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Sociology of Crime and Deviance

Unit Four: SCLY4

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Course Outline

1 Different theories of crime, deviance, social order and social control

- Different definitions of crime, deviance, social order and social control
- The distinction between sociological theories of crime and other theories (eg biological, psychological); crime and deviance as socially constructed
- Functionalist theories of crime: Durkheim, anomie, collective conscience; Merton's strain theory; manifest and latent functions; functionalist subcultural theories
- Marxist and neo-Marxist theories of crime: classical Marxism, laws reflecting class interests; Neo-Marxism, hegemony, the CCCS studies, critical and new criminology
- Interactionist theories of crime: labelling theory, the self-fulfilling prophecy
- Feminist theories of crime: patriarchy, male control of women's lives
- Control theory and other contemporary approaches to crime: social bonds, communitarianism, situational prevention; postmodern theories; Foucault on individualisation and surveillance
- Realist theories: New Left Realism and Right Realism
- The relevance of the various theories to understanding different types of crime, and their implications for social policy.

2 The social distribution of crime and deviance by age, ethnicity, gender, locality and social class, including recent patterns and trends in crime

- Study of statistics and other evidence on the social distribution of crime by age, ethnicity, gender, locality and social class, including recent patterns and trends
- Issues related to and explanations of the social distribution of crime and deviance by age: juvenile delinquency and youth crime
- Issues related to and explanations of the social distribution of crime and deviance and ethnicity: explanations from different theories, racism in the criminal justice system
- Issues related to and explanations of the social distribution of crime and deviance and gender: explanations of the rates of male and female crime, the gendering of crime, chivalry thesis, the gender deal
- Issues related to and explanations of the social distribution of crime and deviance and locality: rural and urban crime
- Issues related to and explanations of the social distribution of crime and deviance and social class: explanations from different theories; white collar crime; occupational crime.

3 Globalisation and crime in contemporary society; the mass media and crime; green crime; human rights and state crimes

- Globalisation and crime: examples and explanations of globalised crimes such as web-based crimes, global trades in drugs, weapons and people; global corporate crime
- Mass media and crime: media's role in social construction of crime including moral panics and amplification; crime and news values and agenda setting; representations of crime (both fact and fiction)
- Green crime: definitions, criminalisation of environmental offences; extent, enforcement of green crimes: environmental laws, corporate and state environmental crimes, crimes

against non-human species

- Human rights and state crimes: international rules and norms and examples of violations of them; human rights violations; state crimes.

4 Crime control, prevention and punishment, victims, and the role of the criminal justice system and other agencies

- Crime control, prevention and punishment: contemporary policies, linked to the theories studied under point 1; surveillance, zero tolerance, anti-social behaviour orders, expansion of imprisonment
- Victims of crime: statistics and other evidence on victims of crime; ethnicity, age and gender; different theoretical accounts, e.g. positivist and radical victimology
- Role of the criminal justice system and other agencies.

5 The sociological study of suicide and its theoretical and methodological implications

- Durkheim's classic study of suicide, including typologies
- Interpretivist responses to Durkheim, e.g. Atkinson, Douglas
- Realist approaches, e.g. Taylor's 'people under trains'
- The theoretical and methodological implications of the different approaches of the study of suicide.

Functionalism on Crime and Deviance

- Functionalism was one of the first theories of crime that sought to explain deviance by the nature of society rather than the biology and psychology of the individual.

Durkheim – positive view of crime - thinks crime is functional for society!

- Durkheim believed modern societies are made up of **collective conscience** based on **moral individualism** since ‘**uniformity so universal and absolute**’ was **impossible**. Thus, unlike Marxism, he believed crime can **never be eradicated** since it’s **normal** and **appears** in **all societies** but in **different forms**.
- Crime is an ‘**integral part of all healthy societies**’. This is because **individuals** are **exposed** to **different influences** and will all **not** be **committed** to the shared values/beliefs of society. Thus, crime acts as a **moral dichotomy** providing us with what is good/bad behaviour and in effects binds together society.
- Crime can be **functional** since **all societies need** to **progress** and **social change begins** with some form of **deviance**. E.g. homosexuality was once illegal, but today its normal. Thus, yesterday’s **deviance must become tomorrow’s normality** for change to occur according to Durkheim. Moreover, this suggests **crime doesn’t disappear but change it form**.
- However, **Societies need both crime and punishment** because **without punishment** the **rate of criminality** would become **dysfunctional**. Thus, **laws must be stricter than before** and must be **experienced throughout society** to justify the need for control.
- Durkheim noted that too much and too little crime reflected **social pathology** (dysfunctional). Thus **balance** is needed:
 - **Too much crime - not enough** collective conscience, society in a state of **anomie** (normlessness)
 - **Too little crime – too strong** collective conscience, **totalitarian state**.
- Lastly, the criminal was not an **unsociable being** but one that ‘**plays a definite role in social life**’.

Evaluation of Durkheim’s theory:

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Cohen (1966) 2 additional functions of crime:

1. Deviance as a '**safety valve**', providing a **harmless expression** of **discontent**. E.g. prostitution enables men to escape from family life without undermining the family as an institution. (*synoptic link to the functions of the family*)
2. Deviant acts can **warn society** that an **aspect is not working properly** – e.g. widespread truancy from school. (*synoptic link to education – Paul Willis's study of the lads*)

Evaluation of Cohen's theory:

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Merton's (1938) strain theory suggests crime arises from the culture and structure of society.

- He begins from the **functionalist** position of **value consensus** – idea that all members of society **share the same values**. In the USA, for example, individuals strived for the **same goal of success**, largely measured in terms of wealth and material possessions.
- However, while great emphasis is placed on the 'American dream', **little significance** is given to the **means of achieving** it. This results in an **unbalanced society** where success is about '**winning the game**' rather than '**wining though circumscribed modes of activity**'.
- Once rules cease to operate, a situation of **anomie** occurs in which **deviance is encouraged**. Individuals respond to this in five ways:
 1. **Conformity** - most **common response**. Members strive to success though **accepted channels**.
 2. **Innovation** - adopted by those that are denied the opportunities to succeed via conventional means. E.g. working class – thus, greater pressure to deviate for 'success'.
 3. **Ritualists** - **lower middle-class** where **goal of wealth is abandoned** but they **continue to conform** to conventional **standards** of respectability (e.g. education). **Thus, deviant for rejecting mainstream goal**.
 4. **Retreatism** - embraced by '**drop-outs**' e.g. tramps/drug addicts. Deviate in 2 ways by rejecting **shared values of success and means to achieve it**.
 5. **Rebellion** - **both goals and means** are rejected and **replace** with an **alternative** society.
- Crime is therefore a result of the **culture and structure of society** which **overemphasises cultural goals** at the expense of **institutionalised means to achieve** it, creating a tendency towards **anomie**. This **increases need for deviance** but **level varies** according to people's **social position**.

Evaluation of Merton theory:

- Merton assumes American culture is **homogenous** while others reject idea of common **value hierarchy** fixed by **culture** or **structure**.
- Problematic to suggest individuals shape their goal by society when they interact in multi-values with the different groups they participate in.
- Exaggerates the level of working class crime as he ignores more undercover crimes like corporate crime which is committed by the ruling class.
- However, some argue Merton’s theory is still applicable today. E.g. Thatcherism placed great emphasis on individual success during the 70s and 80s which contributed to a rise in property crime according to some sociologists.

Evaluation of Functionalism:

Strength	Limitation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Unlike Marxism, functionalists are correct in suggesting that crime cannot be eradicated since it existed in communist countries like China and the Former Soviet Union. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Functionalism fails to consider wider power relations in society like who make the laws? and who it benefits? ➤ Assumes society is based on value consensus. ➤ Premises of each theory relies on statistics as an accurate reflection of crime in society – stats not always reliable since not everyone reports crime. E.g. only 50% of all rape cases are reported and only 7% are sent to court! ➤ Ignores the individuals reasons for committing crime ➤ Functionalism cannot account for politically motivated crime where people break the law because of a commitment to a cause. E.g. socialist groups who seek to bring about a fairer society.
<p>Synoptic Link</p>	

Structural and Subcultural Theories of Crime and Deviance

- Subcultural theories largely arose as a **response** to **Merton's** strain theory.
- While **strain (structural) theories** explain crime according to ones positions in society, **subcultural theories** define it in relation to the norms and values of a particular social group.

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2. Albert Cohen (1955) Status Frustration and Reaction Formation

- Cohen modified Merton's theory to **combine both strain** and **subcultural theories** to explain the **origins of culture** since the previous two only assumed crime was 'part of a culture or 'culturally transmitted'.
- Began by highlighting **two limitations** to **Merton understanding** of **working-class crime**:
 1. Deviance is a **collective** not individualist response.
 2. Ignores **non-utilitarian** crimes (no financial rewards)
- Lower-class boys do aspire to mainstream goal but experienced **greater strain towards delinquency** due to **cultural + material deprivation** which lead to educational failure and dead end jobs.
- Consequently, they suffering from **status frustration** and respond with '**reaction formation**' - developing a **contra culture** in which activities become **non-utilitarian, negativistic, versatile** and characterised by **short-run hedonism**.
- Thus, an **alternative set of norms is adopted** – a **delinquent subculture** – which **reverses mainstream culture** by valuing activities like truancy and vandalism.

Evaluation of Cohen's theory:

- Only applies to a minority of delinquents – just the working class. What about all other types of crime?
- It can explain the causes deviance more than crime.
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3. Cloward and Ohlin (1960) – Illegitimate Opportunity Structures

- They argue while Merton theory was good, he failed to notice delinquent subcultures have their own **illegitimate opportunity structures**.
- Just as the opportunity to succeed by legitimate routes differed, so does the opportunity by illegitimate means.
 1. **Criminal subcultures** emerge in areas with established organised crime where utilitarian activities are encouraged and one can rise within the criminal hierarchy.
 2. **Conflict subcultures** develop when there is little access to legitimate and illegitimate structures. Resulting in gang violence to release frustration and gain prestige.
 3. **Retreatists subculture** are denied both legitimate and the illegitimate route, 'double failures'. Largely organised around illegal drug use.
- Thus, **crime is not simply a result of limited legitimate opportunities but available illegitimate opportunity** as well.

