



**Cambridge Assessment  
International Education**

Example Candidate Responses – Paper 4

# Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology 9699

For examination from 2024



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## Introduction

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The main aim of this booklet is to exemplify standards for those teaching Cambridge International AS & A Level Sociology, and to show how different levels of candidates' performance (high, middle and low) relate to the syllabus requirements. This document helps teachers to assess the standards required to achieve marks beyond the guidance of the mark scheme.

In this booklet, candidate responses have been chosen from the June 2024 exam series to exemplify a range of answers.

For each question, the response is annotated with examiner comments about where and why marks were awarded or omitted. This is followed by comments on how the answer could be improved. There is also a list of common mistakes and guidance for candidates for each question.

Please refer to the June 2024 Examiner Report for further details and guidance.

The questions and mark schemes are available on the [School Support Hub](#)

**9699 June 2024 Question Paper 42**

**9699 June 2024 Mark Scheme 42**

Past exam resources and other teaching and learning resources are available on the [School Support Hub](#)

## How to use this booklet

This booklet goes through the paper one question at a time, showing you the high-, middle- and low level response for each question. In the left-hand column are the candidate responses, and in the right-hand column are the examiner comments.

Example Candidate Response – high	Examiner comments
<p>There have been several perspectives and viewpoints to explain the effect of Religion. Many sociologists such as Marxists have argued that religion favours the interest of the ruling and powerful class. Along with them the conflict theorists have the same viewpoint that religion and religious institutions favour the ruling class. Feminists argue that religion supports the interests of the ruling or powerful class while they believe that religion is unbiased it will</p>	<p>1 The candidate rightly locates the question in the context of Marxist theory, thereby demonstrating good AO2 skills.</p>
<p><b>Responses</b> are written by real candidates in exam conditions, demonstrating the types of answers for each level. These could be used to discuss and analyse the answers with learners in the classroom to improve their skills.</p>	<p><b>Examiner comments</b> explain where and why marks were awarded. These help to interpret the standard of Cambridge exams to help learners refine their exam technique.</p>

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The answer could have been improved by greater focus on the reference to religious organisations in the question. More examples of how the organisational aspects of religion may serve ruling class interests would have been helpful.
- While references to the feminist theory of religion may help attention might have been paid to explaining the difference might be viewed as a ruling class for the purposes of answer.

This section explains how the candidate could improve each response. It helps learners to improve their exam technique.

## Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- The term 'ruling class' refers to a group who enjoy a privileged position in society on the basis of their economic power primarily. Some candidates wrongly conflate other privileged groups, such as men and the feudal aristocracy, with the ruling class.
- Candidates often discuss religion in general even where specifically. More attention to the organisational aspects questions that refer directly to the impact of religious org

This section lists common mistakes as well as helpful guidance from the examiner. This will help your learners to avoid these mistakes. You can use this alongside the relevant Examiner Report to guide your learners.

## Question 1

### Example Candidate Response – high

### Examiner comments

Globalisation is a process that through the speed of its occurrence transforms the nature of other processes and ~~can~~ leads to events that have global consequences. One consequence of globalisation is the development of transnational organizations, they operate across national borders. Some of them are governmental, such as IMF and others are independent (can be called 'civil society organizations') of the state. Transnational organizations also involve large businesses operating in the global market. Some sociologists believe that transnational companies have contributed to an increase in global inequality. This essay will evaluate this statement.

Firstly, one argument that supports the view that transnational organizations indeed have led to an increase in the gap between rich and poor is the exploitation of labour in developing countries by developed nations.

The workforce in <sup>developing</sup> countries is very attractive for business owners because it tends to be cheap. As capitalism promotes the importance of 'money success' capitalists are trying to save on everything in order to maximise their profits. This leads to poor working conditions and bad salaries for employees.

As a consequence, workers in developing countries are exploited and global. In 1996, the Life Magazine posted a picture of young boy from Pakistan. His name was Tariq and reportedly he was sewing Nike clothes for just 80 cents per day. This is an example

1 The candidate provides a clear account of what is meant by transnational organisations, thereby demonstrating good understanding of the question.

2 The candidate offers exploitation by transnational corporations (TNCs) as a point supporting the view expressed in the question. Then, they develop the point suitable by referring to the imperative of capitalism to maximise profits, using cheap labour where available.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

of a large famous TNC Nike exploiting child labour. The company did not take liabilities and claimed that they were unaware of the age of workers. As a consequence, global TNCs are exploiting cheap labour and so increasing global inequality.

Secondly, there are also examples where NGOs are contributing to the global inequality. Even though NGOs should be civil society organisations they sometimes also exploit people in hard life-situations. In 2018 The Times posted an investigation about NGO Oxfam exploiting victims of the Haiti earthquake in 2010. The victims were in a hard situation as many of them lost their homes, relatives, money, belongings, etc. The Oxfam workers (mostly white, middle class, European) took advantage of their superior position and so it was found out that they were sexually harassing ~~women~~ female victims, physically and verbally abusing them and children. This horrible example shows that developed nations working in virtuous organizations ~~are~~ that are aimed to help victims also mistreat them and so increase the global inequality.

Thirdly, governmental organisations such as the IMF and the World Bank have a list of structural adjustment programs (SAPs) that developing countries have to adopt in order to receive assistance. According to Hong those SAPs are damaging for domestic economies. For example, most common SAPs

3 The candidate makes good use of a relevant example to illustrate the point about transnational corporations exploiting cheap labour.

4 The candidate demonstrates strong AO2 skills in recognising that it is not just transnational corporations that engage in exploitation in developing countries; other types of transnational organisations may also be implicated, such as the example given of Oxfam.

5 The candidate makes good use of a relevant concept (structural adjustment programmes) to illustrate a key point about how organisations like the IMF (International Monetary Fund) and World Bank may be implicated in the exploitation of developing countries.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

are privatisation, and trade liberalisation. Due to the fact that developing countries do not have neither resources nor technologies to produce products of secondary sector they focus on agriculture in which they have a comparative advantage in. This leads to abandonment of diverse crops for domestic consumption and a switch to cash crops such as coffee and cotton which can be sold in developed countries. ~~These~~

This policies only benefit developed nations as they get cheaper primary products. Hong argues that these policies lead to more unemployment and corruption in the long-run for developing countries. For instance, Hanton observed the policies ~~by~~ given to Sierra Leone by the World Bank, the suggested austerity measures had led to cuts on spending on education. As a result, many young people did not have any career prospects which caused social unrest and contributed to the civil war in 1990s. Therefore, governmental organization can also increase global inequality through poor SAPs.

~~During the 1990s,~~

Moreover, Madeley suggests that TNCs can exploit their size and power to influence governments especially in developing countries. For example, in 2005 The Royal Dutch Shell paid \$15 million, without admitting liability, to settle a lawsuit alleging that it paid Nigerian government

6 The candidate provides a clear and accurate account of how structural adjustment programmes may be detrimental to the economic interests of recipient countries. This level of detail helps to demonstrate high order AO1 skills.



## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

for the police to silence those who were criticising company's actions. This shows that TNCs can be more powerful than some developing governments, therefore leading to worse living standards of the citizens.	7
On the other hand, NGOs can sometimes be helpful and perform even better than governmental organisations. Due to the fact that there are so many NGOs they can specialise on very unique tasks and be the best in them. E.g. NGO 'Excellent' has helped the population of East Africa to build sand dams. They used natural resources. Sand dams were filtering the water. As a consequence, children were able to go to school instead of trying to find water. Therefore, NGOs can improve living standards in developing countries and so decrease global inequality.	8
Furthermore, some sociologists argue that TNCs can be beneficial for developing nations and some economists believe that the TNC-led strategy is the best way of development. According to Aisbett, even though TNCs are harmful in the majority's mind especially for developing nations, they in fact offer many benefits to developing countries. For example when TNCs <sup>open up their branches in developing countries,</sup> they create a lot of workplaces. Unemployment decreases, people earn more, so have more disposable income which they reinvest to the economy and create	9

7 The candidate makes a good point supporting the view in the question, which is well-illustrated with the example of Shell.

8 The candidate makes a good evaluative point, challenging the view expressed in the question. Again, the point is well-illustrated through use of an example, in this case the work of the NGO 'Excellent'.

9 The candidate provides another well-made evaluative point, with a clear explanation of ways in which TNCs may benefit developing countries.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

more output from other firms because demand increases. Also, TNC-led growth is rapid because they are already established firms that can benefit from economies of scale and they transfer technologies and techniques from abroad which results in more training and more educated workforce.

~~In addition, a lot of TNCs are accused of committing environmental crimes such as illegal waste dumping or air pollution and so~~

In addition, Dalmija and Schultink argue that the World Bank and WHO have enormously contributed to raising nutritional standards in developing countries and combating ~~diseases~~ diseases. ~~WHO~~ According to WHO Africa has 25% of global diseases burden and only 3% of healthcare workers. Therefore, some international WHO staff was sent to Africa in order to improve living standards there.

In conclusion, there are <sup>many</sup> examples where transnational organisations behaved inappropriately by valuing only their own interests. However, it might be the problem of individuals as there are also examples where TNCs, WHO, and the World Bank are benefitting developing nations and in some cases without asking anything <sup>in</sup> return (WHO staff in Africa). Therefore, transnational organisations had a different impact on the global inequality.

10 The candidate makes helpful reference to a relevant sociological source, Dalmija and Schultink, with some use of relevant statistical data.

11 The candidate provides a summative conclusion, though rather brief and lacking substantive insight. A somewhat simplistic conclusion by comparison with the relatively high standard of the preceding discussion in the main body of the answer.

Mark for AO1 = 8 out of 9  
Mark for AO2 = 9 out of 11  
Mark for AO3 = 13 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
30 out of 35**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The substantive points about the impact of TNCs in developing countries might have been linked to relevant theoretical perspectives, such as Dependency Theory and the World Systems perspective.
- There was scope to be more questioning about the points offered for and against the view expressed in the question. For example, the candidate somewhat uncritically accepted that TNCs operate in an exploitative way in all developing countries, overlooking examples of where certain countries have acted successfully to limit exploitative practices in their domestic labour market.
- The concluding paragraph could have engaged with the question more directly by, for example, stating which arguments the candidate finds most persuasive and why.

## Example Candidate Response – middle

## Examiner comments

Transactional organisations, as the name suggests are corporations that operate their business in numerous countries around the globe. On the other hand several critics point out that organisations have led to an increase in global inequality. In order to verify whether or not transactional organisations have contributed to inequality, ~~it~~ shall be evaluated separately in order to validate the statement. In order to understand the correlation, ~~we~~ an understanding or rather an analysis must be made of transactional organisation as a by-product of today's capitalistic society, and compare the views of Marxists, post-modernists and feminist alike.

It is believed that today's form of inter-connectivity came into being post-cold war after the collapse of the Soviet Union. However, the world has always been like ~~this~~ a "Global village" as described by Marshall McLuhan. It is evident by the researches found traces of inter-connected or rather Global trade in Zimbabwe, where they found traces of research that points out that the country had traded with China and Iran. There are several pre-requisites that are required for transactional organisations to flourish or operate, which shall be discussed below and compared to other schools of thought views that pin-point the organisation as the reason behind global inequality.

Political dimension requires that there should be a free and fair capitalistic economy for such organisations to operate over. After the second world war, various countries adopted supranational laws and organisations to protect

1 The candidate rightly notes the relevance of theoretical perspectives in answering the set question.

2 The material in this paragraph is tangential to the question; it is a prelude to an answer rather than an answer as such.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

their interests. Organisations such as the IMF, the UN and WHO are pertinent to mention. After the war various countries gained independence and stepped onto the post-colonial system. Giddens draws a similarity between Globalisation and locality. It is pertinent to mention that transnational organisations are the direct result of Globalisation. Globalisation, as Slouthe put it, is the free movement of people between countries, their services to one another and goods.

Now that transnational organisation and Globalisation link has been established, there must be an explanation onto how does it inevitably lead to inequality. The capitalist societies that emerged from the second world war doubled in size after the Soviet union's collapse in the early 1990s. Since there were only 14% democratic countries in the world back in 1974, that number has since tripled in size and stature.

Marxist believe that transnational organisations are a neo-colonial project by western hegemonic countries. As Karl Marx put it, "Free yourselves, do not fear as you need to free from your chains. Marxist point to previous colonial countries who provide aid or great jobs in their previous colonies in the name of economic development. Thompson explains that through IMF establishment in 1944, countries that received aid, have to implement "Structural adjustment programmes" which are mostly detrimental to the country seeking aid like in the case of

3 This paragraph touches on some relevant material but is still rather tangential to the question.

4 There is good use of a relevant concept – neo-colonialism – and links to Marxist theory. At this point, the material is directly focused on the question and the candidate demonstrates sound AO1 and AO2 skills.

5 The candidate makes another helpful reference to a concept – structural adjustment programmes – but does not explain why these programmes may be detrimental to developing countries, resulting in a lack of depth in this part of the answer.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

Peru, Brazil and Argentina. Even if those countries have political stability, it does not result in economic stability, as omaha argues. Global inequality, as marxist point out, are through such programmes by the IMF or collectively known as Washington consensus. Marxist believe that coca-colonialism is transparent and is evident in various countries today. The westernisation of other countries are through fast food chains, hip hop, hollywood and finally, by organisation that want to set up a business venture in the country. Transnational organisations, via IMF enter the market in a country and obtain cheap goods & services, ~~as~~ which could be later sold in another country for profit, as capitalist view. On the contrary, capitalists believe that globalisation, democracy and transnational organisations help for the greater good in terms of poverty reduction, quality services through competition, health care by medication made via different resources from different countries.

Feminist like Hochschild, an American sociologist believe that women are at a disadvantage in such a globalised world as they <sup>know</sup> have become "Global care chains". Due to the fact, that transnational organisations want to maximise profits, for working women it creates an issue to leave their children to a maid, usually a migrant who send the money she earns back to her home.

Sceptics of transnational organisation fail to acknowledge the opportunities that such

6 The candidate provides a basic explanation of how the activities of TNCs might be detrimental to the economic interests of developing countries, but there is little follow through on the point in terms of links to theory/concepts/evidence.

7 Potentially, a relevant point about how some groups in particular (women in developing countries, for example) may be disadvantaged by the operations of transnational organisations, but it is left somewhat unclear what the candidate argues in this part of the answer.

**Example Candidate Response – middle, continued**

**Examiner comments**

Organisations bring. In the Reagan era, most transnational countries set up factories and offices in South East Asia like China, Taiwan and South Korea. The reasons could indicate lower taxes and pay of labour but the net result brought unprecedented success. China reduced its poverty in millions and Taiwan has become the largest semi-conductor chip manufacturer in the world through the company TSMC. 8

Modernisation/dependency theory highlight the same that countries need to open their country for democracy to flourish, to move away from an agriculturist to a self-reliant manufacturing one. On the other hand, the Postowal theory (1960) is the most recent and acknowledged theory. However, the latter does not touch upon the inequality in brings to the global south. Such exploitation from bourgeoisie countries towards proletariat signify the relationship between core developed countries and periphery developing world. 9

Transnational organisation do in fact contribute to an increase in global inequality. Such organisations are profit driven and their role as non-state actors do not concern the exploitation that may arise, like cutting of forests in Brazil leading to a horrific climate change crisis globally. 10

8 The candidate raises a clear and well-made point, challenging the view in the question and they support this with a relevant example, showing good AO3 skills.

