

GCE

Sociology

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS **H180**

OCR Report to Centres June 2016

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This report on the examination provides information on the performance of candidates which it is hoped will be useful to teachers in their preparation of candidates for future examinations. It is intended to be constructive and informative and to promote better understanding of the specification content, of the operation of the scheme of assessment and of the application of assessment criteria.

Reports should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and mark schemes for the examination.

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H180/01 Socialisation, culture and identity

General Comments:

This is the first examination of the new Sociology specification, and overall the standard of responses was good. There was a wide range of responses, suggesting that the paper differentiated adequately. The vast majority of candidates attempted to answer all questions of the paper and managed to time their responses well. There were very few rubric errors and candidates seem overall well prepared knowing the assessment objectives of each question. Saying that, however, it was apparent that some candidates did not evaluate in the questions which specifically asked for evaluation; that is, question 4 on section A and the 20 mark questions on section B and candidates need to be reminded of the importance of addressing all 3 assessment objectives, particularly when the question asks to "Assess this view" or to "Briefly evaluate". In section A, there were clear differences between candidates in the use of sources; some candidates made no reference to the source and consequently lost AO2 marks for application. There is further discussion regarding use of sources in the individual questions (questions 2 and 3) below. In section B, the family was the most popular topic, followed closely by youth culture. Few centres chose the media option.

With every question, in order to achieve marks in the highest mark band, candidates need to include a range of sociological evidence and to discuss these with some depth. A large number of responses, particularly for the 12 and 20 mark questions in section A and section B failed to include the required range and depth of sociological evidence. "Evidence" can include studies, theories, concepts and contemporary examples, although it should be noted that responses which rely heavily of contemporary examples will not score very highly as, on their own, contemporary examples are not good sociology. It is also worth noting that there is a difference between contemporary examples and anecdote. Contemporary examples mean events in society that can inform sociology but may not have been formally researched or studied; or events that are happening as sociologists are carrying out their research. For example, some candidates referred to different types of masculinity in question 4. Anecdotal evidence, on the other hand, is bordering on 'common sense' knowledge and this is not rewarded in the examination; for example, by claiming that "gender identities are changing because women are becoming more loud and confident.". Responses which were wide-ranging in their use of sociological studies, particularly in question 4 (section A) and the 12 and 20 mark questions in section B, tended to score highly and there are some examples of good practice in specific individual question sections below.

On the whole there was a clear difference between the high and low achieving candidates. At the top end, there was a range of sociological evidence contained in answers to all of the questions. Such responses included relevant and detailed explanations including sociological studies, concepts and theories where appropriate. The lower achieving candidates were often unable to provide sociological knowledge and understanding and their answers became very anecdotal and common sense like. Candidates must be encouraged to back up their answers with sociological evidence; be it concepts, studies, relevant contemporary examples or theory. For example, in answers to question (3), candidates who discussed the impact of nurture by referencing socialisation and social control scored more highly than those that talked about having a 'loving family'.

In terms of assessment objectives, Knowledge and Understanding (AO1) remains the strongest area; good candidates were able to offer a whole range of sociological knowledge, mainly in the form of concepts and studies, but sometimes making relevant use of contemporary examples and theory. AO2 (application) seemed to be the most difficult skill area for candidates; whilst many have been trained to evaluate evidence and arguments, they are less successful at interpreting knowledge and applying it to the specific question or context. For example, in

question 3, candidates were able to offer a range of knowledge related to the importance of nurture, but all too often, failed to include references to the source. As mentioned earlier, it is also worth pointing out that a significant number of students are not offering any evaluation for question 4, which is worth 4 marks. Candidates must be reminded that there is an evaluative element to this question.

Comments on Individual Questions:

Question 1

The vast majority of candidates were able to offer a core definition of the term 'culture'. Most responses referred to "a way of life" or the "shared norms, values, beliefs and customs of a society". Candidates were awarded 2 marks for an accurate definition. The other two marks were awarded for development of the definition, for example by discussing aspects of culture (such as food, dress and language), different types of culture (e.g. subculture; popular culture) or cultural diversity. Most candidates were able to score at least 3 marks on this question and the vast majority of candidates had a good knowledge of this concept. However, not all candidates were able to develop the concept to score full marks. Centres should encourage candidates to write a definition then develop it with examples to show how it links to the concept.