Evaluation of Cloward and Ohlin

- Place too much emphasis on gang crime at the expense of small group or individual crime.
- like Merton and Cohen they assume everyone is committed to the success goal of achieving wealth ignoring groups like the 'hippies' who make a conscious choice to reject conventional goals.

4. Miller (1962) – Lower Class Subculture

- Miller claims the **lower class** have **distinctive values** past from their **previous generations** which **encourage lower class men** to engage in **deviant behaviour**.
- He believed that **delinquency** was the result of an **exaggerated conformity** to the six '**focal concerns**' he identified:
 1. **Fate**
 2. **Autonomy**
 3. **Trouble**
 4. **Excitement** – search for thrills
 5. **Smartness** – capacity to 'outsmart' others
 6. **Toughness** – respect for courage

Evaluation of Miller

- However, most sociologists reject his claim of an isolated lower class whose values bear no relation to mainstream culture.
- Gill (1977) provides support for Miller as he found residents in lower class areas didn't think it was wrong to commit certain crimes like stealing from an unoccupied house.

5. Matza (1964) -Delinquency and Drift

- **Breaks** away from **strain and subculture theory**, arguing **delinquents** are **committed** to the **same values as other members in society**. Also suggests **behaviour is adaptable** and involves **choice**.
- Crime occurs when **society's commitment to moral order weakens**. Far from being deviant individuals "casually, intermittently and transiently immerse in a pattern of illegal activity" so that they **drift in and out**. Thus, **deviant behaviour** is **spontaneous** and **impulsive**.
- Criminal behaviour is also encouraged when '**techniques of neutralisation**' are temporarily **used** to **release** the hold society. These include **denial of responsibility**, **denial of injury** resulting from the act, **denial that the act was wrong**, condemnation of those who enforce the rules and appeal to higher loyalties.

Evaluation of Matza

- 'Drift' hypothesis **can't explain all crimes since** delinquents **do not 'age out'** of offending but may only be committing crimes more **discreetly** during maturity years.
- Since this is also a learning theory, concepts such as drift become difficult to measure and questions like 'who learnt the first deviant act? Always arises.
- Fails to specify **how** or **why** the neutralisation techniques process **begins**.
- Delinquents may **not always** be **sincere** when they **express remorse** or **reject**.
- Can't explain persistent delinquency.

Evaluation of Structural and Subcultural theories of crime

Strength	Limitation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All these theories are androcentric, ethnocentric. ➤ Can mostly explain juvenile crime only!! ➤ Moreover they can't explain rising crime rates among privileged youths, such as drug use or student revolts.

Synoptic Link

Conclusion:

Both **strain** and **subcultural** theories help **understand crime** by suggesting it originates in **socially** induced '**strains**' or '**tensions**'.

However, **reasons** for these strains/tensions can **vary according** to ones **society** since we do not share the same value systems. Thus one theory cannot explain all crimes in all societies.

Marxism on Crime and Deviance

- **Marx** – didn't write on crime but believed it would **eradicate** under communism.

Does crime disappear with communism? Think about China and the former Soviet Union.

No. Rather crime and deviance was blamed on reasons outside society's control such as mental illness, traitors from outside etc.

- Traditional Marxists ask **three** important **questions** about crime:

1. Who makes the law? Who benefits?

- Marx - "The **ideas of the ruling class** are in every epoch **the ruling ideas**" – thus Marxists like Snider argue laws are made by the ruling class to represent and preserve their interests.
- **Pearce** argued even laws that **might appear** in the **interest** of the **working-class**, in **reality benefit** the **ruling class** too. E.g. factory legislation protecting the health and safety of workers benefit capitalists as it keeps workers fit and loyal to their employers.
- **Chambliss** asserted much of what takes place in the **creation** of **rules** is '**non-decision making**' as in the ruling class make up their mind without discussing it with anyone else.

2. Who breaks the law? Who gets caught?

- **Chambliss** argues **crime** is **widespread** in **all parts of society**. But since **crime** is **ideologically defined** it becomes **associated** with the activities of the **working-class**. E.g. drug users in poor neighbourhood are likely to be labelled + prosecuted unlike middle-class students.
- **Snider** argues this in turn **distracts attention** from, more serious, **cooperate crime** committed by the ruling class, which cost more to society than burglary/muggings. However, both writers argue such crimes are **not penalised** since money made is used to **finance legal business** operations, which benefit the bourgeoisie. E.g. police spend most of their time dealing with minor public crimes rather than cooperate crime.

3. Why break the law? Why enforce it?

- **Chambliss** and other Marxists see crime as a **natural 'outgrowth' of capitalism** since it's **driven by greed, self-interest and hostility**.
- **Gordon** claimed **law enforcement supports the capitalist system in 3 ways**:
 1. Criminals are defined as **'social failures'** responsible for their own actions. Thus **individual not the capitalist society is blamed**.
 2. The imprisonment of **selected members** of the **working-class neutralise opposition** to the capitalism and distracts attention from the ruling class crimes. E.g. blame mugging and knife crime on blacks.
 3. Defining criminals as 'misfits' **justifies strong policing, use of force** and their **imprisonment** – Thus crime acts as a **mechanism of social control**.

Current Example To support Marxism

Evaluation of Marxism

Strength	Limitation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Crime did not wither away/eradicate in communist societies. E.g. Russia – no one admitted to the existence of crime as it undermined the ideology. Deviance was blamed on reasons outside society's control such as mental illness, traitors from outside etc. ➤ Capitalism does not always produce high crime rates. E.g. Switzerland, Greece & Ireland. ➤ Marxism on Crime and Deviance is both androcentric and ethnocentric

- Too much emphasis on cooperate crime, what about serious crimes like murders, rapes etc, which are not caused by monetary, gain and cause damage to individual not capitalism?

Synoptic Link

Neo- Marxism on Crime and Deviance

Neo-Marxist approaches to crime are **strongly influenced** by **Marxism** but they **do not accept** that there is a **straightforward** link between the **structure** of **capitalist society** and **deviance**.

Taylor, Watson and Young – New Criminology

- Combined **Marxism** with **labelling theory**.
- They outlined a **‘full social theory of deviance’** in which criminologists had to consider:
 - Distribution of **wealth and power**.
 - Circumstances surrounding the **decision** of an individual to engage in deviance.
 - **Meaning** of the deviant act for the person involved.
 - The way in which other members of society **respond**, like the police.
 - Reaction needs to be examined in terms of **the way society is organised**.
 - The **impact** of the deviant label.
 - The relationship between all these factors.

Evaluation of New Criminology

Strength	Limitation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Neglects the impact of crime on victims by focusing so much on working class crime. ➤ Androcentric and ethnocentric.

Stuart Hall - Policing the crisis

- Sought to explain the **increasing** levels of **mugging** in Britain during the **70s**
- They found **no evidence** to indicate **mugging** was a **new** crime or that it was **increasing**.
- They concluded that this crime was a **moral panic** (exaggerated outburst of public concern over a particular group or behaviour) which was created to cover the **economic problems** **capitalism** was encountering during the 1970s.
- This is because economic problems and industrial and social unrest meant that the **hegemony** (ideological domination) of the ruling class was under threat so **mugging** was **presented** as the **key element** in the **breakdown** of **social order**.

- The moral panic over mugging helped capitalism in two ways:
 - 1) Public were **persuaded societies problems** were caused by **immigrants** rather than **faults of capitalism**.
 - 2) Government was able to **justify the use of force** to **suppress groups** that were **challenging** them.
- **Societal reaction** to muggings led to the **labelling** of **black male youths** as deviants. This helped to justify increasing figures and stronger policing.

Evaluation of Stuart Hall

Strength	Limitation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Study claims black street crime was not rising while at the same time suggesting it was bound to due to increasing unemployment. ➤ No evidence that public fear was increasing. ➤ No evidence that public identified the crime with black youths

Synoptic Link

Interactionism on Crime and Deviance

- Most of the theories considered up to now have looked at the factors that supposedly **direct** the behaviour of deviants. The **emphasis** has been on the **idea** that **deviants simply react to external forces** is similar to the **positivist** position.
- **Interactionists** take a different approach. They examine:
 - **How** and **why** particular **individuals** and **groups** are **defined** as **deviant**.
 - The **effects** on such a **definition** on their **future actions**.

Becker (1963) - Labelling Theory

- According to **Howard Becker**, there is **no such thing as deviance**. An act only becomes deviant when **others perceive** it as such.
- He gives the example of a **fight** involving **young people**: in a **working class** neighbourhood this may be defined as **delinquency** by the **police** but in a **wealthy** neighbourhood it is simply defined as '**youthful spirit**'.
- Despite the **acts** are the **same**, the **meaning given** to them by **observers** is **different**. Becker believed if youngsters are **defined** as **deviant** and **convicted** then they have '**become deviant**'. In other words, they have been **labelled deviant**.
- Possible effects of labelling:
- Once an individual or group is labelled as deviant, **others** see them **only** in **terms** of this **label** – what Becker calls a '**Master Status**'.
- Labelling also **causes** the **labelled** person or group to **see themselves** in terms of their **label** which can produce a **self-fulfilling prophecy** in which the **label** actually makes itself become **true**. Becker identified 5 stages:
 1. The individual is labelled as deviant and may be rejected from many social groups.
 2. This may encourage further deviance. E.g. a drug addict may turn to crime because employers refuse to give him/her a job.
 3. Ex-convicts find it difficult to get a job and may be forced to return to crime.
 4. The **deviant career** is completed when individuals join an organised deviant group, thus confirming and accepting their deviant identity.
 5. Now a **deviant subculture** may develop which includes norms and values which supports their deviant behaviour.

Strength	Limitation

Young – Labelling and Marijuana users

- **Young (1971) replicated** Becker’s study in the UK by researching ‘**hippie**’ marijuana users in **London**. He found:
 1. The police **viewed** hippies as **dirty, lazy drug addicts**.
 2. **Police action against** marijuana users **united them** and **made them feel different**.
 3. As a result they **retreated** into small groups.
 4. **Deviant norms and values developed in these closed groups**. Hair was grown longer, clothes become more unconventional and drug use became central activity.
- Thus a **self-fulfilling prophecy** was **created** through the process of labelling and its effects upon the group.

