

A LEVEL

Examiners' report

SOCIOLOGY

H580

For first teaching in 2015

H580/03 Summer 2022 series

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Introduction

Our examiners' reports are produced to offer constructive feedback on candidates' performance in the examinations. They provide useful guidance for future candidates.

The reports will include a general commentary on candidates' performance, identify technical aspects examined in the questions and highlight good performance and where performance could be improved. A selection of candidate answers is also provided. The reports will also explain aspects which caused difficulty and why the difficulties arose, whether through a lack of knowledge, poor examination technique, or any other identifiable and explainable reason.

Where overall performance on a question/question part was considered good, with no particular areas to highlight, these questions have not been included in the report.

A full copy of the question paper and the mark scheme can be downloaded from OCR.

Advance Information for Summer 2022 assessments

To support student revision, advance information was published about the focus of exams for Summer 2022 assessments. Advance information was available for most GCSE, AS and A Level subjects, Core Maths, FSMQ, and Cambridge Nationals Information Technologies. You can find more information on our [website](#).

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Paper 3 series overview

Paper 3 comprises Section A, which is compulsory, with 2 sources and 3 questions, and Section B which contains 3 options with 3 questions in each. The paper is demanding, with several different question styles, sources, and extended responses.

To do well in the compulsory Section A on Globalisation and the Digital Social World, candidates needed to engage with the sources in Questions 1 and 2, create a debate and show evaluation skills in Questions 2 and 3, and support all answers with a range of evidence, applying this directly to the question. Candidates who did well on Section A were able to apply a range of wider evidence, often using relevant contemporary examples in conjunction with studies, concepts and theories, and were also able to select and apply relevant points from the sources and develop these in relation to their wider knowledge. Candidates who did less well often lacked focus on the precise question asked, or used more general theoretical and empirical evidence, which was not relevant to, or effectively applied to, developments in digital communication. For example, some candidates used very generic knowledge which they did not relate to the precise question. Some responses lacked any evaluation in Questions 2 and/ or 3.

In Section B a range of developed points is needed, and there is an expectation that detailed knowledge and understanding of sociological evidence will be demonstrated. In the 20 and 40 mark questions an extended response is expected, with explicit and direct evaluation of the main view which goes beyond the juxtaposition of alternative views. Candidates who did well were able to clearly select and present relevant sociological knowledge in a way which demonstrated full understanding. Evaluative points were also presented in equal depth and used to directly challenge the view in the question. Weaker responses often lacked the required range of points – for example in the 10 mark question, three clear and distinct points are required to meet the requirements of 'range', whereas many responses only presented one or two points.

Another notable differentiator was the breadth and depth of evaluation. Some candidates presented very brief and undeveloped evaluative points, such as saying that the view is outdated, which were tagged onto the end of their knowledge-based paragraphs. Such points attracted little credit. Using alternative theories or views to challenge the view in the question is an appropriate approach to producing effective evaluation. However, weaker responses tended to merely list the other theories on a particular topic, making no attempt to use these to directly evaluate the view in the question. Such juxtaposition attracts little credit.

Many candidates were able to produce extended essays with range and depth. However, some struggled to apply their knowledge to the question set and weaker responses were characterised by a 'catch-all' approach where many studies were presented in various ways in the hope that some would be relevant.

A general issue across the whole paper was the precision and accuracy of the evidence used. Some candidates used sociologists' names almost interchangeably and quite often their recall and use of names was inaccurate.

Candidates who did well on this paper generally did the following:	Candidates who did less well on this paper generally did the following:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• utilised relevant sociological theories and studies to apply to the questions set• developed their explanations to fully demonstrate their understanding• linked their points back to focus on the question throughout their answers• included well developed and focused evaluation points where relevant.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• demonstrated a lack of knowledge or confusion relating to the questions set• presented points which were largely common sense based and not supported by sociological evidence• lacked focus on the question set, instead presenting generalised responses• did not include evaluation where required, or juxtaposed alternative views.

