

Sociology

Answers and commentaries

A-level (7192)

Paper 3: Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods

Marked answers from students for questions from the June 2022 exams. Supporting commentary is provided to help you understand how marks are awarded and how students can improve performance.

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Answers and commentaries

Please note that these responses have been reproduced exactly as they were written and have not been subject to the usual standardisation process.

20 mark question

This is the 20 mark extended writing question within the Theory and Methods section.

8 marks are available for knowledge and understanding (AO1), 6 marks for application (AO2) and 6 marks for analysis and evaluation (AO3).

The stem for this 20 mark question begins: 'Applying material from Item C and your knowledge, evaluate...'

Question 6

Read **Item C** below and answer the question that follows.

Item C

Social action theorists take a micro-level approach in focusing on an individual's free will and choice of behaviour. These theorists believe it is important to examine how people interact with others and seek to understand the meanings behind why people behave as they do.

However, structural theorists are critical of social action theories. They argue that sociologists should examine the structural power differences between groups and individuals, which control people's behaviour.

Applying material from **Item C** and your knowledge, evaluate the usefulness of social action theories in explaining human behaviour.

[20 marks]

Mark scheme

Level 5: 17–20 marks

- Answers in this band will show sound, conceptually detailed knowledge of a range of relevant material on the usefulness of social action theories in explaining human behaviour.
- Sophisticated understanding of the question and of the presented material will be shown.
- Appropriate material will be applied accurately and with sensitivity to the issues raised by the question.
- Analysis and evaluation will be explicit and relevant. Evaluation may be developed, for example through a debate between different perspectives eg social action, functionalism, Marxism, feminisms, postmodernism. Analysis will show clear explanation. Appropriate conclusions will be drawn.

Level 4: 13–16 marks

- Answers in this band will show accurate, broad or deep but incomplete knowledge. Understands a number of significant aspects of the question; good understanding of the presented material.
- Application of material is largely explicitly relevant to the question, though some material may be inadequately focused.
- Some limited explicit evaluation, eg from a structuralist perspective, and/or some appropriate analysis, eg clear explanations of some of the presented material.

Level 3: 9–12 marks

- Answers in this band will show largely accurate knowledge but limited range and depth, eg a broadly accurate, if basic, account of social action theories. Understands some limited but significant aspects of the question; superficial understanding of the presented material.
- Applying listed material from the general topic area but with limited regard for its relevance to the issues raised by the question, or applying a narrow range of more relevant material.
- Evaluation will take the form of juxtaposition of competing positions or one or two isolated stated points. Analysis will be limited, with answers tending towards the descriptive.

Level 2: 5–8 marks

- Answers in this band will show limited undeveloped knowledge, eg two or three insubstantial points about social action theories.
- Understands only limited aspects of the question; simplistic understanding of the presented material.
- Limited application of suitable material, and/or material often at a tangent to the demands of the question, eg drifting into alternative theories.
- Very limited or no evaluation. Attempts at analysis, if any, are thin and disjointed.

Level 1: 1–4 marks

- Answers in this band will show very limited knowledge, eg one or two very insubstantial points about theories in general. Very little/no understanding of the question and of the presented material.
- Significant errors and/or omissions in application of material.
- No analysis or evaluation.

0 mark

No relevant points.

Indicative content

Concepts and issues such as the following may appear: labelling; self-fulfilling prophecy; social construction; symbols; looking-glass self; dramaturgical analogy; impression management; symbolic interactionism; role taking; verstehen; career; typifications; the natural attitude; indexicality and reflexivity; social order; structuration; agency; patriarchy; capitalism; interpretivism; qualitative; ethnomethodology; phenomenology; social structure.

Sources may include the following or other relevant ones:

- Atkinson
- Becker
- Berger and Luckmann
- Blumer
- Cooley
- Douglas
- Garfinkel
- Giddens
- Goffman
- Lemert
- Mead
- Schutz
- Weber.

Student responses

Response A

Social Action Theories may be found useful in explaining human behaviour. They are a micro-level approaches to studying society - therefore they look at individuals ~~at~~ and their unique experience rather than at the general society - they do not aim at forming general laws. Social action theories assume that individuals have free will and internal forces influence their behaviour - rather than social institutions.

Becker f.e. developed a labelling theory which assumes that people's behaviour is likely to be caused by the self-fulfilling prophecy. The way that we are labelled by others ^{may} influence therefore the way we act, how we achieve in school, whether

a person may become a criminal or not.

Symbolic interactionism developed by Mead and Blumer argues on typifications - the way in which we form our assumptions of certain gestures when we p.e. talk with others. This process is therefore in constant progress as we gain understanding of certain symbols that have different, common meaning in our society.

Also Goffman, in his dramaturgical approach discusses that people have a free-choice over their behaviour and identities. Therefore people behave differently in different social settings and change their roles, as like actors in front of different audiences - f.e. a doctor may act different with patients and different with friends after work.

