

Cambridge AS & A Level · Sociology 9699 · Notes

Globalisation, power and politics A2

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Last checked 6 October 2026

Read first: [Perspectives on globalisation](#)

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What you need to know

By the end of this topic you should be able to:

1. **Explain and evaluate the spread of liberal democracy and human rights:** what they are, how far globalisation has spread them, and why some sociologists doubt that it has.
2. **Explain global social movements and attempts to oppose globalisation:** who opposes globalisation, how they organise across borders, what they want and how much they achieve.
3. **Weigh up the debates about the role of the nation state in tackling global social and environmental problems:** whether governments can still deal with problems that cross borders, such as climate change, crime, disease and poverty, or whether power has moved elsewhere.

This topic has been asked only twice, in **2023** and **2024**, both times as a 35-mark essay on Paper 4. One asked who benefits from globalisation; the other asked whether governments can stop global crime, which links to *Globalisation and crime*. The theories of globalisation (modernisation, dependency, world systems) are in *Perspectives on globalisation*.

Understand it

Power in a global world

Globalisation is not only about trade and culture. It also changes **who holds power**: national governments, transnational corporations (TNCs), international bodies such as the UN, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and ordinary people who now organise across borders. This topic asks three questions about that power:

- Is globalisation spreading **democracy and rights**, or the power of a few?
- Can people **resist** globalisation, and how?
- Can **nation states** still solve problems that cross their borders?

The spread of liberal democracy and human rights

A **liberal democracy** is a system in which the government is chosen in free, competitive elections with more than one party, and power is limited by the **rule of law**, independent courts, a free press and **civil liberties** (free speech, free assembly, freedom of religion). **Human rights** are rights everyone holds simply by being human; the UN's **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)** set them out for the whole world.

The case that globalisation spreads them

- **The "third wave". Samuel Huntington** (*The Third Wave*, 1991) described a wave of countries becoming democracies from **1974** (Portugal) onwards: southern Europe, then Latin America, then Eastern Europe after the fall of communism in 1989–1991.
- **The end of history. Francis Fukuyama** (*The End of History and the Last Man*, 1992) argued that after communism collapsed, liberal democracy plus a market economy had no serious rival left as a way to run a modern society.
- **Modernisation theory. Lipset** (1959) argued that economic development creates an educated middle class that demands a say in government. If global trade makes countries richer, it should, on this view, make them more democratic. Modernisation theorists also see globalisation spreading the values that development needs: democracy, enterprise, individual freedom and reward by merit.
- **Neoliberals** add that countries which open up to foreign trade and investment grow faster, and that people who are free to buy, sell and own property soon expect to be free to vote and speak.
- **Pressure from outside.** The EU requires new members to be stable democracies; the IMF and World Bank have tied loans to "good governance".
- **Global media and the internet** let people see how others live and organise against their rulers. In the **Arab Spring** (from **2010–2011**), protests spread from Tunisia across North Africa and the Middle East, partly through social media; **Castells** (*Networks of Outrage and Hope*, 2012) saw this as a new kind of networked movement.
- **A global human rights culture.** NGOs such as **Amnesty International** (founded **1961**) and Human Rights Watch report abuses anywhere in the world, and the **International Criminal Court** (since **2002**) can try individuals for genocide and war crimes. **Cosmopolitan** thinkers (**Beck; Held**) argue that more people now see themselves as **global citizens** with loyalties beyond their own country, which makes it harder for leaders to stir up hatred of foreigners.

The case against

- **Democracy is in retreat.** Freedom House, a US research group, has recorded more countries losing freedom than gaining it every year since **2006**. Most Arab Spring countries did not become democracies: Egypt's elected government was overthrown by the army in 2013, and Syria fell into civil war. Tunisia, the one success, has since moved back towards one-man rule.
- **Backlash.** Resentment of Western power and culture has fuelled movements that reject liberal values, and some rulers have used that resentment as an excuse to jail critics and crush opposition. **Benjamin Barber** (*Jihad vs McWorld*, 1995) described global consumer culture ("McWorld") and the tribal or religious reaction against it ("Jihad") as feeding each other.

