



GSOC.CR2 Functionalist and Marxist Explanations of Crime

AQA 8192 · Calculators not allowed · about 75 minutes

Total Marks

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Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Use sociological vocabulary and name sociologists where you can.

1 Durkheim argued that crime performs an important function for society by...

- ☐ A) reaffirming shared values when society reacts to it
- ☐ B) making everyone in society richer
- ☐ C) removing all rule-breaking permanently
- ☐ D) proving that laws are unnecessary

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Durkheim used the concept of 'anomie' when discussing periods of rapid social change.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Durkheim identified more than one function that crime performs for society.

- (a)** Explain what Durkheim meant by crime performing 'boundary maintenance'. (2)

- (b)** Explain what Durkheim meant by crime and deviance allowing for 'adaptation and change'. (2)

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

- 4 The functionalist sociologist Robert Merton offered a different explanation of why crime occurs.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

- 5 Merton described 'innovation' as one possible response to strain.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

- 6 State and briefly explain one other response to strain identified by Merton, other than innovation.

(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)

- 7 State one criticism often made of Merton's strain theory.

(Total for Question 7 is 2 marks)

- 8 Marxist sociologists offer a very different explanation of crime from functionalists.

(Total for Question 8 is 4 marks)

9 Marxists also refer to 'selective law enforcement' when explaining patterns in recorded crime.

(Total for Question 9 is 4 marks)

10 State one example of a type of crime Marxists argue is committed disproportionately by wealthy or powerful people or organisations, but is often underpoliced.

(Total for Question 10 is 2 marks)

11 Which perspective argues that laws mainly serve the interests of the ruling class?

- ☐ A) Functionalism
- ☐ B) Marxism
- ☐ C) Interactionism
- ☐ D) New Right

(Total for Question 11 is 1 mark)

12 A large manufacturing company is found to have broken health and safety regulations, putting workers at risk, but receives only a small fine and no criminal prosecution. In the same month, a person is sent to prison for shoplifting goods worth 50 pounds.

Using your knowledge of Marxist explanations of crime, explain what this scenario might illustrate about the criminal justice system.

(Total for Question 12 is 6 marks)

- 13** Functionalists argue crime and deviance mainly benefit society as a whole. Marxists argue crime and deviance mainly reflect, and serve the interests of, a capitalist ruling class. Evaluate the view that crime and deviance mainly benefit society as a whole (a functionalist view), rather than mainly serving the interests of the ruling class (a Marxist view). In your answer you should refer to sociologists' views and consider more than one perspective.

(Total for Question 13 is 12 marks)

- 14** Durkheim's theory of crime rests on the idea of a shared moral order.

(Total for Question 14 is 2 marks)

- 15** Merton's strain theory relies on a distinction between goals and the ways of reaching them.

(Total for Question 15 is 2 marks)

- 16** State one similarity between the functionalist and Marxist explanations of crime.

(Total for Question 16 is 2 marks)

Mark scheme · GSOC.CR2 Functionalist and Marxist Explanations of Crime

Question 1

- **B1** A (reaffirming shared values when society reacts to it)
- **Answer: A**

Question 2

- **B1** a state of normlessness, when social norms are weak, unclear or breaking down (oe)
- **B1** development, e.g. this can occur during periods of rapid social change, when established norms lose their grip on behaviour
- **Answer: A state of normlessness, when social norms are weak, unclear or breaking down; this can occur during periods of rapid social change, when established norms lose their grip.**

Question 3

- (a) **B1** identifies that publicising and punishing a crime reminds society of its shared moral boundaries (oe)
- (a) **B1** development, e.g. this reaction reaffirms and strengthens the collective conscience, the shared beliefs and values that unite society
- **(a) Answer: Punishing a crime publicly reminds society of its shared moral boundaries, reaffirming and strengthening the collective conscience, the shared beliefs and values that unite society.**
- (b) **B1** identifies that some deviance introduces new ideas that challenge currently accepted norms (oe)
- (b) **B1** development, e.g. today's deviance can sometimes become tomorrow's accepted norm, allowing society to gradually adapt and change
- **(b) Answer: Some deviance introduces new ideas that challenge accepted norms; over time, today's deviance can become tomorrow's accepted norm, allowing society to gradually adapt.**

