

Activity answers

Chapter 4: Methodology

Unit 1: Assessing research findings

Activity 1 (page 227)

1 In what ways can Hoyle's research be seen as an example of triangulation?

Hoyle's research is an example of triangulation because she used a variety of research methods to investigate the policing of domestic violence from a number of angles and vantage points. In her research she used two types of triangulation: data triangulation and methodological triangulation.

Data triangulation involved collecting data at different times from different people in different places – she interviewed, for example, police officers and the victims of domestic violence as well as examining official records and observing police officers on duty. In the course of her research she also collected quantitative and qualitative data from her interviews and observations.

Methodological triangulation was used in two ways. Her semi-structured interviews used 'within-method' triangulation to collect both quantitative and qualitative data, while 'between-method' triangulation was used to check the validity of her data – the data from interviews with police officers detailing how they dealt with the victims of domestic violence was verified by Hoyle's observation of these officers as they dealt with actual incidents.

2 With reference to Hoyle's research, outline the advantages of triangulation.

Triangulation has a number of advantages, as demonstrated by Hoyle's research. **Data triangulation**, for example, can be used to cross-check validity. Hoyle was able to check the validity of her interviews with serving police officers (in which they claimed to treat the victims of domestic violence with sympathy) by observing their actual behaviour towards such victims. This type of triangulation can also be a way of assessing researchers' interpretations and conclusions. For example, the fact that Hoyle collected data from different sources (such as interviewing victims *after* interviewing police officers) allowed her to 'ensure that the police officers had given me an accurate version of the incident and of the wishes of the victims'.

In relation to **methodological triangulation**, one advantage of 'within-method' triangulation is that it can be used to check the validity of answers and the reliability of the method. Hoyle's semi-structured interviews with both victims and officers, for example, improved the validity of her research by comparing the two versions of events, while the research's reliability was improved through the use of

quantitative data. 'Between-method' triangulation had the advantage of improving the validity of the research (Hoyle compared what officers 'said they did' with her observations of what they actually did). It also allowed the weaknesses of one research method (semi-structured interviews) to be offset by the strengths of another method (non-participant observation).

Unit 2: Sociology and science

Activity 2 (pages 233–234)

1 Durkheim claimed that 'each society is predisposed to contribute a definite quota of voluntary deaths'.

a) What support for this statement is provided by Item A?

Item A supports the statement in three main ways.

1 Over a 12-year period (1866–1878) Durkheim found little variation in the suicide rate for a particular society. For example, in Italy and France the rate varied between 30 and 38 for Italy and 135 and 160 for France. This suggests that each society will experience a definite quota of voluntary deaths since if it did not we would expect to see much greater statistical fluctuation in suicide rates year-on-year.

2 The comparison between different societies shows very little fluctuation in their relative rates of suicide. Throughout the 12-year period Saxony, for example, consistently showed the same relative rates of suicide, as did countries such as Norway, Sweden and France. Once again this suggests that a predisposition to contribute a definite quota of voluntary deaths is in some way related to the nature of the society in which they occur.

3 From this we can conclude that because the relative positions of the different countries did not change dramatically over the period studied some condition or quality of life in each society affected the rate at which its members committed suicide.

b) Use Item A to support Durkheim's claim that a science of society is possible.

Durkheim's claim that 'a science of society is possible' revolves around the concept of 'social facts' and the idea that they can be treated as 'things' – something that can be objectively measured, quantified and subjected to statistical analysis. In this way it is possible to draw correlations between social facts – cause and effect relationships can be established and theories can then be developed to explain those relationships. On this basis it is possible, according to Durkheim, to discover the 'laws' that govern the social

world in the same way that it is possible to discover the laws that govern the natural world.

Item A can be used to support Durkheim's argument in a range of ways. Firstly, the consistency of suicide rates within and between countries suggests these rates can be treated as social facts; that is, as something that exists external to the individual. If suicide was, for example, only explicable in terms of individual psychology we would not expect to see the rate-consistency displayed in Item A. There would be much greater random variation in suicide rates if it was simply a matter of 'individual choice'.

