**Planning stratification 20 mark essays:**

**Question 1:**

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| Item: Marxists suggest that occupation is still the most efficient way of describing social class of both an individual and the family they belong to at any point in their lives. Most studies have concentrated on the occupation of the main in the household. Some feminists would argue that to fully understand the class position of a family the occupation of both parents should be considered.  **Applying material from the item and your knowledge, evaluate the extent to which occupation is a useful indicator of an individual’s social class [20 marks]** | |
| Tips: this essay needs you to look at measures in class: objective and subjective. Consider what occupation shows about someone’s social class position and problems with it, in terms of social mobility, wealth, views of feminists and issues with subjective views of class. Possible studies/sources: NS-SEC, Registrar General’s scale, Surrey scale (feminism), Savage, Archer etc. | |
| Introduction (address the item and outline the different issues in the debate)  Social class is concerned with the economic differences between groups of people, these groups are arranged in some type of hierarchy. Some sociologists believe that occupation is a useful indicator of an individual’s social class, however others would disagree, this could be because classes are multi faceted. Occupation is an example of an objective measure. | |
| Paragraph 1   * NS-SEC- Based on employment relations e.g. whether people are employers, self-employed or employees. * It’s also based on market conditions e.g., salary, promotion prospects and hours worked. | * However the scale has been criticised for being too objective. * Some people have a subjective interpretation of their own class position. * Class identities – subjective. There are 3 groups. Savage carried out semi structured interviews 1977-1999 in Manchester.   1- Small group specified themselves as being in a specific class- often graduates who had cultural confidence to express class position in articulate fashion.  2- Well educated but did not identify with particular class position. Reject the notion of social class. See themselves as individuals rather than social class background.  3- Majority of respondents and were actually identified with social class. However in an ambivalent, defensive and uncommitted way. Savage ( Marxist) and colleagues suggest that working class and middle class were based on simple desire to be seen as ordinary.   * Initially the scale was criticised by feminists however their arguments have now been acknowledged and women are recognised as wage earners. |
| Paragraph 2   * Feminists Dale, Gilbert and Arber (1985) developed the Surrey Scale to overcome the patriarchal biased of the Hope Goldthorpe Scale * This is another example of an objective measure where women are classified on the basis of their own occupations whether they are married or not. | * However the inclusion of women in occupational classifications does present some difficulties this is because more women work part time and it is therefore difficult to know whether the class assigned represents their whole life experience or a temporary experience. |
| Paragraph 3   * Feminists also criticise the Registrar General Scale for being sexist. * This occupational scale was used by government from 1911 until 2000 and involved the ranking of thousands of jobs into 6 classes based on the occupational skill of the head of household. | * Assessments of jobs were made by their own staff hence why there was a bias towards non manual occupations as having a higher status. * Reliance on occupation meant that those in economic position was based on wealth and unearned income disappeared from view. * Feminists say its sexists as the class of household depended on the head of male household. * Workers allocated to same class often had widely varying access such as promotions and pay. |
| Conclusion  Overall occupations may have been helpful in the past however now due to the pay gap between men and women it is difficult to measure an individual’s social class by their occupation alone. Another way this can be done is through ones assets for example house size. Alternatively class can be measured subjectively as demonstrated by Savage. | |

Question 2:

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| Item: Worldwide, the rich have got richer, even when the world economy slumped into recession, and the poor have got poorer. At the start of 2014, Oxfam calculated that the richest eighty-five people on the planet owned as much as the poorest half of the world’s population. Marxists might explain this as the rise of a transnational capitalist class, while functionalists might explain it in terms of meritocracy.  **Applying material from the item and your knowledge, evaluate the usefulness of Marxist theories in explaining growing global inequality [20 marks]** | |
| Tips: this essay needs you to look those arguments that have explored global inequality: mainly postmodernists, New Egalitarians (Giddens and Diamond), Sklair and Robinson, in addition to Marxists that have looked at the rising inequality such as Westergaard and Resler. The item sets out the debate: rise of a transnational class that sit above others i.e. rich getting richer vs. meritocracy - Murrary, Saunders etc. | |
| ***Introduction (address the item and outline the different issues in the debate)***  Marxists would argue that Polarization has occurred and that the ‘Rich have got richer and the poor have got poorer’. They would also argue that the gap between the rich and the poor has widened in society.  Functionalists also argue that there are divisions in society and that social stratification exists, however they argue that this is necessary in a functioning society. Durkheim argues that social life wouldn’t exist without conflict, and that social inequalities express natural inequalities.  Postmodernists discuss globalization and argue that it has led to a transnational capitalist class arguably this is more useful in explaining growing global inequality as it doesn’t only focus on the UK.  [Need to define globalisation to directly address the question] | |
| ***Paragraph 1: Marxists***  As it says in the Item Oxfam calculated that the richest 85 people on the planet owned as much as the poorest half of the world’s population. Marxist theory would back this up due to their views on polarization (‘the rich have got richer and the poor have got poorer’).  Westgaard and Resler (1976) put forward a Marxist view that there was a ruling class in Britain consisting of the richest 5-10% of the population, whose position came from the ownership of capital. Private share ownership was highly concentrated in this minority group. Globalisation is the trend of increasing interaction between people on a worldwide scale due to advances un transportation and communcation technology.  Robinson (Marxist) argues these changes due to globalisation have created a transnational capitalist class. He argues capitalism is no longer based at the level of the nation state, now is organsied on a global scale with the growth of multi-national or transnational corporations. | ***COUNTER:***  Weberians would disagree with this as they believe that the traditional class structure has split and is no longer coherent. They argue that Embourgoisement is occurring and that working class manual workers are adopting more middle class norms and values. Even though this only takes into account the UK (or other western countries) it still shows that inequality may be decreasing in some countries. |
| ***Paragraph 2: Functionalists***  But Marxists would argue that society isn’t meritocratic and inequality isn’t functional.  Education system inequalities | ***COUNTER:***  Functionalists agree that there are divisions in society and that inequality exists but they believe that that this is functional in society and that meritocracy exists.  Davis and Moore would argue that people must be motivated to fill the top positions, therefore this is done by the unequal distribution of rewards. This could explain global inequality, however they would argue that the people at the top have earned their place through hard work and merit.  Other functionalists to use would be: Parsons and Durkheim |
| ***Paragraph 3: Postmodernists***  Postmodernists would agree with the statement that Globalization has led to a transnational capitalist class.  Postmodernist Sklair states that Globalization and the global system have produced a transnational capitalist class associated with major transnational corporations.  Giddens and Diamond – we need to look at inequality in terms of social exclusion – we need to look at how people are disadvantaged based on a variety of factors e.g. migrants may experience more problems than other groups. | ***Counter:***  New Right – Saunders – increase in the super class and differences in global wealth are the result of meritocratic practises. The richest have earnt their position as a result of a society that has provided more opportunities for people. |
| ***Conclusion*** | |

Question 3:

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| Item: Racism has often been given as a reason for the historic position of ethnic minorities. As the UK became a more diverse culture and assimilation occurred, it was expected by functionalists that differences between groups would become less marked and all would be treated equally. However, figures for poverty and unemployment show this has not happened and Marxists and Weberians would argue ethnic minorities still face inequality and are negatively privileged.  **Applying material from the item and your knowledge, evaluate the usefulness of functionalist theories in explaining ethnic inequality [20 marks]** | |
| Tips: take functionalist views of ethnicity as your starting point and then pick them apart using (at least) Marxist and Weberian arguments. Use contemporary evidence to highlight the extent to which assimilation has occurred. Postmodernism would be an excellent counterpoint in this essay. | |
| Introduction (address the item and outline the different issues in the debate)  As the item explains, as the UK became a more diverse culture and assimilation occurred where ethnic minorities slowly began to adapt to the culture overtime.  Functionalists view ethnic inequality as temporary in society, however Marxists and Weberian disagree with this view by saying racism is the result of capitalism | |
| Paragraph 1   * Functionalists believe that ethnic differences and inequalities are temporary and based on cultural differences between minority or immigrant groups and their host nation (Parsons) | * However Cox (1948) is a Marxist who argued that racism was the creation of capitalism and helped to maintain it by creating divisions in the working class, thereby making working class revolt less likely * Castles & Kosack (1973) argued that ethnic minorities form a “Reserve Army of Labour”, prepared and forced to work for lower wages than the majority white population. This serves to divide the working class further. Allows for legitimisation of scapegoating in employment.   Ethnic minorities more likely to be in low-paying occupations, more likely to be receiving living wage, over ½ of Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black African children were growing up in poverty. 40% of ethnic minorities live in poverty – double the number of white British. Indicates discrimination/racism when attempting to get jobs e.g. Woods and CVs. |
| Paragraph 2   * The differences are inevitable. * Assimilation - the minority groups slowly adapt to the culture over time * Social order and collective solidarity mean that the minority groups slowly adapt to the culture over time.   Evidence for this = the UK uses citizenship tests, which can be evidence of assimilation. | * Parkin (1968) is a Weberian who suggests high status, privileged groups (e.g. political elites, judiciary) operate a system of social closure, keeping ethnic minorities out of positions of authority. He refers to ethnic minorities as “negatively privileged status groups” |
| Paragraph 3  Patterson (1965) Britain is basically homogeneous in its culture but was disturbed the arrival of ‘immigrant strangers’ in 1950s. This has led to racial discrimination because  1) people fear change  2) working class resentment of competition for jobs  3) Failure of EM to assimilate. | Modood (1997) is a postmodernist who argues that ethnic minorities should not be “lumped together” in terms of sharing the same disadvantages etc. Their experiences are diverse. He is also critical of the portrayal of ethnic minorities as victims. Not all ethnic minorities are faced with racial discrimination in society  People are now able to pick and choose their identity (Polemus) |
| Conclusion   * Functionalists offer a useful view of theory regarding ethnic inequality, however can be contradicted by the view of Marxists, Weberian and postmodernists | |

