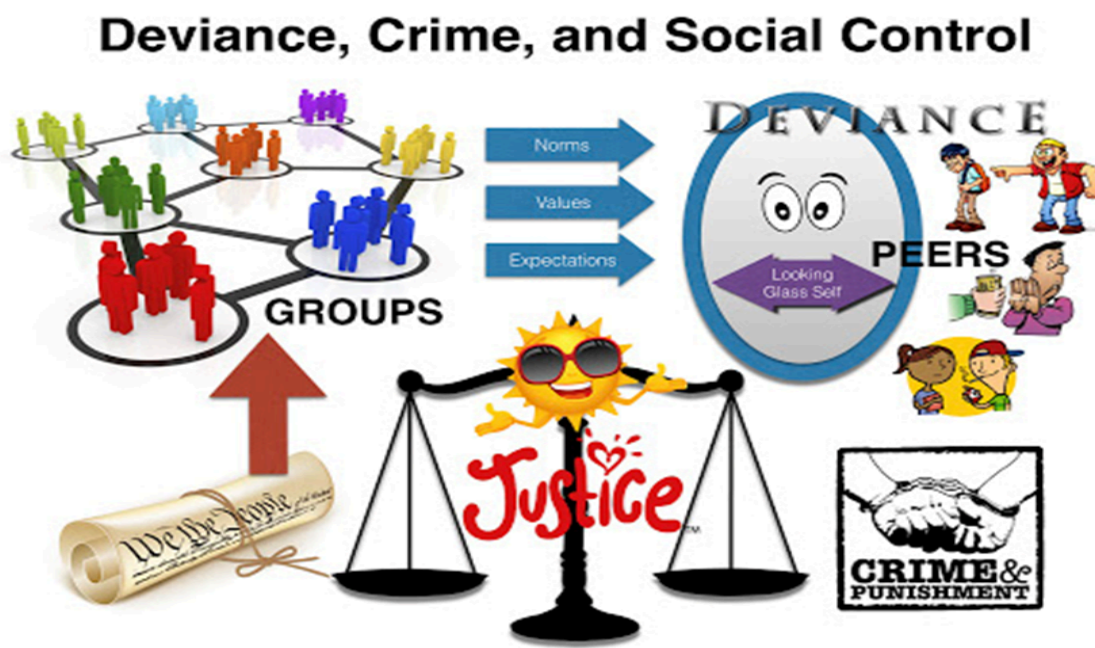


Unit 6:

Crime, Deviance and Social Control



Crime:

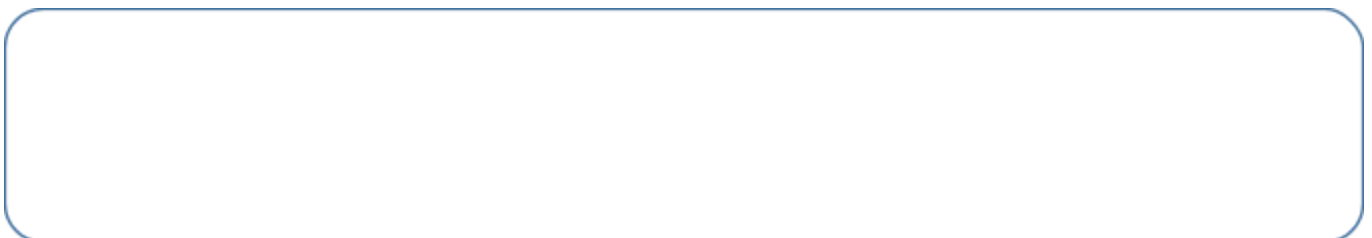
Crime occurs when a law is broken. The law is clear, has usually been set down in writing and is enforced by the police and the judiciary system. When someone breaks the law, for example, by breaking into someone's house or stealing a car, they may end up paying a fine or going to jail.

Deviance:

Deviance occurs when someone breaks an accepted code of behaviour. Deviant behaviour is not necessarily illegal and the code that has been broken is usually an unwritten code that everyone understands. It would be deviant, for example, to turn up at a funeral in a bright red suit. People would usually regard it as anti-social or abnormal behaviour.