- **Growth without democracy.** China became the world's second-largest economy while staying a one-party state, which challenges the modernisation idea that wealth brings democracy.
- **Marxist view.** Liberal democracy is the political shell that suits capitalism: it protects private property and gives people votes that do not touch economic power. Western states supported friendly dictators when it suited business, and used "democracy" to justify wars such as the invasion of Iraq (2003).
- **Western imperialism? Huntington** (*The Clash of Civilizations*, 1996) himself argued that the world is divided into civilisations with different values, and that pushing Western ideas on them causes conflict. Some Asian and African governments argue that rights centred on the individual are a Western idea, and that community, family and economic rights matter more (**cultural relativism**). Critics answer that this argument is often used by rulers to silence opponents.

Weighing it up. The number of democracies is far higher than in the 1970s, and rights are now a global language. But democracy has stalled, the spread has been uneven, and the countries where democracy took hold had local causes too (a middle class, a strong civil society), not just globalisation.

Global social movements and opposition to globalisation

A **social movement** is a large group of people acting together, mostly outside political parties, to bring about or resist change. **New social movements** (from the 1960s) focus on identity, the environment, peace and rights rather than class and wages. A **global social movement** organises across borders, often through the internet, around problems that no single country causes or can solve.

Movement	Opposes or demands	Example
Anti-globalisation and global justice ("alter-globalisation")	The power of TNCs, the WTO, IMF and World Bank; unfair trade and debt	Protests at the WTO meeting in Seattle (1999); the World Social Forum (first held in Porto Alegre, Brazil, 2001), slogan "Another world is possible"
Indigenous and peasant movements	Free-trade deals that destroy small farmers and local land rights	The Zapatista uprising in Mexico on 1 January 1994 , the day the North American free-trade deal began
Anti-inequality	The wealth of the top 1% after the financial crisis	Occupy Wall Street (2011) , "We are the 99%", copied in many countries
Debt campaigns	Poor countries' debts to rich countries and banks	Jubilee 2000 , whose petitions and human chains helped push rich countries to promise wider debt cancellation at the G8 Cologne summit (1999)
Environmental	Climate change and environmental damage	Greenpeace; Fridays for Future (school strikes, from 2018); Extinction Rebellion (2018)
Feminist and anti-racist	Sexual harassment; racist policing	#MeToo (2017); Black Lives Matter (from 2013)

Movement	Opposes or demands	Example
Anti-sweatshop and anti-brand	Low pay and unsafe factories in global supply chains	Naomi Klein (<i>No Logo</i> , 1999) on the power of global brands

Opposition from the right. Not all resistance to globalisation is left-wing. **Nationalist and populist** movements oppose free movement of people, trade deals and international bodies, wanting power returned to the nation (the UK's vote to leave the EU in **2016** is an example). **Religious fundamentalist** movements oppose Western culture (Barber's "Jihad").

How global movements work. **Mary Kaldor** (*Global Civil Society*, 2003) describes a **global civil society** of NGOs, campaigns and networks that sits between states and markets. **Castells** argues that the internet lets movements form quickly without leaders, spread across countries and bypass the mainstream media. The irony is that they use globalisation's own tools (the internet, cheap travel, global media) to oppose it.

How much do they achieve?

- **Successes:** debt relief (Jubilee 2000); putting climate change and sweatshops on the agenda; firms adopting codes of conduct after campaigns; the WTO's plans for a new round of trade talks stalled after Seattle.
- **Limits:** they are a loose mix of groups with different aims and no shared plan for an alternative; many fade quickly (Occupy); Marxists argue that capitalism absorbs protest by selling "ethical" products; and governments and TNCs still make the decisions.

The nation state and global problems

A **nation state** is a country with its own government that claims **sovereignty**: the final say over what happens within its borders. Many problems now cross borders: **climate change**, pollution, pandemics, global crime, migration, financial crises, poverty and inequality. **Ulrich Beck** (*Risk Society*, 1992 in English) called these **manufactured risks**: dangers created by human activity that spread worldwide, so that we live in a **world risk society** that no single state can protect.