Question 4:

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| Item: A truly open labour market is one where from an equal base everyone has the same chances of recruitment and advancement. It assumes that workers are employed and progressed on the basis of merit rather than privilege, favour or background.  **Applying material from the item and your knowledge, evaluate the view that an open and non-discriminatory labour market exists in the UK [20]** | |
| Tips: this essay needs you to use the sources from the social mobility workbook. It involves a much more wide-ranging approach where you can pull evidence in from across the topics in stratification and can look at any of the evidence related to the workforce. You can do a paragraph on a different topic e.g. age, class, gender and contrast different theoretical views – usually functionalism (meritocracy) vs. Marxist/feminist/Weberian views. It will need contemporary evidence to make it work. The intro will need to define what is meant by an ‘open labour market’. | |
| Introduction (address the item and outline the different issues in the debate)   * An open labour market relates to the system being meritocratic so all members of society no matter their background are open to job opportunities and will only be recruited based on achievement and hard work. * However, this isn’t the case for everyone, for example men still dominate the primary labour market, especially if they are middle aged and from a middle class background. | |
| **Paragraph 1 – Gender (functionalist view)**   * They would argue that men and women naturally have different roles in society. * Schultz argues that women choose to priorities their role as a homemaker over stay on at work. This is due to the close relation they share with the children. * Murdock talked about men having superior physical strength so this made them more able to perform more strenuous tasks. Whereas women due to their biology is more inclined to be at home to complete their expressive role. * Sex discrimination Act 1975 – stop employers discriminating * There has been an increase in the female MPs in parliament. | **Gender (Liberal Feminists)**   * There has been changes in legislation but the labour market is still not equal. They want men and women to share roles within women and work but **Ann Oakley** presents idea that society has become more symmetrical but is not yet equal. * The aim should be to socialize children differently and encourage symmetrical roles. To then reflect onto later life. * The aim should be to socialize children differently and encourage symmetrical roles. * **Sue Sharpe** looked at changing aspirations of girls that in turn impacted changes within the law. With the introduction of laws such as **Equal Pay Act 1970** * But this still not fully implemented an example of this could be the Carrie Gracie case of the BBC not paying her the same as her male coworkers. |
| **Paragraph 2 - Age**   * Since the introduction of equality acts there has been an increase in the number of women in the labour market. * Legislation in 2006 made age discrimination illegal. * The youth have a lot of choice and opportunities in terms of internships leading to jobs, part-time work and apprenticeships. This means that they are able to choose what is best suited to them. This is also partly available to the elderly e.g. part time work for extra money if state pension is not enough. | **Age – Not yet equal.**   * Vincent argues that those over 65 in the UK have very little access to the labour market and suffer high levels of poverty. * The youth have more access to the labour market since they are exploited as a cheap workforce. * They can also be easily hired and fired as when needed for example, if there is a recession young employees are likely to be fired to save money. * Legislation takes a long time to be processed and put into action. * 1 in 5 workers in all age sectors told an MORI 2002 survey that they had experienced discrimination at work, with 38% saying that age discrimination as the cause. |
| **Paragraph 3 – Class (Functionalist views)**   * Work is MERITOCRATIC, this is been awarded a good job and a good position due to the skills you have and your hard work. * Competition is healthy and will always exist. * Davis and Moore argue that pay is related to talent and there is a general consensus that the most important jobs are secured by the most abled. | **Class ( Marxist)**   * Meritocracy is a Myth! * Working class is exploited by the middle class. * Bowles and Gintis say the workforce is not equal due to the education system reproducing inequalities of the w/c. * Middle class students are more likely to get the more important roles because of their access to Bourdieu three capitals, whereas w/c are limited in term of further education and their networking. |
| Conclusion   * It is more equal than it was before all the law were introduced. * There are still areas were people are still disadvantaged by their age, gender, class etc. * Different people will experience different levels of inequality e.g. a ethnic, elderly, working class women. * The increasing retirement age means that people are working longer so they are not forced into retirement thus creating equal opportunities for them. However, this creates a negative impact on the youth since work is limited and being taken up by older members of society. When they could perhaps be bringing newer skills and ideas, with a lot more to offer. - | |

