SOCIOLOGY

Paper 9699/12

Socialisation, Identity and Research Methods

Key features

- Greater observance of the examination rubric is needed in Section A.
- Limited use of sociological material was given to support points made in **Questions 2** and **3.**
- Knowledge of the concept of under-socialisation tended to be weak.
- In section B essay evaluation was primarily delivered via juxtaposition.
- Essay responses could be improved with a greater focus on evaluation.

General comments

The standard of responses overall was moderate. In particular, candidates struggled with **Question 3**. There was a deficit in knowledge and understanding apparent, with few responses able to make successful links between under-socialisation and deviance.

Questions 2(a) and **2(b)** require the demonstration of methodological knowledge. In **2(a)** there was evidence of knowledge of observational studies but overall there was either a misreading of the question by many candidates, or a misunderstanding of the term 'practical factors' in respect of this method. Responses to **Question 2(b)** suggested a lack of familiarity with the strengths and limitations of content analysis. Generally, there was less evidence of responses adhering to the rubric of **Questions 2(a)** and **2(b)** than in the previous session. It is still worth reiterating that the marks for these questions are accumulated on a points-based approach as demonstrated by the mark scheme. Centres should note that candidates would benefit from practicing the skills required for all of the questions in Section A.

In Section B the quality of responses was quite varied. In **Question 4** a number of candidates were not confident in engaging with the concept of objectivity. In **Question 5** candidates showed greater competence in outlining the supporting argument (age identities are no longer clear and fixed) than the counter argument (the view that age identities are still fixed and clear); this left some answers rather unbalanced. This is particularly important because there are more marks available for evaluation in Section B

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

This question was answered well by most candidates. The majority were able to identify at least one way and invariably two. The most typical ways were examples of approval or disapproval in respect of style, taste and attitude etc. Many development points cited informal negative and positive social sanctions. Weaker responses tended to provide general descriptions of pressure groups without specifying a 'way'. Answers to this question need to identify and describe. Without a clear identification no mark can be awarded.

Question 2

(a) Good responses clearly identified a practical factor, explained it, selected relevant sociological material and then showed how the selected material supported the point. The range of practical factors referred to was limited. Access, time and money were the ones typically referenced by candidates although few were able to fully develop these. Often development points were either absent or if present did not demonstrate how the selected material supported the point. A majority

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of candidates identified ethical or theoretical factors as points. These did not receive any reward. It was notable that many candidates provided lengthy descriptions of types of observational studies and the differences between them. In other words, there was a tendency to discuss the topic area in general terms. Marks are only rewarded for points that directly focus on the question.

(b) Most candidates could point to either a strength or a limitation of content analysis but often not to both. Successful answers tended to identify strengths in terms of the advantages of producing comparable data or in relation to practical issues. Candidates tended to be a little more confident in discussing limitations. The most popular example revolved around the potential for researcher bias. Responses rarely followed the rubric of this question explicitly i.e. identifying, explaining and then explaining why an identified point is a strength or limitation. Overall, there appeared to be some knowledge of this research method but a lack of understanding about its uses. A number of candidates mistakenly identified content analysis as a qualitative method and others regarded it as an example of a secondary research method.

Question 3

(a) This question was not well-answered by most candidates. A significant number of responses lacked a clear understanding of the meaning of under-socialisation, especially in the context of deviant behaviour. Many confused it with not having been socialised and used examples of feral children. This approach was not rewarded. Many responses wrote long introductions without making concrete points. Quite often candidates made only one clear point in their response and any additional ones were vague and undeveloped. Hence, very few candidates achieved the higher levels for this question. Stronger answers were able to explain the link to failures in primary socialisation and use material from, for example, Murray or Parsons to support these points. This question does not require an essay response to achieve full marks. Candidates need only provide two clear and sociologically developed points to achieve full marks.

(b) Overall, this question produced better responses than **3(a)**. Good answers included reference to social agency, subculture and marginalisation. Some responses gave good accounts of these factors and their impact on deviance but did not apply their argument to under-socialisation for their point to be fully developed. This meant that many responses were unable to access the top mark band. Some candidates gave more than one argument in their response. In these cases, only the strongest one was rewarded.