Three positions answer whether the nation state can still cope:

Position	View of the nation state	Thinkers
Hyperglobalists	Declining: TNCs and global markets now hold the power, and borders matter less and less ("a borderless world")	Kenichi Ohmae (<i>The End of the Nation State</i> , 1995)
Sceptics	Still strong: states make the rules that markets follow, control borders and armies, and can act decisively when they choose	Hirst and Thompson (<i>Globalization in Question</i> , 1996)
Transformationalists	Changed, not finished: states pool some sovereignty in international bodies and treaties to deal with shared problems	Held et al. (<i>Global Transformations</i> , 1999)

The case that states cannot tackle global problems

- **No single state can solve them.** Carbon released in one country warms the whole planet. A country that cuts emissions bears the cost while others share the benefit, so each is tempted to wait for others (the **free-rider** problem).
- **TNCs are more powerful than many states.** Some of the largest TNCs earn more each year than the whole economies of many countries. They can move factories and profits to wherever rules and taxes are lowest, which pushes governments into a **race to the bottom** on wages, taxes and environmental rules.
- **Agreements are weak.** The **Kyoto Protocol (1997)** was never ratified by the USA. Under the **Paris Agreement (2015)**, each country sets its own targets and nothing forces it to keep them; the USA left in 2020, rejoined in 2021, and announced it was leaving again in 2025.
- **Marxist view:** the state serves capital, so governments protect business profits rather than the environment or the poor; global poverty continues because rich countries and their corporations benefit from it.
- **Global crime** shows the same problem (see below).

The case that states still can

- **States acted when they had to.** In the **2008** financial crisis, governments rescued the banks; in the **COVID-19** pandemic (2020), they closed borders, ordered lockdowns and ran vaccination programmes. These show that the state remains the main actor in a crisis.
- **Cooperation works sometimes.** The **Montreal Protocol (1987)** phased out the chemicals damaging the ozone layer, and the ozone hole is slowly recovering. The UN's **Sustainable Development Goals (2015)** set **17** goals for **2030**, which most governments report against.
- **States are the members of every global body.** The UN, WTO, EU and Interpol exist only because states set them up and fund them. On the transformationalist view, pooling sovereignty is how states extend their power, not how they lose it.
- **Some failures are choices.** Governments could tax and regulate TNCs more and fund poorer countries' efforts, but often choose not to. That suggests unwillingness rather than powerlessness.

Weighing it up. States cannot solve global problems alone, but nothing else can solve them without states. The real question is whether they cooperate, and that depends on political will, which is often weakest where the costs fall on powerful interests.

Applying it: can governments stop global crime?

Global crime (such as drug and human trafficking, cybercrime, money laundering and corporate crime) is a clear test of state power, because its planning, victims or profits are spread over several countries at once. *Globalisation and crime* covers it in full; the arguments for this topic are:

Why governments struggle.

- **Borders:** a detective in one country cannot arrest a suspect or seize evidence in another without that country's help, and extradition between countries is slow and often refused.

- **Choosing a base:** a gang keeps its leaders and money wherever the police are weakest or easiest to bribe, and relocates if a crackdown starts.
- **Business methods:** many criminal groups run like companies, with suppliers, transport and accountants; the large profits buy lawyers, contacts and hiding places for the bosses.
- **Networks:** **Castells** argues that container shipping, cheap flights, the internet and instant bank transfers tie the world together, and criminals use these links as freely as legal firms do, creating a **global criminal economy**: cartels, smugglers and money launderers in different countries trade with one another like firms in a supply chain.
- **Ethnic and diaspora ties:** some gangs recruit only people of one nationality and lean on emigrant communities abroad (Chinese **triads** and the Chinese **diaspora**); a closed group bound by family, language and trust is very hard for an undercover officer to join.
- **Poverty:** where jobs are scarce, traffickers easily find both recruits and victims, and growing coca or opium poppies earns a farmer far more than growing food.
- **Technology:** hidden sites on the **dark web** sell drugs and weapons, **encrypted messaging** apps keep plans away from police, and **cryptocurrency** moves payments without passing through a bank.
- **TNCs:** a poor country that relies on a TNC's factories may back off from charging it, for fear the firm will pull out; rich offenders can also pay off badly paid officers and officials.
- **Marxist view:** governments depend on business for taxes and jobs, so they serve the capitalist class; capitalism's greed and inequality also generate crime (it is **criminogenic**), and firms that break the law usually get fines rather than prison.

Why they are not powerless.

