

SOCIAL DIFFERENTIATION AND STRATIFICATION REVISION GUIDE

This topic is on Paper 2. It is all about inequality and differences between people.

There are lots of questions, which vary from 1, 2, 4, 5 and 9 marks. The questions are short and have sources to help you. You may be able to link other topics you have revised to answer the questions. You may also repeat information and key words in different questions. You will not be marked down for doing this

5.1 Sociological theories of stratification

Stratification is about the inequalities in society. Stratification sees society like a trifle split into different layers. Most societies have had inequalities.

Inequality may mean income, wealth, health, lifestyle, opportunities, education and anything that is to with life chances.

Conflict theories are Marxism and Feminism-

Consensus theory is Functionalism – This theory sees society as based upon consensus or agreement.

Functionalist theory of stratification

- Davis and Moore are Functionalists . They believe that stratification (inequality) is needed by society to help make sure that the best roles get allocated to the most able. This is called role allocation. Unequal rewards help this to happen. Inequality plays a positive function for society.

Functionalists believe that society is a meritocracy. The best rewards are given to those who work hard and who have talent. Sociologists names to know are Parsons and Davis and Moore.

The New Right believe that the UK is fairly close to being a meritocracy. Peter Saunders is a New Right and he thinks that the higher social classes are naturally born clever and that is why they do well in life.

Conflict view of Marxism

The Marxist theory of social stratification disagrees with this view. The UK is not a meritocracy as society is unfair. There are two classes and the ruling class have great advantages. The system is rigged in their favour to keep them in power. Through private schooling and the Old Boys Network they keep in power.

Society is a two class system . The working class (proletariat) and the ruling class (bourgeoisie). The ruling class exploit the proletariat.

Marxists say that the working class do not realise how badly they are exploited because of false class consciousness. The ruling class control the media and trick the working class into believing that wages are fair, and the system is fair.

Conflict view of Feminism

Feminists believe that society is male dominated. They call this patriarchy. The conflict is between men and women. Women have had to fight hard to make society more equal. However, women still have the glass ceiling and do not get equal pay despite laws making discrimination illegal, such as the Equal pay Act, 1970.

Weber's theory of stratification

Max Weber believed that class was just one thing. Class is about your occupation, but also your market position. How much are your skills worth to others? Also, important are your status (how important you are) and your power in society (based on the groups you belong to).

Questions

Describe what is meant by stratification (2 marks)

Describe what is meant by role allocation? (2 marks)

Explain the functionalist view of stratification (4 marks)

Explain why Marxists believe that society is unfair? (4 marks)

Discuss sociological views of inequality. (9 marks)

5.2 Different forms and sources of power and authority

Power means being able to influence others to get what you want.

Informal sources of power are sanctions used by people to control others . For instance, parents control teenagers through the use of sanctions, such as grounding ,loss of devices or stopping pocket money.

Formal sources of power are sanctions used by the forces of social control, such as the police and courts. Police and courts are the agencies of social control.

Weber believed that there were three kinds of authority which gave people power.

Traditional authority is based on long established customs e.g. Religion, our kings and queens.

Charismatic authority is based upon the personality of the leader . E.g. Christ, Martin Luther King had this kind of authority.

Legal Rational authority is based upon clear and logical rules , such as an election. E.g. prime minister.

Questions

Describe what is meant by power? (2 marks)

Explain Weber's view of authority. (5 marks)

5.4 Factors which may influence access to life chances and power SOCIAL CLASS

This topic is linked very closely to

Social Class

Gender

Ethnicity

Age

Disability

They expect you to be aware of other differences that may affect a person's chances in life. These might include **Sexuality, Nationality or the Region** you live in.

All of these link to **Life chances**.

Life chances are to do with a person's chances of enjoying the good things in life and avoiding the bad things.

Life chances are to do with Health, Quality of Life, Lifestyle and Wealth.

E.g. Good life chances would include the chance to:

Be rich.

Live in a nice house.

Receive a good education.

Get a good job.

Go on nice holidays.

Drive a nice car.

Receive good health care.

Wear nice clothes.

Do exciting things.

Live a long healthy life.

Retire early.

People with bad life chances are more likely to:

Be poor.

Live in poverty

Low life expectancy.

Be unhealthy.

Be unemployed or low paid.

Be a victim of crime.

Go to prison.

The 4 factors may all affect life chances in different ways.

