, 12 for knowledge and understanding (AO1) and 8 marks for application (AO2). For AO1, candidates need to show a wide range and depth of sociological evidence. For the top level, candidates needed to include a wide range of developed ideas, supported by sociological evidence and cover at least three social areas of life for example education, family, workplace, media, crime etc. For AO2, candidates need to include a wide range of explicit application to the source.

Candidates achieving the highest mark band were signposting areas of social life such as 'one area where social class background affects chances of achieving a secure and well-paid job is family …'. In these answers, candidates were explicitly using sociological evidence such as the Hope-Goldthorpe Scale, material deprivation, cultural capital, culture of dependency to develop their ideas. Candidates often drew on their knowledge of other topics and applying it to the question, this was particularly true of material one education. Some candidates also focused on research on social mobility and studies of poverty and/or the underclass effectively. The best answers typically focused on four areas and included a couple of pieces of evidence on each or one well developed piece of evidence and clearly applied these to the issue of achieving a secure and well-paid job.

Weaker answers tended to lack the development needed to move into mark band 4. Answers which fell into mark band 2, as with the previous year, tended to lack a range of explicit social areas and used unsubstantiated ideas and/or statistics to support ideas. Most of the weaker answers also tended to focus on contemporary examples rather than using sociological evidence. Material on Marxism was sometimes tangentially relevant, but many candidates did not seem aware that functionalist theories disputed the ideas that class influences job outcomes. Some candidates also wrote at length but without relevance about why other forms of inequality such as gender and ethnicity were important. Some candidates felt the need to evaluate by offering counter-arguments although this was not called for by the question and could not be rewarded.

Question 6

In this question, to achieve mark band 4, for AO1 candidates needed a wide range of developed ideas supporting the question and for AO3 they needed a wide range of ideas evaluating the question. For AO2, candidates needed to support each idea in both AO1 and AO3 by applying material from the source to achieve full marks.

Candidates struggled more on AO1 with this question, most were able to recognise the statement as being associated with a functionalist viewpoint, typically focusing on Patterson's host-immigrant model, though this was developed with varying degrees of sophistication. Stronger answers showed an understanding of the historical and cultural context of the study i.e. West Indian immigrants came to the UK in the 1960s and reasons for lack of assimilation. Some candidates linked this approach to more traditional approaches such as Parsons, while others cited other studies illustrating lack of assimilation for example Dahya on ethnic segregation in housing, data on Pakistani and Bangladeshi women's poor grasp of English language and issues about lack of integration among Muslim communities. Some candidates also drew on New Right ideas such as Murray on the black underclass and Sewell's work on black masculinities and anti-school subcultures.

Weaker answers often did not go beyond general functionalist theory, while some candidates gave lengthy accounts of Davis and Moore's theory without really understanding how it applied to the question.

AO3 was overall much stronger, answers tended to draw on Marxist and Weberian theories with strong answers showing in-depth knowledge of different approaches such as Cox, Castles and Kosack, Rex and Barron and Norris. Some candidates struggled to apply such theories to the debate and tended to juxtapose them with arguments for the view without really explaining why they would disagree with the view. Interestingly, a number of candidates used Miles' concept of racialised class fractions to support the view, arguing that some racialised class fractions had responded to racialisation by cultural resistance for example Black Power and radical Islam and so had provoked further racism. Some candidates also referred to postmodernist views, less developed responses simply stating that they saw ethnic inequalities as less important in a more individualised society whilst some developed this point by directing their answers towards evidence of hybridity and mixing of cultures to illustrate the changes. Some candidates also produced good evaluation by using more empirical material for example by referring to studies of discrimination and racism both in the workplace and in areas such as policing, media and education to argue that ethnic inequality was the result of institutional racism rather than a lack of assimilation. Some candidates moved into tangential discussions regarding gender and class rather than focusing on the question of assimilation.

Most candidates seemed aware of the need to offer a conclusion at the end though many were little more than a summary of previous arguments.

Overall this was a question where candidates often had reasonable knowledge but sometimes struggled to apply it explicitly to the question and where counter-arguments were often used in juxtaposition rather than to develop clear and explicit evaluation points.

H580/03 Debates in Contemporary Society

1.   General Comments:

This was the second entry for this component of the new specification, and overall the standard was good, similar to last year. Many candidates coped well with this demanding paper, with several different question styles and in general seemed to manage the timing and paper demands well.