Deviance includes acts that are positive and may be rewarded, for example, an act of heroism may be rewarded with a medal. Some deviance is not sanctioned, for example, eccentric behaviour may be tolerated.

Deviance and crime are relative, that is what is considered to be deviant or criminal varies from time to time and place to place. They go against the dominant values of the society.



Dominant Values: Beliefs that form a basis for action and are held by most people or by those with the power to force those values on others.

What is the difference between deviance and crime?

Deviance is behavior that violates (breaks) norms and rules of society, and **crime** is a type of deviant behavior that violates the formal criminal law.



Criminology is the study of crime from a scientific perspective.

What does sociological theory contribute to the study of deviance and crime?

Functionalist theory sees both deviance and crime as functional for the society because it affirms what is acceptable by defining what is not. **Structural strain theory**, a type of functionalist theory, predicts that societal inequalities actually force the individual into deviant and criminal behavior.

Conflict theory explains deviance and crime as a consequence of unequal power relationships and inequality in society.

Symbolic interaction theory explains deviance and crime as the result of meanings people give to various behaviors. Differential association theory, a type of symbolic interaction theory, interprets deviance as behavior learned through social interaction with other deviants.

Labeling theory, also a type of symbolic interaction theory, argues that societal reactions to behavior produce deviance, with some groups having more power than others to assign deviant labels to people.

The agencies of socialisation also act as agencies of social control, these include:

Exam question: To what extent can agencies of social control prevent crime?

- **The media:** reporting criminal behaviour and court cases in the newspapers or on television informs people about behaviour that will be punished and often reinforces shared social feelings about what is right and wrong behaviour.

- **Religion:** religions have rules about behaviour for their followers. For example, in Christianity the Ten Commandments forbid certain actions.
- **The police,** who are responsible for investigation criminal acts and catching offenders.
- **The law courts,** that hear charges brought against people, decide on their guilt and impose punishments.
- **The panel system,** including prisons and other institutions, that are responsible for overseeing the punishment that has been imposed by the law courts.

Informal agents of social control

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

- **The family-** through positive and negative sanctions, such as praise, presents or grounding, stopping pocket money.
- **Education-** through detentions, letters home, a 'hard stare' or firm talking to.
- **Religion-** through the beliefs of reward and punishment of behaviour i.e. heaven and hell, or karma.

- **Peer groups**- through ridicule, gossip, fear of embarrassment, rejection, positive and negative sanctions.
- **Mass media**- through reinforcing the norms, values and laws of a society in reporting the punishments of those who break the law.

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

	called in to prevent large-scale law breaking
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The functions of the penal system are:

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

The ways of measuring crime:

Exam questions: Explain how crime rates are measured. [6]

They include:

- **Official statistics**
- **Self-report studied**
- **Victim surveys**
- **Official statistics:**
one of the main sources of information about crime. The statistics are socially constructed and need to be

treated with caution. Interpretivists argue that they tell us more about the decisions made by those who compile them than about the actual extent of criminal activity.

The main sets of official statistics on crime are usually:

- **Police counts of the total numbers of different types of offences.**
- **Court records of total numbers of convictions for different offences and records of the characteristics of offenders such as their age, gender, and ethnic group.**
- **The home office statistics in the UK, published each year, compiled from figures submitted by all police forces.**

Advantages & disadvantages of official police-recorded crime statistics:

Advantages

- **Readily available and cheap source of secondary data**
- **Provide a wealth of statistical information on recorded crime rates**
- **Possible to identify long-term trends in recorded crime rates**

Disadvantages

- **Based on recorded crimes and exclude crimes that are not discovered, reported or recorded**
- **Are socially constructed and therefore do not provide a valid or true picture of crime levels**

Dark figure: it is unreported and unrecorded crimes; the police statistics are the tip of iceberg. Sociologists see the police statistics as a social construct and have used two techniques to try to get the full picture:

1. **Self-report studies.** These are confidential questionnaires or interviews asking respondents whether they have committed listed criminal acts. While official statistics show that most crime is committed by men and by working-class people, self-report studies reveal that significant numbers of crimes are committed by women and by middle-class people. However, the data in self-report studies can also be questioned:

- **Validity:** how accurate are the responses? Respondents may exaggerate to impress their peers or the researcher or there may be reasons why different types of people admit or do not admit to crimes. Researchers cannot be sure how many and which responses are valid.
- **Relevance:** some self-report studies have asked about relatively trivial offences, such as travelling on public transport without paying, and can be seen as a test of honesty rather than criminality, if for example women are admitting mainly to these lesser offences.
- **Representativeness:** many self-report studies have been of adolescents in school, so whole categories of crime such as white-collar crime are ignored.