Section B

Question 4

Most candidates showed a reasonable understanding of positivism and interpretivism as sociological perspectives but did not always apply their knowledge to the debate about whether society can be studied objectively. Generally, there was little discussion of the meaning of objectivity. Good responses looked at how values might be involved in stages of the research process, although many simply listed or described different methods with few links to the question. The strongest responses introduced the idea of value freedom and how this is viewed by various perspectives (Marxist, feminist or functionalist). Few candidates introduced references to Weber and the freedom/neutrality distinction, and even fewer covered the debate directly. Evaluation was invariably by juxtaposition. Overall, responses to this question were not strong.

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Question 5

Responses to this question tended to be slightly weaker than **Question 4**. Effective answers used a range of arguments to shape their response to whether age identities are clear and fixed. Focus was often on childhood and old age and the characteristics of these age groups. Most candidates made reasonable use of sociological evidence. Many also cited cross-cultural variations in perceptions of age to support their argument. This was often effective. Many candidates focused on a survey of the life course and the features of each stage but without showing much relevance to the question. Most responses were rather unbalanced with evidence in support of the proposition more apparent than against. It is worth noting that there are more marks available for AO3 in this question than for AO1. Stronger responses were able to consider postmodern views of individualism or views linked to changes to childhood.

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Paper 9699/22
The Family

Key messages

- Schools should support candidates where possible with access to laptops/computers to type exam responses, where handwriting is a concern.
- Candidates should ensure they understand the requirements of the questions prior to the examination – familiarisation through use of past exam papers / marks schemes would benefit them.
- Candidates need to focus responses on the context of **the family**, as this is the unit focus.
- More successful responses applied relevant sociological theories, concepts, and research to demonstrate sociological knowledge and understanding.
- Candidates should ensure essay responses engage in competing views, looking at different sides of the issue in the question and apply relevant sociological material.
- Candidates need to ensure responses reflect marks available (*see comments below*)
- Teachers/candidates should use the mark schemes as teaching and learning tools, particularly for **2(b).**

General comments

Overall, a minority of candidates demonstrated they were well prepared for the demands of the paper. There were a significant number of candidates that were not. These candidates demonstrated little sociological awareness, often relying on anecdotal/common-sense knowledge, with some candidates demonstrating a lack of comprehension in how to address particular questions (*see individual question comments below*).

In general, candidates appeared to demonstrate a reasonable sociological knowledge and understanding of functionalism, Marxism, and functions of the nuclear family. Many candidates had a weaker knowledge of New Right views of the family and changes in motherhood.

The more successful candidates produced responses that (a) reflected the requirements of the question and (b) applied relevant sociological material to support their responses. Candidate responses that achieved lower marks tended to not answer the question set, and/or tended to be descriptive and lacked application of sociological material in providing evidence of analysis and assessment, often relying more on common sense/general knowledge. The extended writing questions (**Question 4/5**) were excellent discriminators for candidates to demonstrate their skills of knowledge and understanding, interpretation and application and analysis and evaluation. Some candidates did not provide a response that addressed contrasting sides of the debate, providing one-sided responses only.

Most candidates were able to name relevant sociological concepts/studies; less successful candidates did not ***apply*** these to develop their response, often relying on simply stating them or defining/describing them rather than applying them in a way that engaged the question. This was particularly noticeable within the essay responses. Any rubric errors tended to occur within **Questions 2(a)** and **3(b)**, whereby candidates provided more points than were required. A minority of candidates did not provide any form of response to all **Question 2(b).**

In general, candidates need to be more aware of their use of time reflecting the marks available. For example, in **Question 1** lengthy introductions and conclusions are not necessary; this uses up valuable time that could be utilised on other more challenging questions, e.g. several candidates appeared to run out of time providing essay responses that were cut prematurely short. The majority of candidates answered the questions in order; some perhaps could have benefitted from answering the essay first.

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Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

The majority of candidates were able to identify and describe two relevant features of a nuclear family. Commonly *two generations…parents and children* and *isolated from extended kin…do not live with wider family/relatives.*
Less successful candidates demonstrated repetition, particularly of the description or only gave one feature.

