

## Candidate 2 evidence

1 Gender and age are both important parts of an individual's identity. An individual's  
2 identity can be easily influenced by what are know as agents of socialisations. There are  
3 two different kinds of agents of socialisation. There are primary agents that are only the  
4 family and secondary agents that are all other institutes that interact with an individual.  
5 One way primary socialisation can influence gender identity is through differing bed  
6 times. This means parents will give older children latter bed times than younger  
7 students in-order to reinforce there older age identity. One way secondary socialisation  
8 influences gender identity is through the advertising of toys. This means the media  
9 advertises toys such as kitchens or building sets to a specific gender to try to influence  
10 there future identity. Once an identity is formed it can still be influenced and changed.

### 11 Study – EAVES Just the Women

12 A study that looks into how society – in particular the media – influences the formation  
13 of gender identity is the EAVES Just The Women study. One finding of this study is that  
14 there were 1300 incidents of sexism in newspapers analysed, over a 2 week period. This  
15 shows the extent to which negative sexist gender stereotypes through the media will  
16 influence female identity as women are misrepresented in the media.

17 A further finding of this study is that tabloids objectified women in an extreme way. The  
18 media used images of women that focussed on women's appearance and comments  
19 were about how women did or did not conform to 'feminine' behaviour. This shows the  
20 media could negatively impact on girls' and women's gender identity through restricting  
21 their career choices and aspirations if they feel they must conform to outdated gender  
22 stereotypes in job choices.

23 Another finding of the just the women study is that photographs and coverage of women  
24 focused on there looks and their femininity. Objectification of women presented women  
25 as sex object in the newspapers, but this would not be permitted in the workplace due  
26 to equality laws, or even on broadcast TV media. This shows that female identity is  
27 negatively influenced by the media in society. This also shows that the newspapers see  
28 a women's identity as her attractiveness, appearance, her appeal to men instead of any  
29 of her other achievements and intelligence, and the media tries to influence female  
30 identity to focus more on their appearance.

31 A final finding of this study was that the newspapers often covered stories about sexual  
32 assaults or rapes against women in a glamorous erotic way. The impact of this on  
33 female gender identity is that sexual violence against women is acceptable and  
34 normalised, and this could affect decisions by members of the jury in rape trials if they  
35 think these crimes are acceptable.

36 One strength of the just the women study is that it used multiple newspapers. This is  
37 more accurate as it provides an overall picture of the representation of the extent of

38 *gender stereotypes impacting on female identity across multiple different newspapers*  
39 *so more valid conclusions can be drawn about how media influences gender identity.*

40 *Another strength of this study is that it analysed newspapers collected over a two week*  
41 *period. This makes the study a longitudinal study which makes it more reliable as it*  
42 *contains more data which can then be used to display more accurate information on the*  
43 *influence of newspapers on gender identity. It shows how common the sexist*  
44 *discussion of women in media is, and the impact that has on women's identity, as it*  
45 *clearly happens many times in many newspapers, not just on one day in one*  
46 *newspaper.*

47 *A further strength of this study is that it brought about positive change. This is an*  
48 *advantage as the study influenced the Leveson inquiry which lead to improved*  
49 *representation of women. Sexist articles and publications such as Page 3 and Nuts,*  
50 *Loaded have now been removed from UK media. There is now a more positive*  
51 *representation of female gender identity in the media as a result of the study findings.*

52 *A weakness of the study is that the content analysis only covered newspapers. Much*  
53 *sexist content and negative gender stereotypes appears online, through influencers*  
54 *such as Andrew Tate. The study unfortunately did not look at how much sexist online*  
55 *media content there was and how this might influence female gender identity.*

56 *Theory 1 – Action theory – Symbolic Interactionism/ Labelling*

57 *One theory used to explain the formation of identity is Symbolic Interactionism theory.*  
58 *One key feature of symbolic interactionism is significant others. This means we can*  
59 *change our behaviour based on others' reactions to our actions. For example, if a*  
60 *woman acts in a masculine way and this is met with disapproving comments from men*  
61 *and women, she might change her behaviour and act more feminine to 'fit in' with social*  
62 *expectation of her female identity. The Just The Women study supports this theory*  
63 *claim, as the media criticised women who were not acting 'feminine' enough like Angela*  
64 *Merkel.*

