5.5 Crime Patterns by Class, Ethnicity and Age: 30-minute Pack

AQA 8192 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Where a question refers to Item E, use both the Item and your own knowledge in your answer.

Item E: Two wards, two pictures

A hypothetical scenario written for this exercise; the wards, figures and study described are entirely invented.

A student researching crime statistics for a class project compares two neighbouring, entirely fictional wards. In Ashfield ward, police stop-and-search rates for young people are three times higher than in Oakdene ward. However, an anonymous self-report survey of teenagers in both wards, carried out for the same class project, finds broadly similar levels of reported drug use in Ashfield and Oakdene. Ashfield also has a larger number of visible police patrols and CCTV cameras than Oakdene.

1 A national survey that asks a sample of the public directly whether they have been a victim of crime in the last year, whether or not they reported it to the police, is called a...

- ☐ A) self-report study
- ☐ B) victim survey
- ☐ C) official statistic
- ☐ D) moral panic

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Sociologists argue that comparing recorded crime rates between different ethnic groups requires particular caution. Explain why comparing recorded crime rates between different ethnic groups requires particular caution.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

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3 State one reason self-report studies might also have limitations when studying patterns of crime by social group.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

4 Official crime statistics are the most commonly quoted source of crime data. Define official crime statistics.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

5 Explain one reason official statistics on crime and social class might be affected by policing practices rather than only by offending.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

6 Age is one of the clearest patterns found in recorded crime statistics.

(a) State one recorded pattern in official statistics regarding age and crime. **(2)**

(b) State one reason sociologists give for treating this pattern with some caution. **(2)**

(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)

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7 Explain what this difference between recorded stop-and-search rates and self-reported drug use in Ashfield and Oakdene might suggest about the relationship between official crime statistics and policing.

(Total for Question 7 is 6 marks)

8 Explain why sociologists would say using both official statistics and self-report data, as in Item E, gives a fuller picture of crime than official statistics alone.

(Total for Question 8 is 6 marks)

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Mark scheme · 5.5 Crime Patterns by Class, Ethnicity and Age: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

B (victim survey) **B1**

Answer: B

Question 2

identifies that recorded rates reflect who is stopped, searched, arrested and charged, as well as who offends **B1**

development, e.g. sociologists point to evidence that policing attention, such as stop-and-search, is not spread evenly across different areas and groups **B1**

explains this can affect recorded figures independently of underlying offending **B1**

concludes that recorded differences are evidence about the criminal justice system's practices as much as, or more than, straightforward evidence about who commits more crime **B1**

Answer: Recorded crime rates reflect who is stopped, searched, arrested and charged, as well as who actually offends; since policing attention such as stop-and-search is not spread evenly across areas and groups, recorded differences between ethnic groups are evidence about criminal justice system practices as much as, or more than, straightforward evidence about underlying offending.

Question 3

identifies a genuine limitation, e.g. respondents might underreport their own offending, or over- or under-estimate its seriousness **B1**

brief development, e.g. so self-report data is not a perfect measure either **B1**

Answer: Respondents might underreport their own offending, or over- or under-estimate its seriousness, so self-report data is not a perfect measure of crime patterns either.

Question 4

figures on crime that has been reported to, and recorded by, the police (oe) **B1**

development, e.g. compiled and published nationally, for example by the Office for National Statistics **B1**

Answer: Figures on crime that has been reported to and recorded by the police, compiled and published nationally, for example by the Office for National Statistics.

Question 5

identifies that policing resources are often concentrated on public, street-level offences, for example through patrols in particular areas **B1**

development, e.g. this can mean offences more visible in lower-income areas are more likely to be detected and recorded **B1**

further point, e.g. offences more associated with wealthier groups, such as fraud, may be investigated by different regulatory bodies **B1**

development, e.g. these offences are therefore less visible in headline police-recorded crime figures, even when they cause serious harm **B1**

Answer: Policing resources are often concentrated on public, street-level offences, making offences in some areas more likely to be detected and recorded, while offences more associated with wealthier groups, such as fraud, are often investigated by different regulatory bodies and are less visible in headline crime figures.

Question 6

(a) identifies a genuine pattern, e.g. recorded offending rates tend to be highest among teenagers and young adults, then decline with age **B1**

(a) brief accurate development **B1**

(a) Answer: Recorded offending rates tend to be highest among teenagers and young adults, then decline with age.

(b) identifies a genuine reason, e.g. it may partly reflect where and how policing resources are focused rather than only real changes in behaviour **B1**

(b) brief development **B1**

(b) Answer: The pattern may partly reflect where and how policing resources are focused, such as greater surveillance of public spaces young people use, rather than only real changes in behaviour with age.

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Question 7

identifies the higher recorded stop-and-search rate in Ashfield despite similar self-reported drug use in both wards	**B1**
explains this suggests recorded or detected activity can reflect where police choose to focus resources, not only where an activity actually occurs	**B1**
links this to Item E's detail about Ashfield having more visible patrols and CCTV	**B1**
explains self-report data, gathered directly from young people rather than through police contact, gives a different picture of underlying behaviour	**B1**
concludes that a higher recorded rate in one area does not, by itself, prove people there break rules more than people elsewhere	**B1**
accurate use of the item's specific details throughout	**B1**

Answer: Since self-reported drug use is similar in both wards but recorded stop-and-search is three times higher in Ashfield, which also has more visible policing, the difference in recorded figures likely reflects where police resources and surveillance are concentrated rather than a real difference in underlying behaviour between the two wards.

Question 8

identifies self-report studies as asking people directly, often anonymously, whether they have committed offences	**B1**
explains this can uncover unreported or undetected behaviour, such as the drug use reported by teenagers in both wards in Item E	**B1**
identifies that together these sources can reveal a 'dark figure' of crime that official statistics alone miss	**B1**
explains this matters for interpreting patterns such as the Ashfield/Oakdene comparison, since official figures alone would have suggested a real behavioural difference between the wards that Item E's self-report evidence does not support development, e.g. combining sources helps sociologists check whether a recorded pattern reflects real behaviour or policing practice	**B1**
accurate use of terminology throughout	**B1**

Answer: Self-report studies ask people directly, often anonymously, whether they have offended, which can uncover behaviour official statistics miss, such as the similar drug use across both wards in Item E; combining this with police-recorded figures shows that Ashfield's higher recorded stop-and-search rate does not reflect a real behavioural difference, revealing the dark figure that official statistics alone would have hidden.

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