Question 4

- **B1** identifies that strain arises from a gap, or disjunction, between culturally approved goals, e.g. financial success, and the legitimate institutionalised means available to achieve them
- **B1** explains that individuals who are unable to achieve the approved goals through legitimate means experience strain
- **B1** development, e.g. this strain can push some people towards crime as an alternative route to the goal
- **B1** correctly and specifically attributes this theory to Merton's strain theory
- **Answer: Merton's strain theory argues strain arises from a gap between culturally approved goals, such as financial success, and the legitimate means available to achieve them; people unable to achieve these goals legitimately may turn to crime as an alternative route.**

Question 5

- **B1** identifies innovation as accepting the culturally approved goal, e.g. wealth
- **B1** identifies that the individual rejects or lacks access to the legitimate means of achieving it
- **B1** development, e.g. instead using illegitimate or criminal means to pursue the same goal
- **B1** a correct example, e.g. theft or fraud as a way of acquiring money when legitimate routes seem blocked
- **Answer: Innovation means accepting the culturally approved goal, such as wealth, but rejecting or lacking access to the legitimate means of achieving it, and instead using illegitimate means such as theft or fraud to pursue the same goal.**

Question 6

- **B1** names a genuine second response, e.g. retreatism, ritualism or rebellion
- **B1** brief accurate description, e.g. retreatism: rejecting both the goal and the legitimate means, e.g. some drug users or people who drop out of mainstream society
- **B1** development consistent with the response named
- **B1** correctly distinguishes it from innovation, explained in Q5
- **Answer: Retreatism: rejecting both the culturally approved goal (e.g. wealth) and the legitimate means of achieving it, as with some drug users or people who drop out of mainstream society altogether, unlike innovation, which still pursues the goal by illegitimate means.**

Question 7

- **B1** identifies a recognised criticism, e.g. it does not explain crimes committed by wealthy or already successful people who are not experiencing strain
- **B1** brief development, e.g. or that it assumes everyone shares the same success goal, which may not be true of every social group
- **Answer: Critics argue strain theory does not explain crimes committed by wealthy or already successful people, and assumes everyone shares the same success goal, which may not be true of every social group.**

Question 8

- **B1** identifies the Marxist claim that capitalism can be 'criminogenic', meaning it creates conditions that encourage crime
- **B1** development, e.g. poverty and inequality produced by capitalism can push some poorer people towards crime as a means of survival or of acquiring the goods capitalism encourages everyone to want
- **B1** further point, e.g. Marxists also argue crime is not confined to the poor, pointing to extensive crime by the wealthy, such as fraud or tax evasion
- **B1** clear, accurate use of Marxist terminology
- **Answer: Marxists argue capitalism is criminogenic: poverty and inequality it produces can push poorer people towards crime as a means of survival or of acquiring the goods capitalism encourages everyone to want, while crime by the wealthy, such as fraud or tax evasion, is also extensive.**

Question 9

- **B1** identifies selective law enforcement as the claim that laws are enforced more strictly against, and more likely to target, working-class crime than crime committed by the wealthy or powerful
- **B1** development, e.g. street crime attracts more police resources and media attention than white-collar or corporate crime, even though the latter can cause greater financial harm
- **B1** further point, e.g. Marxists argue this makes crime appear to be mainly a working-class problem, disguising the true extent of crime among the wealthy
- **B1** clear, accurate use of Marxist terminology
- **Answer: Selective law enforcement is the Marxist claim that laws are enforced more strictly against working-class crime than crime by the wealthy or powerful, e.g. street crime attracts more policing than white-collar crime, which Marxists argue disguises the true extent of crime among the wealthy.**

Question 10

- **B1** identifies a genuine example, e.g. corporate crime, such as breaching health and safety or environmental regulations, or large-scale financial fraud or tax evasion
- **B1** brief accurate development linking it to the underpolicing argument in Q9
- **Answer: Corporate crime, such as breaching health and safety or environmental regulations, or large-scale financial fraud, which Marxists argue receives comparatively little police or prosecuting attention.**