- **Crime is still local:** **Katja Franko Aas** (mark schemes spell her "Franco") argues that even a worldwide trade needs people and property in real towns (street dealers, safe houses, front businesses), and ordinary local police can raid and prosecute these.
- **Countries cooperate:** forces share intelligence and run joint investigations; British and Romanian police, for example, have teamed up to break trafficking gangs that moved people between the two countries.
- **Supranational bodies:** **Interpol** and **Europol** coordinate police across countries.
- **Stronger agencies:** the UK's National Crime Agency (2013) was created to lead the fight against serious and organised crime, and many countries have widened their police's surveillance rights and funding for this work.
- **Following the money:** banks must now check who their customers really are and report suspicious payments, and most countries now share details of **offshore bank accounts** automatically, so dirty money is harder to hide.
- **Unwilling, not unable:** some governments choose not to act. Russia does not hand its own citizens to foreign courts, China has stayed out of some joint schemes, and US states such as Delaware long let people register companies without naming their owners, which hides money from investigators.

Who benefits from globalisation?

The 2023 question asked whether only the rich and powerful gain. Use all three parts of this topic, plus the theories in *Perspectives on globalisation*.

For: the rich and powerful gain most.

- **Marxists** see globalisation as **neo-colonialism**: rich nations keep control through ownership and debt instead of empire. Profits flow to shareholders in the West, and poorer countries are reduced to **satellites** supplying cheap labour and raw materials. **Wallerstein's world systems theory** puts the rich **core** above the poor **periphery**.
- **Democracy has not clearly spread**: anger at Western influence has sometimes helped strongmen win support, and uprisings have been crushed (Syria, Egypt after 2013).
- **Migrant workers** may be exploited: building workers in some Gulf states have had passports kept by employers, worked long hours in extreme heat and gone unpaid, while the firms that hire them keep costs down.
- **The Western model does not fit everyone**: the free-market recipe exported by rich countries (cutting public spending, opening markets) rewards investors but can leave poorer countries without the schools, clinics and protected industries they need, so the poor bear the cost.
- **Global bodies** (WTO, IMF) and TNCs are shaped by rich countries; nation states compete to please investors.

Against: others benefit too.

- **Neoliberals**: opening up to world trade raised incomes across Asia; on this view, a growing economy lifts the poor as well as the rich (South Korea, Vietnam).
- **Modernisation theorists**: globalisation spreads the values needed for development (democracy, enterprise, individual freedom, meritocracy).
- **Democracy and rights**: Eastern Europe after 1989 and South Africa after apartheid show ordinary people gaining votes and rights, and their example encourages others.
- **Global citizenship**: travel, study abroad and social media mix people from different countries; **cosmopolitan** thinkers argue that people who see themselves as citizens of the world are less easily drawn into nationalist hatred and war.
- **Migrants and their families**: money sent home (**remittances**) supports families and communities in the country of origin.
- **Awareness and aid**: television and social media coverage of famine or abuse prompts donations, aid budgets and sanctions on abusive governments; global social movements give the powerless a voice.
- **Women, the poor and the middle classes**: factory jobs give some women their own income; new middle classes have grown in countries such as India and China.

Key facts and formulas

There is no formula list in Sociology. "Learn it" means you must remember it.

Key term	Status
Liberal democracy: free, competitive elections with more than one party, plus the rule of law, independent courts, a free press and civil liberties	Learn it
Human rights: rights everyone holds by being human; Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UN, 1948)	Learn it
Spread of democracy: Huntington's third wave (from 1974); Fukuyama's end of history (1992); Lipset (1959) development brings democracy; Arab Spring (2010–2011); Castells (<i>Networks of Outrage and Hope</i> , 2012)	Learn it
Doubts: democratic retreat since 2006 (Freedom House); Barber (<i>Jihad vs McWorld</i> , 1995); Huntington (<i>The Clash of Civilizations</i> , 1996); cultural relativism; China's growth without democracy	Learn it
Global social movement: people acting together across borders, mostly outside parties, to bring about or resist change; global civil society (Kaldor, 2003)	Learn it
Opposition to globalisation: Zapatistas (1994), Seattle (1999), World Social Forum (2001), Jubilee 2000, Occupy (2011), Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion (2018); Klein (<i>No Logo</i> , 1999); nationalist and religious opposition	Learn it
Nation state and sovereignty: a country's government claims the final say within its borders	Learn it
Three positions: hyperglobalists (Ohmae, 1995), sceptics (Hirst and Thompson, 1996), transformationalists (Held et al., 1999)	Learn it
Beck: manufactured risks, world risk society; free-rider problem; race to the bottom	Learn it
Global agreements: Montreal Protocol (1987), Kyoto Protocol (1997), Paris Agreement (2015), Sustainable Development Goals (2015, 17 goals for 2030)	Learn it
Paper 4: two essays from different sections, each 35 marks: AO1 9, AO2 11, AO3 15, so $9 + 11 + 15 = 35$	Learn it

How to do it

We have tagged 3 questions for this topic, from 2023 and 2024 only, 2 different (the November 2024 question was set on two papers). All 3 are 35-mark "Evaluate this view" essays from Paper 4, and each fits one type, so the counts add up to 3.