Strength	limitation

Lemert – Societal Reaction

- **Lemert (1972) distinguished** between **primary** and **secondary** deviance:
- **Primary deviance** – consists of **deviant acts** before they are **publically labelled**. Trying to find the causes of primary deviance is difficult because:
 - Samples of deviants are inevitably based only on those who have been labelled, and they are therefore unrepresentative.
 - Most deviant acts are so common that they may be in statistical terms normal. E.g. most males engage in homosexual acts at some point.
- The **important** factor in creating ‘deviance’ is the **reaction of society** - the public identification of the deviant.
- **Secondary deviance** is the **response** of the **individual** to that **societal reaction**.

Strength	Limitation

Goffman – Deviance and the Institution

- Goffman study of the **treatment of mental patients in institutions illustrates** the idea of **secondary deviance**. He shows how deviance can actually be created by the societal reaction to it.
- He found that when inmates arrived, pressure was placed on them to **accept** the **institutions definition** of them as ‘**mentally ill**’. Their **individually** was in turn **striped away** from them through what Goffman calls a **mortification process**:
 1. Their clothes are removed and possessions taken away.
 2. They are issued a ‘new identity’ in the form of regulation clothes.
 3. Every day is strictly controlled with a compulsory set of activities.
 4. Little freedom of movement is granted.
 5. Their actions are continuously watched and assessed.
- **The effects of all this leave inmates unprepared for life in the outside world. This is because:**
 - Some accepted the institutions definitions of them as helpless deviants.
 - Others were unable to function at all in the outside world.
 - The label ‘ex-mental patient’ makes re-entry into society very difficult.

Strength	Limitation

Evaluation of Interactionism:

Strength	Limitation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Labelling theory is wrong in suggesting that deviance is created by the social group who define acts as deviant. Some acts, like murder for personal gain, will always be regarded as deviant in society. ➤ Interactionism fails to explain why individuals commit deviant acts in the first place (primary deviance) ➤ Labelling theory is too deterministic as it assumes once a person has been labelled, their deviance will automatically increase. Leaves no space for personal choice and free will. ➤ Ignores wider power relations in society – e.g. why some people are labelled rather than others and why some activities are against the law and others are not.

Synoptic Link

Left Realists on Crime and Deviance

- **Left Realists** are associated with the **Labour Party** and are therefore **socialists** who seek to bring about change through **reform** rather than revolution, unlike Marxists.
- Writers include **Taylor, Lea, Watson and Young** (1980s).
- They look into **three key areas**:

1. The Problem of Crime

- Unlike previous theories, like Functionalism, they argue **crime** is a **real problem**.
- As example they point to **sharp rise in street crime** since WW2 which cannot simply be explained by changes in reporting and recording.
- They also **reject** the idea that there are **very few victims** of crime, instead arguing **certain groups face high risks** – these include people living in **deprived** areas, **ethnic minorities** and **inner city residents**.
- **Victimisation studies** found **support** for Left Realists as there is **widespread fear of crime**, particularly among **women**.
- While they accept white-collar and corporate crime is serious, they argue there has been too much emphasis on this in recent years at the expense of **under-reported** and **under-recorded** crimes like **sexual assault, harassment, racially motivated attacks** etc.

2. The Explanation of Crime

Three key areas can be used to explain crime and deviance:

- 1) **Relative Deprivation** - crime can develop as a reaction to relative deprivation. This is when a group or individual feels that they are relatively deprived from experiences and goods enjoyed by others in society. Modern societies place great emphasis on consumerism, which increases likelihood of criminal/deviant behaviour. This is similar to Merton's strain theory since crime is a result of rising expectations of high living standards and restricted legitimate opportunities to achieve it.
- 2) **Subculture** – group subcultures develop as a response to dealing with relative deprivation. However, they vary substantially. E.g. second-generation West Indian immigrants adopted Rastafarianism or Pentecostalism as well as hustling for money.
- 3) **Marginalisation** – experienced by groups who lack organization and political representation and thus use rioting and violence as a form of political action. E.g. London riots. The key to avoid marginalisation is employment.

3. Dealing with Crime/ Solution

Three ways to deal with crime:

1. **Improving policing** – Left Realists argue there are major flaws in policing, e.g. Clear-up rate is low suggesting police are unable to deter criminals.

Moreover, the police spend little time investigating crime and rely heavily on public information while there is low public confidence in the police (particularly in inner city areas and among ethnic groups). E.g. London riots. Without public support, police resort to military policing; increase in stop and searches, surveillance technology etc.

Finally, minor crimes, like minor drug offences and underage drinking, are over-policed while major offences like racially motivated attacks, corporate crime, pollution or domestic violence are under-policed.

Thus, solution is to improve the relationship between the police and the community by enabling the public to shape policing policy and enabling the police to spend more time investigating crime. Moreover, they argue ALL types of crimes should be policed equally.

2. **Social causes of crime** – the solution to reducing crime is not to address problems of policing alone but also to address broader problems of social inequality.

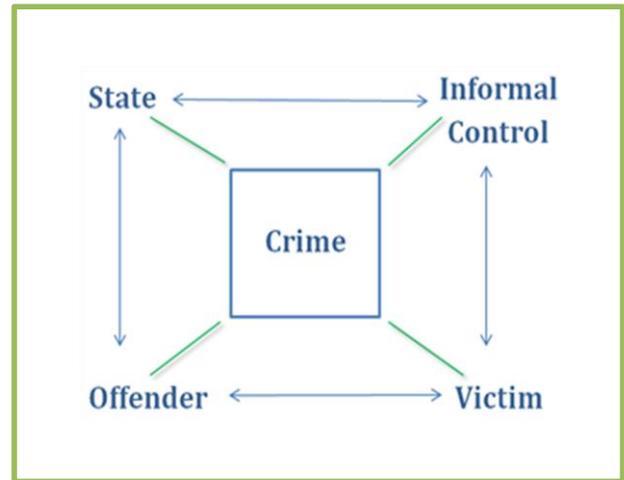
Thus, polices should address a variety of areas including:

- Improving leisure facilities for young people.
- Reducing income inequalities.
- Reducing unemployment and creating job prospects etc.

Labour party polices on reducing criminality:

3. The square of crime – crime can only be understood in terms of the relationship between the four elements in the ‘square of crime’:

- Why people offend.
- What makes the victim vulnerable and whether they choose to define incidents as criminal and report them.
- The factors that affect public attitudes and responses to crime.
- The social forces that influence the police and the rest of the criminal justice system.



Evaluation of Left Realists

Strength	Limitation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Explores the experiences of victim’s more than previous theories. ➤ Current cuts to public spending by the coalition government provides support for the assumption that social investment is necessary to prevent relatively deprived groups of society from turning to crime. ➤ Had more impact on social policy than any other perspective, particularly with New Labour in power – “Tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fails to explain the causes of street crime. ➤ Relies heavily on subcultural theory, which has been heavily criticised. ➤ Can explain why some groups who experience relative deprivation turn to crime and others don’t. ➤ Can’t explain all types of crimes. E.g. corporate or organised crime.

Right Realist on Crime and Deviance

- **Right Realists** are associated with the **Conservative** and other **right wing** political parties.
- Key writers include **Wilson** and **Herstien**.
- They look into **two key areas**:

1. Thinking about crime

- Wilson (1975) **rejects** the idea that **reducing poverty** will in **effect reduce crime**. This policy failed in the USA in the 1960s as many poor people, such as the elderly or sick, do not commit crimes.
- Wilson focuses on **street crime** arguing it is a result of **rational calculation**. People will commit crime if the **likely benefits exceed** the **likely costs**. In reality the chances of getting caught, or if punishments take place long after offences, then even severe punishments will not deter people.
- **Strong communities** are an **effective** way of **dealing with crime** as it **defers** people from committing crime and those who do **lose** their **standing** in the community. Moreover, crime itself undermines communities.
- Thus, Wilson argues the solution is to retain **strong community** ties to prevent them from **deteriorating** through crime and deviance. The role of the police is to **clamp down** on the **first signs** of undesirable behaviour. E.g. Keeping drunks, prostitutes, drug addicts and vandals off the street so that law-abiding citizens feel safe.
- He argues if a broken window is left unrepaired the area will start to deteriorate and law-abiding citizens will feel unsafe on the streets thereby leading to the breakdown of informal social control. Thus, the key is to concentrate on areas that are starting to deteriorate before it's too late to save them.

2. Crime and Human Nature

- **Wilson & Herstein** (1985) argue some people are **born** with a **predisposition** towards **crime**. Their potential for crime is likely to be realised if they are **not properly socialised**. E.g. the absence of close-knit nuclear families.
- They believe people have **free will** and choose to commit crime by weighing up the **costs and benefits**. Moreover, they argue it is too **easy** to live off **welfare benefits**, and the potential gains from crime are increasing as society becomes more affluent. For many people the benefits of crime come to outweigh the costs, and the crime rate increases.

Conservative party polices on crime:

Evaluation of Right Realists

Strength	Limitation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Has had impact on policy, particularly under Conservative governments. E.g. Thatcher's 'Zero Tolerance' policies strict sentencing. ➤ Also embraced by the Labour government. E.g. ASBOs clamps down the first sign of deteriorating behaviour. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lack of investment is more important in deterring neighbourhood decline. ➤ Concentrating on minor offences takes attention from more serious crimes, meaning offenders get away with it. ➤ Ignores role of social inequality like unemployment.

Postmodernism on Crime and Deviance

- Postmodernists argue we live in a **postmodern world** characterised by **diversity, uncertainty** and **fragmentation**.

Unique criminality

- **Smart** (1995) argue traditional approaches to crime all adopt a version of **positivism**;
 - They seek to find **causes** of criminality.
 - They seek to **eradicate** crime.
 - They accept **scientific methods** of data collection regarding crime.
 - They believe it is possible to develop an **overall theory** explaining criminality.
- Smart **rejects traditional approaches** to crime as he does not believe crimes can be linked together and common factors which cause crime can be identified.
- Instead he regards **each criminal act** as **unique** and does not believe it's possible to improve society. He argues effective ways of dealing with crime must be **local** and **individual**.