Suicide rate-consistency, therefore, suggests a social cause – that a social process was acting on individuals to make suicide more or less likely. If this was the case, it would be possible to scientifically study the social causes of suicide. For Durkheim, one of the social factors determining suicide rates was levels of social integration (the extent to which individuals are part of a wider social group). Individuals who are not well integrated into social groups (such as older adults) are more likely to commit suicide than those who are well integrated (such as younger adults).

2 Use Item B to support the realist view that:

a) both the social and natural sciences operate in open systems.

Sayer (1992) argues that a large body of natural scientific research (in areas like meteorology and evolution) takes place within *open systems*, where it is not possible for the scientific observer to control all the possible variables that affect behaviour. In this situation prediction is not possible with any degree of certainty (unlike within a closed system where all variables can be tightly controlled). It is possible, however, to understand and explain behaviour 'after the event' in terms of the underlying mechanisms that caused the behaviour.

Item B illustrates an example of an open system in the natural sciences. The marine biologist Dr Kevin Brown suggests that 'damage to marine life caused by global warming and a thinning ozone layer could worsen the effects of chemicals through complex interactions which scientists are unable to predict'. In other words, while it is possible for natural scientists to understand the cause of damage to marine life – global warming impacting on the behaviour of chemicals in the sea – the complexity of their interaction makes it impossible to make precise predictions about the exact damage that will be caused.

Human societies are also open systems where it is impossible for the social scientist to control all variables affecting human action. However, using the example of suicide, just because it is impossible to predict which individual will or will not commit suicide this doesn't mean social scientists cannot explain 'a suicide' after the event in terms of the underlying social structures and mechanisms that caused it. Furthermore, they can predict approximately what the suicide rate is likely to be.

b) conclusive verification or falsification are not possible in open systems.

For Popper an important characteristic of science is the ability to disprove ('falsify') theories. A scientific theory, therefore, is one that can be tested against evidence and be capable of *falsification*. The testing process works in two distinct ways: firstly, through an original scientific attempt to falsify a theory; and, secondly, through the efforts of other scientists to verify the results of the first attempt (by, for example, conducting the same experiment in the same way under the same conditions). If the same results are obtained this contributes to the verification process.

Item B suggests that while verification and falsification can be carried out in open systems (the theory that the mass marine deaths are caused by a rise in television viewing in Australia, for example, can potentially be falsified or verified through research) the verification and falsification can never be conclusive. There are two main reasons for this:

1 The complexity of the interrelationships between global warming, a thinning ozone layer and the effects of dumping man-made chemicals is impossible to predict in an open system like the world's oceans. **2** Since it is not possible to accurately control variables such as global warming or the spread of man-made chemicals throughout the ocean (let alone the precise way they may interact at any given moment), the kind of falsification process identified by Popper as a characteristic of science is impossible to carry out.

c) in view of this, there are basic similarities between the methodologies of the natural and social sciences.

Item B can be used to support the realist view that there are basic similarities between the methodologies of the natural and social sciences in two ways.

1 Both the natural and social worlds are examples of open systems and, as such, are amenable to both *understanding* and *explanation* but not necessarily *prediction*. (For example, although marine biologists can understand and explain the reasons for mass marine deaths they cannot predict when these events will occur nor the precise conditions under which they will occur.)

2 The item suggests that in both the natural and social worlds behaviour is constrained by structures (what Sayer (1992) defines as 'sets of internally related objects and practices'). In Item B, for example, marine life is surrounded by structures that condition and determine behaviour – these include both the environment (water) in which animals live and things (global warming, pollution levels and so on) that impact on and change that environment. Within these structures certain mechanisms operate and both natural and social scientists can understand and explain these mechanisms. In the social world, for example, the rate of suicide in any society is related to mechanisms such as levels of social integration, whereas Item B suggests that mass marine deaths are related to mechanisms such as the

effect global warming has on man-made chemical pollution in the ocean.

