

A Level Sociology Knowledge Organiser

Theories of crime (crime and deviance)

Marxist theories

Criminogenic capitalism: crime is an inbuilt part of capitalist life, causes **alienation** – lack of power, control satisfaction of the working classes, leads to a culture of envy and crime.

× However not capitalist societies have high crime rates, crime is also present in communist societies

Laws based on ruling class ideology: laws reflect capitalist values of protecting private property, government don't pass laws that regulate businesses or threaten profit. W/C unaware due to false class consciousness, health and safety laws only serve to maintain productivity and keep workers safe to maximise profit

× Marxists fail to recognise that many laws actually benefit all members of society

Selective law enforcement: Law is not equally enforced and W/C targeted and prosecuted more, creates a false representation in crime statistics

× Ignore other inequality linked to crime

× Marxist theories are too deterministic not all w/c turn to crime – Neo-Marxists see crime as an act of political resistance and right realists see it as a rational choice

× Left realists criticise for not offering practical solutions to reduce crime in society (too revolutionary)

Neo-Marxist theories

New criminology: Crime is a deliberate and meaningful act as a response to powerlessness created by capitalism, criminals are active individuals who attempt to change society and protect against exploitation, injustice etc.

× **Left realists** – this view romanticises criminals as being 'robin hoods'

× Doesn't offer solutions, cannot explain crimes that don't have political motivation **Fully social theory:** Taylor – combines ideas from Marxism/labelling, believes that w/c can result in crime but only if individuals are labelled by the ruling class E.g. Hall's study of 'muggers'

Functionalist theories

Durkheim Crime is inevitable, can perform positive functions for society

1) **Boundary maintenance** (helps to distinguish between right and wrong, helping to unite individuals and prevent atrophy)

2) Allows **social change** (society can adapt and progress as crimes/deviance challenge ways of thinking e.g. on homosexuality)

3) Can act as a **warning device** that something is wrong in society and needs to be fixed

× Crime is not always beneficial for society

× Durkheim can't explain why crime and deviance exist in the first place

Merton: Strain theory - when there is disparity between the goals of society and the legal means of achieving them.

Five reactions to strain including conformity (no crime) or innovation shown by the working classes, using illegal means to achieve material success (e.g. theft)

× Can't explain why not all individuals who experience strain commit crime

× Cannot account for crimes that do not result in monetary success or achieving goals

× Cannot account for crime/deviance committed by groups rather than individuals (subcultural theories can)

Labelling theory

The process of labelling: primary deviance (acts not publicly labelled, doesn't affect individual) secondary deviance (acts that have been publicly labelled and can have an influence on how an individual views themselves). Label can become master status and can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy and a deviant career due to blocked opportunities

✓ Evidence suggests labels do exist within the police force e.g. black

Individuals

8X more likely to be stopped and searched,

× Removes blame from offender as blames society

× Cannot explain why individuals commit a primary act

× Ignores that crime/deviance may be a rational choice

× Is too deterministic – not all accept the criminal label

× Labelling can actually reduce crime – reintegrative shaming involves labelling the act and not the criminal

Left Realism

Blame inequality in society, three **reasons** for crime:

1) Marginalisation (being on the fringe/edge of society) 2) Relative deprivation (feeling like you lack what others have) 3) Subcultures (close deprivation gap/gain status or acceptance)

Solutions: community policing, improving community facilities, multi-agency approaches to tackling crime

✓ Holistic view of crime

× Fails to explain white collar crime

× Too deterministic – not all w/c commit crime

Right Realism

Blame the individual for crime, **reasons** for crime:

1) Biological differences 2) poor socialisation (linked to lone parent families and the underclass) 3) rational choice theory (benefits vs. cost of crime)

Solutions: maintaining environment (broken windows theory), situational crime prevention (making crime more difficult to commit)

× Fails to address structural causes of crime

× Cannot account for crimes that are not a rational choice (e.g. impulsive crimes such as violence)

Subcultural theories

Cohen: juvenile delinquency, **status frustration**, young, working class boys fail in education so join subcultures to achieve status in peer group and to find illegitimate ways of achieving success (e.g. vandalism, joyriding)