You should know which groups have the lowest life chances.

How do each of the 4 affect people's life chances? You should be able to apply some sociological ideas to try to explain why different groups have different life chances. Also, it would be useful to have some evidence of this.

- The 2001 Census showed that 10% of the population could be classified as ethnic minority. Pakistani and Bangladeshi families are more likely to be unemployed, have worse housing health and education.
- Men die younger than women.
- 5 times as many men as women are found guilty or cautioned of crimes.
- Girls do better than boys at GCSE and A' Level.
- Women commit far less crime than men and may be treated less harshly by the police and courts (Criminal Justice System). However, female crime is growing.
- Evidence shows that women still hit the glass ceiling at work. They are denied access to the top jobs.
- Working Class people have shorter life expectancy than middle class people. All serious illnesses are more common lower down the class scale.
- Working Class children eat more sweets and fizzy drinks.
- Working Class people smoke more than middle class.
- Working Class people are more likely to live in a worse environment with pollution and have worse housing. They can't afford private health care. All of these things link together to cause lower life expectancy.
- Some ethnic minorities do worse in education. Black Afro-Caribbean boys do worse and are more likely to be permanently excluded from school.
- Some ethnic minority groups have higher rates of unemployment and are likely to live in poor housing. They are likely to be discriminated against and are more likely to be victims of crime.

Life chances are to do with inequality. If things are fair then people should have equal opportunities, this doesn't mean that everyone will end up equal, but people ought to have equal chances.

SOCIAL CLASS

ASCRIBED STATUS – a PERSON IS BORN WITH THIS STATUS E.G. THE QUEEN. There are many people who are still born into titles and wealth. They have high status by birth and inherit power to influence decisions.

ACHIEVED STATUS – A PERSON HAS TO WORK TO ACHIEVE THIS E.G. A LAWYER.

People like MP's gain power and influence in this way. In theory anyone could become prime minister but in reality, in the UK some people are born with advantages.

How do you measure social class?



Obvious measures are:

Wealth – what you own in property, possessions or have in the bank.

Income – how much money you earn each week, month or year. These days often paid into a bank account. Having a large income does not mean you are wealthy. It depends on your outgoings (what you need to spend each month).

Occupation (job)

Status (how important are they?)

Other things that could be important are:

Type of education

Accent

Clothes

Neighbourhood

The person's own view of what social class they are.

Type of house they live in.

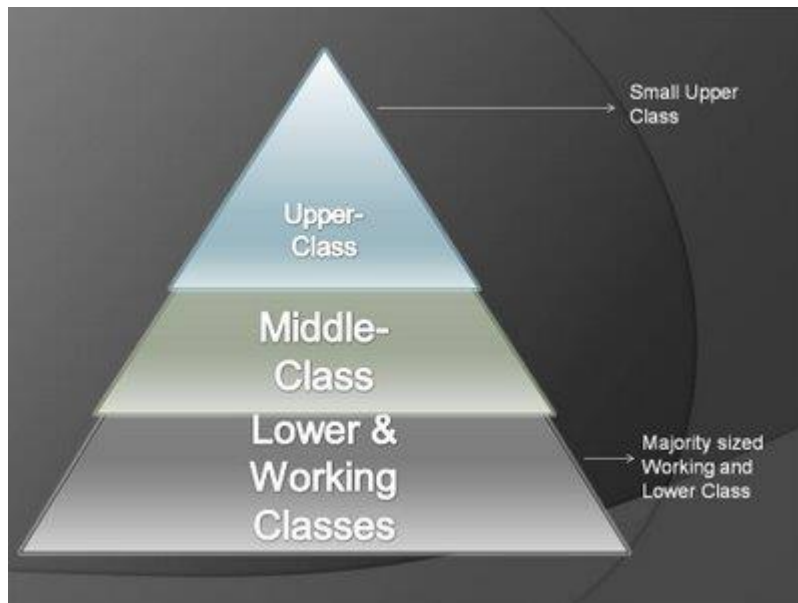
Lifestyle

Traditionally the way was to divide people into manual and non-manual workers.

Manual workers are working class. However, this has become less useful as many of the manual jobs have disappeared. There are now many low paid non manual jobs which would be seen as working class e.g. Working in McDonalds.

The Registrar General Scale used to be the government's method of deciding which class you were. This depended on your job. If you were a child, it depended on your

father's job. Feminists said that this ignored women. Also, the scale does not include the Upper Class.