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| Introduction (address the item and outline the different issues in the debate)  For a truly open labour market to work, it requires social mobility, which refers to the movement up or down the social scale from one class to another. There are some social policies that have enabled people to become socially mobile. Such as, the education reform act 1988 and the equality act 2010. However it can be argued society is not completely meritocratic due to the privatization and marketization of schools. Meritocracy is defined as equal opportunities meaning those with the most talent and skills can reach the top positions. | |
| Paragraph 1  Functionalism  Functionalists such as Parsons see society as meritocratic, his theories of particularistic values are generated by the family which is the primary agent of socialization. We are judged by “particularistic terms” as we gain our ascribed status from the family. Additionally, universalistic values are generated by the education system, which is the main agent of secondary socialization. In society we are judged in terms of our achieved status. Davis and Moore use the theory of role allocation and link it to social stratification, which is a means of ensuring that the most talented people feel the positions that are most functionally important to society. Education therefore “sifts and sorts” and grades people in terms of ability, which is rewarded in exam success. | Althusser (Marxist) disagrees with functionalists and claims that a range of informal and formal agencies of social control are necessary to maintain capitalism. He argued that is people simply forced to cooperate with capitalism, they would eventually reject the system. Therefore, Althusser argued that people are manipulated into loving the system so that they find it harder to challenge it.  Another argument is Bernstein’s theory of the language code in schools, there is the elaborate code used mainly by middle class people which involves a far greater range of words.  The restricted code which is used by everyone in society, however the working class are constrained to its use. Bernstein argues that working class children tend to do less well in education because the language of schools tend to be elaborate. |
| Paragraph 2  Weberians argue that men are advantaged in the workplace, as at work women experience a ‘glass ceiling’ where they cannot get to a higher job role as men are more likely to be in higher positions of authority. Men are also paid more than women on average, Barron and Norris argue that there is a dual labour market where women dominate the secondary part of this market which has lower pay and poorer job security. Hakim argues that women experience vertical and horizontal segregation where they do not have a lot of variation in their job opportunities and status within those jobs.  Carrie Gracie who was a BBC correspondent experienced inequality within her field when she found that her male counterparts were earning a higher wage then her, the argument of the company was that there wages were based on popularity and ratings, even though this was clearly not the case, this illustrates that even in today’s society women still experience segregation and inequality, and there are laws which are governed that essentially protect big companies in discrimination cases. | However these advantages that men experience are changing as the number of women entering the workforce has risen by 2.45 million in the past 30 years.  Although there is evidence to suggest horizontal segregation is declining with deduction in men in manual work, there is still a concentration of 82% of women in caring, leisure and admin service and a concentration of men in process and machinery work of 89%.  Black feminists would counter Weberian arguments as they only look at middle class white women however agree that women still experience inequality.  They would also argue that 75% of working age Bangladeshi women and 69% of working age Pakistani women are not working or seeking employment. |
| Paragraph 3  Another issue which is present in the labour market is disadvantages in the workplace against people depending on their age. Older and younger people are most likely to experience discrimination in the workplace. Older people may be seen as “too old to employ”, lacking up to date knowledge etc. Young people may be seen as less reliable and trustworthy or simply lack experience. European legislation (2006) made age discrimination illegal but a significant number of workers in a MORI poll in 2002 claimed to have experienced age discrimination. Employers may see older people as expensive to employ, perhaps requiring re-training, or generating costs linked to retirement and redundancy. | Parsons sees this a fair and just as he sees the period of “youth” as functional. Teenage subcultures provide a transition between childhood and the responsibilities of adulthood. A time to “let off steam” before assuming responsibilities of adult roles, Eisenstadt argues different age groups enable people to learn new social roles and therefore contribute to social solidarity.  Marxists such as Philipson suggests that the logic of capitalism is about exploiting workers and consumers for profit. This is incompatible with the need of the elderly. Retirement from paid work often means that the elderly lose a major source of status, respect, identity and economic security. This has resulted in the elderly, despite their greater needs, being neglected by the capitalist system because they no longer have disposable income. |
| Conclusion  In conclusion society can be seen as non-discriminatory in the open labour market as the majority of people are able to get there through merit starting in the education system, which although has some unfair disadvantages e.g private schools, all students still sit the same exams which allows for anonymity and for people to succeed purely off their merit. However there are still some inequalities in the workplace for women and ethnic minorities making it much more difficult for them to succeed economically even though they succeeded in the education system. Finally older individuals are essentially forgotten about in society as they are seen as dependent rather than useful | |