Question 2

The vast majority of candidates understood the concept of norms, but a large number found it difficult to appropriately link the norms to the source material. Candidates need to be reminded that there are two marks available for stating two examples of norms and then four marks available for application to the source and application of the example to the concept of norms. Many candidates didn't explicitly identify examples of norms, instead citing "acceptable behaviour" which is a definition rather than an example. Lots of candidates took norms to be those of the feral children rather than those of humans and when this was the case it often wasn't possible to reward them at all. Lots of students took physical/biological characteristics of the feral children in an attempt to link to norms, this had to be cleverly done in order to be rewarded. The most common responses which scored highly were norms around gender identity, language, human care / love. These were clearly cited in the source and thus, marks were awarded for application as well as knowledge. Some candidates accurately identified two general norms such as "queuing in a shop" or "listening to teachers in lessons" but these were totally unrelated to the source so, whilst they scored relatively highly for knowledge, they tended to be weak on application marks.

Question 3

Most candidates had a good understanding of what was meant by nurture. There were 8 marks available for this question: 4 marks for Knowledge and Understanding (AO1) and 4 marks for Application (AO2). In this question, the application marks were awarded for reference to the source. The best answers offered a range of knowledge and understanding of nurture by referring to concepts such as socialisation and social control, studies such as Oakley, and examples of feral children, both from within the source and wider examples of feral children. Often students referred to the nature/nurture debate in order to illustrate nurture; however, those candidates who introduced an evaluative tone by discussing nature in opposition to nurture did not get rewarded as there are no evaluation marks for this question. Weaker responses took a narrow view of nurture taking it to mean "family upbringing" and such responses tended to neglect the source and examples of feral children. A few candidates were confused and suggested that the source didn't support nurture, because Kamala and Amala's behaviour was obviously in their nature.

Question 4

Most candidates were able to offer some sociological knowledge to support the view that distinct gender identities are disappearing. The best responses drew upon a range of relevant studies, such as Connell, Sharpe, Mort, Nixon, Mac an Ghail and Jackson. A large number of responses discussed different forms of gender identity as becoming more acceptable and common although often these points were unsupported with evidence although some responses did use relevant contemporary examples to illustrate. Often examples of women working and men as fathers were used. Sue Sharpe was used frequently to illustrate change in attitudes of girls as was Wilkinson's genderquake and Jackson's ladettes. However, some candidates put forward evidence without explicitly linking points back to the specific question. For example, many responses referred to many different types of masculinity/femininity but with varying degrees of development -e.g.: New Man/Meterosexual/Crisis of masculinity/new wave girls. The best responses linked these concepts explicitly to change and the decline in traditional identities. Weaker responses failed to focus on the notion of changing gender identities and offered descriptive accounts of traditional gender roles and identities. Furthermore, many weaker responses offered ideas which were unsupported by sociological evidence, such as "women are now working as much as men" or "men are looking after the children more". Other weaker responses described evidence of gender inequalities (e.g. glass ceiling) without specifically linking it to identities. A common problem was getting gender mixed up with sexuality. There were lots of discussions of homosexuals, transvestites and transsexuals, missing the focus on masculinity and femininity, showing a lack of understanding of what we mean by gender identity. Some responses did not include any evaluation – command words such as Discuss/ Assess/ Evaluate need to be identified with students. This question has 4 marks for evaluation and the stronger responses centred around the continuation of traditional gender roles. However, weaker responses simply juxtaposed ideas, eg: stating Ann Oakley's research into socialising into gender roles or Functionalists believing they were the best type of roles (without mentioning change). Some candidates put forward these studies and simply stated that this type of gender identity was in decline. Other weaker responses simply failed to evaluate at all. Candidates must be reminded that this 12 mark question is a "mini essay" with all three assessment objectives being tested.

Question 5

The majority of candidates were able to identify the key features of the extended family, through identifying it as beyond the nuclear. Those that score full marks typically discussed the vertical/horizontal types and then linked this to Asian family structure and often gave a reason why they are more popular in different types of family. Those that were not able to achieve full marks did not know how to develop their responses. Centres need to suggest to students to think of reasons why certain types of family have increased or declined in society as a way of accessing the higher mark band for this question. Including studies is a good way of achieving high marks and some strong responses made references to Wilmott's concepts of the modified extended family.

