



GSOC.CR11 Environmental Crime Prevention: Broken Windows and Zero Tolerance Policing

AQA 8192 · Calculators not allowed · about 70 minutes

Total Marks

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Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Write full sentences for questions worth 4 marks or more. Use sociological terms where appropriate.

- 1** Which pair of sociologists proposed the 'broken windows' theory about neighbourhood disorder and crime in the United States?

- ☐ A) Wilson and Kelling
- ☐ B) Merton and Cohen
- ☐ C) Becker and Goffman
- ☐ D) Hirschi and Matza

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

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- 2** Define the term 'environmental crime prevention' as used in neighbourhood policing contexts.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

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- 3** Outline one main claim of Wilson and Kelling's broken windows theory about visible disorder in a neighbourhood.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

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- 4** Identify and explain two features of zero tolerance policing as it was applied in neighbourhoods inspired by 1990s New York policing.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

- 5** Describe one way visible neglect, like broken windows or litter, might affect residents feelings of safety in an urban neighbourhood.

(Total for Question 5 is 3 marks)

- 6** Explain two criticisms sociologists have made of broken windows theory and zero tolerance policing.

(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)

- 7** State one historical example, mentioned in GCSE level discussion, of a city that adopted policing inspired by broken windows and zero tolerance in the 1990s.

(Total for Question 7 is 2 marks)

- 8** Explain one practical policing action that shows a zero tolerance approach when applied to a UK high street neighbourhood.

(Total for Question 8 is 2 marks)

- 9** Item A: A chart produced by a local council shows that between 2015 and 2019 reports of vandalism in a small town fell by 28 percent after a programme to clear graffiti and repair broken windows. However, recorded robberies in the same period remained about the same. Using Item A and your knowledge of broken windows theory, explain two possible reasons why vandalism fell while robberies did not change.

(Total for Question 9 is 4 marks)

- 10** Explain two ways zero tolerance policing might affect relations between police and local communities in a neighbourhood.

(Total for Question 10 is 4 marks)

- 11** State one strength of using visible environmental improvements, such as fixing broken windows, as part of a crime reduction strategy.

(Total for Question 11 is 2 marks)

- 12** Define the 'zero tolerance' approach to policing as applied to neighbourhood disorder in the UK or US context.

(Total for Question 12 is 2 marks)

- 13** Compare zero tolerance policing with community policing as alternative neighbourhood strategies, giving two differences.

(Total for Question 13 is 4 marks)

- 14** Explain one ethical concern about zero tolerance policing in relation to human rights or fairness in a diverse urban neighbourhood.

(Total for Question 14 is 2 marks)

- 15** Explain two reasons proponents give for why zero tolerance policing might reduce petty crime in city neighbourhoods.

(Total for Question 15 is 4 marks)

- 16** Discuss how far sociologists would agree that zero tolerance policing is an effective response to crime in urban neighbourhoods. In your answer, consider different sociological perspectives, evidence about outcomes, and possible social consequences. Reach a supported judgement.

(Total for Question 16 is 12 marks)

Mark scheme · GSOC.CR11 Environmental Crime Prevention: Broken Windows and Zero Tolerance Policing

Question 1

- **B1** A (Wilson and Kelling)
- **Answer:** A

Question 2

- **B1** identifies that environmental crime prevention is changing the physical or social environment to reduce crime (oe)
- **B1** development, e.g. examples such as improving street lighting, removing graffiti, or clearing litter to reduce opportunities and signals for crime
- **Answer:** Environmental crime prevention is changing the physical or social environment to reduce crime, for example improving lighting, removing graffiti or clearing litter to reduce opportunities and signals for offending.

Question 3

- **B1** identifies the claim that visible signs of disorder, such as broken windows or graffiti, signal a lack of social control
- **B1** development, e.g. this absence of control then encourages more serious crime to develop in that area
- **Answer:** They claim that visible signs of disorder, like broken windows or graffiti, signal a lack of social control and that this can encourage more serious crime in the area.

