**Crime and Deviance**

**Revision notes, exam requirements and exam questions**







**GCSE Sociology 2012**

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| Agent of social control | An individual or group that is responsible for ensuring members of society conform to socially acceptable behaviour. |
| Anomie | A situation where large numbers of people fail to follow the generally accepted norms and values. |
| British Crime Survey (BCS) | A victim survey conducted annually by a team of researchers at the Home Office. |
| Capitalist society | An economic system where the production of goods is organised for profit and sold to a free market. |
| CCTV | A television system often used for surveillance. |
| Chivalry thesis | The belief that the police and courts are easier on women because they are male dominated. |
| Crime | Behaviour that breaks the law. |
| Dark figure of crime | The amount of crime that does not appear in the statistics. |
| Deviance | Behaviour that does not conform to the dominant norms of a specific society. |
| Functionalism | An approach that seeks to explain the existence of social structures by the roles they perform in or for society. |
| Indictable offences | Serious crimes, where if a person is found guilty they are likely to go to prison. |
| Institutional racism | Where the structure and practises of an organisation such as the police, lead to a group being discriminated. |
| Lad-ette | A young woman who behaves in a crude manner and engages in heavy drinking sessions. |
| Marxist | An approach which looks at the divisions in society based on the social class groups in the capitalist society. |
| Official crime statistics | The way crime is officially measured, based on statistics collected by the Home Office. |
| Peer group pressure | Where someone is influenced by their group of friends to behave in a certain way. |
| Recorded crime | Crime that is recorded by the police |
| Reported crime | Crime that is reported to the police. |
| Self-fulfilling prophecy | This is where people who are labelled and begin to believe their label and behave as such, making the label true. |
| Self-report study | Surveys of the public which ask them to confess to crime they have committed but for which they have not been caught. |
| Socially constructed | Views of what is criminal or deviant behaviour are influenced by the values and norms of the society we live in. They are defined by society. |
| Socially defined behaviour | Behaviour that is thought of as natural but is actually a product of cultural expectations. |
| Sub-culture | A group with its own set of values and ways of behaviour which are distinctive from the generally accepted cultural values of society. |
| Surveillance | Is the monitoring of the behaviour of people and objects within society. |
| Validity | Data is valid if it gives a true picture of what is being studied. |
| Victim surveys | Surveys of the public which ask them to report any crime they have experienced, whether or not they have reported them. |
| White collar crime | Criminal acts committed by middle-class people in the course of their work. |

**Crime and Deviance Exam requirements:**

*The exam specification asks that .......*

**Candidates should be able to:**

1. Define the concepts of “crime” and “deviance”
2. Describe the ways in which individuals are encouraged to conform to social rules both formal and informal.
3. Assess, at a basic level, the usefulness of official crime figures, and self-report and victim studies, to sociologists studying crime and deviance.
4. Describe how criminal and deviant behaviour affects victims, communities and society in general.
5. **Candidates should be aware**, at a basic level, of how crime patterns differ through different groups in society, e.g. class, age, gender, ethnicity and location.
6. **Candidates should be able to** describe and outline different sociological explanations of criminal and deviant behaviour, such as sub-cultural theories, labelling theory and relative deprivation
7. **Candidates should be aware**, at a basic level, of the ways in which criminal and deviant behaviour have created public debates in recent years.
8. **Candidates should understand**, at a basic level, the nature, significance and measures taken to stop social problems such as racism and teenage crime.

***Use these alongside the headings in the rest of this guide to help you make sure you have revised everything you need to know!***

Crime and deviance

Revision notes

1. Definitions of crime and deviance

## Key words:

* **Deviance** – Actions that break norms and values of society or group.
* **Crime** – An action that is against the law.
* **Norms** – A set of unwritten social rules
* **Values** – Beliefs of right and wrong in society.
* **Cross-cultural deviance-** Something that is deviant in some cultures but not in others.
* **Situational deviance-** Something that is deviant only in certain situations.
* **Historical deviance-** Something that is deviant only at a certain time.

###### Is deviance relative?

There is evidence to suggest that definitions and perceptions of deviance change over time and depending on what culture you are in:

* It was considered deviant to be a single mother 60 years ago but is no longer, this is an example of historical deviance.
* To walk down the road naked would be deviant but to be naked on a nudist beach is not deviant, this is an example of situational deviance.
* For a boxer to hit his opponent is not considered deviant but to hit someone in the face when they annoy you is deviant, this is role/positional deviance.
* To wear shoes inside a house is not considered deviant in Britain but is in Japan, this is an example of cross-cultural deviance.

There have also been attempts by the European Union to standardised moral codes through the legal system in all 27 countries, which is evidence that some deviance is not relative:

* The European Union made it a criminal offence to use children for sexual exploitation and child pornography.
* Torture, cruelty, inhuman or degrading treatments or punishments have also been made illegal in all 27 EU countries.
* It is illegal to smoke in enclosed premises open to the public.

