GCSE

SOCIOLOGY

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

8192
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General Comments

There was a wide range of responses from students on paper 2. It was pleasing to see that most found the paper accessible, and there was a marked decrease in the number of questions that were left unattempted. As compared to 2019 (the last time a whole cohort sat the exam), students were much better able to manage their time, meaning fewer rushed responses, and more balanced papers overall.

Students were mainly well prepared for the exam, demonstrating good knowledge and understanding of the specification. This was particularly evident with most of the 12 mark questions, where the advanced material was used well. However, certain sections of the specification had clearly been covered less thoroughly in some schools. This was particularly evident in the case of questions 4, 8, 9, 10, 17, 18, 19, and 20. Schools should be reminded that the specification should be used as the guide for teaching, not the textbooks.

In the main, students had a much better understanding of how to access marks in the questions. Knowledge and understanding in particular were impressive, and although an improvement was seen from 2019, analysis and evaluation were still not as strong. There was a particular tendency for a minority of students to heavily rely on material from the sociology of education in this section - although the paper is synoptic in nature, this was often to such an extent that it limited responses.

There is also confusion between some key research method knowledge eg between reliability and validity, qualitative and quantitative etc. Schools should address the usage of the word 'accurate', which is very ambiguous. Students used 'Accurate' to mean validity/ reliability/representativeness The lack of development here lead to lower band marks.

Question 1

The vast majority of students identified choice A, the dark figure correctly.

Question 2

Most students were able to identify choice C, the criminal justice system.

Question 3

This question saw most students able to access marks, but tended to focus on construction of norms and values. Few students referenced time, place, social situation or culture - those that did generally seemed to be better quality responses. In many cases, answers were fragmented and lacked quality.

Question 4

Unfortunately, there were many lower quality responses to this question. Many students answered this question incorrectly, either conflating corporate crime with white collar crime, or referencing acting together/joint enterprise.

Question 5

Most students were able to access marks in this question - the vast majority of them identifying the dark figure of crime. However, many students were unable to develop the point to a good enough extent to access the second mark.

Question 6

This was a well answered question. Many students referenced the work of Cohen or Merton, and were able to develop their responses to ensure higher band marks. Other students cited poverty and inequality as a reason, linking to marxist theory. Some students referenced negative labelling, but many wandered into the sociology of education in their response, meaning lower level marks.

Questions 7

Most students were able to access marks to this question. Most responses spoke about how behaviour changes when subjects are being observed, but only a minority were able to cite the observer effect or the Hawthorne effect. Some students mixed up overt and covert, meaning that they were not able to access marks.

Question 8

This was a well answered question, with the vast majority of students able to access some marks. Students made good use of the item to identify Carlens research method, although many were unable to develop this further, making weak reference to the class and gender deals without further development, A surprising amount of students were unable to identify Carlen as a feminist, limiting the banding of their response.

Question 9

The majority of students spoke about the difficulty in comparing results. Answers were often generalised, and there was confusion between what qualitative and quantitative methods were, suggesting a lack of understanding of the methods. More successful answers linked the method to youth crime, and focussed on the ethical issues of being present when crime is committed.

Question 10

There were some good responses to this essay. Many students demonstrated good understanding of different theories and ideas towards prisons, ideas around functionalist and Marxist theories were often well developed. A number of sociological terms were correctly applied in the essays, for example the Functionalist ideas around maintaining social norms and values, boundary maintenance, maintaining social control, reassuring the public about law and order. Contrasting ideas from Marxists were also evident - the exploitation of the working class and the needs of the Bourgeoisie in maintaining rule over the weaker social group to allow for continued exploitation. Some students also included reference to informal social control which did not relate to the question, there was also over use of Feminist theory which was not relevant to the question.

Question 11

A very well answered question. Stronger answers related labelling to crime and deviance and also contrasted this with Functionalist ideas from Cohen and subcultures. Alternative explanations were also offered and some students referenced edgework. However, many students focussed their answers on labelling in schools - anti-school subcultures etc. Schools should advise students against doing this.

Question 12

A significant number of students chose incorrect options to this answer, but most were able to identify option C, relative poverty.

Question 13

This was a well answered question, with most students able to identify the correct option D, patriarchy.

Question 14

The vast majority of students were able to access marks to this question, with most referring to social class. Other creditworthy answers referred to ethnicity, feudalism and apartheid.

Question 15

There were a range of responses to this question - many students spoke about the working classes, but the weaker responses only referred to 'the poor'. Other responses referred to ethnic minority groups and women. Some responses focussed on those on benefits and single mothers, but lacked development and included much conjecture.

Question 16

Students were able to access marks in this question. Most responses spoke about the comparability of data, but did not develop the response for the second mark. There was also a tendency to give a feature of the data as an advantage i.e. it is quantitative.

Question 17

Some students referred to negative labelling from teachers but did not relate it to not going to university. The question was not answered directly enough or well enough to gain full marks. Some of the better answers were around discrimination and problems that some students may face. This was another question which saw a large number of students giving answers more suited to the sociology of education section.

Question 18

This was not a well answered question. It is clear that most students did not know what ethnography is. Most students referred to ethnicity and comparisons. There were some creditworthy responses, as students were able to identify ethnography as an in depth, qualitative method that takes place over a long period of time.

Question 19

This question drew a range of responses, and most students were able to identify one of the patriarchal structures that were included in the item, and develop it to some extent. Better responses were able to develop their explanation, and correctly identified Walby as a feminist. A minority of students were unable to identify one of the structures, despite them being listed in the item.

Question 20

Again, this question saw a range of responses. Better answers referred to ideas such as lack of educational opportunity, lack of healthcare and the cycle of deprivation. However, many students failed to develop their responses beyond a basic explanation of these factors, limiting the marks available.

Question 21

A very well answered question, which shows students clearly made good use of the advanced information. Most students had a good understanding of the concept of meritocracy, and referenced the work Davis and Moore with varying degrees of accuracy. Most students juxtaposed the Functionalist view with a Marxist interpretation. Stronger responses included the feminist perspective, and made some excellent conclusions. Weaker responses covered general points about fairness in society.

Question 22

This final essay drew a range of responses. Most students cited the work of Murray as an argument to suggest that the welfare state has not reduced poverty, suggesting that it has failed. Some students struggled with the other side of the argument however, incorrectly stating that Marxists saw the welfare state as a positive. The responses covered the work of Functionalists and the belief that the Welfare State supports people temporarily when they need it the most. Other good ideas came around Feminism and the fact that women are supported at times when needed but a different side was also covered and this was the idea that the Welfare State did not support women well enough and that this was an evidence of further control and patriarchy in society. These responses also acknowledged that the welfare state was more than just benefits.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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