Karl Marx said that the owners of the factories and big bosses were the Ruling Class and the rest of the workers were the Working Class (Proletariat). The difference in power that being an owner gave people, meant more, according to Marx, than any difference in status or wages that different jobs may have. The Ruling Class own the big businesses and are people like Alan Sugar and Richard Branson.



All scales of class that are based on jobs do not include wealth. Is a bricklayer who wins the lottery working class?

Upper class – this includes the aristocracy, ‘pop’ aristocracy (footballers and pop stars) and business people like Richard Branson. The Upper Class own most of the wealth and are very powerful. Some of them belong to ‘the old boys’ network’ and make sure that their children get into positions of power. The Upper Class are a small group of people with a lot of power. They often depend on inherited wealth being passed through the family.



"I'm going out Miss Tasket. I have a business lunch."

Middle Class- people at the top like doctors and professors have better life chances than people lower down the middle, such as nurses and teachers. The middle class is a large group. They are more likely to own shares, have savings, pension schemes or to be saving for their children's education. This is called **Deferred Gratification**. You are prepared to wait to enjoy the rewards of your hard work.

There is also a group at the top who we call the **Upper Middle Class** who would see themselves as above the average middle class person. Middle class people tend to have geographical mobility and will move around to secure promotion or better opportunities.

Working Class – many people are proud of being working class. In the USA they use the term lower class which does not sound as good. Many traditional working class jobs are in decline and films like 'The Full Monty' show the effect of this. Working class people tend to have a strong sense of local identity. They may stay in one area of the country all their lives.

Social mobility means your ability to climb the social class ladder.

MERITOCRACY – the idea that **those with talent and ability should be able to achieve**. It means having equal opportunities. This is a huge debate in Sociology.



If Britain was equal people should have an equal chance of climbing up the social class ladder. In fact, they do not, and privileged people get a better start in life through private education and better life chances. Talented working class people may not get a chance to succeed.

Since World War Two there has been an increase in the number of middle class people. This has meant that there have been many opportunities. However, the recent evidence of the last 20 years is that the very rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer.

Facts about Social Class inequality

Social trends 1997 – Working class people live 4-5 years shorter than middle class. They are more likely to be unhealthy.

Working class children do not do as well on average in education. This may be because they lack cultural capital, have low expectations themselves or are labelled by teachers. Cultural Capital means having the know-how of how to get on in education. Middle class children may have more books in the house, have parents who went to university themselves and place more value on education.



Working class subcultures may make it difficult for children to succeed. Working class children may be more **FATALISTIC** in their view of life.

They do not expect to be successful and have low aspirations. They expect to take whatever life brings. When he was 16 Mr. Tivey asked his friend Clyde what he would do when he finished Year 11. His friend replied “What comes... You know what I mean...”.

Middle class children may have a more **PURPOSIVE** attitude to life and expect to have a future which they are planning. The upper middle class boys in the documentary 7-Up knew which university they would go to at age 7.

Working class children are less likely to get to the top jobs and to get into Oxford or Cambridge.

Classless society?

New Right believe that social class does not matter much anymore. We now live in a classless society. The old working class jobs have gone and everyone is better off.

Marxists disagree and say that class is still the most important difference. The ruling class have power and privilege and get the best for themselves and their children.

Fiona Devine studied the working classes in the 1980's and still found that there was a sense of working class identity. She studied the affluent or better off workers who were more likely to have become like the middle classes.

The government are investing a lot of money in trying to bridge the gap in education between disadvantaged students and others. This suggests that class still matters.

Questions

Explain what is meant by social class. (4 marks)

Describe what is meant by the Old Boys Network(4 marks)

Discuss whether social class matters any more. (9 marks)

GENDER

Gender – social differences between the sexes.

Sex – biological differences.

Be aware of the massive social changes that have changed gender roles and may have reduced inequality between the two genders. Things you should be able to write about are:

Patriarchy – the idea that society is dominated by men, which is what feminists believe. How true is this now?

Genderquake - The idea that there has been a massive change in the aspirations and expectations of women. Women no longer see their main future as being mothers and house wives. How true this is is unclear.

Stereotyping girls not expected to do some things. E.g. play football. Boys not expected to play with dolls, be emotional.