Section A overview

Most candidates answered all three questions. Many contemporary examples were effectively applied, though there were also candidates whose responses went very little beyond common sense. To be creditable, contemporary examples must be specific, well explained and applied. Referring to Facebook or Skype, for example, could not be credited as developed sociological knowledge. In addition to contemporary examples, many candidates had clearly learned a range of relevant studies and concepts and were able to apply these effectively to all three questions.

Question 1*

1* With reference to Source A and your wider sociological knowledge, explain how the development of social media has created opportunities that empower young people. **[9]**

Most candidates attempted this question and were able to select parts of the source to develop potentially relevant points. More successful responses were able to focus on ideas raised in the source, often linking them to sociological ideas such as time-space compression, media convergence and global networks. They were then able to expand on these ideas using examples, sociological studies or concepts and make a direct link to young people and empowerment. Many considered examples specific to young people such as job opportunities (referring to websites and social influencers) and online activism and protests (referring to school strikes based on climate change and Greta Thunberg).

However, there was often a lack of focus on the question, either in terms of 'empowerment' or in terms of 'young people', or sometimes both. For example, many candidates outlined some of the benefits of using social media and being able to communicate with others instantly but made no attempt to suggest how this may empower young people. Others focused on online social movements such as #Me Too, engaging with the idea of empowerment, but did not make any link to young people in particular. The source was not particularly focused on empowerment, and candidates were required to make that link. Some candidates struggled to do this and often just quoted from and recycled sections from the source without any attempt to develop this into a relevant point about young people's empowerment.

Exemplar 1

		<p>social media has created new opportunities for all age groups one being young people. social media is the use of online platforms that allow people to connect at anytime from any where. source A infers that young people can "create and share ideas", this allows people to have their own voice and be their own person. Post modernist aiddens discusses the idea of reflexivity and choice that young people now have due to media which gives them power. they are able to construct an identity and share this on a global scale.</p>
		<p>Furthermore, another opportunity social media has created is the freedom to hide behind a screen and therefore change societys outlook on a person. young people can now hide behind social media so tha they are not stereotyped by their age identity. source A infers that social media creates the image of being "face to face" but we can adapt and change what people see. sociologist Haraway discusses this as being a "cyborg" in which young people create their own robot identities.</p>
		<p>Another opportunity social media has created is a wider range of connections creating a "global village" of young people. people now never feel alone as they "carry a smartphone" enabling them to interact at any time. this means that young people feel empowered as they are the "digital age" that only keeps on growing.</p>

This response demonstrates good use of the source for both points made – parts of the source were selected and then linked to the point being made. The candidate clearly applies their selected material to the idea of empowerment, while also focusing on young people, which allowed them to achieve full marks. Though the evidence used in each point was quite brief, this is enough for a question in this section. The third point, though less well developed and lacking supporting evidence, was not needed since full marks had already been achieved.

Question 2

- 2 With reference to Source B and your wider sociological knowledge, evaluate the view that living in a 'global village' is a negative development for people worldwide. **[10]**

Some candidates did not include any evaluation of the view in the question, despite the clear wording. Though the focus of the question was the 'global village', a broad interpretation of this was credited, with most candidates discussing the negatives and positives of people around the world being connected online. Most candidates used two ideas from Source B to develop their supporting points, focusing on lack of privacy and the difference between cultures becoming less obvious. The most successful responses developed the point on lack of privacy in the source using evidence, including the Snowden Report, the Cambridge Analytic scandal, or Marxist ideas of exploitation by big firms online. Some took a different angle on this and linked lack of privacy to issues of relationship breakdown, using Clayton or Miller, or the problem of a digital footprint, using Case and the example of Paris Brown. All these approaches were creditable.