Question 6

Most candidates were able to identify two non-family households. The most common were cohabiting couples, LATs, single person households, and student households. The stronger responses were able to offer a range of sociological knowledge related to the types of non family households; for example, by identifying trends and patterns, by explaining relevant sociological research (for example Klinenberg (the cult of the individual) or Levin's research on LATs). However, there were a lot of anecdotal responses here or less sociological. Many did not use studies or concepts limiting their marks. Explanations for these types of household often lacked sociological evidence and studies. Some candidates seemed confused by reconstituted and empty nest families and named them as non-family households. Candidates should be encouraged to think carefully about which two types to select as some have got more

sociological evidence attached to them than others; for example, many chose student households and then had nothing to say, whereas living alone gave much more scope, with links to individualism, ageing population etc. There was some confusion over the term 'non-family household', with some candidates discussing single-parent or same-sex families which could not be rewarded any marks.

Question 7

The vast majority of candidates interpreted this question as a question about the nuclear family being the ideal type and they failed to interpret what was meant by "ideology". Those few responses who did fully understand the question were able to refer to the critical theories which explain how and why the nuclear family is presented as an ideal type and the consequences this may have for individuals and society. Such responses made good references to Leach and his "cereal packet" image of the nuclear family, and to the feminist Gittins who talks about "familial ideology". Weaker responses described Parsons and / or Murdock's theory of the functionality of the nuclear family. Such responses were not specifically addressing the question and therefore could not reach the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Question 8

This question was generally very well answered and most candidates showed a good knowledge and understanding of the debate in the question. Strong responses were able to back up their arguments with a range of sociological evidence, using for example Beck and Beck-Gersheim and Giddens' idea of confluent love. Reference was made to secularisation, changing role of women, backed up by Sue Sharpe and the increased popularity of cohabitation. Stronger responses also recognised that half of the marks on this question are given to evaluation. Many strong responses criticised the view with arguments surrounding the popularity of re-marriages; the delaying of marriage rather than the rejection of it; Chester's theory of the neo-conventional family. Good evaluative use was also made of feminist views who argue that the persistence of marriage is a key patriarchal institution which legitimates and reproduces gender inequalities. Weaker responses tended to make assertive comments about declining marriage, without backing these up with studies, theories or statistical evidence. A further feature of weak responses were a lack of focus on the specific question, often turning the debate into whether marriage is a good or a bad thing, rather than staying focussed on the question. This particularly affected evaluation, which was often only implicitly relevant, since it was on the lines of 'functionalists don't agree that marriage should be a thing of the past because they think it's important' which wasn't really the focus of this question. Another feature of weaker responses is that they failed to provide a balanced evaluative view; sometimes forgetting to evaluate altogether. Students often struggled to expand on points in their evaluation, often only citing remarriage rates. More sociological concepts or general ideas were used in this question rather than sociologists and sociological theory. Many candidates included more reasons as to why marriage is a thing of the past, instead of evaluating the statement. There was evidence of weak application to the question at times; for example, by discussing divorce rates, divorce legislation and people leaving marriage until later, not directly linked to marriage in decline. Some candidates did use later marriage or divorce rates putting people off marriage or cohabitation as a credible alternative to marriage as opposed to a prelude to it as explicit evaluative points.

Question 9

Most candidates had an idea as to what anti-school subcultures were, but unfortunately some missed the opportunity to use examples. Stronger responses compared anti-school and anti-education subculture, sometimes using studies like those on the New Wave Girls or the Black Sisters to support this. Other popular relevant studies cited were Willis and Mac an Ghail. However, many weaker responses defined anti-school subcultures only, without developing it with reference to studies, concepts or theories, or failed to demonstrate an accurate core understanding: Not liking school in itself does not make something subcultural.

Question 10

This was generally a well answered question by the majority of candidates who referred to deviant subcultures. Most could identify 2 clear examples, most commonly 2 types of spectacular subcultures, e.g. punks, hippies, mods. Most responses had some knowledge and understanding of the two subcultures but fewer were able to support these with sociological evidence, and many just described their clothes and style, not developing this to explain their deviance or linking to studies such as those of the CCCS. As with the family option, candidates should be encouraged to think of their 2 points first, and choose points which lend themselves to substantiation with evidence. Some chose wider examples, such as gangs or anti-school subcultures, but again, substantiation was often lacking.