If, therefore, we follow the realist argument that 'science' involves both identifying and explaining how these mechanisms operate, then it also follows that the methodology used in the natural and social sciences can be broadly similar.

Unit 3: Interpretivist methodology

Activity 3 (page 236)

1 Use Items A, B and C to support a phenomenological view.

A phenomenological view of suicide is based on the idea that 'social reality' consists entirely of the meanings people give to events (such as, in the items, the biological fact of death). If we accept this idea it follows that the task of the sociologist is to uncover the meanings people give to an event and, by extension, how and why these meanings are constructed.

In this respect, phenomenological methodology begins with the idea of meaning and explores how 'similar events' are categorised. The meaning of a death, for example, can be categorised in a number of ways (murder, accident, suicide and so on). As Atkinson demonstrates, two things are important here: how meanings are categorised and by whom. This idea is illustrated by Item B where a coroner suggests that the 'meaning of a death' (which it was his job to decide) was influenced not by objective criteria but by the social context of the event. In wartime – when suicide verdicts were considered 'bad for morale' – coroners were reluctant to categorise a death as suicide. This didn't, of course, mean people did not take their own life during wartime, but simply that the official meaning of this act was less likely to be suicide. Similarly, in Item C suicide does not exist in the Irish Republic; again, this doesn't mean people don't kill themselves, but only that the law prevents the death being officially recorded as suicide.

While Items B and C represent 'official attempts' to reclassify 'suicides' as something else, Item A illustrates a further question addressed by phenomenologists, namely how do powerful social actors (such as coroners) arrive at their interpretations and classifications? It is possible to provide alternative explanations of the events depicted in the item – for example, that they were accidents. Alternatively, in the fall from the ship it could be argued that while one of those involved intended to commit suicide the other did not – one may have been murdered by the other. The key point here is that we can never be sure of people's intentions and the meanings of their actions; the best we can do is make educated guesses about the reasons for their behaviour 'after the event'. According to phenomenologists, this prevents the development of the kind of scientific methodologies and explanations favoured by positivist sociologists.

2 Do you believe there is a 'real', 'objective' suicide rate? Give reasons for your answer.

There are two ways to approach this question.

1 The phenomenological argument suggests that the 'real' and 'objective' suicide rates studied by people like Durkheim are actually the product of subjective interpretations by powerful social actors (such as doctors, the police and coroners). From this view, therefore, a coroner uses 'commonsense' categories and evidence to come to a decision about whether to classify a death as suicide – and Item B suggests such decisions can be influenced by a range of subjective factors (such as the effect of suicide on people living during wartime). In this respect the failure to classify death as suicide makes the 'real' and 'objective' nature of suicide rates highly questionable. What appear to be objective statements of fact (suicide statistics) are actually little more than the subjective interpretations of human beings.

2 We can take the view that phenomenologists are wrong to believe that an objective suicide rate does not exist. Some positivists, such as Durkheim, believe that the suicide rate is real and is reliably measured in official statistics. After all, deaths are amongst the events that are most rigorously studied in our society and there are careful and complex procedures in coroners' courts to ensure that they are not classified incorrectly. Alternatively, it could be argued that even if official procedures are imperfect at classifying deaths, an objective suicide rate could be found if researchers carried out even more rigorous research to identify the real rate of suicide.

However, the idea that a real rate of suicide can be identified has its limitations. Whether a death was a suicide or not hinges on whether a person intended to take their life or not. In studying suicide there is a particular problem in determining what a person's intentions were at the time of the act – the person is dead so it is impossible to ask them whether they intended to kill themselves. Therefore it could be argued that, at best, suicide rates will only approximate to the 'real' rate of suicide.

Unit 4: Postmodernist methodology

Activity 4 (pages 240–241)

1 Research is not as simple and straightforward as it seems. Comment on this statement from a postmodernist view with some reference to Items A and B.

Item A presents a picture of the 'research process' which suggests it is a relatively untroubled process from the initial data collection to ultimate publication – with the role of the researcher being that of facilitating the general process (from collecting, interpreting and analysing data to writing it up in a presentable form). In other words, this conventional

picture presents the research process in broadly objective terms with the role and influence of the researcher within this general process treated as largely unproblematic.

