

### Item B

Some sociologists explain levels of offending by girls and women in terms of their socialisation or their position in patriarchal society. For example, one feminist sociologist argues that the weakening of patriarchy has led to an increase in female offending.

However, other sociologists focus on the ways in which the police and courts treat females, as well as on the impact of media stereotypes of female offending.

### Q4. Applying material from Item B and your knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of levels of female offending. [30 marks] 2019 summer exam

The mark scheme for this question was:

#### Indicative Content

Concepts and issues such as the following may appear: chivalry thesis; control theory; liberation thesis; patriarchy; sex role theory; feminism; functionalism; class and gender deals; intersectionality; different categories of offence (e.g. shoplifting, prostitution, violence); girl gangs; delinquent subcultures; peer pressure; role models; moral panics; 'defining deviance up'/net widening;; victim-precipitation; stereotyping in the criminal justice system; self-report studies.

Marks	Level Descriptors
25–30	<p>Answers in this band will show sound, conceptually detailed knowledge of a range of relevant material on female offending. Sophisticated understanding of the question and of the presented material will be shown.</p> <p>Appropriate material will be applied accurately and with sensitivity to the issues raised by the question.</p> <p>Analysis and evaluation will be explicit and relevant. Evaluation may be developed, for example by locating the discussion within a debate between theories or perspectives (eg sex role theory, control theory, feminism), or considering methodological issues such as the validity of sources of data on female offending. Analysis will show clear explanation. Appropriate conclusions will be drawn.</p>

### Examiners report

#### Question 04

This question produced responses at all levels of quality. Some weaker answers became side-tracked into explanations of male criminality, or of females as victims rather than as offenders. Other responses lacked knowledge of material, specifically on female offending, and attempted, often with only limited success, to apply other theories of crime and deviance, usually strain and subcultural theories.

However, in general at all levels of response, students made an effort to apply material from Item B. Weaker answers tended to offer somewhat commonsensical accounts of one or two theories that reflected points in the Item, or accounts that were light on conceptual detail. Most students struggled to develop the Item's reference to media stereotyping satisfactorily, though a few higher-

level responses engaged successfully with the idea that a moral panic about young female offending had led to increased social control and criminalisation of females.

Good answers were able to discuss some or all of the following, using appropriate concepts and evidence: sex role theory and gender socialisation: Heidensohn and control theory; Adler's liberation thesis and the weakening of patriarchy; Carlen on class and gender deals; and the chivalry thesis.

The best answers made good analytical and evaluative points throughout their essay. For example, in discussing Heidensohn and control theory, some questioned the extent to which changing gender roles may have made the theory less relevant in today's society, often then going on to link this evaluation to the liberation thesis. Similarly, some better answers questioned the continuing relevance of the chivalry thesis in the context of greater gender equality and increased numbers of women working in the criminal justice system.

**Using this feedback, what have questions tended to leave out?**

**With the two examples, what are the 2 pieces of feedback/targets you would give them to help improve their essays?**

Example 1:

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>

Example 2:

>

>



Do not write outside this box

0 4 Read Item B below and answer the question that follows.

Item B

sex role

Some sociologists explain levels of offending by girls and women in terms of their socialisation or their position in patriarchal society. For example, one feminist sociologist argues that the weakening of patriarchy has led to an increase in female offending.

Lib. Thesis

However, other sociologists focus on the ways in which the police and courts treat females, as well as on the impact of media stereotypes of female offending.

Chivalry Dualist

Applying material from Item B and your knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of levels of female offending.

Concl

dark fig. = men + crime but dark figure

[30 marks]

#1 <del>Lib</del> Chivalry Th. Camp + hood sex role Th.	#2 Dualist Walt Heid Carlen - Control theory	Lib thesis ↳ media stereotypes ↳ women victim in UK in US Dom Abuse. Patriarchal control Th.
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As mentioned in the item, there is clear differences in official statistics of female and male offending.

4 out of 5 offenders are male, they are also 50 times more likely to be accused of 'intimate' crimes than women. Sociologists

between some sociologists believe that women offend less due to the bias and leniency

of courts and the police whilst others say it's due to the control that wider society has of women that gives them less opportunities to offend.