1. **How are individuals encouraged to conform to social rules both formal and informal?**

**Key words:**

* **Conformity-** Following the rules.
* **Agents of social control-** The various groups, both formal and informal, that control our behaviour.
* **Formal social control-** Carried out by agents that only exist to control society- police, army, law courts and government.
* **Informal social control-** Carried out by agents that control society, although control is not their primary function.

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| **Formal agent** | **How they control society** |
| The government | Through the Houses of Parliament, the government legislates (makes laws) to control behaviour |
| The police | The police force enforces the law |
| The judiciary  (Court system) | Courts decide how to punish law-breakers |
| The penal system (prison and other sanctions) | These are the different ways law-breakers can be punished and controlled |
| The army | The army defends a country, but may also be called in to prevent large-scale law breaking |

**How do we formally sanction (punish) criminals?**

The functions of the penal system are:

* To prevent crime
* To deter others from committing crime
* To reform offenders
* To punish criminals
* To keep the public safe

**Methods of punishment**

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| **Punishment** | **Definition** |
| ***Antisocial behaviour order (ASBO)*** | Individual social orders, e.g. banning someone from an area |
| ***Community service*** | Offenders ordered to work in a community, e.g. clearing graffiti |
| ***Corporal punishment*** | Physical punishment e.g. whipping |
| ***Curfews*** | Often part of an ASBO, limiting the time the offender may be allowed out in public |
| ***Death penalty*** | Known as capital punishment, illegal in Britain |
| ***Electronic tagging*** | Attaching a tag to the offender to control and monitor where they are |
| ***Fines*** | Financial punishment |
| ***Mental health orders*** | Granted if the crime is due to mental illness |
| ***Prison sentencing*** | A loss of freedom for a set amount of time |
| ***Probation*** | Being offered supervision instead of prison to ensure that offending stops |

**Informal agents of social control**

The family, education, workplace, religion, peer groups and mass media all control our behaviour mainly through social pressure and sanctions.

* **The family**- through positive and negative sanctions, such as praise, presents or grounding, stopping pocket money.
* **Education**- through detentions, letters home, a ‘hard stare’ or firm talking to.
* **Religion**- through the beliefs of reward and punishment of behaviour i.e. heaven and hell, or karma.
* **Peer groups**- through ridicule, gossip, fear of embarrassment, rejection, positive and negative sanctions.
* **Mass media**- through reinforcing the norms, values and laws of a society in reporting the punishments of those who break the law.

###### Paul Willis (1977) - Learning to Labour

He researched 12 working class schoolboys and found that they had developed an anti-school subculture; they had rejected the values of school and had developed their own norms and values. These were of non-conforming to school rules which they felt were based in middle class values which did not applyto them. Willis believed the boys’ behaviour was shaped by; the realities of the workforce which for them would be working class factory jobs (with no need for an education), the attitudes of the teachers who had labelled them as non academic and the peer pressure they felt to conform to the fellow classmates.

Willis argued this was evidence of behaviour being controlled in a variety of ways.

###### How do we measure crime? What is the usefulness of official crime figures, and self-report and victim studies, to sociologists studying crime and deviance?

**Key words:**

* **Official statistics** –numbers and percentages to show what crime is being committed and who is committing them, taken from government sources. Information can be supplied by such agencies as the police, the courts and the prison system.
* **Self-report studies** – Studies that ask individuals about the crimes they have committed.
* **Victim surveys** – Surveys that ask individuals about the crime they have been the victims of in the past year e.g. The British Crime Survey.
* **The “dark figure” of crime**- the large amount of criminal activity that never appears in the official statistics.

**Official statistics** of crime are useful in gaining an understanding of what type of crimes are being committed and by whom but there are problems with drawing conclusions from official crime statistics.

These are:

1. Somebody has to realise a crime has taken place
2. The crime has to be reported- this does not always happen as the victim may not feel the police will treat the case seriously or they may feel embarrassed (in the cases of rape) or fearful of the criminal who committed the crime.
3. The crime has to be registered as a crime but at times there may not be enough evidence to do this or the police may decide not to take it any further due to lack of evidence or not being considered to be worth reporting.
4. The variations of policing throughout Britain mean that each force and even each officer will don things differently. This effects the validity of official statistics as what will be recorded as a crime in one force may not be in another.

In this way, many sociologists argue that official crime statistics are “**socially constructed”-** in other words, they are the outcome of a series of choices and decision made by the various people involved, such as victims, witness, police and legal system. They might not actually reflect the true figure of crime.

The **‘dark figure’** of crime refers to crime that goes unrecorded.

There are several ways sociologists and the government have tried to uncover this dark figure of unrecorded crime.

The British Crime Survey, by conducting a **victim survey** (a random survey of people to see if and what crimes they might have been a victim of) tries to gain an insight into such unreported crimes.

However, some problems arise;

1. People may not co- operate
2. They may not tell the truth
3. People may be unwilling to talk about crimes such as sexual assault
4. The process relies on memory which is unreliable
5. People under the age of 16 are not interviewed
6. Some sociologists question the usefulness of a national crime survey when people’s experiences of crime are so different depending on where they live in the country, generalisations are difficult to make.