× Miller: W/C do not need to be failed by society to become criminal due to existing norms, values and focal concerns'

Cloward and Ohlin: three types of subcultures 1) criminal (stable w/c areas), 2) conflict (unstable areas) 3) retreatist

× Matza – Delinquency drift

× Overlap between subcultures

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Trends in crime (Crime and deviance)

The usefulness of official crime statistics

Police recorded crime	
<p>Offences detected or reported to the police and recorded</p> <p>85% of crimes recorded by the police are reported by the public.</p> <p>PRC may also be influenced by the following factors →</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Can see trends over time x Not all crimes are witnessed (drug taking, abuse) x Not all crimes are reported -60% (fear, distrust of police) x Not all crimes are recorded (1/5) (minor, witness not believed) x Do not show dark figure of crime <p>Media influencing the public reporting of crime (by focusing on certain crimes/moral panic)</p> <p>Changing police priorities</p> <p>Changing policing practices and technology</p>

Victim surveys	
<p>CSEW samples 50,000 households at random each year, asked to report crimes have been a victim of in past 12 months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Can uncover dark figure of crime x Sample may not be representative (25% do not take part) x Participants may not be honest (fear) x Some may not realise they have been a victim (white collar crime) x Not all crimes have a direct victim

Self-report surveys	
<p>Anonymous surveys, asked to report crimes committed in past 12 months (carried out 2003-2006)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Can uncover dark figure of crime x Sample may not be representative, may choose not to respond x May not be honest (fear, poor memory) x Does not include all types of crimes

Sociological views of statistics			
<p>Functionalists</p> <p>Statistics are accurate, represent true nature of crime</p>	<p>Marxists</p> <p>Not accurate - white collar and corporate crimes</p>	<p>Feminists</p> <p>Not accurate – female crimes and crimes to women</p>	<p>Interactionists</p> <p>Statistics are a social construction</p>

Social class and crime

Trends	Working class more likely to be convicted of offences, higher % in prison population
Class is main factor	Strain theory (Merton) – working class more likely to experience strain and innovate (criminal)
	Status frustration (Cohen) – working class boys fail to achieve in education, join delinquent subcultures
	Criminal subcultures (Cloward and Ohlin) –develop in stable working class areas – criminal apprenticeship
	Socialisation/focal concerns (Miller)
	Marginalisation and relative deprivation (Left Realism)
Not main factor	Criminal justice system is biased / selective enforcement / labelling of offenders(Marxists)
	White-collar and corporate crimes under represented in statistic (less likely to be detected/prosecuted)
Reasons for white collar crime: Edgework (thrill of crime), relative deprivation, greater opportunity of crime	

Gender and crime

Trends	95% of prison population are male, ¾ convicted offenders are male, males receive longer prison sentences
Men commit more crime	Sex role theory (parsons) – men socialised to be more criminal, women take on expressive role Men experience crisis of masculinity, express this through violence/crime
	Control theory (Heidensohn) – more controls over women’s behaviour in public and private sphere, less opportunity for crime
Men do not commit more	Chivalry thesis - women treated more leniently in CJS – seen as sad not bad
	Female crime is increasing – gender/class deal (working class women more likely to be criminal) (Carlen), liberation thesis ‘ladette subcultures’

Ethnicity and crime

Trends	Black individuals make up 13% prison population but 3% general population Black individuals 9X more likely to be stopped and searched
Ethnicity is main factor	Left Realism – marginality, deprivation, subcultures (study by Pryce)
	Social exclusion – due to racism (non-utilitarian crimes)
	Poorer family backgrounds – higher % of lone parent (lack of positive role models)
CJS is biased/racist	Criminal justice system is biased Gilroy – myth of black criminality Hall – policing the crisis (black individuals labelled and scapegoated)
	Institutional racism – Macpherson report, canteen culture
	Selective enforcement – stop and searches
Other factors	Link could be influenced by factors including gender and class
<p>Does institutional racism still exist?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Stop and search rate shows growing disparity ✓ Chief of met police voiced it still exists ✓ Only 10% BAME officers × Anti-racism training × Greater recruitment of BAME officers 	