The other common point was about cultures becoming more similar, with responses often referring to cultural homogenisation, sometimes also linked to cultural defence. Cultural imperialism was also used, as was cultural appropriation and McDonaldisation – though the latter was rarely explained or understood accurately. Some candidates used cultural homogenisation as a positive aspect of a global village, in evaluation of the view in the question, which was credited if applied effectively. Another commonly used evaluative point was the spreading of social movements (with reference to the source), using examples such as the Arab Spring uprisings and the Black Lives Matter protests. A range of other points were also used, on both sides of the debate, which, due to the open nature of this question, were usually all creditable. The differentiator tended to be the selection and use of evidence and whether candidates included evaluation points. Most candidates used the source effectively and frequently in this question, though only one relevant reference was required to gain both available AO2 marks.

Question 3

- 3 Evaluate the sociological view that older people have benefitted from advances in digital forms of communication. **[16]**

A small number of candidates left this question out entirely, which may have been related to timing since most candidates who attempted it seemed to find it quite straightforward. However, many responses attracted low marks since they struggled to go beyond common sense type points or lacked enough focus on older people. For example, a number of responses referred to addressing loneliness and keeping in touch with friends and family, but often in a very generalised way with no additional evidence. Specific examples and evidence was needed to gain full credit. A high number of candidates referred to the COVID-19 pandemic as a reason for isolation and a benefit brought by digital forms of communication, but few developed this well in relation to older people. Better responses were able to use specific evidence related to older people such as the Ages 2.0 project, but many used more general evidence of positive effects, such as Shaw and Gant, and then applied their ideas to older people, with varying degrees of success. If done well, this could still be fully credited, but those who just said 'this could apply to older people' would not be credited for a developed point. This question has a higher weighting for AO3, and it was unfortunate that a minority of candidates did not include any evaluation. Those who did often developed their points well, referring to the generational digital divide, often supported by Boyle, and applying additional ideas from Berry or Damant, for example.

Assessment for learning



Technique is important to score well on this section, so it is a good idea for centres to practise planning question with their candidates:

Question 1 needs two developed knowledge points, both referencing the source.

Question 2 needs two points supporting the view and two points challenging the view, which can be brief but need to use evidence. At least one reference to the source is needed.

Question 3 needs two developed points supporting the view and three developed evaluation points.

Centres should use past papers to help candidates practice these structures.

Focus on command word to help candidates know whether they need to evaluate:

For example:

- 2 With reference to Source B and your wider sociological knowledge, evaluate the view that living in a 'global village' is a negative development for people worldwide. **[10]**

This term should clearly indicate to candidates that a debate needs to be created, with points on both sides.

Section B overview

This section accounts for two thirds of the available marks and should therefore have appropriate time dedicated to it. Some candidates decided to tackle this section first, though there did not seem to be a particular benefit to doing this. There were few, if any, rubric errors and most candidates appeared to select and stick to the option for which they had been prepared. Most candidates seemed to understand the requirement for evaluation in the 20 and 40 mark essays, though a significant minority also included evaluation in the 10 mark question, suggesting that they were not clear on the appropriate question technique.

There was sometimes little difference in the range and depth presented for the 20 and 40 mark essays; candidates should go into greater depth in the longer essays, fully explaining and developing points and supporting them with additional studies and examples.

Option 1 overview

Option 1, Crime and deviance, was the most popular option. Each question in this option presented its own challenges to some candidates but many were able to achieve high marks and had clearly prepared well.

Question 4*

Crime and deviance

4* In what ways are self-report studies a useful measurement of crime?

[10]

This question was not answered well by most candidates. It was recognised that the potential content for this question was narrower than for Question 7, for example, and good, methodological points were fully credited to account for this. However, many candidates clearly did not know what self-report studies are, with many confusing them with victim surveys, which undermined their answers. For example, there were frequent references to the Crime Survey for England and Wales (or its predecessor the British Crime Survey which may still be being taught, though this was replaced by the CSEW in 2012), the Islington Crime Survey and the Merseyside Crime Survey, which are all victim surveys and not self-report studies. Some candidates referred to both victims and offenders, showing a lack of secure understanding of self-report studies.