Question 11

Many candidates recognised that most subcultures were males and offered examples of these, such as the Skinheads and Teddy Boys. They also noted the lack of studies into females and most went on to explain McRobbie's Bedroom Culture and stronger candidates went on to refer to subcultures that did include women e.g. Punks. There was a range of different approaches to answering this question, gaining equal success. Some focused on males using CCCS studies in particular; other strong responses focused on females, discussing bedroom culture, malestream sociology, invisibility of girls. Stronger responses tended to include both in order to fully address the question. However bar the use of McRobbie, many candidates failed to refer to more studies in relation to gender, surprising as there are so many. As a consequence of the number of available studies that students could have used in response to this question it was important to show knowledge of theorists to get top marks. Some students simply listed a variety of studies rather than developing by applying them to the question of how gender impacted on youth subcultures.

Question 12

Most students acknowledged that the view in this question was from the Marxist perspective. However there was a tendency to write in detail about the proletariat and bourgeoisie rather than referring to particular studies such as the CCCS who write from a neo-Marxist perspective. When giving examples of subcultures that were seen to be a form of resistance rebellion most spoke about Skinheads and Teddy Boys, better answers mentioned the sociologists who carried out these studies. A few stronger answers were able to connect the ruling classes to institutional racism and then to resistance. However, a significant number of candidates mixed up Marxist and functionalist studies, claiming that A.Cohen, Cloward and Ohlin, Merton etc (functionalists) were actually Marxists and would agree that deviant subcultures are a form of resistance against the ruling class. This misunderstanding undermined their answer.

The evaluation in this question was often weaker than the knowledge with candidates often making basic statements in evaluation rather than detailed explanations e.g. Functionalists would disagree and say that subcultures help young people transition into adulthood. This question provided ample opportunities to use theory and consequently students were unlikely to reach high marks without doing so. Stronger responses evaluated by using a range of alternative explanations such as labelling, status frustration, letting off steam, using theories and studies to support these points.

Question 13

There were some strong answers to this question which explained that audiences were not passive; some referred to direct and indirect theories. Good use was made of examples to illustrate the idea of active audience theory and other strong responses referred to specific models such as the uses/gratification and selective filter models. Another feature of strong

responses was reference to relevant sociological theory such as pluralism and post modernism. However, weaker responses were confused about the idea of the active audience, with some confusing active and passive, and suggesting that the active audience takes in everything it sees. Most were able to explain the idea, but again, it lacked enough development or substantiation.

Question 14

There was a very mixed response to this question. Whilst most candidates clearly understood what was meant by the hypodermic syringe model, some examples were not related to the notion of the hypodermic syringe and the direct effect; for example some responses discussed the build-up of stereotypes, the drip-drip effect, suggesting a degree of confusion. The most popular examples cited were the Bobo doll, Jamie Bulger (copycat violence), and various examples of advertising. Some responses made good use of Marxist views on brainwashing/propaganda in relation to media effects.

Question 15

The vast majority of candidates had a good understanding of deviance amplification. The strongest responses were able to really pull apart the idea of deviance amplification and explain well how the process works referring to and explaining the key concepts of moral panics, folk devils and moral entrepreneurs. Many responses referred to Wilkins when explaining the concept, and often explained that it refers to the media creating more deviance. Many went on to explain the process using concepts such as Moral Panics and folk devils. Better answers gave examples but the main one that was used was the classic study of the Mods and Rockers by Stan Cohen, although many responses referred to more contemporary examples, such as knife crime. Other stronger candidates referred to Goode and Ben-Yehuda. However, there were a significant number of responses which couldn't clearly explain deviance amplification, writing very confused answers about representations.

Question 16

Most candidates were able to interpret this as a Marxist view and were able to discuss Marxist ideas on the control of the content of the media in a general way using the work of Miliband for example. However, many candidates spent too long explaining the Marxist theory in general rather than the specific arguments and studies relating to representation of social groups. The most common accurate and relevant examples used were 'benefits street', and the portrayal of the working/ under class in a negative light and the representation of the poor, with some discussing the idea of 'poverty porn'. However, there was often an over-reliance on contemporary examples at the expense of sociological studies of representations of social groups. Other strong examples examined the representation of minority ethnic groups from a neo-Marxist point of view, citing Stuart Hall's study of the mugging moral panic in the 1970s and the more recent example of Islamophobia. Most students recognised the need to evaluate in this question and when evaluating most candidates referred to Pluralists and Postmodernists as alternative views to Marxism but often, the evaluation points were underdeveloped in evaluation. Candidates must be reminded that AO3 makes up half the marks on this question so they should spend as much time evaluating as they do explaining the view in the question.