Socialisation – girls are socialised differently than boys and guided away from some occupations. E.g. at home by parents and at school by teachers. In the past there were barriers to girls choosing different subjects.



KY214045 [RF] © www.visualphotos.com

Sexism – the belief that men are superior to women and the behaviour that comes from this.

Sexual discrimination- when someone is treated differently because of their sex.

Double burden or Double shift – women may work full time and still be expected to do all the jobs.

Triple Burden – Women look after home, work and do all the **emotion work**.

Gender Pay Gap exists despite the Equality Act 1970.

Glass ceiling – the invisible barrier that stops women getting the top jobs. Girls outperform boys at school now but are still behind in terms of work success.

Femininity – the gender role of a woman being gentle, emotional and caring.

Masculinity – the traditional gender role of a man being strong and tough. There is a feeling that it is getting harder to be a man in the traditional way. Manual jobs are harder to find, lone parents show that men are not always needed.

Some say there is a **crisis of masculinity** as men struggle to cope with their new place in the world.

New man – a new idea about how men could be in the 90's. Anti- sexist and non-aggressive. More feminine qualities. Childcare, emotions. Treating women as equals.

New Lad – Back to Men Behaving Badly – a reaction to the New Man. The rise of magazines like Loaded and FHM were an attempt to turn back the clock to an earlier time when men could act like “lads” and not worry about it.

House Husband – a new idea in the late 90's that men could stay at home and look after the children whilst women worked. Mr. Davis, a PE teacher from Ridgewood High has done this. The coalition government are making it easier for men to take more time off to help with babies and to bond better with them.

Ladette – new identity for women in the 90's, behaving badly like lads – fighting, drinking smoking and everything lads enjoy!!! There are plenty of role models for girls to copy nowadays.

Women less likely to be convicted of crime – **Chivalry factor?** Teachers, police, magistrates and judges are likely to want to “save” females and treat them softer.

Women are more likely to be victims of domestic violence. There are refuges to help women who are abused, such as Allen House in Dudley which is a safe house for abused women and their children. The location of Allen House changes regularly to keep it safe. There are organisations for men who are battered husbands too.

Women live longer than men.

Women do better at education, but not so at work.

Teenage pregnancy 30 per 1000 girls aged 15-19 each year. This has a huge effect on girls, less so on boys. Being pregnant as a teenager reduces life chances.

Sex Discrimination Act 1975, and the Equal Pay Act, 1970, has made it better for women, but can be hard to prove discrimination.

Men are 3 times as likely to kill selves as women. Is there more pressure on men to be breadwinners and providers?

Men pushed to be breadwinners, suffering stress and early death as a result.

Men are not allowed to show feelings in public except for anger. Paul Gascoigne crying at the 1990 World Cup because he couldn't play in the final was said to be a breakthrough for British men. What a shame that the only thing we were allowed to cry about was football!!!! However, a masculine role model crying in public may have been a step forward for the men of the UK.

It is still hard for men to do traditional female jobs.

Men have power and status.

Men not valued as parents. They rarely keep children in a split and do not get a great deal of paternity leave although this has improved. Fathers for Justice have tried to challenge this idea to make sure fathers get their rights.

On the other hand, the CSA (Child Support Agency) has been set up to make sure that absent fathers pay their way.

Also think about the way that the power relationships between men and women have changed. Who has power in the home? Are gender roles becoming more similar. Are the differences between men and women becoming less?

Questions

Explain how gender may affect life chances . (4 marks)

Describe what is meant by gender. (2 marks)

Describe how men have been affected by changes in society? (4 marks)

Discuss whether men and women in the UK are more equal than in the past. (9 marks)

ETHNICITY

Race – outdated way of classifying groups. Different groups have more on common e.g. Blood type goes across any supposed racial groups.

Ethnic group = a group with a shared culture and identity e.g. Irish, Serbian, British, Kurdish, Jewish.

Ethnic pay gap – The difference in pay between members of some ethnic minority group who are paid less on average than white British people.

Ethnic minority – an ethnic group that is smaller than the main ethnic groups.

Immigrant – someone who has moved from one country to another.

Illegal immigrant – someone who has moved from one country to another illegally.

Asylum seeker – someone who flees a country to escape persecution.

Racism – The belief that some races are better (superior) to others and the behaviour that comes from this belief.

Overt racism – this can be seen or heard by someone.

Covert racism – people may not be outwardly racist but may still treat or think about people differently.

