GCSE

SOCIOLOGY

8192/2: Paper 2 – The Sociology of Crime and Deviance and Social Stratification
Report on the Examination

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General Comments

Although a wide range of responses were evident from students taking this first paper 2 based on the new specification, it was pleasing to see that the majority of students found the paper accessible and were able to respond to all the questions. Unfortunately, a significant minority did not keep to the 'mark a minute' rule and, as a consequence, appeared to have rushed their final answers.

Students were mainly well prepared for the exam, demonstrating good knowledge and understanding of the specification. This was particularly evident in the case of questions 03, 04, 05, 08, 14 and 17. However, certain sections of the specification had clearly been covered less thoroughly in some schools. This was particularly evident in the case of questions 10, 15, 18, 19 and 20. Questions that required longer extended answers produced mixed responses, with many students able to demonstrate a sound knowledge of relevant sociological theories, concepts and evidence, together with the ability to apply this knowledge and understanding to the demands of the questions. The skills of analysis and evaluation were less apparent, however, with a minority of students using the technique of juxtaposing social factors; in many cases this approach bore little relevance to the question posed and as a consequence earned them relatively little credit. This approach is ill-suited to the demands of the new specification and is not recommended.

Question 1

This first multiple choice question saw most students correctly identifying B, chivalry thesis.

Question 2

Most students were able to identify C, moral panic. However, a significant minority of students selected one of the distractors, B: folk devils.

Question 3

This was generally well answered, with many students able to gain at least 2 marks for their description. Many students opted to describe fraud and tax evasion, with many able to develop their answer, often making the link to the work place or the 'crimes of the powerful'. Many students were able to develop their answer further to reach level 3 by asserting that these crimes are less likely to be detected and so are unlikely to be recorded in crime statistics. Less effective responses tended merely to identify a type of occupational crime or suggest it was 'middle class crime'.

Question 4

There were some very effective responses to this question, showing good understanding of the sources of data on crime. The most popular option was official statistics, with most students able to develop the point with a description. Many students were able to develop their answer further by suggesting that it masks the 'dark figure of crime'. Other students identified and described self-report studies and victim surveys, with many developing into level 3. Some students identified 'the media' as a source of data on crime, which was a creditable response.

Question 5

There were a range of different responses to this question. Many students chose an appropriate feature to examine, such as the length of time spent with the gangs. Many students failed to explain their choice fully enough as a strength for the second mark. A significant number of

students suggested a feature of the study as an advantage, without further development, eg 'it gave qualitative data'.

Question 6

Less effective responses wrote about gangs' behaviour in general and did not focus on the girls' goals and aspirations. Many students suggested that the girls were socialised into mainstream society before they joined the gang. A significant number of students gave very effective responses, applying Merton's idea of strain theory – that the girls shared the goals of mainstream society, but did not have the legitimate means to achieve them.

Question 7

Most students gained some credit as they wrote about an appropriate disadvantage, usually based on the fact that it was harder to repeat the interviews and compare the qualitative data. A minority of students suggested that it was a problem as the interviewees may lie, without developing a reason as to why that might be the case. Many students made little or no attempt to link to the context of the question. It is also worth noting that a significant minority of students confuse validity and reliability as concepts; it is recommended that teachers should devote more time to improving students' understanding of this important distinction.

Question 8

This was a well answered question, with the vast majority of students able to access some of the marks. Many students were able to make good use of the item to identify a way in which behaviour can be considered deviant, ie when society defines it as such. More successful students went on to link this to labelling, self-fulfilling prophecy and master status. An impressive number of students were able to identify that Becker wrote from an interactionist perspective, showing strong knowledge and understanding of this key study.

Question 9

This was also a well answered question. Students showed good knowledge and understanding as they identified a range of reasons for the issues with defining deviance. The most common issues suggested were time, place and cultural norms. Many students were able to give good supporting examples; as a consequence, a significant number of students were able to access the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Question 10

Unfortunately, there were a significant number of lower quality responses to this question, with many students only offering limited knowledge of institutional racism in the criminal justice system. Some students gave very simple accounts of the likelihood of the BAME boys being stopped and searched by the police, whilst some students were able to recount the story of Stephen Lawrence through the lens of the McPherson Inquiry. This demonstrated fairly good knowledge and understanding, but their skills of analysis and evaluation were often significantly weaker. Many students took the approach of juxtaposing gender or class bias in the criminal justice system in an attempt to evaluate, but made little or no attempt to link these factors to the actual question. This approach is ill-suited to the demands of the reformed specification and denies students access to the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Responses that achieved higher marks were more successful in linking their ideas to the question; pointing out that BAME people are more likely to be concentrated in lower social classes, and therefore citing the work of the likes of Merton and Cohen successfully. Some students were successful in discussing the work of Becker, linking to police profiling of BAME individuals.