Some sociologists believe that there is a dark figure of female offending, they commit more crime than reported.



As One explanation for low statistical levels of female

**HA** offending is, as mentioned in the item, the leniency towards women. The Chivalry Thesis believes that men are socialized from a young age to a certain chivalrous way towards women, being more caring and patient. This results in male adults being less likely to arrest or accuse women of crime. Due to the fact that the Criminal Justice System is mainly dominated

**DEV** by men, it means that the dark figure of women getting away with crime may actually be quite big. Campbell believes that women are given more cautions and warnings than men. And that's why they are less likely to be arrested. Hood believes men are more likely to get custodial sentences, therefore there's less women in prison. Farrington and Harris

**AN** however, would argue that when women and men commit crime at the same level of offending, they receive the same sentence. So leniency towards women may ~~not~~ be because women are more likely to commit less serious crime. Hales also points out that men commit more crime than recorded therefore ~~male~~ male offending is still much more dominant.

There are sociologists that believe that the Criminal Justice System holds dual standards on women. On one side, as Heidensohn ~~pro~~ argues,

Turn over ►



x and  
judged

women are harshly sentenced if they deviate from the norms of 'femininity' but on the other side they are more likely to get less serious sentences if they are mothers of young children. Carlen believes that women are ~~too~~ sentenced<sup>m</sup> on their roles of as wives and mothers rather than on the seriousness of their offences. However,

Liberational Theorists, Adler, believes that this happened in a Patriarchal society. Now that we ~~live~~ are slowly liberating ourselves from the Patriarchal structure and ideology, women will commit more serious crimes and ~~off~~ female offending rates will increase. The dual standards will dissolve and women will be judged

Extra space <sup>equally as men</sup>, the gender gap of offending will narrow. However, this thesis has proven to not be true due to the fact that female crime started rising before the feminist movement, therefore the system is most likely going to continue having dual standards of women.

Not clearly  
linked to  
offending

Functionalists look at ~~the~~ female offending rates being low as a consequence of socialisation, as mentioned in item. ~~The~~ Boys are encouraged from a young age to be tough and aggressive which makes them more pre-disposed for crime



Male  
offending

In the future, Parsons believes that boys take male role models in the nuclear family. So they act out in gangs and seek role models through gangs. Cohen said that boys join all-male gangs to find

masculine identity and role models. Girls don't suffer this, therefore there is no pre-disposition for crime. Feminists argue this is because patriarchy controls women into not offending. (Item).

Heidensohn believes that patriarchy makes women not ~~sure~~ commit crime by making them

scared of crime. All of the rape cases shown of the media (Item) recently have made women

want to stay home. Due to women's housewife role in the nuclear family they are bound to their house their outings are restricted which reduces the possibilities of offending. Girls are

DEV

socialized into (conforming to norms) and staying at home away from danger through what McRobbie calls 'bedroom culture'. Female offending can therefore be influenced by the control of women of wider structures in society, such as the family and reinforced through socialization. However, functionalists don't see the oppression of women and instead justify male offending.

Other sociologists say that society offers women a deal to conform to society's needs. Carlen

Turn over ►



Do not write outside the box

believes that when society doesn't give working class women the emotional and material rewards for conforming and not offending they have no other option than to turn to crime to escape poverty.

There are many views on why levels of female offending are different from males. It is very difficult to separate and isolate the wider effects of society with the impact and influence of the Criminal Justice System.

HA It may not be an either or situation, all these sociological theories explain different reasons for female offending. It is neither one nor correct than the other.

reasonable knowledge with some analysis. Some material at a tangent to the question





0 4 Read Item B below and answer the question that follows.

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Item B

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Applying material from Item B and your knowledge, evaluate sociological explanations of levels of female offending.

[30 marks]

• Chivalry thesis.

• Media - glorify OITNB example

• Liberalisation thesis

• Post mod - metanarrative - all different reasons

• Suppressed by patriarchy

• Biology? - found more likely to commit crime if like a man?

