GCSE Sociology Knowledge Organiser
Crime and Deviance

Key terms

Agencies of social control - The groups in society who control and regulate our behaviour

Anomie - A sense of normlessness where people feel like there are no strict rules (a cause of crime)

Chivalry thesis - The criminal justice system (police, courts) are less harsh on women as they are less likely to be seen as 'bad'

Corporate crime - Crime committed by businesses with the aim of making profit for that business

Crime - An illegal act which is punishable by law

Criminal justice system - The system of police/ courts /prisons to manage offenders and reduce re-offending

Dark figure of crime - All crimes that are not witnessed, reported or recorded by police

Deviance - An act which goes against societies norms but may not be illegal

Deviancy amplification - The process whereby the mass media can exaggerate the significance of a crime or deviance in society

Formal social control - Where behaviour is controlled by official agencies associated with the government

Informal social control - Where our behaviour is controlled by social pressure/agencies such as family

Institutional racism - Where an organisation e.g. police shows racism and discrimination overtly or covertly

Relative deprivation - Where an individual feels as though they are lacking the things that individuals who are similar to them have

Sanctions - The consequences of behaviour which are given by society

Self-report studies - Where individuals report crimes that they have committed themselves in a survey

Status frustration - Where working class males are disappointed with their position in society and cannot achieve well due to education

Strain theory – Where individuals do not have the legitimate means to achieve the goals of society

Subculture - A group of individuals whose norms and values are different from mainstream society

Victim survey - Individuals complete a questionnaire to report crimes that they have been victims of

White collar crime – Crime committed by middle class professionals

Definitions of crime and deviance

Crime - an illegal act which is punishable by law e.g. theft, murder	Deviance - n act which goes against societies norms but may not be illegal e.g. face tattoos
Why is crime and deviance difficult to define?	

It varies by place – where the act takes place could mean it's seen as criminal	It varies by time – what is seen as criminal before may not be criminal now	It varies by culture – what is deviant in one culture may not be in another

Statistics on crime and deviance

Police recorded crime	All crimes recorded by the police.
	Advantage – Large scale data, can compare trends over time and between different places
	Disadvantage – Does not include the dark figure of crime, crimes may not be witnessed (e.g. drug taking, domestic violence), reported (due to fear) or recorded by the police (seen as trivial or time wasting) Only 60% of crimes are reported, only 40% of then recorded
Victim surveys	Crime survey for England and Wales (CSEW) - These surveys question people about their experiences of being victims of crime in the past 12 month
	Advantage – Can uncover crimes not reported/recorded by the police, can look at trends in who is likely to be a victim
	Disadvantage – People may not be honest due to fear or may over exaggerate crimes, people may not realise they have been a victim of crime so don't report
Self-report surveys	These surveys question ask people to report any crimes that they have committed themselves in the past 12 months
	Advantage - Can uncover crimes not reported/recorded by the police, can look at trends in who is likely to be a criminal
	Disadvantage - People may not be honest due to fear or may over exaggerate crimes – means statistics might not be accurate

Social control

Formal social control	Informal social control
Agencies associated with the government which enforce formal rules/written laws Examples: The police, courts, prison service, probation Sanctions can include fines, imprisonment	Agencies which enforce informal rules/norms/unwritten rules in society Examples: Family, peers, religion, media Sanctions can include social pressure, approval, disapproval, grounding etc.

Functionalists view social control positively as it maintains social order/cohesion
Marxists view it negatively as it is used by the ruling class to control the working class
Feminists view it negatively as it is used by men to control women

Functionalist theories

Crime is inevitable and universal. It occurs when individuals can't achieve the goals of society.

Durkheim – Crime can be positive for society through – 1) Boundary maintenance 2) Changing society 3) Acts as a warning device 4) Provides jobs

Merton – Crime occurs due to strain – people cannot legally achieve the goals of society due to poor education/opportunities. 5 reactions – conformity, innovation, retreatism, rebellion and ritualism.

Marxist theories

Crime is negative and helps to maintain capitalism/keep the class divide. The ruling class create laws which benefit them and scapegoat the working class
The working classes are targeted by police and so are more likely to appear in crime statistics.
Middle class/white collar crime less likely to be detected.

Feminist theories

Crime is negative and helps to maintain patriarchy in society. Crimes such as domestic violence and sexual crimes are not taken seriously and female victims are not supported.
Female criminals are seen as 'double deviants' as they go against the law and expectations.

