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Oxford Cambridge and RSA

GCE

Sociology

Advanced Subsidiary GCE AS **H180**

OCR Report to Centres June 2018

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- areas where students were more successful

- main areas where students may need additional support and some reflection

- points of advice for future examinations

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OCR REPORT TO CENTRES

H180/01 Socialisation, culture and identity

1.   General Comments:

This is the third 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 fairly. 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 seemed overall well prepared knowing the assessment objectives of each question. On occasion, some candidates did leave whole questions out perhaps indicating a lack of practice in working under timed conditions. It was also 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. Very 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 on contemporary examples, will not score very highly as, on their own, contemporary examples are not good sociology and would only achieve Level 2.

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 suggesting they were relying on common sense. 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 how the peer group socialises individuals into their culture with reference to studies such as Johal and the concept of the 'white mask' scored more highly than other candidates who just recycled the sources.

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) continues to improve with many candidates signposting their use of the source with phrases such as, 'In Source A…'. Whilst this is good practice it should be noted that there is a difference in the mark scheme between simply referencing the source (e.g. lip service) and doing something with it (i.e. taking elements from the source and applying them to specific pieces of sociology). AO3 skills of Analysis and Evaluation were moderately successful. It is worth mentioning that when candidates are prepared for this examination, it

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should be made explicit that question 4 and question 8/12/16 all have AO3 marks with the latter having more AO3 marks than any other skill area. Therefore candidates should be encouraged to evaluate more than what they would write for their AO1 knowledge marks.

2.   Comments on Individual Questions:

Question 1
The majority of candidates were able to offer a core definition of the term 'cultural diversity'. Most referred to 'cultural differences within society' or 'cultural differences between societies'. Candidates were awarded 2 marks for an accurate definition. The other two marks were awarded for development of the definition, for example by discussing an example of cultural diversity such as reflecting on UK society or developing different types of cultural diversity such as inter- and intra-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 were able to explain two examples of cultural diversity with reference to the source. The most common answers were difference in the use of technology and differences in appearance. Candidates need to be reminded that there are two marks available for stating two examples and then four marks available for application to the source. To further develop application marks, centres should encourage candidates to choose a general point and then give examples from each picture to show diversity. Some candidates did not use the Source and therefore did not get any AO2 Application marks.

Question 3
Most candidates had a good understanding of how the peer group socialised individuals into their culture. To gain full marks for this question candidates needed to refer to the source and at least one reference to wider sociological knowledge (ideally a study) but often one of these elements was missing. Some candidates did not go beyond a common sense answer on ideas about fitting in and peer pressure. Good responses used studies on peer relations, such as Lees, Hey; Sewell and Mac an Ghaill as well as using the source to discuss peer group issues.

Question 4
Most candidates were able to offer some sociological knowledge to support the view that not all youths share the same culture. There was a broad range of approaches offered with some candidates illustrating differences through subcultures whilst others highlighting differences in class, gender or ethnicity. Two fully developed points with evidence were needed to get full marks for knowledge and the same for evaluation. Candidates must be reminded that this 12 mark question is a "mini essay" with all three assessment objectives being tested – this was particularly noticeable with some candidates not offering any evaluation points or counter-arguments.

Question 5
The majority of candidates were able to define and explain the concept of nuclear families. Those that scored full marks typically defined the term and developed it with knowledge by Parsons or Murdoch discussing the role of the family or its universality. Candidates should be

reminded that any definition needs to be developed with at least two extra development points or examples in order to get full marks with slightly more development required than would be expected for Q1.

Question 6
Most candidates were able to identify two reasons for the decline in family size. This question was answered very well with the changing role of women and child-centred/ financial reasons being the most common. Candidates signposted their answers very well with two clear paragraphs and this was a nice technique to use. Candidates must include Sociological knowledge and not their own ideas about why the decline in family size has occurred – too often good points were not supported with sociological evidence and therefore only achieved level 2.

Question 7
The majority of candidates did not answer this question well with many using co-habitation incorrectly as an example of a non-family household. Most responses lacked any evidence, even if they were able to refer to student households or single person households. Better responses discussed Klineberg, Beck & Beck-Gernshein, linked to individualism and LATs. Centres should look at the specification and inform students not to provide evaluation (A03) as there are no marks available. Some candidates were not able to achieve full marks as they had wasted too much time being critical.