Question 4

- **B1** identifies a feature, e.g. rigorous enforcement of minor offences such as public drinking or subway fare evasion
- **B1** explains how it works, e.g. policing minor disorder is intended to prevent escalation into more serious crimes by restoring order
- **B1** identifies a second feature, e.g. high police visibility and proactive stop-and-search or stop-and-question actions
- **B1** explains how it works, e.g. visible policing is intended to deter both minor and potential serious offenders and reassure residents
- **Answer:** Features include rigorous enforcement of minor offences, such as public drinking or fare evasion, intended to prevent escalation into more serious crimes; and high visible policing, including proactive stops, intended to deter offenders and reassure residents.

Question 5

- **B1** identifies a way, e.g. residents may feel less safe or more fearful when they see signs of neglect
- **B1** development, e.g. they might avoid going out at night or change routines to reduce perceived risk
- **B1** further development, e.g. decreased social interaction and fewer people on the street can then further reduce informal social control
- **Answer:** Residents may feel less safe when they see neglect such as broken windows, leading them to avoid going out at night or change routines, which can reduce social interaction and informal social control on the street.

Question 6

- **B1** identifies one criticism, e.g. it can criminalise poverty and target marginalised groups for minor offences
- **B1** develops that criticism, e.g. increased arrests for petty offences can disproportionately affect young people, ethnic minorities or the homeless
- **B1** identifies a second criticism, e.g. it may displace crime or ignore structural causes like poverty and lack of services
- **B1** develops the second criticism, e.g. focusing on minor disorder does not address unemployment or housing problems that contribute to serious crime
- **Answer:** Criticisms include that zero tolerance can criminalise poverty and disproportionately target marginalised groups, increasing arrests for minor offences; and that it may displace crime or ignore structural causes such as unemployment and poor housing, which are not fixed by policing minor disorder.

Question 7

- **B1** identifies a correct example, e.g. New York City under some police administrations in the 1990s
- **B1** brief development, e.g. note that this example is often used to illustrate large scale zero tolerance efforts
- **Answer: New York City in the 1990s is commonly given as the example of a city adopting zero tolerance policing inspired by broken windows theory.**

Question 8

- **B1** identifies a practical action, e.g. issuing fixed penalty notices for littering or quickly removing graffiti
- **B1** development, e.g. this is intended to remove visible signs of disorder quickly so they do not encourage more serious offending
- **Answer: A practical action is issuing fixed penalty notices for littering or promptly removing graffiti, intended to remove visible signs of disorder so they do not encourage further offending.**

Question 9

- **B1** identifies a reason, e.g. removing visual signs of disorder reduced opportunities or cues for vandalism specifically
- **B1** develops reason, e.g. community reassurance and immediate environmental repair may directly discourage petty vandalism
- **B1** identifies a second reason, e.g. robberies are influenced by different causes, such as organised offenders, poverty or market for stolen goods, not just visible disorder
- **B1** develops second reason, e.g. therefore fixing windows would not necessarily affect the underlying causes of robbery, so robbery rates stayed the same
- **Answer: Clearing graffiti and repairing broken windows removed visual cues and immediate opportunities for petty vandalism and reassured local people, so vandalism fell; robberies may be driven by different factors such as organised offenders, poverty or markets for stolen goods, which environmental fixes alone do not address, so robbery rates did not change.**

Question 10

- **B1** identifies an effect, e.g. it can increase tension and distrust if officers are seen to target minor offences by marginalised residents
- **B1** develops that effect, e.g. people may feel over-policed, reducing cooperation with police and making intelligence gathering harder
- **B1** identifies a second effect, e.g. it can increase residents sense of safety and trust if minor disorder is visibly addressed and streets feel cleaner
- **B1** develops second effect, e.g. some residents may welcome frequent patrols and rapid removal of disorder, increasing confidence in policing
- **Answer: Zero tolerance may increase tension and distrust where residents feel over-policed and targeted, reducing cooperation and making intelligence gathering harder; alternatively, it may increase some residents sense of safety and trust if minor disorder is visibly tackled and streets feel cleaner, raising confidence in policing.**

Question 11

- **B1** identifies a genuine strength, e.g. quick visible improvements can reassure residents and reduce petty offences
- **B1** brief development, e.g. this can increase footfall and informal social control, discouraging some criminal behaviour
- **Answer: A strength is that quick visible improvements can reassure residents and reduce petty offences, which can increase footfall and informal social control and discourage some criminal behaviour.**