The compulsory Section A on Globalisation and the Digital Social World was generally well done, though a significant minority of candidates struggled to use the sources effectively this year, and lacked enough wider sociological material to support their points, particularly in Questions 1 and 2.

It is, however, notable that the overall standard, particularly on the longer responses in Section B, is generally weaker than under the previous specification in comparable papers. Whether this is due to the additional demands and length of this paper, the linear nature of the A Level, or a combination of these and other factors, is unclear. However, many candidates struggled to engage with the 40 mark essays, in particular, not including enough range and depth of relevant sociological material or effective evaluation. A difference in the time spent on, and the length of, the 20 mark and the 40 mark essays was often not evident, with some candidates spending longer on the 20 mark essay. Candidates' marks will significantly increase if more time and effort is spent on preparing for and writing the 40 mark essays, in particular practising the ability to focus on the view in the question and select and apply appropriate material in sufficient depth.

One issue which differentiated between candidates on this paper was their ability to fully understand the requirements of the question. This was evident in Question 2, as with last year, a number of candidates did not seem to recognise the need to evaluate, though fewer seemed to make this mistake compared to last year. The Assessment Objective weightings for each question will not change, and therefore this question will always require evaluation. The wording '*to what extent…*' indicates the need for evaluation, and candidates should be prepared for this. It is also worth informing candidates of the way in which the Assessment Objectives break down for each question, to avoid unnecessary evaluation, or too little, for example.

A general point which was seen this year and has often been identified in previous sociology papers, is the candidates' ability to focus their response on the view in the question set. This year this was particularly evidence in Question 5 and 6 in the crime option, and Question 7 and 8 in the education option. The religion option created fewer issues with this. 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. Juxtaposition continued to be a problem this year, and was particularly evident in Q6 and in Q8. As mentioned in reports on the previous specification, using connectives such as 'however' does not necessarily demonstrate evaluation if they are merely placed at the beginning of a section describing an alternative view, with no real attempt to use it to challenge the view in the question. Candidates must be encouraged 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.

Additionally, in questions which were potentially quite wide, such as Question 12, there was a tendency to present few explicitly evaluative points at all, and merely list a wide range of views on the link between gender and religion. Candidates should be encouraged to make their evaluation more focused and explicit.

Despite discouraging this in many previous reports, some candidates are clearly still being advised to write very general introductions which define key terms. Such generalised introductions and generic definitions attract no additional marks and waste time.

As mentioned last year, 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 another 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 clearly ran out of time, spending too long on Section A, which is worth one third of the marks, and writing very little for the 20 and 40 mark essays. Many answered the paper in reverse, which is acceptable, but some candidates moved back and forth between questions, with no indication that they were intending to return.. Candidates should be encouraged to clearly mark all their responses.

2.   Comments on Individual Questions:

Section A
As mentioned above, this section was generally done well. Many centres had clearly taught a number of studies and concepts, which were well used, but candidates could also access the highest marks by using appropriate specific examples to support points made. In general the sources were referred to appropriately, but the wide-ranging nature of the sources in this paper did mean that some candidates struggled to go beyond them with wider sociological knowledge. It was also clear that many candidates believed they had to refer to both sources for both questions, when, in reality, each source may have been more/ less appropriate depending on the question. Some candidates simply 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, extending this with their wider sociological knowledge, which could include studies, concepts not mentioned in the source, theory, statistical data and/ or examples.

Question 1
Successful candidates were able to use the source(s) explicitly and make at least two developed and distinct points using wider sociological knowledge/examples. Most candidates were able to grasp the notion that "revolution" applies a radical change from one state of affairs to another, but only a minority of candidates were able to couch a description of how digital media worldwide has led to revolution in sociological language. The sources did lead to some confusion, since it was evident that some candidates were trying to apply parts of each of the sources which were not necessarily that relevant to this question. Weaker candidates merely paraphrased the sources, albeit in a lengthy way, without further explanation, and without using wider sociological evidence or examples. The most common answers were media convergence, speed of change, improvements in communication and cultural defence.