Question 8
This question elicited a mixed response. Some candidates struggled to maintain focus and spent time debating the pros and cons of nuclear families rather than focusing on the question. There were two successful approaches, both credited. Some used Functionalist/ New Right views to support the view that same-sex families were a threat, discussing the functions of the nuclear family and why same-sex families don't achieve this (Parsons, Murdoch, Dennis & Erdos, Murray). They then evaluated using feminist views and postmodernist views, though many struggled to keep this evaluation focused. Others took the opposite approach, saying that the diversity and acceptability of same-sex families did make them a threat, and then used the functionalist views about the universality and importance of the nuclear family to challenge this. Both were creditable, but it was lack of focus, which let responses down. It must be stressed that Evaluation (AO3) is the biggest skill in this essay question and therefore essays are expected to evaluate and be critical more than anything else.

Question 9
There was a generally well answered question with most candidates able to define what a spectacular subculture was. The best answer defined the concept and were able to provide further examples such as punks or skinheads. Some candidates did not address the 'highly visible' aspect of spectacular subcultures and therefore lost marks. In addition, some candidates addressed subcultures in a more general way and did not state the 'spectacular' nature that the question required.

Question 10
This was generally a well answered question by the majority of candidates who referred to two examples of folk devils. Most commonly, these were Mods and Rockers, skinheads, hoodies or ravers. The best candidates were able to support their answers with evidence, most usually linked to a study or developed with reference to moral panics. On occasion, some candidates stated their folk devil but then descended into a basic description and therefore did not get higher than level 2.

Question 11

Very well answered question with most candidates able to locate evidence and studies to be able to explain why the majority of youth deviance was committed by males. There was a range of studies used referring to masculinity such as Cohen, Miller, Mac an Ghaill. Some candidates also looked at control of females, using McRobbie & Garber, Lees, Smart. At times there were still some candidates evaluating. It should be noted that evaluation is not credited in this question and candidates are wasting their time in doing so. The level of detail remained the differentiator between level 3 and level 4 responses, with candidates purely listing studies and explaining them in a sentence unable to reach level 4 because they lacked the significant depth of knowledge.

Question 12

The majority of candidates were able to identify this view that 'youth culture contributes to social order in society' as a Functionalist view and used Parsons and Eisenstadt to support. Some lacked accuracy or detail with this, referring very generally to the organic analogy. Evaluation came from other views such as CCCS (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies) or feminists. However, some candidates clearly did not understand the wording 'contributes to social order' and their responses were very confused and lacked accurate application of material. It must be stressed that Evaluation (AO3) is the biggest skill in this essay question and therefore essays are expected to evaluate and be critical more than anything else.

Question 13

There were some strong answers to this question, which explained the concept of deviance amplification. Most candidates referred to the role of the media in strengthening and magnifying deviance in society and made reference the deviance amplification spiral or gave examples such as moral panics. Typically, candidates could get the two marks for a core definition and a further two marks for using an example to back up their point. However, there were less candidates producing a further example or point to get the fifth mark.

Question 14

This question was answered relatively well with candidates able to explain two ways that femininity may be represented in the media. Most common were the ideas of the Male Gaze by Mulvey, symbolic annihilation by Tuchman with some also discussing the image of housewife/ mother.

Some weaker candidates did not illustrate their points with evidence and consequently gained level 2 for their answer.

Question 15

The vast majority of candidates had a good understanding of representations of how the media can affect its audience in a direct way. The vast majority responded with hypodermic syringe model, followed by Bandura et al and Anderson. A small number of candidates evaluated the view and began discussing indirect approaches. Centres should look at the specification and inform students not to provide evaluation (A03) as there are no marks available. Some candidates were not able to achieve full marks as they had wasted too much time being critical.

Question 16

Most candidates were able to answer the question that the media does not accurately reflect the culture of minority ethnic groups in the contemporary UK. Most commonly were studies from Barker, van Dijk and Malik. It is worth reminding candidates that evaluation marks can be gained from direct criticism as well as offering counter-arguments. Candidates must be reminded that

AO3 makes up half the marks on this question so they should spend more time evaluating then they do explaining the view in the question.

H180/02 Research and understanding social inequalities

1.   General Comments:

This was the third year of assessment for this paper and centres do seem to have prepared their candidates quite well for the exam. Almost all candidates attempted to answer all the questions and very few left any out, meaning there were only a very small number of non-responses. Most timed their answers well with few running out of time.