Prejudice – Prejudging (thinking) a person because of the group they belong to e.g. all Italians make great lovers, Scottish people are mean.

Discrimination means treating someone differently because of the group they belong to e.g. not giving them a job or a house. Arresting them when you might not somebody else.

Racial discrimination – when someone is disadvantaged or treated differently because of their 'race' or ethnicity.

Institutional Racism is when an organisation such as schools or the police are racist to the core in their practice and the way they are organised. The Macpherson report found that the British police were institutionally racist after the murder of Stephen Lawrence. They failed to investigate the murder properly because they viewed Stephen as a gang member. This was based on racist stereotypes.

THINGS TO BE AWARE OF

Remember that there are many differences between ethnic groups and between the genders of different ethnic groups. It is also difficult to use certain terms, such as Asian which could include a large number of very different ethnic groups, such as Chinese, Iraqi, Japanese and Indian. Religion and nationality may also play a large role in deciding someone's ethnic identity e.g. British Muslim.

Think about the reasons for people to be racist. E.g. They were socialised that way by their parents, media, education, personal experiences, the area they grew up in. It also may be because of ignorance, fear, believing stereotypes.

Be aware of Britain's long history of migration. These islands have been invaded by Romans, Normans, Anglo-Saxons and our sea faring past and empire has brought many ethnic minorities to Britain. Bristol and Liverpool have had sizeable black communities since the 18th century and there were black people as far back as Elizabethan times.

Many migrants came after World War Two from our colonies. However, since the 1960's restrictions have made it more difficult to come to Britain. At the same time laws have been passed to try to stop racial discrimination in the 1970's and onwards.

Immigration is a very controversial issue this century and politicians of all parties find it difficult to deal with. There has been a great deal of publicity about immigration especially around the Brexit debate. The government have had a hostile environment policy. This was designed to make it tough for illegal immigrants but has resulted in a cruel policy which meant some legally British people were deported . This was because they did not have proof on paper. The government had failed to provide them with this. This is called the Windrush Scandal.

Questions

Describe what is meant by ethnicity. (2 marks)

Explain what is meant by stereotyping (4 marks)

Explain what is meant by institutional racism. (4 marks)

DISABILITY

TRY TO SHOW AWARENESS THAT DISABILITY IS A HUGE LIFECHANCE ISSUE. Think of all the different types of disability there are and the obvious ways that this affects Life chances. Access to buildings, education, jobs, prejudice, discrimination. There is a disability pay gap.

One idea about Disability in Sociology is called the 'Social Model' of Disability. This idea says that being disabled is more to do with the way that society is organised. People with disabilities are seen as problems, rather than the problem being that society is not set up to allow them to take part. This leads to social exclusion.

Changing attitudes

Barriers are not just physical. Attitudes found in society, based on prejudice or stereotype (also called [disablism](#)), also disable people from having equal opportunities to be part of society.

Medical model of disability

The **social model of disability** says that disability is caused by the way society is organised. The **medical model of disability** says people are disabled by their impairments or differences.

Under the medical model, these impairments or differences should be 'fixed' or changed by medical and other treatments, even when the disability or difference does not cause pain or illness.

The medical model looks at what is 'wrong' with the person and not what the person needs. It creates low expectations and leads to people losing independence, choice and control in their own lives.

Some examples

- A wheelchair user wants to get into a building with a step at the entrance. Under a social model solution, a ramp would be added to the entrance so that the wheelchair user is free to go into the building immediately. Using the medical model, there are very few solutions to help wheelchair users to climb stairs, which excludes them from many essential and leisure activities.
- A teenager with a learning difficulty wants to work towards living independently in their own home but is unsure how to pay the rent. Under the social model, the person would be supported so that they are enabled to pay rent and live in their own home. Under a medical model, the young person might be expected to live in a communal home.
- A child with a visual impairment wants to read the latest best-selling book to chat about with their sighted friends. Under the medical model, there are very few solutions, but a social model solution ensures full text audio-recordings are available when the book is first published. This means children with visual impairments can join in with cultural activities on an equal basis with everyone else.

Winnie the Witch: social model of disability

Share:

[Watch the video "CBeebies Bedtime Stories 'Winnie the Witch' " on YouTube](#)

When they created [Winnie The Witch](#), Korky Paul as illustrator and Valerie Thomas as author produced a fun way for children to learn about colour.

