3.2 Left Realist Criminology and Community-Based Crime Prevention

AQA 7192 · about 55 minutes · Write-in edition

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Use sociological terms where appropriate. Questions 6 requires full sentences and a clear conclusion.

1 Compare briefly how left realists and right realists differ in their focus when proposing solutions to crime in a neighbourhood with high youth offending.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 Identify one specific multi-agency partner that left realists would include in a local crime reduction strategy.

(Total for Question 2 is 1 mark)

3 Explain two ways community policing, as part of a left realist approach, might reduce fear of crime and improve community relations in a deprived estate.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

4 Outline the left realist concept of a 'victim centred' approach to crime prevention in a neighbourhood affected by antisocial behaviour.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

5 Explain one reason why left realists place importance on local community perceptions of crime and the fear of crime when designing prevention policies.

(Total for Question 5 is 3 marks)

6 Item B: A report on the fictional Riverside Estate shows rising petty theft, low employment and poor relations between youth and police. Using Item B and your own knowledge, evaluate the left realist explanation of why crime occurs in places like Riverside Estate and the left realist solution of multi-agency community prevention. Make sure you reach a supported conclusion.

Discuss how far sociologists would agree that left realist explanations and community-based solutions offer the best way to understand and reduce crime in estates such as Riverside Estate. Use Item B and your sociological knowledge in your answer.

(Total for Question 6 is 12 marks)

7 Define the term 'community-based multi-agency prevention' as it is used by left realists proposing local crime reduction schemes.

(Total for Question 7 is 2 marks)

8 Define the left realist use of the term 'relative deprivation' as it is used in explanations of crime and social unrest.

(Total for Question 8 is 2 marks)

9 Explain how left realists use the concept of marginalisation to explain why some groups may commit crime in inner-city areas.

(Total for Question 9 is 4 marks)

10 Define Young's 'square of crime' as used by left realists studying urban crime problems.

(Total for Question 10 is 2 marks)

11 Describe one example of a community-based crime prevention policy that left realists might support in a deprived urban area.

(Total for Question 11 is 3 marks)

12 State one common criticism of left realist explanations of crime from other sociological perspectives.

(Total for Question 12 is 2 marks)

Mark scheme · 3.2 Left Realist Criminology and Community-Based Crime Prevention

Question 1

identifies left realist focus on structural causes, victims and community interventions	**B1**
identifies right realist focus on individual responsibility, deterrence and harsher control	**B1**
explains a difference, e.g. left realism favours multi-agency prevention while right realism favours tougher policing and punishment	**B1**
development noting the contrast in who is helped or targeted, for example left realists aim to help victims and reduce inequality, right realists emphasise control of offenders	**B1**

Answer: Left realists focus on structural causes, victim support and community-based, multi-agency prevention, while right realists emphasise individual responsibility, deterrence and tougher control; left realism seeks to reduce causes and help communities, whereas right realism stresses punishment and control of offenders.

Question 2

identifies one realistic partner, e.g. youth services, social services, schools, local housing authority, health services or police	**B1**

Answer: Youth services (other acceptable answers include social services, schools, housing authority, health services or police).

Question 3

identifies community policing increases police presence and visibility	**B1**
explains how visibility can reduce fear and deter low-level offending	**B1**
identifies community policing builds relationships and trust between police and residents	**B1**
explains how improved trust encourages reporting and co-operation, helping tackle crime and support victims	**B1**

Answer: Community policing increases visible local police presence, which can deter low-level offending and reduce fear, and it builds relationships and trust so residents are more likely to report crime and cooperate, improving victim support and problem solving.

Question 4

identifies that a victim centred approach prioritises victims needs and reduces harm	**B1**
development, e.g. provides practical support, improved reporting channels and restorative measures to help victims	**B1**

Answer: A victim centred approach prioritises victims needs and reducing harm, providing practical support, better reporting channels and restorative measures so victims are helped and communities feel safer.

Question 5

identifies that fear of crime affects quality of life and social cohesion	**B1**
development, e.g. high fear can reduce community interaction and informal social control	**B1**
links this to policy, e.g. reducing fear can help restore neighbourhood order and reduce opportunities for crime	**B1**

Answer: Left realists stress local perceptions because fear of crime harms quality of life and social cohesion; high fear reduces community interaction and informal social control, so reducing fear is a key policy aim to restore order and lower crime opportunities.

