



National
Qualifications
2024

X849/77/11

Modern Studies

TUESDAY, 30 APRIL

9:00 AM – 12:00 NOON

Total marks — 90

Attempt ONE Section only

SECTION 1 — POLITICAL ISSUES AND RESEARCH METHODS — 90 marks

Part A — Attempt TWO questions.

Part B — Attempt BOTH questions.

SECTION 2 — LAW AND ORDER AND RESEARCH METHODS — 90 marks

Part A — Attempt TWO questions.

Part B — Attempt BOTH questions.

SECTION 3 — SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND RESEARCH METHODS — 90 marks

Part A — Attempt TWO questions.

Part B — Attempt BOTH questions.

Write your answers clearly in the answer booklet provided. In the answer booklet you must clearly identify the question number you are attempting.

Use blue or black ink.

Before leaving the examination room you must give your answer booklet to the Invigilator; if you do not, you may lose all the marks for this paper.



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SECTION 1 — POLITICAL ISSUES AND RESEARCH METHODS — 90 marks**PART A — 60 marks****Attempt TWO questions****Question 1 — Power and influence**

'The media exerts a negative influence on the political process.'

Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland **and** any other country/countries you have studied.

30

Question 2 — Political ideology

'Approaches to contemporary political issues are no longer bound by ideology.'

Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland **and** any other country/countries you have studied.

30

Question 3 — Political structures

'Political systems and constitutions which are more flexible are less effective.'

Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland **and** any other country/countries you have studied.

30

PART B — 30 marks**Attempt BOTH questions****Question 4**

You are researching public experiences of political participation.

To what extent would a longitudinal study be a better method than interviews for investigating this issue?

In your answer you should make reference to relevant examples.

15

[Turn over

Question 5

To what extent can Source A be considered trustworthy?

15

Source A

Dramas at Westminster: Select committees and the quest for accountability — an observation approach

A brief history of select committees

The history of select committees demonstrates that they have been a part of the House of Commons landscape for a long time. The trend since the middle of the twentieth century has shown that the House of Commons has become increasingly assertive in its rights to hold government to account, and that — in line with legislatures across the world — committees have become indispensable to the effective functioning of Parliament.



Select committees today

Today, there are a range of committees to shadow departments as part of a process of government scrutiny (the types of committees are captured in table 1.1 and the range of committees since 2010 in table 1.2). As noted, select committees are a small group of cross-party MPs. Specifically, they are normally made up of between nine and 18 MPs. The party balance typically reflects that of the House of Commons. So, over the 2010 parliament (the main period of study), a typical select committee of 11 members would have five Labour Party MPs, five Conservative Party MPs and one member from a third party (often a Liberal Democrat MP). This has been replicated following the 2017 general election where no party had an overall majority. Similarly, chairs were allocated based on party balance. The precise balance is informally agreed by party whips but approved by the House. Since 2010, members have been elected through their party groups, while the chair is elected by the whole House, both by secret ballot.

Table 1.1 Types of select committee in the House of Commons

Type	Description with example
Departmental	One committee for each ministerial department to oversee the expenditure and administration and policy of that department. For example, the Education Committee which shadows the Department for Education.
Cross-cutting	Committees to investigate government policy on a more thematic basis without a single department. For example, the Science and Technology Committee which looks at policy across central government.
Domestic	These committees look at internal governance of the House of Commons and how it is administered. For example, the Procedure Committee which looks at procedural matters in the House.
Legislative	Committees that undertake scrutiny of legislation in some way but which do not examine legislation on a line-by-line basis. For example, the Statutory Instruments Committee which examines secondary or delegated legislation in the Commons.
Joint	There are joint committees with the House of Lords which scrutinise certain issues either on a permanent or temporary basis. For example, the Joint Committee on Human Rights.
Other	Some committees are appointed on an ad hoc basis to inform the House. For example, the Reform of the House of Commons Committee considered ways to make the House of Commons more effective in 2009.

Question 5 (continued)

Source A (continued)

Methods

This book adopts a qualitative approach using a range of methods, including participant and non-participant observation, semi-structured interviews, a focus group and textual analysis of written records.