~~PA~~ ^{Ethnomethodology} is another theory that assumes people are free in their behaviour - f.e. a mother may realise that her child may start to act as if she is in a hotel (when in reality she is in her room). This illustrates how individuals can manipulate their meanings and assumptions of certain aspects of their daily life - and act differently.

However, social action theories have been greatly criticised by structuralist theories such as ~~for~~ functionalism, Marxism, or feminism. The criticism mainly refers to the fact that S.A. theories ignore the role of social structures influencing their behaviour - therefore the extent of free will is exaggerated. Functionalism would argue that people's behaviour is influenced by social institutions such as family (as f.e. Parsons argued) or school.

These institutions give individuals a possession of universalistic norms and values that influence individual's behaviour in every aspect of life. Marxists would argue that a type of social structure that influences every aspect of human's behaviour is inequalities in capitalist societies. Therefore individuals are restricted to these inequalities in their behaviour due to a false consciousness.

Feminist would also disagree with the extent of free will that S.A. theories propose. ~~as~~ The structure that influences and restricts women behaviour in all aspects of life is patriarchy. Therefore as Heidensohn argues in Control Theory,

women are not having a free choice to commit crime as patriarchy controls them at every aspect of life. F.e. responsibility of children or lack of leisure time due to triple shift.

However, some sociologists provided a compromise between structural and S.A. theories. Giddens' structuration theory assumes that individuals and public institutions are interdependent. Social institutions will only exist if individuals decide to maintain them. Individuals influence how social institutions look like while at the same time social institutions may restrict some aspects of individuals' behaviour. Giddens argues that such example is law - people are restricted by law in their behaviour and cannot commit crime freely and without consequences. At the same time individuals create and form law, law is in progress of constant modifications due to people's ^{different} needs and changes in ~~people's~~ ^{individuals'} behaviour.

This is a Level 5 response

This answer shows sound, conceptually detailed knowledge of a range of relevant material on the usefulness of social actions theories in explaining human behaviour. From the outset it clearly explains that social action theories' micro level approach assumes individuals have free will and that their behaviour is influenced by internal factors rather than social institutions, and consequentially social actionists do not aim to form general laws of behaviour.

A sophisticated understanding of the question is shown and material presented in the item by the consideration of a range of social actionists. These include labelling theorists, symbolic interactionists and the dramaturgical approach.

The essay explicitly addresses the issue presented in the item that actionists ignore social structures and the essay responds by considering the limitations of the concept of free will, as presented by functionalists, Marxists and feminists.

Analysis is explicit as can be seen by the clear breakdown of concepts and theories belonging to the differing social actionist approaches. Similarly, explicit evaluation is evident by not only the debate between the very different positions of actionist and structuralist approaches, but also the introduction and development of Giddens' alternative structuration approach (paragraph 5).

20 marks

Response B

Social action theories attempt to explain human behaviour looking at individuals. It is a micro-level approach, focusing on free will, choice of behaviour and the labels we attach to things, people and interactions.

When seeking to understand how people interact with others, and the meanings, as to why people behave in the way we do, as talked about in Item C, social action theorists see everyone as 'social actors' who adapt ^{their} behaviour based on the environment they are in. Goffman develops the idea of a 'front' self and a 'back' self. The front self is the person you present to people according to the environment and your relation to the people around you, the back self is rarely seen and is the person you are on the inside without the pressures of society.

Another theory developed by Social action theorists around how we present ourselves and ^{why we} behave as we do, is the theory that "I am not who I think I am, I am not who you think I am, I am who I think you think I am." This explains that people try and become who they think the people around them want ^{them} to be, this offers a very different view than any put forward by any other theory as it looks at and helps to understand how a person's sense of self affects their life experience.

Structural theorists such as Marxists and feminists are critical of social action theories as they argue that sociologists should be taking a more macro-approach looking at wider society and considering structural power differences. In societies with such powerful groups who ~~such as the ruling class and~~ males and are at an advantage in society, such as members of the ruling class, men and white people others are left in their control. This means that for certain disadvantaged groups they do not have the

Extra space Same levels of freedom of choice in the ways they choose to behave and the ~~other~~ overall choices they make in life.

Social Action theory offers some very insightful views into a person's sense of self and how they behave. However as pointed out by ~~some~~ structural theorists some groups do not have a level of freedom to make their choices when it comes to acceptable behaviour, due to stereotypical expectations, so Social Action theory is not as useful here.

This is a Level 3 response

Knowledge shown is largely accurate but with limited range and depth. The essay outlines well the points referred to in the item but with too little development. Similarly they appropriately refer to Goffman and other's concepts of the self but with limited development and attempts to relate those points to the question set.