9 Referencing modernisation theory is a good starting point for a further evaluative point, but ultimately there is insufficient explanation of the relevance of that theory in helping to analyse the issues raised by the exam question.

10 A valuable link to environmental impacts arises from the activities of TNCs but is underdeveloped in the context of the answer.

Mark for AO1 = 6 out of 9  
 Mark for AO2 = 7 out of 11  
 Mark for AO3 = 8 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
 21 out of 35**

**How the candidate could improve their answer**

- The first three paragraphs of the answer were tangential and could have been omitted. Better to have focused the answer from the outset on directly addressing the issues raised by the question.
- While in subsequent paragraphs the candidate made a number of relevant points for and against the view expressed in the question, there was scope to unpack the points further. More detailed explanation of the points was required to gain higher marks. Better linkage of the points to relevant theories, concepts, and evidence would also have helped improve the answer.
- The answer focused on the impact of TNCs primarily; references to other types of transnational organisation needed to be more developed in order to provide a full response to the question.
- Higher marks could have been gained by providing a clear, well-reasoned conclusion.

## Example Candidate Response – low

## Examiner comments

## Globalisation.

It is the process through which, the transport of people (the ability to travel quickly), goods (through trade), services, information and culture can be shared.

According to SoCulte, Globalization has many influences. It has led to the internationalisation of borders through which countries can interact, the removal and reduction of sanctions and restrictions to revive trade and universalism through which people can share cultures. It has also led to solve the problem of time and space so people can enjoy the same show on platforms such as Netflix together.

One of the results of globalisation is TNCs (Trans national companies) these Organisations. These companies originate from western developed countries such as McDonalds, L'oreal, KFC, Samsung, Starbucks etc. These companies from Developed Countries come and settle branches in developing countries, according to Neo liberals settle in developing countries for many reason. They

1 The candidate provides a rather unclear and tangential start to the answer.

2 The material here is relevant to the question, but the candidate may be conflating transnational organisations with TNCs specifically.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

have to sell their products and in return offer jobs opportunities, pay taxes which help the economy and help build the infrastructure of these developing countries. In return, they earn money. The advantages of TNCs include the fact that young people aim to ~~earn~~ have education because it helps them get a job at these TNCs as they require trained and educated employees.

It is just not this but also that these companies make an effort bring changes to their menus according to the needs of their consumers. This process is called glocalisation which is a mix of globalisation and localisation. ~~India~~ Majority of people in India do not consume meat, so McDonalds has created a vegan menu for them or the fact that all their products are Halal in muslim countries like Pakistan.

~~Countries~~ TNCs have provided job opportunities not only for men but for women too, who gain equal opportunities. It is often seen in

3 While it is possible that TNCs require some educated and trained employees, they are also known to employ large numbers of unskilled and semi-skilled workers. The candidate over-generalises and offers an assertion rather than a fact based on clear supporting evidence.

4 Glocalisation is a potentially relevant concept in relation to this question, but it is unclear how the candidate links this material to issues of global inequality. This is a relevant point challenging the view expressed in the question.

5 The candidate misses the opportunity to support the point with reference to appropriate statistical evidence and/or theoretical perspectives. It can also be questioned whether TNCs are significant supporters of gender equality in the workplace, though this point is touched on at a later point in the answer.



## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

Pakistan, that there are equal numbers of male and female employees working in the outlets of such stores

Rostow's Growth model shows how TNCs affect the economy of developing countries. In the first stage, the country's economy is based on agriculture so it's an agricultural economy. In the second stage, these companies of developed countries either come themselves or send aid to help development begin. Through the construction of these outlets, infrastructure development and job opportunities, development begins in the third stage. In the fourth stage, the country is in development. People are employed, the revenue being earned is further being invested in the country's infrastructure. This attracts foreign attention and brings in foreign investment and more TNCs to settle down. In the fifth stage, the economy of these developing countries is similar to the developed countries.

According to Functionalists, the system is the rich people in developed countries spreading branches

6 The candidate makes quite a good link to Rostow and Modernisation Theory, helping to develop a line of argument against the view in the question. The limitations of Rostow's thesis go unexplored in the answer, however.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

in developing countries. They spend very little or have minimum on these countries and their people. It is just because of the currency value that such little amounts seem to be a lot in these countries.

These TNCs also support charity work in certain companies. Coca Cola for example does charity work by deducting the profit earned during the month of Ramadan and gives it away to NGOs like in Pakistan. 7

However, with its advantages, Globalization and TNCs have their negative consequences too. According to feminists, there is very little or no female presence ~~through~~ 8 in the employment of these TNCs. Women are stereotyped into the clothing industry without any protection.

This has led to many tragedies including the death of 20,000 workers in Rana Plaza in Bangladesh. Protective gear is not available for males either.

7 This is a relevant evaluative point, but again somewhat uncritical and simplistic. The candidate misses the opportunity to question why Coca Cola might be engaged in such charity work.

8 The candidate makes good use of feminist theory to suggest gender-based inequality within TNCs.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

1 Continued from page 12.  
 However, as many advantages of TNCs there are, there are factors that speak of its inequality. According to Marxists like Karl Marx, TNCs are a way the elite capitalist people make money out of poor developing countries. The invest a minute amount and make profits off of them. Countries have been categorised into 3 groups. Periphery countries are rich developed countries that exploit the resource of poor countries. Non periphery countries are those that are exploited and semi-peripheral are those which are in between. They get exploited and exploit poorer countries.

9

9 While the link to Marxist theory is relevant, the explanation that follows adds little in terms of answering the set question.

Examples of exploitation include Shell polluting Nigeria for petrol/gas, Nestle using local water bodies to sell bottled mineral bottles called 'Nestle Pure life' in Pakistan, and developed countries from dumping their trash in Ghana.

10

10 The candidate makes a relevant link to environmental impacts. The candidate needs to show how these environmental impacts may illustrate growing inequality as a consequence of the actions of transnational organisations.

In addition TNCs like McDonalds have crept into consumers life through ~~McDonalds~~ McDonaldisation and

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

Coca Colaisation, which is a concept of these two brands have become part of our lives. One way they do this is by creating a narrow and selected menu for people so they have the idea that the taste of their food is always the same. The subtle colors like the yellow in the Arch of 'McDonalds' logo 'm' and Coca Cola's red color are used as a technique to remind people. Not only by using consumer psychology and product placement, ~~also~~ these brands also try to exploit culture by using it in their advert to invite consumers. An example of this is Coke studios where, Pakistani songs in multicultural languages and traditional backgrounds are used.

According to traditionalists, there is both Good and Bad that comes with these TNOs. No one can ignore how beneficial these TNOs are for the infrastructure, economy and jobs. However there is also a lot of disadvantages that come with these TNOs. They exploit resources of

11 The relevance of this paragraph in relation to the question is unclear.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

of these countries and pollute the environment. Their unhealthy food leads to health issues.

In Conclusion therefore, I would like to say, that TNCs should exist in ~~developing~~ developing countries. However, they should not misuse the resources and powers they have since, nation states can't control them. By making sure to take care of the environment and helping the countries where their consumers are, both sides can benefit each other.

**12** This is a moralising conclusion (suggesting what ought to be) rather than an academic statement expressing the candidate's answer to the question.

Mark for AO1 = 5 out of 9  
 Mark for AO2 = 5 out of 11  
 Mark for AO3 = 5 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
 15 out of 35**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- Drawing clearer links between the points offered and the issues of inequality raised by the question, would have helped improve the answer.
- Higher marks could have been achieved by making more use of supporting evidence and/or examples.
- Stating which arguments and evidence the candidate finds most convincing and why would also have helped improve the answer.

## Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- Assuming uncritically that TNCs represent the full extent of transnational organisations is a common mistake. Knowledge of transnational organisations that are not TNCs needs to be more developed if candidates are to achieve high marks in relation to this topic in the syllabus.
- Distinguishing between different developing countries is valuable when assessing the impact of globalisation; not all developing countries are affected in the same way.
- Recognising that inequality may exist in different forms/levels, is one way of delivering nuanced answers to questions about the impact of globalisation. Inequality is not simply confined to differences in income and wealth; it can also include social, cultural, educational and environmental dimensions.
- Referring to theoretical perspectives on transnational organisations, without fully explaining their relevance in the context of the question, is a common mistake.
- Relying on assertion in discussing the impacts of globalisation should be avoided; points need to be supported with references to relevant sociological material, such as study evidence, credible statistics, theories and academic reasoning.

## Question 2

### Example Candidate Response – high

### Examiner comments

Global migration refers to the process of which migrants leave their home countries and migrate to different countries for a wide variety of reasons such as war + more job opportunities. It can be argued that this process of global migration has positive + negative consequences for developing countries.

Firstly, ~~however~~ in support of this view it can be argued that global migration removes skilled workers from developing countries and relocates them to developed countries. This leaves developing countries without skilled workers and puts them in a position where they are reliant on other nation states to provide assistance there skilled workers could have provided. Such as doctors + nurses. This is termed the 'Brain Drain' and it prevents developing countries from continuing to develop as global migration moves the 'brains' of their society. Only 5% of <sup>trained</sup> doctors in Zimbabwe actually work in Zimbabwe. This shows how much of a negative effect the brain drain is having on developing countries, which is caused by global migration.

1 The candidate expresses a well-explained point in support of the view expressed in the question. The point also accurately links to the concept of 'brain drain'.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

Global optimists would subvert this as they suggest that skilled workers are likely to return to their home country after temporary migration. This lets them provide more skills + knowledge to the developing country. 2

Alternatively, it can be argued that global migration has a positive effect on developing countries. Through global migration comes the spread of liberal + westernised values. In developing countries it is often found that they hold traditional and sometimes damaging views for example sexist views on women and the oppression of self expression. Bourm suggests that migrants adapt to their new culture and create social solidarity. 3

They are then able to spread these views through technology with their home country and also when they return. This liberates people who are oppressed by traditional values. Parsons suggests that countries cannot develop if they obtain traditional values that hold them back. Therefore through global migration + the spread of liberal values it helps the countries develop. 4

Global pessimists would argue that this simply isn't realistic. This is a 1 size fits all solution and indigenous cultures won't adapt.

2 The candidate provides a good evaluative rejoinder at the end of the paragraph, linking well to the global optimist perspective. This is a good example of how to support an analytical point with a reference to a relevant theory (AO2).

3 This is a very well-explained point suggesting a positive social and cultural impact of global migration.

4 The candidate introduces another relevant theory, the global pessimist viewpoint and the candidate links this well to the concept of Westernisation and how this may disadvantage developing countries.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

Furthermore, in support of this view it can be argued that global migration is contributing to westernisation. The spread of western values + beliefs is damaging other cultures, making them feel/seem inferior. Through this 'superiority' of westernisation traditional indigenous cultures are being erased. Seawall argues that westernisation makes other cultures seem inferior and is a negative process. Developing countries lose their identities and sense of pride. This lowers self-esteem + patriotic views which are key in helping development. Therefore, global migration is making developing countries' cultures inferior. Llasa disagrees with this as she argues that a homogenised culture actually prevents war. So it is a positive process.

On the other hand, many would argue that global migration has a positive effect on developing countries because migrants are able to make money in their migrated country and send the money back home to improve life in the home country. Hoschild terms this 'global care chains' the process where typically women generate savings through working in the

5 Again, a well-placed rejoinder to the argument that the candidate carefully outlines earlier in the paragraph. The candidate demonstrates excellent flexibility and insight in their thinking with strong analytical points of this kind.

6 The candidate makes good links to the idea of remittances and global care chains, demonstrating relevant sociological knowledge and understanding.



## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

more developed countries and send money back to friends + family and it improves life in the developing countries. This suggests that global migration is a positive process as it financially benefits LEDC.

Pessimists would counter this by suggesting that migrants actually start new lives and leave their previous lives behind, providing financial benefit to their new 'homes'.

Alternatively, in support of this view it can be argued that global migration leads to negative stereotyping of minorities/migrants. When migrants relocate they are often termed as 'foreigners' and 'burdens'. This stereotyping falls on their home countries and negatively labels them too. For example Poole argues that Islam is villainised by the Western media and this has an effect on their home countries. Islam is often associated with developing countries. Canning argues that this mistreatment of migrants + home countries is a negative process.

However, it can be argued that this is simply a minority who attach these labels. Many migrants are accepted along with their religion + culture.

7 The candidate demonstrates excellent dialectical thinking in challenging the earlier point in the paragraph.

8 The candidate makes good use of the concept of stereotyping to highlight disadvantages that migrants from developing countries may face when working overseas.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

Lastly, in opposition to the view it can be argued that global migration is positive because it increases global diversity and encourages acceptance. Global migration allows for indigenous cultures and foods to spread across the world and create a global culture. This isn't making anyone's culture inferior but instead embraces all cultures and creates global identity.

McLuhan refers to this as 'global village' we embrace each other's culture and break down barriers that cause racism + hatred. This is a positive process for all ethnicities/cultures.

Those who hold traditional views oppose this as they believe that all cultures shouldn't mix as it loses the countries' identity.

In conclusion, it can be said that global migration does have negative effects on developing countries such as negative stereotypes + 'brain drain' but there are more positives that liberate the people in LEDC.

9 The candidate draws out their point to explain clearly how the creation of a global culture with elements of hybridity may promote a form of equality between cultures.

10 A rather short concluding paragraph. The candidate's point that there are more positives than negatives with global migration needs more development and support to be convincing.

Mark for AO1 = 7 out of 9  
Mark for AO2 = 8 out of 11  
Mark for AO3 = 10 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
25 out of 35**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- Higher marks could have been achieved by reflecting on the extent to which the experience of global migration is the same for all developing countries. Some developing countries may benefit more than others from global migration.
- More references to relevant research studies would have been helpful.
- The conclusion was undeveloped and lacked the sharpness shown in earlier parts of the answer.

## Example Candidate Response – middle

## Examiner comments

2.

The argument stating that global migration has only negative consequences for developing countries has both points for and against the statement in which I will explore. Global migration consists of individuals moving from a low economically developed country to a higher economically developed country due to either push or pull factors.

An argument that contradicts this statement is that global migration opens up the opportunity for immigrants to send money back over to their countries. Therefore meaning these 'LEDC's' (less economically developed countries) are receiving money that can be put towards different factors e.g. healthcare or food supplies, overall benefitting the country. A theorist that supports this is Hoschilt's theory of 'global care chains' which consists of female workers getting better paid jobs and sending their money back home to help their families. Global care chains prove that global migration can also have positive consequences for developing countries.

