

CRIME AND DEVIANCE – SOCIAL CONTROL

INFORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL

Unwritten rules of behaviour (social norms) control most of our behaviour and sanctions are used to reward or to punish.

Communities: Play a significant role through...

- Neighbourhood watch schemes
- Threat of telling parents
- CCTV and increased surveillance

Religion: can play a major role in informal social control – children who go to a church, mosque or other temple, are taught what is right and wrong

Media: Bombards us with messages about how to behave, e.g. public information adverts.

Social media: Enables people to name and shame criminals much more easily.



PERSPECTIVES ON SOCIAL CONTROL

Functionalists: Social control is a good thing – helping keep society in order.

Marxists: Social control is used to control the workers while not used against the ruling classes.

Feminists: Social control benefits men and keeps women under control (e.g. gossiping about someone).



FORMAL SOCIAL CONTROL

Involves official institutions to keep society in order.

Police/courts/prison system: In place to keep social order, punish those who break the law and protect the rest of society from them.

Social services: E.g. Children's Services will intervene if a child is at risk, or they are out of control.



FORMAL SANCTIONS

Custodial sentences: Time spent in prison for the most serious offences.

Community service: Period of unpaid work given instead of prison (for less serious crimes).

Electronic tagging: Police can monitor the whereabouts of someone – so they can be released on licence.

Curfew: Some criminals have to stay in their homes during the evenings – less opportunity for them to reoffend.

Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBOs): Given to stop anti-social behaviour – often specifies areas/people they can't go near (replaced ASBOs).



THE COURTS

Judiciary: Part of government which makes laws.

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS): Decides whether a case goes to court.

Crown Court: Deals with more serious crimes – controlled by judges, assisted by a jury of 12 members of the public.

Magistrates' Court: Deals with less serious crimes – can send people to prison for up to six months and impose fines of up to £5000.



VIEWS ON THE POLICE

Functionalists: Believe that without the police society would fall into chaos, and that police do community work, e.g. school visits.

Marxists: See the police as biased against the working classes, e.g., the Hillsborough victims were treated as criminals.

Feminists: See the police as abusing their power, e.g. Sarah Everard case.



VIEWS ON THE COURT SYSTEM

Functionalists: Believe the courts protect society from dangerous individuals by sending them to prison, or using other sanctions to discourage crime.

Marxists: Believe the courts are unfair and protect the interests of the rich and powerful, and are intimidating for the working classes.



CRIME AND DEVIANCE – WHO IS INVOLVED IN CRIME?

VICTIMS OF CRIME

Poorer people: Working class are more likely to be victims of crime – particularly from violence/ burglary (easier targets than the wealthy who have better security, or live in safer areas).



Men: More likely to be the victims of physical assault – particularly by strangers.



Women: Twice as likely to be the victims of domestic abuse or sexual violence.



Hate crime: Directed at race, disability and sexual orientation on the increase.

CHARLES MURRAY – NEW RIGHT VIEW

‘Culture of poverty’:

- Poor subcultures = crime and delinquency
- The poor have their own way of life
- Criminal behaviour is seen as normal



Crime is worse than in the past...

- Collapse of the family
- Failing education system
- Weak law enforcement



MARXIST VIEW

Capitalism: Advertising makes poor people want more things so are more likely to steal from each other.



CRIMINAL SUBCULTURES

Subculture: Small group in society with their own norms and values.

Delinquency: Behaviour, usually linked to youth, that breaks the law or is seen as unacceptable

Rewards/status: Members of criminal subcultures might be rewarded with money, expensive goods or higher status within the group.

County lines: Gangs or organised crime networks exploit children to sell drugs (travelling across counties, using dedicated mobile phone ‘lines’).



ALBERT COHEN – WORKING CLASS BOYS

Status frustration: Anger or dissatisfaction at your position in society...

- Cultural deprivation – lack the skills to achieve
- At the bottom of the official status hierarchy
- Unable to achieve a higher status by legitimate means (education)

So, resolve their frustration by rejecting mainstream middle-class values - form and/or join a delinquent subculture.

In these subcultures they can earn an alternative high status from criminal acts.

