



General Certificate of Education

Sociology 6191

**SCY4 Crime and Deviance;
Stratification and Differentiation**

Report on the Examination

2008 examination - January series

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SCY4

Section A – Power and Politics

Question 1

- (a) Some candidates took this question to mean that they should identify a range of elite groups and thus scored no marks. Those candidates who answered the question set provided a range of evidence including aspects of democracy, the existence of pressure groups and new social movements, the right to vote and the role of the media in anti-government arguments. Some candidates provided acceptable arguments from theoretical perspectives such as pluralists.
- (b) This question was mostly taken to provide an opportunity to examine the theoretical debates between pluralists, elitists, Marxists and feminists. Such debates were normally presented accurately, though they lacked much in the way of empirical examples or placement in contemporary societies. The welcome few who did take an empirical approach to this question often scored highly by examining examples of the decision-making process in action as, for example, over the debates on fox hunting or the war in Iraq.

Question 2

The most common answer to this question provided a descriptive account of pressure and interest groups, usually sub-dividing between insider and outsider groups. A disappointing feature here was the lack of empirical material used by candidates. Most answers were placed in a fairly timeless and stateless dimension.

Some more developed responses included new social movements and discussed issues that had a global dimension, but these were in a minority.

Question 3

In an age when the mass media are arguably more prominent and influential than ever before, when the UK had recently changed its Prime Minister and when the American election process was in full operation, it was disappointing to see how many candidates seemed unaware of any empirical material on this topic apart from references to “The Sun Wot Won It” or Neil Kinnock’s head in a light bulb.

A minority of candidates did have some grasp of more recent issues and material, and were able to place these in a theoretical context, using Marxist and feminist material or referring to various media models such as uses and gratifications or the hegemonic model.

Section B – Religion

Question 4

- (a) Most candidates scored well on this question by using evidence such as church attendance, baptisms, weddings and funerals to illustrate religious decline or by taking and developing concepts such as rationalisation, desacrilisation and disengagement.

A worrying feature of many answers was an unnecessary length, often covering three and sometimes four pages. Similarly, many candidates included elaborate evaluation of the points identified. With future examinations in mind, including those in the new specification, please note that the questions which ask candidates to 'identify and briefly explain' do not require the candidate to evaluate the evidence or arguments.

- (b) This question was well done by the majority of candidates. The most common elements featured were the growth of New Religious Movements, aspects of multiculturalism, post-modernist views on spiritual shopping, the growth of some traditional religions and fundamentalism. These were often set alongside the continued activity in traditional religions and the privatisation of religion.

Question 5

This question was interpreted in various ways by candidates. Some focused on the needs of different groups. In such cases they usually commented on the needs of different social classes, genders, age and ethnic groups and related these to some form of religious affiliation. Other candidates focused more broadly on religious organisations and the role of religion in society. This was perhaps a more complicated line of investigation to sustain and as a result fewer candidates gained very high marks with this approach.

Weaker candidates saw this as an opportunity to tell the examiners all they knew about religion. This form of answer scored occasional hits on target, but for the most part did not address the question set.

Question 6

A common response to this question was to provide a summary of typologies of sects and cults along with definitions of churches and denominations. This approach rarely focused on the question set and so tended to score low marks.

An alternative line of inquiry took a closer look at the validity of statements about traditional religions and their supposed decline and offered a challenge to the assumption in the question.

Better answers looked at the whole of the question and tried to evaluate changes in religious belief and practice in terms of the question. This was sometimes done very well, but many candidates had difficulty in sorting out which aspects of their knowledge on the sociology of religion were most relevant here.

Section C – World Sociology

Question 7

- (a) Most candidates responded reasonably well to this question, citing such features as the growth in economic interdependence, the development of transnational corporations, globalised politics, changes to the distance-time dimension and Marxist arguments about exploitation.

Interestingly, unlike candidates' responses to question 4(a), very few candidates answering this question offered any evaluation of the points raised.

- (b) Most candidates showed some awareness and understanding of the process of globalisation and offered some advantages and disadvantages. The most common answers saw little good and much damage caused by globalisation.

Question 8

This question was completed reasonably well by most candidates who attempted it. Most saw it as an opportunity to use theoretical juxtapositions between modernisation and dependency theorists. This is well-understood material. However, some candidates were able to go beyond this basic position and explore relationships more deeply, including issues such as debt relief, the role of aid, the power and control of TNCs and corruption of officials and elected officers. As is usual with candidates answering questions on world sociology, there was a fair range of empirical examples to illustrate and develop points.

Question 9

This question was answered competently by many candidates. Some saw it as an opportunity to explore a range of issues linked to the environment and development. Many answers were mainly descriptive lists of environmental problems and disasters, including desertification, deforestation, water pollution and global warming. However, some better answers came from candidates who addressed the question of inevitability and explored the role of governments and the socio-political issues. The problems faced by some rapidly emerging economies such as China and India were also discussed by some candidates.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.