**Self-report studies** are a way of trying to investigate what crimes people have been the victims of, it is usually in the form of a questionnaire. Confidentiality and anonymity is assured to the respondent in the hope that more truthful answers will be given. This is thought to be a more valid way of gaining data than official statistics.

**Problems with self report studies are:**

* Reluctance from people to take part and admit their criminal activity
* The truth may not be told
* Usually completed by young people so not a representative sample of all crimes committed
* Reports focus mainly on delinquent not criminal behaviour so are limited in their usefulness.

1. **What impact does crime have on victims, communities and society in general?**

**Significance of crime for victims:**

* The following social groups are at a higher risk from crime than other groups: the poorer working classes; males; the young and those from minority ethnic groups.
* There are different impacts that the victims suffer: physical (e.g. injury during an assault), financial (e.g. having to replace uninsured stolen goods), psychological (e.g. feeling stressed or insecure after an assault or burglary); or social (e.g. affecting victim’s family relationships).
* Crime doesn’t necessarily affect people in the same way- someone may become a victim repeatedly over a period of time (repeat victimisation). Racial harassment or domestic violence for example may occur repeatedly and also routinely throughout someone’s life.

**Significance of crime for communities:**

Many sociologists believe it is the ***fear of crime***, rather than the reality**,** that controls our behaviour and thoughts.

Fear of crime can make communities work together, such as with neighbourhood watch schemes and communities may benefit from criminals working in the local area carrying out community service. However, fear of crime has led to some people being fearful to leave their houses, homes with many alarm systems, neighbourhoods where people do not know each other.

Fear of crime has lead to social control becoming the norm, for example, CCTV, neighbourhood watch schemes, DNA testing, photo ID, however, how much effect all these are having on reducing crime is under question.

**Significance of crime for society:**

***The costs of white collar and corporate crime:***

Clinard and Meier (2001) identify 3 kinds of costs (or harm) that are closely linked with white collar and corporate crime.

**Financial harm-** the economic impact associated with white collar/corporate crime- such as loss of tax revenue.

**Physical harm-** might be suffered by employees, consumers and the community. For example, sickness, injury or death from environmental pollution, the sale of defective car tyres or unfit foods.

**Social costs-** includes mistrust that may develop between professionals, clients or employers and employees

1. How do patterns of crime change by class, gender, ethnicity, age & locality?

**Social Class and crime**

The lower the class position, the higher their criminality level. Working class young people have a crime rate 8 times higher than the upper or middle class youth. The working classes are also over represented in the prison population. Inner city areas and council estates have higher rates of crime than rural or suburban areas; these are largely working class areas.

There are however other types of crime which probably cost society more than the value of burglaries and bank robberies put together.

**White collar crime** is committed by middle class people in the course of their work.

This crime takes various forms:

* **Occupational crime** (carried out by individuals at work, e.g. minor theft of an organisations property to large scale fraud)
* **Professional crime** (carried out as a lifetime career such as drug dealing)
* **Corporate crime** (carried out by executive of organisation to increase profit and can include activities such as selling harmful products)
* **Computer crime** (this is increasing as more financial transactions are carried out via computers)

White collar crime is hard to research due to difficulties in identifying it, the unwillingness of individuals and organisations to discuss it. Many crimes are “without victims”.

White collar criminals may be brought to court but might be treated differently to other criminals because:

* Judges have similar backgrounds to many white collar criminals.
* Compared to a burglar/mugger, white collar criminals aren’t considered to be a danger to the public.
* The victims of white collar crimes are not harmed as seriously as other crimes.
* The media doesn’t tend to portray white collar crime as serious

**Gender and crime**

Men are more likely to commit crime than women.

Statistics show:

* In 2005, there were 30.7 million females compared with 29.5 million males in the UK population. However, male offenders outnumber women in England and Wales four to one.
* In 2002 19% of offenders were women.

**Age and crime**

The statistics state young people aged 14-20 commit a large proportion of crime. However this does not take into account:

* Parents, school and wider society heavily monitor teenagers so crimes committed are more likely to be noticed
* It may be that crimes committed by older people are underreported heightening the difference between the ages

**Ethnicity and crime**

Afro-Caribbean people are seven times more likely to be in prison than white or Asian people. Explanations are:

* Afro-Caribbean commit more crime
* The criminal justice system is racist and gives harsher sentences to Afro-Caribbean people

Afro-Caribbean people generally live in inner city areas with lower level of schooling and higher unemployment; this may lead to crime as a means of survival.

Asian people are seen as more law abiding and as a result of:

* Greater economic success
* Stronger family and community ties providing effective social control
* A distinct culture which provides a feeling of belonging and an alternative source of status
* The strength of religious belief

***Racial harassment and violence***

It is the police who keep the records of criminal activity and sometimes it is not clear if there was a racial motive. Also the police may be reluctant to admit race motivated the criminal act.

The murder of **Stephen Lawrence** in 1993 is an example of how the police did not fully investigate a murder committing by a gang of white youths. The gang stabbed Stephen to death and were heard shouting racial abuse at him. There were witnesses who gave the names of the gang but the police did not follow it up.