Question 2

Most candidates were able to focus well on this question, describing at least two positive effects and at least two negative effects on non-Western societies (as evaluation), in order to access high marks. Most used Source B to describe some general ways in which non-western societies had been able to use digital media in defence of their culture, though not all were able to add in their own knowledge or examples. Some candidates were able to use wider evidence such as the concept of reverse colonisation (eg Mexicanisation of California), examples (such as the tribes of the Amazon Rainforest), or forms of empowerment such as the Arab Spring or female empowerment, (using Nakamura, for example). Typical negative effects utilised Source A and cultural homogenisation, and commonly ideas of Americanisation, cultural imperialism and McDonaldisation were applied, though these were often not fully understood or linked to digital communication. Some candidates also used ideas of defence and empowerment as a negative effect, referring to the use of digital media by fundamentalist groups such as ISIS, for example. Weaker responses did not go beyond recycling the ideas from Source B. Additionally, a significant proportion of candidates appeared to have no idea that they needed to include evaluation/ an alternative view, so many lost all four AO3 marks – this problem was also seen last year, and though fewer candidates made this mistake this year, it was still very evident. As mentioned above, centres would do well to prepare their candidates for the question stem: '*To what extent'* and ensure that they recognise that this requires evaluation.

Question 3

Effective evidence used to support the view that global advances in digital forms of communication have led to an increase in gender inequality included: the rise in pornography (sometimes using Dworkin); trafficking/ sex slavery (sometimes using Hughes and/ or Arlaccki); and online abuse (sometimes using Boellstorff, or research on slut shaming/ body shaming). Responses often also included references to revenge porn, trolling, women's lack of visibility and representation in the industry and within gaming, and sexual objectification, often just writing that '*feminists would argue...*' to substantiate these ideas, but still gaining credit for well-explained and appropriate examples. A minority of candidates used wider material on gender representations in the (old) media and tried to make these 'fit' this question – this was done with varying success; depending on how well such material was applied. Common evidence used in this way included Mulvey and the male gaze, McRobbie and slimblondeness, Ferguson and the cult of femininity and Wolf and the beauty myth. Some candidates made no attempt to apply this to digital forms of communication at all, discussing films, adverts and magazines, while others wrongly claimed that these writers had said these things about online content. It is possible to effectively use such material, but centres should encourage candidates to recognise the original source of the ideas and consider how these could be updated and specifically applied to digital media.

There was some very successful evaluation, with a number of candidates actually flipping the question and focusing first on the ways in which gender inequality has declined due to digital forms of communication. More marks are available for AO3, so a greater weighting for this side of the debate was required, but many candidates did not provide enough evaluative points to access the full range of AO3 marks. Thus two developed and relevant points supporting the view in the question could gain full marks for AO1, yet three developed evaluation points were required to maximise AO3 marks. It is suggested that candidates are fully briefed on the Assessment Objective weightings in the different questions.

Common evaluative evidence included: Cochrane and ideas about fourth wave feminism being online; examples of online campaigns including the #metoo movement, Laura Bates' Everyday Sexism Project etc; Nakamura's ideas on ethnic minority women becoming more empowered;

and Haraways "Cyborg Manifesto" (though this was also sometimes used to support the view in the question, which could also be creditable). A minority of candidates drifted away from gender inequality, for example, arguing that class inequality or age inequality are more important. This was not creditable, since it lacked any engagement with the question.

Section B:

Option 1 Crime and Deviance
This was the most popular option by some margin. It was evident that most candidates had a very wide range of knowledge at their disposal, but some seemed unsure about how to apply it to the specific questions asked, which was unfortunate. As mentioned above and last year, the longer questions seemed to contain less range and depth of knowledge than seen in the legacy specification in longer option topic essays, where a significant number of marks are available, but can also be lost.

Question 4
A small number of candidates missed out this question, suggesting that they felt underprepared for it. The most common 'ways' offered included the rise of global organised crime and green crime, but within these more specific points were also made, relating to the impact of globalisation on the global trade in drugs, arms, people etc. Other relevant examples used included terrorism and an increasingly global concern, and also online/ cybercrime. If specific and relevant examples of such 'global' criminal activity were used, these were given full credit, but higher ability responses were also likely to use relevant studies such as Glenny (McMafia), Castells, Gastrow, Beck, Potter, South and Franko Aas. Lower level responses were more anecdotal or focused on describing global crimes rather than fully engaging with their increasing prevalence and the reasons for this.

Some much lower ability responses did not engage with the question effectively, writing that crime happens everywhere, or that the media covers crimes globally, which did not attract any credit.

Three clear points, supported with developed examples/ evidence, were needed to gain maximum marks. The majority of candidates did not include enough range, slightly limiting their marks, and a minority included evaluation, which was not required or creditable.