H180/02 Researching and understanding social inequalities

This was the first assessment of this paper for the new AS Level specification. Teachers and candidates were therefore to some extent coming to terms with the requirements of the new format exam paper. In general candidates seemed rather better prepared for Section A of the paper relating to sociological methods than for Section B relating to social inequalities. Most candidates used their time effectively and completed all the questions but a small minority seemed to be running out of time on question 6 and consequently wrote rather short answers.

Performance on assessment objectives

In terms of subject knowledge and understanding (AO1) most candidates seemed to have some awareness of key concepts relating to methodology such as validity, reliability and representativeness, however, the terms tended to be used in a tokenistic or irrelevant way by some weaker candidates. Better candidates had a firmer grasp of these concepts and were also able to relate theoretical debates, for example between positivist and interpretivist traditions in sociology to the questions in section A. In section B subject knowledge was often weaker with many candidates appearing to have little more than rather 'common sense' knowledge about class inequalities in relation to Question 5. Subject knowledge in relation to feminism and gender inequalities was better but again some candidates seemed to have learned key terms such as 'glass ceiling' or 'horizontal segregation' without really understanding how they might be used to explain gender inequalities.

Most candidates to varying degrees understood that all the questions in section A required some degree of application (AO2) of material from the two sources and good candidates showed they could do this consistently and relevantly. On Question 6 candidates were more variable in showing application skills, weaker candidates often failed to relate their explanations to the issue of gender inequalities in work and employment.

Most candidates appeared to have some awareness of the need to show skills of analysis and evaluation (AO3) in relation to Questions 4 and 6 with the majority offering at least some attempt to consider both strengths and weaknesses of semi-structured interviews in Question 4. On Question 6 weaker candidates tended to either juxtapose alternative theories with feminism without explicitly evaluating or only evaluated briefly or not all. Only a minority of answers seemed to reflect the fact that half the marks for this question (10 out of 20) were allocated for this assessment objective.

Question 1

Most candidates showed some ability to understand and interpret the data in Source A with the majority being able to formulate two relevant conclusions. Better responses tended to be based on identification of trends, for example the increasing proportion of income taken by the top 10% and the declining proportion of income taken by the poorest 10% since 1972/73 and good candidates then used examples of data taken from the source accurately to illustrate their conclusions, for example the share of income taken by the poorest 10% declined from 4% in 1972/73 to 1% 2009/10.

Some candidates while identifying conclusions failed to support them with data. The most common error was that candidates simply stated the obvious, for example the top 10% always have the largest share of income or that there was no data for any income groups below the top 30% in 1938/39. Some candidates also assumed that the bottom 70% of the population had no income at all in 1938/39 even though the key stated that no data was available. A few candidates also engaged in unnecessary explanations of their conclusions, for example based

on Marxist theory. A number of candidates referred to trends in the distribution of wealth rather than distribution of income as shown in the source, seemingly unaware of the difference between the two.

Question 2

This question was generally well answered with most candidates showing at least some understanding of the concept of rapport. Most candidates were able to identify at least two reasons why sociologists may feel that it is important to build up a rapport with the people they are studying. Weaker answers tended to be less developed in their explanation and typically focused on ideas such as 'getting people to open up' and 'collecting more information'. Better answers were more conceptual discussing ideas such as validity, verstehen, richer qualitative data, ethical issues and links to interpretivist approaches. A few candidates also linked rapport to feminist methodologies.

Most candidates made some attempt to apply material from the source often quoting directly from the source material. The best answers offered two or three well developed points, each one linked to at least one concept and supported with material from the source. There were, however, a few otherwise good answers which failed to use Source B at all or which only paid lip service to it, for example by mentioning Source B or Gosling's research without explicitly using an example of how she had achieved rapport in her research.

A small number of candidates offered evaluative points about the methodology of the study, for example about researchers losing objectivity when they gained rapport, these were not credited with any marks as this was not asked for by the question.

