**Q: Do the interpretations support the view that the Nazis came to power due to political weakness within the Weimar Republic?**

**[In your answer you should refer to how and why interpretations differ. Use your own knowledge and understanding of the wider historical debate over this issue to reach a well-supported judgement.]**

**Interpretation 1: The American historian William L. Shirer writing in his book ‘*The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich’,* published in 1959.**

The weaknesses of the Weimar regime were obvious. There were too many political parties, and they were unable to form a lasting majority in the Reichstag that could back a stable government. [By 1932]… political power was concentrated in the hands of a senile President and in those of a few shallow, ambitious men around him. Hitler saw this clearly, and it suited his purposes.

**Interpretation 2: C. L. Holtfrerich, a specialist historian on German history writing in a book ‘*Weimar: Why did German Democracy Fail?*’ published in 1990.**

Conflict was going on throughout the lifetime of the Weimar Republic. Yet Nazism was not then successful. The Nazi rise to power was essentially linked to the Great Depression, which was a world-wide phenomenon and had little to do with the domestic conflict.

**Mark scheme:**

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|  | **AO1 (4 marks- knowledge)** | | **AO4 (6 marks- interpretation analysis)** | |
| **BAND 4** | You have a very detailed understanding of the question topic. | 4 | You have fully analysed/evaluated how and why the interpretations differ. You have fully analysed the content, authorship and intended audience of the interpretations and have reached a well-supported judgement on the question. | 5-6 |
| **BAND 3** | You have detailed understanding of the question topic. | 3 | You have analysed/evaluated the differences between the interpretations showing some awareness of why they differ. You have analysed the authorship and content to reach a supported judgement on the question. | 3-4 |
| **BAND 2** | You have some understanding of the question topic. | 2 | You have analysed/evaluated the interpretations and have referenced the author and the content. You have little awareness of why the interpretations differ. You include a judgement on the question. | 2 |
| **BAND 1** | Vague answer with a limited understanding of the question topic. | 1 | You make simple comments about the interpretations, with little or no analyses/evaluation. You do not reach a judgement. | 1 |

**Model answer:**

**Q: Do the interpretations support the view that lives of women worsened under the Nazis? [10]**

**[In your answer you should refer to how and why interpretations differ. Use your own knowledge and understanding of the wider historical debate over this issue to reach a well-supported**

**Interpretation 2: An extract from *Women in Nazi Germany*, an article published on the website *GermanCulture.com*, a general information site.**

Many women supported the National Socialist Party because it urged returning to the family values of the past when women were encouraged to stay at home and concern themselves with taking care of the household. There were many women in Germany who had the desire to return to this simpler way of life.

**Interpretation 1: Charu Gupta, a feminist historian, writing in an article ‘*The Politics of Gender: Women in Nazi Germany*’, published in a magazine in 1991.**

With the coming of National Socialism, the progress in women’s rights was reversed. The humiliation of women became a way of life. The Nazi desire for motherhood for all German women became the central issue and family was seen as the most important part of the *volk*, or people.

Interpretation 1 supports the view that the lives of women worsened under the Nazis. The historian of this interpretation claims that during the Nazi regime, women lost the rights and freedoms that they previously had. It also suggests that women were expected to be mothers and housewives and that this was an important part of the Nazi ideology. From my own knowledge, I know that women were encouraged to have more children through schemes that would reward them. For example, the Nazis would award medals to women that had a certain number of children. Also, married women would be dismissed from their work and would be expected to look after the home and their husband as part of the three K’s (children, church and kitchen). The author of the interpretation is a feminist historian, which means that she would have a clear agenda and audience. The author would have carried out a lot of research, being a historian, but their personal attitudes may influence them to interpret Nazi policies towards women in a way that suggests their lives worsened.

Interpretation 1 does not support the view that the lives of women worsened under the Nazis. The extract suggests that many women were happy to return to a simpler or more traditional life where family was at the core. From my own knowledge, I know that the Nazis gained a lot of electoral support from women as they came to power. During the regime, women were also seen as important as they were responsible for choosing a ‘good German’ partner and looking after children who would grow up to become important members of the Third Reich. Although the article is focused on the lives of women in Nazi Germany, it is from a general information website so it is less specialist and critical. The audience of this website would probably have less prior knowledge, so the information published on there would reflect that.

Overall, the interpretations differ greatly on what the lives of women were like in Nazi Germany. The main reason why they disagree is the authorship. For example, interpretation 1 was written by a feminist historian who will have done a lot of research into the treatment of women in Nazi Germany to highlight the problems women experienced. However, interpretation 2 is from a general information website and is therefore less specialist. The website is about German culture as a whole, so it has a different purpose to interpretation 1, which is only interested in discussing the experiences of women in Nazi Germany.