Due to Stephen’s parents being persistent the case was brought to court and the Metropolitan Police were described as institutionally racist and urged greater awareness of racial issues.

**Locality and crime**

In general terms the crime rate is higher in urban areas than in rural areas. Data from the British Crime Survey 2007/2008 shows that the risk of being a victim of crime is lower in rural than urban areas. Also the risk is higher in the most deprived areas.

* Inner city crime could be a response to economic deprivation and social inequality. There are higher levels of unemployment in urban areas than suburbs.
* There could be more opportunities to commit crime in urban areas, such as city centres with department stores, parked cars etc than in rural areas.
* Cities have lower levels of informal social control than rural areas.
* Statistics might also reflect different policing methods. IN rural areas, the police might deal informally with offenders who commit less serious offences than to charge them.

1. **Sociological explanations of crime.**

**Key words:**

* **Delinquency-** The undesirable, antisocial behaviour of young people.
* **Peer Group Pressure** – Pressure exerted by people close to us in age e.g. friends or workmates in the attempt to do or not do certain things. Peer group pressure does not always have to be a negative thing it could also be a positive thing.
* **Labelling-** Thinking of a person or a group of people in a particular way, often negatively, presuming that all of the group are a particular type of person.
* **Gender socialisation-** Teaching males and females the expected patterns of behaviour for their gender in society.
* **Police targeting-** Where the police focus on a particular group of people in society, believing them to be more likely to be involved in criminal behaviour than other groups.
* **Discrimination-** Treating people differently because of their social characteristics e.g. not giving someone a job because she is female.
* **Racism-** a form of discrimination; treating someone differently to others in society because of their ethnicity**.**
* **Alienation-** Not feeling part of the wider society or culture; feeling separate and cut off from it.
* **Self-fulfilling prophecy-** A way of thinking about a person or group of people, usually negative, that causes that person or group of people to behave in a way that makes the belief reality.
* **Relative deprivation-** this occurs when individuals or groups feel they have less or are unfairly disadvantaged in relation to other people in society
* **Anomie** -is the situation when large numbers of people fail to follow generally accepted values, instead adopting various deviant forms of behaviour such as theft.

**Key sociological explanations for all groups:**

1. **Inadequate Socialisation**
2. **Subcultures**
3. **Labelling theory**
4. **Lack of opportunity**
5. **Relative deprivation**
6. **Marxist theories- the nature of society**

***Make sure you are clear on what each of these explanations says about why it make people commit crime.***

##### **Age and crime**

1. **Lack of social control at home and in education**-

Longitudinal studies have tried to identify why some people commit crimes and others do not. Some reasons have been highlighted:

* Poor parenting
* Troubled family life, with arguments, violence, drug and alcohol abuse
* The individuals low reasoning ability

1. **Peer groups** have a big impact on an individual’s behaviour. Young people may become apart of a delinquent **subculture**.
2. **Subcultures** develop through which hold norms and values so different from mainstream society, these can lead to antisocial behaviour and delinquency.

4. **Boredom-** with nothing to do and nowhere to go many young people seek the thrill and adrenaline rush of committing crime.

1. **Labelling theory-** Observational research by Cicourel (1976) of a USA police and probation officers found that if a person behaved and looked in a certain way this directly affected their likelihood of arrest and conviction. If a young person acted as a ‘typical delinquent’ they were more likely to get convicted with a harsher sentence. The ‘typical delinquent’ was seen as having a low income, broken family, male, not successful at school and an ethnic minority.

**Gender and crime-**

Men commit five times more crime than women, why?

1. **Differential gender socialisation**, girls are encouraged to be more passive and boys more active and tough (manipulation and canalisation)
2. **Different levels of social control**. Parents more heavily supervise girls and later in life women have children to care for. Boys are given much more freedom and generally take less responsibility for chid care.
3. **Gender stereotyping**. Those in the criminal justice system will have different expectations of each gender, it may be that police, jurors and judges believe women less likely to commit crime but not the case for men.

***Are women committing more crime than in the past? If so, why?***

* Changing socialisation- girls are encouraged to be assertive and independent rather than relying on men.
* Greater opportunity- women now go out to work and socialise so have an equal opportunity to commit crime.

Women are more likely to be victims of crimes than men. For example, rape, domestic violence, sexual assault. **Feminists** state the police do not take these crimes seriously enough and argue that women can be treated unfairly and insensitively when giving evidence in court.

###### Ethnicity and crime-

Why are black men over-represented in the criminal statistics and prison population?

1. **Poverty and unemployment-** In a consumer society such a Britain people are bombarded with images of material goods to buy. If they cannot be attained legally then crime is another option.
2. **Police targeting-** due to prejudice held by the police, ethnic minorities particularly black people find themselves the victims of police discrimination. This idea is also linked to labelling theory and self-fulfilling prophecy**.**
3. **Discrimination and racism in the criminal justice system-** some argue the police, law courts and prison system are racist and that ethnic minorities do not get treated fairly, leading to an over representation in criminal statistics. It is also argued that this can lead to ethnic minorities feeling alienated from the rest of society, which in turn can lead to a self fulfilling prophecy of criminality.
4. **Different norms and values-** some ethnic minorities may have norms and values that go against mainstream society such as the Rastafarian religion believing smoking marijuana brings you closer to God. This could lead to criminal or deviant behaviour being committed due to cultural differences.