Question 3

In general candidates seemed to find this question more challenging than question 2. In particular candidates appeared to find it harder to apply evidence from the source material to support points in their answers. Weaker responses typically focused on practical advantages of quantitative data, for example 'it is quicker and cheaper to collect' or 'it can easily be presented in the form of graphs or tables'. As with question 2 the best responses tended to be more conceptual. Good candidates often linked quantitative research to the positivist tradition in sociology, although some candidates' understanding of this did not go much beyond a preference for quantitative methods. Better answers discussed notions of objectivity, social facts, looking for patterns and trends, need for precision in measurement, a macro approach and a basis in scientific methods. Many candidates employed concepts such as reliability, validity, representativeness and generalisability but sometimes used the terms with only a vague understanding of their meaning or in some cases entirely incorrectly. Generalisability in particular seemed to be used by some candidates to indicate any general form of accuracy in data. The best responses used concepts accurately and linked them to Source A and specifically to studying the distribution of income in the UK.

There were some very good responses which used example from the source to illustrate patterns and trends, for example the growth in inequality in income distribution since the 1970s. Some candidates also considered how the data might have been collected, for example through national or official statistics and considered how this might make the data more representative and generalisable. A few candidates also considered how such quantitative data might be useful to governments in formulating social policies, for example to reduce income inequalities. The best answers typically offered at least three clearly distinct and fully developed reasons why quantitative data might be useful in studying the distribution of income in the UK linking each one to at least one concept or theoretical idea and showing how it might be applied to the Source and the study of distribution of income. Weaker answers often used concepts but did not explain them or left it implicit as to why quantitative data was more reliable or representative.

Question 4

This question differentiated candidates well with a range of responses. Many candidates prefaced their answers with sometimes lengthy explanations of semi-structured interviews and while this sometimes developed into useful evaluation points it was not strictly necessary to answer the question. A significant number of candidates seemed to assume that semi-structured interviews include a mixture of open and closed questions which is not strictly true and this led them to make irrelevant or inaccurate evaluation points such as 'positivists like semi-structured interviews because the closed questions allow them to collect quantitative data'.

As with questions 2 and 3 the best answers were based on a sound understanding of key concepts including validity, reliability, representativeness and generalisability. Such responses also included some discussion of theoretical approaches such as interpretivism and positivism and sometimes also alluded to the ethical issues surrounding such interviews. Very good answers offered a balanced evaluation of the questions with typically at least two strengths and two weaknesses of semi-structured interviews with each point clearly referring to a theory or concept and clearly linked to the research context (researching the lives of women in poorer neighbourhoods). For example, some candidates referred to the rich qualitative data Gosling obtained with this method and how the rapport and trust it developed was necessary for investigating sensitive issues such as poverty and family relationships often linking this validity and interpretivist approaches. Similarly in considering weaknesses some candidates pointed to the time taken to complete such interviews and the small sample size in Gosling's study to consider issues of representativeness. Some also discussed the difficulties of other researchers replicating her study because of her unique relationships with her subjects creating issues of reliability, subjectivity and possible researcher bias.

Some candidates appeared to have a long check list of points which they felt they had to cover in this question and therefore either spent rather too long on it, sometimes leaving insufficient time for other questions (usually question 6) or alternatively they produced answers with a huge breadth of points but with few of them sufficiently developed to reach the top band of marks. Other candidates showed a good understanding of semi-structured interviews but failed to link their use to the context of studying the lives of women in poorer neighbourhoods. Some candidates evaluated the methods of the Gosling's study in general (especially the use of snowball sampling) although this was not specified in the question. Finally, some candidates spent too long evaluating alternative methods (for example the use of structured interviews or questionnaires), although this was also not required by the question.

Question 5

This question produced a large number of fairly uninformed responses. Most candidates showed some understanding of life chances and could often identify two ways in which they were affected by social class, for example education, health or income levels. However, many candidates struggled to offer precise or detailed sociological evidence to support their answers and simply offered rather generalised points for example that rich people could access private education or private health care.