Postmodernists are interested in the following three areas to move away from traditional criminology;

1. A New Definition of Crime

- Postmodernists view 'crime' as a **social construction**, based on a narrow legal definition, reflecting **out-dated meta-narrative** of the law, which **does not reflect** our diversity society.
- They seek to develop a **wider conception of crime** based on **justice** and **respect** for **individual identities** and **lifestyles**.
- They suggest that crime should **be re-conceptualised** not simply as breaking laws, but as **people** using **power** to **disrespect others** by causing **harm** of some sort.
- They identify **two** forms of **harm**:
 1. **Harms of reduction** - power is used to cause loss or injury.
 2. **Harms of repression** - power is used to restrict future human development.

2. The Causes of Crime

- In postmodern societies individuals are increasingly focused on themselves with **little regard** and **respect** for **others**.
- **Each crime** becomes a **one-off** event **expressing** whatever **identity** an **individual** chooses, and is **motivated** by an **infinite number** of **individual** causes, including **emotional** reasons.

This may include by **humiliating, bullying or intimidating victims; hate crimes** directed at others simply because of such characteristics as ethnicity, religion, gender, sexual orientation, disability or nationality etc.

- Thus, the **individual nature** of postmodern societies means the **causes** of crime are **undiscoverable**.

3. The Control of Crime

- According to Postmodernists, the **fragmentation of society** reflects the **fragmentation of organised crime prevention**. They place emphasis on **private crime prevention** instead of policing policies etc. E.g. Private security firms to control private 'public' places like shopping centres etc.
- Moreover, they suggest **policing policies** should become **very localised** and **community-based**, reflecting the **fragmentation of society** into a **diverse** range of **smaller groups of localised identities**. E.g. the use of Sharia courts and laws for areas concentrated by Muslim communities.
- Furthermore, **Foucault (1991)** argues **surveillance technology** controls the behaviour of everyone, not just offenders, which **penetrate** into the **private lives** of individuals. It collects data on individuals through things like consumer tracking. E.g. oyster cards. He argues people should instead be left free so if crime does occur, such deviants would instead face **stricter control** (e.g. repressive policing etc.).

Synoptic Link

Strength	Limitation

Gender, Crime and Deviance

Statistics on gender and criminality

- In 2005, **79%** of known offenders were **male** and **21% female**.
- **45%** of crimes committed by **women** were **thefts**, which only account for only a **third** of **men's offences**.
- **International statistics** show the **same pattern** to that of the UK.

In 1976 **Smart** put forward the following **reasons** to explain the **neglect of women in criminology**;

- Women commit **fewer crimes** than men.
- Crimes committed by women are **comparatively trivial**. E.g. shop lifting.
- **Sociology** is dominated by **men**.

Official statistics suggest **women in all age groups commit less crime** than men. This raises **three key questions**:

1. Do women really commit fewer crimes than men or are the figures misleading?
2. Is the proportion of crime committed by women increasing and is it interlinked to women's liberation?
3. Why do some women break the law?

Explanations of Low Female Criminality

1. Pollak – the 'masked' female offender

- Pollak (1950) argues official statistics **underestimate female criminality**. Most crimes committed by women went **unreported** and **unrecorded**. E.g. prostitution and shoplifting.
- He argues there are **two** main reasons for this:
 - 1) **Criminal justice system** is mostly males and operates with **chivalry** which means they are **lenient towards women**.
 - 2) Women are good at **hiding crimes** as they are used to **deceiving** men in matters of pain or faking orgasms.

Limitation

- His work is based on inaccurate stereotypes of women.
- His work has little credibility today.

2. The 'Chivalry Thesis'

- A self-report study (2008) of **14-25 year old** found that **55% of males** and only **35% of women** admitted to a **criminal offense** in the past year. This suggests **men do commit more crime** than women but not disproportionately.
- A youth survey in 2011 found, excluding drug offences, **11% of females** and **26% of males** had committed a **fairly serious offense** in the last 12 months.
- **Women** were also **less likely** to be **cautioned**, given **custodial senses** or **prosecuted** compared to **1 in 7 offences** committed by **men**.

Evidence against the Chivalry Thesis

- Vast number of research suggests crimes committed by men were more serious which can explain why they were more likely to be cautioned, prosecuted and given custodial sentences.
- Men were twice as likely to shoplift despite official statistics suggested the same number of men and women shoplifted.

3. Double standards in the Criminal Justice System

- **Heidensohn** (1985) argues the **criminal justice system** is influenced by **attitudes of gender** in society. **Women** are treated **harshly** when they **deviate** from **norms of female sexuality**. E.g. **sexually promiscuous girls** are more likely to be given **harsher sentences** than their male counterpart. Conversely, courts are reluctant to imprison mothers with young children.
- **Carlen** (1997) found women are more likely to be **sentenced** according to the courts **assessment** of them as **wives, mothers and daughters** rather than the **seriousness** of their **crimes**. Thus, the **standard applied to women differs according to their role**, suggesting the criminal justice system is gendered, as it lenient for 'good' women, doubly harsh for 'bad' women.

Limitations

The Causes of Female Crime

1. Physiological causes

- Earliest explanations of female criminality are based on **biological theories**. E.g. **Lombroso (1895) compared the features of criminals to non-criminals**. He believed that **male criminals** could be identified by **physical abnormalities** like an **extra toe** or **nipple**. Few **women** had these qualities and thus, were **not 'born criminals'**. However, he believed that women who had **physically male characteristics** were **more likely** to commit crime.

Strength	Limitation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ While such theories are outdated, some Sociologists today argue violent female crime is linked to premenstrual syndrome (PMS). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ No scientific support for Lombroso's work, ➤ Physical abnormalities were usually a result of crime not the cause. ➤ Outdates explanation of crime.

2. Women's liberation

- **Adler (1975)** argued **women's liberation** led to new **types of female crime** and **increase in female criminality**. **Women** are taking up **male roles** in both **legitimate** and **illegitimate** areas of society. E.g. women are no longer limited to shoplifting but are getting involved in robberies, mugging and murder.

Limitations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Heidensohn (2002) accepts female criminality has increased in the UK since 1950s, but argues this is mostly among women experiencing poverty who are thereby the least influenced by feminism. Working-class women are more likely to commit crime if they are not employed or tied down to a family.

3. Female conformity

- **Heidensohn** (1985) argues women commit less crime than men due to **patriarchal control** imposed over them at **home, work** and **society** more generally. Examples include:
 - Women spend **more time** at **home** and caring for children which means they have **little time for crime**. Daughters are also given **strict curfews**.
 - Women **avoid** certain **public places** and **times** of the days due to fear of becoming a **victim** of crime or harassment. They also **limit** their **behavior** to avoid labels like 'slag, slut or bitch'.
 - Women are **controlled** by **male superiors** at work and may be intimidated by various forms of harassment.

Limitations

- Patriarchy is no longer pervasive in society due to laws. E.g. Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and Equality Act 2010.

4. Masculinity and crime

- **Messerschmidt** (1993) found that **men** turn to **different forms** of **crime** according to their **social position** and attempts to be **masculine**. E.g. **White middle-class boys** who were subservient at school were involved in pranks, vandalism, excessive drinking and minor thefts outside school – adopting **accommodating masculinity**.
- Conversely, **working-class boys** who had less chances of academic success constructed masculinity around the importance of physical aggression – **oppositional masculinity**.
- Finally, **lower-class ethnic boys** who were denied all legitimate routes (work and education) expressed their **masculinity** through **violence** and **serious crimes** like property theft.

Limitations

- Can't explain individual differences in crime. E.g. why not all working or middle class boys react in the same way.
- Assumes all male crime is a result from the need to express masculinity.
- Adopts a stereotypical image of all men.

Gender and crime Evaluation

Synoptic Link

Strength	Limitation

Ethnicity, Crime and Deviance

- Association of criminality with racial groups dates back to the **19th century** when **Irish immigrants** were portrayed as the '**dangerous class**'.
- In recent years the issue returned to surface with the **over-representation** of **African Caribbean's** in the **1980s** with speculation that the **criminal justice system** is **institutionally racist**. E.g. in 2010 black groups made up 2.8% of population but 13.5% of prison population.
- Today, while African Caribbean's continue to be over-represented in stop and searches, **Muslim Asians** also appear to be another **target**, particularly following the incidents of **9/11** and **7/7**. Moreover, the **2001 Bradford riots** led to Asian youths being labelled as '**troublesome gangs**'.
- In the **1990s** the **Macpherson Report** into the racially motivated murder of **Stephen Lawrence** and the police forces failure to bring his murders to justice, raised the issue of **institutional racism** within the **metropolitan police**.

1) Racism and the Criminal Justice System

1. Stop and searches

- Statistics suggest **black** people are **five times more likely** to be **stopped and searched** than the average for the population as a whole. **Asians** also had an **above average** chance of being stopped and searched but not as high. This **supports** the **results** of the **Macpherson Report** that the police force is **intentionally racist**.
- However, this could be a result of **ethnic groups** mostly living in **inner city** areas where **levels of criminality** are generally **higher**.

2. Arrests

- Statistics show **black** people are **four time likely** to be **arrested** than the average population as a whole. The **difference** was even **greater** for **imprisonment** (6x).
- For **Asians** arrests only remain high for suspected offenders of the **Anti-Terrorism legislation**, not other types of crimes.

3. Prosecuting and sentencing

- **Black** men were **five times more likely** to be given **custodial sentences** than white men. They were also given on average **three month longer sentences** than their white counterparts. **This discrepancy was even higher among Asians**.
- **Self-report studies** suggest official statistics **exaggerate** the extent of **ethnic minority criminality**. Moreover, research suggests that **ethnic groups** are **more likely** to be **victims of crime** than the white population.

Limitations

2) The 'Myth of Black Criminality'

- **Gilroy** (1983) in *There ain't no Black in the Union Jack* (1983) argued **black criminality** was a **myth** since both **British Asians** and **African Caribbean's** were part of the **ex-colony** meaning they were able to **resist** the **exploitation** of **British imperialism**. **Demonstrations** and **riots**, such as **Notting Hill** riots 1958, represented their **resistance** to their unjust treatment.
- **Myth of black criminality** developed as a result of **negative police stereotypes** which ethnic groups responded to. Thus, **ethnic criminality** is a result of **police prejudice**.