Question type	Questions
Evaluate a claim that governments cannot tackle a global problem (essay)	2
Evaluate a claim about who benefits from globalisation (essay)	1

Paper 4 lasts 1 hour 45 minutes for two essays, so allow about 50 minutes for each, including 5 minutes to plan.

The plan for every essay.

1. **Introduction** (3–4 sentences): define the key terms (globalisation, nation state, global crime, liberal democracy) and pick out the key words of the quotation ("only", "powerless", "main").
2. **Build the case for the view** with named theories, studies and real cases.
3. **Evaluate** it with the other side, paragraph by paragraph.
4. **Conclusion**: answer the exact words of the quotation, with a reason.

1. Evaluate a claim that governments cannot tackle a global problem (essay) (2 questions)

Asked as: governments are powerless to prevent the spread of global crime (2, one question set on two papers). The same plan fits climate change, pollution, pandemics or poverty.

1. **Define the problem and say why it is global**: its causes, victims or profits sit in several countries, so no single state controls all of it.
2. **Build the case for the view**, one paragraph per point, each with a case:
 - Borders and jurisdiction, slow extradition; criminals (or polluters) basing themselves where rules are weakest and moving when pressed.
 - Castells's networks: gangs run like firms and trade across countries; closed groups bound by nationality and family (triads) that undercover officers struggle to join.
 - Poverty: easy recruits and victims for traffickers; coca and poppy farming pays better than food.
 - Technology: dark-web markets, encrypted apps and cryptocurrency.
 - TNCs' leverage over poor host countries; corruption of officers and officials.
 - Marxist theory: the state serves the capitalist class, and capitalism is criminogenic, so corporate crime goes unpunished.
 - Hyperglobalists (Ohmae): power has moved to markets and TNCs.
3. **Evaluate with the other side**:
 - Franko Aas ("Franco"): crime is still local.
 - Cooperation between states (joint British and Romanian investigations into trafficking) and supranational bodies (Interpol, Europol).
 - New or enlarged national agencies (the National Crime Agency).
 - Controls on money laundering and offshore accounts.
 - Sceptics (Hirst and Thompson) and transformationalists (Held): states still act and pool sovereignty.
4. **Turn "powerless" into "unwilling"**: some governments choose not to act (Russia and China refusing some international plans; US bank secrecy). This is the strongest evaluation: not powerless, but selective.
5. **Judge**: for example, governments cannot stop global crime alone, but cooperating they can disrupt it; where they fail it is often from lack of will, especially towards powerful corporations.

Variants. For an environmental problem, swap the crime cases for the free-rider problem, the race to the bottom, Kyoto and Paris (weak), and the Montreal Protocol (a success). Keep every paragraph on what **governments** can or cannot do: examiners mark down answers that only describe the problem.

2. Evaluate a claim about who benefits from globalisation (essay) (1 question)

Asked as: only the rich and powerful benefit from globalisation (1).

1. **Define globalisation** and say which dimension you will use (economic, political, cultural), or that you will use several. Pick out the key word ("only").
2. **Build the case for the view:** Marxist neo-colonialism and satellite states; Wallerstein's core and periphery; the backlash that helped strongmen; exploited migrant workers; a free-market recipe that rewards investors more than workers.
3. **Evaluate with other winners**, one paragraph each: neoliberals (growth for all); modernisation theory (values for development); the spread of democracy and rights; cosmopolitan global citizenship reducing conflict; migrants and remittances; awareness leading to aid; women, the poor and the new middle classes.
4. **Judge:** for example, the rich and powerful gain the most, but "only" is too strong, since other groups gain something; the real question is how unequally the gains are shared.

Variants. "Globalisation has spread democracy and human rights" or "Global social movements have failed": use the "case for" and "case against" lists in *Understand it* the same way.