Better answers supported their two points with sociological studies, concepts and/or statistical data. For example there were some good answers on education which included studies such as Bourdieu, Bowles and Gintis and Willis, sometimes alluding to concepts such as social and cultural capital, social reproduction and material deprivation. Some good answers were also seen drawing on studies of social mobility such as Goldthorpe et al and Roberts et al using concepts such as relative rates of social mobility and the 1:2:4 Rule of Relative Hope. Some good answers were also seen on health and life chances citing data from studies such as the Black Report, Marmott et al, Lobstein or official statistics on social class and mortality and morbidity. The best answers typically identified two relevant examples of how social class may

affect life chances and then supported each one with at least two pieces of evidence typically in the form of sociological studies with some examples of data, findings and/or concepts.

Some candidates offered more general theoretical accounts of social class typically based on Marxism but these often failed to focus on life chances and instead discussed class inequality more generally, for example the notion that the workers are exploited by the bourgeoisie. Other candidates discussed inequalities of income and/or wealth but again often failed to relate these to the concept of life chances. A few candidates developed points based on New Right ideas linking to Charles Murray and the underclass and in some cases these were effectively linked to life chances through the idea of poorer children being trapped in the underclass because of a 'dependency culture'. A minority of candidates wasted time by discussing evaluation points which were not required or by juxtaposing material (for example on functionalism) to support the argument that the UK was in fact meritocratic.

Question 6

This question differentiated candidates well though fewer really good answers were seen than on question 4, the other essay style question. In terms of knowledge, weaker responses tended to show little understanding of different feminist explanations and tended to offer a generalised account of feminism. Better answers tended to make use of concepts such as the glass ceiling, horizontal and vertical segregation and women's dual burden or triple shift. A common problem was that candidates devoted too much space to describing gender inequalities or to discussing what feminists felt should be done about them rather than focusing on feminist explanations.

Better answers tended to show some understanding of different forms of feminism, typically discussing some or all of radical feminism, liberal feminism, Marxist feminism and occasionally black feminism. Some candidates also discussed postmodern feminism or post-feminism though usually in terms of evaluation of other forms of feminism. Candidates were differentiated in terms of the range of feminist explanations and the depth and accuracy of their understanding. Marxist feminism in particular was not well understood by some candidates. Some candidates also only used liberal feminism as a critique of other feminist theories and seemed unable to explain how liberal feminists might continue to explain gender inequalities in work and employment today. The best answers tended to combine theoretical and conceptual explanations with some references to sociological studies with a wide range cited, for example Benston (on domestic labour) and Breughel (on the reserve army of labour) in support of Marxist feminism, Johnson (on patriarchal terrorism) and Adkins (on sexualisation of women's work) in support of radical feminism and Sharpe and Oakley (on gender socialisation) in support of liberal feminism.

Better answers applied these explanations directly to the issue of gender inequalities in work and employment and cited evidence of such gender inequalities in support, for example the pay gap, evidence of occupational segregation, and forms of sex discrimination. Weaker answers often showed some understanding of theory but failed to apply material to work and employment, discussing gender inequalities in general or in family life instead.

Some candidates offered little or no evaluation of feminist explanations but most at least offered one or two juxtaposed alternative theories such as functionalism (eg Parsons), the New Right (eg Schlafly) and Hakim's preference theory. The best answers offered more wide ranging evaluations usually treating alternative explanations in more depth and using them directly to criticise feminist approaches. Some candidates also used feminist theories to criticise one another for example liberal feminists argument that radicals tended to ignore reductions in gender inequality, black feminists argument that other approaches ignored issues ethnicity and racism and Marxist feminists argument that other feminists ignored the role of capitalism and the importance of class inequalities. A few candidates also discussed Walby's theory of intersectionality, though this was sometimes not fully understood. Some candidates also cited evidence of progress made by women in work and employment to suggest that feminism was now out of date and evidence that men were now the disadvantaged sex in some aspects of

work. Some candidates also made use of postmodernist ideas such as individualisation theory to suggest that gender was no longer of any consequence. While many candidates attempted to formulate a conclusion this was often simply a brief repetition of material already covered rather than offering a real weighing up of the evidence.

The best answers were typically those which were able to outline at least three theoretical or conceptually based feminist explanations and applied all of these with evidence to gender inequalities in work and employment. Very good answers typically included at least three explicit evaluation points with each one being supported by a theory, concepts and/or studies or other sociological evidence. Very few candidates offered any explicit positive evaluation of feminist explanations, although in better responses this was often implicit in their outlining of evidence to support such approaches.

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