Other weak responses, made the error of providing features that could be applied to any family type, or provided functions of the family, e.g. *primary socialisation*. Other errors involved stating the nuclear family is *ideal, important or normal*; these are not features, rather subjective assessments made from theoretical positioning.

Occasionally candidates provided more than the two responses required. Unfortunately, there were a few examples of candidates writing far too much, with responses including introductions, conclusions, definitions of the family and explanations for why the nuclear family exists. These are clearly not required and suggest some candidates were not prepared for the question requirements prior to the examination.

Note: *Candidates should be encouraged to structure their **Question 1** responses as two bullet points or numbered 1/2, avoiding introductions and unnecessarily lengthy answers. Also provide just the two responses required.*

Question 2

(a) Overall, candidates were not particularly successful in their responses to this question, with some showing a complete lack of understanding of what social policies are, seemingly confusing with socialisation and social norms/attitudes.

The minority of candidates that were successful, provided two appropriate ways social policies may influence family life and give a relevant explanation. There were a small number of very good answers that achieved full marks, with some candidates seemingly following a logical and well thought structure of:

- *Identified way/point*
- *Way explained*
- *Relevant supporting sociological material*
- *Application of this material to demonstrate the original point.*

This is very encouraging to see, and is hugely beneficial for candidates to adopt this approach as it helps them to focus their response. Responses commonly focussed on *China's One Child policy, Equal Pay Act,* and *Divorce Act. Welfare provision* was occasionally referred to.

The more successful responses clearly demonstrated two ways, supported with the application of appropriate sociological material. Less successful candidates whilst able to provide two relevant ways, did not support with sociological material, therefore at most were awarded half the marks available to them. Where candidates went wrong, was in focussing responses on how the family for example*, socialises children,* or *placed sanctions on children.*

To improve, candidates need to support points using appropriate sociological material e.g., social policies, concepts, studies, relevant sociologists etc. and apply these in demonstrating the original point made. Too often, candidates wasted valuable time providing lengthy introductions, conclusions or definitions of the family – ***these are not required, and candidates should be encouraged to get straight into the response.*** Candidates occasionally provided more than the two ways required which wasted valuable time.

Note: *Candidates should be encouraged to structure responses as two separate paragraphs identified as 'The first…. The second….' for clarity and <u>only provide</u> the **two points required**.*

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(b) *Notably, a small number of candidates failed to provide a response to this question (NR).*

Candidates in general appeared unprepared for the demands of this question, with only a small minority clearly identifying one valid strength and one valid limitation of New Right views of the family. Typically candidates were more successful in identifying a limitation of the New Right rather than a strength, commonly citing how it *fails to acknowledge the negative aspects/the dark side of the nuclear family, or it is outdated as it fails to recognise the positives of family diversity.*

The common error candidates made, was in stating a positive or a critique of the nuclear family, *e.g. that it is the best type of family, or lone parent families, e.g. that they cannot socialise children properly.* Positives/negatives of the nuclear/lone parent family are not the same as strengths/limitations of New Right views of the family. They are simply a statement of what they think of that family type.

Note: *Candidates would benefit from using the mark schemes to create a table of strengths and limitations of the key theoretical stances in relation to the family during their studies, to aid their learning and revision.*

Centres should encourage candidates to adopt a clear and structured approach to answering **2(b)**: *A strength / limitation is…. / X have this as a strength / limitation because they… / This is a strength / limitation because…*

Question 3

(a) Most candidates provided some sort of valid response, although performance was mixed. The more successful candidates were able to provide at least two points that focused explicitly on demonstrating how men continue to dominate family life. Commonly, how *society is patriarchal and this permeates through to all institutions including the family*, as well as how *men tend to be the breadwinner, which gives them the power of important decision making.* These claims were supported with relevant sociological evidence such as radical feminism, Edgell. etc.

Less successful responses tended to be due to (a) not focusing points made on the specific context of the question, and (b) relying on common-sense and anecdotal evidence as opposed to sociological evidence. A common error was for candidates to focus too much on the lives of women, possibly inferring they're exploited/oppressed, e.g. act as a reserve army of labour or how they face a triple shift, *rather than explicitly addressing how men dominate family life*.