Participant and non-participant observation

For this book, the researcher worked as a research assistant to a select committee in the House of Commons for 14 weeks during the second half of the 2010 parliament (approximately 600 working hours). Every week, the researcher was able to observe private and public meetings of ‘their’ committee, attend and participate in team meetings, observe proceedings of parliamentary debates and evidence sessions, help to write briefing materials for committee members and the chair, and contribute to the drafting of committee reports. This was supplemented with negotiated access to observe other committees private and team meetings. Observations were complemented by watching and analysing over 100 hours of evidence sessions made available online (see www.parliamentlive.tv). A fieldwork diary was kept and a private and confidential journal, not accessible to anyone else other than the researcher. The precise details and exact timing of observation of the committee observed remain confidential to protect the anonymity of former colleagues and to permit more candour in empirical sections. The research received ethics approval from the University of Sheffield.

Semi-structured interviews and focus groups

46 semi-structured interviews were scheduled, one-on-one meetings with select committee members (23), chairs (10) and staff (13) *. A snowballing technique was used to identify appropriate interviewees beginning with MPs from the researcher’s committee and followed recommendations from clerks and officials. Individuals were invited through email. Although useful, not all invitations were accepted. All interviewees signed an informed consent form and were recorded using a recording device (with two exceptions).

A focus group of eight parliamentary officials was also drawn on and provided insights into the use of evidence in the UK Parliament and the work of select committees.

(*This excludes countless informal conversations during fieldwork in the House of Commons as the researcher spoke to people and rushed to and from meetings, on the way to the office, in the cafeteria, in the committee office, over the phone, in emails, at bus stops, in the Westminster gym, and in the Palace’s numerous bars — among other places.)

Supplementary data: reports, briefings and statistics

Documents are a key part of the House of Commons. As such, texts were used to supplement analysis, including committee reports, email exchanges, copies of speeches, magazine articles, press cuttings and the Official Report (Hansard), guidelines, manuals and more.

Adapted from Geddes, M (2019), *Dramas at Westminster: Select Committees and the Quest for Accountability*. Political Ethnography, Manchester University Press, Manchester. Available at <https://www.manchesterhive.com/view/9781526136817/9781526136817.xml>

[Turn over

SECTION 2 — LAW AND ORDER AND RESEARCH METHODS — 90 marks**PART A — 60 marks****Attempt TWO questions****Question 6 — Understanding the criminal justice system**

‘Relations between the judiciary and government demonstrate power is equally balanced.’

Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland **and** any other country/countries you have studied.

30

Question 7 — Understanding criminal behaviour

‘The cost of crime cannot be underestimated.’

Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland **and** any other country/countries you have studied.

30

Question 8 — Responses by society to crime

‘Custodial responses to crime are increasingly successful.’

Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland **and** any other country/countries you have studied.

30

PART B — 30 marks**Attempt BOTH questions****Question 9**

You are researching public experiences of crime.

To what extent would a longitudinal study be a better method than interviews for investigating this issue?

In your answer you should make reference to relevant examples.

15

[Turn over

Question 10

To what extent can **Source B** be considered trustworthy?

15

Source B

**Young people and street crime in an inner-city Dublin community —
An observation approach**

Jonathan Ilan

Introduction

This paper reflects on the use of the observation of people in their natural environment in the study of youth crime within an inner-city Dublin community as part of a PhD study.



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Young people and crime in Ireland: What do we know?

The research upon which this paper is based focuses on a particular group of young offenders and attempts to gain a sense of their day-to-day existence, their biographies, and their interactions with the agents of the state who intervene in their lives. (See note 1) Common sense indicates that there is a powerful link between social disadvantage and criminality and such a conclusion has been borne out through research (O'Mahony 1993; Bacik et al. 1997). An observational approach to youth crime allows us to unravel and explain this link, through the concrete example of a particular community and a group of young people within it.

Research focus: Community

An important step in observational research is the selection of a field site. The area of North Street (see note 2) can be characterized as disadvantaged. A local survey indicates that the residents have a low rate of participation in higher education and a high level of dependence on social welfare. The street, occupied by over 1,000 people, is dominated by rows of high-density flat complexes, owned and managed by Dublin City Council. An extended, legitimate presence in the area was therefore required in order to gain any sense of what transpires in relation to its offending. The researcher undertook one year as a full-time volunteer at 'The Club', a local community-based youth project. This organisation provides support and advocacy to young people involved in, or at risk of, offending behaviour.