An argument in favour of the statement however is that despite individuals migrating to 'MEDC's' (more economically developed countries) and having the opportunity to learn new skills within better jobs, they often migrate permanently rather than temporary migration before heading back home and putting their skills to good use. A

1 This is a well-developed point challenging the view expressed in the question.

2 The candidate makes a good link to a relevant concept – 'care chains' – helping to identify positive consequences of global migration for some female migrants and their families.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

good example of this is 'Brain Drain' which is the idea that migrants will get these better paid jobs in MEDC's and choose to stay there rather than return back home and help their country. For example, there may be more South African doctors in the UK rather than in South Africa itself and therefore means these developing countries are unable to develop any further due to the loss of citizens leaving the country. This then supporting the statement that global migration only has negative effects on developing countries.

3 The candidate discusses the idea of a 'brain drain', with an example to illustrate the negative consequences for developing countries.

However, despite this being said above, global migration will inevitably provide better healthcare for those migrating to 'MEDC's' due to healthcare being further advanced ~~by~~ than developing countries and in some cases (UK) this healthcare being free of cost through the NHS. This means that individuals from developing countries are provided with the healthcare they deserve as it's one of the human rights. However, it could be argued that this will result in permanent migration and that others will begin to also migrate in the hope to benefit their families, but where does this leave their developing country if everyone is trying to leave?

4 A good evaluative point extending the analysis by countering the notion that a 'brain drain' has only negative consequences for developing countries and their people (AO3).

Another argument favouring the statement is that global migration results in less workers being in these developing countries and therefore the country is lacking more than it already was. Less workers means there is less people to fill

5 The candidate maintains the dialectic in their analysis by offering an insightful counter to their earlier point about the benefits of improved healthcare for migrant workers.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

Up necessary job vacancies such as a school teacher or a doctor. This only sets back any progress and stops any development from happening. This therefore proving the statement to be correct. 6

A third argument against the statement is that global migration opens the opportunity for job roles to be filled, inevitably resulting in more money for the migrants. The better job opportunities provided to these individuals means they are placed in a better position to provide for their family and overall just live an easier life than they would be living back at home. This therefore contradicting the argument that there are only negative consequences for developing countries due to global migration. 7

In conclusion, there are more arguments against this statement than in support of it therefore proving the statement to be incorrect. That isn't to say there isn't some truth to the statement however there are more arguments to contradict this. 8

**6** This paragraph is rather vague and seems to partly be repeating the previous observations about a 'brain drain' and loss of key workers.

**7** The candidate identifies a potential benefit for the migrant worker and his accompanying family but needs to show how this might also be beneficial for the country of origin in general. Reference to 'remittances' would have helped in making that connection.

**8** The conclusion is rather simplistic and unsupported. The quality of arguments generally counts more than the quantity of arguments for a particular case, and it would have served the candidate better to consider whether some of the arguments they discussed in their answer were more plausible and/or better supported by evidence than other arguments.

Mark for AO1 = 5 out of 9  
Mark for AO2 = 6 out of 11  
Mark for AO3 = 7 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
18 out of 35**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The candidate might have made it clear that benefits for the individual migrant (higher paid employment, for example) might not necessarily have beneficial consequences for the developing country (the country of origin).
- Links to relevant theories would have added more substance to the sociological analysis.
- A more thoughtful and insightful conclusion would have helped to improve the answer.

Example Candidate Response – low

Examiner comments

The view that global migration only has negative impacts on developing countries is a complex and difficult view.

In post modern times we have seen countries in the west (USA, Canada, EU) which are the most developed countries on the planet be flooded with mass migration. For example one of the main reasons for this in France was having to rebuild the country after WW2. The French brought in ~~into~~ many immigrants from third world countries like Niger and Ivory coast. This obviously had massive benefits as this provided jobs and rebuilt a war torn France.

~~One~~ Functionalists believe migration improves and increases social solidarity as governments introduce us to certain cultures. Marxists like Louis Althusser believed that migration was a scam done by the elite ruling class to get more cheap labour from other nations and over all increasing the power gap of the

1 This paragraph describes the background to an increase in global migration. As the question does not ask about the reasons for global migration, the candidate uses their time fruitlessly in writing the paragraph.

2 The use of theoretical perspectives at this point is helpful but is limited in scope because the relevance of the theories for answering the question is left largely implicit.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

bourgeoisie and the proletariat (Elite and working class)

The new christian right believes that the reason mass migration is happening is to turn more votes Blue (Democrat). Former USA president donald trump argued that Biden is letting in multiple thousand immigrants for more votes on his behalf to stay in power.

Although the Left argues that the main focus on third world immigration is that it provides more culture and more people of ethnic backgrounds allowing for a much more powerfully diverse nation.

Feminists believe that letting people from other cultures into a developed country can negatively affect western women as they don't agree with western idealogys. For example feminist don't agree with Muslims being covered with burkas and Muslim men having multiple wives, this can be very damaging to the average western women's working equality. Many feminists fear that if migration continues at the current rate, first world countries become third world countries, and womens rights are gone.

3 The candidate returns to discussing reasons for migration, which is tangential to the question.

4 Potentially a valid point, but undeveloped and the relevance for the question is left largely implicit.

5 The discussion here is at a very general level and lacks direct links to how global migration affects developing countries specifically.

Example Candidate Response – low, continued

Examiner comments

Many patriotic nationalists like the new right argue that migration needs to be stopped as it only has negative impacts. The new right agrees with the Marxist perspective on cheap labour. To expand more on this, they believe that massive corporations (owned by the elite) let the immigrants in because they are hired by the major corporations and are underpaid. As they are illegal immigrants, they cannot complain as they will be deported if they do, both perspectives agree on this.

6

6 Again, the discussion here is more about the reasons for global migration than the consequences for developing countries.

Furthermore the new right believes that letting third worlders in is not safe for women and children as people from war torn countries are dangerous. We see this with the major terror attack, Tunisian man stabbing babies in France. Also with the watch theft epidemic in London which is generally being done by young men of African descent. The knife crime epidemic in London which is also generally being done by young African men.

7

7 This paragraph is more about the consequences of migration for developed countries as opposed to developing countries.

We are seeing major western countries letting everyone in with open borders. Many people of the new right argue how can you even call the EU a continent if we don't even have borders. Like a house.



## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

without walls. Overall we are seeing increase in over all crime with the rise of migration rape, drugs, violence and robbery.

Many people of the third world countries are saying that Europe started migration and colonisation and that they aren't happy its happening in return. People of the New right argued against this saying that EU migration into AFRICA isn't the same as the Europeans brought technology whereas the Africans brought knife crime.

They argued that 2000 years ago, Europeans had ~~glades~~ were Roman building beautiful monuments with a successful financial system and economy whereas 200 years ago Africans were living in wooden huts living around a campfire.

Many people argue migration is a great thing. If done correctly!

The USA was a country built off of migration, Europeans, Africans, South Americans all came together to make the most powerful country in the history of human kind.

Why was this? Many argue this was because people ~~be~~ were patriotic

8 This paragraph has little relevance to the question and is based more on assertion than sociological reasoning.

### Example Candidate Response – low, continued

### Examiner comments

and weren't divided like they are today.

Another perfect example of immigration being done well is in the UAE. The UAE is 90% migrants but it is arguably a much better functioning society than the West. This is due to religion as you need god fearing men to not commit crimes and people that are true to their values and family orientated, you also see it is also due to religion patriotism as if everyone loves the place they live in, they won't be deviant and the last one is that its culturally well kept. The UAE is clean and has a strong police system making people automatically want to respect the place.

In conclusion Global migration has many negative impacts but can be extremely positive if conducted well.

9 This paragraph is also off-topic, although some credit is merited for implicitly indicating that the experience of global migration may differ between developing countries, some perhaps having a more positive experience than others (AO1).

10 A sparse conclusion, largely unsupported by the preceding discussion. Throughout the answer the candidate omits to refer to the consequences of global migration for developing countries specifically, thereby limiting AO2 marks in particular.

Mark for AO1 = 3 out of 9  
 Mark for AO2 = 3 out of 11  
 Mark for AO3 = 4 out of 15

**Total mark awarded = 10 out of 35**

### How the candidate could improve their answer

- References to the functionalist and Marxist perspectives needed to be linked in to a substantive analysis of the consequences of global migration for developing countries.
- The answer speculated extensively about what should have been done about migration in the view of different political perspectives. That material was irrelevant to the question and needed to be replaced by references to specific consequences of migration for developing countries, as outlined in appropriate sociological sources such as the recommended Cambridge International A Level Sociology textbooks.

### Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- Candidates often fail to distinguish between different forms of global migration (temporary, semi-permanent, and permanent, for example) and how each form may affect the experience of the migrant and the community of origin.
- Answers on the consequences of global migration often focus primarily on the economic dimension, thereby missing the opportunity to broaden the response by also considering social, cultural and environmental impacts.
- Candidates are often better informed about the negative consequences of global migration than the positive consequences and this can lead to unbalanced answers.
- In discussing global migration, many candidates fail to make sufficient distinction between consequences for the individual migrant and consequences for the wider society.
- A more nuanced understanding of the consequences of global migration would help candidates achieve higher marks. For example, many candidates assume that developing countries always benefit from remittances sent to family members by migrant workers. However, remittances are often saved and used to enable further family members to migrate, thereby adding to the loss of workers and depopulation experienced as a negative consequence by some developing countries.

## Question 3

### Example Candidate Response – high

### Examiner comments

Media refers to the process of sharing information, technology, news and etc, via various mediums (TV, newspapers etc). On the other hand, post modernists are those school of thought that believe media can have both a negative and positive influence in peoples lives today.

Through the media models presented to us, we'll see the way media can lead to a negative impact on peoples lives, shown via the hypodermic surging model, however, it can also show the loss of media's influence <sup>one</sup> have positive impact shown via models such as reception analysis models. These models provide a showcase how media can influence or not influence people.

Starting off with the for side, we see the way post-modernists argue that exaggerate the influence of media on peoples life. According to Katz and Lazarsfeld, they believe that post-modernists may take people as passive recipients of media influence, which is not true. They

1 The answer begins well by referencing different theories about the influence of the media, although at this stage there is no link to postmodernist ideas as such.

2 This is the start of the candidate's discussion about the influence of the media. They mention the postmodernist contribution, though details about postmodernist ideas are lacking at this point.

3 The candidate makes good use of the two-step flow model to argue that people are not passive recipients of media influences.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

back up their argument through the two-step flow model, which highlights the fact that people are not passive recipients of media information. They say that instead, people, through everyday social and personal conversations, look up to an 'opinion leader' - a person of influence who has exposed themselves to various media mediums - and share their viewpoints with them. Therefore, firstly, the opinion leader internalises media content and then he shares it with people in social settings, where people may

accept, reject, or modify the opinion-leader's interpretation of media content. Thus, this shows us how media has very little influence on people's life but instead people have a more adverse effect on each other. 4

They are criticized for having a simplistic view of the fact that ppl would always listen to opinion leaders. 5

Additionally, David Paul takes about the fact that the influence of media is not as significant as post-modernists make it out to be. He merely argues, that people either 'selectively recall', 'selectively expose' or 'selectively interpret' media models. He backs his argument up with the reception analysis model, and argues that in modern industrial societies (MIS), people actually choose what media they want to consume, what media they want to remember and how they want to interpret that media. He conducted a research in the 1970s, which where he examined 29 groups

4 The candidate carefully explains details about the two-step flow model in an accurate and literate form, demonstrating good AO2 skills.

5 The candidate offers a relevant criticism of the two-step flow model, demonstrating good evaluation skills (AO3).

6 The candidate explains the reception analysis model well and uses it to extend the analysis of media influence in support of the view expressed in the question.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

of people, ranging from class, ethnicity and gender, who would watch the news channel 'Newsnight' on BBC. By examining ~~these people~~ and through group discussion, everyone had different opinions on the news channel. This, Morely shows the way media's influence is over-exaggerated in people's life, as people are not passive recipients of media messages.

Morely is criticised by McGabe who says that media can be a source of violence and not just diversion.

Lastly, Blumberg and McQuail, who use the uses and gratification model argue the way people use media for social, political and biological needs. They say that people watch <sup>some</sup> media for reasons such as diversion which gives them the ability to escape from their everyday routine, personal identity, they shows or entertainment platforms to make sense of who they are and for surveillance, which

7 The candidate uses relevant study evidence to illustrate points about the reception analysis model is an example of good AO2 skills. However, references to postmodernist ideas are not made directly.

8 The candidate gives a brief, but helpful mention of the reception analysis model.

9 The candidate provides complete arguments and evidence for the view expressed in the question here with an accurate and well-informed discussion of the uses and gratifications model, demonstrating good AO1 and AO2 skills.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

means that they obtain information from media and ~~clarity~~ for personal relationships where people may indulge in media in order to compensate for things like a lack of company. These four sections of the uses and ~~and~~ gratification model highlight the fact that media is not used to have influence on people's views, but instead it is there to provide them with entertainment and knowledge, which is important for their mental health. ~~and~~ Therefore, media does not have a direct influence on people, as people choose what media to indulge in for various reasons.

They are criticised for ~~determining~~ that having an over-deterministic view of ppl as of being active recipients of media.

10

10 The candidate gives a relevant critical perspective on the previously described models of media effects, with good use of the term 'deterministic' to demonstrate analytical insight and awareness of broader philosophical issues underpinning social science. This shows good AO2 and AO3 skills.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

Moving onto the ~~against side~~, the hypodermic syringe model ~~classifies~~ suggests that media has a lot of influence on people's lives today. This model uses the analogy of a patient (the audience) being injected with a syringe (media content), therefore portraying individuals as passive recipients of media.

11

11 The candidate gives a sound account of the hypodermic-syringe model as a line of analysis against the view expressed in the question.

Starting off, Newton talks about the way the media has led to desensitisation amongst individuals. She argues that nowadays, people are being shown violent media, such as news, which promote violence and ultimately makes one believe that violence is the answer of solving everyday problems. Moreover, she argues that violence has led to people empathise with villains rather than the victims. For eg the Palestinian Genocide that is happening currently has led a lot of people to be desensitised and supporting the Zionist agenda of ethnically-cleansing

12

12 The candidate makes good use of a study to illustrate the thinking behind the hypodermic-syringe model.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

Palestinians.

Additionally, media has a strong influence over people's lives as it causes them to imitate what they see on media platforms. This is supported by Bandura et al, who ~~to~~ <sup>13</sup> conducted an experiment to showcase how media has an immense effect on people. He showed 3 groups of children a media content of Bobo doll being hit by a mallet, while he showed one group nothing. Eventually, when those children were given Bobo dolls, they ~~not~~ <sup>13</sup> were 3 groups hit them with mallets, while the 4th group, did not, therefore showcasing the way that ~~imitation~~ has a drastic effect on media influence ~~is~~.

