5.1 Formal and Informal Social Control: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8192 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Use sociological vocabulary and give clear examples where asked.

1 Evaluate the view that informal methods of social control are more important than formal methods in preventing crime and deviance in society. In your answer you should consider more than one point of view.

(Total for Question 1 is 12 marks)

2 Sociologists distinguish 'deviance' from ordinary rule-following behaviour. Define deviance.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

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3 Sociologists are careful to distinguish crime from the wider concept of deviance. Explain the difference between crime and deviance.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

4 State two agencies that make up the formal criminal justice system, other than the police.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

5 Explain why this argument might be made.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 5.1 Formal and Informal Social Control: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

Level 4 A detailed, well-balanced evaluation that accurately explains BOTH the case for informal control AND the case for formal control, supported by accurate examples and sociological terminology. Strengths and weaknesses of each view are analysed, and a reasoned, supported judgement is reached.	**10-12**
Level 3 A clear evaluation that explains both the case for informal control and the case for formal control, with accurate examples. Some analysis of strengths/weaknesses. An attempt at a conclusion, which may be only partly supported.	**7-9**
Level 2 Some relevant explanation of informal and/or formal control, with limited development or accuracy. Little clear evaluation or comparison between the two.	**4-6**
Level 1 One or two isolated, undeveloped points about informal or formal control, with little or no sociological terminology or accurate detail.	**1-3**
Level 0 No relevant content.	**0**

Indicative content:

- Case for informal control: it operates continuously in everyday settings (family, peers, community, workplace) and can prevent deviant or criminal behaviour before it happens, through fear of disapproval or exclusion.
- Case for informal control continued: socialisation into shared norms and values, largely carried out informally through the family and peer group, means most people conform most of the time without ever encountering the criminal justice system.
- Case for formal control: it provides a visible, consistent deterrent backed by the power of the state, applying specific written sanctions (fines, prison) that informal groups cannot impose.
- Case for formal control continued: formal control is especially important for serious crimes, and for situations where informal ties are weak or absent, such as between strangers in public.
- Evaluation of the case for informal control: its effectiveness may depend heavily on how strong an individual's social ties are; someone with weak family or community ties may be much less affected by informal disapproval.
- Evaluation of the case for formal control: it usually only responds after a crime is reported or discovered, so it depends on detection, and its deterrent effect on already-determined offenders can be limited.
- A balanced conclusion should weigh the wide, everyday preventive reach of informal control against the seriousness and consistency of the sanctions only formal control can apply, without claiming either removes the need for the other.

Question 2

behaviour that goes against the shared norms and values of a social group, and is likely to be disapproved of or sanctioned (oe)	**B1**
development, e.g. distinct from legal crime, since deviance is judged by social groups and does not have to break a law	**B1**

Answer: Behaviour that goes against the shared norms and values of a social group and is likely to be disapproved of; unlike crime, deviance does not have to break a law to be judged this way.

Question 3

identifies deviance as behaviour that breaks the shared norms and values of a social group	**B1**
identifies crime as a narrower category: behaviour that specifically breaks a written law of the state	**B1**
explains that all crime is therefore also deviant, but not all deviance is criminal	**B1**
development, e.g. crime is legally defined and enforced by the state, while deviance is socially defined and can be judged by any social group	**B1**

Answer: Deviance is behaviour that breaks a social group's shared norms and values; crime is the narrower category of behaviour that breaks a written law of the state. All crime is therefore deviant, but not all deviance is criminal.

Question 4

one correct agency, e.g. the courts	**B1**
a second, different correct agency, e.g. the prison or probation service	**B1**

Answer: The courts, and the prison or probation service.

Question 5

identifies that informal control operates continuously in everyday life, before any law is broken	**B1**
development, e.g. fear of a family's, friends' or community's disapproval can stop rule-breaking that the police would never see or become involved in	**B1**
further point, e.g. formal control usually only reacts after a crime has been reported or discovered, so its reach depends on detection	**B1**
development, e.g. informal control's constant, everyday presence gives it a wider preventive reach in ordinary situations than a criminal justice system most people rarely encounter	**B1**

Answer: Informal control operates continuously in everyday life, so fear of disapproval from family, friends or the community can prevent rule-breaking the police never see, whereas formal control usually only reacts once a crime has already been reported or discovered.

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