Limitations

3) Ethnic Minority Criminality

- **Lea and young – Left Realists** (1984) - **attack Gilroy** for suggesting **disproportionate** number of **black criminality** is a result of **police racism**. Instead they argue:
 - Most crimes are **reported** by the **public** not the police.
 - Crime rates for **Asians remained low** at the time he was writing. If so **why was the police only prejudice towards African Caribbean's?**
 - Statistics suggest **first generation immigrants** were **law abiding**, thus it's **hard** to explain **second/third generation** crime linked to **anti-colonial struggle**. Moreover, most victims of black crimes are black people!
- Lea and Young accept Police racism but also believe there has been a real increase in the crime committed by ethnic groups. They believe this is a result of relative deprivation, marginalisation and the formation of subcultures.

Limitations

4) Policing the Crisis

- Hall et al (1979) provide support for Gilroy in their explanation the **increasing** levels of **mugging** in Britain during the **1970s** and **1980s**.
- They found **no evidence** to indicate **mugging** was a **new** crime or that it was **increasing**.
- They concluded that this crime was a **moral panic** (exaggerated outburst of public concern over a particular group or behaviour) which was created to cover the **economic problems** **capitalism** was encountering during the 1970s.
- This is because economic problems and industrial and social unrest meant that the **hegemony** (ideological domination) of the ruling class was under threat so **mugging** was **presented** as the **key element** in the **breakdown** of **social order**.
- The moral panic over mugging helped capitalism in two ways:
 1. Public were **persuaded** **societies problems** were caused by **immigrants** rather than **faults** of **capitalism**.
 2. Government was able to **justify** the **use of force** to **suppress groups** that were **challenging** them.
- **Societal reaction** to muggings led to the **labelling** of **black male youths** as deviants. This helped to justify increasing figures and stronger policing.

Strength	Limitation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Study claims black street crime was not rising while at the same time suggesting it was bound to due to increasing unemployment. ➤ No evidence that public fear was increasing. ➤ No evidence that public identified the crime with black youths

British Asian Crime

- **Bowling and Phillips** (2002) found early studies show a **low crime rate** among **Asians** due to **strong family** and **community** ties. Despite the majority lived in poverty in inner city areas, they were **committed** to the **family name** and **honour, izzat**, which **encouraged conformity**.
- However, in recent years, research shows young **Asian men** were taking a more **aggressive** stance to combating **racist attacks**. E.g. **Bradford riots** in **2001** and the so called '**jihads**' with the **War on Terror**.

- **Alexander (2000)** argues **media images** of the growing problem of **Asian gangs** and **terrorists** are a **myth**. Despite this is true in some instances it is still the **exception rather than the norm** for most Asians. Thus, it reflects **media moral panic**.

Conclusion

- Ethnic minorities are **more likely** to be **criminalised**, particularly the black population. This in turn leads to **social exclusion**, which thereby **increases chances** of them being **criminalised** – a **vicious circle!**

Ethnicity and crime Evaluation

Synoptic Link

Strength	Limitation

Social Class, Crime and Deviance

- The **distribution of crime** appears to be linked to one's **social class**. E.g. Merton and other subcultural theorists suggest crime is a predominantly **working-class activity**. However, they **don't recognise middle-class crimes**.
 - While official statistics support the view that crime is concentrated in the working class, many Sociologists believe this is a reflection of **social construction** and therefore does not provide a **reliable picture**. E.g. studies of white collar, corporate, state and environmental crimes suggest crime is common in all social classes.
- 1) **Labelling theory** – does not address the issue of class directly, but **Becker** work suggests those from **lower income backgrounds** are **more likely** to be **labelled** than those from higher income backgrounds for deviant behaviour like drug use, vandalism etc.
 - 2) **Marxists** – emphasise the **importance** of **crimes** committed by the **ruling class** and argue that there is **class bias** in the **law** and in the **administration of justice**. They acknowledge that crime is present in all classes because **capitalism encourages greed**, and that the crimes of the ruling class cause more harm to society.
 - 3) **Left Realists** – accept **all classes commit crime** but empathise that **street crime** should not be ignored. They argue that **relative deprivation, marginalisation** and **subcultures** might cause **high levels of street crime in lower social classes**. They also stress the fact that the **working class** are more likely to be **victims of crime**.

Synoptic Link

4) **The Underclass and Crime – Murray and Taylor**

- Some sociologists suggest there is an **underclass** in **modern day society** (lower than working class), **who do not share the same values** with **mainstream members of society**. E.g. homeless people.
- **Murray** blames the **underclass** for a **large proportion of crimes** and blames **welfare benefits** for the **rise in crime** as it **does not provide incentive** for young people to find a **job**.

Synoptic Link

- **Taylor** conversely believes **underclass crime** is a result of **material deprivation** rather than an acceptance of mainstream culture and benefits. He argues that unskilled male jobs have declined in recent years increasing poverty for this group and creating further tendency for them to commit crime.

Strength	Limitation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Most Sociologists reject the idea that a distinctive underclass exists. ➤ Many criticise Murray as they found no link between welfare and crime. E.g. during the 1900s crime increased more in the UK than Sweden which has a more generous welfare state. ➤ No link between single parenthood and criminality. In fact single parents are more likely to become victims of crime.

Age, Crime and Deviance

- Statistics consistently suggest that more than 20% of offenders cautioned or convicted in England and Wales are aged 10 – 17, and over 1/3 are aged under 21. Amongst middle age and older people offending rates decrease.
- Home Office research suggests highest offending rates for property crime for males was 14, for violent crime it was 16 and for serious offences it was 17. However for fraud and forgery it peaked to 22 – 25. Conversely, among females offending age was around 15 for serious and property offences and 16 for violent offences.

Studies of Youth Offending

- **Cohen** – youth crime is a result of the formation of subcultures reflecting status frustration among working-class boys who do poorly at school.
- **Matza** – denies there are cohesive subcultures, arguing young people drift in and out of delinquency.
- **Lyng** – offenders, young people in particular, put themselves in risky circumstances because they enjoy being on the edge of danger and using their skill to avoid coming to harm. Lyng uses the term ‘edgework’ to describe this and uses the theory to explain offences such as joyriding.
- **Presdee** – studied **arson** by asking sixth-formers to write about the meaning of fire for them. Based on accounts of school-leavers ‘burning their blazers’ he argues arson can be seen to **symbolically destroy** the power of adults or to mark a **rite of passage** from one status to another. He also observed young people on bonfire night engaging in risky behaviour with fireworks and bonfires. He argues that in highly regulated, rational late modern societies people need to transgress established rules to find space away from such an organised society.
- **Neo-Marxists** see youth culture as a creative response to change in class structure. E.g. Teddy boys were seen as part of a working class attempt to recreate class loyalty where they felt it was threatened by ethnic minorities, urban redevelopment and growing affluence.

Strength	Limitation
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Critics of Neo-Marxists claim they exaggerate youth culture as an opposition to society.

- Whatever the difference in the explanations of youth crime and deviance, they tend to assume official statistics are correct to see young people as heavily involved in crime and deviance.

Questioning 'youth crime'

- Both police statistics and self-report studies fail to reveal the extent or the importance of white collar, corporate, environmental and state crimes which are almost entirely committed by adults.
- **Pearson** (1983) believes there have always been moral panics about certain types of crime, and youth crime in particular, which exaggerates the fear.
- **Cohen** (1972) shows how an exaggerated moral panic about violence between mods and rockers in the 1960s amplified what deviance there was amongst these youths; thereby suggesting youth deviance could be, in part, a media creation.
- Despite the challenge of the above data to official statistics, all available data does suggest there is higher criminality among younger people than there is among older people.

Control theory

- **Control theory** (aka **social bond theory**) explains the apparent decline in offending as people age.
- Control theory argues all individuals are likely to commit crime and deviance unless they have reason not to. Thus, what prevents some people from becoming criminals/ deviants is the existence of social bonds; when bonds to society are weak or broken then crime takes place. This is similar to Durkheim's idea that egoism or anomie is responsible for crime.
- There are four aspects of social bonds;
 1. **Attachment** – this involves socialisation resulting in the development of a conscience, which prevents us doing harm to other.
 2. **Commitment** – is the time and energy we put into certain activities, which gives us a stake in society and something to lose if we are found to be criminal.
 3. **Involvement** – concerns spending time on socially conforming activities, which gives us little time to be deviant.
 4. **Belief** – involves commitment to cultural goals.

Generally, these types of bonds develop as we get older. This means that as we age we are less likely to be criminal or deviant. It can also lead to a change in our belief, which also increases the likelihood of conforming.

The theory explains both low offending rates among older people and higher rates of crime and deviance among the young.

+ It can explain why in nearly all societies crime rates are higher in younger age groups.

Limitations

- Can't explain why people engage in particular types of criminal and deviant behaviour.
- Matza denies that delinquents have weak bonds to society.
- Can't explain white collar and corporate crime, which are committed by people who have strong social bonds.

Synoptic Link

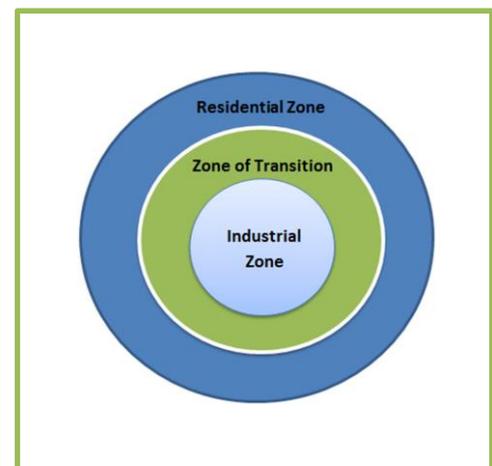
Crime and Locality

Socio-spatial criminology examines where offenders live and where crimes are committed, viewing neighbourhood – or spatial characteristics - as a key factor in crime rates.

Why is crime more likely to occur in urban areas?

Chicago School Group – urban delinquency

- **Chicago school group** devised a map of the city divided into three sections to explain crime rates.
- The central business district – industrial zone – was found in the center of cities. Next to this was the '**zone of transition**', which is where the highest offending rates occurred.
- The 'zone of transition' consisted of deprived areas with poor housing, little social stability, concentration of social problems like crime etc.
- Chicago school group explains offending as a result of high rate of population turnover, poverty and poor housing, which combined to create **social disorganisation** – a situation where there was no strongly established community and therefore no shared values which could prevent offending. Such values were passed from one generation to the other through **socialisation** or **cultural transmission**.



