

- ❑ Discuss the wider implications for sociology of this sort of issue. If we cannot trust official statistics, how are we to study sociology?
- ❑ Ask students to investigate alternative methods of discovering how much crime is committed (victim surveys and self-report studies).

WHY IS GAZ IN COURT FOR MUGGING? A MYSTERY SOLVING ACTIVITY BY JILL SWALE, KENDRICK SCHOOL, READING.

INTRODUCTION

The solving of a mystery by selecting and ordering relevant material through group discussion is a technique recommended by David Leat to encourage thinking skills. This activity is a modification of his approach as all the items are relevant to some sociological perspective, but the object is to decide which... It provides practice in interpretation of items and application of theories to actual situations, as well as consolidating knowledge of researchers. Sorting activities appeal to kinaesthetic learners.

INSTRUCTIONS

- (1) Photocopy the chart of the 30 numbered items about Gaz so that each group has a copy, and provide scissors. Ask the students to discuss the items and to arrange them according to the different perspectives they seem to support. How much help you give with this will depend on whether you are using this for revision, or are expecting them to guess at some of the perspectives from meeting them in other topics. You could elicit all the perspectives they have studied, list them, and ask them to see how many they can find. Alternatively if you have only taught three perspectives so far, ask three different groups to pick out items relating to those, leaving the other items for another time. Students should arrange the relevant items on the desk under headings. Some items could be related to more than one explanation. Encourage particular focus on these when they feed back to the class.
- (2) Provide the second set of items, the lettered details of perspectives and their sources. If you are planning to cover just a few of the perspectives this time, only provide the appropriate lettered items. Ask the students to pair up the numbered items about Gaz with the appropriate lettered items. This needs more detailed knowledge than the first task, such as distinguishing different subcultural theories.
- (3) Elicit evaluation of the alternative theories. Provide further uncut sheets to use as revision notes.

- (4) As a creative thinking extension task ask students to devise another scenario that could be interpreted from a range of perspectives, or to find such a story in a newspaper, and make synoptic links.

Solutions to Pairings

1. d	11. g	21. n
2. f	12. x	22. l
3. i	13. o	23. r
4. k	14. h	24. m
5. e	15. w	25. cc
6. b	16. z	26. bb
7. p	17. v	27. y
8. s	18. aa	28. q
9. c	19. dd	29. t
10. u	20. j	30. a

DEFINING THE CAUSE OF DEATH BY STEVE WALKER, WILLENHALL SPORTS COLLEGE, WALSALL

This is a useful resource for illustrating key themes in the positivist versus interpretivist debate about suicide. Students should examine the cases in groups either with each group discussing a different case or getting them to consider all of them. Follow up with plenary discussion

BRIEFING: THE GENERAL HOUSEHOLD SURVEY BY ROB POVEY, BABBINGTON COMMUNITY COLLEGE LEICESTER

Rob Povey has written another very useful briefing on a key source of social data

KEY TEXT: OPEN WORLD: THE TRUTH ABOUT GLOBALISATION, BY PHILIPPE LEGRAIN, REVIEWED BY STEPHEN THOMAS, CASTLE SCHOOL, THORNBURY

This book and the summary provides an important antidote to the rather one-sided coverage of the globalisation debate which too often features in the A level textbooks

WHY IS GAZ IN COURT FOR MUGGING?

A MYSTERY SOLVING ACTIVITY

Jill Swale

CASE STUDY MATERIAL

1. When Gaz was twelve he was caught taking a CD from a shop without paying. He received an official caution and lots of people heard about it. This is likely to be mentioned in court.

2. Gaz was hanging about in the street with his friends because they were bored. He has a dull part-time job as a cleaner. He did not plan the mugging, but when he saw the person making a call in the street, grabbing the phone was a chance for a bit of excitement.

3. Gaz's family is poor and his mother is finding it difficult to cope with all the children. The father was never a lot of help, even before he went to prison. Gaz is not very bright, so he is easily led astray by other lads.