Worked examples

Each example is a new 35-mark essay. The marks are given the way the levels mark scheme works: by assessment objective and level, not by points. In the exam, write each bullet as a full paragraph.

Example 1

'Globalisation has led to the spread of liberal democracy across the world.' Evaluate this view. [35]

Introduction. Define liberal democracy (free elections, more than one party, rule of law, civil liberties). Globalisation may spread it through trade, media and international pressure, but the record since the 2000s is mixed.

For the view (AO1/AO2).

- **The third wave:** Huntington's wave of new democracies from 1974, speeding up after communism fell; Fukuyama's end of history.
- **Modernisation:** Lipset's link between development and democracy; global trade creates middle classes who demand rights.
- **Global media:** the Arab Spring spread through social media (Castells's networked movements).
- **Pressure:** EU membership rules; IMF and World Bank "good governance" conditions; a global human rights culture (Amnesty International, the International Criminal Court).

Against the view (AO3).

- **Retreat:** Freedom House has recorded more countries losing freedom than gaining it every year since 2006; most Arab Spring states did not become democracies.
- **China:** growth without democracy.
- **Backlash:** Barber's Jihad against McWorld; Huntington's clash of civilizations; cultural relativism.
- **Marxism:** liberal democracy protects capitalism, and the West has backed dictators when it suited business.
- **Local causes:** where democracy did take hold, a local middle class and civil society mattered as much as globalisation.

Conclusion. Globalisation helped the spread of democracy at the end of the twentieth century, but it is not enough on its own: democracy now spreads only where local conditions support it, and in many places it is retreating.

How it would be marked. Accurate knowledge of named theories and cases (AO1 7–9), applied to "globalisation" and "across the world" throughout (AO2 10–11), and evaluation that is sustained and leads to a reasoned verdict (AO3 12–15).

Example 2

'Global social movements have had little success in opposing globalisation.' Evaluate this view. [35]

Introduction. Global social movements act across borders, mostly outside parties. Some oppose globalisation outright; most (the global justice movement) want a fairer version of it.

For the view (AO1/AO2).

- **Globalisation goes on:** trade, TNCs and global finance have kept growing since Seattle (1999).
- **Divided aims:** environmentalists, unions, indigenous groups and anarchists agree on what they oppose but not on an alternative.
- **Short-lived:** Occupy (2011) faded within months.
- **Absorbed:** Marxists argue that capitalism sells "ethical" brands and turns protest into a market.

Against the view (AO3).

- **Real gains:** Jubilee 2000 helped win debt cancellation; campaigns pushed firms to adopt codes of conduct (Klein's *No Logo*); the WTO's trade talks stalled.
- **The agenda changed:** climate change is now central to politics, helped by Fridays for Future and Extinction Rebellion.
- **New tools:** Castells shows how the internet lets movements form fast across countries; Kaldor's global civil society gives the powerless a voice.
- **Right-wing opposition:** nationalist movements have slowed globalisation more than left-wing ones (the 2016 Brexit vote).

Conclusion. Movements have not reversed globalisation, but "little success" understates them: they have changed what it looks like and what governments discuss.

How it would be marked. A range of movements and studies (AO1 7–9), each linked to "success" and "opposing" (AO2 10–11), and sustained weighing of what counts as success (AO3 12–15).

Example 3

'The nation state is no longer able to deal with global environmental problems.' Evaluate this view. **[35]**

This is the hardest kind: you must apply the three positions on the nation state to one kind of problem and keep judging what states can do.

Introduction. Define the nation state and sovereignty, and environmental problems such as climate change and pollution that cross borders (Beck's manufactured risks).

For the view (AO1/AO2).

- **Global by nature:** carbon from one country warms all; the free-rider problem.
- **TNCs and the race to the bottom:** firms move to countries with weaker environmental rules; hyperglobalists (Ohmae) say markets now rule.
- **Weak agreements:** Kyoto never ratified by the USA; Paris targets set by each country and not enforced; US withdrawals.
- **Marxism:** states protect profits before the environment.

Against the view (AO3).

- **Montreal Protocol (1987):** states phased out ozone-damaging chemicals, and the ozone layer is recovering.
- **States set the rules:** sceptics (Hirst and Thompson) note that every law on emissions is a national law.
- **Pooling sovereignty:** transformationalists (Held) see the Paris Agreement and the SDGs as states acting together.
- **Will, not ability:** governments acted fast in 2008 and in COVID-19; they could do the same for the environment but choose not to.

Conclusion. No state can deal with these problems alone, but no one else can deal with them without states. The barrier is mostly political will, not inability.

How it would be marked. Detailed knowledge of the three positions and real agreements (AO1 7–9), applied to environmental problems throughout (AO2 10–11), and a sustained evaluation that separates ability from willingness (AO3 12–15).

Common mistakes

- **Writing about globalisation in general.** According to the 2023 examiner report, many lower-scoring essays explained what globalisation is but never tested the word "only". Keep using the question's key word ("only", "powerless").

- **Description instead of evaluation.** Summarising knowledge without testing the view keeps AO3 low. Challenge the view in every section.
- **Assertion instead of sociology.** Claims such as "globalisation is bad for the poor" need a theory (Marxism, modernisation), a concept (neo-colonialism, sovereignty) or a study (Wallerstein, Franko Aas) behind them.
- **Forgetting other winners.** Strong answers to "who benefits" brought in migrants and their families, women, the poor and the middle classes, not just "the poor lose".
- **Treating "powerless" as true or false.** The best answers separate what governments cannot do from what they choose not to do.
- **Missing the question number.** Examiners cannot be sure which question you answered if the number is missing or unclear.

How to get the marks

- **"Evaluate this view" (35 marks):** one long essay, marked by levels for each assessment objective.
- **AO1 knowledge and understanding (9):** the top level (7–9) needs a wide range of accurate, detailed points using concepts, theory and research. Use terms such as liberal democracy, human rights, sovereignty, neo-colonialism, global civil society, global social movement, manufactured risk, race to the bottom, and name sociologists.
- **AO2 interpretation and application (11):** the top level (10–11) needs every piece of material tied to the question's wording all the way through. Use real cases: the Arab Spring, Seattle, Jubilee 2000, the Paris Agreement, the Montreal Protocol, Interpol.
- **AO3 analysis and evaluation (15):** the top level (12–15) needs evaluation that is clear, developed and kept going through the whole essay, with contrasting views. A brief outline of the other side stays in the 4–7 band; explicit evaluation that is not kept up reaches 8–11.
- **Evaluate the wording:** "only" is disproved by one group that gains, so then weigh how unequal the gains are; "powerless" against "unwilling".
- **Reach a judgement** that says for whom, or for which problems, the view holds best and worst.
- **Answer two questions from different sections** (Globalisation, Media, Religion); the paper is out of $2 \times 35 = 70$.

Quick check

1. Give four features of a liberal democracy.
2. How does modernisation theory link globalisation to democracy, and what case challenges it?
3. Name two global social movements and say what each opposed.
4. What do hyperglobalists, sceptics and transformationalists each say about the nation state?
5. Give one reason why governments struggle to stop global crime and one reason they are not powerless.

Answers

1. Free, competitive elections; more than one party; the rule of law with independent courts; a free press; civil liberties such as free speech and assembly (any four).
2. Development creates an educated middle class that demands a say in government (Lipset), so if globalisation brings growth it should bring democracy. China challenges this: it grew into the world's second-largest economy while remaining a one-party state.
3. For example: the global justice movement at Seattle (1999) opposed the WTO and unfair trade; the Zapatistas (1994) opposed a free-trade deal that threatened small farmers; Jubilee 2000 opposed poor countries' debts; Extinction Rebellion (2018) opposes inaction on climate change.
4. Hyperglobalists (Ohmae): it is declining as markets and TNCs take power. Sceptics (Hirst and Thompson): it is still strong and makes the rules. Transformationalists (Held): it has changed, pooling sovereignty in international bodies.
5. Struggle: police and courts have power only within their own borders, and criminals base themselves where police are weakest (or: encryption and cryptocurrency, TNCs' power, corruption). Not powerless: Franko Aas argues that crime is still local, and states cooperate through Interpol and Europol.

Past questions to try

- 9699/43/M/J/23 Q1: essay on whether only the rich and powerful benefit from globalisation.
- 9699/41/O/N/24 Q1: essay on whether governments are powerless to prevent the spread of global crime.
- 9699/41/M/J/22 Q2: essay on whether governments are unable to prevent the growth of global crime.