Interactionist theories

An act is only seen as criminal/deviant if it is labelled as such by society. Labelling can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy and criminal becoming a master status. Individuals can spiral into a 'deviant' career and join deviant/criminal subcultures (Becker)

Subcultural theories

Criminal subcultures involve young males, show behaviour which goes against society's norms and are likely to show anti-social acts.
Cohen – working class boys experience status frustration and join delinquent subcultures to gain status/fight back against society

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Key studies

Merton (functionalist)

Merton argued that all members of society hold the same values. However, Merton believed that they did not have the same opportunity to realise their shared goals. Strain theory says crime occurs when individuals cannot legally achieve the goals of society. There are 5 reactions to strain, not all are criminal – conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism and rebellion.

Cohen (functionalist)

Cohen argues that working class boys hold the same goals as the rest of society, but that because of educational failure and poor employment prospects, they have little or no opportunity to realise those goals. They experience status frustration and join delinquent subcultures where they show vandalism, graffiti, joyriding etc. to gain status in their group.

Becker (interactionist)

An act only becomes seen as criminal/deviant when it is labelled as such. An individual could accept the label through a self-fulfilling prophecy which becomes their master status (what they see as their most important characteristic). They could spiral into a deviant career by joining a criminal or deviant subculture and commit further acts.

Carlen (feminist)

Used unstructured interviews with 39 working class women to understand reasons for crime. They turned to crime because they had less to lose and couldn't conform to the gender deal or the class deal. For example, they were less likely to have stable and happy relationships or well-paid jobs – they were more likely to turn to crime as they had less to lose.

Heidensohn (feminist)

She uses control theory to explain how patriarchy in society means women commit less crime. Women are controlled at home (by husbands), at work (by male bosses) and in public (by the threat or fear of male violence). Girls develop a bedroom culture. They have less opportunity for crime due to more controls being put over their behaviour.

Social class and crime

Trends – Working class are more likely to be convicted offenders / in prison

Reasons	Material and relative deprivation, Inadequate socialisation, Poorer education (strain theory), Status frustration (Cohen)
Why might statistics not be accurate?	Bias within the criminal justice system – working class crimes (blue collar) are targeted more by police than middle class (white collar)
	White collar crimes (e.g. fraud, tax evasion) are less likely to be detected – they take place in private, may not have a direct victim and are not policed
	Corporate crimes (e.g. horse meat scandal) are less likely to be detected – may not have a direct victim and can be covered up

Gender and crime

Trends – 94% of the prison population are male, ¾ of convicted offenders are male

Reasons	Gender socialisation (men are socialised to be tough, risk taking) Lack of male role models in society More opportunity for crime / subcultures
Why might statistics not be accurate?	Chivalry thesis – women may be treated more leniently in the CJS, seen as 'sad not bad' so don't appear in statistics
	Female crime is increasing – women are committing more crime than before
	Ladette subcultures – women committing typically 'male crime'
	Carlen – working class women have less to lose by committing crime

Ethnicity and crime

Trends – 13% of the prison population are black vs. 3% in the general population, 9x more likely to be stopped and searched

Reasons	Higher chance of poverty/deprivation, poorer family backgrounds (more lone-parent), more chance of joining criminal subcultures
Why might statistics not be accurate?	Institutional racism / Macpherson Report – police/courts are more likely to target BAME individuals
	Stop and searches – 9X more likely for black individuals, 3x more likely to be arrested – more likely to appear in crime statistic
	Chief of Met policed voiced it is still racist, some forces have no BAME officers
	But… anti-racism training, increased recruitment of BAME officers

Age and crime

Trend – 15-24 year olds most likely to appear in crime statistics

Reasons: Socialisation, opportunity, subcultures, media

But… The police might target young people, crimes may be easier to detect

Treatment of young offenders

Sanctions available for young offenders: fines, referral orders, community sentences, CBOs, custody

Should young offenders be sent to prison/custody?

Yes	No
Protects the public, can access rehabilitation programmes, can act as a deterrent	Prisons may act as universities of crime, 73% reoffend, may join prison gangs

Prison as a punishment

Is prison the best form of punishment?

Yes	No
Functionalists – can rehabilitate offenders, act as a deterrent	Universities of crime, 45% reoffend, not suitable for those with disabilities/mental health issues

Violent crime

Is violent crime an issue in society?

Yes	No
Statistics may not show true extent of violent crime Gun crime/knife crime are increasing Influence of the media in promoting violence	Some statistics suggest violent crime has decreased since the 1990s Anti-violence and anti-gang education introduced into schools

The media and crime

Does the media show crime accurately?

Yes	No
Functionalist view – the media shows a range of views, pluralism, no one group dominates	Marxists – conflict view, agenda setting, media owned by ruling class, scapegoats working class, Exaggerates violent/sexual crimes

How can the media encourage crime?

Copycat crimes e.g. Daniel Bartlam, violence
Deviancy amplification – the media creates moral panics, labelling and a self-fulfilling prophecy e.g. mods&rockers
But… other factors may affect criminal behaviour