Researchers are seen as being largely outside the research process – in the sense of being relatively neutral data collectors and interpreters – and, in consequence, are not seen as having much influence on the research itself.

Item B, on the other hand, questions the way research is both conducted and presented to an audience. While Item A suggests an objective process whereby behaviour is studied and facts presented, Item B suggests a much messier ‘reality’ – the idea that research reports are social constructions ‘designed to persuade, to give the impression of rational, analytic thinking, and to convince the reader that the researcher’s view is “the truth”’.

Item B, in this respect, suggests the research process is both highly subjective and subject to manipulation at all points.

Postmodernists argue that ‘sociological research’ is based on the assumption that human action is rational, patterned and ordered and, based on this assumption, that it is then possible to study behaviour in a similarly rational and ordered manner (Item A). Postmodernists seek to defamiliarise this situation – suggesting that social actions are ‘exotic, random, irrational, contradictory, arbitrary, crazy’. From this it follows that the research process must also have these features. By problematising those things the researcher takes for granted, including the possibility of rationally studying an irrational social world and the use of categories such as class, gender, age and ethnicity, postmodernists question the whole basis of conventional sociological research. Postmodernists see the research process as a way of constructing, reconstructing and reproducing a particular ‘reality’ – one that derives from the order imposed by the research process, not one that ‘objectively exists’. In this respect, the metanarrative of research displayed in Item A is simply one way of looking at the social world – and for postmodernists there are ‘multiple, if not infinite, interpretations of the social world’.

From a postmodernist perspective, therefore, the aim of sociological research is to understand the multiple interpretations people put on behaviour (both their own and that of others) in order to ‘look at the social world from different vantage points, in terms of different perspectives’. In this respect sociologists ‘should allow other voices to be heard in their research publications, particularly the voices of those they are researching’.

2 Item C is an adapted extract from an article by Horace Miner, an American anthropologist. Nacirema is American spelt backwards.

a) How is this description an example of defamiliarisation?

Item C is an example of defamiliarisation because it involves looking at something familiar and everyday (such as cleaning one’s teeth or going to the dentist) in a new and novel way so that it is possible to understand it from a

viewpoint, or viewpoints, other than those normally used by people in everyday life.

b) Do you find it useful?

Personally, you may or may not find it useful, but postmodernists certainly believe that defamiliarisation has its uses. From their point of view this technique can be useful because it clearly demonstrates how the same events can be viewed in different ways. It shows how individuals can construct the meaning of the same events differently. It is therefore useful for illustrating the idea that there are many possible interpretations of ‘reality’.

You might find the technique allows you to understand the social world and the actions and beliefs of others better because you become more aware of the possibility that their viewpoint is very different from your own. On the other hand, you might find the technique unsettling or confusing because it challenges your sense of reality.

c) Write a brief defamiliarised description of an aspect of everyday behaviour.

The technique here is to choose a situation you are familiar with (such as a family, school or work situation) and describe it in a deliberately literal way. For example, going to a class at school might be described in the following way:

‘The younger members of the tribe are trained to respond to “The Bell” – both as it rings and, most interestingly, just before it is due to ring. In the former case when The Bell rings and the children are outside their teaching box (or “classroom” as it’s known in the local language) they must enter the teaching box. However, when they are inside the box and The Bell rings they must exit the box. This ritual is repeated on an hourly basis throughout the day.’

Unit 5: Feminist methodology

Activity 5 (page 244)

1a) How can the questions in Item A be seen as sexist?

The questions can be seen as sexist for two reasons.

1 They are androcentric – roles such as ‘natural leader’ were assumed to be relevant only to boys while roles such as ‘homemaker’ were deemed irrelevant to boys.

2 The language used to describe some roles, e.g. ‘leader’ for boys and ‘follower’ for girls, can be considered sexist in that the former reflects common assumptions about male dominance and superiority while the latter suggests female subservience.

b) How might the results of this study simply reproduce traditional gender stereotypes?

