



# 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

All crimes recorded by the police.

**Police recorded crime**

**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 months

**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

These surveys question ask people to report any crimes that they have committed themselves in the past 12 months

**Self-report surveys**

**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	Agencies which enforce informal rules/norms/unwritten rules in society
Examples: The police, courts, prison service, probation	Examples: Family, peers, religion, media
Sanctions can include fines, imprisonment	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

## 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.

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### 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  
Some statistics suggest violent crime has decreased since the 1990s  
Gun crime/knife crime are increasing  
Anti-violence and anti-gang education introduced into schools  
Influence of the media in promoting violence

## 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