**90% of prisoners in the UK are male, and the majority are working class.*



ETHNICITY AND CRIME

Scapegoat: Person or group made to bear the blame for something they didn't do.



Over-representation in crime stats:

- Black people are 3 x more likely to be arrested than white people in the UK
- 12% of UK prisoners are black (compared to 3% of population)
- 25% of UK prisoners are from ethnic minorities (compared to 12% of population)
- Black people are 3 x more likely to be murdered than white people in the UK



Institutional racism: Black people are also likely to be assumed to be gang members so treated more harshly...

Stephen Lawrence case: Police wrongly made assumptions Stephen being in a gang and ignored vital evidence – so his killers were not brought to justice until nearly 20 years later.

CRIME AND DEVIANCE – FUNCTIONALIST VIEW

EMILE DURKHEIM

Argued that some crime was important for society to function properly – reminds us what is right and wrong...

- When someone is punished for the crime this helps society as we see justice being done...
- ...and punishment (through the legal system) deters other potential criminals, by showing what will happen if they break the rules

Collective sentiment: When a terrible crime happens it reminds us how wrong it is and makes society stronger.

Anomie: When there are no longer any norms guiding behaviour, e.g. riots of summer 2024.



ROBERT MERTON – AMERICAN DREAM

The American Dream: Everyone aspires to a great lifestyle, nice house/car, etc...

- Most people achieve this is through hard work
- Not everyone can achieve such a dream
- Huge pressure to achieve despite lacking the means to do so
- Creates a strain on society and anomie

Structural theory: Idea that crime is caused by a person's position in society...



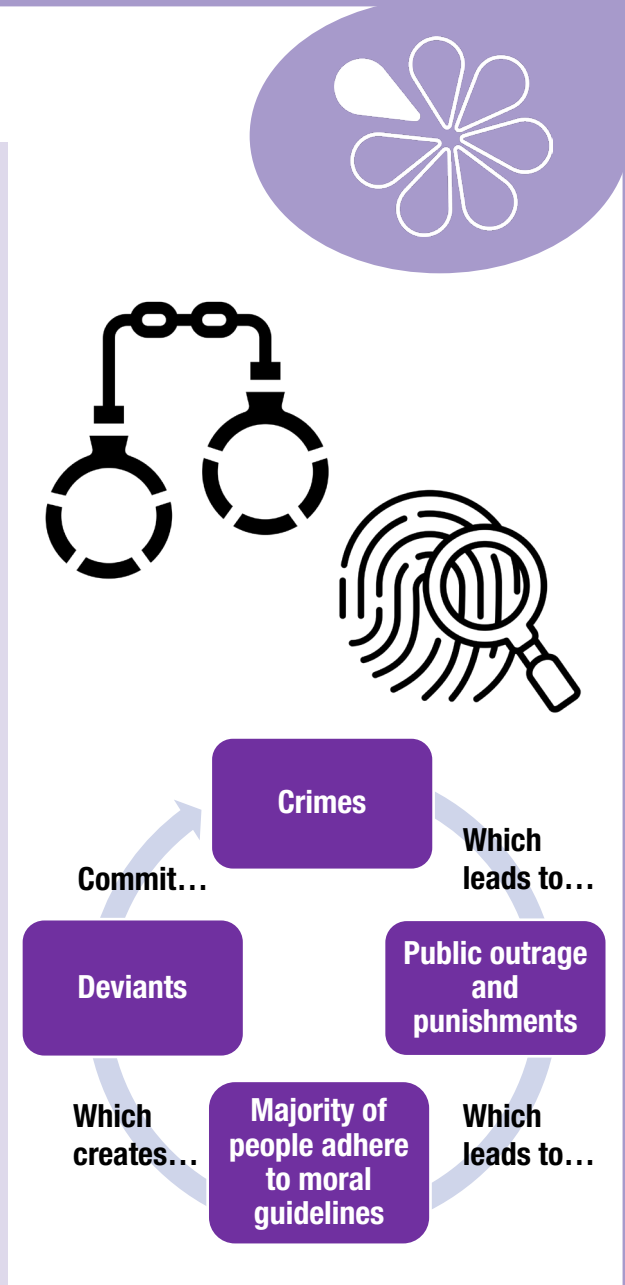
MERTON'S STRAIN THEORY

Strain theory: Idea that the pressure to succeed makes people turn to crime – people respond in 5 ways...