The questions lead the respondents to provide answers that reflect traditional gender stereotypes in terms of the assumptions they make about males and females. The results of this study will reflect assumptions, for example, about males being active (‘sports fan’) and dominant (‘natural

leader'), while females are portrayed as passive (they are not involved in active pursuits) and subservient (they 'follow fashion'). In addition, the fact that only females can choose the 'homemaker' role further suggests that a traditional female role is to care for men, while by extension the traditional male role is to provide for women.

2a) In what ways does Finch's woman-to-woman interviewing style reflect Oakley's 'feminist interviewing'?

Oakley argues that 'feminist interviewing' should have four basic characteristics.

1 It should not be **clinical**, something reflected in Finch's style by the setting of the interview (the woman's home) and its subject matter being familiar to the women (marriage, motherhood and childbearing). A further aspect of Finch's non-clinical style was showing her interviewees she was 'on their side' and that she was making 'an emotional as well as an intellectual commitment to promoting their interests'.

2 It should not be **manipulative**. Finch, for example, argued that both interviewer and interviewee should have a say in the content and direction of the interview – her technique was to reject the idea that the role of the interviewer was to somehow manipulate the interviewee into revealing 'the truth'. Finch wanted to gain the trust of her respondents, treating them as equals, not using them for her own purposes as an interviewer – something that shades into the next idea (**3**) that interviewing should not be **exploitive**. She also avoided being exploitive through her commitment to promoting the interests of the women.

4 Oakley argues that an interview should not be **hierarchical**, something Finch avoided by putting herself 'on the side' of the women she studied. The idea here was that with a common femininity 'both parties shared a subordinate position in society and, as a result, were likely to identify with each other', thereby creating an equal relationship within which women felt they could talk freely.

b) What are the advantages of this style of interviewing?

For Finch there were two main advantages to this style of interviewing. Firstly, 'it worked better'. Finch found that by setting up an equal relationship, allowing the interviewee to have some control over and say in the direction of the interview, and conducting the interview in an informal and non-hierarchical way she created the conditions under which the interviewee would 'open up', and answer questions honestly and truthfully. This would therefore make the data more likely to be valid.

Another advantage for Finch was that the informality of the style meant the interview was non-manipulative. Finch allowed the women to speak 'in their own words' rather than trying to manipulate them into saying the kinds of things she may have wanted them to say. She therefore avoided the kinds of distortion that might have resulted from more formal or structured interviewing and again this could add to the validity of the findings.

The second main advantage according to Finch is that this style of interviewing is 'morally better'. It avoids the exploitation of the women which Finch sees as an ethical problem with other styles of interviewing.

Unit 6: Sociology, methodology and values

Activity 6 (pages 247–248)

1 Do you agree with Becker's view in Item A? Give reasons for your answer.

The question here concerns the possibility or otherwise of sociology being 'value free' – both in the sense of individual sociologists being able to put aside their personal values and in the sense of the research process itself being free from the intrusion of 'personal and political sympathies'.

To agree with Becker, therefore, is to argue that since it is impossible for the sociologist to put aside their personal values entirely, they will always intrude into the research process to some extent. The solution to this problem, for Becker, is to dispense with the fiction that research is 'value free' (when it can be easily demonstrated that this is impossible) and instead adopt a 'value-committed' approach to research – one that 'tells a story' from a particular viewpoint. There are at least three objections to this idea:

1 Sociological research carried out in the way Becker suggests runs the risk of being labelled as biased, at best, and propaganda at worst. In other words, a sociologist committed to abandoning the idea of value-freedom and objectivity risks having their work dismissed and marginalised on the basis that it is no better than personal opinion and it is completely unscientific.

2 The idea of taking sides suggests that one side is right and the other side is wrong. In reality it could be that both sides are partially right and partially wrong. From the viewpoint of postmodern methodology, it is impossible to say that one side is more right than the other; they simply have different perceptions of reality.