**Social class and crime**

Why are the working class, particularlythose from inner city areas, more likely to be convicted of crimes than other social classes?

1. **Socialisation and subculture-** if children are not socialised into the norms and values of mainstream society then there is little to stop them committing acts of deviance or crime. If children are brought up with parents who are criminal this going to make them think criminality is a natural part of life.
2. **Lack of opportunities-** When people are unable to achieve a standard of living they feel they are entitled to crime becomes a means of attaining money and prestige they cannot get through legally. Sociologists highlight the term ‘**relative deprivation’** which explains the awareness people have about the life style of the rest of society. This is a **STRUCTURAL** explanation of crime, the working class experience unequal opportunities in education, gain fewer qualifications and are unable to get high paid jobs, crime is tempting to the working classes. **Anomie** is the situation when large numbers of people fail to follow generally accepted values, instead adopting various deviant forms of behaviour such as theft. This could happen when a society fails to provide enough ways for people to be successful - then they will frustrated and possibly turn to crime.
3. **Status frustration-** due to the lack of educational success and high paid jobs, the working classes experience are made aware of the lack of power and status they hold in society. They feel frustrated and angry at the unfair treatment they experience in society, which can lead to crime. This is a **STRUCTURAL** approach to explaining crime.

##### **Marxist view-** Society is divided between those who have and those who do not have. Crime is a part of the conflict between these two groups. The media reinforce the Capitalist system of materialism, consumerism and competition, which encourages greed and selfishness. The ruling class creates the laws and place a larger importance on theft of property than violent crimes. Crimes committed by the working class are punished more severely than white-collar criminals. This is a **STRUCTURAL** explanation of crime.

**Other explanations of crime in different groups.**

**Biological**

Biological explanations look at biological causes for criminal activity. This might be a genetic cause that makes them more violent or a physical characteristic that makes them possibly more likely to become a criminal.

**Psychological**

Psychologists explain criminal behaviour in a number of ways. Some explanations focus on personality traits of individual offenders. Being impulsive, outgoing or having a particular personality disorder like schizophrenia might make you more prone to becoming a criminal according to psychologists.

1. **How has criminal and deviant behaviour created public debates in recent years?**

Debates about criminal behaviour and what causes it go on frequently between politicians and amongst the media. The debates focus on things like the growth of internet crime and identity fraud, terrorism and the treatment of terror suspects, human trafficking, anti social behaviour, fear of young people and crime committed by teenagers.

Crime is always a focus of public concern and debate. The media play a role in setting the agenda (deciding the focus) of public debates and discussions about crime and deviance. TV news broadcasts for example, focus on some items, stories and exclude others. This leads the public to see particular issues as problems. It’s argued that the media increases the public’s worries about law and order.

Reiner (2007) notes that various news studies of news reports have found that violent crimes are over represented compared with their occurrence in official statistics on crime. He also argues that news stories exaggerate the risk of crime faced by groups such as white people of higher status and they over represent women, children or older people as victims of crime.

1. **What is the nature, significance and what measures have been taken to stop social problems such as racism and teenage crime?**

**Youth crime** and anti social behaviour among teenagers are issues of concern to British politicians, and the public. Pitts (2005) notes that youth crime is often front page news in the UK and therefore is seen as a cause of anxiety among members of the public. Juvenile crime in other words, is still considered a big social problem in today’s society.

Behaviour that is seen as a problem includes: anti social behaviour, drug taking, binge drinking, gangs and violent crimes including gun and knife crime.

**Members of the public consider anti social behaviour among teenagers as a problem** partly **because** they think that it has negative consequences. People think that the fear it generates is damaging to community life and to community ties. Incidents like graffiti and vandalism cost money. More serious incidents of violence and teen knife crime are seen as costly because of the young lives lost and the devastation caused to communities and victims’ families.

Newburn (2007) points out that, according to official statistics, a significant proportion of crime is committed by young people. These statistics, together with adult fears about youth crime, lead to young offenders being society’s number one **“folk devil”.** This term refers to social groups that are seen as deviant and as troublemakers. These groups are shown in the media as a threat to society.

This media portrayal of young people as folk devils can result in a **“moral panic”** or a public outcry about their behaviour.

A **moral panic** is when the media reports in such a way that normally small acts are sensationalized and exaggerated. Minor acts of vandalism committed by young people, for example, are seen as typical of all young people and as a threat to social order. A moral panic also involves a process of **scape goating** young people or blaming them for society’s problems.

**Governments in Britain have tried to control youth crime and reduce anti social behaviour by policies and laws such as:**

* Fining parents for their children’s misbehaviour
* Curfews
* Exclusion zones
* Anti social behaviour orders (ASBOs) (*although* these aren’t just used for young people, and also have been criticized for being a “badge of honour” for some young people)

**Racism**

Members of some ethnic minority groups are among those at high risk of becoming a victim of crime. Racially motivated crime and racism more generally are examples of social problems, because they are damaging or harmful to individuals and society.