- 1. Conformity:** Pursuing cultural goals through socially approved means.
- 2. Ritualism:** Using the same socially approved means to achieve less elusive goals (more modest and humble).
- 3. Innovation:** Using socially unapproved means to obtain goals, e.g. dealing drugs, robbing a bank or committing fraud to achieve financial security.
- 4. Retreatism:** Rejecting both the cultural goals and the means to obtain it, then find a way to escape it, e.g. using drugs or alcohol, or becoming homeless.
- 5. Rebellion:** Rejecting the cultural goals and means, then work to replace them, e.g. becoming a terrorist or belonging to an extreme group.

Criticism: His theory only accounts for economic crime, and not all working class people turn to crime!

Subcultural theories of crime: Look at other reasons that people turn to crime, such as to achieve status and respect.



CRIME AND DEVIANCE – MARXIST VIEW

SOCIAL CONTROL

The ruling class controls the police/courts

- Protects the wealth of the rich
- Concentrates on punishing working class crimes more

Abuse of power: Powerful business people and politicians use bribery and threats to keep people quiet who may suspect what they are up to – keep their crimes secret and avoid jail.



CAUSE OF CRIME

Argue that crime happens because of capitalism and consumerism – humans are not naturally greedy and selfish but capitalism makes them that way

Capitalism: Economic system where means of production is privately owned and operated for profit.

Consumerism: Preoccupation of people and society over the acquisition of goods...

- Advertising (media owned by ruling class) – makes working classes believe they need to own lots of nice things...
- ...Makes people greedy and want more than they can afford...
- ...When some people can't get the goods they want they will inevitably turn to crime



CORPORATE CRIME

Crime committed by big businesses (often linked to negligence/often not prosecuted).

These crimes benefit the company (not individuals like white-collar crime)

Many corporate crimes are never brought to justice, e.g. pollution caused by factories – companies often cover up their crimes or ignore the rules about pollution.

Southern Water: Fined £90 million in 2021 for illegal dumping of sewage.



WHITE-COLLAR CRIME

Financially motivated, non-violent crime. Called white-collar because of the white shirt and tie usually worn by middle class workers who carry it out.

E.g. MPs expenses scandal.

Forgery: Producing a fake document or fake money.

Fraud: Tricking somebody else to get money unlawfully.

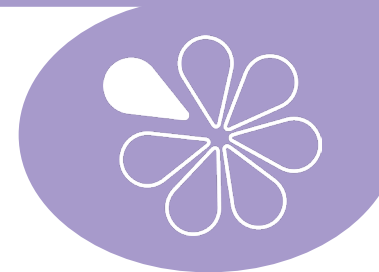
Corruption: The misuse of public power for private gain.

Bribery: Offering someone money to persuade them to do something or to keep quiet.

Identity theft: The illegal use of someone else's personal information.

Cyber crime: Computer-oriented crime, e.g. hacking, phishing scams.

Insider trading: Trading of a public company's shares using non-public information about the company.



DIFFERENTIAL ENFORCEMENT OF CRIME

Working class people are more likely to be arrested and convicted for their crimes...



- White-collar and corporate crime is usually committed by people of high social status – these people are less likely to be suspected of committing a crime
- Corporate crime seen as unimportant for police and the courts
- Corporate crime usually involved a large network of people working together to keep their crime secret

Punishment:

- Companies can receive fines – but paying is not a problem
- White-collar offenders can afford top lawyers

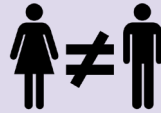
CRIME AND DEVIANCE – FEMINIST VIEW

SOCIALISATION

Affects the likelihood of crime...

Boys: Socialised to be active, dominant and aggressive, and are also influenced by testosterone.

Girls: Encouraged to be quiet, obedient, kind and cautious



FRANCES HEIDENSOHN – LACK OF OPPORTUNITY FOR CRIME

Less likely to commit crime than men...