3 The arguments put forward in Item C suggest that even if a completely value-free sociology is impossible, some degree of objectivity and rigour is possible in research. Becker's view that you should take sides seems to rule out this possibility.

On the other hand, some sociologists support Becker's position. Although Gouldner is critical of Becker's own values, he agrees with him that values are bound to enter sociology and there is no point in pretending that sociology is objective.

Whether you agree with Becker or not depends upon which arguments you find most persuasive.

2 'There are better and worse ways of conducting research.'
Discuss with reference to Item B.

Geertz's argument is that all social research involves a compromise being made by the sociologist. While there may, in an ideal world, be better ways of doing research, there are also, he argues, ways of producing knowledge that are significantly worse than sociological research.

In this respect Geertz is arguing that the best form of social research would be completely objective – but that this is clearly impossible since social researchers cannot help but 'draw on their everyday knowledge and on their political and moral values in the process of research'. However, he is also arguing that just because it is not possible to meet some ideal standard (because there is an 'inevitable and indissoluble link between scientific and everyday thinking and between social theories and moral and political values'), it is a mistake to argue from this that 'sociological research' is no better (or worse), no more reliable or valid (or unreliable or invalid) than the opinion of anyone who cares to offer it (an extreme relativist position). Sociological research – for all its undoubted problems and faults – is a better way, according to Geertz, of generating knowledge and understanding about the social world, on the basis that it is research that is 'rigorous and reflexive [and] produces knowledge that is more objective than research which is sloppy and uncritical'.

3 It is useful to look at social life from a variety of standpoints and vantage points. Discuss with some reference to Item C.

Item C puts forward a view of the social world that is arguably very different from our own historical or contemporary view of the world (for the Blackfoot 'our land is more valuable than your money. It will last forever. It will not even perish by the flames of fire'; whereas for the White men paper money had greater value). The two views are based on different cultural ideas about value and the question for sociologists is not 'which view of the world is correct?', since any judgement here would be based solely on one set of cultural values (those of the Blackfoot or the White man). Rather, the question is: how can we use these different views to make sense of different social behaviours?

In this respect, if sociologists look at social life from a variety of different standpoints and vantage points it should be possible to understand how different cultural groups construct the social world. In other words, rather than seeing sociology as some sort of quest for 'objective truth' in a world based around subjective judgements (is the Blackfoot world view more or less valid than that of the White man?), it would be better to see it as a project designed to understand how and why different world views come into being. For example, how and why did the Blackfoot come to develop cultural values that were very different from those of the White man? In this way sociologists can use different vantage points to generate knowledge about the social

world and its processes in a way that avoids both extreme relativism and the search for 'objective truths'.

4 How does the cartoon in Item D support O'Connell Davidson and Layder's rejection of relativism? (See page 246.)

O'Connell Davidson and Layder's rejection of relativism is based on the argument that it is possible to identify a reality that is 'separate from the conceptual systems employed by people to grasp it'. In basic terms, just because someone claims or believes something to be 'true' doesn't mean it is true; various aspects of the social world can be separated from people's beliefs because it has an independent, objective existence that is separate from the subjective interpretations of individuals.

The cartoon illustrates and supports this argument in the sense that King Canute is pictured trying to prevent the waves covering him simply by ordering them not to do so. If the waves had no objective existence outside of Canute's (human) consciousness then they would obey his wishes; however, the fact that the waves do not obey his command indicates they do have an objective existence – their behaviour is unaffected by the King's commands. For O'Connell Davidson and Layder the social world is seen in similar terms – it has objective features that do not obey the dictates of individuals. There is, in other words, a 'solid world out there separate from human beings' concepts and beliefs'.