Phillips and Bowling (2007) indicate that there have been more than 150 racist murders over the last 35 years in Britain. They argue however, that most crime (around 85%) committed against minority ethnic communities is **not** racially motivated.

Social problems like racism need solutions. **The British government has tried to tackle racially motivated crime by introducing laws:**

**The Crime and disorder act (1998)** introduced new offences including:

* Racially aggravated assault
* Racially aggravated criminal damage
* Racially aggravated harassment

*A racially aggravated offence* is one in which the offender shows hostility to the victim based on the victim’s membership of a “racial” group or the offence is motivated by hostility towards members of a racial group because they are members of that group.

Racially aggravated offences have a higher maximum penalty than offences that are not racially aggravated. The maximum penalty for racially aggravated criminal damage for example is higher than that for criminal damage.

**Crime and Deviance exam questions and guidance Total marks = 30**

**Types of questions to expect and how to answer them**

**Question (a)** asks you to read the Item – usually a table or graph - and identify a number/percentage (1 mark)

**Question (b)** asks you to read the Item – and identify a point, number or percentage. (1 mark)

**Question (c)** asks you to identify two reasons/differences for something e.g. reasons a family/peer group may encourage members to conform, differences between, and reasons for crime and deviance, ways in which people may be victims of crime, differences between formal and informal rules, reasons why crime may not be reported to the police. (2 marks)

Make sure you can identify the differences between formal and informal rules/laws/agents of social control and know the difference between crime and deviance.

**Examples of 2 mark questions:**

Identify two types of social control.

* Family
* School
* Media
* Workplace
* Peer group
* Religion
* Police
* Army

Identify two reasons why some people might not report crime. (2 marks)

* Too trivial (wallet stolen with not much money in it)
* Victim being scared to report the crime
* No apparent victim (vandalism)
* Crime not detected (no crime realised)
* Regional differences in police reporting and prioritising of crime
* Police discretion
* Police labelling/ and or targeting
* Some crimes are harder to detect than other crimes (white collar crime)

**Question (d)** asks you to explain the meaning of a key term (4 marks)

Make sure you can define key terms, for example: formal/informal agents of social control, norms and expectations, victim survey, deviant behaviour, stereotype, labelling, relative deprivation, white collar crime.

**Question (e)** asks you to describe one way: in which a victim survey is carried out and explain why this is better than using other statistics /one way in which the government has aimed to reduce the level of crime in society and explain how successful this policy has been /one way in which informal rules operate within a social group and explain how people conform (5 marks)

Make sure you know about the advantages and disadvantages of official crime statistics, victim surveys and self report studies.

Make sure you know about ways of dealing with crime and anti-social behaviour.

Make sure you know about how formal and informal agents of social control teach people to conform through shared norms and values and positive and negative sanctions.

**Question (f)** asks you to describe one way/problem/example and explain the reasons for this or solutions to the problem. (5 marks)

You need to know about how some examples of crime have generated public debate and explain why this is seen as a social problem. E.g. knife crime/gun crime/youth crime – ‘boys in hoodies’.

You need to know about how agents of formal and informal social control work and be able to explain how they influence a person’s behaviour.

You need to know about reasons for crime such as relative deprivation, poverty and labelling.

You need to know about which social group is more likely to commit crime and explain why – gender, age, ethnicity, social class

**Examples of 5 mark questions:**

**Describe** one reason why poor people are more likely to be convicted of crime than richer people and **explain** why this might lead to higher levels of working class criminals. (5 marks)

You may describe the following reasons why poorer people are more likely to commit crime:

* Different norms and values
* Higher levels of alcohol consumption leading to violent crime
* Police more likely to be present in working class areas
* More likely to be prosecuted by the police than cautioned
* More ‘need’ to steal if poorer
* More peer pressure on middle class not to steal

**OR** you could discuss why working class people are more likely to be labelled by police and the arrested etc.

You then need to EXPLAIN why this might lead to higher levels of working class crime- labelling and self fulfilling prophecy, media representations of working class criminals etc

**Describe** a way of measuring crime and **explain** why the crime rate might increase in the future (5 marks)

Ways of measuring crime:

Official statistics of record/indictable crime

Victim surveys

Self report studies

Reasons why it might increase in the future:

* More police to detect crime
* People encouraged to report more crime
* CCTV detects more crime
* More crime occurring
* Influence of the media- TV violence, rap music, gun/knife culture- increased awareness of anti-social behaviour
* Government putting more money into fighting crime
* ‘Soft’ punishment not deterring criminals
* Decreasing levels of social control in society i.e. families and schools
* **Describe the way in which a victim survey is carried out and explain why it might show more accurately than police statistics the number of crimes actually committed.**
* **Mark 1** – A victim survey is an anonymous questionnaire
* **Mark 2** – It asks people to say what crimes they have been a victim of in the last year
* **Mark 3** – It may be more accurate than police statistics because people may be willing to mention something anonymously that they weren’t willing to do with the police
* **Mark 4** – This could be because they might be scared of what will happen if they tell the police
* **Mark 5** – Also the police might not always record the crime that is reported so it wont be counted but on a victim survey it will
* **Describe one kind of problem behaviour believed to be associated with teenagers in recent years and explain why members of the public have considered it a problem.**
* **Mark 1** –Knife crime has been associated with teenagers in recent years
* **Mark 2** – This is because of some high profile stabbings involving teenagers or teenage gangs
* **Mark 3** – People are concerned about this because they think if teenagers are commiting these crimes now what will they be doing in the future when they grow up
* **Mark 4** – But some people might say that people are only concerned because the media are exaggerating the problem and creating a moral panic
* **Mark 5** – and that by doing so they are making folk devils of young people to blame them for all of society’s problems.
* **Describe one way in which recent governments have attempted to reduce the level of crime in society and explain how successful the policy has been**
* **Mark 1** – One way of reducing crime has been the use of CCTV cameras
* **Mark 2** – This stops crime because people know they are being watched so will be scared of getting caught
* **Mark 3** – Also the CCTV footage can and has been used in many cases to catch a criminal
* **Mark 4** – Some people say though that there is still just as much crime but now people just do it where they know there is no CCTV
* **Mark 5** – Others say that CCTV is very expensive and they should use the money to employ more police officers instead
* **Describe one agency of informal social control and explain how it can influence people’s behaviour**
* **Mark 1** – The media is an example of an agency of informal social control
* **Mark 2** – The media shows us images of people who are famous and liked
* **Mark 3** – And this teaches people that if they behave like these celebrities that they too will be liked
* **Mark 4** – Also it shows on the news examples of people who have broken rules or laws and what happens to those people
* **Mark 5** – This teaches people not to break those rules as they know what will happen to them if they do the same
* **Describe one way in which informal rules may operate within a social group and explain why the group’s members may conform to these rules**
* **Mark 1** – A social group may have many informal rules or norms which its members must follow
* **Mark 2** – If someone does not follow them then the other people may say or do negative things towards them like laugh or make fun of them
* **Mark 3** – This would make the person realize that they had broken the rule and would try to put things straight and not break the rules again
* **Mark 4** – People will not want these negative reactions, especially if it is from their friends
* **Mark 5** – People may also just want to feel that they are part of a group and will do what they can to make sure they stay in the group

**Question (g) gives you a choice of EITHER / OR**

**Discuss how far sociologists would agree that** .......................................................

* ... The working class/men/some ethnic minorities are more likely to commit crimes than other sections of society.
* ... The main reason for crime is inadequate socialisation within the family.
* ... Females are less likely to commit criminal offences than males.
* ... deviant and criminal behaviour among young people is due to peer group pressure
* ... Official crime statistics recorded by the police provide a complete picture of the extent of crime in Britain. (12 marks)

You need to be able to put forward points for both sides of the argument.

Make as many points/give reasons why some sociologists agree with the statement.

Then, make points/give reasons why some sociologists disagree.

Use words/phrases like – However ..., On the other hand.....

**How to structure a 12 mark question...**

You need to begin an essay with a BRIEF introduction, explaining and giving definitions of all key words in the question/statement.

You then need to put forward at least three arguments that support the statement **(Some sociologists would agree. They would say that....),** giving definitions and as much detail and sociological concepts and evidence as possible. Make sure you use your own examples to illustrate the points you are making, apply your examples to the question throughout.

Then put forward three arguments against the statement and ensure you explain fully, using relevant examples. **(Some sociologists would disagree. They would say that....),** **you must include a conclusion,** which ties up the essay, coming to a personal conclusion with a short statement justifying your decision.

Throughout the essay make sure you use as many sociological key terms and concepts as possible.

*Avoid common sense answers that do not show your knowledge of sociology.*

Possible essay questions to practise-

“To what extent would sociologists agree that poor socialisation leads to crime and deviance?”

““To what extent would sociologists agree that prison is the most effective punishment?”

“To what extent would sociologists agree that Official statistics present an accurate portrayal of crime figures?”

““To what extent would sociologists agree that criminal behaviour is caused by a lack of money and opportunities?”

“To what extent would sociologists agree that the family is the most important agent of social control?”

**“To what extent would sociologists agree with the idea that the people most likely break the law are young men?”**

(12 marks)

Arguments and evidence for this claim:

* Statistics show the young and men commit most crimes
* Young girls have less opportunity to commit crime due to higher levels of parental control
* Young people are more influenced by peer pressure
* Men have more opportunity
* Young have fewer responsibilities so punishment are less effective
* Young (men) drink more alcohol
* Any other reasonable answer

Arguments and evidence FOR this claim

* Women might commit crimes but they are given cautions and not prosecutions
* Older people might commit crimes but are more successful at avoiding arrest
* Older people might commit more white collar crime
* Media representation of criminals might affect public perception
* Any other reasonable answer

**“To what extent would sociologists agree that the best way to reduce crime is to give criminals longer prison sentences?”**

(12 marks)