Analysis is limited and evaluation is by way of a juxtaposition between the social actionists and the structuralist approaches of Marxists and feminists. An appropriate evaluation of concept of freedom of choice is made but could be more explicitly related to the set question (paragraph 4).

11 marks

10 mark question

This is the 10 mark application question from the Crime and Deviance section.

The assessment objectives here are: 3 marks for AO1, 4 marks for AO2 and 3 for AO3.

The stem for this question reads: 'Applying material from Item A, analyse two...'

Question 3

Read **Item A** below and answer the question that follows.

Item A

There are differences between social classes in levels of deprivation and access to resources. There are also higher recorded levels of violence committed by people from lower socio-economic backgrounds.

There are reasons for social class differences in becoming a victim of crime.

Applying material from **Item A**, analyse two reasons for social class differences in becoming a victim of crime.

[10 marks]

Mark scheme

Level 3: 8–10 marks

- Answers in this band will show good knowledge and understanding of relevant material on two reasons for social class differences in becoming a victim of crime.
- There will be two developed applications of material from the Item, eg the working class are more likely to be victims of crime due to deprivation and lack of resources to be able to protect themselves from vandalism and theft (radical victimology); those from lower socioeconomic backgrounds cause their own risk of being a victim of crime due to their higher levels of violent behaviour (positivist victimology).
- There will be appropriate analysis/evaluation of two ways, eg the extent to which the working class precipitate (cause) their own risk of being a victim of crime.

Level 2: 4–7 marks

- Answers in this band will show a basic to reasonable knowledge and understanding of one or two reasons for social class differences in becoming a victim of crime.
- There will be some successful application of material from the Item, eg the working class are more likely to become a victim crime as they live in areas of deprivation with higher levels of crime. There will be some analysis/evaluation.

Level 1: 1–3 marks

- Answers in this band will show limited knowledge and understanding of one or two reasons for social class differences in becoming a victim of crime.
- There will be limited application of material from the Item. Some material may be at a tangent to the question, eg drift into explanations of social class differences of offending.
- There will be limited or no analysis/evaluation.

0 mark

No relevant points.

Sources may include the following or other relevant ones:

- Christie
- Cohen and Felson
- Hoyle
- Lea and Young
- Lees
- Mawby and Walklate
- Mendelsohn
- Miers
- Newburn and Rock
- Tombs and Whyte
- Von Hentig
- Walklate
- Wilson and Kelling
- Wolfgang.

Student responses

Response A

One reason for social class differences in becoming a victim of crime may be as mentioned in the stem because of higher levels of violence committed by people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. This means that people who are culturally and materially deprived will live in areas that will record higher levels of criminal activity. There may be some neighbourhoods that are more dangerous and means that people from working classes will be more exposed to crime, increasing the possibility of becoming a victim of violence. Disorder and urban disorganised conflict subcultures which arise in areas of high population turnover may prevent a stable criminal network from developing. This means that in such areas there will be more gangs and different groups that may be prone to violence. This means that people living in such areas which tend to be from lower classes will have increased chances of being a victim of crime. Violent gangs may have the tendency to attack innocent people due to unexplainable purposes that do not have to be materialistic. It could be because of the way someone dresses or acts which may span violent tendencies. On the other hand it can be said that people living in poorer areas may not necessarily

are more prone to being victims of crime as they are adapted
 Extra space to such environment and know how to act to avoid
 worst confrontations. Additionally it can be said that offending
 depends on the type of neighbourhood and the types of subcultures
 that arise in it. Not all deprived areas will have worst situations.

Another reason for social class difference in becoming a victim
 of crime may be differences in levels of deprivation and access
 to resources. It can be said that working class members tend
 to experience limited opportunities and may feel relatively
 deprived in comparison to other people in the society. Left-realists
 would argue that relative deprivation is one of the causes of crime
 especially because of the type of consumerism that is identified when
 increasing the feeling of frustration even more in the working class.
 This may lead to an increase in snatching or robbing of people
 from the middle class. It can be said that middle classes
 are more prone to being victims because of this. They have certain
 distinctive characteristics which make them more prone to becoming
 victims of crime which is called victim propensity. This could include
 designer clothes, jewellery, handbags. On the other hand it can be
 said that in middle class neighbourhoods there is increased surveillance
 and CCTV cameras which actually may discourage working class
 people from snatching them due to an increased risk of being
 caught. If the costs and risks are too high they may not choose
 to pursue these actions.

This is a Level 3 response

This answer shows a good knowledge and understanding of the presented material, both reasons for social class differences were taken from the Item, namely higher levels of violence committed by people from lower socio-economic backgrounds, and class differences in levels of deprivation and access to resources.

Both reasons were developed, for example higher risk of violence was appropriately related to Cloward and Ohlins study of criminal subcultures based in areas of high crime rates and more risk of violence. The student also reasons that people living in such working class areas are more likely to become victims of crime.