Unit 7: Sociology and social policy

Activity 7 (page 252)

1 Read Item A. How might an acceptance of the idea of relative poverty change government social policy?

If governments accept an absolute definition of poverty, then research by sociologists such as Rowntree suggests that poverty is dying out and has virtually disappeared. From this viewpoint, therefore, it is not necessary to do much about poverty since it is ceasing to be a major problem as a result of rising living standards. This viewpoint was largely accepted by the Conservative government when Margaret Thatcher was in power. However, if a relative definition is accepted, poverty is not dying out, but for much of the last few decades has been increasing. Since poverty is generally seen as something which is undesirable, a relative definition is more likely than an absolute one to encourage the government to take action. Labour governments under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown both adopted a relative definition of poverty and partly as a result introduced policies directly aimed at reducing and eventually eradicating child poverty.

The definition used is also likely to influence the sort of social policies followed when it is decided that action must be taken to reduce poverty. Absolute definitions tend to identify small groups in the population as likely to suffer from poverty. Poverty is individualised: it is seen as being

the fault of the individual. Policies based on this definition therefore tend to be based on the idea of changing the behaviour of individuals – for example, getting them off drugs or persuading them to go to work. However, the relative definition of poverty sees poverty as an aspect of wider social inequalities caused by the structure of society. Policies based upon this definition tend to aim to reduce inequality, and deal with problems such as low pay and inadequate benefits, rather than aiming to change the behaviour of individuals.

2 Judging from the quotes in Item B, what influence did Anthony Giddens have on Tony Blair's social policy?

Judging from Item B, Giddens had a substantial influence on Tony Blair's social policy in a range of ways.

1 Giddens 'stressed the importance of social solidarity and social cohesion' – something that involved the idea of 'active citizens' who were concerned about both their rights and their duties to the community. This idea is reflected by Blair in his argument that rights given by the state should be balanced by 'the duties of citizenship', a situation in which the state and the individual share a mutual commitment to improving the community.

2 Giddens' call for a 'renewal of civil society', promoted by government through the encouragement of 'community-based organisations who have a sense of civic duty', is echoed by Blair when he sees the state as an 'enabling force'. Both Giddens and Blair, in this respect, share the idea that social integration can be promoted through social policies that encourage a partnership between the state, on the one hand, and communities and voluntary organisations on the other.

3 Where Giddens saw '*social exclusion* as the main threat to social order and social solidarity', Blair addressed the idea of some groups becoming detached from the wider society through the image of the 'rough-sleeper bedding down for the night in a shop doorway or on a park bench'. Furthermore, Blair agreed with Giddens that government had an important role to play in helping people in general – and children in particular – to move out of poverty.

However, it is impossible to say whether Tony Blair would have adopted some or all of these policies without the influence of Anthony Giddens. To some extent Blair may have consulted Giddens because he knew that Giddens supported policies to which he was already attracted.

3 How does Gordon Brown's statement in Item C fit with the policies of the Blair years?

Brown's statement is making general reference to social inclusion – the idea that government policies should be directed at 'empowering people to aspire and reach even higher', for example. In this respect the statement fits with the policies of the Blair years in a number of ways.

1 Social inclusion is evidenced in relation to poverty, where the aim has been to lift as many people as possible out

of poverty (through policies such as the minimum wage, increases in Child Benefit and the Sure Start programme). Brown's statement fits with the policies of the Blair years in the sense that government help for the poor was designed to empower them – to give them the initial help they needed to raise themselves out of poverty.

2 When Brown talks about taking 'advantage of the global economy' he is referencing the idea that new types of work (in global service industries, for example) are replacing 'old types' of work in areas like the manufacturing industries. Where this has resulted in unemployment, policies have been focused on areas like education, training and, most significantly, retraining. Labour's New Deal, for example, was part of their programme for social inclusion in the sense that policy initiatives were aimed at not only getting the young unemployed into work but, most importantly, helping them to take advantage of new opportunities created by the developments in the global economy.

3 Brown's desire to 'unleash a new wave of social mobility across the country' is further related to the idea of social inclusion; the educational policies of the Blair years were directed towards reaching out to the excluded by providing them with opportunities to enter mainstream society. Where education has been seen as an important source of social mobility, the idea of finding new ways of motivating young people in deprived inner-city areas and of improving 'underachieving schools' fits neatly with Brown's statement.