65 *Another key feature of Symbolic Interactionism is dramaturgical model. A woman might*  
66 *have a front stage where she acts all feminine and wears feminine clothes to be given*  
67 *approval in public but also has a back stage where she really is a tomboy and wants to*  
68 *act and dress masculine, but does not do this openly in public to avoid negative*  
69 *comments. We can therefore be seen to be able to adjust our behaviour and gender*  
70 *identity, in response to others' reactions.*

71 *A further key feature of Symbolic Interactionism is Labelling. This explanation suggests*  
72 *that people label others' behaviour and this label is internalised and acted up to in order*  
73 *to fulfil the label prophecy. However, with women being 'labelled' by the media as sex*  
74 *objects, as in the JTW study, this label is rejected by many women who wish to show*

75 *they are important for their achievements not just for their beauty. So the 'Never mind*  
76 *Brexit, here's Legsit' media story talking about Sturgeon and May's legs not their Political*  
77 *decisions, will encourage women to reject this 'beauty' label and be determined to*  
78 *show female gender identity should be more about achievements of women.*

79 *Another disadvantage of symbolic interaction explanations of gender identity is that it*  
80 *does not acknowledge the patriarchy. This means it fails to consider the effects of*  
81 *having male run institutions such as the media that males benefit from such as men*  
82 *newspaper owners deciding to display women in sexualised ways which badly*  
83 *influences attitudes towards women and on the formation of female gender identity.*

84 *Another weakness of symbolic interactionism explanations of gender identity, is from*  
85 *Marxism. This theory would highlight that the media is used to promote ideas about*  
86 *beauty and attractive female identity to women, so that women are encouraged through*  
87 *advertising to buy products to look more attractive, to make profit for owners of the*  
88 *beauty products. This is not discussed in symbolic interactionism theory at all.*

89 *Theory 2 – Structural Theory – Feminist theories*

90 *A structural theory which explains how society influences female gender identity is*  
91 *Feminist theories. This theory argues that Patriarchal institutions reinforce negative*  
92 *gender stereotypes and disadvantage women by restricting their career aspirations. This*  
93 *helps men to get promoted and discourages women from trying to be successful*  
94 *through achievements and rather to focus on their appearance.*

95 *The Just the Women study supports Feminist theory as it highlights how a male*  
96 *dominated media institution eroticises sexual attacks on women. This negatively*  
97 *impacts on female identity by promoting rape culture and this affects how both men and*  
98 *women view rape victims. Feminism as a political movement through #MeToo has*  
99 *highlighted this and raised awareness to challenge abuse of female models and*  
100 *actresses by men like Harvey Weinstein.*

101 *Marxist Feminism would explain the formation of gender identity differently too. Marxist*  
102 *feminism would highlight the dominance of wealthy women in the media and how*  
103 *women from poorer backgrounds are absent from media newspapers. This reinforces a*  
104 *negative identity for poor women, that the only acceptable female gender identity is*  
105 *wealthy women.*

106 *Black Feminism would highlight the lack of black female identity examples in media, the*  
107 *vast majority of female actor and models being white. This reinforces a 'white female'*  
108 *identity which is also usually very tall and thin. This does not relate well to many black*  
109 *women so their female gender identity is not common in the mainly white western*  
110 *media.*

111 *Finally Feminism has campaigned for change politically, to improve women's gender*  
112 *identity. Campaigning for an end to FGM for example, improves women and girls safety*  
113 *worldwide, and this improves their gender identity as not people who should be victims*  
114 *of this violent behaviour against their Human Rights.*

115 *A strength of the Feminist explanations is that media clearly is a male dominated*  
116 *industry and women are displayed in the media by these men, the way men wish to*  
117 *display women. The Dolce and Gabbana advert showing a woman on her back*  
118 *surrounded by five men promotes rape culture, and this shows the media is sexist and*  
119 *does promote dangerous attitudes towards women which affects women and girl*  
120 *identity.*

121 *In conclusion identity and its formation is very complex but it can be changed by*  
122 *individual action, and is also influenced by structures such as the media, in society.*  
123 *Issues around the correct representation of women in newspapers and the wider media*  
124 *is still an issue – age identity is also affected as the media emphasises the importance*  
125 *of young / youth and the unacceptable old/ elderly – this puts pressure on women to buy*  
126 *products to look younger to fit this 'accepted' younger identity. Older actresses often*  
127 *find a lack of work once they get older. Research which shows continuing*  
128 *unacceptable treatment of women such as sexual assaults, domestic violence, rape*  
129 *and female genital mutilation, happen as a result of society influencing negative female*  
130 *gender identity stereotypes.*