Question 11

- **B1** B (Marxism)
- **Answer: B**

Question 12

- **B1** identifies selective law enforcement or differential treatment of corporate versus street crime as relevant
- **B1** links the company's lenient fine to the harsher treatment of street crime described in the scenario
- **B1** explains the individual's prison sentence for a relatively low-value offence as evidence of harsher treatment for working-class or street crime
- **B1** explains this pattern could disguise or underrepresent the true extent and seriousness of crime committed by the powerful
- **B1** development referencing the Marxist argument that law can serve capitalist or business interests
- **B1** clear, accurate use of Marxist terminology throughout
- **Answer: The company's small fine compared with the individual's prison sentence for a much smaller-value offence is consistent with the Marxist argument of selective law enforcement, where street crime is treated more harshly than corporate crime, disguising the true scale of harm caused by the powerful.**

Question 13

- **Level 4** (10-12): A detailed, well-balanced evaluation that accurately explains BOTH the functionalist case AND the Marxist case, supported by accurate reference to named sociologists where appropriate. Strengths and weaknesses of each view are analysed, and a reasoned, supported judgement is reached. Sociological terminology is used accurately and consistently throughout.
- **Level 3** (7-9): A clear evaluation that explains both the functionalist case and the Marxist case, with some accurate detail. Some analysis of strengths/weaknesses. An attempt at a conclusion, which may be only partly supported.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Some relevant explanation of the functionalist and/or Marxist case, with limited development or accuracy. Little clear evaluation or comparison between perspectives.
- **Level 1** (1-3): One or two isolated, undeveloped points about crime benefiting society or the ruling class, with little or no sociological terminology or accurate detail.
- **Level 0** (0): No relevant content.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Functionalist case: Durkheim argued crime performs boundary maintenance, reaffirming shared values when society reacts to it, and allows for adaptation and change as some deviance introduces new ideas that later become accepted.
 - Functionalist case continued: Merton's strain theory explains crime as a response to a gap between culturally approved goals, such as wealth, and the legitimate means of achieving them, e.g. through innovation.
 - Marxist case: capitalism is criminogenic, with poverty and inequality pushing some people towards crime, while crime by the wealthy (fraud, corporate crime) is also extensive but comparatively underpoliced.
 - Marxist case continued: selective law enforcement means laws are enforced more strictly against working-class crime than against crime by the powerful, which Marxists argue serves and protects ruling-class interests.
 - Evaluation of the functionalist case: critics argue it is too optimistic about how functional crime really is, given the real harm caused to victims, and does not fully explain who benefits from crime and who does not.
 - Evaluation of the Marxist case: critics argue it can be too deterministic and focuses heavily on capitalism and social class, saying comparatively little about other patterns in crime such as gender or age.
 - A balanced conclusion should weigh Durkheim and Merton's claims that crime serves genuine functions for society as a whole against the Marxist argument that recorded crime and its enforcement still systematically favour the already-powerful, without presenting either side as simply correct.

Question 14

- **B1** the shared set of beliefs, values and moral attitudes that operate as a unifying force within society (oe)
- **B1** development linking it to boundary maintenance, e.g. punishing crime reaffirms this shared moral order
- **Answer: The shared set of beliefs, values and moral attitudes that unify society; punishing crime reaffirms this collective conscience through boundary maintenance.**

Question 15

- **B1** the socially approved, legitimate ways of achieving a culturally valued goal (oe)
- **B1** a correct example, e.g. education and work as legitimate routes to financial success
- **Answer: The socially approved, legitimate ways of achieving a culturally valued goal; for example, education and work as legitimate routes to financial success.**

Question 16

- **B1** identifies a genuine similarity, e.g. both are structural, macro perspectives explaining crime through the wider structure of society rather than individual choice
- **B1** development, e.g. both link crime to economic factors, though they interpret this relationship very differently
- **Answer: Both are structural, macro perspectives that explain crime through the wider structure of society; both also link crime to economic factors, even though they interpret this relationship very differently.**