It does appear that if candidates do well in Section A, then often their Section B answers are weaker. This is also true in reverse. Many candidates demonstrated confidence in using methodological concepts and theories except in two key areas: sampling (in this case snowball sampling) and reliability continue to be areas of weakness for some candidates. There were also many examples of the use of validity and reliability in the same sentence as if the candidate is unsure of which to use and then put them both in for good measure.

AO2 skills were better this year, many candidates engaging effectively with the context of the methods questions as well as linking to the question in Section B. However, there were a disappointing number of candidates unable to interpret the simple bar graph in Question 1 linking children in poverty to family types. The AS syllabus affords many opportunities to practise such interpretation and this should be encouraged.

AO3 skills vary with some excellent examples of balanced evaluation in Q4 and Q6 although there are still many candidates who find it difficult to make a coherent argument with evidence for two sides of a debate.

2.   Comments on Individual Questions:

Question No. 1
Most candidates answered this question well and were able to draw two conclusions from the data provided. The majority described two accurate conclusions from Source A and then went on to support these conclusions with accurate figures from the bar graph. To achieve full marks (4), they had to draw the conclusion eg working couple parents had the fewest proportion of children in poverty of all the groups listed (correct conclusion so 1 mark) but to get 2 marks they had to say something like 'in 2011/12, this group had approximately 20% of children in poverty compared to 23% in working lone parent families, 70% in workless couple families and 67% in workless lone parent families'. This then needs to be repeated for the second conclusion in order to achieve 2 marks and hence full marks for the whole question. If the candidate only drew 2 conclusions and did not back them up with figures from the graph, then full marks cannot be attained – only half the available marks.

A minority of candidates did not pay attention to the title of the graph and thus drew inaccurate conclusions because they thought that it was about the different rates of poverty of different kinds of parents or couples. No marks were credited for this. Others just lifted figures from the graph without drawing a conclusion. eg stating in 2001/02 workless couple parents had 80% of children in poverty and in 2011/12, it was 73%. Thus, they did not state that the proportion of children in poverty had decreased during these 10 years. There was also a small number who

continue to give reasons for the changes, thus wasting time, which could be spent more fruitfully on later questions.

An increased number of candidates this year wrote two separate paragraphs headed "The first conclusion is…..This can be supported by the figures in the graph showing ………." The second conclusion is…….This can be supported by figures showing…." Such an approach is really helpful and helps to clarify the two separate points. It also shows that full marks can be achieved by a few lines of writing!.

Teaching tip: To repeat what was advised last year – ensure that candidates constantly practise the interpretation of quantitative data during their course. There are plenty of bar graphs, tables, pie charts and similar on every subject in the specification. Correct interpretation needs careful reading of the title, the units used (% or millions or thousands), the time element, the source (many candidates in later questions assumed this data came from the census whereas it was clearly stated that it came from HBAI.) So a good guide for this question is always Title? Units? Time? Source? (TUTS)

Question No. 2
Most candidates did well on this question and showed a good understanding of what official statistics were and how they would be useful for studying poverty. A significant number achieved full marks. The best answers linked the use of official statistics to a positivist approach to methodology, and, in the main, used the concepts of reliability, representativeness, generalisation accurately and appropriately. Similarly, better answers focused on two or three reasons (no more than this is needed if they are fully developed) in which they used appropriate concepts well, explained the reason fully and then linked it to the source/the study of poverty. These then are the three components of a top level answer: a well explained answer, use of appropriate concepts and a link to the source. If a candidate does this twice (The first reason why researchers may make use of official statistics is because they are collected in a quantitative form, they enable researchers to see patterns, trends or correlations e.g between family types and child poverty as seen in Source A. ……The second reason is ……..) then it is possible to gain full marks. There were a range of different answers for this question including reliability, objectivity, representativeness, easy/cheap access, helps to track changes over time, precision of measurement, positivist approach and so on. As was stated last year, the mark scheme differentiates between developed (level 3), underdeveloped (level 2) and undeveloped (level 1) so to achieve higher marks; candidates need to develop their answers as fully as they can. This does not mean writing a long essay – 2 simple paragraphs are enough.