4. Laws relating to robbery favour the rich. They maintain an unequal society, protecting the property of the upper classes from the poor and needy.

5. Gaz and his friends wear outfits which make older people feel nervous. All his friends have dead-end jobs but it gives them a sense of belonging to dress the same way, and when people look shocked by their appearance, it makes the group feel a bit more powerful.

6. Gaz's family is not poor compared with people in the developing world, but they do not have as much money as many British families. Gaz cannot afford many of the fashionable clothes and music items enjoyed by his peer group.

7. A local factory owner was punished only by a fine when one of his workers was killed by dangerous machinery. Providing safer machinery would have cut the owner's profits. This is much more serious offence than taking someone's mobile phone, yet the criminal justice system is far more interested in property offences.

8. Gaz's family lives on a fairly new council estate and the relatives they have are scattered around the country. His friends' families are also fairly new to the area, and they have no real feeling of roots. They try to gain a sense of territory by supporting their local football team, sometimes fighting fans of opposing teams. They like to assert their control of the local streets by 'taxing' people passing through. 'Taxing' can involve stealing items from passers by, such as mobile phones.

9. Gaz knows that when he was at school, quite a few girls stole other pupils' mobile phones, but no one seemed to suspect them and they got away with it.

10. The local university students frequently steal items such as road signs, which are worth more than the mobile phone Gaz is alleged to have stolen. The police lack manpower, and rarely pursue the thefts by students.

11. The alleged mugging incident took place in a rundown inner city area where many poorer members of the community live.

12. Children are brought up in our society to believe that competition between people is natural. The more successful people have the right to enjoy the private property they earn. But Gaz's mother works more hours on the checkout than the father, of Roland, the owner of the phone, works as manager of his firm. Roland's father earns twenty times more a year. Gaz was justified in redistributing wealth in favour of his family.



13. Society puts stress on competition rather than on co-operation. The media are constantly urging people to buy the latest goods. The manufacturers and advertisers gain huge profits from this, and ordinary people are conned into thinking consumer goods will bring happiness. No wonder Gaz wanted a mobile phone.	14. Almost everyone agrees that stealing is wrong, and laws against it are there to protect all citizens. In big cities people sometimes feel less sense of belonging and collective responsibility. There is less harmony and order if people no longer accept the norms and commit crime.	15. Gaz feels a nobody in his cleaning job, and he had little status in the lower streams at school. He has noticed that the local youths often gain status with the peer group for graffiti, vandalism and other acts of daring, even though they bring no financial reward.
16. After Gaz received a caution, he gained 'street cred' with some of the lads in his school who frequently got into trouble. This seemed to change his ideas about the sort of person he wanted to be.	17. Gaz is only 18. At the moment he and his friends seem to have drifted into a phase of small rebellious acts, but when they have families of their own they are likely to behave more responsibly and stop offending.	18. Gaz's group of friends feel marginalized, without much of a future. None of them have got good full-time jobs, and they feel school did them no favours. They do not owe society anything in return.
19. Gaz was brought up by a single mother, who found it difficult to hold down a job and control her children. If the government were less generous with state benefits and council housing, young girls would think twice about getting pregnant. If people were forced to take responsibility for their actions and they would take better care of their children.	20. Gaz's trial is likely to be in the newspapers. It is important to publicise incidents such as mobile phone robbery. Media coverage draws the public together in condemnation of such acts and reminds everyone what the law is.	21. Crimes such as phone robberies occur in half-empty streets. If the police cracked down on activities which make areas sordid, such as begging, prostitution, drinking outdoors and the dropping of litter, the public would enjoy visiting those areas more, and they would be safe for everyone.
22. The father of Roland, owner of the mobile phone, is involved in thousands of pounds of tax evasion each year. He pretends that his wife works for him and that a lot of the family outings are the expenses of entertaining clients. He can afford skilled accountants to present the figures in his favour so has never been in trouble. Most of his manager friends do the same and regard it as normal behaviour in business.	23. It is fair to pay people more if they are prepared to take the risks involved in setting up businesses or undertake long professional training courses. The inequalities of wealth that result are inevitable, and the competitiveness, which benefits society in many ways, has the unfortunate by-product of encouraging some to attempt dishonest gains. The way to prevent this is to make crime a difficult and unattractive option. Better street lighting. more CCTV, more bobbies on the beat and harsher penalties would cut street crimes such as mugging.	24. The police heavily patrol the area where the incident took place. The victim raised the alarm and the police saw Gaz running and gave chase. He acted abusively when detained and the police arrested him.
25. Gaz's friends have typical working class values. These include being tough, looking for excitement, not letting anyone push them around, and accepting that they are bound to get into trouble from time to time.	26. In the working class area where Gaz lives there are quite a few successful criminals. Youths know that if they steal items, it is quite easy to sell them through the criminal networks available.	27. Gaz feels let down. When he was younger, people told him that if he worked hard, he would get a good job. Now there has been a downturn in the economy, and there is no work except part-time cleaning. He feels entitled to plenty of money, even if he has to break the law.
28. The media are exaggerating the risks of being mugged, and they always seem to be blaming black people. The government are so unpopular that they are trying to distract and divide the public by finding scapegoats. There are more police on the streets now, supposedly to stop the muggers, but really to discourage the public from rioting. Gaz feels he has been suspected because he is black and working class.	29. Gaz has never been very bothered about obeying the law. His family have suffered a lot of discrimination since coming to Britain, and they still talk about how whites kept black people as slaves, and how badly they behaved in the old Empire days. There is no reason to keep the laws of a nation that has exploited his people.	30. It would be surprising if Gaz did NOT commit crime. There is plenty to gain by doing so, and nothing much to stop him. There are not many people who really care what he does, and he has no commitments to keep him on the straight and narrow. His part time job does not take up enough of his time to keep him out of trouble, and he has not been brought up with strong moral beliefs. The only thing to stop him would be more control.