Question 5
This question created some confusion for candidates, with some focusing on evaluating the accuracy of the OCS, and others focusing more on the ethnicity part of the question. Both approaches were creditable, but both of these aspects of the question needed to be engaged with to gain access to the higher levels. Many candidates found it much easier to evaluate the accuracy of the OCS in terms of ethnicity, with a significant minority not attempting to support their accuracy at all, severely limiting their marks – a 20 mark essay requires a balanced debate. Common evaluative points included concepts and issues such as "canteen culture" and "institutional racism", and these were often developed using examples such as the McPherson inquiry, Mark Daly's undercover investigation of racism in the police force and studies such as Waddington, Holdaway, Anderson, Scraton and Reiner. Other ideas which were often applied included interactionist ideas on labelling, with reference to Becker and Cicourel, and Marxist and neo-Marxist ideas on control and scapegoating, with reference to Gordon, Gilroy and Hall. Some also considered the lack of focus on white collar and corporate crime unfairly disadvantaging some ethnic groups. Less successfully applied were general views about the

lack of validity of statistical data, issues of police targets (coughing and cuffing) and the dark figure, or alternative methods of collecting crime data such as self-report studies. These ideas were all potentially relevant, but were often not fully linked back to the issue of ethnic groups. In terms of knowledge to support the accuracy of the OCS, many attempted a more methodological approach, referring to Positivists, and issues such as reliability and representativeness. Some candidates did not apply these ideas back to the issues of ethnic groups and patterns of crime. Such responses also struggled for range and depth. More successful approaches were those which considered why the OCS might be accurate – for example, some used functionalists and New Right views about the police and value consensus, then went on to discuss why some ethnic groups may be more prone to commit crime. Various theories and studies were used in this way, including radical criminologists such as Gilroy, Bourgois and Nightingale and Sewell. Ideas from interactionism and left realism were variously used to either support the statistics by explaining why some ethnic groups might be driven to more criminality, or to challenge the view by considering police activities. Both approaches were creditable when successfully applied.

Responses tended to focus very heavily on black crime rather than 'amongst different ethnic groups', though some did discuss the increase in statistics relating the crime amongst Asians, and issues of accurate categorisation (Fitzgerald & Sibbett) and/ or Islamophobia (Abbas). Three developed points relating to the accuracy of the statistics on patterns of crime and ethnicity was enough to gain full marks for AO1, with three developed criticisms of these statistics being enough for full marks for AO3.

Question 6
A significant number of candidates seemed completely unprepared for this question, and appeared to have no understanding of what was meant by 'subcultural explanations', despite such theories being clearly and separately identified in the specification and related textbooks and resources. Such candidates often presented all the theories of crime they had learnt (eg functionalist, Marxist, interactionist, right and left realist), one after another, often with no attempt to even try to relate these to subcultures. Even those who did try to focus on subcultures were often doing so in a haphazard way suggesting a lack of real understanding of what distinguishes subcultural explanations from other explanations of crime and deviance. Sometimes such 'catch all' responses did hit on relevant studies, almost by accident, and gained some credit for these. However, some candidates had clearly prepared well for this question and were able to give a range of subcultural explanations, showing a good depth of knowledge. Most commonly such responses focused on the traditional functionalist subcultural explanations, discussing A.Cohen, Cloward and Ohlin and Miler, often at length. Sometimes these ideas were also linked to Merton, which was also credited, and stronger candidates also made links to more recent studies in support of these, such as Nightingale, Bourgois and Hobbs. Similarly, other postmodern/ cultural criminology material, such as Katz, Lyng and Presdee, was also creditable, either as knowledge or evaluation, depending on how it was used. Additionally, neo-Marxist subcultural studies such as those of the CCCS were used effectively by some candidates, which added valuable range to their responses. Left realist ideas on subculture in relation to relative deprivation and marginalisation were also credited, as were other studies on subcultures/ gangs (such as Willis, Patrick, and Mac an Ghaill). In these cases, marks credited for AO1 were frequently high. However, points were only recognised as fully developed if the understanding of the importance of subculture was clear. Weaker candidates referred to the right material but focused on individuals throughout, showing a lack of understanding.

It was less common to see answers that evaluated with the same level of range and depth of knowledge, so generally AO1/ knowledge marks were better than AO3/ evaluation marks. Many

just included very brief weaknesses of the studies mentioned, or merely juxtaposed alternative theories with little or no evaluative links. Stronger responses used Matza, Marxist ideas on white collar crime and feminist views on females to successfully challenge the scope of the subcultural explanations.   Matza was, however, frequently and incorrectly presented as a subcultural explanation himself.