Lastly, Marcuse talked about the way the media had ~~the~~ <sup>14</sup> led to this sense of 'narcotism' which would lead people to accept the ruling class ideology. The

<sup>13</sup> A further study (Bandura) adds depth to the analysis in the preceding two paragraphs, demonstrating sound AO2 skills and keeps the evaluation well focused on the issue of the extent of media influence.

<sup>14</sup> The candidate provides a sound link to Marcuse and the Frankfurt School, which was an important influence on the development of postmodernist ideas later in the twentieth century.



## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

Media would also showcase  
 people as being prosperous and  
 in a positive light, which  
 would ultimately lead the  
 masses to believe that this  
 wealth and capitalism is something  
 to be desired.

In conclusion, we see the  
 way media can both  
 impact and not impact  
 people's lives. Both sides  
 are valid in their argument,  
 therefore making this  
 topic subjected to debate.

15

15 The conclusion adds very little to the preceding discussion.

Mark for AO1 = 6 out of 9  
 Mark for AO2 = 8 out of 11  
 Mark for AO3 = 10 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
 24 out of 35**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- Higher marks could have been achieved by providing more detail about postmodernist ideas, explaining why that perspective views the media as having such a strong influence in society today. Lack of references to postmodernist thinkers was a notable omission, although to the candidate's credit the answer remained focused throughout on the key issue raised by the question of the extent of media influence today.
- While the candidate covered some limitations of each model of media effects, implicitly or explicitly, they missed the opportunity to reflect on the limitations of this type of abstract modelling in general. Arguably, both passive and active models of media effects are over-generalised, too abstract to be readily tested in studies, deterministic, and speculative, among other drawbacks.
- Had the candidate's conclusion reflected the analytical skill shown in their preceding discussion, higher marks would have been awarded.

Example Candidate Response – middle

Examiner comments

Section B

POMO for

- Technological advancements
- 1990 - phone ringer - 2013 - half world online
- Digital Media
  - ↳ terminally online
  - ↳ simulacra - uk online relating ships more
- Turkel - 'culture of simulation'
  - ↳ sims (control)
  - ↳ Disneyland Billiard - hyper reality
  - ↳ Disney world
- Trad & New media
  - ↳ Disney world niche market not everyone afford
  - ↳ hyper reality experienced
- POMO agent
  - ↳ question of intelligence
  - ↳ study on show 'Big Brother' able to differentiate.
  - ↳ half world not online as well
  - ↳ terminally online doesn't describe anyone people use as escapism, don't prefer over real life.

→ complex multifaceted issue, no empirical evidence, more in depth research needed to apply generalisations

→ Feminists - male centric

→ Pluralist - the degree of it's involvement up to audience.

→

Examiner comments area (currently blank in the image)

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

~~It can be said~~ Almost all sociologists would agree that whether traditional or new, media has become a part of everyday life for most. However the degree to which it is involved in our lives will be the topic of ~~discussion~~ explored in this essay. Many sociologists would not agree with postmodernists ~~if they~~ claim of media playing a central role in people's life.

~~It can be argued that a large amount~~ Postmodernists contend that ~~not a media~~ with the advancements in technology, media has surely become an integral part of an individual's life. From influencing ~~for~~ how people live their life and express themselves to even forming online identities ~~that they favour~~ might favour over their real ones. However, if we ~~examine in a~~ historical context or were to examine media content and production it soon reveals to have revolved around ~~rather~~ patriarchal interests, according to feminists. The ~~argue~~ that the large amount of content produced is ~~made with~~ created is to adhere to male interests, ~~and we can also~~ ~~be~~ and also the large amount of media moguls and traditional ~~con~~ media conglomerate owners are men. In this way the content is ~~for~~ being largely produced by men, created for a male audience, according to feminists. Further arguing that this creates a male centric media that alienates women as they are not able to relate or ~~not~~ ~~connect~~ connect with the content. Even a lot of advertising

1 The candidate provides a useful illustration of what postmodernists mean when they refer to the increasingly pervasive influence of the media in society today, demonstrating sound AO1 skills.

2 An interesting switch to the feminist perspective, but slightly tangential to the question in how the candidate develops the point.

Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

Examiner comments

Commercials do ~~not~~ also target a male audience and women are largely presented in ways that ~~can~~ please would interest men, according to feminists. ~~From this~~ Therefore it can be argued that the postmodernists do exaggerate their media's presence as being central to all lives, when feminists argue that is central to men if it is central at all.

3

Another criticism made ~~not about~~ <sup>by many interactionist sociologists</sup> the ~~matter~~ is that ~~just~~ it is the role that media plays in ~~most~~ people's lives is not generalisable as each individual has autonomy over ~~the~~ ~~more~~ the degree to which they ~~want~~ media is involved in their lives and how. ~~Thus~~ They argue that media's involvement can vary from individual to individual according to each of their ~~needs~~ different needs, priorities, experiences. Therefore it can be criticised that the role of media being a central ~~for~~ part of everyone's lives is too deterministic and exaggerated.

4

~~Postmodernists do claim that~~  
However if we assess the other side of the argument, post modernists ~~do~~ ~~rightly~~ point out that since the advent of the phone in 1990s, almost half the word ~~has been~~ <sup>was</sup> recorded to be online in 2013, and with the ~~the~~ new technological ~~advancements~~ <sup>advancements</sup> each day it ~~will not be wrong to~~ can be said that media playing a main role in people's lives ~~is~~ <sup>is</sup> not an exaggeration.

3 This ending to the paragraph is better in terms of linking the feminist perspective to the question. Ultimately, though, the point is unconvincing in the sense that earlier the candidate was implying that the media was central to the lives of both men and women, though within a differential power structure and set of effects.

4 The candidate highlights a relevant angle supporting the view expressed in the question and demonstrates a sound understanding of the interpretivist perspective.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

Post modernists ~~also~~ observe through these advancements in technology and development of engaging apps and websites, people have turned to new media to vicariously live through online avatars or in videogames or ~~apps~~ such as online games such as ' Sims', where you can create and ~~control~~ manipulate an avatar and their setting. This can even be observed in kids of living out experiences that they do not have access to, through games such as 'Roblox', an RPG that is very popular among kids. ~~Statistics~~ Statistics show ~~to~~ more and more kids have access to the internet at ages as young as ten ~~years~~ years old. ~~and~~ and

According to post modernist, ~~more~~ people are starting to favour their ~~int~~ virtual identities over their real ones and ~~are~~ are doing so because they seem to ~~have~~ <sup>gain</sup> some ~~and~~ control over their lives online, contrasting the unpredictability of real life. Turkle identified this as 'culture of simulation'. As an individual has complete control online, it can be countered that the feminists criticism ~~first~~ fails to ~~a~~ acknowledge that women ~~and men alike~~ can create identities online that they control and that they can personalise ~~to~~ as they please. So it can be said that women are not excluded from the experience of media such as 'simulacra'.

In conclusion, it is ~~not~~ the role that media plays in people's lives is complex and multifaceted topic of contention. ~~However~~ It is hard to conclude the degree of media's involvement as it seems to be often ~~changing~~ varying and hard to underpin accurately. With this in mind it is undisputable that media does have involvement in people's lives, though the significance of it's ~~role~~ role in people's lives will need further in depth research and discussion.

5 The candidate begins the evaluative part of their answer with a sound point about the extent of media use today and the growing importance in our lives of the new media.

6 The candidate demonstrates some understanding of specific postmodernist ideas here, with a useful reference to 'the culture of simulation'.

7 This point appears to link back to the earlier discussion of feminist theory, but neither this point nor the earlier discussion of feminist theory is entirely clear. The significance of the references for answering the question needs to be better explained.

8 A reasonable, but brief, conclusion.

Mark for AO1 = 5 out of 9  
Mark for AO2 = 6 out of 11  
Mark for AO3 = 7 out of 15

Total mark awarded =  
18 out of 35

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- Some parts of the answer required greater development and to be better explained in order to clarify and substantiate the points being made.
- The conclusion was promising but would have gained higher marks had the references to the difficulty of establishing the extent of media influence been explained more fully. For example, what might be the practical and methodological difficulties of studying media influence in this context.
- The answer was rather short on references to specific postmodernist contributions to the study of the media.

## Example Candidate Response – low

## Examiner comments

'Post-modernists have exaggerated the influence of the media in people's lives today.' This viewpoint <sup>enhances</sup> ~~expects~~ the significance of ~~per~~ influential people such as organisation.

Post-modernists believe that the media is full of hypocrisy and shame due to the input of negativity or falsely portraying a narrative. This means the ~~the~~ media is saturated and connects to a 'hyper-reality' where 1 because everyone is so desensitised they believe everything they see in the media.

For example, the line between the media and ~~the~~ <sup>reality</sup> ~~reality~~ is <sup>blurred</sup> ~~blurred~~ that they fall into a state of misconceptions and cannot tell the difference between the media and actuality as they <sup>perceive</sup> ~~perceive~~ the media to be real.

1 A short reference to the postmodernist concept of hyperreality is provided but demonstrates only limited understanding at this point.

Example Candidate Response – low, continued

Examiner comments

To which it covers actual issues and is used <sup>as</sup> a way to distract people from reality and what is actually happening - 2

For example, The 'conflict' between the land of Palestine/Lebanon and the Israelis ~~creates~~ corrupting them. In reality, the ethnic cleansing of Palestine dated centuries ago and is still happening to ~~this~~ <sup>today</sup>. Back then, the Israeli soldier stripped Palestinian ~~rich~~ <sup>rich</sup> mothers of their children to give to the Israeli mothers, which in turn left them to ~~hate~~ go against and learn to hate for Palestine.

The media doesn't showcase this and relies on a false perspective of this whole situation which in turn is causing indifference and inequality. 3

However, what post-modernists lack are that there are more than one source of media such as music (Rap), podcast, free speech, which can all lead to a sort of narrative. 4

The <sup>idea</sup> of the media (such as ~~free~~ <sup>free</sup> - media) influencing peoples' lives today can be an ~~an~~ umbrella term.

For example, mass media and organisations stealing from cultures as Hall explained.

For instance, because of globalisation, there is an increase in a process where the

2 Here, the candidate seems to be conflating postmodernist and Marxist ideas, with the notion that the media is used to distract people from what is really happening, being more associated with the Marxist analysis than the postmodernist.

3 Again, this is more a conflict perspective of the kind exemplified by Marxist theory. Connecting these ideas so closely with postmodernism shows some misunderstanding, and therefore weak AO1 and AO2 skills.

4 The candidate provides a useful link to the idea of media as narrative but does not develop or challenge.



## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

government/or organisations profit off of media and culture and strive to dominate it.

Zara is a well known <sup>clothing</sup> company organisation that profits off of 'high culture/culture' and uses it in their productions to which they take credit for. This has led to 'high culture' and culture losing their meaning and significance.

This leads to mass media and totalitarianism of how people collectively enjoy trends and come to an agreement. This can be seen as ~~ext~~ an exaggeration as it may distort cultural values and beliefs as one state believes in one thing.

which puts them as a common denominator. The media can use anything and everyone follows, which puts them on a pedestal and can disintegrate any progress made such as the media ~~being~~ 'woke'.

There are pointless videos and posts that talk about anything, such as skincare and gimmicks which is also influential and can affect the media control and who sees it.

However, post-modernists have also exaggerated the influence of media as there are multiple sources of control which also may

5 The candidate's argument is unclear. This is an example of where the candidate might offer a good point but needs to find a clearer and more accurate set of words to drive home their meaning in relation to the question.

6 The relevance and meaning in this paragraph are particularly difficult to understand.

7 This is an assertion. To be convincing, the point needs to be supported with evidence and/or examples, and the candidate also needs to explain how and why videos about skincare may be highly influential.

Example Candidate Response – low, continued	Examiner comments
<p>-may be beyond the governments control such as television, music, free speech, books, art and poetry. Influences comes in multiple ways which in this case it is free media' due to ones way of expressing themselves.</p> <p>There are multiple concepts that may overstate the media's influence such as parsons and Hall's statement. They all equally explain the media and it's portrayal. (such as pressure-groups)</p>	<p><b>8</b> There is lack of clarity again, although there is a hint of a relevant point in the reference to multiple sources of control.</p> <p><b>9</b> The conclusion follows the pattern of the answer as a whole in being difficult to decipher, with terms appearing with no obvious context (for example, the reference to pressure groups in the final sentence).</p> <p>Mark for AO1 = 2 out of 9            Mark for AO2 = 3 out of 11            Mark for AO3 = 3 out of 15</p> <p><b>Total mark awarded = 8 out of 35</b></p>

### How the candidate could improve their answer

- There is a suggestion that the candidate had some good knowledge and understanding, but their ability to express ideas was limited on this evidence. Greater clarity and accuracy in forming sentences was needed to gain higher marks.
- The candidate knew some relevant postmodernist terms but did not to apply them well to the question. To improve the answer, there needed to be greater attention given to explaining why postmodernists think that the media is a pervasive influence in people's lives today.

### Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- Questions about postmodernist theory are often answered with little or no detailed understanding of the perspective. Indirect references to the theory rather than direct discussion is a common mistake among candidates.
- Candidates would benefit from understanding more about how postmodernist theory relates to earlier traditions in sociology, such as the interpretivist and critical theory (Frankfurt School) contributions.
- Higher marks could be gained by guiding candidates on how to write more developed conclusions to their answers.
- Candidates would benefit from greater awareness of limitations in specific postmodernist ideas, such as those linked to the concepts of hyperreality, simulacra and identity.
- Higher marks could be gained when discussing media influence by considering whether some groups are more likely to be influenced than other groups (the poor rather than the rich, for example, or vice versa).
- Some candidates wrongly identify an ideological role for the media in postmodernist thinking. In doing so, they overlook the absence of a theory of power in postmodernism. Postmodernists provide what they see as a descriptive account of the media as opposed to an analysis of the media's power structure and role in society. Distinguishing between postmodernism and Marxist theory is important in that respect.

## Question 4

### Example Candidate Response – high

### Examiner comments

There is an ongoing debate in sociology about who has the main control over the media content. ~~Some believe~~  
 This question is especially complicated in the modern time due to the rise of New media and more diversity and competitions in the media sphere. Some sociologists believe that nation states exert a great deal of power over the media content. This essay will evaluate this question.

Firstly, one argument that supports the view that governments have no power over media content is a rise in civil journalism. This ~~concept~~ phenomenon occurred due to the new media where audiences can become content creators themselves. 1

Anyone who has an access to the Internet can create a profile in social media e.g. YouTube and post their content which others can watch. ~~The~~ Civil journalism has significantly undermined the governmental control over media because it has become much harder to censor something. For example, the Arab Spring in 2011 was a massive wave of protests in muslim countries, such as Bahrain, Yemen, Egypt and others. The protests were aimed at overthrowing the unfairly elected government. Even though, presidents have prohibited any mentioning of protests in ~~social~~ <sup>the</sup> media 2

1 The reference to the concept of citizen journalism as a point supporting the view expressed in the question is well explained, so good AO1 and AO2 skills shown here.