Appropriate analysis/evaluation is evident from the clearly argued point that relative deprivation is likely to lead to blocked opportunities for the working class, and as a consequence they are more likely to turn to crime against the relatively more affluent middle class, who then are more at risk of becoming a victim of crime. Evaluative awareness is then shown that the middle are better resourced to prevent crime by for example the use of surveillance eg cameras.

8 marks

Response B

Living in an area of [deprivation with little to no resources], there is an inevitability to utilitarian crime. ^{If} people in a neighbourhood are materially deprived and often feel like they have nothing to lose, they are likely to ~~fastly~~ take the risk of committing a crime, as the potential reward outweighs the costs. This is why when living in a deprived area as a member of the working class you are more likely to be the victim of theft or a mugging.

Another reason for social class differences in the chance of becoming a victim of a crime is, as stated in the item, there are higher recorded levels of violence committed by people from lower socio-economic backgrounds. Non-utilitarian crime is also very common among the working class because their relative deprivation leads to status frustration. The broken window theory suggests if a window is broken and not immediately fixed by locals or the council it sends

a message that it is an area of crime which
Extra space people do not care about, inviting in more crime.
This theory offers a reason for the growing amount of
violent crimes committed in low income areas which
will result in more people in that area becoming
victims.

This is a Level 2 response

This response shows a more basic knowledge and understanding of two reasons for social class differences in becoming a victim.

Both reasons are taken from the item, however development shows too little sociology and is more related to explaining why these reasons are likely to lead to some groups becoming criminal, rather than as the question asks for, becoming a victim of crime.

Some analysis is shown by an appropriate explanation of why the working class are more likely to become a victim of mugging (paragraph 1).

5 marks

6 mark question

This 6 mark short answer question is also from the Crime and Deviance section.

All 6 marks are allocated to assessment objective AO1, and the stem is 'Outline three ...'

Question 2

Outline three different ways in which crime prevention strategies may reduce crime.

[6 marks]

Mark scheme

2 marks for each of three appropriate ways clearly outlined or 1 mark for each appropriate way partially outlined. Answers may include:

- target hardening such as increased surveillance deters people from committing crime (1 mark) people are less likely to choose to commit a crime if they think they are likely to be caught (+1 mark)
- zero tolerance strategies increase the risks of committing crime (1 mark) the risks begin to outweigh the benefits of committing crime and so decrease the likelihood of crime (+1 mark)
- reduction of poverty and unemployment attempts to reduce the likelihood of crimes (1 mark) the reduction in inequality and deprivation is likely to reduce feelings of relative deprivation that can result in crime (+1 mark)
- punishment prevents individuals from being able to commit crime (1 mark) prisons take individuals off the streets and therefore they cannot commit further crime put them in prison/give them a fine (+1 mark)
- a multi-agency approach leads to a better understanding of the issues faced by criminals and support can be offered (1 mark) the police, social workers, teachers and doctors increasingly work together to support individuals to reduce their risk of offending (+1 mark)
- naming a type of overarching crime prevention strategy such as situation/environmental/social and community (+ 1 mark) describing how this may reduce crime with an example such as increasing the risk of being caught (+ 1 mark)
- other relevant material should be credited
- no marks for no relevant points

Student responses

Response A

One crime prevention strategy that may reduce crime is a zero tolerance policy suggested by right realists. They suggest that by targeting all levels of crime this will deter all types of offenders and will therefore reduce crime.

Another crime prevention strategy, suggested by left realists, is the focus on wider social problems such as marginalisation and relative deprivation. By focusing on and solving these issues individuals will have less motive to turn to crime as they will be able to achieve the social approved goals through social approved means, thus reducing crime.

Surveillance is another crime prevention strategy that may reduce crime. As offenders may be deterred if the risk of them being caught through CCTV is too high - this therefore reduces crime.

This is a Level 2 response

Three appropriate ways were identified (1 mark each) and clearly outlined (a further mark each): zero-tolerance, focus on wider social problems eg relative deprivation, and surveillance.

6 marks

Response B

One crime prevention strategy is zero tolerance, this strategy may reduce crime as if criminals believe for crimes such as shoplifting or vandalism the consequences are worth it they will commit it, however if police take a zero tolerance approach criminals may feel less obligated to do so. Secondly another prevention strategy is fines, this may reduce crime as ~~per~~ individuals may know how much it is and know they can't afford a fine. Thirdly longer sentences, criminals may be less likely to commit the crime if a longer sentence is the consequence, this is because some criminals believe some sentences are worth the time, however if they were longer maybe it would make the criminal think twice.

This is a Level 1 response

In this case just two appropriate ways were identified (1 mark each) and clearly outlined (a further mark each): zero-tolerance and longer sentences.

4 marks

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