A range of at least four developed points was needed to reach the very top of Level 4 for both AO1 and AO3.

Option 2 Education
This option was not as popular as crime and deviance, but was attempted by a significant minority of candidates. Question 7 appeared to cause the most difficulty, though as mentioned above and last year, the longer questions seemed to contain less range and depth of knowledge than seen in the legacy specification in longer option topic essays.

Question 7
A number of candidates missed out this question, and it was also not well done by many who did attempt it, suggesting that many candidates felt underprepared for this aspect of the topic. Though this is a new area on this specification, it is clearly identified in the specification and covered in related resources. The most common 'ways' identified included: poverty in some countries affecting provision/ access to education (often with a comparison to free and compulsory provision in the UK), differences in provision between genders, (often citing Malala Yousafzai, though few engaged with the idea of the 'gender apartheid' in education), and different cultural priorities affecting provision (often contrasting educational provision in Scandinavian countries, and/ or China with other countries). Stronger responses included evidence from specific countries (eg statistics relating to Yemen were often cited), and data, often from UN research. Very few studies were seen, but this did not preclude top marks if other evidence, including well-explained examples, were used, though many responses were largely descriptive and anecdotal in tone.

Some much lower ability responses did not engage with the question effectively, writing about different cultural attitudes towards education (eg 'tiger mums') rather than differences in provision, which did not attract any credit. Three clear points, supported with developed examples/ evidence, were needed to gain maximum marks. The majority of candidates did not include enough range, limiting their marks, and a minority included evaluation, which was not required or creditable.

Question 8
Many candidates were able to identify a range of in-school factors and answered this question effectively. A minority of candidates were confused and focused on out-of-school factors such as cultural and material deprivation. Unless this knowledge was used as evaluation, it was not creditable – merely juxtaposition. Some responses did not even attempt to focus or identify a link to in-school or out-of-school factors, merely listing all the explanations for class differences in attainment they could think of. Typical in-school factors included a range of interactionist-type views on teacher labelling, setting and streaming, the self-fulfilling prophecy and the forming of anti-school subcultures in school (common studies included Becker, Hargreaves, Keddie, Willis, Rosenthal & Jacobson, Rist etc). Other successful approaches included issues of the hidden curriculum and the myth of meritocracy, using a Marxist approach (Bowles and Gintis). Some candidates also used material which could have been seen as out-of-school, such as Bernstein and speech codes, but successfully applied it to teaching and learning, thus were credited.

In evaluation, cultural deprivation and material factors featured prominently, with candidates commonly using Bernstein, Sugarman, Bourdieu, and Smith and Noble as well as New Right and Marxist ideas. A significant number simply juxtaposed out-of-school factors rather than using them to explicitly challenge the in-school explanations.

Three developed points relating to in-school factors was enough to gain full marks for AO1, with three developed criticisms of the relevance of these views being enough for full marks for AO3.

Question 9
Some candidates were able to provide excellent answers to this question, having been taught and learnt a wide range of educational policies since 1988. Application was also generally strong with most candidates able to explain how these policies contributed to parental choice (such as in the case of "league tables"), or diversity (such as in the case of EMA). Different interpretations of choice (eg choice on what to teach, choice on which subjects to take, choice on which school to attend, or what to do after school) were all accepted, as were different interpretations of diversity (eg in terms of gender, ethnicity, class or merely diversity of provision). Commonly discussed policies included open enrolment, league tables, Ofsted, marketisation, parentocracy, Sure start, EMA, EAZs/ EiCs, specialist schools, academies, free schools, apprenticeships, new vocationalism, expansion of HE etc. The vast majority of candidates focused on policies rather than sociological perspectives when engaging with the question (which was still fully creditable), but there were some (mostly simplistic) references to New Right and Marxist theories of education, and many candidates attempted to link policies to governments, and thus different ideologies, though not always accurately. Weaker responses were lacking enough depth of understanding of different policies and frequently got them mixed up. Some also lacked depth, listing several policies with little explanation. As always with policy type questions in this topic, a minority of candidates did not gain credit as they discussed the 1944 education act and/ or the tripartite system, which were clearly pre 1988.
Evaluation was also strong with many candidates commenting on how recent policies (such as the introduction of tuition fees, the scrapping or scaling back of policies such as SureStart and EMA) had negatively affected diversity. There was also explicit evaluation (eg using Ball and Gerwitz's ideas on 'choosers' to evaluate open enrolment/ league tables, or using Marxist writers such as Finn and Cohen to evaluate vocationalism). Some responses also evaluated by referring to policies that were seen to be more negative in terms of diversity and choice, such as the national curriculum, the introduction and increase in tuition fees, the new GCSE's/English Bacc, the ending of Curriculum 2000 AS/A Levels, the expansion of grammar schools etc.
The main discriminator in responses was the range of policies used and specifically the detail the candidate was able to discuss these in. A range of at least four developed points was needed to reach the very top of Level 4 for both AO1 and AO3 – and many responses had a lot more range than this but lacked depth, limiting their marks.