2 The candidate makes good use of an example to illustrate how citizen journalism can provide a challenge to the control of governments over the media. Choice and use of the example demonstrates high order AO2 skills.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

those who were participating in them posted in ~~the~~ Twitter and posts went viral, so it was impossible to delete them from the Internet. As a consequence, many presidents had to step down due to the protests. This shows the power of ordinary people over the media content and government censorship.

Secondly, due to the fact that media is a very competitive and diverse industry politicians nowadays acknowledge the fact that not all media sources will support them. According to Whalle there is no single powerful group that controls the media, but many powerful groups with different ideologies e.g. conservative and liberal parties. As a consequence, <sup>argues</sup> contemporary politicians are very careful about what they say to media because they know how differently media can present information and how media can heavily impact voting behaviour. This shows that the control over media content is in the hands of owners and nowadays there are many media sources and therefore owners with different values.

Also, there has been a decrease in the extent to which governments control the media content due to the 'new economic shift'. This term was coined by Pavis and McAdam, they argue that nowadays media corporations had to expand their

3 The candidate makes effective use of the idea of fragmentation within the media industry to suggest limitations to government control of the media.

4 The candidate demonstrates good reasoning skills in identifying where power may lie in relation to politicians and the media.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

number of staff members because they started to operate across national borders meaning that they have more news to cover and also more staff is needed to quickly adjust to new technological changes. Media corporations nowadays are owned by a large group of shareholders. For example, Twitter which was originally ~~own~~ owned by a small group of people including its creator Mark Zuckerberg, is now owned by a large number of individual and institutional shareholders. Consequently, due to the fact that there are so many people, the concentration ratio of ownership has fallen making it harder for an individual e.g. politician to bribe the company and promote his/her values. Additionally, Martell argues that there has been a decrease of the power of the USA government because people can find alternative ideologies and critical commentary in the Internet - due to the development of New media the content has become more interactive e.g. people can like some posts, leave their commentary under them etc. therefore, more people can express their opinion and others can read it. E.g. people might read about communism in China and decide that it is a better economic structure than <sup>the US</sup> capitalism ~~As a~~ ~~new~~ ~~idea~~ ~~idea~~ Therefore, it is harder

5 It is not clear how this point helps to answer the question, but the reference to 'the new economic shift' is potentially relevant.

6 A thin line of argument here perhaps, but again the candidate tries to reason points through to provide a sound analytical response to the question.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

For governments to control media content as it is impossible to prohibit <sup>eg</sup> comments or ban foreign websites without retaliations.

On the other hand, some sociologists argue that the power of the government over media content has increased. According to Curran and his concept of 'press barron' in the past media owners were not discrete about their propagandist role. They acknowledged that they intentionally supported conservative party in the middle of 20<sup>th</sup> century. ~~He~~ Curran suggests that nowadays media are even more propagandist but they just are not overt about it-

For example, there was a famous Tony Blair's trip to Australia to meet Rupert Murdoch. After their meeting Blair has gained support from the 'Sun', which is owned by Murdoch.

Moreover, there are legal barriers for media workers <sup>and the use of media</sup> that ~~forbid~~ the reporting of

For example, in the UK it is the Official Secrets Act of 1989 which makes it illegal for journalists to post about defence and international relations (secret information). If we talk about the

restrictions on media consumers we can talk about the example of ~~the~~ North Korea. In this country foreign media is completely banned. If a person is found to be using the Internet there are legal punishments for that, such as

7 A reasonable point for the view in the question, but it could have been expressed in a sharper way.

8 The candidate makes a good evaluative point supported by a reference to the work of Curran and using a relevant concept – propaganda – to extend the discussion and gain marks for AO3.

9 A good example of a means through which government can exert control over those working in the media.

10 A helpful reference to authoritarian regimes and the powers available to such governments in controlling the media. The candidate misses the opportunity to discuss differences between authoritarian regimes and democratic governments in relation to control of the media.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

the death penalty. Therefore those examples show that ~~the~~ <sup>a democratic</sup> government can exert some power over the media content or an authoritarian government can control the media coverage completely.

Also, according to the traditional Marxist perspective media is ~~an~~ <sup>an</sup> Ideological State Apparatus <sup>(Althusser)</sup> which

legitimises the ~~social~~ class inequality and helps maintain capitalist social order. ~~It is~~ It is a superstructure that rest on the economic base controlled by the ruling class. According to Marcuse media is an important agent of socialisation that ~~make~~ creates a false consciousness by making proletariat accept their inferior position and believe in the idea that their exploitation is fair (they do not know that they are being exploited). And media by showing examples of successful working class, such as Steve Jobs who started in the garage maintains the idea of fairness. Therefore, the government being the ruling class controls the media and content.

In addition, according to pluralists ~~media owners try to attract~~

In addition, media owners' main aim is to make profit. Government can be a great source of money as they tend to buy a lot of advertisements.

As a consequence through ~~agenda-setting~~

11 The candidate demonstrates good AO2 skill in linking the discussion to a relevant sociological perspective (Marxist theory) and developing the point through reference to Marcuse and the idea of false consciousness.

### Example Candidate Response – high, continued

### Examiner comments

and gatekeeping the GMB suggests media do not post bad information about nation states in order not to lose potential clients and profit.

In conclusion, there is some evidence that suggest that governments indeed have control over media content. Even though it might be limited (not in the case of North Korea) but still some things such as the Official Secrets Act in the UK suggest that governments have control over media content.

**12** An astute point about the possible links between media and government as a source of advertising revenue. This again is evidence that the candidate thinks deeply about the issues raised by the question and reasoning points through quite well for AO3 marks.

**13** The candidate provides a limited conclusion that doesn't add much to the preceding discussion or offer any additional reflections on the issues raised by the question.

Mark for AO1 = 8 out of 9  
 Mark for AO2 = 9 out of 11  
 Mark for AO3 = 12 out of 15

**Total mark awarded = 29 out of 35**

### How the candidate could improve their answer

- The candidate demonstrated that they were capable of some considered and well-reasoned analysis in their response to the question. In that context, the conclusion to the answer was disappointing. A more sharply honed and thoughtful conclusion would have improved the response.
- There was scope to make more links to relevant sociological theories, such as the pluralist view of the media and the debates between digital optimists and digital pessimists.
- There were a few places where the candidate could have been more questioning about the points they were making. For example, stating that authoritarian regimes are able to have complete control over the media is contentious. Citizens accessing foreign media illicitly occurs even under the North Korean regime and the internet is exceptionally difficult to police even with the powers of an authoritarian state. A little more nuance in expressing some of the key points would have added to what overall was a very good answer.



## Example Candidate Response – middle

## Examiner comments

Media a broad agency providing content for society. Many perspectives argue on who control the media. Media content is often produced by different groups conveying agenda's. they want the public society to believe.

The Pluralist view argues that the media content is often controlled by the audience. Without demand, there would be no supply. This view focus on the receiving end of media also known as the audience. They argue about how no conglomerate would supply a form of media content if there is no ultimate target focused on. Without a demographic to produce content for, there would be not media. This ultimately shows how the audience has control over media content. For example, the term ' boycott' and 'cancel'.

Democratic regime argues that media content is based on what the majority want. It looks at current trends by 'society and what's the new thing to advertise it even more. Society is able to choose the majority of types of media content preferred instead of the government.

Editors and Journalist can be viewed as 'the groups who produce media content such as newspapers and network reports. They have the most power to show the public what they want. For example, they may only showcase news reports they find fitting according to their agenda's and ~~hide~~ hide information they do not want in public.

With the rise of the 'New Media' we can see how

1 The answer begins well with an accurate reference to pluralist theory as a supporting point for the view expressed in the question (AO1 skills shown).

2 The reference to 'democratic regimes argue that media content is based on what the majority want', is somewhat confusing. A democratic regime is not a sociological perspective and it is left unclear in the statement who within a democratic regime is arguing that media content reflects the wishes of the majority. The paragraph needed to be more closely linked to the question and better expressed.

3 A helpful reference to the role of editors and journalists in creating media content. However, the point that editors and journalists may have power in the context of the media could have been developed and supported with evidence. For example, how do editors and journalists exercise control over the media and what are the sources of their power?

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

The evolution of technology is controlling media content. New media such as Instagram, Youtube and Tiktok often uses a algorithm based system which is dependent on the user. New media allows for digital optimism where it can be used for the good of society. For example, digital protests often start using media awareness. The 'Me2' campaign addressing sexual assault brought awareness to thousands of victim cases of their trauma. Media users that have the opportunity to go against the government by exposing truths and rumors they may try hiding.

4

Radical feminist theories argue that it is the men who control the government to push their male gaze agendas such as viewing women as objects and empowering men over women by supporting the patriarchy.

5

Some sociological perspectives argue that it is the government who control media content through their power and network. They control media content through different ways to push their agenda's they support and misuse their power to influence the audiences and society.

The Authoritarian regime talks about how the government is able to control media content. The government has ultimate control over what media they would like to be produced fitting their image. For example, a government may broadcast only positive news advertising their state or country as extremely safe despite their number of cases dealing with illegal activities such as drug and murder.

6

4 A good line of analysis is introduced at this point, linking with the digital optimist view that the new media has helped open more channels for individuals to challenge the existing power structures in society, including the power of government. More development of the point and supporting examples would have helped gain further marks.

5 While the feminist perspective is a relevant reference in the context of the question, the particular point here is weak and poorly expressed. The idea that the government has a 'male gaze agenda' is unconvincing. If there is a male gaze agenda operating in the media, it is set by male audiences and/or the actions of those who work within the media seeking to boost circulation figures and/or generate more advertising revenue; it is not at all clear from the candidate's answer what it might mean for the government to have a male gaze agenda.

6 In this paragraph and the preceding one, the candidate begins to make the case that governments may have powers to control the media. However, details about what those powers are and how they might be implemented are largely absent from the analysis.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

Editors and journalists, despite their power to produce content they find fitting, are ultimately controlled by their agency who is then controlled by the government. Their jobs hang by a thread if they do not wish to produce content the government want. This kind of power conveys how the government has control over media content.

7 Potentially a good point, but again lacking detail. Why is the position of editors and journalists so dependent on government favour and what evidence is there that the government has this level of control? Is the candidate still referring to the situation in authoritarian regimes or all types of government? The paragraph is unclear on those important questions.

Digital pessimism talks about the bad uses of new media. The government may easily be influenced by this using means such as censorship, funding, and regulation. The government is able to censor any forms of content opposing their agenda's. For example, content exposing the tragedies of wars. The government is able to fund only networks and agencies supporting their views and publishes content hiding information they don't want, without funding, an agency may have to shut down. The government may be able to regulate information being produced and stabilises hiding issues they don't want the media finding out.

8 A helpful reference to censorship and regulation in this paragraph, but the candidate links these processes to the new media specifically. Censorship and regulation are features with all forms of media, including traditional media, so it is unclear why the candidate is discussing the new media specifically in this context.

This view that the government has no control over media content consists of a lot of factors within media. While some say it is dependent on the audience and society others may say it is the higher authorities with the money and power.

9 The point being made about government funding seems to be assertion rather than an acknowledged fact or a point arising from an established sociological analysis. The point needed to be developed through reference to appropriate sociological material to be convincing.

10 The candidate offers a conclusion, but it is short of substance. It would be better if the candidate could express which lines of argument they find most convincing in relation to the exam question and why.

Mark for AO1 = 6 out of 9  
Mark for AO2 = 7 out of 11  
Mark for AO3 = 8 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
21 out of 35**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- While the candidate covered a range of relevant points for and against the view in the question, there needed to be more substance to the points to merit higher marks.
- Using evidence from relevant studies to support key points would have been one way the candidate could have added substance. More links to relevant sociological theories would also have helped.
- Some points would have benefited from more thinking through, as they ultimately seemed weak and unconvincing points in relation to the question.

**Example Candidate Response – low**

**Examiner comments**

~~Government have no control over the media~~  
 Media is source of communication outlet  
 which has state and private ownership. It tends to store ~~and~~ information  
 and ~~also~~ collects consume it  
 and managers control day to day to  
 media. which can be argued that  
 government, ~~has~~ managers, owners, audience  
 controls the media. Managers are according  
 to pluralist, ~~an~~ and owners according to Marxist.  
 Instead of government, the media is  
 controlled by ~~the~~ managers. According  
 to pluralist, the media is controlled  
 by managers. <sup>in a managerial Calbraith</sup>  
 argues that managers are <sup>em</sup> well rather  
 remunerated which state that media <sup>than</sup> employed  
 is not control by individuals <sup>by</sup>  
 but rather it is controlled by  
 shareholders. ~~However, it can be~~  
~~seen that media~~ like twitter  
 was established by Nau Zebra  
 and it had a control of  
 various shareholders. Thus, it can  
 be control by individuals who  
 are considered as audience.

However, Buhari argues that there  
 a managerial revolution which tends  
 to take about the fact there  
 a tough competition in reality  
 and all media organisations  
 want to make profits. Media

**1** The candidate makes an appropriate link to pluralist and Marxist theory, but the development that follows is hard to understand as the wording is unclear in parts.

**2** There is some sense of this material being relevant to the question, but again the wording lacks clarity.

Example Candidate Response – low, continued

Examiner comments

serves as a network, which <sup>works</sup> ~~work~~ ~~across~~ across the national borders. However, there's a tough competition for media to make profit.

Moreover, it is argued that media is controlled by audience since there are various platforms through which audience can control media like blogs and if they want to spread awareness about a society they can simply post on social media with hashtags and viral. For example, the ongoing Palestine situation audience can have a control as media has broken its horizon and there are various platforms through which audience that talk about it. However, since the media is also in control of our ~~self~~ ~~own~~ according to marxist, then they restrict and can control the awareness and stop it from reaching the maximum audience they censoring it and ~~to~~ meta ~~to~~ can control it.

Furthermore, ~~more~~ it can be argued that media is controlled by managers who are the pluralist and they have various platforms such as broadcasting through which they can convey their message and not just ~~the~~ television, there are various other platforms.

**3** The candidate makes a useful reference to the role of audiences in controlling the media (AO1). The point could be better developed by considering specific ways that audiences can influence media content beyond simply commenting on social media.

**4** There is a confusing reference here to managers being the pluralists and the point of the paragraph is unclear.

**Example Candidate Response – low, continued**

**Examiner comments**

The big six media companies such as Disney which tends to show the imagination is also controlled by owners. 5  
 One they have the ability to show audience and characters.

Moreover, it also tends to support that managers have control over their own media content as they are making day to day content, since they show what they want audience to see. They have the power to change consumer mindsets and if they want they can show they consumers and what they to buy specific product it's all in the hands of ~~owners~~ managers. 6

However, it can be argued that not just managers, owners have more control because they are rich and powerful and not poor.

Furthermore, the media content is controlled by owners as they are considered as capitalist. If they want media sometimes, media can help a people show many ways to question their status and how of their situation. Hence, solution can also be provided to owners do not want at all because of many cases undertaken.

**5** The candidate's answer jumps around here. In this paragraph, there is a quick switch to discussing owners, but little substance to the point being made.

**6** The candidate offers the assertion that owners can show audiences what they (the owners) want the audience to see, but no evidence or relevant sociological reasoning is given to support this point.

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

their situation can help them to compete against them, which they really do not want. For example, if media news worry that they can do a certain work or job which can ~~enhance~~ make them move towards goal money. They tend to work towards it and have their social class.

7 There is a lack of clarity in the point being made and no linkage to relevant sociological material (theories, concepts, explanations, evidence).

Apart from that, it can be argued that apart from managers, owners, audience government have ~~also~~ control over media content due to various reasons.

~~Government~~ seem to not control media content since ~~Government~~ has control over media and ~~Government~~ has control over media content, since they have ability to communicate with other managers that what type ~~and~~ content should be showed to consumers for example, ~~the~~ the ascent that took in period the government did not wanted it to reach full audience that's why government asked owners, managers. That to show such content to ~~pe~~ ~~at~~ consumer.

8 A relevant example of government intervention to influence the media, but the underlying point about the link between government and media managers is left underdeveloped, so demonstrating only limited AO3 skills.

Moreover, government has control over media which can ruled with a fact that it there's any



## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

political competition going on, government will have the ability to show only the strength of their party and not their opponent. This could be easily done they the ~~par~~ ~~consumers~~ if they can spend money and bribe ~~or~~ owners and managers to show only their government and not their opponent. However, this shows that the content of media is mostly sold out and most of the time actual and honest content is not shown.

9 An unclear point, but it does contain a link to the idea of bribery as a means of influencing decisions within the media.

lastly ~~Further~~, government has control over media content in a way that they are above the private owners audience they have the major control of ~~the~~ media. Then they are surrounded the most powerful and well known away all the other perspectives. ~~however~~ if government doesn't want to show news to be shown in the ~~new~~ channels then it won't be shown. Since they have this army.

10 Again, this is largely an assertion rather than being a paragraph of reasoned argument based on relevant sociological material.

Example Candidate Response – low, continued

Examiner comments

continue

In conclusion, it can be argued that media is controlled by government, politicians, producers, audience. Sometimes, it is mostly controlled by ~~to~~ all of them except government as I mentioned. Mostly, people still tend to rely on old media like as audience because they are aware of the fact that media is controlled by various people in society. Hence the validity and reliability of the media can be questioned. Since most of them aren't biased as it is sold and can be easily ~~by~~ bought, like these, the questions regarding the authenticity could be easily raised as governments tend to run their

their product and politicians tend to buy and these products

11 A basic conclusion, with the reasoning increasingly difficult to follow.

Mark for AO1 = 4 out of 9  
 Mark for AO2 = 5 out of 11  
 Mark for AO3 = 6 out of 15

**Total mark awarded = 15 out of 35**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- Many points lacked clarity in a linguistic sense.
- While some relevant points for and against the view in the question were stated, there was very little development in the form of explanation and/or supporting sociological material.
- Relevant theories were mentioned, but the candidate demonstrated little understanding of how those theories could have been used in answering the question.
- The answer could have been improved in terms of its logical sense. Some points needed to be more clearly expressed and more closely applied to the question that reflects more than just a limitation in the use of language.

## Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- Conflating the ruling class with government occurs quite often in answers about control of the media. While the ruling class in the form of rich media owners may control the media, this grouping should not be confused with the government, which is a separate institutional structure with its own imperatives and modes of operation.
- Some candidates wrongly assume that the new media is controlled by individual content creators rather than by powerful ownership groups and platform providers. They don't recognise that there is an ongoing sociological debate about where the balance of powers lies between different agencies and social actors in relation to the new media.
- Some candidates wrongly assume that democratic governments have little power to control the media by contrast with authoritarian regimes. Thinking more critically about the role of democratic governments in the media space would help these candidates write more informed answers for this part of the syllabus.
- Answers addressing the issue of government control of the media often omit to consider specific mechanisms through which government may exercise control. Some candidates assume that the government possesses relevant powers to control the media, rather than demonstrating in the answer where that power resides and to explain the means through which it is exercised. Good answers, by contrast, demonstrate a detailed understanding of mechanisms such as censorship, public ownership, regulation, control of digital infrastructure, licensing and funding, as ways that government can exercise control in relation to the media.
- A common mistake is for candidates to confuse assertion with appropriate sociological reasoning. This often occurs where a point is asserted as fact rather than developed through reference to relevant sociological concepts, theories, evidence and explanations. Candidates should be encouraged to challenge the points they make and consider the range of alternative interpretations and viewpoints available.

## Question 5

### Example Candidate Response – high

### Examiner comments

There have been several perspectives and viewpoints to explain the effect of Religion. Many sociologists such as Marxists have argued that religion favours the interest of the ruling and powerful class. Along with them the conflict theorists have the same viewpoint that religion and religious institutions favour the ruling class. Feminists argue that religion supports the interests of the ruling or powerful class while they believe that religion is patriarchal it still supports the more powerful one which in this case are men.

Marxists see religion as an ideology that wraps the perception of people of the society in the capitalist viewpoint. They argue that capitalism/religion supports the idea of capitalism where the bourgeoisie (ruling class) are exploiting the working class. Karl Marx argues that religion doesn't allow the working class to recognise their oppression and doesn't let them improve their situation. Marx refers to religion as the 'opium of the people.' This way it suggests that religion acts as a drug which numbs both the pain of the oppression along with the idea that

1 The candidate rightly locates the question in the context of Marxist theory, thereby demonstrating good AO2 skills.

2 The candidate provides a helpful summary of the Marxist theory of religion with a good account of how religion may contribute to false consciousness, meriting marks for AO1.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

the working class can improve its position in the society. Religion has been portrayed in such a way that the people are told to believe that social structures are god given and inevitable. The people are promised rewards and satisfaction after eternal life which helps them numb their pain. Moreover, they are given hope by making them believe that supernatural intervention might help their problems. Such ideologies favour the ruling class since it allows them to constantly exploit the working class without letting them take a stand or improve their status.

Moreover, the people of the working class are used as a mechanism of social change. Instead of letting them understand the pain and their situation the Religion keeps them in a false class consensus. They are made to believe that their position and pain is what they deserve and any effort to change it will result in more damage. The ruling class and the people in power constantly use this as an ideological weapon to exploit the working class since they know they won't rebel or show resistance to such oppressive treatment.

3 The candidate gives a good link to the question explaining how religion may serve the interests of the ruling class (good AO2 skills).

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

There are many historical evidence supporting this claim and portraying how the ruling class benefits from the idea of religion. Firstly, the unfair caste system in India shows how the people aren't allowed to change their status and if they do it will only result in punishment. Therefore, the lower class doesn't even put in the effort to improve the status. Moreover in Europe the queens and kings are in power and are shown to be ruling over their people. In USA during the slavery era the owners would encourage their slaves to accept Christianity so that the religion's concept about rewards in after-life will allow the slaves to accept their faith without being rebellious. Furthermore, during the industrial era in England religion was used as a source to keep the workers sober and allowed them to keep on working. Everywhere, when the ruling class can take the advantage of religion they do and then they use it to justify their oppression that the working class has to face.

Some sociologists might argue and say that clergy can be used to challenge the ruling class if they act as organic intellectuals. A neo-Marxist Gramsci talked

4 The candidate provides a well-chosen example to help develop an understanding of how religion may be involved in supporting ruling class interests.

5 The candidate gives another good historical example to support the view expressed in the question.

6 The candidate provides a good link between religion and the encouragement of sobriety among the working class; the point might have been more developed in order to provide a clear explanation of how sobriety might serve ruling class interests.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

about this idea and said that religion can benefit many as well. Billings did a study on two groups from 1920s to 1930s and both the groups being religious. The organic intellectuals were able to help one group stand against the status quo. These groups of minors were more rebellious and help from the organic intellectuals allowed them to fight against the status quo and oppression they were facing. This is an example that religion can favour you if used properly and understood.

Furthermore, the feminists also argue that religion and religion in organisations have been patriarchal and have been supporting the powerful ones which in their case are the men. Feminists talk about how religion puts restrictions on women while it lets the men to roam around freely. Religious textbooks mostly use men as prophets and leaders whereas the women are portrayed to be evil. An example of this is the Eve bite of the fruit which led to the Garden of Eve. More over, the women are restricted from applying to be at higher positions such as how in Catholicism women aren't allowed to be priests. In religions like Islam women are told to

7 The candidate makes a well-informed reference to Gramsci and the idea that religion can be used to challenge authority as well as to defend ruling class interests, thereby attracting AO2 and AO3 marks.

8 There is good use of feminist theory to develop the point that religion may be linked to the maintenance of power structures in society.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

wear a hijab or how women are not allowed to touch the religious book on their menstruation cycle. While women are being told what to do the guys are roaming around freely without so many restrictions and orders.

However, many sociologists would argue and say that religion can help women such as wearing the hijab can be seen as a liberation and a source of protecting women from the bad eyes of the people. Religious feminists argue that many religions have given several rights to women which they should use to stop getting punished from their husbands. If the religious books are read closely there will be many explanations to why things are the way they are and how women can benefit from it according to their interests.

Marxists have argued that religion preaches submission and hope which allows the working class to be where they are and not take action. On the other hand, functionalists such as Durkheim see religion as a binding force which is bringing together the society through shared norms and values which produces social cohesion. Durkheim

9 A good evaluative point in response to the account of feminist theory (AO3).

10 A clear and accurate juxtaposition of functionalist theory with the Marxist theory of religion, demonstrating good AO3 skills.



## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

believes that Religion is a unifying force which allows the society to act as a whole rather than being individual. For example in cases like marriage, funerals and birth the society plays a pivotal role in such moments. In moments of stress and anxiety the society comes together as a source of comfort for others. You are able to deal with loss better if you have people who can relate with it and can understand your pain.

In conclusion it is true that Religion gives the ruling class the favour of exploiting the working class. However, according to functionalists we can't also deny the idea that Religion can be a binding force bringing the society together and causing social cohesion. Religion serves the idea of both exploitation and comfort. Some people of the society use the concept of religion to exploit while others use it to find comfort for themselves.

11 A reasonable conclusion that rightly points to the multi-faceted nature of religion and variance it is used by different groups and in differing circumstances.

Mark for AO1 = 7 out of 9  
Mark for AO2 = 9 out of 11  
Mark for AO3 = 10 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
26 out of 35**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The answer could have been improved by greater focus on the reference to religious organisations in the question. More examples of how the organisational aspects of religion may serve ruling class interests would have been helpful.
- While references to the feminist theory of religion may help to support the view expressed in the question, more attention might have been paid to explaining the differences with Marxist theory, and specifically how and why men might be viewed as a ruling class.

## Example Candidate Response – middle

## Examiner comments

Religious organisations can be found to serve the interests of the ruling class rather than society as a whole. Therefore this essay will focus on the views of Karl Marx, functionalists Durkheim and Parsons on how religion serves the interest of society or ruling class:

First of all, Karl Marx claims that the saying "God created man in his image" is actually supposed to be "man created God in their own image". He uses this to argue that man use God as a way of limiting themselves. They give God powers which man already possess such as having control over their lives, hence preventing themselves from actually controlling their lives. Moreover, Marx argues that religion acts as an "opium to the people". This meaning that religion helps numb the pain rather than the people getting a happy fulfillment. He gave examples as ~~to~~ to how religion acts as an opium. One example is that individuals have something to look forward to as in some religions they ~~are~~ are promised a life after death and they will spend it in a paradise called heaven. Thus making their life more bearable as such life is not forever but heaven (paradise) is. Another <sup>example</sup> opium is that for the proletariats they accept their status. In other words, religion makes individuals accept their sufferings as it is seen as God-sent or as their destiny. Some say it is a test from God or a punishment because of their sins and whoever passes the test will be rewarded in heaven. Thus, instead of seeing the exploitation of the capitalist, they accept it and this keeps social order and prevents them from

1 The candidate provides an accurate and literate explanation of the Marxist idea that religion is the 'opium of the people', demonstrating good AO1 and AO2 skills.

2 The candidate makes a direct link helping to explain the view that religion serves the interests of the ruling class.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

trying to over throw the ruling-class. Therefore, religion contributes to the ruling class' interests.

However, functionalists such as Durkheim disagree on such views. He found that religion contributes in social solidarity. He separated religion in two categories. They are the profane and the sacred. 3

Through his research on the Australian Aboriginals, he saw that they use what is known as a totem as a sacred symbol. This symbol can either be a plant, such as a tree, or an animal such as a Kangaroo. Moreover, these totems are used for rituals and each totem identifies a clan with different names which are also sacred. Through these ~~rituals~~ totems, the individuals join together for rituals and this creates social solidarity. 4

Durkheim argues that God and society are alike and that through worshipping God, people are also worshipping society. This is because, individuals worship together and there is a decrease of ~~individualism~~ individualism, rather, society benefits as a whole. Therefore, religion acts as a cement that binds people together in order to create social solidarity.

In addition, another functionalist, Parson claims that religion promotes a value consensus in society. He saw that the norms intergrated in society is also derived from religious backgrounds. He uses the example of the ten commandments. One of these commandments is "Thou shalt not kill" and this can be seen as a value in society. It helps in every-day-life such as when driving, or if there is a heated discussion so that no one dies. It also 5

3 There is good use of the concept of social solidarity to introduce an alternative perspective to the Marxist theory of religion.

4 The candidate describes the connection between religion and the creation of social solidarity, as identified in the work of functionalist theorists well, so good AO2 and AO3 skills shown.

5 The candidate makes good use of the concept of value consensus, again demonstrating relevant knowledge and application in relation to the question.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

helps in decreasing the rates of murder and suicide in society. Therefore, religion helps society as a whole with a value consensus.

Subsequently, Parsons also claims that religion makes life on earth bearable for people. An example of this is it helps people deal with death, especially unexpected death. People use religion while grieving and one way of getting over it is by hoping the deceased are in heaven (paradise). Moreover, it helps individuals to accept what they cannot control and believe that God does everything for a reason, such as having no control over the weather. It can also help individuals, especially those in the lower-classes to have hope as there is life after death. Again, they have something to look forward to, and that is heaven, hence making the sufferings on earth a bit more bearable than it actually is. Therefore, again according to Parsons, religion benefits the individuals in the society as well as society itself.

In conclusion, religious organisations serves the interests of both the ruling class and society as a whole. However, we can also argue that it depends on which perspectives we find more debateable than others in order to agree whether religion benefits capitalism or creates social solidarity and value consensus.

**6** The candidate misses the opportunity here to make a comparison with the Marxist view that religion helps the working class accept what they cannot control. There are some similarities as well as some differences between Parsons' functionalist ideas about religion as a coping mechanism and the Marxist account of the ideological role of religion, which the candidate could have mentioned.