Question 11

Students fared better in this second ('mini-essay') extended writing answer. Many students concentrated their answers on a New Right/Functionalist critique of crime, suggesting that individuals who are raised in criminal cultures normalise this type of behaviour and repeat it. Others gave good accounts of Murray's view that children from 'families without fathers' lack strong male role models and as a consequence find them in inappropriate places. Analysis and evaluation came in the form of comparisons with other theories and concepts, such as the Marxist view that capitalism causes crime. There were some very effective responses from students who were able to compare inadequate socialisation as a cause of crime with a range of other explanations, such as by Merton and Cohen, who suggest that crime is caused by a lack of opportunity. More able students correctly used writings from a feminist perspective as a point of comparison, citing the work of Heidensohn (control theory) and Carlen (class and gender deals). Many more students were able to reach a reasoned conclusion for this question.

Question 12

Most students correctly identified option A, life chances.

Question 13

Few students had issues with this multiple choice question, correctly identifying option B, ethical issues.

Question 14

There was a good range of responses to this question. Most students described examples such as social class, ethnicity, gender, and were able to develop their response to at least level 2, linking to factors such as poverty, racism and the glass ceiling. Less effective responses merely identified an example, with little or no development.

Question 15

This question seemed to cause issues for many students. When students were able to correctly identify one of Weber's 3 types of authority, most were able to develop their response with a description. Many students reached level 3 by further developing with a range of examples of individuals with that particular type of authority. However, a significant number of students were not able to access any marks for this question, as they were unable to correctly identify a type of authority. Less able students identified institutions, such as the police or the government.

Question 16

This was a well answered question. More able students were able to describe the low response rate and the length of the questionnaire potentially leading to inaccurate responses. In a similar way to their responses to question 5, many students suggested a feature of the research without further development, eg 'it did not give qualitative data'. Less effective responses suggested 'people could lie' without any form of development as to why this might be the case.

Question 17

Although there were a good range of responses to this question, a significant minority of students struggled to frame an appropriate response. Less effective responses identified reasons, such as being born into poverty, or the poverty trap, with little or no development. A minority of students identified a social characteristic such as gender or ethnicity as a reason, but again struggled to develop their responses. More successful students used life events such as being made unemployed, divorce or eviction, and were able to develop their responses sufficiently to access the higher levels of the mark scheme.

Question 18

Unfortunately, there were a number of less effective responses to this question, mainly centred round the fact that many students conflated the concept with subjective poverty. These responses tended to suggest the issue lay in the fact that people may not be poor, but might feel poor in relation to those around them. A number of students made good use of the work of Townsend in their discussion, arguing that relative poverty is a more accurate measure of inequality than absolute poverty, or that the lifestyle choices of certain groups not in poverty may skew the data.

Question 19

This was a question with which a significant minority of students struggled. A number of students seemed to have little knowledge of the work of Devine beyond what was written in the item, with many just recycling information contained in the item, and even in some cases incorrectly stating that more well-off workers accepted capitalism without criticism. The more able students were able to give very effective answers, demonstrating their understanding that Devine was critical of the work of Lockwood, discussing both her methodology and her rejection of privatised instrumentalism.

Question 20

This question produced some notably lower quality responses. A significant minority of students simply made general points about ageism in society, with younger people earning less money, or older people finder it harder to find employment. The more able students gave excellent responses, citing issues such as the age divide in voting patterns, often with particular reference to the referendum on Britain's membership of the EU in 2016.

Question 21

This was a question which saw some excellent responses. Most students had a strong grasp of the glass ceiling as a concept, and were able to explain the idea that whilst it is no longer legal to discriminate on the basis of gender, social barriers remain that often stop women achieving positions of parity with men in society. Knowledge and understanding of students was strong, citing evidence such as the gender pay gap and the disparity between girls' better educational performance and their lower status positions in the workplace. Most students cited the feminist perspective, but the higher level responses were less 'general' in their approach, often citing the likes of Walby's 'theorizing patriarchy' and Dunscombe and Marsden's triple shift.

More successful students often approached the 'how far' aspect by citing the view of liberal feminists that legal barriers have been removed and more women are reaching top positions than ever before. Many responses also cited examples such as women only shortlists in the Labour

Party. A handful of students were able to cite the work of Catherine Hakim, who suggests that the pay gap exists as women make a 'rational choice' to leave the labour force to have children.

Question 22

With varying levels of accuracy and detail, the majority of students were able to cite the work of Murray, suggesting that a welfare dependent underclass exists. More effective responses made links to relevant evidence and ideas such as the poverty trap, generational educational underachievement and relative levels of unemployment. Interestingly, many students chose to use the Marxist viewpoint in different ways – some students used it to support the assertion in the question, citing Marx's identification of the 'lumpen proletariat'. Other students used this as an evaluation point, suggesting that Marxists believe that those in receipt of benefits are victims of an unfair capitalist system. Many students cited feminist perspectives – some particularly successfully, for example pointing to the fact that women were more likely to be reliant on benefits as a result of patriarchy. Others used it in a less nuanced way and frequently simply stated an opinion. A minority of students either left this question out entirely or were unable to complete their response, clear evidence that they had devoted too much time to some of the preceding questions – it is important to remember the 'mark a minute' guidance in order to avoid this.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website.