Option 3 Religion, belief and faith:
This option was the least popular by some distance. Those who did attempt this option mostly produced higher ability responses.

Question 10
This question was generally well answered, though some candidates struggled to find a range of 'ways' for this question. The most common point made related to the cohort effect, linked with secularisation (often using Voas & Crockett). Some good answers highlighted how some young members of ethnic minority groups were more religious than their parents due to issues of identity (a variety of evidence was used to support this point including Modood, Woodhead,

Mirza, etc). The other common point relating to religiosity increasing with age was linked to experience of bereavement and impending mortality giving older people more religious belief (Davie and Vincent). Some candidates also discussed different manifestations of religiosity related to age, referring to more traditional religions (associated with older people) compared to NAMs and spirituality as more prevalent amongst younger age groups (as 'spiritual shoppers') (Postmodernist ideas, Day, Heelas); additionally, Davie's ideas on the growth of vicarious religion were sometimes well applied in this context.

Weaker responses were common sense based and unsupported by evidence. Three clear points, supported with developed examples/ evidence, were needed to gain maximum marks.

Question 11
Candidates were able to offer a range of developed points in support of the question but struggled a little more with the development of AO3 points. Again, there was a tendency towards juxtaposition on this question.

Most responses focused on functionalist views, referencing Durkheim, Malinowski and/ or Parsons, and developing these ideas well in relation to the question. Some candidates added range by referring to religion as a force for change as a positive way of meeting society's needs, using Weber, and, more commonly, Maduro/ liberation theology. There were also some who used Marx's ideas on religion as knowledge, in the sense that it is having a positive role for Capitalism. This could be creditable, but sometimes candidates became very confused as to whether Marx would support this or not, and this undermined their answer.

In terms of evaluation, the most common approach was to use Marxist ideas regarding the opium of the people and as a means to legitimate and maintain capitalist society as playing a negative role. Some responses also highlighted how religion is detrimental to women promoting patriarchy and excluding women from religious hierarchies (feminists such as de Beauvoir were used here). These points were fully creditable, but too often were merely juxtaposed rather than explicitly used in an evaluative way. Some candidates also gained some credit for challenges to the functionalist views, such as the lack of contemporary evidence and the small scale nature of the studies – though these points were often not well developed.

Three developed points relating to the positive role religion may have in meeting society's needs was enough to gain full marks for AO1, with three developed criticisms of this role being enough for full marks for AO3.

Question 12
This was a very wide question, which therefore tended to be well answered in terms of the range and development of AO1 but candidates sometimes struggled to provide explicit evaluative points, thus limiting their marks for AO3.

Different approaches were taken to this essay, with some focusing more on feminist views, and others taking a more general approach towards gender and religion. Many candidates discussed feminist views on the relationship between religion and patriarchy, with writers such as Armstrong, de Beauvoir and Daly being commonly seen. Some candidates also discussed differences in religiosity and possible reasons why women are more religious than men with links to Heelas and NRMs and NAMs. Inequalities in terms of religious hierarchies were highlighted (the stained-glass ceiling) and differences between different religions in this regard. With regard to gender and ethnicity, both the perceived oppressive nature of some religions towards women (notably Islam) and feminist accounts by Watson and others of liberating effects of veiling etc.

was also well discussed. Writers such as Badawi, Watson and El Sadaawi were used both to support and to challenge some feminist views, in relation to Islam, as was the Goddess movement (Christ). Similarly Holm and Woodhead were used by many candidates, but in different ways. Some candidates also attempted to apply other theories such as functionalism and Marxism to gender, with varying degrees of success.

Evaluation was often found within the feminist views, as mentioned above, or by using Marxist to argue that social class is more significant, which was usually not very successful.

A range of at least four developed points was needed to reach the very top of Level 4 for both AO1 and AO3.