Limitations

- Confuses where people live with where they commit crime.
- The model of delinquency does not fit the town planning and social housing model of most European cities; only applicable to America or even just Chicago.

Opportunity Theory

Felson (2002) argues crime rates are related to opportunity which depends on;

- **Target attractiveness** – thieves prefer portable and valuable items above large lower value items.
- **Accessibility** – how easy the object is to steal and escape without being witnessed.

Limitations

Routine Activity Theory

- **Felson** (2002) also developed Routine Activity Theory, which suggests crime takes place where **suitable targets** and **likely offenders** are in **close proximity**. Offenders are more likely to commit offences in area which they spend time or are close to where they live.
- He argues burglaries tend to take place where there is no **capable guardian** (e.g. police, neighbourhood watch) to see and report an offence. He claims the **time** of the day is also important. E.g. town centres witness more crime at night than during the day because more people are out drinking. Thus, all these factors affect when and where an offence takes place.
- People's routine activity also influences the risk of being victims. E.g. those who go out drinking in city centre frequently have higher risks of becoming victims.

Limitations

Cognitive maps

- **Brantingham** et al (1991) argue people have different perceptions of areas of towns and cities depending on where they live, where they work, where they go for leisure and the routes between these areas. The **map** a person carries in their mind of an area is called **cognitive map**. Thus, offences are most likely to take place when the opportunity arises in an area with which a **potential offender** is **cognitively familiar**. E.g. a study found burglars on average travelled two miles.

Limitations

Evaluation of Crime and Locality

Strength	Limitation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ These theories seek to reduce criminality in various way. E.g. better lighting, blocking access to the backs of houses, marking objects with permanent ink etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Can't explain why people commit offences, only the circumstances that lead to crime. ➤ They assume all offenders are rational, ignoring impulsive crimes.

Synoptic Link

Crime, Deviance and Official statistics

- Many theories of deviance are based on official statistics provided by government organisations such as the police and courts.
- These statistics tend to show two main trends:
 1. Some social groups appear to be more involved in crime than others. They are: the working class, the young, males and some ethnic minorities. Most Sociologists (e.g. subcultural theorists) have taken these statistics at face value and gone to explain why these groups appear to commit a disproportionate amount of crime.
 2. Crime rates in Britain remained low until the 1950s but have increased rapidly ever since, although there was some decline during the mid-1990s. Often the release of crime statistics receives widespread publicity and leads to concern that the country is experiencing a 'crime wave'.

Unrecorded crimes

- Not all crimes that take place are recorded by the police. For a crime to be recorded at least three things must happen:
 1. Somebody has to be aware that a crime has taken place.
 2. The crime must be reported.
 3. The police or another agency must accept that a law has been broken.
- Some crimes, like tax evasion, do not have an obvious victim and it is crime like these that are least likely to be reported.
- However, attempts have been made to estimate the amount of crime which victims are aware of but which is not reported to the police or not recorded as a crime by them.

Strength	Limitation

Victimisation studies

- In **1993** the Home Office published the first **British Crime Survey** which takes place every **two years** and represents an attempt to **overcome** the **limitations** of **official statistics**.
- Instead of relying on police records, it uses **victimisation studies** – these involve **asking** individuals if they have been the **victim** of crime in the previous year, whether they **reported** the crime and whether the **police recorded** the crime.

British Crime Survey 2007 found that:

- **Less than half of all crimes** (41%) are reported to the police. **Reporting varies enormously according** to the **crime** – e.g. 93% of car thefts were reported compared to just 32% acts of vandalism.
- The usual reason for **non-reporting** was that the crime was thought to be **too trivial** or that the victim believed the **police could not do anything** or **wouldn't be interested**. Only a tiny **minority** were **frightened** of revenge or of the **police** themselves. E.g. less than 50% of rape cases are reported and only 7% of rapists are successfully prosecuted!
- **Around half** (40%) of the **incidents reported** to the police were **not recorded** as crimes. This was because the police judged the **incident** as **too trivial**, did **not** believe that it had **taken place** or felt that there was **insufficient evidence** to proceed.
- **However**, in terms of **trends** with **overall crime rates**, figures from the British Crime Survey were **in line** with the **official police figures**.
- **A substantial minority refuse to cooperate with the survey**. These people are not likely to be representative of the population, thus distorting the figures.
- **Victims of crimes**, such as domestic violence and sexual crimes, **may not be willing to reveal them**.
- **Changes in attitudes may affect the public's willingness not regard acts as criminal**. E.g. people may have become less tolerant of crime of violence or vandalism and so may be more willing to report them.

Strength	Limitation

Self – Report Studies

- Self-report studies attempt to discover the **characteristics of criminals**. They use questionnaires or interviews and ask individuals to **admit** to the **number** and **types of crimes** they have **committed**.
- The data is then **compared** with **official conviction rates** to **discover** which types of **offenders** are **most likely** to be **convicted**.
- Using data from **40 self-report studies** from **different countries**, **Box (1981)** rejected the impression created by official statistics that **working class youths** are **more likely** to **engage** in **delinquency** than **middle class**.
- **Graham (1995)** found **social class had no influence** on whether young British males and females would **admit** to having **committed** offences, **although** the **lower classes** were **more likely** to **admit** to more **serious** offences.
- **Individuals may wish to conceal their criminal acts**. However, it is estimated that around **80%** of those who reply **do tell the truth**.
- It is likely that **self-report studies identify more offenders** than official statistics.

Strength	Limitation

Bias in official Statistics

- **Self-report studies indicate that there may be police bias against working class delinquents**. Chambliss’s (1973) study of two American gangs provides support for this view:
 - **The working class – ‘roughnecks’** – were viewed with suspicion and each was arrested at least once.
 - **The middle class – ‘saints’** – were never arrested, although they carried out more serious delinquent acts.

Thus, he concluded that the **police do not view middle class delinquency seriously** as such activities are often dismissed as **‘harmless pranks’!**

Strength	Limitation

White collar crime

- Research suggests that crimes committed by individuals from **high social status** do not appear in official statistics.
- **E.g. Sutherland** (1960) was the first sociologists to study white collar crime. He **defined** it as “crimes committed by persons of **high social status** and **respectability** in the course of their **occupation**”.
- White collar crimes may include a variety of offences:
 - Bribery, corruption and fraud in business and politics.
 - Corporate negligence – e.g. inadequate safety can lead to injuries or death of workers.
 - Misconduct by professionals such as lawyer or doctors.
 - The breaking of trade regulations, food and drug laws as well as safety regulations.
 - Misrepresentation in advertising.
- There is much **evidence** to suggest these sorts of offences are **widespread**. However, a number of factors combined **reduce** the apparent **extent** and **seriousness** of white collar crime:
 1. White collar crimes are difficult to detect as many do not have obvious ‘victims’.
 2. In cases of bribery and corruption all those involved will benefit, so nobody is likely to report the offence.
 3. In cases where the victim is everyone in society (e.g. from misrepresentation in advertising) few members of the public have expertise to realise they are being misled and government agencies do not have the resources to follow up more than a few cases.
- Even if they are detected, **very few white collar crimes lead to prosecution**. The power and influence of many involved mean that a **‘blind eye’** is often turned or an **‘official warning’** is only given.
- **Official statistics, therefore, significantly underestimate the extent of white collar and corporate crime. Consequently, crime is viewed as predominantly working class behaviour.**

Strength	Limitation

State crime

- Cohen (2001) argues crime statistics should also include ones committed by the **state**. E.g. abuse of human rights.
- The ‘War on Terror’ as highlighted crimes committed by terrorists who are sometimes state-sponsored, but also by national governments themselves. The USA has been accused of human rights abuse including torture, money-laundering, state sponsored assassinations etc. which have been reported ‘unnatural’ when it occurred in many countries like China, Iran, and Syria.
- State crimes are often covered up and rarely result in prosecution because the state has the power to decide what offences are prosecuted.

General Examples:

- Torture and illegal treatment of citizens.
- Corrupt policing and criminal justice system.
- War crimes, genocide, state sponsored terrorism.
- Violation of human rights.

Real life examples:

- French government’s secret service blew up a Greenpeace ship in 1985, killing one person.
 - Death of Princess Diana – state crime or accident?
 - Leveson enquiry.
 - President Nixon and Watergate scandal.
- **Marxist explanation;** state crime is not recorded as the law is made by the bourgeois state to keep them in power. Thus, it will only criminalise the deviance of the proletariat.
 - **Weberian Explanation;** state has the legitimacy to use force and may justify it in order to protect public interest. E.g. Anti-Terrorism legislation or murder of Bin Laden. However, what constitutes public interest varies. E.g. Invasion of Iraq.

Strength	Limitation

Green Crime

- Green criminology extends the definition of conventional law breaking to include harm to animals and plants.
- Lynch (2003) crime statistics should include ‘individuals, entities who/which kill, injure and assault other life forms (human, animal or plants) by poisoning the earth.
- Three approaches to Green Criminology:
 1. Offences which damage environment and break national or international law.
 2. Legal action which damage the environment.
 3. Beck (1992) technological advances led us to enter a ‘risk society’ whereby conflict is mostly a result of damage to the environment and manmade disasters (e.g. nuclear accidents, air pollution etc.) than natural ones.
- South (1998) argues state and green crimes are interlinked. Direct examples of this link – or what he calls ‘primary crimes’ include;
 - Air pollution caused by governments, businesses and consumers.
 - Deforestation – 20% of world’s rainforests were destroyed between 1960 and 1990.
 - Species extinction which will eradicate 10 million more by 2020.
 - Water pollution, which kills 25 million people per year.
- ‘Secondary crimes’ result from flouting environmental laws. E.g. dumping toxic waste.
- No agreement as to what constitutes harm to the environment and therefore what constitutes Green crime

Strength	Limitation

Globalisation and crime

- Globalisation is the growing interdependence of societies across the world. Thus, corporate crime is becoming increasingly transnational. E.g. moving money and staff overseas to avoid taxation, shifting resources and waste elsewhere, internet fraud etc.
- Globalisation of crime means a crime committed in one country can have its offenders located in another country. Thus, without the cooperation between states, it may be difficult to investigate a crime and track down the offender. E.g. United Nations and Europol (European Police Office).
- **Examples** of global crimes include;

1. **International drug trade** - Global illegal drug market produces more wealth than 88% of countries worldwide.
2. **Human trafficking** – illegal movement or smuggling people, for various reasons, from one location to another. E.g. prostitution, child labour, illegal removal of organs for transplants.
3. **Money-laundering** – making money through illegal means, such as drug dealing or human-trafficking, which launder to prevent being caught.
4. **Cybercrime** – wide range of crime committed over the internet. E.g. internet fraud, child pornography, terrorist networking, hacking, identity theft etc.