As the item states, female offending (or lack thereof) can be explained by the the socialisation process and where women stand in the patriarchal society. However, some would argue that the patriarchal boundaries are weakening and so crime amongst women is rising as a result of this. It can also be argued that the CJS treats women differently to men and so they receive a weaker conviction or in some cases, aren't convicted at all.

The first explanation that focuses on levels of female offending is known as the Chivalry thesis. Pollak explains this to be the theory that the process of socialisation



has resulted in women having more leniency in the <sup>CJS</sup> system. He believes boys are socialised from an early age to be kinder to women because they can be seen as more vulnerable by society and as a result don't like to assert their power over them, even if they are breaking the law. This theory could help explain why for every 6 indictable offences committed by men, women are only prosecuted for 1. The theory would argue ~~that not only are~~ <sup>that even if</sup> women were prosecuted for the crime, they would still receive a lighter sentence as the court system is predominantly male and so have more sympathy for female offenders. However it can be argued that this **AN** leniency doesn't occur often due to the patriarchy now being less dominant and the process of socialisation being less gender stereotypical.

As mentioned above, the patriarchy is arguably weakening which has <sup>led</sup> ~~less~~ to an increase in female offending. Adler would refer to this as the liberalisation thesis.

This states that now the patriarchy has less influence over women, they're committing similar crimes to men which explains the increase in female offending. Women now have more freedom and the choice to go to work\* alongside <sup>and have less restrictions to their social life</sup>

Turn over ►



having children rather than having to stay at home and fulfil the housewife role which limited the opportunity women had to commit crimes. This suggests women have always had the ability to commit crimes on the same level as men, but only now feel they have the opportunity to.

AN

On the other hand, it can be argued that female offending isn't the only type of offending increasing. The media has a huge impact on our perception of crime and life within the

APP

CJS through video games and TV shows such as 'Orange is the New Black'. The media is therefore promoting a more glorified version of crime to the realities of what life is like for criminals inside the system. As a result this can make people believe a life filled with crime isn't that bad and see the potential pros of crime outweigh the negative and consequences, meaning more people are taking the risk. This can not only explain

AN

why female crime is rising but also why crime is rising as a whole in some areas. However the media can also be used to help explain why there are so many more men being prosecuted compared to women. The media can be used to reinforce stereotypes



and beliefs (particularly patriarchal ones) that <sup>result</sup> explain in women being less pursued and prosecuted due to the fear of backlash from the media (e.g. imprisoning a mother of 3 for years compared to a single man) and patriarchal expectations of how women should be treated.

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outside the  
box

Although Adler would argue the patriarchy is less dominant in today's society, it can still be argued that it is still relevant to explain levels of female offending. The patriarchy can be seen as dominant still as women are often still expected to fulfil the <sup>expressive</sup> ~~instrumental~~ role in the family and as a result either work less (part-time) or sacrifice their career for as long as needed. This therefore limits the opportunity women ~~get~~ have to commit crime and as a result men ~~are~~ are the dominant <sup>gender</sup> ~~force~~ in crime statistics.

The final argument is argued by Lombroso who believes the difference in levels of offending can be put down to biological differences. Women ~~have~~ are believed to have a weaker superego ~~meaning~~ resulting in women having less of a conscience but this is outweighed by maternal instincts and so women commit

Turn over ►



less crime. The research study also found that the ~~the~~ women who had been prosecuted for more serious crimes had more masculine traits, for example their face shape / bone structure and levels of hormones. This suggests men may be more innately criminal than women however this argument can be **EVAL** been as out dated compared to other more recent theories about crime.

In conclusion, the levels of female offending can be seen to be rising for various reasons such as a weaker patriarchal influence however they can also ~~still be~~ <sup>be explained</sup> as to why they are consistently lower than men in comparison. To contrast all explanations, Post modernism would argue that all explanations are **EVAL** a metanarrative and to truly understand the changes in female offending, we must look at each person individually because overarching explanations ~~are not~~ <sup>event desirable</sup> ~~are not~~ <sup>are not</sup>.

Good understanding of presented material with  
eval present