**7** The conclusion adds little to the analysis and the points made offer no further analysis or development.

Mark for AO1 = 7 out of 9  
Mark for AO2 = 7 out of 11  
Mark for AO3 = 9 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
23 out of 35**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The material used to support the view in the question is limited to an accurate account of the main features of the Marxist theory of religion. Higher marks could have been gained by using a wider range of material to support the view, including examples of how religious organisations might support the interests of the ruling class in practice.
- The evaluation was limited to an account of the functionalist theory of religion. There was no direct analysis of possible limitations in the Marxist view that religion serves the interests of the ruling class.
- The conclusion said little more than that the answer to the question depended on which sociological perspective one favours. A sharper, more analytical conclusion would have improved the answer.

## Example Candidate Response – low

## Examiner comments

The view of religious organisations serving ruling class interests ~~is~~ aligns with the Marxist Marxism. It is a conflict theory that sees the ~~social~~ structures of ~~social~~ society ~~and~~ religion, in conflict ~~with~~ or creating conflict. In this case religion is a social institution which is tool used by the Bourgeoisie (the ~~existing~~ ruling class) to exploit and oppress the proletariat (working class). This essay will explore the theory of Karl Marx, ~~who~~ ~~was~~ ~~an~~ who seems to align with this view and some ~~more~~ other sociologists ~~that~~ ~~are~~ ~~against~~ this, like feminists and functionalists.

1 The candidate rightly links the view expressed in the question to the Marxist theory of religion (AO1).

Karl Marx developed the theory of Marxism, ~~and he saw the institute of religion in which~~ he explained that society is organised to benefit the elite at the top, even through exploiting the working class through the economic system of ~~capital~~ capitalism. He saw the various institutes of society ~~and~~ ~~aiding~~ in ~~the~~ ~~function~~ ~~the~~ ~~is~~ only benefiting ~~the~~ ruling class. This also included the institute of religion. Many ~~religious~~ religious teachings helped to create ~~domestic~~ domestic, passive workers. ~~that~~ ~~will~~ ~~would~~ ~~keep~~ the ~~working~~

2 The candidate provides a basic summary of the importance of the concept of ruling class interests in Marx's work (AO1).

One way that Marx claimed religion did this was through the church. It ~~would~~ ~~teach~~ This is where ~~is~~ a lot of the working class would come to ~~find~~ complain about

Example Candidate Response – low, continued

Examiner comments

misfortunes and were also taught religious teachings that aimed to help the working class cope. ~~the~~ The church would preach humility and humbleness to the working masses and presented their misfortunes and suffering as ~~with~~ virtuous and ~~as~~ ~~a sign that god was content with those that~~ They would see the church would also make grand promises of the afterlife to the people that faced adversity in this life. ~~the~~ This is also the reason why Marx ~~called~~ <sup>referred</sup> religion as 'the opium of the people'. ~~to~~ <sup>if</sup> the working class citizens would get frustrated and angry with the ~~unfairness~~ unfairness and suffering in their life, ~~the would be subdued using the opium~~ ~~the would be subdued using the opium~~ their frustrations would be subdued using ~~the opium~~ ~~of religion's~~ ~~promises~~ of heaven and God's approval using religion or in other words an 'opium for the masses' ~~that~~ and they would calm down upon hearing they will be compensated in the after life.

According to Marx this would stifle any ~~the~~ opportunity for the working class to revolt and stand up for their rights, or ~~is~~ Marx called it 'the proletarian revolution', and the ruling class ~~would stay~~ ~~on top and benefit from the exploitation~~ could continue to exploit and oppress the working class for their own gain.

~~for this way Marx believed religion to be~~

3 The candidate identifies coping with the stresses of life as one way in which religion may support the working class.

4 The candidate makes a good point about the significance of the afterlife in encouraging the working class to accept suffering in their life on earth, showing relevant knowledge and sound application to the question.

5 The candidate draws a solid link between the solace provided by religion and the working class being persuaded to avoid rebellion and conflict in this life (AO1 and AO2).

## Example Candidate Response – low, continued

## Examiner comments

Marxist claimed that if the proletariat were to bring a revolution and establish a communist society, there will be no religion. Their religion was only needed to sustain an exploitative system of ~~with~~ like capitalism.

However many sociologists ~~argue that~~ criticise this perspective for being too deterministic and economically focused & ignoring the other diverse ways religion ~~can~~ functions in societies or how it can ~~be~~ effect different individuals & differently. 6

One such criticism is from the feminist who claim Marxists to be too ~~focus~~ focused on the segregation of classes to acknowledge the ~~two~~ diverse experience of women in those 7 classes. ~~For~~

~~functionalists~~ Functionalists see religion as not exploitation but rather serving a positive ~~for~~ role essential for the function of society. 8

**6** The candidate makes reference to Marxist theory being too deterministic and demonstrates good AO2 and AO3 skills.

**7** The candidate expresses this brief point well. The point might have been further developed to provide a substantive rejoinder to the Marxist theory of religion.

**8** A relevant reference to functionalist theory, but too underdeveloped to gain many marks.

Mark for AO1 = 5 out of 9  
Mark for AO2 = 5 out of 11  
Mark for AO3 = 6 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
16 out of 35**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The account of Marxist theory was quite well done, but the rest of the answer lacked detail and ultimately provided only a very limited evaluation of the view expressed in the question.
- The answer could have been improved by including examples of specific ways in which religious organisations may serve the interests of the ruling class. For example, parallels between the hierarchy in religious organisations and the power and status of the ruling class might have been examined. Links between the ruling class and the funding of religious organisations could also have been discussed.
- Functionalist theory provided a powerful contrast to the Marxist theory of religion, but the answer lacked a substantive account of the functionalist contribution.

## Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- The term 'ruling class' refers to a group who enjoy a privileged position in society on the basis of their economic power primarily. Some candidates wrongly conflate other privileged groups, such as men and the feudal aristocracy, with the ruling class.
- Candidates often discuss religion in general even where the question refers to the role of religious organisations specifically. More attention to the organisational aspects of religion would help avoid this mistake when answering questions that refer directly to the impact of religious organisations.
- Answers on the role of religion are often confined to a contrast between Marxist and functionalist perspectives. Better answers would range more widely, drawing on additional theories and using examples and evidence to support the discussion.
- Differences in the Marxist perspective are often overlooked in answers on the role of religion. For example, classical Marxists have a very different view of the role of religion to later Marxists such as Gramsci, Althusser, and the Frankfurt School.



## Question 6

### Example Candidate Response – high

### Examiner comments

Religion refers to the worship of one or more a supernatural creature, particularly one or more Gods. It better

Religion refers to the worship of outwardly, or supernatural creature, particularly <sup>the worship of</sup> one or more Gods. On the other hand, social significance refers to the way social institutions such as religious institutions, educational institutes and so on, have an impact on humans and their life.

The ~~prop~~ The topic of this essay is subjected to sociological debate. While some sociologists, such as Max Weber, Steve Bruce and Martin argue that religion is not socially significant in modern industrial societies (MIS), others such as <sup>1</sup> Dake, Peter Berger and so on disagree with the proposition and believe that religion is still significant in MIS. Thus, this topic ~~is of~~ contains in depth arguments from both the proposition and opposition.

<sup>1</sup> A helpful reference to thinkers on either side of the debate, demonstrating sound knowledge of the topic (AO1).

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

Starting off with the for side, Steve Bruce argues that religion is not socially significant today due to his theory of socialisation. According to Bruce, socialisation refers to the fragmentation of social life, which inherently means that people in MS are not integrated into an unifying society and that there is a focus on personal individualism, rather than collectivism. He relates this to how religion is not acting as a unifying force anymore as society and religion are not interconnected anymore, which has led to secularisation. For example, Bruce argues that the Church no longer serves as a focal point for people. In the past, people would come to Church to celebrate religious activities and weddings, but now people do not deem these activities important enough or they simply perform these activities outside a church.

Additionally, Bruce highlights the fact that religion in the past, would give people comfort and solace, but through the press, however, now, people turn to therapists to give them solace. Therefore, Bruce argues that due to

2 A well-honed point supporting the view in the question. The candidate states Bruce's argument accurately and clearly, with strong links to the question, demonstrating good skills in AO1 and AO2.

3 A useful example to help illustrate Bruce's argument.

4 The candidate explains and illustrates a further element of Bruce's thesis well.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

modernisation, people do not deem religion as important anymore.

Bruce is criticized by Heelas who argues that religion still provides comfort to people and people are still involved in religious activities, such as Muslims getting married in mosques.

However, Bruce criticizes Heelas as he argues that in MIS and supports the loss of religion in MIS via his theory of religious pluralism. Bruce argues that religious pluralism, which is the emergence of new sects and religious movements, have given people too much choice in choosing their religion, thus, making them confused and altogether pushes people away from religion, thus, contributing to secularisation.

Moving on, Max Weber puts out his theory of rationalisation to explain how religion has become insignificant in MIS. Weber highlights the fact that in the past, people were religiously motivated - which meant that they would perform actions based

5 The candidate makes good use of an argument against Bruce, helping to demonstrate AO3 skills.

6 The candidate extends the discussion of Bruce's ideas, showing insight into the significance of religious pluralism. Ultimately, the point about increased fragmentation in religious organisations is not explained convincingly as a rejoinder to Heelas' point about people still turning to religion for solace and emotional support.

7 The candidate provides a helpful reference to Weber's concept of rationalisation.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

on religious beliefs. This way, they did this because they wanted to go to heaven, hence, they believed that if they lived a sin-less and God-fearing life on Earth, they would be awarded/rewarded with heaven in the afterlife. However, due to the introduction of industrialisation and the enlightenment period, people started to think more 'rationally.' Instead of looking towards religion to provide them with answers, they looked up to science and scientific answers on how to live their life. Thus, Weber calls this process as the 'enchantment' process, where people's lives were not dictated by superstition, religion and magic anymore, which ultimately led religion to lose its social significance. For example, people in the past believed that happiness could only be brought by performing religious activities (attending church), however now, people achieve happiness through means such as good education, physical exercise and so on. Therefore, Weber's theory of rationalisation highlights how religion has gotten

8

8 The candidate gives a clear and well-expressed account of the significance of rationalisation as a factor that may have undermined the social significance of religion.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

insignificant in MIS.

Weber is criticized by Spickard who argues that the resurgence of new religious movements (NRMs) shows how magic, superstition and religion is still significant in MIS.

Lastly, Martin puts forward his theory of disengagement to showcase how religion has less social significance today than in the past. Disengagement, according to Martin, refers to the withdrawal of social religious institutions from the wider society. In other words, religion does not have social and political control over people's life now, which is compared to when it did in the past. Martin backs up his argument by stating that in the medieval times (16<sup>th</sup> Century) in the UK, the church and the state were connected through the doctrine of the 'Divine Rights of Kings', which was created by King James I. The doctrine stated that the king, was also the head of state, and church and no one could judge him.

9 A brief rejoinder to Weber's argument using the example of NRMs (new religious movements). This evaluative point might have been further developed by the candidate to gain more AO3 marks.

10 Excellent use of another relevant concept 'disengagement'.

Example Candidate Response – high, continued

Examiner comments

except God himself. Therefore, people started worshipping him <sup>in</sup> a 'godly' manner, which created this ~~line~~ <sup>link</sup> between the state and Church. However, in MS, the Church has separated from the state. For example, the House of Lords in the UK used to be full of religious figures ~~dominating it~~, however, in MS, there are only a few seats also ~~called~~ <sup>held</sup> by the archbishops. Therefore, one sees the way ~~St Martin's~~ <sup>St Martin's</sup> theory of ~~socialisation~~ <sup>disengagement</sup> showcases the loss of religious significance.

11

11 The candidate explains the idea of disengagement very well in this paragraph, demonstrating good AO2 skills in particular.

Martin is criticized by sociologists who argue that state and religion are still interconnected. For example, Pakistan's legislation includes a lot of Islamic laws, which ultimately controls people's life.

12

12 The candidate makes a short, but well-made point against Martin's argument about disengagement.

Evaluating the ~~for~~ <sup>for</sup> ~~state~~, we see the way the aforementioned sociologists argue that secularisation has taken place in MS, making religion less important today.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

Moving onto the ~~against~~ side, Dave argues that religion is ~~still~~ socially significant in MIS. He argues that sociologists generalise about religion losing its significance as the only evidence of people straying away from religion is present in Europe. Dave ~~pushes~~ his argument by stating that religion is ~~still~~ ~~equivalent~~ in countries such as Europe, Latin America, and the Middle East. People ~~will~~ ~~do~~ see religion as a means of providing comfort and a sense of belonging. For example, Muslims go to the masjid, often for Friday (Jumma) prayers, which unites them and provides a sense of belonging to them. Additionally, there are organisations based on conducting religious lectures where people may go to discuss the Quran, Bible, etc. Therefore, Dave argues that religion is important in MIS. ~~At~~ Moreover, he says that people may not be outwardly religious but that does not mean they are not inwardly religious. For ~~eg~~, in France, due to the wide spread

13 The candidate carries out a good evaluation (AO3) again, pressing the point that religion still remains socially significant in many countries.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

Islamophobia, Muslims may not feel comfortable praying <sup>outside</sup> in public, but they may pray in their homes, thus, religion is still vital for people.

14

14 A well-made point about a possible move towards more privatised forms of religious practice in some societies.

Davie is criticized as sociologists argue that there is not sufficient evidence to back up her argument, therefore denying it to be questionable.

15

15 The candidate develops the evaluation in a mature way by also considering counter arguments to Davie's critique of the secularisation thesis, thereby helping to merit high marks for AO3.

Furthermore, Rodney and Bainbridge argue that the increase in religious pluralism showcases the significance for religion in MS. They argue that religious pluralism, which is the introduction of new sects, religions, etc, allow people to pick and choose the religious belief they most relate to. For example, in MS, many religions such as Christianity are coming up with new school of thoughts, which accept homosexuality, therefore giving space to the members of the LGBTQ+ community to resonate with these new sects and groups of Christianity, ultimately providing them with a safe religious space. Thus, this allows marginalized groups

16

16 The candidate makes good use of Rodney and Bainbridge to further the evaluation of the view in the question.



## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

to ~~it~~ come closer to religion. Additionally, they argue that religious pluralism is actually a positive thing as more people are now coming up with their own religious sects and organisations, which shows how religion is still important to people today.

Bruce criticizes the concept of <sup>religious</sup> social pluralism as he believes it creates more chaos in society.

Lastly, Peter Berger, in his work of 'de-secularisation' argues the fact that religion is still important today. According to Berger, religion is important in MIS as conflicts based on religion still exist. He gives the example of the Liberation theology, where he argues that people are still fighting for their religious rights and aim to bring religious ideology back. For example, the Iranian Revolution in the 1970s highlighted the way Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers overthrew the the people of Iran overthrew their western leader, as they wanted to eradicate western teachings from

17 The candidate concludes a detailed and well-informed evaluation with a further line of argument based around Berger's concept of de-secularisation.