Those who did know what self-report studies are could often develop very good responses, discussing the benefits of their often longitudinal nature, with reference to the Cambridge study, for example, and their ability to uncover hard to reach crimes, addressing the dark figure, such as victimless crime and minor offences. Good responses also included references to validity and the potential to gain both qualitative and quantitative data. Some also focused on usefulness of self-report study data in challenging police practices shown in the official crime statistics, such as chivalry and institutional racism. However, a large number of responses, including those which included creditable content, evaluated self-report studies, sometimes at great length, which was not required for this question.

Misconception



Many candidates did not understand that self-report studies are focused on offenders, rather than victims.

Exemplar 2

4	1	One way in which self report studies are useful is that they give qualitative data. Qualitative data is where individuals can expand on their answers and give more detail and depth as oppose to quantitative data which only gives numerical data and individuals can only give a simple answer. Quantitative data for self report studies in crime is useful because individuals can report as much information as they like to explain a crime. If self report studies were quantitative data, we would only find out what types of crimes were committed and how many people committed those crimes. For example, 10000 cases of shoplifting. But with qualitative data where answers can be expanded on,
4	2	we can find out information like why those crimes have been committed. For example, a question can be asked to the individual like 'what made you shoplift?' and reasons for the crimes can be spotted which can help since we can find ways to reduce the crimes from taking place.

This response makes just one point about the usefulness of self-report studies. The candidate clearly understands what SRSs are – i.e. focused on offenders and not victims - and uses accurate methodological knowledge to support their point. The focus was on qualitative data, but SRSs can be qualitative, so this was accepted, and the response fully engaged with the way in which SRSs could be useful. Due to the challenging nature of this question, this point was credited as fully developed – though two more points would have been required for the candidate to gain full marks.

Question 5*

5* Assess the view that traditional socialisation is the main influence on patterns of offending amongst males.

[20]

This question produced a range of responses, with some candidates offering excellent responses, but many candidates struggled to understand the requirements of the question. The term 'traditional socialisation' seemed to confuse some candidates, who did not seem to grasp the link to gender. Many candidates discussed New Right ideas about a lack of socialisation. This content was used in different ways, with some saying that it showed that a lack of traditional socialisation caused offending among males and others implying that it is traditional for the underclass to socialise males to be deviant. The most commonly applied studies included Oakley, Smart and Heidensohn, focusing on the different controls and freedoms placed on boys and girls which may contribute to offending in males. Some candidates also used sex-role theory, referring to Parsons and Sutherland, and others applied studies of masculinity, including Messerschmidt, Mosher, Mac an Ghail and Connell to discuss expectations of hegemonic or 'hyper' masculinity. All of these approaches were creditable if linked to socialisation and gender role expectations, by family, peers or even media. The chivalry thesis was often used but appeared on both sides of the debate depending on how the candidate interpreted and applied it. Some argued that traditional socialisation has led to a chivalrous attitude in the criminal justice system, using it to support the view in the question. Others used it as an alternative explanation for patterns of male offending, using it as evaluation. Both were creditable if explained and applied. Other material commonly used in evaluation included postmodern ideas, including Katz and Lyng, and subcultural theorists such as Cohen and Cloward and Ohlin. Successful responses applied these to directly challenge the view in the question, explaining why these sociologists would disagree that male offending is related to socialisation, and instead exploring risk-taking or a search for status as a more plausible explanation.

Question 6*

6* Evaluate the view that the law discriminates against the working class.