Question 6

Level 1 Basic knowledge of left realist ideas with limited application to Item B, minimal analysis and no sustained evaluation. Conclusions, if present, are unsupported. **1-3**

Level 2 Some accurate knowledge of left realist concepts and policies with straightforward application to Item B. Some analysis of strengths and weaknesses, but limited depth and an undeveloped conclusion. **4-6**

Level 3 Clear and accurate knowledge of left realist explanations and community responses, with good application to Item B. Balanced analysis considering alternative sociological perspectives and evaluation of effectiveness, leading to a reasoned conclusion. **7-9**

Level 4 Thorough and accurate knowledge of left realist theory and policies, well applied to Item B. Detailed, balanced evaluation that weighs empirical and theoretical strengths and limitations, compares with other perspectives, and reaches a well-supported, explicit conclusion. **10-12**

Indicative content:

- Explain left realist causes: relative deprivation, marginalisation, subcultural responses, and the square of crime linking offender, victim, state and public.
- Apply to Item B: low employment links to marginalisation; rising petty theft linked to relative deprivation; poor relations with police increase distrust and underreporting, fitting the square of crime idea.
- Strengths of left realism: focuses on real victims and local-level causes, offers practical, community-focused policies such as multi-agency work and victim support, can restore trust and reduce fear.
- Limitations and criticisms: may underplay deeper structural causes of crime and capitalism, risk of insufficient resources for multi-agency schemes, potential to neglect long-term economic change, and evidence on effectiveness may be mixed.
- Compare other perspectives: right realism emphasises control and deterrence which may reduce short term offending but neglects root causes; Marxist approaches stress class structure and capitalism as underlying causes; interactionism highlights meanings and labelling which left realism accepts only partially.
- Evaluation of policy: community policing and job initiatives may reduce petty crime in the short term, but without broader economic investment and tackling inequality their effects may be limited. Consider evidence for mixed outcomes and the importance of local implementation.
- Conclusion should weigh evidence and argue whether left realist explanations and community solutions are convincing overall, for example useful and pragmatic but incomplete without wider structural change.

Question 7

identifies multi-agency prevention as coordinated action by local agencies such as police, youth services, housing and health to prevent crime **B1**

development, e.g. explains the aim is to combine resources to tackle causes, help victims and reduce opportunities for crime **B1**

Answer: Community-based multi-agency prevention is coordinated action by local partners such as police, youth services, housing and health to prevent crime, aiming to combine resources to tackle causes, help victims and reduce opportunities for offending.

Question 8

identifies that relative deprivation is feeling deprived compared with others or with expected standards, not absolute poverty (oe) **B1**

development, e.g. left realists link relative deprivation to frustration and rising crime where people compare themselves unfavourably with others **B1**

Answer: Relative deprivation is feeling deprived compared with others or with expected standards rather than absolute poverty; left realists link it to frustration that can increase offending when people see unfair gaps between expectations and reality.

Question 9

identifies marginalisation as exclusion from jobs, organisations and political voice **B1**

development, e.g. marginalised groups lack clear organised means to improve their situation **B1**

links marginalisation to higher rates of unorganised or utilitarian crime **B1**

further development, e.g. marginalisation can produce anger and a search for identity or income through subcultural or criminal activities **B1**

Answer: Marginalisation means being excluded from secure employment, political voice and organised groups; without legitimate channels to improve their position, marginalised people may resort to unorganised or utilitarian crime, and may seek identity or resources through subcultural or criminal activity.

Question 10

identifies the four elements: offender, victim, state and public **B1**

development, e.g. explains that interaction between these four produces the social reality of crime **B1**

Answer: Young's square of crime comprises four elements, offender, victim, state and public, and left realists argue crime is best understood by the interactions between these elements in a community.

Question 11

identifies a community-based policy, e.g. multi-agency youth outreach, environmental improvements, or local CCTV combined with community oversight **B1**

development, e.g. explains how the policy aims to reduce opportunities for crime or increase informal social control **B1**

further development, e.g. links the policy to left realist goals of helping victims and reducing root causes **B1**

Answer: An example is multi-agency youth outreach combining youth workers, local police and job advisors to provide activities, employment help and positive supervision; this reduces opportunities for crime, increases informal social control and addresses root causes in line with left realist aims.

Question 12

identifies a recognised criticism, e.g. that left realism accepts the reality of crime but underplays structural class analysis or fails to challenge capitalism strongly enough	**B1**
brief development, e.g. Marxists argue left realism does not fully explain wider economic causes	**B1**

Answer: A common criticism is that left realism accepts the reality of crime but underestimates deeper structural causes tied to capitalism, with Marxists arguing it does not offer a strong enough critique of economic inequality.