LINK THESE SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES ABOUT CRIME WITH THE NUMBERED ITEMS IN THE CASE STUDY MATERIAL ABOUT GAZ

<p>a. HIRSCHI'S CONTROL THEORY. This suggests that people are likely to commit crime, unless they are bonded into society. This occurs through attachment, commitment, involvement and belief. Otherwise social control has to be asserted to make people obey the law. (T. Hirschi, <i>The Causes of Delinquency</i>, 1969)</p>	<p>b. LEFT REALIST explanation of relative deprivation as a cause of crime. (J. Lea and J. Young, <i>What is to be done about Law and Order?</i> 1984)</p>	<p>c. In <i>Girl Delinquents</i> (1981) A. Campbell argued that a lot of female crime was unsuspected, as did O. Pollak in <i>The Criminality of Women</i> (1950). This could be related to the LABELLING THEORY.</p>
<p>d. LABELLING THEORY, (H. Becker, <i>The Outsiders</i>, 1963).</p>	<p>e. MARXIST SUBCULTURAL VIEW, as in D. Hebdige's <i>Subculture, the Meaning of Style</i> (1979)</p>	<p>f. WILLMOTT'S SUBCULTURAL THEORY (<i>Adolescent Boys in East London</i>, 1966). Working class youths in dead end jobs seek excitement in their leisure. As this is often in the street, they are easily detected.</p>
<p>g. ECOLOGICAL VIEW. Crimes are more likely to take place in the zone of transition where there is social disorganisation (C. Shaw and H. McKay, <i>Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas</i>, 1942).</p>	<p>h. FUNCTIONALIST VIEW OF EMILE DURKHEIM. Collective conscience is weakened in large industrial societies. (<i>The Division of Labour in Society</i>, 1893.)</p>	<p>i. D. WEST AND D. FARRINGTON'S POSITIVIST STUDY They found delinquency tended to correlate with low family income, large family size, comparatively low intelligence, parent with a criminal record and parents considered unsatisfactory at child rearing (<i>The Delinquent Way of Life</i>, 1977)</p>
<p>j. EMILE DURKHEIM'S FUNCTIONALIST VIEW. A little crime is functional, as it binds the community together in abhorrence.</p>	<p>k. TRADITIONAL MARXIST VIEW on law creation</p>	<p>l. TRADITIONAL MARXIST VIEW that enforcement of the law against middle class white collar and corporate crime is weak (S. Box, <i>Power, Crime and Mystification</i>, 1983).</p>
<p>m. LABELLING THEORY. Differential patrolling of groups or areas by the police is likely to lead to more arrests amongst that group, especially those whose appearance fits the preconceived ideas of the law enforcement agencies (the self-fulfilling prophecy). Left Realists and Marxists would tend to agree.</p>	<p>n. ZERO TOLERANCE, the need for public order. This is one of the views of some members of the New Right such as James Q. Wilson (J. Wilson and G. Kelling, <i>Broken Windows</i>, 1982)</p>	<p>o. TRADITIONAL MARXIST view about how media create consumer fetishism.</p>