They also created a unique and valuable tool for teaching children, and many adults too, about different ways of thinking about [the social model of disability](#).

Here's how the story goes. In this reading of the story:

- Winnie represents society
- the house represents the environment
- Wilbur represents people with impairments or differences
- the birds represent attitudes of everybody else in society

Winnie finds Wilbur a problem because his black fur can't be seen in her black house. He gets in the way.

Society finds disabled people a problem.

Winnie uses her skills to change Wilbur a little, thinking a green Wilbur will be less trouble in her black house. She doesn't ask if he wants to be green, because she thinks she knows best.

Society tries to change or 'fix' individuals with impairments or differences, even when they are not ill or in pain.

Wilbur is still a problem. Winnie makes another, bigger change to Wilbur but makes Wilbur very unhappy because he wants to be himself. Winnie has created an attitude that lets even the birds think they can laugh at Wilbur.

People with impairments or differences don't want to be changed to fit in to "normal" society. They want to be themselves, equals just as they are, taking part and contributing to society. The wrong change creates social attitudes that lead to individuals being treated disrespectfully, just as the right change can make sure everyone is equal and respected.

Winnie decides to change her house and keep Wilbur as he is. They can both live happily in the colourful house.

Changes in society remove barriers to everybody living in equality and independence. The moral of the story is it is better to change our environment and attitudes rather than try to change people with impairments or differences!

[Winnie The Witch](#) by Valerie Thomas (Oxford University Press, 1987),

Questions

Explain why disabled people may face discrimination. (4 marks)

Explain ways in which disabled people could be socially included. (4 marks)

SEXUALITY

You need to be aware of concepts . such as homophobia which may cause prejudice, discrimination or even Hate Crime against people from the LGBT community. The media

may present these groups in a stereotypical way which may add to their disadvantages. All of these things may affect their life chances.

Questions

Explain what is meant by homophobia. (4 marks)

Explain why a person's sexuality may affect their life chances. (4 marks)

AGE

One of the key ideas you need to understand is that **AGE IS SOCIALLY CONSTRUCTED**. This means that our idea of what is meant by a certain age has changed over time and from society to society.

In the past girls may have been married by age 12 and this would have been seen as ok. Nowadays the older men that married them would be seen as paedophiles. This shows how age is socially constructed.

The idea of **CHILDHOOD** is a fairly recent one. In the past children were just seen as miniature adults and were expected to work alongside adults from a young age. The Victorians began to develop the idea of childhood as a special time of innocence and play. Probably only rich families had this idea at first but by the 20th century this had begun to be expected for all children. More and more laws have been passed to protect children from working or being mistreated. Up until 1980 children were still given the cane in schools (**CORPORAL PUNISHMENT**).

Also new was the idea of the teenager which first appeared in the 1950's as teenagers had their own money. Teenage years became the special time for having fun between childhood and adulthood. Teenagers had their own norms, music, clothes, style of dress and even their own way of talking. This was the start of **youth subcultures** like Teddy Boys, Mods, Skinheads, Hippies and Punks.

In the last ten years there has been a new group emerging called the Tweens which includes 10-12 year olds. This group are targeted by companies and now have their own clothes, music etc.

You also need to be aware of **AGEISM**. Ageism means discrimination against groups because of their age. The elderly and young people are most likely to suffer from this. It may result in not being listened to, denied opportunities and may mean that you are more likely to be living in poverty.

Young people may be labelled by the police as up to no good. At Bluewater shopping centre in Kent young people were banned from wearing hoodies to the centre. They may be more likely to be arrested and charged.

Children are more likely to be victims of abuse than other groups of society. Unfortunately, research shows that children who are abused are more likely to abuse other people as they become older.

Young people and the elderly are also likely to be stereotyped by others. This may affect their life chances in many ways.

Age therefore affects Life chances.

LABELLING, STEREOTYPES, PREJUDICE, DISCRIMINATION, SCAPEGOATING, FOLK DEVILS AND MORAL PANICS

Some groups are more vulnerable to Prejudice and Discrimination. Make sure you know the difference. The Jews in Nazi Germany are a classic example of this, but you could talk about youths with hoodies or immigrant groups. Scapegoating is when a group is blamed for all society's problems.

They may be labelled as a problem group like the Jews were and so treated unfairly.