Some candidates were able to make some link between the lives of women in the family and male dominance within the family, but a significant number did not, therefore not fulfilling the requirements of the question.

Note: *a small number of candidates wasted time providing an unnecessary evaluation of the claim. This is <u>not</u> a requirement of the question (they do this in **3(b)**. Furthermore, lengthy introductions, conclusions, and definitions of the family are unnecessary, and candidates should be discouraged from doing this on this question.*

(b) Most candidates were able to provide a valid response, with the majority of these able to achieve at least level 2. However, a small number provided no response at all. Stronger responses focused on how *women are working more now and therefore have greater decision making power*, or how with the *onset of 'new man', men are engaging more in the expressive role in the family, lessening the traditional patriarchal dominance*.

Weaker responses tended to simply focus on gender equality within domestic tasks, *without making the link to argue against the claim that men dominate family life.* For example, the rise of 'new man'/men undertaking the expressive role, without considering the impact of this on male domination within the family. Well answered responses were those that explicitly recognised changes in power dynamics, or decreased patriarchy within the family due to social or legal changes, supported with relevant sociological evidence, however these are few in number.

As with **3(a)**, a significant number of candidates demonstrated a lack of sociological awareness, relying on common sense knowledge as opposed to sociological evidence to support points made.

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There were again those candidates that did not consider the context of the family (as the question required), and discussed society in general, e.g. work, therefore not answering the question.

Note: *a small number of candidates wasted time by providing more than one argument against the claim, using up time that could be useful elsewhere.*

Section B

Question 4

This was the slightly more popular option of the two essays, and generally speaking responses were weak. Responses very much relied on anecdotal evidence/common-sense with little sociological material used to support claims made. This would perhaps suggest a general lack of familiarity with the topic of motherhood.

A significant number of candidates were able to demonstrate they knew something about how the lives of women had changed. They did not go on to develop this to consider the consequences or impact of these changes upon motherhood. For example, women today are focussing more on careers, gaining financial independence, without going on to consider the impact of this on motherhood to demonstrate how it has changed.

Some candidates recognised the impact of changing fatherhood, although candidates did not always make the links/significance to motherhood clear.

Weaker responses focused too much on how motherhood was in the past, with little attention given to how it has changed, turning their responses into a historical discussion rather than a sociological assessment. Some responses demonstrated assumptions/generalisations about mothers, e.g. they're taken for granted, or that the child has a closer bond to the mother than the father, along with personal opinion on how mothers should be treated or the impact upon children of mothers working, all of which are irrelevant to answering the question.

Note: *candidates need to be more aware of the importance of assessment/evaluation within essays, given its weighting in the mark scheme.*

Question 5

Slightly fewer candidates opted for this question, and responses were of mixed.

The more successful candidates were able to demonstrate (largely from a functionalist perspective, although some did apply Marxism), the importance functions of the family play in creating social stability, for example, *primary socialisation instils social norms and values which prevents members of society becoming dysfunctional/prevents anomie…* or *reproduction provides workers to ensure economic stability in society…* These claims tended to be argued against, by discussing how the role of the family is not to promote social stability, but rather *capitalism or exploitation of women*. A very small number of responses addressed how the family can actually create *instability*.

Weaker responses simply discussed the functions of the family e.g. functionalism vs Marxism/feminism without addressing the question of whether the main role of the family is to promote social stability or not. For example, candidates stated the *family acts like a warm bath*, or *stabilises adult personalities*, but then did not go on to demonstrate the significance of how this creates social stability.

Other weak responses turned this into a discussion of gender inequality in the family, or the loss of functions debate, without connecting to the issue of social stability or not.

Note: *candidates need to be more aware of the importance of assessment/evaluation (AO3) within essays, given its weighting in the mark scheme.*

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Paper 9699/32
Education

Key messages

- Candidates were generally able to attempt all questions.
- Some candidates gave lengthy responses to lower mark questions.
- Essay evaluation was often juxtaposed rather than explicit.

General comments

The standard of responses overall was good. Most candidates were able to answer all questions. Candidate responses showed a clear difference in their ability to access the skills of knowledge and understanding, interpretation and application, and analysis and evaluation. The extended writing questions were excellent discriminators of these skills. Most candidates appeared to manage their time appropriately.