p. TRADITIONAL MARXIST VIEW of differential enforcement of the law according to class of offender and type of crime.

q. HALL'S MARXIST THEORY. His study of the capitalist media's coverage of mugging, especially by black youth, (S. Hall, *Policing the Crisis*, 1979.)

r. NEW RIGHT VIEW emphasising practical ways of reducing crime, known as administrative criminology. (R. Clarke, *Situational Crime Prevention, Theory and Practice*, 1980).

s. TERRITORIALITY, A LEFT WING SUBCULTURAL VIEW suggested by J. Clarke in *Skinheads and the Magical Recovery of Community*, found in *Resistance through Rituals*, ed. S. Hall and T. Jefferson, 1976.

t. This view of an OPPOSITIONAL SUBCULTURE amongst black people in white communities is from the left wing Race and Politics Collective. According to Gilroy and Bridges, crime is a form of resistance to white oppression which occurs because black people are largely excluded from organised protest through political parties and trade unions (Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, *The Empire Strikes Back*, 1983.)

u. LABELLING VIEW concerning way working class are more likely to be viewed as offenders. (S.Box, *Deviance, Reality and Society*, 1981). This could equally well be a Marxist view.

v. THEORY OF DRIFT, a subcultural theory by D. Matza. (*Delinquency and Drift*, 1964).

w. STATUS FRUSTRATION, as described by A. Cohen in his early subcultural theory, *Delinquent Boys, the Culture of the Gang*, 1955.

x. TRADITIONAL MARXIST VIEW about capitalist values and working class motivation for crime.

y. MERTON'S STRAIN THEORY, part of the Functionalist tradition. . When the goals held out by society as desirable cannot be reached by legitimate means, some people try to reach them by innovation, i.e. crime. (R. Merton, *Social Structure and Anomie*, 1938.)

z. LABELLING THEORY. Labelling after an act of primary deviance can lead to secondary deviance, according to both Becker and Lemert. Cooley's theory of the looking glass self supports this idea. (H. Becker, *The Outsiders*, 1963, E. Lemert, *Human Deviance, Social Problems and Social Control*, 1981. C. Cooley, *Human Nature and the Social Order*, 1902.)

aa. LEFT REALIST THEORY OF MARGINALISATION (J. Lea and J. Young, *What is to be done about Law and Order?* 1984.

bb. CLOWARD AND OHLIN'S SUBCULTURAL THEORY OF ILLEGITIMATE OPPORTUNITY STRUCTURE. Crime is more likely to occur in areas where there is already a criminal subculture. This provides knowledge and opportunities for the young to enter a criminal career. (R. Cloward and L. Ohlin, *Delinquency and Opportunity*, 1961).

cc. MILLER'S SUBCULTURAL THEORY. He described six focal concerns of working class life which can lead into crime. They are trouble, toughness, smartness, excitement, fate and autonomy. (W. Miller, *Working Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency*, 1962).

dd. NEW RIGHT VIEW, as espoused by Charles Murray (*The Emerging British Underclass*, 1990)