



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)  
January 2012**

**Sociology**

**SCLY4**

**(Specification 2191)**

**Unit 4: Crime and Deviance with Theory and  
Methods;  
Stratification and Differentiation with  
Theory and Methods**

***Report on the Examination***

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## **SCLY4**

### **General**

The majority of students were able to answer all the questions in their chosen section. Few students missed out whole questions but, when they did, there were obvious consequences for the overall mark.

In some cases responses to Question 04 (or Question 08) appeared to be rushed with students apparently running out of time. Since this question carries a large proportion of the marks available, this usually cost marks. Some students chose to answer this question first; these responses were often more thorough and scored more marks.

The new format seems to have presented no problems to students.

### **Section A – Crime and Deviance with Theory and Methods**

The great majority of students chose this Section.

#### **Crime and Deviance**

##### ***Question 01***

There were many good responses to this question. However, a lack of explicit analysis and evaluation prevented many students from accessing the top mark band. Only a minority could use other theories to evaluate labelling theory. Most students were able to identify some key concepts of labelling theory such as self-fulfilling prophecy and master status. Many were also able to identify relevant studies, the most popular being those by Becker and Lemert. Better answers extended the discussion to include contributions from theorists such as Cicourel, Piliavin and Brier, Downes and Rock, Braithwaite and Reise.

Students who did not do so well on this question often spent time giving detailed descriptions of the labelling process without referencing it to relevant concepts. Weaker responses often discussed labelling and education instead of crime and deviance. Only a minority of students scored in the lower mark band and there was often undeveloped potential. In weaker responses students wrote about other theories rather than labelling. Some students included subcultural views on crime without distinguishing them from labelling theory.

**Question 02**

Most students were able to offer a reasonable response to this question. An understanding of global crime was in evidence across answers. More focused answers dealt with both the amount and types of crime, as the question required. Better responses demonstrated broad knowledge and understanding accompanied by analytic commentary and an awareness of the contributions of Glenny, Castells and Beck. Evaluation was less developed though analysis was strong. Some sophisticated responses were evident where students used their theoretical insight and their knowledge of the issues to engage properly with the question. Responses to global crime figured here. Answers that offered conceptual understanding tended to stand out and were rewarded accordingly.

Weaker responses tended to focus on simply describing the range of crimes that are made easier by globalisation. Most students focused on internet crime, such as cyber-bullying, fraud, and the dangers of social networking sites. Green crime and state crime were also referred to but were seldom developed to address the question as they were not explained in relation to globalisation.

**Methods in Context****Question 03**

This question was answered reasonably well, with a large proportion of responses scoring marks for application. Students who took time to read Item C carefully found several themes that they could follow (eg courts using formal language) that could be applied to covert observation – so taking the response away from generic listing of strengths and limitations of the method to a more considered and applied answer. This may be due to courts being something students have some knowledge of; some schools and colleges had been on visits and students were able to use this experience to good effect. Sound application was in evidence, with a range of characteristics of court proceedings being presented though not always being applied explicitly to the method. Students also tended to focus more on practical rather than ethical or theoretical issues.

Some students still struggled with the skill of application. In these responses students showed generally sound knowledge of the covert nature of the method and addressed its advantages and disadvantages sometimes with undeveloped conceptual commentaries. However, there were the usual 'method only' responses which scored between five and eight marks. A small number of responses scored in the lower band, with limited method and little reference to context.

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## **Theory and Methods**

### ***Question 04***

The best responses did everything asked of them – functionalist and New Right, theory and application, links to research, and good evaluation. The more successful students moved beyond standard presentations of functionalism and were able to give accounts of Durkheim, Parsons and an internal critique from Merton. Students generally wrote more about functionalism than the New Right. However, it was not necessary to cover both theories equally, even for full marks. Some students addressed the relevance of functionalism and the New Right to ‘society today’, as required by the question. This was achieved largely through discussion of family diversity and New Right views on crime prevention and punishment. Evaluation was generated by challenge from a wide range of other theories. More consideration was given to theory than to research. Where research was addressed, this tended to be concentrated on Durkheim’s study of suicide.

Few answers were limited or showed little sociological understanding with minimal or limited analysis and/or evaluation. Many students focused their responses on topics, usually family, education, and/or crime and deviance. Some responses dealt with crime and nothing else, using substantive topics as a proxy for ‘understanding society’. In these responses evaluation was attempted largely by juxtaposing theoretical viewpoints. The New Right was treated in two main ways: firstly, Murray/Saunders and the underclass as a source of deviance; secondly, right realism – Wilson and Kelling and the strategies offered to reduce crime. Most students were able to make some valid points about the New Right. A number of students interpreted this as a ‘theory’ question and wrote about every theory they knew with limited reference to the question.

## **Section B – Stratification and Differentiation with Theory and Methods**

Very few students opted for this section and the following comments are based on a very limited range of student responses.

### **Stratification and Differentiation**

#### ***Question 05***

Few students were able to access the top mark band for this question and a larger than usual proportion gave no response at all. Good answers tended to discuss both old age and youth when discussing differences and inequalities between age groups. Some students were able to offer some theoretical development and appropriate evidence and studies. Weaker responses tended to be descriptive and lack sociological insight. Many used examples rather than studies to illustrate the points made which gave a descriptive rather than an analytical response.

#### ***Question 06***

As for Question 05, few students were able to access the top mark band and a larger than usual number were unable to offer any response. The best answers showed a breadth of knowledge and understanding of Marxist theories of stratification. Some responses showed a basic knowledge of Marxism but then drifted into other aspects of stratification such as social mobility without being able to make these relevant to the question set. Weaker responses were over-reliant on Item E. Functionalism was often identified but not used evaluatively.

## Methods in Context

### *Question 07*

Many students struggled to apply their chosen method to the issue of the life chances of minority ethnic groups. Most students could offer a range of strengths and limitations of official statistics. Others were able to apply the use of official statistics in the study of stratification and differentiation in general but without applying this specifically to the issue in the question. Good examples of application tended to focus on why governments may want to manipulate statistics in relation to minority ethnic groups.

## Theory and Methods

### *Question 08*

The best responses did everything asked of them – functionalist and New Right, theory and application, links to research, and good evaluation. The more successful students moved beyond standard presentations of functionalism and were able to give accounts of Durkheim, Parsons and an internal critique from Merton. Students generally wrote more about functionalism than the New Right. However, it was not necessary to cover both theories equally, even for full marks. Some students addressed the relevance of functionalism and the New Right to ‘society today’, as required by the question. This was achieved largely through discussion of family diversity and New Right views on crime prevention and punishment. Evaluation was generated by challenge from a wide range of other theories. More consideration was given to theory than to research. Where research was addressed, this tended to be concentrated on Durkheim’s study of suicide.

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## Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html>

## Converting Marks into UMS marks

Convert raw marks into Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) marks by using the link below.

**UMS conversion calculator** [www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion)