



A-LEVEL SOCIOLOGY

7192/3: Crime and deviance with theory and methods
Report on the Examination

7192
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Question 01

This was generally well answered. Most students were able to identify two appropriate reasons why deviant subcultures exist, the most common being as some form of response to: blocked opportunities, status frustration or inability to achieve a society's mainstream goals. A few students cited labelling, marginalisation or a criminal environment as their reasons. Some considered the role of gang subcultures in offering boys the male role models that their lone parent families may have failed to provide. However, a number of answers gave minimal explanation of either of their chosen reasons and others presented essentially the same reason twice, usually variants of blocked opportunities.

Question 02

This question was also generally well done, with most students able to score four marks and many gaining all six. The reasons most frequently outlined were: lack of confidence or trust in the police's ability or their willingness to help, fear of retribution from the offender, the crime being too trivial to report, shame or embarrassment about being a victim, being unaware that one had been victimised, and unwillingness to go through the ordeal of giving evidence and re-living the experience. Domestic abuse or sexual assault and rape were often used to illustrate some of the reasons offered. Failure to gain full marks was generally due either to repetition of essentially the same reason, or to failure to explain the suggested reason clearly. Some students wrote unnecessarily long answers for this six-mark question for which they could not be credited.

Question 03

In general, this question was less well answered. Many students failed to develop any application from Item

A in their response. Some answers failed to identify any specific crime reduction strategy; alternatively, they described such a strategy (often at some length) but without identifying any reason why it might not be successful. There were also instances where students wasted time by discussing how such strategies might be successful, rather than unsuccessful as the question asked for.

The best answers applied the Item to their response by linking assumptions taken from within it about how or why: offenders commit crimes; and/or about what crimes it is important to reduce; or, less commonly about the role or impact of criminal justice agencies, to the underlying rationale of a specific crime reduction strategy or strategies. These answers then went on to explain reasons why the strategies might not work.

In terms of specific crime reduction strategies, the most popular choices were 'target hardening' and 'zero tolerance'. Reasons offered for the failure of such strategies included: failure to understand that offenders' motivations were not always rational, and that a strategy focusing on street crime neglects more harmful crimes such as corporate or state crime.

Question 04

This question produced responses at all levels of quality. Some weaker answers became side-tracked into explanations of male criminality, or of females as victims rather than as offenders. Other responses lacked knowledge of material, specifically on female offending, and attempted, often with only limited success, to apply other theories of crime and deviance, usually strain and subcultural theories.

However, in general at all levels of response, students made an effort to apply material from Item B. Weaker answers tended to offer somewhat commonsensical accounts of one or two theories that reflected points in the Item, or accounts that were light on conceptual detail. Most students struggled to develop the Item's reference to media stereotyping satisfactorily, though a few higher-level responses engaged successfully with the idea that a moral panic about young female offending had led to increased social control and criminalisation of females.

Good answers were able to discuss some or all of the following, using appropriate concepts and evidence: sex role theory and gender socialisation; Heidensohn and control theory; Adler's liberation thesis and the weakening of patriarchy; Carlen on class and gender deals; and the chivalry thesis.

The best answers made good analytical and evaluative points throughout their essay. For example, in discussing Heidensohn and control theory, some questioned the extent to which changing gender roles may have made the theory less relevant in today's society, often then going on to link this evaluation to the liberation thesis. Similarly, some better answers questioned the continuing relevance of the chivalry thesis in the context of greater gender equality and increased numbers of women working in the criminal justice system.

Question 05

This question proved difficult for many students. Some had no real idea as to what objectivity meant, often confusing it with reliability, representativeness or validity. At best, these answers made a passing connection with relevant issues in a largely tangential response.

Somewhat better responses had an understanding of the meaning of objectivity, but were unable to sustain a discussion for long. For example, some focused on how the participants in research might all have different subjective views, rather than focusing on the idea that it is the researcher's subjectivity that is at issue here.

Strong answers developed explanations focusing on the influence of the researcher's preferred perspective, personal values, political commitment or career interests, or on the influence of funding bodies. These answers often addressed the impact of such factors on methodology, research findings and their interpretation. Reference to the work of Becker, Gouldner, Weber and interpretivists often appeared in these answers.

Question 06

In general, answers here were of a reasonable standard but there was wide variation. The weakest answers were usually simply limited developments of information in the Item, or in some cases mere paraphrasing of its content. Weaker answers generally took a topic-based approach, describing inequalities in particular institutions in contemporary society, such as education or the criminal justice system.

Many of these answers gave accounts of reasons for class differences in educational achievement but were unable to apply relevant Marxist ideas such as the correspondence principle, reproduction or legitimation, focusing instead on labelling, speech codes and the like. By contrast, the best answers had a solid and extensive knowledge of general Marxist concepts and were able to examine Marxism's contribution to our understanding of today's society via discussion of specifically Marxist approaches to particular topic areas.

Evaluation tended to take two paths: firstly, criticism of Marxism from other perspectives, usually functionalist, feminist and/or postmodernist; and secondly, the view that Marxism is outdated - for example because there is now more mobility or equality, or a more complex class structure than when Marx wrote, or because the predicted revolution and/or classless society has failed to materialise. Some answers that took the first path became side-tracked into lengthy accounts of other perspectives, losing sight of the need to bring them into debate with Marxism. Some answers offered a positive evaluation, drawing on empirical evidence to argue that Marxism remains relevant to contemporary society. Other answers showed analysis and evaluation by considering the relative merits of different Marxist approaches, such as those of Althusser and Gramsci.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.