Postmodernists have provided a very different way of looking at crime and deviance in contemporary society; these tend to be highly critical of more traditional sociological approaches, particularly functionalism & Marxism.



Crime & Deviance

postmodernity

Postmodernism *rejects grand narratives*, particularly those which seek to offer explanations of crime & deviance based on ‘science’ and ‘structural sociology’.

**The post modernist account is based on three key concepts**

That sounds complicated!

**1. Difference** ~ society is a ‘**global village**’ connected by mass media ~ this highlights how different we all are.





**2. Fragmentation**

The death of grand narratives has led to the disintegration of the traditional suppliers of norms & values (family, religion etc..). This means that society is fragmenting.

**3. Incoherence**

This involves ‘resurrecting the importance of the irrational’

It’s simple!

Previous sociological explanations seek to explain the factors that make people commit crime/deviance (ie: sub-cultural values, lack of socialisation, anomie, poverty, welfare dependency etc etc). *Postmodernists break with this approach* and argue ***it’s our emotions*** that ***are causes*** of criminal and deviant behaviour (emotions are irrational and ‘unscientific).

The third factor ‘***incoherence***’ is particularly important as it forms the basis of the postmodernist explanation of why people turn to criminal/deviant behaviour.

Postmodernists Levin & McDevitt argue that most crime and deviance is the result of ‘*thrill-seeking’*

*“……thrilling activities provide an escape from the dullness of everyday rouitines. When a person commits a crime they experience feelings of self-realisation & self-expression which bring them alive”.*

*Fenwick & Hayward (2000)*



Levin & McDevitt’s argument does not explain why this should provide thrills for some and not the vast majority of the population who tend to be law abiding.

Fenwick & Hayward

may provide one answer

to this.

BUT

*“The reward for violence & theft is as much psychological as it is social. It provides the joy of exhilaration and the thrill of making someone suffer”.*

***Levin & McDevitt (2002)***