Weaker responses were less conceptual eg saying official statistics are repeatable and/or less developed eg official statistics are reliable and/or didn't link directly and explicitly to the source and poverty (the latter give the AO2 marks and so it is possible to get 0 if the source is ignored) A few candidates used Source B instead of Source A and a significant minority defined in detail what official statistics are – this is not necessary. Candidates do not need to describe facts taken from the source – this again simply wastes time and gains no credit. There were also some candidates who wrote whole paragraphs that said "Positivists like official statistics because they are reliable, objective, quantitative etc – a list of terms without explaining why (words of the question) they liked them to be reliable, objective, quantitative etc. A few candidates discussed the weaknesses of official statistics and this was not credited, as it wasn't asked for in the question – there are no evaluation marks for this question.

Teaching tip: this question asks candidates to give reasons why a researcher uses a particular method, sampling technique or approach in specific research so candidates

need to practise this type of question for all the key methods. While teaching the different methods, teachers could design a simple question 2 for each method taught so that candidates build up a bank of almost "ready-made" answers to cover all possibilities. They need to give a REASON/use CONCEPTS/ LINK to the source. (RCL) Two fully developed reasons are enough although if they cannot do this, another way to achieve level 3 is to do 3 underdeveloped reasons. It is also useful to teach candidates to pick the reason they think they can write more conceptually about.

Question No. 3
This question was reasonably well answered this year, there being a definite improvement on the sampling question from 2017. The majority had a good understanding of what a snowball sample is and at least one idea as to why it might have been used in the context of studying low paid informal work. There was some background information in the source, which was used by most candidates although some did ignore it.

The best answers were those that used conceptual language related to methodology in a confident and accurate way: for example, some used the concepts of gatekeeper, rapport and representativeness correctly and linked this to the particular context of informal work in their answers. A minority of candidates tried to argue that snowball samples were representative but a few good answers used the multiple starting points outlined in the source to argue that this did in fact enhance the representativeness (even though it would be unusual for this type of sample under normal circumstances.)

As outlined in the mark scheme, a candidate would need to provide "A RANGE of knowledge in the form of concepts and theories" to achieve the top level (level 4).This means that THREE DEVELOPED REASONS would be expected to achieve full marks. In order for a reason to be developed, it would need to include:

- ➢ the reason (such as ease of access if recommended, reluctance of people to admit that they are doing informal work, difficulties of acquiring any type of sampling frame etc.)
- ➢ an appropriate reference to methodological theory and/or concept
- ➢ a link to the context ie informal low paid work
- ➢ all written in a clear and logically structured way

Weaker answers were lacking in the accurate use of methodological concepts and theory, often failing to structure their points in a logical or clear way. It would help if each idea was separated into a single paragraph with an introduction something like "The first reason why a researcher might use snowball sampling to study people ………. and continue in this vein with second and third reasons. There were some answers that failed to mention the source at all so the possible 4 AO2 marks were not awarded.

Several things should NOT be done in this question, as they will not be credited:

- ➢ outlining the weaknesses of snowball sampling
- ➢ a definition of snowball sampling
- ➢ reiteration of the findings of the source research is irrelevant
- ➢ writing out what the researchers actually did

A significant number of candidates continue to think that sampling is a method in itself and then proceed to discuss how the sampling can make the research more valid or more reliable and the

like. This is clearly a fundamental misunderstanding of the how respondents are chosen for research and how the research is actually carried out.

Teaching tip: Text books are full of fairly short examples of research on a wide variety of topics. It would be good practice for this type of question to design a simple exercise for several of these so that candidates can practise these types of answers. Stress the 3 elements that need to be addressed: RESEARCH ELEMENT (snowball sampling), SOURCE (Katungi et al) and CONTEXT (low paid informal working). Encourage them to write each point in a separate paragraph with first, second, third reasons clearly separated out.

Question No.4
Most candidates wrote good answers to this question and some were very good. Those that achieved the top range of marks concentrated on the methods used in the source (semi-structured interviews and focus groups) and looked at them in the context of researching low paid informal work; although some candidates did broaden this out and discuss other qualitative methods, which was acceptable, as that is what the question asked. Good answers took a logical approach and went through the various strengths and weaknesses of the qualitative approach in relation to theory, validity, reliability, representativeness and generalisability, using the concepts frequently and accurately throughout their answers. It was also heartening to see an increased use of one paragraph per point, which helps the essay to flow in a more structured way.