For **Question 1** some candidates referred to wider societal changes rather than changes in schools. Centres should give clear guidance on the differences between internal and external factors.

For **Question 2** most candidates were able to identify two reasons, but some did not give relevant sociological material to support the reasons given. Centres should ensure candidates are aware of the points-based approach of the mark scheme.

For **Question 3** candidates also needed to give supporting sociological evidence. Responses to this question sometimes drifted from IQ tests to give more general reasons for lower educational achievement without sufficient application to tests.

For **Question 4** most candidates were able to give a range of points relating to the functionalist view of the role of education. Many also gave counter arguments most popularly from the Marxist perspective. Centres should encourage candidates to show explicit evaluation rather than just juxtaposition of and opposing view.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Most candidates could identify at least one example of changes in schools which have led to girls' achievement. The most common responses were references to higher expectations from teachers and examples of the feminisation of education notably female teachers as role models, coursework, and changes in teaching materials. In their explanation, a considerable number of candidates did not score full marks as they did not adequately describe how the example related to improvements in achievement. Some candidates gave examples that related to external factors, such as changing aspirations of girls in general, so did not score marks.

Question 2

This question produced a very wide range of answers, with most candidates able to identify two reasons why ability grouping in schools can disadvantage some children. The most common points were in relation to labelling / self-fulfilling prophecy, subculture, and inappropriate placements in sets /streams due to teacher stereotypes of class and ethnicity. In their selection of material and explanations of these points, many candidates also referred to the work of Hargreaves, Rosenthal, and Jacobsen, Gillborn and Youdell and Sewell. However, a significant number were not able to select the relevant sociological material required to gain the additional marks. Also, a small number of candidates discussed labelling in general but did not

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connect this to ability grouping in schools so did not score. A small number of candidates gave lengthy descriptions of IQ testing and/or the Tripartite system, without applying this to ability grouping. A significant number of candidates gave an unnecessary introductory paragraph outlining different types of ability grouping.

Question 3

Most candidates were able to identify two arguments against the view that IQ tests are an accurate measure of educational achievement. The most common arguments referred to, were criticisms from a Marxist perspective, social inequality, references to cultural bias, differential opportunities for preparation for tests, and problems with defining intelligence and what is being tested. A significant number referred to the work of Bernstein, Gardner, Flynn, and Bourdieu. Most candidates were able to explain their points in enough depth to get score at least 3 for each argument, but significantly fewer were able to develop points enough to get into the Level 3 mark band. Many candidates gave an unnecessary introductory paragraph providing a definition of IQ. A small number of candidates gave lengthy descriptions of the Tripartite system, without applying this to the question.

Question 4

The most successful responses focused on key functionalist thinkers and their view of the role of education. Many responses referred the work of Durkheim, Parsons and Davis and Moore. Many candidates discussed key concepts such as socialisation, economic and selection functions. Candidates were able to discuss concepts such as universalistic/particularistic values, secondary socialisation, role allocation and particularly meritocracy.

Stronger answers showed some depth and understanding of views and key concepts such as applying examples of how uniform, the teaching of subjects such as history and assemblies in schools, could help foster social solidarity and values consensus.

Some candidates gave general accounts of functionalist views without these being fully applied to the role of education. Some answers had limited use of the New Right perspective. This was often juxtaposed or not clearly used in support or against the functionalist view. Similarly, the social democratic view was mentioned briefly but often without clear understanding of whether this supported or was against the functionalist view.

Candidates were more successful in identifying appropriate material from a Marxist perspective such as the views of Bowles and Gintis, Althusser, and Bourdieu. Evaluation was largely by juxtaposition. The most common explicit evaluation points were from Marxist and feminist views, on how education was not meritocratic. Other specific evaluation points by candidates was by reference to Tumin's critique of Davis and Moore or in a few cases by reference to teacher labelling in relation to lack of meritocracy.