The philosophy of 'The Club' is to penetrate, as far as practicable, in the lives of its services users; involvement with 'The Club' therefore gave the researcher access to a range of relevant participants including young offenders, the general youth population, the community at large, as well as Gardaí (Police), social, youth and community workers.

Research focus: The Crew

The young men who are the focus of the study formed the core of a wider youth group that they sometimes refer to as 'The Crew'. The core membership, ranging in age from 14-19 years consists of six to eight young men who attend 'The Club' and live on the street or its immediate area. The members of the group appeared to display a lack of interest in formal education or structured youth services and most of them have been classified as having some sort of emotional, learning or behavioural difficulty. They are frequently cited by local residents in complaints to the Council and the Gardaí for antisocial behaviour: alcohol and cannabis consumption in public, urination, high noise levels and vandalism. The Crew would be classified by their youth and social workers as 'problematic' to work with, both individually and as a group.

Question 10 (continued)

Source B (continued)

Methods in action including observation and interviews

Participant observation and in-depth interviewing are the methods by which much of the data for the study was gathered. In order to successfully complete participant observation it was necessary to become ‘immersed’ within the relevant community. This was achieved through nearly a year and a half based within ‘The Club’, on excursions with the young people and staff, days spent on North Street, on the streets, in the flats and the community centre, accompanying members of The Crew to court hearings and meetings with various care professionals, as well as attending relevant local meetings.

Everything seen and heard was recorded with meticulous detail. This process yielded a vast amount of observational data on the activities of the young people, the social structure of the flat community, and interactions with Gardaí and professional workers.

Conclusion

When we consider these facts about the community structure, it becomes clear that the offending of The Crew takes place within a highly complex socio-cultural environment. The Crew are branded a nuisance by the organs of community leadership, yet there is tacit support for their activities by others in the community who purchase stolen goods from them.

Certain community workers would go as far as to say that these young men are ‘scapegoated’ as there exists far more serious offending within the flats which is not acknowledged by those who currently hold leadership positions. They are alienated from much of the community whom they call ‘rats’ and derive their sense of identity more from affiliation with each other and their offending behaviour.

Their gang offers them the solidarity and sense of security that is lacking in all other aspects of their lives. By weighing up interview against observation and the testimony of one participant against another we begin to realise that the issue of youth street crime is inordinately complex, with many concerns.

Notes

1. The research design was heavily influenced by seminal uses of observation of disadvantaged communities and crime, particularly those concerned with youth crime. See, for an example of works conducted in the North of Ireland, Jenkins 1983; Bell 1990; Gillespie et al. 1992. For an account of similar methods used to research crime in the USA and UK see Hobbs 2001.
2. The names of all places and people have been changed in order to protect the identity of informants.
3. See Kearns 1994 for a good account of life at the time.

Adapted from Ilan, J., (2007) Young people and street crime in an inner-city Dublin community — An ethnographic approach, Centre for Social and Educational Research.

ISBN: 1 900 454 24 6 Full report available at https://www.academia.edu/985734/Young_people_and_street_crime_in_an_inner_city_Dublin_community_An_ethnographic_approach

[Turn over

SECTION 3 — SOCIAL INEQUALITY AND RESEARCH METHODS — 90 marks**PART A — 60 marks****Attempt TWO questions****Question 11 — Understanding social inequality**

‘Social stratification is damaging to society.’

Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland **and** any other country/countries you have studied.

30

Question 12 — The impact of social inequality

‘For the individual, employment inequalities have the most significant impact.’

Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland **and** any other country/countries you have studied.

30

Question 13 — Responses to social inequality

‘Non-governmental organisations play an essential role in tackling inequalities.’

Discuss, with reference to the UK/Scotland **and** any other country/countries you have studied.

30

PART B — 30 marks**Attempt BOTH questions****Question 14**

You are researching public experiences of poverty.

To what extent would a longitudinal study be a better method than interviews for investigating this issue?

In your answer you should make reference to relevant examples.

15

[Turn over

Question 15

To what extent can **Source C** be considered trustworthy?

15

Source C

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Section 1 Part B Question 5 Source A

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Section 2 Part B Question 10 Source B

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