To achieve Level 4/ full marks in AO3, a candidate needed to provide **two developed strengths and two developed weaknesses** but surprisingly few managed to do this. The main reason for this was that a lot of accurate, well-made points were not fully developed.   For example, a candidate might say "Qualitative methods are very valid" – this is essentially **undeveloped**. Another candidate might say "Qualitative methods are very valid because the researcher will build up a rapport with the people he is interviewing and this is helpful when talking to people in low paid informal work" The latter statement is **underdeveloped** because it still leaves the examiner wondering "Why?" What is valid? What is rapport? Why is it helpful in this research? A bit more explanation would push the point up to **developed** eg "Qualitative methods are very useful to study low paid informal work because in a semi- structured interview, the interviewer can build up rapport (a close relationship with the interview) in order to probe more deeply into the reasons for them undertaking this work. As the work is illegal and untaxed, interviewees are unlikely to speak totally openly unless they trust the person they are talking to. This trust leads to more openness so that the material collected is likely to be more honest, thus increasing validity." Hence, a fully developed point should include theory or concept, a clear explanation with detail and a link to the actual research context. The use of concepts and theories (Interpretivism, Positivism, Realism mainly) will also enhance marks in AO1 as full marks requires the use of at least 3 concepts or theories.

A significant minority of candidates totally misunderstood the question by confusing qualitative with quantitative methods. This led to a completely wrong answer as it was all linked to the wrong side of the debate. There were also several candidates who did not know what was meant by a semi-structured interview and its capacity for collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, leading to further confusion in their answers.

Further characteristics of the weaker answers were similar to last year's:

- ➢ a description of the research process and/or research results
- ➢ descriptions of the different types of qualitative data
- ➢ saying things like "focus groups are reliable and valid" hoping that one of these is right
- ➢ totally repetitive conclusions which just summarise what they have already said
- ➢ evaluation of evaluation eg a better method would be questionnaires and then going on to elaborate on the strengths and weaknesses of questionnaires
- ➢ ignoring the context of the research topic

It is advisable in this question to start straight away with "The first advantage of using qualitative methods to study low paid informal work is…… and to continue in this vein.

It is also crucial for the 6 AO2 marks to be awarded that all points made are in some way linked to the research topic. Too many answers are generic and generalised so miss out on these marks.

Teaching tip: As a group exercise in class, give the whole class a research topic eg why do boys and girls tend to choose different subjects at A level. Then, divide the class into groups, giving each group a different method to apply to that topic. Ask them to make a list of the advantages and disadvantages arising from the use of their allotted method to the topic. It is essential that candidates are asked to do the 3 main types of interviews separately. They should also include whether their method is favoured by Interpretivists or Positivists and whether it is essentially a quantitative or a qualitative method. (Perhaps a poster could be made to display this information too) When each exercise is complete, the finished products could be made into a booklet for revision purposes.

Question No.5
This question had very few excellent responses or full marks, although there was a small number that did achieve high level marks. Those that did were characterised by a clearly structured answer, which covered gender inequality for males or females in **2 areas of social life** such as family, poverty, education or crime. 10 out of the 10 possible marks on this question come from solid empirical knowledge which can be in various forms such as studies eg Joseph Rowntree Foundation study on women and poverty; theories such as Functionalist views on expressive and instrumental roles ; or concepts such as the glass ceiling. **Each area** (such as education) needs **at least two** pieces of evidence which both need to be **developed** eg Archer and hyper-feminine girls plus Sharpe and changing attitudes to education.

Weaker answers tended to be vague and general eg women get more lenient sentences in court without any reference to statistics or any of the numerous studies that have found this out. Some candidates even tried to "bend" studies on ethnicity or class to fit the gender profile needed for the question. Weaker answers also tended to write about many areas and write a brief outline of a concept in each- rather than going into detail on 2 studies in each of 2 areas. Answers that only use contemporary examples cannot go above level 2 and a level 4 answer needs at least 2 developed studies to hit the top mark of 10.