They may be seen as Folk Devils like the Mods and Rockers in the study Folk Devils and Moral Panics by Stanley Cohen. They were seen as a problem and everyone becomes scared of the group. The media presents them as a problem and so the problem is blown out of proportion. The group are labelled and find it difficult to be accepted.

Questions

Describe what is meant by moral panics (4 marks)

Explain why young people may face discrimination. (4 marks)

OTHER useful ideas linked to LIFECHANCES

Whatever question comes up asking about life chances always remember to link the different aspects of life chances together.

E.g. Working class male lives in a poor area, goes to a poor school where expectations are low. His parents do not expect him to do well and don't encourage him. He is likely to leave school with low qualifications, is more likely to hang out with peers who get him into trouble and will find it harder to get a good job. He is more likely to be unemployed, earn low wages or get into trouble with the police because he has no money and lives in a poor area. Poor diet means he is more likely to be ill. He has no money for a gym membership so becomes unhealthy and cannot work. This makes him even poorer.

He is more likely to suffer from crime, less likely to own a nice house or go on nice holidays. The bad news is his children are likely to get the same life chances. Oh, and unfortunately, he is likely to have a short life expectancy!! Cheerful stuff!!

However, he could have saved himself all this trouble by getting a good education to improve his life chances. Revising for this exam could help yours!!!

However, don't get too carried away because the richer classes are able to give themselves an advantage by sending their children for private education with smaller classes. Or by moving to a new house to make sure they get in the best state schools.

Also remember that other factors might also affect his life chances. How would being black, disabled, female or old affect his life chances? Think about what the story might be for different groups.

ELITISM

Elitism is the idea that there are a few rich and powerful people who are able to make sure that they enjoy all the best things in life and that they remain rich and powerful. They also pass on these advantages to their children.

They do this by making sure that their children get all the advantages of the best education, opportunities and access to the top jobs. A recent BBC programme called "Who gets the top jobs?" showed that to break into media, law, big business or medicine, you needed to know the right people and have enough money to live in London on no wages for an extended period of time. Only the children of Upper and Upper-middle class families could afford this.

The elite are like an in-group who keep all the best things for themselves and do not let others join the group.

Oxford and Cambridge University are part of this and working class children or even middle class children from state schools. The private schools like Eton and Harrow are also part of this and children who go to these schools are more likely to get into Oxford and Cambridge.

People who go to Oxford and Cambridge are likely to become politicians, get the top jobs in the BBC and are very powerful. Elitism is about a small group getting the very best life chances and keeping them within their group and passing onto their children. Marxists would see the advantages they gain as being unfair.

The BBC programme 'Who gets the best jobs' showed how difficult it is to get into some of the top professions like journalism, fashion and law. Young people need to have a connection with a company and be able to live on no wages in London to stand a chance of breaking in. Many people have to work unpaid to begin with. Working and even middle Class people cannot afford to do this and do not have the connections.

OTHER USEFUL BITS

PRIVILEGE – This involves people like the Upper class enjoying privileges that others do not enjoy. Having privilege is taken for granted by those who enjoy it, but it actually gives them an unfair advantage. White, able-bodied, adult (not too old or young), middle class males enjoy many privileges. Not having to worry about racism or sexism are part of this. Being able to see role models on tv that are the same as you is one. Being unquestioningly welcomed because of the group you belong to is part of this. Asking to speak to someone in charge and knowing you will speak to someone like you (i.e. White middle class male) is another.

EXPLOITATION

Some groups like women are often exploited in society. Feminists believe that women are exploited in the family. They have to do all the unpaid domestic labour including housework and childcare which are thankless and not valued. Even in the age of women working they have to do the double shift or have the Dual Burden of a job and domestic labour.

Marxists believe that the working class are exploited by the ruling class or the rich. They have to work long hours and low pay to make the rich richer. In the UK the richest 5% have got richer in the last 20 years and the poorest poorer. The ruling class use the working class to stay rich and powerful

5.5 Poverty as a social issue

POVERTY

At the very poorest end are people who live in Poverty. The biggest problem with poverty is saying exactly what it is.

You may get a question which asks you to explain what is meant by the following:

ABSOLUTE POVERTY is when a person does not have the basics essential for survival. These are based on people's biological needs and include food, water, shelter and clothes. People who do not have these basic things would be classed as living in poverty in any place or time.

Absolute poverty is usually expected to be found in developing countries like Ethiopia, Kenya or India.