Patriarchal social control: Girls are given less freedom than boys by their parents, so it is unlikely that they will turn to crime

Fear: Women often fear sexual violence (exacerbated by media reporting of rape) so may be frightened to leave their home.

Gossip: If women act outside of the female social norms they may be gossiped about or labelled – this is a deterrent.

Supervision: Women are often more closely supervised at work, as they are not normally bosses, so less opportunity for white-collar crime. Home life: Women have more domestic/childcare duties, so have less time to commit crime.



ANGELA MCROBBIE – BEDROOM CULTURE

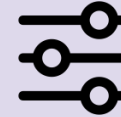
1970s theory based on romance, fashion and the private domestic space of the girls' bedrooms, e.g. experimenting with make-up and hair, gossiping about boys and reading magazines. Whereas boys are more likely to play outside.



HIRSCHI'S CONTROL THEORY

We are controlled by 4 bonds – if they are strong enough we conform...

- How much we have to lose
- How committed we are to society's values
- Our connections to others
- How involved or busy we are in society



OTTO POLLACK – CHIVALRY THESIS

Chivalry: Medieval knights code, e.g. rescuing damsels in distress...

Argued female crime is underestimated...

- Police/judges are usually men so are socialised to protect women – unwilling to arrest, charge or convict them.
- Men often felt sorry for women who had broken the laws or rules
- Women were particularly good at hiding their crimes, e.g. poisoning or child abuse/neglect.



BUT, Demonisation of women: Some feminists have argued that women might actually be treated worse...

Image of women: Women who fit traditional gender stereotypes (good housewives and mothers)

are more likely to be treated leniently... whereas women who commit crimes that go against these roles are treated harshly, particularly those involving children.



PAT CARLEN – WHY WOMEN COMMIT CRIME

Women conform through the promise of 2 deals:

Class deal: Working hard = decent standard of living

Gender deal: Conforming to the conventional domestic gender role = material and emotional rewards of family

Linked to **Hirschi's control theory.**

When these break down women may turn to crime. E.g. some of the women in the study had been abused by partners or spent time in care, and most had always been in poverty despite working.



CRIME AND DEVIANCE – INTERACTIONIST VIEW

LABELLING THEORY

Interactionists say there is no such thing as the typical offender – anyone may be a criminal. The main difference between an ordinary person and a criminal is that a criminal has been labelled a criminal!

Master status: The main thing that people see when they meet a person, often related to how they live their life...

- The way people see us has a powerful effect on how we see ourselves and how we act
- Criminals are more likely to reoffend when they are given a negative label



HOWARD BECKETT – SELF-FULFILLING PROPHECY

Stage 1: Publicly labelled as deviant – rejected from social/family group.

Stage 2: This may encourage further deviance, e.g. drug addicts may steal to finance their habit.

Stage 3: Officially classed as deviant – similar effects occur, e.g. convicted criminals find it hard to get a job.

Stage 4: Deviant career may emerge – individuals may join an organised deviant group – the individual accepts their deviant identity.

Stage 5: The label may become a master status – overriding all other forms of relationships outside deviant group



STEREOTYPES

- Many people have a notion of the typical offender
- Most people expect offenders to be young, male and working class
- These views are influenced by the media and how they represent criminals



MORAL PANIC

An over-the-top reaction to an issue which makes people question whether society is falling apart.

He argued that the way the media reports crimes often leads to moral panics and mass hysteria. And that media overreacts/sensationalises aspects of behaviour.

Hypodermic syringe model: View that the media has a direct effect on how we behave (the intended message is directly received and wholly accepted by the receiver) – leads to a climate of fear, e.g. migration, terrorism.

Deviancy amplification: The more people hear about the crime the more they are encouraged to copy the behaviour.

Folk devils: Outsider groups that are seen as deviant and are scapegoats for society's problems).



STANLEY COHEN – 5 STAGES OF MORAL PANIC

Stage 1: Something or someone is defined as a threat to values or interests.

Stage 2: This threat is depicted in an easily recognisable form by the media.

Stage 3: There is a rapid build-up of public concern.

Stage 4: There is a response from authorities or opinion makers.

Stage 5: The panic calms down or results in social changes.