The stronger answers were also characterised by a clear structure and this has improved this year so that many more candidates across all levels did separate out their answer into paragraphs starting "One way that men are unequal in work is ……"   It might be helpful for them to also separate out the studies within the area as well along the lines of "One study which shows how men are disadvantaged in education is ……Then a new paragraph starting with "Another study which shows how men……………

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Teaching tip: As the main weakness in this question is always, a lack of concrete evidence such as studies, theories, concepts and statistics, the tables suggested last year continue to be a useful teaching tool. Get candidates into groups and ask each group to make a table on a different area of social inequality linked to the different areas in the specification such as work, education, crime, media etc. Each box should contain at least TWO/THREE pieces of evidence, which can then be used to answer whatever combination of inequality/area comes up in the exam. These could possibly be made into posters and displayed in a classroom so they can be referred to and tested verbally quite regularly. Detailed notes on these studies etc. can be kept in the candidates' own notes.

Question No.6

There were some very good answers to this question as well as some really weak ones. As last year, the candidates who have been awarded high marks wrote balanced arguments for both sides of the view and linked their arguments to the question consistently throughout their essays. The latter point makes a tremendous difference to the AO2 marks so that references to understanding social class inequalities at regular points can enhance the final mark significantly. Weaker candidates tended to list different explanations for class inequalities without any comparison to the Marxist view and how they differed from that. Just writing out "Weber explains social class differences by saying…." is merely juxtaposition and not true evaluation. In fact, some candidates simply wrote out the Marxist view, often very competently, but failed to contrast it with any other view at all. Thus, they received 0/10 for AO3 evaluation. It is crucial that all candidates understand the key command verbs for this paper such as describe, explain why, outline or evaluate (assess too) so that they know what is expected in their answers.

There were many candidates who showed a very good knowledge of the Marxist explanations for social class inequalities and hence, they achieved good marks on AO1. Lower marks were awarded when the knowledge did not include the appropriate Marxist language for concepts or theoretical points such as polarisation, surplus value, ruling class ideology. The inclusion of the correct terminology can push a relevant point up into a higher band. To achieve level 3 in AO1, a candidate needs to write **THREE developed points** and again, candidates need to be aware of what the difference is between a developed, an underdeveloped and an undeveloped point is. The same is true of AO3. A developed point must include a theory, a link to the question, a fairly detailed explanation and concept.

An example of this in Q6 would be:

"However, **Functionalists,** such as **Parsons,** would **disagree with the Marxist** explanation of social class inequalities in the contemporary UK because they believe that social class is not a result of capitalism but that **it serves a useful function to keep society in social order** by rewarding those who work hard in our modern **meritocracy**. Thus, **Davis and Moore** discuss stratification as a means to ensure effective role allocation and performance. They also point out that the most important jobs receive the highest rewards depending on their **functional uniqueness** (explain) and the **degree of dependence** (explain) on others. The functionalist view is based on a **consensus** approach unlike the Marxist view which is a **conflict** approach"

It is important when candidates are learning about any of the inequalities that they know and understand the whole range of theories that have something to say about them. This question will put forward a view on some aspect of inequality such as this year's question which asked about the usefulness of the Marxist view on social class inequality and the candidate is expected to put forward evidence for and against this view. Arguments for and against can be theoretical

eg Weber's approach or conceptual eg dual labour market or empirical eg figures showing the incidence of zero hour contracts for working class jobs.

This year saw a further decrease in the number of candidates who understood how to use paragraphs for different points. Centres would benefit their candidates greatly by teaching them how to plan, structure and execute this type of debate essay, emphasising how important it is to separate points out into different paragraphs. Some essays ramble continuously without any differentiation between the different viewpoints, losing marks and not achieving one of the criteria for the top level ie "There is a well-developed line of reasoning which is clear and logically structured."

Teaching tip: Gather past and specimen Q6 questions and ask the candidates in groups to mark these questions, using the mark scheme. Clearly, the mark scheme is in assessment language but this can be "translated" for them beforehand. Get them to highlight the different AO's and then to discuss what is needed to get into the higher levels. Ask them to mark AO1, AO2 and AO3 in the margins when they appear in the essay and then get them to place each AO into a level. Doing this enables them to play the role of examiner and to see what is needed to reach the higher marks. Marking future homework essays could also highlight different skills with different colours. Although this is clearly very time-consuming, it does familiarise candidates with how their papers are marked.

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OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)
The Triangle Building
Shaftesbury Road
Cambridge
CB2 8EA

OCR Customer Contact Centre

Telephone: 01223 553998
Facsimile: 01223 552627
Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

www.ocr.org.uk

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored