Examiners' Report

Principal Examiner Feedback

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Pearson Edexcel GCE

In Geography (9GE0)

Paper 3

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Examiners Report – 9GE0/03

Overview

It is obviously impossible to know the motives that led to this small cohort to sit this paper in October. The candidature was so small much of the following report should, in no measure, be seen as representative of what might have transpired should this paper have been sat in the summer. Some of the comments may well reflect an impression that most were trying to improve upon disappointing centre assessed grades at the lower end of the ability spectrum whilst (a few) others were, perhaps attempting to turn B grades into A grades or even A to A* grades.

Question 1

For many of the stronger responses this became a comparison of the methods of control involving 'hard' and 'soft' power. In general neo-colonialism was seen as an extension of colonialism but with wholly different methods. Some reflected on role of TNCs and international development policies such as China's 'belt and road' strategy. The weakest responses were less secure over neo-colonialism than colonialism seeing it as a just a modern equivalent without any distinctive mechanism of maintain power. It would also be encouraging if the role of local elites was recognised as being central to the maintenance of both colonial and neo-colonial strategies, but particularly the latter.

Question 2 (a) (i)

There were very many more correct answers to this than wrong answers. Of course, most of the work had been done for the candidates so errors would come from a complete lack of familiarity with the mathematical notation or from addition errors. Some candidates didn't attempt the question at all and, as a consequence the ones that followed it.

Question 2 (a) (ii)

The most familiar problem with candidates on this section of the paper, is not so much their lack of methodical numeracy but there lack of understanding of the meaning of the results. Significance is an intellectually challenging concept but without it statistical testing is pretty much worthless. There was much uncertainty here, mostly on the level of knowing whether significance was determined by higher or lower umbers than the numbers on the table.

Question 2 (b)

There were a few quite thoughtful responses to this, noting the sample size and speculating how many (landlocked) countries might not be members of the United Nations. A few also noted the low numbers in some of the categories and one of two very sophisticated responses speculated about the legitimacy of the 'level' of development wondering whether that was simply economic development or a wider view that included social and cultural variables, The general performance was, however, quite weak.

Question 3

These questions are set-up to test students ability to extract information from the resources(s) but also the strength of their AO1 foundations. In this example very few thought it fitting to explore the multiple and contested meaning of 'development'. The hindrance of development is the focus of this question and it was disappointing that a failure to identify what exactly development might look like was a major issue for most candidates. The specification invites an exploration of just how complex the idea of development is and how the benefits of that development might be very unevenly spread. Rural-urban contrasts might be noted as might the reliability of GDP per capita measures in countries with spectacularly uneven income distributions. The booklet contained a number of prompts to the fact that development might benefit some but not all; the existence of a land-owning elite and the 'business as usual' transition form direct colonial rule to neo-colonialism. As in previous years with more a representative range of answers form which to analyse stretch[s and weaknesses the absence of AO1 at sufficient levels of understanding was the most notable weakness in this cohort.

Question 4

There were similar issues with the responses to Question 4. Some candidates managed to write answers that avoided any mention of social development. A good reminder to students who might complete this paper as a mock for summer 2021 is that using the key focus words in the question is both essential for framing answers but also as an *aide memoire* to answer the question asked! The level of demand of this question was a little higher than Question 3 with a more limited range of resources on which to build their answers. The few impressive responses recognised the implications of the high Gini coefficient scores in much of Latin America and were able to relate this to land ownership concentrations. What was missing form many was the way in which the impact of economic inequalities as measured by Gini was and is bound to impact on a significant range of other measures including life expectancy, maternal mortality, infant mortality, education level and many more. This was were the absence of AO1 was most

startling because, of course, the candidates had no direct resource information about the social impacts.

Question 5

For both of the last two questions on this paper tt has become a recurrent theme to remind students and, perhaps, teaching colleagues that the dominant AO here is AO2 and not as many seem to think, AO3. Many of the answers in this unusual and untypical cohort had very little to add to their deconstruction of the title and their especially detailed overview of Figure 7. There was much information to be gleaned from that resource as there was from Figure 6. It was notable that there was relatively little use of the text that accompanied Figure 6 which might have led, if it had been read critically, to reflect on more AO2 extension. The keyword in the title insofar as defining the focus of this question is probably 'inevitably' and candidates need to be encouraged to address these critical words. The most important missing elements of AO2 were that although inevitable' is a strong position but can be justified, especially given the lack of any global programme to address the worst impacts of growth on climate change and biodiversity loss. Kuznets suggests decline in environmental impact in post-industrial societies but that fits uneasily in a world of globalised production lines and a almost total commitment to economic models built around growth. High GDP per capita might facilitate research into energy sources and production methods that are cleaner suggesting a more positive impact and these could easily be linked to specific aspect of the geography of Latin America drawn for Figures 6 and 7. More sustainable options might be possible but there is a tension between capitalism and environmentalism with emerging countries playing a major role, including Brazil. Some students might have added that there needs to be a political will to change and leadership that ignores the challenges of climate change because they deny that challenge e.g. Trump, Bolsanaro, although perhaps a temporary impediment to environmental protection, are nonetheless significant hurdles.

Question 6

As with Question 5 most answers to this question focussed on the issues surrounding the resources although a small number answered the question without paying any attention whatsoever to the resources offered particularly the 'moral' of the Bolivia material. A very small number got the balance right between AO3 and AO2/AO1. The majority of answers were too brief and lacked

structure tending to repeat a narrative derived largely from Figure 8. There was a lack of argument supported by evidence; in its place was unqualified evidence that was left to speak for itself, which of course it didn't. The intention with these final questions is that they will allow candidates to reflect on the materials from the whole of the resource booklet and. Keywords were, one again, 'development' which is again not constrained to simply economic development allowing a discussion of cultural imperialism or social development. The locational focus is the whole of Latin America which gives a range of opportunities address both differences between countries and within countries as encouraged by the material on Bolivia. There is also opportunity to discuss the emergence of China which all candidates are likely to have studied in the context of challenges to the status of the US as the dominant superpower. They are given not so gentle hints about this with Figure 11. Sadly, very few candidates seem to have reached Figure 11. This is the most demanding question on the paper and the marks were reflected this but significant improvement could be made by all candidates, to repeat the theme, by paying closer attention to the need to draw on AO2 and AO1.