[40]

This question proved challenging for many candidates. Some did not seem to understand what was meant by 'the law', not linking this to the police and the criminal justice system or to law makers, but instead interpreting this more widely as 'society' and discussing general inequalities which affect working class people, such as low pay or poor housing. Some of these responses had little focus on crime at all and thus could not gain much credit. Most candidates did recognise the view in the question as one which would be supported by Marxist and interactionist sociologists. Commonly used sociologists included Box, Althusser, Croall, Snider, Chambliss, Gordon and Cicourel. There were many discussions of white collar and corporate crime, though these were not always linked to precise sociological evidence. Some candidates also tried to apply functionalist or subcultural material to support the view in the question, including Merton, Cohen and Cloward and Ohlin, arguing that inequalities may drive young working class males to crime, suggesting discrimination. This link was often quite tenuous and underdeveloped. A similar number of candidates used these studies as evaluation instead, arguing that their ideas suggest that working class people commit more crime and therefore the law is not discriminating against them. Similarly, the ideas of the New Right and Right Realists were often used to evaluate the view in this way as well. Another creditable approach to evaluation was to suggest that the law does not discriminate against the working class but rather against men, women, young people or against certain ethnic minority groups.

Assessment for learning



Centres can practise building their candidates' sociological resilience by discussing different ways in which sociological material could be applied to questions like Question 5 and 6 in this paper. Candidates could work in pairs to decide which side of any debate they would put various sociologists and explain how and why they would apply them in this way.

Option 2 overview

Option 2, Education, was the second most popular option. Question 8 seemed to cause some issues for candidates but a good range of responses was seen for Questions 7 and 9.

Question 7*

Education

7* In what ways does teacher labelling influence the achievement of different ethnic groups in education?

[10]

This proved a relatively straightforward question for most candidates, who were able to present more than one relevant point supported with sociological evidence. Commonly used supporting studies included Jasper, Gilbourn and Youdell, Sewell, Wright and Mirza. The question did not specify whether the influence of teacher labelling could be negative or positive, and so some focused on the potentially positive impact of labels on Chinese pupils, for example, or the response of some pupils in terms of rejecting their labels and working harder. Such approaches were creditable if they were well focused on the question. Weaker responses did not include precise evidence, and often presented generalised points about labelling and the self-fulfilling prophecy, which were not fully linked to ethnicity. Some responses also lacked range: three developed points were needed to reach Level 4.

Question 8*

8* Assess social democratic views of education.

[20]

Candidates who did show an understanding of the social democratic view were often not able to present three developed points relating to it. One approach was to link this view to policies which have been influenced by the social democratic view and this is the approach taken by the most successful responses. Halsey was commonly referred to, and policies such as SureStart, EAZs, EiC, EMA and City Academies were all frequently explained and linked to ideas of equality of opportunity and therefore used to illustrate the social democratic view. Evaluation was often limited to juxtaposing other theories of education, though some more effective responses were able to show how and why New Right or functionalist views would oppose social democratic policies, or why Marxists would disagree with the premise that the education system could be made fairer.

A significant proportion of candidates missed out this question, indicating a lack of understanding or preparedness for this question. Some of those who did attempt the question seemed confused about what exactly the social democratic view argues, with some mistakenly linking it to New Right ideas for example.

Exemplar 3

8.	<p>Social democrats believe that there should be things put in place to ensure that everyone has an equal chance in education. Halsey argues that the 1944 education act failed to ensure that school was equal for all as it is still evident that middle class students have a higher attainment and are more likely to go to the ^{university} compared to the working class students. She argues this should be reviewed to make school less more equal.</p>
	<p>However, this is different to functionalists who view education as very equal already. Parsons Parsons suggests that the education system is meritocratic and all students despite class differences have an equal opportunity to succeed in education. He argues that students are given the same opportunities but may not always put in the same effort which is what causes the inequality of outcomes.</p>

This extract shows an example of a developed knowledge point for Question 8. The candidate uses Halsey, showing understanding of the basic social democrat position on the role of education, and linking to the way that the 1944 Education Act did not create equality for all. Though this is quite a brief point, due to the nature of the question, the understanding shown was enough for this to be fully credited. The evaluation point which follows was also credited as developed – it is just about enough, since the candidate challenges the view of Halsey using Parsons and meritocracy and does stay focused. The candidate went on to give two more developed knowledge points, not shown here, arguing against private schools and academisation, though their evaluation of these points was less well focused and developed.