RELATIVE POVERTY is when people do not have what is needed for an acceptable standard of living in their particular society. E.g. In 21st century Britain you are expected to have a house with central heating, Digital TV, internet, mobile phone, car, hot water, fridge, freezer, inside toilet etc. People who do not have these may be seen as living in relative poverty. Yet in the 1960's people in Britain would not have expected to have many of the things on this list.

This kind of Relative Poverty may be seen as **SOCIAL EXCLUSION**. Social exclusion means that people are not able to fully take part in society. People who are unemployed may feel like this, as may homeless people. Disabled people, pensioners, the Underclass and ethnic minority groups may also feel like this.

SOCIAL INCLUSION is when the government or other groups try to make sure that groups which are left out are included. They may introduce groups to help them such as language classes for people who do not speak English, Job hunters help, extra transport, ramps for disabled people, extra resources for education.

GENDER AND POVERTY

Women are more likely to live in poverty than men. This is because they are more likely to have low pay, work part-time, be a lone parent and less likely to have a good pension because of all of these. 2002 21% of people in poverty in the UK were lone parents.

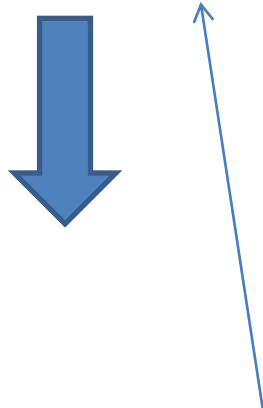
AGE AND POVERTY

Pensioners are also more likely to be living in poverty. 21% of people in poverty in 2002 were pensioners.

Globally, 1 in 3 children are living in poverty.

THE CYCLE OF POVERTY - Also known as the **CYCLE OF DEPRIVATION**. Deprivation means being deprived of the basics needed for a good life.

Children are born to poor parents



They grow up with a deprived childhood. They live in poor housing, eat poor food and wear poor clothes.



They do not get encouraged at school by parents, family life is unstable, have few books or newspapers.



Poor education, no hopes for carrerr, no hope.



Unemployment or poor pay



Poverty



Children born to poor parents

CULTURE OF POVERTY -

A culture of poverty develops. The family starts to get used to being in poverty and adapts a lifestyle to fit this. Weak family fail at school, absent fathers, feel inferior, expect to fail, no hope and so it continues generation after generation.

THE POVERTY or UNDERCLASS DEBATE

Since the 1980's there have been a group of people who have fallen below the working class. These are the long term unemployed, disabled and chronically ill. These people are known as the 'Underclass'. They are cut off from many of the things which everyone else takes for granted.



The **Underclass** refers to people at the very bottom of society but not able to be fully part of society. E.g. the unemployed, homeless, disabled and chronically ill.

The **New Right**, like **Charles Murray**, blame the Underclass themselves for being in this position. They also blame the welfare state which means things like benefits which they say make the underclass dependent on the government for handouts. "They are dependent and no wonder they will not help themselves!! They keep getting money for doing nothing! **The New Right think it is the Underclass's own fault**

The New Right also think the **culture of poverty** makes things worse. Boys brought up in lone parent families with no father will have no role model to teach them what a man should do: work and support a family.

The **culture of poverty** is a way of life which the very poor develop to enable them to get through life. They learn to survive and look for good times having fun right now (**IMMEDIATE GRATIFICATION**). Getting drunk, taking drugs and fast food could all be part of this lifestyle. People who live this lifestyle may be very happy and may not wish to get out of it.

The Underclass are likely to be living in the culture of poverty and have a **fatalistic attitude**



to life. They do not expect to break out of their situation and do not want to.

Teenage girls get pregnant knowing they will get a flat and benefits. The New Right would like to stop this.

DEFENCE OF THE UNDERCLASS

It's not their fault!!! How can they save when they don't have any money? Even if they did they would lose their benefits for having savings. Their response is logical.

Marxists would say that the real reason we have an Underclass is because of capitalism. Our capitalist system creates winners and losers because it is so competitive. For Marxists capitalism does not work and will always produce inequalities. In other words, there will always be some losers who do not get the jobs and houses. **Marxists think that it is society's fault!!**

Questions

Describe what is meant by the underclass (2 marks)

Describe what is meant by poverty (4 marks)

Explain why there is poverty in society. (4 marks)

Discuss whether the culture of poverty is the cause of poverty. (9 marks)