

# Ph. D. Qualifier Exam Spring 2006

## Theory

Answer **one** of the following questions.

### Question 1.

Social disorder is a key concept in criminology. Choose anyone of the major theoretical perspectives that address disorder and crime. Explain how the theory conceptualizes disorder; what social factors it views as relating to or creating disorder; what it suggests is the relationship between disorder and crime; and the prescriptions that it suggests to address negative consequences of disorder on social behavior, in general, and crime, in particular.

### Question 2.

Criminologists have suggested that an important explanation for criminal behavior derives from the frustrations that individuals feel as the gap between their aspirations and their means to achieve these goals increases. Alternatively, other criminologists have pointed to the importance of social control in influencing whether or not individuals will commit crime. Discuss these two perspectives explaining how these two groups of theorists have conceptualized their major variables and their relationship to crime; what the key findings have been in the research that has been done in these areas; and what major or differences are in the ways in which these two approaches explain how we can reduce criminal behavior.

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### **Law and Criminal Justice Policy**

In the past several decades, there have been dramatic changes in criminal law and procedure relating to criminal justice practices and policies. Changing social perceptions have played a major role in many of these policy changes. Choose one or more of the topics listed below and briefly describe the specific types of changes in policy that have occurred. Then, discuss in detail the various factors/pressures that prompted these changes, and the economic, political and social, costs and benefits emanating from those changes.

1. Responding to violence
2. Sentencing policy
3. Re-entry policy
4. Zero tolerance policing
5. Responding to sexual assaults

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## Statistics and Methods

Answer one of the two following questions.

Question 1.

Implicit in the social sciences is the concept of causation. Discuss fully; (1) the nature or elements necessary to establish causation; and (2) the ways that causation is inferred from empirical studies and/or research design. Include how statistics may be used to establish causation as well.

Question 2.

"Gottfredson and Hirshi claim that a single factor, low self-control, when coupled with opportunity for antisocial activity, underlies antisocial behavior over the lifecourse." This suggests that, after controlling for self-control, other factors including psychological and biological factors should not be predictive of offending. In a recent article, researchers tested whether this hypothesis was supported. The sample was comprised of high school students (non-offender group) and similarly aged youth in detention (offender group). The table below displays the results of the multivariate test of the hypothesis. Parent's Education, Age, Race and Sex are control variables. ID/ED, Tower of London, Spatial Span, Spatial Working Memory and Heart Rate are psychological/biological measures. Future Orientation, Consideration of Others, and Temperance are measures of self-control. The table presents three multivariate models. Discuss your interpretation of these results (there is no need to try to interpret the individual unstandardized coefficients) and whether there is evidence to support or reject the theory.

**Table 2. Logistic Regression Analyses Predicting Offender Status**

Variable	Neuropsychological/Biological Only		Self-Control Only		Full Model	
	B/SE(B)	Exp(B)	B/SE(B)	Exp(B)	B/SE(B)	Exp(B)
Parent's Education	.211/.114	1.235	.180/.106	1.198	.200/.117	1.221
Age	-.377/.144	0.686	-.363/.134	0.696	-.403/.149	0.668*
Race	1.34/.426	1.143	-.023/.396	0.978	1.177/.437	1.124
Sex	.255/.400	1.291	.045/.347	1.046	.428/.430	1.534
ID/ED	-.134/.172	0.875			-.124/.175	0.884
Tower of London	-.102/.185	0.903			-.147/.193	0.863
Spatial Span	.615/.208	1.849*			.671/.221	1.956*
Spatial Working Memory	.265/.210	1.304			.182/.214	1.200
Heart Rate	.046/.019	1.047			.045/.020	1.046*
Future Orientation			.412/.197	1.510*	.455/.227	1.576*
Consideration of Others			-.019/.185	0.981	.010/.204	1.010
Temperance			-.343/.222	0.710	-.304/.252	0.738
Constant	1.504/2.660		4.979/2.154		1.749/2.743	
Model Chi-Square/df	34.485/9		17.025/7		38.143/12	
Nagelkerke R-Square	.258		.132		.284	

\*p < .05

\*\*Table for Stats. & Methods Section  
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