Misconception



Many candidates did not understand what the social democratic view of education is, confusing it with the New Right, or with Marxism, or sometimes assuming it was a general term for all the views of education, which were then discussed.

Question 9*

- 9* Evaluate the view that the home is the main influence on the educational achievement of children from different social classes. **[40]**

This question was done well by most candidates and produced some excellent responses, particularly in terms of knowledge to support the view in the question.

The most commonly used studies in support of the view in the question included Smith and Noble, Callendar and Jackson, Feinstein, Bernstein and Bourdieu. However, Willis and Mac an Ghail were also commonly seen. These studies were sometimes applied to support the view, arguing that working class males took on a negative attitude about education due to their father's experience in working class jobs. Other candidates applied Willis and Mac an Ghail to challenge the view in the question, blaming the economy and labour market or peer groups in school instead. Other evaluation included in-school factors such as labelling, the hidden curriculum and differences in types of schools. This question produced a lot of juxtaposition – many candidates presented alternative explanations for differences in educational achievement between the different social classes without using them to explicitly challenge explanations based on home factors.

A minority of candidates did not seem to fully understand what was meant by 'home factors', with some suggesting that cultural factors were home factors and material factors were not and other candidates arguing the opposite. Less successful responses also misunderstood the focus of the question and wrote more on ethnicity or gender instead of social class, or tried to use these to evaluate, which was not accepted for this question.

Assessment for learning



It is a good idea for centres to practise different ways of grouping explanations for differential educational achievement, rather than just focusing on inside school and outside school as the main dichotomy, since questions are likely to vary. Some candidates struggled to decide what counted as the 'home' in this question. Candidates could practise grouping different explanations into home, school and system/ structure, for example, as well as inside and outside school factors and structural, material and cultural factors.

Option 3 overview

Option 3, Religion, belief and faith was the least popular option, though was still chosen by a number of candidates, who had generally been well-prepared, and achieved well, particularly in Questions 11 and 12.

Question 10*

OPTION 3

Religion, belief and faith

10* In what ways is the concept of religiosity useful in studying the sociology of religion? **[10]**

Many candidates found this question difficult, and most responses lacked supporting evidence or examples. Similar to Question 4, due to the nature of the question, methodological points were fully credited. Most candidates found it difficult to develop three different points about the usefulness of religiosity, and some just described what religiosity means, lacking focus on the question. More successful responses were able to expand on different dimensions of religious faith to show how exploring the broad concept of 'religiosity' might be more useful than more traditional ways of measuring religion, such as attendance figures.

Question 11*

11* Assess the view that older generations are more religious than younger people in society. **[20]**

This question seemed to be relatively straightforward for candidates. Most were able to create a debate between a range of ideas, though less successful responses lacked much supporting evidence. Commonly used evidence included the cohort effect, Vincent, Voas and Crockett and Heelas. Some candidates produced quite assertive responses related to getting closer to death and secularisation. In evaluation most candidates presented ideas relating to believing without belonging (Davie) and the rise in young people's membership of non-Christian faiths and New Religious Movements. The differentiator here was the range and depth of sociological knowledge presented, since most candidates were able to present a credible debate, but fewer could present three well-supported points on each side.

Question 12*

12* Evaluate postmodern views of religion in society.

[40]

This question was done well by most candidates who attempted it. The knowledge presented on postmodernist views was sometimes a little narrow or vague, referring to ideas about diversity and choice, and 'pick and mix' without much additional supporting evidence. More successful responses included more specific ideas from Bauman, Lyon, Hervieu-Leger and Davie. Candidates commonly used alternative views on religion, including Marxist, functionalist, feminist and Weberian, to evaluate. Candidates who used these alternative views to directly challenge postmodern ideas, for example, questioning the availability of choice for women in some religions from a feminist perspective, were credited much more highly than those who merely juxtaposed the different views.

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