## Example Candidate Response – high, continued

## Examiner comments

Iran and instead wanted to bring back Islamic values to Iran. This revolution ~~is~~ mirrors other revolutions, which highlight the way people still care about religion and would do anything to install these religious values in their countries.

Berger is criticised as MacIntyre argues that there is not a prominent link ~~between~~ between religion and liberation, as compared to the link between <sup>the state</sup> religion and indoctrination, which leads to revolutions.

In conclusion, we see how both sides gives a detailed and complex arguments regarding religion and its significance. While both sides are valid, this topic still remains inconclusive, as it is subjected to debate and varies from perspective to perspective.

18 A good rejoinder to Berger, maintaining the dialectical nature of the debate the candidate has pursued, impressing with the sophisticated nature of the analysis (AO3).

19 An underwhelming conclusion relative to the high quality of analysis provided in the main body of the answer.

Mark for AO1 = 8 out of 9

Mark for AO2 = 9 out of 11

Mark for AO3 = 11 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =**

**28 out of 35**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- The conclusion needed a sharper edge to gain higher marks. One way this could have been accomplished would have been through enquiring why sociologists find it hard to agree about the social significance of religion today. Is it, for example, that they hold different definitions of religion to some extent; or is it due to methodological difficulties in studying the significance of religion; or might it be that the thinkers are at cross-purposes to some degree, failing to fully understand and respond directly to the points each other thinker is making?
- The candidate could have reflected on the growth of religious fundamentalism in recent years and whether this marks a revival in the social significance of religion.
- Overall, the candidate succeeded in explaining the links to the question very well when making evaluative points. There were just a few examples though where the explanation needed to go a little further in order to fully clarify and justify the point being made.

## Example Candidate Response – middle

## Examiner comments

Religion losing its social significance today than in the past refers to the 'Secularisation debate'. This debate talks about how religious beliefs is declining within society by looking at evidence such as membership, divorce rates and occasions. However, some arguments may be made by arguing religion is changing and not declining. 1

Sociologists argue using empirical evidence by conveying the increase in divorce rates. Most religions such as, Christianity, impose the value that the marriage is holy and must not divorce. However, studies with factual evidence show an increase divorce rate that may correlate with decline of religion. Similarly, we can notice the decline of religious participation during occasions. For example, lesser people are participating in the church and attending mass throughout the week. This also show a decline in religious beliefs. 2

Another reasons we may argue that religion is declining is with the incline of science. Throughout the years science can be seen evolving drastically improving. In the past, religion was used to treat illnesses and sickness with prayers and faith. For example, in Christianity, 'Jesus cured the blind'. However, with science and medicine evolving, people often lean onto medical care to treat their sicknesses instead of relying on faith. This shows societies disbelief in religion to solve their issues and instead rely on proper scientific treatments. 3

With the rise of globalisation, we can notice the

1 The candidate refers to the possibility of a decline in religiosity without acknowledging that this may be something slightly different to the idea of a decline in the social significance of religion. Religion may lose its social significance without there necessarily being a corresponding decline in religiosity, and vice versa. This could occur, for example, where religious belief becomes more individualised and/or privatised.

2 The candidate uses evidence to support the idea of a decline in religious belief, showing sound AO1 and AO2 skills.

3 The candidate makes a reasonable point about the significance of science as a factor that may be eroding the influence of religion.

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

increase of other views and perspectives arguing against religion. One view is 'Humanism'. This is based on sympathy, empathy and emotions basing their norms, values and beliefs. They do not rely on a god or supernatural being teaching them what is right and wrong. Instead they comprehend on how they feel about their action and how the receiver would have felt. Similarly, another perspective is known as 'Atheism'. Here they do not believe in any form of supernatural being and often back their beliefs by hard science cases. This is commonly increasing because of the previously mentioned, evolution of science. Additionally, one more view mentioned is known as 'Individualism'. This is similar to the previously mentioned perspectives. However, they talk about ones own faith, they combine humanism and atheism by basing their values based on feeling and their beliefs based on the research they preach. These views may affect decline in religion as society has other options to choose according to their faiths.

4

4 The candidate identifies the increase in humanist ideas as a challenge to religious belief, demonstrating good knowledge (AO1) and helping to extend the discussion (AO2).

5

5 The candidate makes a brief reference to the growth of individualism, without fully explaining the significance of this for the idea of a decline in religious influence and belief.

6

6 Here, the candidate focuses more directly on the social significance of religion, drawing the answer more tightly into the question (AO2).

In the past, religion was seen as one of the most important institutions in society. It took care of educational needs, healthcare needs, taught values, and <sup>provided</sup> socialisation. However, as society developed, so did other institutions. For example, schools replaced church classes and instead of the Bible being taught, now math equations, science facts and english literature are being studied. Similarly, the evolution of medicine built hospitals and doctors to aid injury's and illnesses, they are the first call before religion. Moreover, religion was used to form social solidarity and control according to Functionists. However, in the present, the government laws are often used to control society. For example,

## Example Candidate Response – middle, continued

## Examiner comments

governments forbid the use of substances before 18, this can be seen as a value reinforced into society replacing religious values.

Some sociologists would argue that religion is not declining but in fact changing. Religion is embedded into society so deep it cannot be forgotten. **7**

Sociologist Mealey argues that religion is changing its ways as society develops but not losing its significance. Arguments such as privatised beliefs can go against secularisation where people are participating in religious events but through different means. For example, with the access to media such as youtube, people are able to attend Church mass online. The evidence previously mentioned would not calculate this way of participation. **8**

With the rise of cults, societies are forming their own religious beliefs and having individualised tokens. Symbolism is open to interpretation and does not need millenniums of history to be considered valid. **9**

Marxist sociologists argue that the lower class society use religion as form of security. They depend on faith as they may not have access to healthcare hospitals and education from schools. This instance may go against secularisation. **10**

Religion is a complex institution having many factors affecting its <sup>significance</sup> ~~influence~~ on society. Sociologists may argue its declining due to the globalisation, and evolution of science, and empirical evidence however some may argue it's changing its ways of participation and not declining within society. **11**

**7** A useful line of analysis as the candidate switches to considering the arguments against the view expressed in the question.

**8** A useful reference to the concept of privatised religious practice and belief (AO3).

**9** The candidate points to the rise of NRMs, such as cults. However, the issue of whether changes such as the growth of NRMs and the increasing importance of privatised religious practice, adds to or undermines the social significance of religion goes unaddressed. Some sociologists would argue, for example, that NRMs are a symptom of a decline in the social significance of religion rather than being an example of a revival in the role of religion in society.

**10** A brief point about the importance of religion as a form of emotional and practical support for the underprivileged but needed further development to gain higher marks.

**11** A rather weak conclusion, not really adding much insight in relation to the set question.

Mark for AO1 = 6 out of 9  
Mark for AO2 = 7 out of 11  
Mark for AO3 = 9 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
22 out of 35**

## How the candidate could improve their answer

- Higher marks could have been gained by referring to more sociological concepts, such as religious disengagement, religious pluralism, religious fundamentalism, rationalisation and disenchantment.
- There was scope to question whether purported changes in religiosity necessarily imply a change in the social significance of religion. The two things can be unrelated to some extent.
- The answer was rather short of references to the ideas of relevant sociologists and theoretical perspectives, including those sociologists such as Wilson, Martin, Davie and Bruce who have contributed to the debate about the secularisation thesis.

## Example Candidate Response – low

## Examiner comments

There is much present of religion in today's society ~~because~~ because of reports and evidence and the ever changing discussion, however the rise of spiritualism, belief in science <sup>over all</sup> and capitalism have challenged religion at it's core, as well as the belief in religion's creation of ~~conflict~~ conflict.

Functionalists focus on the positive contribution made by religion to society. Durkheim argues that when people worship religion they are really worshipping society and his and overall suggest that religion creates social order. Malinowski argues that social solidarity occurs because of religion strengthening the bonds of society and benefiting the individual. 1

Pavon's supports this because ~~he~~ he posits that social solidarity is a result of religion. The functionalist view specifically Durkheim ~~is~~ have conservative values with regards to family life for example. Their view is that religion is continuously socially significant in society today and is vital for social order and solidarity. ~~last year~~

Critics of functionalism point out the ~~big~~ <sup>large</sup> absence of acknowledgment women and the poor when discussing religion and it's positive contribution to society. In this functionalism and religion

1 A useful introductory paragraph that helps place in context what is meant by the idea of religion having social significance.

Example Candidate Response – low, continued

Examiner comments

are outdated because of the rise of Marxism and feminism to advocate for the rights of poor free from exploitation and women from patriarchy. The conservative values of functionalism are also less relevant today because of the different family structures and ~~liberalism~~ overall liberal nature of society in the west predominately. The functionalist view is more relevant perhaps in cultures where religion is still dominant and sexism and homophobia <sup>are</sup> for example ~~is~~ not advocated for, such as Islam.

2 This paragraph lacks clarity overall and links to the question required further explanation.

Marxists argue that religion is negative for society as a form of social control for the poor to keep them oppressed in false class consciousness dominated by ruling class ideology. Marx argues that religion was the opium of the masses implying religion ~~is~~ a repressive nature and ~~is~~ instead suggested a society without religion. Marx suggested that religion was only relevant in class based society which he wanted to rid of therefore perceived religion as outdated and not relevant in an industrial capitalist society for the people who needed freedom not oppression. However, from this religion is beneficially the bourgeoisie therefore advantageous and relevant to some who would like to maintain their position as the ruling class on the other side of exploitation.

3 While Marxist theory can be made relevant to the question, the candidate struggles in this paragraph to make the necessary links. The answer is becoming rather too focused on describing different theories of religion as opposed to assessing whether religion has lost its social significance.

4 The point that religion may still have relevance in terms of the maintenance of capitalism is relevant to the question, but to gain higher marks the candidate needs to consider evidence that might support this view of the role of religion today.

Critics of Marx ~~or~~ argue he neglects the benefits religion ~~brings~~ brings to working class family including charity, education and



Example Candidate Response – low, continued

Examiner comments

representation. Therefore religion does bring positive contribution to society and greatly social order as the systems of the masses still induces order and stability. 5

Additionally, finally, Calvinism and it's role given to capitalism according to Weber proves how religion is relevant today. Weber argued that Calvinism beliefs of the 15th and 16th century is the base to capitalism and therefore capitalism is a revised form of Protestantism. Critics of this suggest there is little evidence to prove this theory however it still a discussion topic relevant today as capitalism dominates globally and is seen as a reason for success. 6

Finally, science and it's <sup>rebuttal</sup> ~~relation~~ to religion is used worldwide as significant. Science is factual and religion is not sure where ~~there~~ balance therefore relevance is less relevant today and the people fear and the fact we live in a community of less. Society today is more individualistic and will support the role in science over secularisation. 7

In conclusion, religion is still relevant today amongst society in many ways as even those who don't believe or worship it directly know it enough to question and debate on it. There are strong arguments such as ~~cannot~~ scientific fact and spiritualisation however all are attempts to understand the world as ~~Materialist~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~pastors~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~stated~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~religion~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>one</sup> ~~main~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~key~~ <sup>to</sup> ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~new~~ <sup>and</sup> ~~world~~ <sup>current</sup> ~~and~~ <sup>questions</sup>. It gives people guidance in times of need and desperation when the outcome is unknown. Ultimately, no matter ~~the~~ how society changes   
 → 8

5 The discussion continues to be at the level of theory rather than considering examples and evidence.

6 More abstract theory here with the reference to Weber and Calvinism. The candidate doesn't consider whether religious beliefs still provide motivation to capitalist entrepreneurs today.

7 The discussion moves to a less theoretical stance with a consideration of the significance of science as a possible counter to the influence of religion in society. The discussion about science needs to be more developed and better linked to the question in order to gain higher marks for AO1 and AO2.

8 Some of the points included in this conclusion would have been better explained in separate paragraphs, prior to the concluding paragraph. The idea that people know enough about religion to debate it, even while not necessarily being religious, is quite a sharp point. Cultures and institutions in the so-called secularised countries still bear the influence of established religion in many subtle respects, including people being able to debate religion in a reasonably informed way.

### Example Candidate Response – low, continued

### Examiner comments

and this society still sees answer above in any form relevant to them. However religion is increasingly unpopular in capitalist societies mostly because of the individualism and how economic self <sup>idea</sup> intent underpins societies. ~~that~~ The social significance of religion is apparent however developing and being in the most modern approach.

**9** The candidate gives a useful reference to the significance of individualism in relation to the question, but it is not explained and developed in a way that might provide a convincing evaluation of the view expressed in the question.

Mark for AO1 = 4 out of 9  
 Mark for AO2 = 4 out of 11  
 Mark for AO3 = 4 out of 15

**Total mark awarded =  
 12 out of 35**

### How the candidate could improve their answer

- The question is essentially a factual one; it is asking whether religion still retains its social significance today. Unfortunately, the candidate used much of their time in answering the question to describe abstract theories of religion, without linking the material well to the empirical matter of whether religion still has social significance.
- The answer could have been improved by drawing on more material from the secularisation thesis.
- The candidate demonstrated only limited knowledge of relevant changes in religion, such as the growth of religious fundamentalism, NRMs, privatised forms of religious practice and belief, and the emergence of alternative belief systems.
- The discussion was over-generalised and gave insufficient consideration to possible differences between societies in terms of the extent to which religious organisations may have lost social significance.

### Common mistakes and guidance for candidates

- Candidates often confuse the idea of religion losing its social significance with the broader topic of decline in religious belief and practice (religiosity). The two things are not necessarily the same, although the relationship between the two is complex.
- The idea of religious revival is sometimes used to argue that religion has not lost its social significance today. Candidates should be aware that the significance of developments such as the growth in NRMs and in New Age ideas is contested in terms of the debate about religion losing its social significance.
- Some answers to questions about secularisation rely too heavily on describing theories of the role of religion (Durkheim, Marx, Weber, for example). To gain higher marks, there needs to be a focus on discussing specific contributions to the secularisation debate, including those from sociologists such as Wilson, Martin, Berger, Bruce, Stark and Bainbridge, Heelas, Wallis, and Davie.
- Good answers to questions about secularisation can be arranged around a discussion of a range of key concepts, including rationalisation, disenchantment, disengagement, religious pluralism, fundamentalism, desacralisation, religious revival, individualism, privatised religious practice, and NRMs. Knowledge of at least some of these concepts is a prerequisite for writing high-quality responses to questions in this area of the syllabus.

Cambridge Assessment International Education  
The Triangle Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge, CB2 8EA, United Kingdom  
t: +44 1223 553554  
e: [info@cambridgeinternational.org](mailto:info@cambridgeinternational.org) [www.cambridgeinternational.org](http://www.cambridgeinternational.org)

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