Strength	Limitation
Synoptic Link	

The Mass Media and the Social Construction of Crime and Deviance

The Media and Agenda-Setting

- The media plays a key role in agenda-setting in relation to crime and deviance – this refers to the **media's influence** over the **issues** that people **think** about as the topic for **public discussion** is set by the media.
- Since the media cannot report all criminal offences, they select to report some stories and ignore others. Thus, **people's perception** of **crime and deviance** is **influenced** by that **media** personnel **choose to report**.

News Values and 'Newsworthiness'

- Media coverage of crime and deviance is filtered according to which events that are considered '**newsworthy**' – a story that captures the attention of most audiences. Thus, journalists use their **values** and **assumptions** to select and report certain stories.

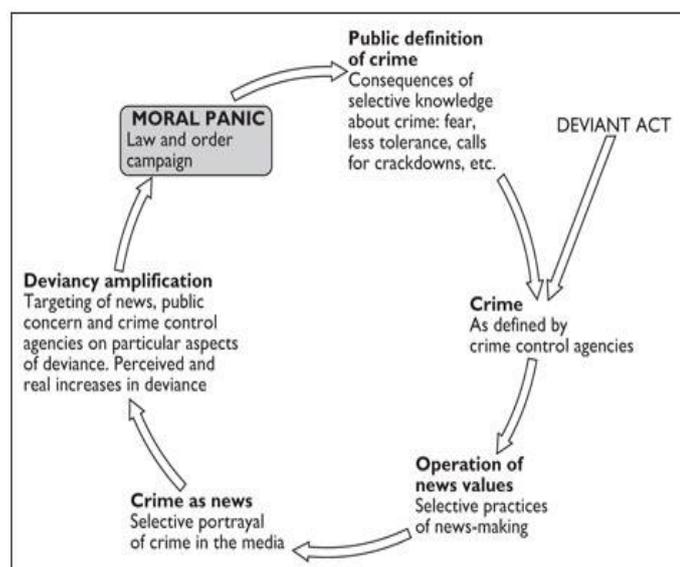
News Value	Meaning
Risk	Crime becomes newsworthy when it's presented as serious, random and unpredictable enough so that we are all at risk of becoming victims. E.g. horse meat scandal
Celebrity or high status people	Crime and deviance, whether serious or trivial, involving celebrities, either as victims or offenders, is seen more news worthy than ordinary offences. E.g. Chris Brown beating Rihanna.
Children	Children as offenders and victims of crime are regarded newsworthy. E.g. the story of Madeline McCann.
Sex	Sex crimes, especially those involving women as victims or offenders are regarded newsworthy. E.g. Amanda Knox
Violence	Violence offences enable the media to report using drama, excitement and action which appeal to audiences. E.g. the Jamie Bulger case.
Conservatism	Events made newsworthy call for more punishment and deterrence. E.g. more police, higher fines, jailing young people, longer and harsher prison sentences etc.

The Distortion and Exaggeration of Crime

- **Geer (2005)** found that all forms of media tend to **exaggerate reporting's** on **crime** and deviance to make it **newsworthy**. Tabloids, particularly, dramatize, exaggerate, over-report and sensationalise some offences out of proportion. E.g. *Crimewatch* selects serious crimes like assault, murder and armed robbery. Thus, images shown in the media, whether reporting of crime or a fictional drama, **do not reflect official statistics**.
- Moreover, she found that **reporting** also **exaggerates** the **risk** of people becoming **victims** particularly among women, old people and ethnic groups, and ignores more serious crimes like white collar, corporate, state and environmental crime.
- The media also has the **power** to **define** people as **'deviant'** and use them as a **scapegoat** for **social problems**.

Deviancy Amplification, Moral Panics and Folk Devils

- **Cohen (1972)** argued **media exaggeration**, even if untrue, can lead to a **moral panic** - a wave of public concern about an exaggerated or imaginary threat to society.
- **Deviants** who are seen as **presenting** this **threat** also become labelled as **folk devils** - individuals or groups posing an imagined or exaggerated threat to society.
- Finally he uses the term **'deviancy amplification'** describe how **agencies**, like the **police** and **media**, can actually **generate** an **increase** in **deviance** by **over-reporting** and **exaggerating minor** and **rare problems** to look **serious** and **common place**. People become motivated to keep informed on events. The resulting publicity has potential to **increase deviant behaviour** by making it seem **common** or **acceptable**.



Stanley Cohen – The Mods and Rockers

- In 1972 Cohen studied **two opposing groups**; the **mods** and the **rockers**. The media reported on their minor acts of **vandalism** and fights taking place in **Clacton** which was occurring at the same rate elsewhere in the UK.
- This generated a **moral panic** about the groups who became labelled as **folk devils**. It in turn generated a **deviancy amplification spiral** in which the media made **worse** and **created** a problem by **condemning** groups through **exaggerated reporting** so that the police **enforced stricter tolerance** towards the group resulting in **higher arrests** and encouraging more youths to **identify** with each **subculture**.

Stuart Hall – Policing the Crisis

- Sought to explain the **increasing** levels of **mugging** in Britain during the **70s**. They found **no evidence** to indicate **mugging** was a **new** crime or that it was **increasing**.
- They concluded that this crime was a **moral panic** which was created to cover the **economic problems capitalism** was encountering during the 1970s.
- This is because economic problems and industrial and social unrest meant that the **hegemony** (ideological domination) of the ruling class was under threat so **mugging** was **presented** as the **key element** in the **breakdown** of **social order**.
- The moral panic over mugging helped capitalism in two ways:
 1. Public were **persuaded** **societies problems** were caused by **immigrants** rather than **faults** of **capitalism**.
 2. Government was able to **justify** the **use of force** to **suppress groups** that were **challenging** them.

Societal reaction to muggings led to the **labelling** of **black male youths** as deviants. This helped to justify increasing figures and stronger policing.

Current day moral panic

Evaluation of Media and Crime

Strength	Limitation

Victimology

- Since 1980s there is been an increase in Victimology; the study of victims and patterns of victimisation.
- All sections of the criminal justice system is paying more attention to the interest and impact played upon a victim. E.g. police are making more effort to engage with local communities and keep victims informed about progress. Victim support schemes have also been developed.

Gender and Victimisation

- British Crime Survey results consistently suggest women are more likely to worry about becoming victims of violent crimes than men.
- Young men (aged 16-24) are twice as likely to be victims of violent crime as their female counterparts, while older men and women are the least likely.
- However, women are more likely to be victims of 'intimate crimes' like sexual assault, rape and domestic violence.

1. Domestic Violence

- Widespread evidence of violence by men and women against their partners. E.g. 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men will experience domestic violence at some point in their relationship.
- 89% of domestic violence is committed by men towards women. Men who experience such violence also suffer less serious attacks than women.
- 2/3 of victims do not report it or seek help as they are afraid the violence will increase, are ashamed or see it as a private matter?
- While the criminal justice system regarded domestic violence as a private matter rather than an act of crime, this view has changed in recent years with the establishment of domestic violence units, rape suits etc.
- Nevertheless, only about ¼ of incidents are reported to the police and only about 5% result in a conviction.

2. Rape

- Women make up 92% of rape victims but it is estimated that 2/3 rapes are not reported to the police. This could be because in rape trials it is often female victims rather than male suspects who seem to be on trial, with their reputation and respectability being scrutinized. E.g. Slut Walk. Moreover rapes that are reported have low conviction rate (5%).

- While the common conception of a rapist is a stranger, in reality most women are attacked by men they know, with a considerable number of repeat attacks.
 - 45% committed by current partners
 - 16% committed by an acquaintance
 - 11% committed by ex-partners
 - 11% committed by dates
 - 10% committed other intimates
 - 8% committed by strangers
- 75% of attacks take place in the home of the victim or offender.

3. Explaining rape and domestic violence

- Feminists explain intimate crimes towards women as a product of patriarchy; to keep women subordinate to men. They argue 'ideology of rape' frighten both female victims of the crime but women generally due to the prospect of it happening to them.
- Marxist-Feminists argue intimate crimes serve the interest of capitalism as it keeps women subordinate to men, but also allows men to release their frustration at home, thereby enabling themselves to be stress free for the next working day. Thus, men do not realise capitalism, not women are the real problem of their oppression.

Limitations

Age and Victimization

- While young people are more likely to be perpetrators of crime, they are also more likely to be victims of crime.
- Over a third (35%) of young people aged 10 to 15 had experienced at least one personal Crime. This was about the same level as for those aged 16 to 25 (32%) and well above those aged 26 to 65 (14%).
- The types of crime that young people experienced changed with age. Robbery and thefts from the person were less common experiences, for instance, for 10- to 11-year-olds than for 16- to 17-year-olds but other thefts were more common. Differences in the proportion of young people experiencing assaults were not statistically significant but were higher than for those over 21 years.
- The degree of repeat victimisation for violent offences was particularly high for young people with 19% of 10- to 15-year-olds experiencing five or more incidents in the previous 12 months.

Limitations**Ethnicity and Victimization**

- With the exception of racial attacks and homicide, ethnic minority do not appear at a higher risk of becoming victims of most crimes than the white population.
- However, any differences between races reflects the fact that most ethnic groups are likely to be from lower social classes, live in socially deprived area and have a younger age profile.
- In regards to homicide 21% of victims were ethnic groups – twice as likely to be victims as the white population, risk are six times higher for black youths.
- Black people and Asians are 14 times more likely to become victims of racially motivated attacks. E.g. harassment, abuse, threat and violence.

