3.4 Green Crime and State Crime as Categories of Harm: 30-minute Pack

AQA 7192 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Write full sentences for the longer, 10-mark and 12-mark questions.

1 Using Item B and your knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of green crime and state crime, and reach a supported judgement.

(Total for Question 1 is 12 marks)

2 Define what sociologists mean by a 'primary green crime' in the study of environmental harm.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

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3 Identify and explain one way primary green crimes differ from secondary green crimes in the context of environmental harm.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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4 Item A: Short research summary on measuring state crime, to be used for the following 10-mark question. Item A: In a comparative study, researchers found two main problems when trying to define and measure state crime. First, states often control information and limit independent investigation, producing gaps in reliable data. Second, what counts as a 'state crime' can be disputed, for example whether severe human rights abuses that occur during wartime are classified as crimes or as legitimate acts of state security. The researchers gave examples from several countries where different political regimes either denied abuses or justified them as necessary for national security.

Using Item A and your sociological knowledge, analyse two reasons why state crime is difficult to define or measure.

(Total for Question 4 is 10 marks)

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Mark scheme · 3.4 Green Crime and State Crime as Categories of Harm: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

Level 1 Provides a basic response with limited sociological explanation or application to Item B, showing little evaluation or unsupported assertion.	**1-3**
Level 2 Provides clear sociological points and some use of Item B, with limited evaluation. Arguments for one side may be developed but counter-arguments are weak or underdeveloped.	**4-6**
Level 3 Good evaluation with developed use of Item B and several sociological perspectives. Arguments are balanced, showing an understanding of explanations such as corporate profit motive, state policy and alternative views.	**7-9**
Level 4 Thorough, well-developed evaluation that integrates Item B with multiple sociological explanations and evidence, addresses limitations and counter-arguments, and arrives at a clear, supported judgement.	**10-12**

Indicative content:

- Arguments that support state responsibility and corporate profit motives: Item B links large scale industrial agriculture and state sanctioned projects to habitat loss and displacement; Marxist or green Marxist explanations emphasise capitalist profit motives and state-corporate collusion to prioritise development and accumulation over environmental protection.
- State crime perspective: Green and Ward and others argue that when states sanction harmful projects they can be party to both green crime and state crime, especially if human rights abuses or displacement take place, supporting the idea that state responsibility is central.
- Role of globalisation and neoliberal policy: policies promoting foreign investment and deregulation can increase corporate opportunities to cause environmental harm with state encouragement, a structural explanation linking global capitalism to green crimes.
- Alternative or complementary explanations: some interactionist or ecological sociology perspectives focus on definitional issues and cultural values, arguing that differing cultural attitudes towards nature shape what is seen as harm; legalistic accounts emphasise gaps in law and enforcement rather than motives alone.
- Limits of attributing all harm to profit or the state: not all environmental damage is intentional; some arises from unintended consequences, lack of knowledge, or technological change. Also states may sometimes enact environmental protections and punish polluters, showing variation in state behaviour.
- Methodological and ethical considerations: evidence of state complicity may be concealed, as in Item B, making it hard to prove intent or criminality; this supports cautious evaluation rather than a single-cause explanation.
- Empirical evidence and case studies: reference to real cases, such as state-backed infrastructure projects causing displacement, corporate pollution scandals and mixed international responses, strengthens argumentation.
- Conclusion should weigh the strength of structural explanations linking profit and state policy against alternative explanations and conclude how far sociologists would agree, offering a supported judgement that state responsibility and corporate motives are important but not sole causes.

Question 2

identifies that a primary green crime directly damages the natural environment, for example pollution or species decline (oe)	**B1**
development, e.g. examples such as air pollution, illegal dumping that causes water contamination, deforestation or wildlife extinction	**B1**

Answer: A primary green crime directly damages the natural environment, for example air or water pollution, land contamination, deforestation or actions that cause species decline.

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Question 3

identifies a valid difference, e.g. primary green crimes are direct harms to ecosystems, while secondary green crimes involve breaches of regulatory law or corporate/state wrongdoing	**B1**
explains the identified difference, e.g. primary crime example like oil spills directly damage habitats, whereas secondary crime example like falsifying emissions tests shows a failure of institutions to prevent harm	**B1**
gives a second valid difference or further development, e.g. primary crimes may be visible ecological damage, secondary crimes involve social or legal processes that allow damage to occur	**B1**
explains the second point, e.g. secondary crimes can include state or corporate evasion of laws, which may be motivated by profit or political priorities	**B1**

Answer: Primary green crimes directly damage ecosystems, such as oil spills or industrial toxic discharge, while secondary green crimes involve breaches of regulations or institutional failure, such as companies falsifying emissions tests or states allowing illegal dumping. Primary crimes result in visible ecological harm, whereas secondary crimes show how social or legal processes permit that harm.

Question 4

Level 1 A basic answer that makes one or two simple points about difficulties in defining or measuring state crime, with minimal use of Item A or sociological knowledge.	**1-3**
Level 2 A clear answer that analyses one or two relevant difficulties, using Item A and some sociological knowledge, but with limited development or balance.	**4-6**
Level 3 A good answer that analyses two distinct and relevant reasons, integrates Item A with sociological concepts, and provides developed examples or explanations.	**7-8**
Level 4 A thorough analysis of two well-explained reasons why state crime is difficult to define or measure, with strong integration of Item A, multiple developed examples and clear sociological insight.	**9-10**

Indicative content:

- State secrecy and control of information, as Item A states: governments may restrict journalists, limit access to archives and block investigations, reducing available data and creating under-reporting.
- Political definitions and contested legality: what one group calls a human rights violation another defends as legitimate state action in war or emergency, producing disagreement over whether acts should be called crimes.
- States may use propaganda or denial strategies to conceal abuses, linking to Cohen's states of denial: denial of injury, denial of victim, denial of responsibility, and appeal to higher loyalties.
- International variation in laws and institutions: differences in human rights protections, judiciary independence and willingness of other states to intervene complicate cross-national measurement.
- Methodological problems: reliance on secondary sources, NGO reports or refugee testimonies can raise issues of reliability and representativeness but may be the only evidence available.
- Practical and ethical barriers to research: investigators face danger, restricted access and ethical issues when interviewing victims of state violence, reducing data quality and quantity.

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