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Paper 9699/42
Globalisation, Media, Religion

Key messages

- Outstanding answers gave a full sociological insight and sound reasoning.
- Good answers combined detailed sociological understanding with effective analysis and evaluation.
- A few answers lacked references to relevant sociological concepts and theories.
- Further marks could be gained by using evidence from sociological studies to support key arguments.
- Some answers discussed the general topic raised by the question but lacked focus on the specific wording.

General comments

The overall standard of the scripts was high, with many candidates demonstrating good understanding of the relevant sociological issues combined with skilful delivery of the higher order skills of analysis and evaluation. Many candidates also made good use of references to relevant sociological studies in developing their answers. Good answers combined detailed sociological understanding with sustained evaluation of the issues raised by the question. Some candidates also made effective use of case studies and examples from particular societies to support key arguments and this is to be encouraged as a way of satisfying the relevant assessment objectives. Lower scoring answers relied on a summary of relevant knowledge without providing any related analysis.

Most candidates answered two questions in the time available. Some candidates answered more than two questions, though they appeared to derive no advantage from this strategy in terms of marks achieved. The questions on Media and Religion proved most popular, with those on Globalisation less frequently attempted.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1

Good answers to this question provided a detailed account of how globalisation may have led to greater inequalities between countries. High-quality responses also included a sustained evaluation of the view expressed in the question. Some candidates made good use of examples of globalisation to help support key arguments. Likewise, many of the answers included helpful references to theories of global inequality as a way of exploring the issues raised by the question. Lower scoring answers were often confined to a few basic points about globalisation with no analysis of its impact on levels of inequality between countries. There were also a few responses that discussed inequality without making clear links to globalisation.

Question 2

There were relatively few answers to this question. Good responses demonstrated a clear understanding of what is meant by global crime and why national governments may be powerless to prevent its growth. High scoring answers also challenged the view expressed in the question by considering ways in which governments might be able to combat some or all forms of global crime. The evaluation often used examples of particular government interventions to reflect on whether governments are powerless of prevent the growth of global crime. Lower scoring answers described some examples of global crime, but provided little or no analysis of how far the growth can be prevented.

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Section B

Question 3

This was a popular question that was answered well by many of the candidates. Good responses provided a detailed account of evidence and theories supporting the view that the media influences social behaviour. Some candidates made good use of the distinction between direct and indirect models of media effects to structure the discussion. There were some high-quality answers that questioned the validity of the studies that purport to show a direct link between media content and changes in social behaviour. Contrasts between the new media and the traditional media also featured in some well-directed responses. Lower scoring answers often offered an uncritical acceptance of the view expressed in the question, omitting to consider alternative arguments questioning the evidence about media influence on behaviour.

Question 4

Good answers to this question demonstrated a clear understanding of the various ways in which gender stereotypes of women may be reflected in the media. High scoring responses also provided a sustained evaluation of the view expressed in the question. Some candidates made good use of references to relevant sociological studies of gender stereotyping in the media to support their analysis. Distinctions between the treatment of women in different types of media content also featured in many high scoring answers. Lower scoring responses were often limited to a few basic points about gender stereotypes in the media, with no analysis of changes or continuities in the way women are represented.

Section C

Question 5

This was a popular question that was answered well by many of the candidates. Good responses to this question demonstrated a detailed understanding of the view, associated with conflict theories, that religion serves the interest of the rich and powerful. This was complemented by a sustained evaluation, often focusing on the competing claims of different theories of religion. Some candidates made good use of examples to show that the interests served may vary between religions. Some well composed analytical responses also considered the possibility that religion serves a range of different interests. Lower scoring answers were limited to a few basic points about how religion upholds inequality, with no reflection on alternative perspectives. There were a few answers that discussed the role of religion in general rather than focusing on specific claims about the interests that religion may serve.

Question 6

Good responses to this question used a range of relevant sociological evidence and argumentation to illustrate the view that there has been a clear decline in religious belief in all societies. High scoring answers also questioned that view, often citing examples of where the extent of religious belief in a society may be increasing. This included references to the growth of new religious movements and the putative increase in privatised religion. The difficulty of measuring the extent of religious belief across time was also mentioned as a complicating factor when assessing claims that there has been a decline, or increase, in religiosity. Lower scoring responses lacked references to relevant sociological material and relied mainly on personal opinion and assertion in answering the question.

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