Limitations**Social Class and Victimization**

- The poorest sections of the working class are more likely to become victims of crime;
 - ‘Hard pressed’ – unemployed, long-term sick and low income families.
 - Areas of high physical disorder – vandalism, graffiti and deliberate damage to property, litter and homes in poor condition.
 - Areas with high level of discrimination.
- 20% of most affluent and 20% of poorest areas ace twice the risk of being victims of burglary.

Limitations

Explaining Victimisation

- Victimisation studies show that crime is not a random act as some social groups are more likely to become victims than others.
- There are **two approaches** to the study of victimology; **Positivist** and **Radical Victimology**.
- **Positivist victimology** – involves identifying characteristics or circumstances of the victim that marks them different from non-victims. They focus on victim precipitation and victim proneness. While the former blames the victim for becoming actively involved in their victimisation, the latter identifies the characteristics of individuals and groups that make them more vulnerable,

Limitations

- Blames victim rather than offender.
- It downplays the role of law; assuming the criminal justice system is ineffective thereby contributing to victimization.
- Focuses too much on individual victims ignoring structural factors like poverty, unemployment which makes certain groups more vulnerable.

- **Radical Victimology** – focuses less on blaming victims for their victimisation and focuses more on the role of law and the criminal justice system in producing victimisation. They believe victims arise as a result of wider social issues rather than individual behaviour or characteristics. They argue social deprivation means deprived members are more likely to become victims while patriarchy ideology generates female victimisation.

Limitations

Synoptic Link – why are the groups above vulnerable to becoming victims of crime?

Crime Control, Prevention and Punishment

The criminal justice system

- The criminal justice system consists of agencies like the police, Crown Prosecution Service, courts, prisons and the probation services. These agencies are responsible for controlling, preventing and punishing criminal behaviour.

Does imprisonment prevent crime?

- Prison system is responsible for deterring, controlling and punishing criminal behaviour, but it doesn't always work as a method of crime prevention. E.g. Research shows a 22% increase in prison population since 1997 only reduced crime by 5%.
- However, prison population continues to grow, with England and Wales having the highest imprisonment rate in the EU.
- Research suggests 65% of former prisoners are likely to reoffend within two years. Thus, imprisonment is not deterring criminals from reoffending.

Realist theories and Social Policies for Crime Prevention

- Realist theories regard themselves as 'real' because they are primarily concerned with explaining crimes that really matter to people and impact on their daily lives. Thus, they are concerned with practical crime prevention through social policy.
- Left Realism stresses the social causes of crime – tough on the causes of crime.
- Right Realists stress on situational crime prevention – tough on the criminals.

Left Realism; Social Crime prevention and being tough on the causes of crime

- Both offenders and victims of crime tend to be from disadvantaged communities where there is high level of marginality and social exclusion. Thus, they seek to tackle material and cultural deprivation to prevent risk factors for crime.
- They assert preventing crime involves addressing social problems through policy;
 - Building strong communities. E.g. Neighborhood Watch, Police and Community Together (PACT).
 - More democratic and community control over policing.
 - Police spending more time investigating crime
 - Tackling social deprivation. E.g. EMA, sure start, youth centers etc.

Synoptic Link

Limitations

- 'Soft' on crime, downplays the role of the offender in choosing to commit crime.
- Social deprivation does not necessarily cause crime as majority of deprived communities do not turn to crime.

Right Realism; situational crime prevention and being tough on the criminals

- Right Realist approaches to crime prevention focus on the individual rather than wider social issues. They argue individuals choose to commit crime through rational calculation. Thus, criminal behaviour must be discouraged in two different ways:

1. Situational Crime Prevention (SCP)

Developed by Opportunity and Rational Choice Theories of crime arguing crime occurs when the following conditions are present;

- Suitable target for potential offender; person, place or object.
- No capable guardian like bystander, police, CCTV etc.
- A potential offender is present who thinks first two conditions are met.

Thus, SCP aims to reduce potential opportunities of crime and increase risks of being caught by 'designing out crime' in particular locations by 'target-hardening' measures like post-coding goods, use of anti-climb paint, CCTV, locks, alarms etc. SCP is, therefore, concerned with preventing crime in certain locations than catching offenders.

2. Increased social control

Developed by Control Theorist, this approach argues strong social bonds are needed to integrate members into society to encourage conformity over deviance. The emphasis is placed on tighter control and socialisation by strengthening social institutions like family, religion and community through the following policies;

- Making parents more responsible for supervision of children. Those who don't may be issued Parenting Orders by court. E.g. given to parents where kids truant from school.
- Schemes like Neighborhood Watch – informal surveillance.
- Cracking down anti-social behaviour. E.g. ASBOs.
- Supervision of offenders. E.g. electronic tagging.
- Zero tolerance policing.
- Fast-track punishment of offenders.

Synoptic Link

Limitations

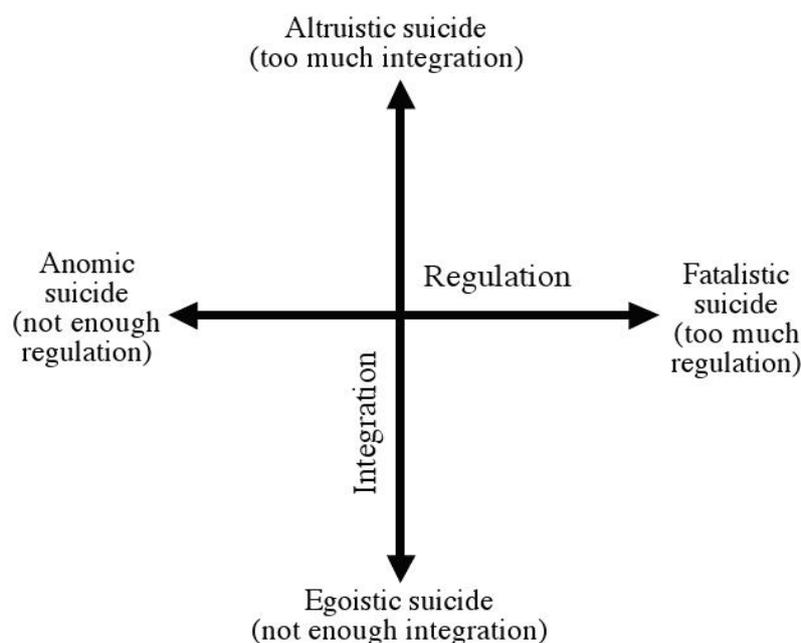
- They ignore wider social causes of crime. E.g. social deprivation.
- Ignores police discrimination towards certain groups. E.g. black people or women.
- Assumes all types of crime is a result of rational calculation, ignoring impulsive crimes and non-utilitarian crimes like vandalism.
- SCP has been criticised on several grounds; (1) geographically limited in preventing crime, (2) removes focus from other forms of crime prevention, (3) doesn't prevent crime overall.

The Sociology of Suicide

The study of suicide provides a good understanding of the different research methods available for Sociological study.

Durkheim – Four types of suicide – Positivism

- Durkheim (1897) used the study of suicide to establish Sociology as an independent discipline from the other social sciences. To accomplish this he tried to show that suicide, the most individualistic act, was not a product of individual psychology, but rather a reaction to society.
- He also used Positivist methodology, arguing it is the best form of social research.
- He argued that suicide rates differed consistently. E.g. high suicide rates were correlated with Protestants, married people, parents etc.
- From statistical patterns Durkheim identified four types of suicide:
 1. **Egoistic** - caused by insufficient integration into social groups. E.g. Protestants had less connection to the church than Catholics.
 2. **Anomic** - caused by too little regulation at times of rapid social or economic change which disrupt traditional norms. E.g. economic booms or recession.
 3. **Altruistic** - caused by too much integration into society. E.g. Hindu widows throwing themselves on their husband's funeral pyres.
 4. **Fatalistic** - resulted from too much regulation by society. E.g. suicide of slaves.



Limitations of Durkheim

- Overestimates the importance of religion in causing suicide, particularly not an important feature of modern day societies due to increasing secularisation.
- Suicide statistics are a social construction according to a coroner's decision. Durkheim treats them as facts.

Interpretive theory of Suicide

- **Douglas** (1967) argues suicide statistics are a **social construction**, based on a coroner's **interpretation** and **negotiation** with the parties involved. E.g. family/friends can persuade the coroner not to record a death as suicide.
- He also argues there are different types of suicide based on **social meaning**. E.g. in Inuit society's elderly Eskimos were expected to kill themselves as times of food shortage.
- **Beachler** (1979) argues suicide provides different types of solution to different situations;
 1. **Escapist** – used to flee from intolerable situations.
 2. **Aggressive** – used to harm others.
 3. **Oblative** – used to obtain something desired. E.g. saving another or getting to heaven.
 4. **Ludic** – taking risk for excitement or as an ordeal.
- **Atkinson** (1978) argues it is impossible to objectively study suicide since 'facts' are a product of **social construction**.
- From his research into coroner courts he found that four factors shape deaths being reported as suicide;
 1. The presence of a suicide **note**.
 2. Some **types of death** like hanging, jumping off a cliff or slitting of wrists.
 3. **Location** and **circumstances**. E.g. a bridge.
 4. Evidence of **depression** or particular **social difficulties**.
- Thus, Atkinson argues positivists ignore the deeper meaning of suicide by accepting statistics at face value as 'facts'. Definition of suicide itself is subjective not objective as they claim.

Limitations

- Categories used to classify suicide are subjective.

Taylor - Underground Suicide

- **Taylor (1982)** moves beyond Positivism and Interactionism, adopting a **realist approach**.
- By studying individuals committing suicide in the London underground, he accepts the Interactionist view that certain factors influence a coroner's decision. E.g. social failure and social disgrace tends to lead to suicide verdicts.
- However, he believed suicide was a result of **four types** based on a person's **certainty** or **uncertainty** about themselves.
 1. **Submissive** suicide involves certainty that your life is over. E.g. in response to terminal illness.
 2. **Thanatation** involves uncertainty about yourself and whether you should live. E.g. gambling or drug addicts.
 3. **Sacrifice** involves certainty that others have made your life unbearable. E.g. rejection by loved ones.
 4. **Appeal** involves uncertainty about others. E.g. suicidal behaviour which may win back a lover if they save you from death.

Limitations