Question 12

- **B1** identifies that zero tolerance means strictly enforcing laws against minor offences and disorder
- **B1** development, e.g. the aim is to prevent escalation into more serious crime by removing signs of disorder and punishing minor breaches quickly
- **Answer: Zero tolerance is the strict enforcement of laws against minor offences and disorder, aiming to prevent escalation into more serious crime by removing signs of disorder and punishing minor breaches quickly.**

Question 13

- **B1** identifies a first difference, e.g. zero tolerance focuses on strict enforcement of existing laws; community policing focuses on partnership and problem solving with residents
- **B1** develops first difference, e.g. community policing may emphasise dialogue and long term relationships rather than immediate sanctions
- **B1** identifies a second difference, e.g. zero tolerance tends to be top down and directive, while community policing is more bottom up and collaborative
- **B1** develops second difference, e.g. community policing may use local priorities and joint initiatives to address root causes rather than relying mainly on enforcement
- **Answer: Zero tolerance focuses on strict enforcement of laws to remove disorder, while community policing emphasises partnership, dialogue and long term problem solving; zero tolerance is often top down and directive, whereas community policing is more bottom up and collaborative, using local priorities to address root causes.**

Question 14

- **B1** identifies an ethical concern, e.g. risk of discriminatory enforcement against ethnic minorities or the homeless
- **B1** develops the concern, e.g. this can lead to breaches of fairness and equal treatment, and may raise human rights questions about targeting vulnerable groups
- **Answer: An ethical concern is discriminatory enforcement, where ethnic minorities or the homeless may be targeted more often, leading to unfair treatment and human rights questions about policing vulnerable groups.**

Question 15

- **B1** identifies a reason, e.g. deterrence: visible enforcement and punishments deter would-be petty offenders
- **B1** develops reason, e.g. immediate consequences for minor acts send a signal that disorder will not be tolerated
- **B1** identifies a second reason, e.g. broken windows logic: removing signs of disorder reduces cues that encourage petty crime
- **B1** develops second reason, e.g. repaired environment can increase guardianship by residents and businesses, reducing opportunities for petty offences
- **Answer: Proponents argue deterrence, where visible enforcement and immediate consequences deter petty offenders, and the broken windows logic, where removing signs of disorder reduces cues encouraging petty crime and increases guardianship by residents and businesses.**

Question 16

- **Level 1** (1-3): Basic statements about zero tolerance with little development. Limited sociological knowledge and few or no contrasting perspectives. Conclusion, if any, is weak or absent.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Some relevant sociological points and at least one perspective presented. Some use of evidence about outcomes or criticisms, but limited depth. A simple judgement is offered with limited support.
- **Level 3** (7-9): Clear discussion including at least two sociological perspectives and some evidence. Considers benefits such as reduced petty crime and criticisms such as displacement or discriminatory effects. Produces a supported judgement.
- **Level 4** (10-12): Thorough, balanced discussion drawing on several perspectives and evidence. Analyses strengths and limitations of zero tolerance, including long term social consequences, community relations and structural causes of crime. Reaches a well-reasoned and supported conclusion that acknowledges uncertainty and trade offs.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Functionalist or New Right style arguments that visible order and strict enforcement can restore social norms and deter crime, citing reductions in petty offences as supportive evidence
 - Empirical evidence claimed by some studies, such as reductions in vandalism or subway crime in specific cases, and the need to weigh correlation versus causation
 - Criticisms from conflict and Marxist-informed perspectives that zero tolerance criminalises poverty and targets marginalised groups, producing discriminatory outcomes
 - Feminist or community-oriented critiques that over-enforcement damages trust between police and communities and can reduce cooperation needed to tackle serious crime
 - Discussion of displacement versus genuine reduction in crime, and the difficulty of attributing long term fall in serious crime to zero tolerance alone due to other factors like economic change, demographic shifts or policing technology
 - Ethical and human rights considerations, including proportionality, fairness and impacts on vulnerable groups such as the homeless
 - Consideration of alternatives, for example community policing, environmental design, and social investment to address root causes
 - A balanced conclusion that recognises zero tolerance may reduce some visible disorder and reassure parts of the community, but also has significant risks and limitations and should not be the sole response to urban crime