Arguments and evidence FOR the claim

* Longer sentences might make people think before they commit a crime- it is a deterrent
* A longer sentence for somebody that keeps committing crimes will reduce the amount of crime as they will be off the streets longer
* Gives people more time to think about what they have done and change their ways- reform.
* Rehabilitation- can gain qualifications, have counselling etc
* Protects society
* Makes members of society feel safe
* Other reasonable answers

Arguments and evidence AGAINST the claim:

* People can be sentenced to life but this does not seem to deter people
* People might resent the time in prison and end up more violent when they are released
* Gives people longer to learn how to become a criminal from the other prisoners
* Better education and primary socialisation will reduce crime
* Long sentence are often overturned but to good behaviour
* Expensive for tax payer
* Other reasonable responses

**“To what extent would sociologists agree that all deviance is relative?”**

**(12 marks)**

Arguments and evidence for this claim:

* Cross cultural deviance
* Situational deviance
* Position/role deviance
* Historical deviance

Arguments and evidence AGAINST the claim:

* EU law on smoking in public places
* EU law on banning inhuman treatment of people
* EU law on not using children for sex or pornography

**Discuss how far sociologists would agree that teenage criminal and deviant behaviour results from parents failing to socialise their children correctly.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agree** | **Disagree** |
| * Parents should be the main way children learn right from wrong. If children don’t learn this the parents must be to blame * *Functionalists* say the main job of the family is to socialize children, if this doesn’t happen children wont know norms and values * Many anti-social or criminal adults then have children who are the same, non-criminal parents have non-criminal children * Parents are a big role modern for most children. Children learn the norms and values from their parents whether they are good or bad. | * Children don’t commit as much crime as it seems. Most of it is exaggerated by the media * Children get labelled by the media and police. This creates a self fulfilling prophecy which is why youngsters commit crime * Young people commit crime because of status frustration. They don’t have any power or influence in society and think that by committing crimes they can get some sort of sense of power * They may be badly influenced by peer group * Violent images in the media influence children to behave violently |

**Discuss how far sociologists would agree that working class males are more likely to commit crimes than other sections of society.**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agree** | **Disagree** |
| * Statistics show men commit more crimes than women * Feminists say this is because men have more opportunities to commit crimes than women (women have to stay in and look after kids) * It may be because men are more violent and aggressive than women * It may be because men are often the main breadwinners and feel pressure to provide for the family. As a result they often turn to crime * Statistics show that working class people commit more crimes than other social classes * This is because they are poorer and sometimes need to commit crimes to survive * Relative deprivation is when people feel poorer than others around them. This leads some people to commit crimes because they are jealous of people who are better off | * Statistics are inaccurate – Women commit crimes but get away with them more often because of the chivalry factor * Women get away with crimes because they commit crimes which are non-violent and they are more likely to get away with e.g fraud * Statistics are inaccurate because many middle class people commit white collar crime but get away with it. * Companies aren’t bothered about reporting white collar crime because it may give them negative publicity * Marxists say that rich company owners commit corporate crime but get away with it because they can afford good lawyers. * Governments are more bothered about dealing with individual crimes |

**Discuss how far sociologists would agree that an act some people would see as deviant might not be seen as deviant by other people**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agree** | **Disagree** |
| * Your idea of deviance depends how you have been brought up * Different countries have different laws * What is considered deviant changes depending on who commits the act, where they are, who they are with * In a country the laws and ideas of what are right and wrong change over time e.g. smoking in public | * Most people have the same ideas of deviance. That is where laws come from. * We can only have norms and laws if most people agree with them |

**Discuss how far sociologists would agree that official statistics of police recorded crime exaggerate crime levels among young people**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agree** | **Disagree** |
| * Young people are negatively labeled by the police who target them. It seems they commit more crimes than they actually do | * Young people do commit more crimes than other groups. This is because of peer pressure from their friends which older people don’t give in to * They are more likely to commit crimes because they are more likely to be involved in a subculture (a group in society with different norms and values from most people) |

**Discuss how far sociologists would agree that official statistics of police recorded crime exaggerate crime levels among some ethnic groups**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agree** | **Disagree** |
| * The police have being accused of being “institutionally racist” * The criminal justice system (police, judges, lawyers etc.) are mostly white people and may discriminate against ethnic minorities * Police may label black people in particular as being troublemakers, criminals, and violent and aggressive | * Ethnic minorities are more likely to be criminal because of unemployment and deprivation * There are a disproportionately large number of black people in prison |

**Discuss how far sociologists would agree that deprivation is the main cause of most crime in modern Britain**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Agree** | **Disagree** |
| * Deprivation means some people may need to commit crime just to survive * Relative deprivation means some people feel much poorer than those around them so commit crime because of jealousy of others * Working class people commit more crimes than other social classes, this is probably because they are more likely to be deprived and in need of extra money. | * Different crimes take place because of different reasons * Corporate crime and some white collar crime happen because people are greedy * Many people commit crimes because they are greedy. Marxists say this is because we live in a consumer society where people are obsessed with how much they earn and own * Some crime could be because of status frustration, peer pressure, poor socialisation, |