Strengths	Weaknesses
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Uncovers some of the dark figure	People may still be reluctant to admit to serious offences
Provides information about 'victimless crime' such as vandalism or drug misuse	People may lie

2. Victimisation studies: these asked a sample of people what crimes they have been victim of, usually over the previous year. Respondents are likely to be more willing to report crimes they have been victims of than those they have committed themselves, as it self-report studies. **Victim surveys** uncover unreported crimes and can show new patterns.

Victim surveys have some problems such as:

- **They cannot cover all types of crime. For example, they do not cover victimless crimes, such as drug use or crimes against organisations or businesses. They also do not usually cover crimes against children, as children are not often respondents in these surveys, although it is thought that children are at high risk of being victims of some types of offences.**
- **It is thought that some types of crimes, such as sexual offences, are still underreported.**
- **Victim surveys rely on the memories of respondents, which may be faulty; for example, they may have forgotten whether an offence occurred in the past year.**

Strengths	Weaknesses
Uncovers some of the dark figure	People may not tell the truth e.g. they may be embarrassed or forget that they have been a victim
Carried out anonymously – and as victims, people will not fear getting in trouble, as they may in a self-report study	Cannot provide information about ‘victimless crime’ eg prostitution

The official police statistics have been shown to under record crime but to different extents for different crimes and types of offenders. There are several reasons for this:

- 1. Most crimes that reach the statistics are reported to the police either by the victim or by witness. Few crimes are uncovered by the police. These some of the factors that influence whether or not victims and witness report crimes to the police:**
 - People do not report crimes they regard as trivial or when they do not believe the police can do anything to help.**

- **Victims may report crimes if it will benefit them, for example, the theft of an insured item may be reported to the police as the insurance company may require this but if there is no realistic chance of the stolen goods being recovered the victim may decide there is no point reporting the theft.**
- **Some crimes are seen as private matters between individuals in which the police not be involved.**
- **Victims may not want to report a crime because they may not want the offender to be punished or they may be too embarrassed to report it.**
- **Witnesses may not report a crime as they may not want to get involved in, for example, giving a statement to the police or appearing in the court.**
- **Victims and witness may be threatened with reprisal by the criminal if they report the offence to the police.**
- **Some communities distrust the police and may be reluctant to have any contact with them.**

2. Invisible crime. Some **white-collar crimes (crimes related to work) and **corporate crimes** are unlikely to come to the attention of the police. For example, there are some areas of work where fraud and theft are normal. These are often **'fiddles'** of which the victims may unaware, such as being charged for a service that has not been provided.**

The recording of crimes is also shaped by wider media and political pressures. For example, police forces may be under

pressure to clear up particular crimes or to act on something about which there is a **moral panic.**

Moral panic: exaggerated social reaction to deviance, creating a demand for action against it.

What are the major forms of deviance?

Mental illness, stigma, and substance abuse are major forms of deviance studied by sociologists, although deviance comprises many different forms of behavior. Sociological explanations of mental illness focus on the social context in which mental illness develops and is treated. Social stigmas are attributes that are socially devalued. Substance abuse includes alcohol and drug abuse but is not limited to these two forms.

What are the connections between inequality, deviance, and crime?

Sociological studies of crime analyse that various types of crimes, such as elite crime, organized crime, corporate crime, and personal and property crimes. Many types of crimes are underreported, such as rape and certain elite and corporate crimes. Sociologists study the conditions, including race, class, and gender inequality, that produce crime and shape how different groups are treated by the criminal justice system, such as showing group differences in sentencing.

Patterns and explanations of crime by age, class, gender and ethnicity:

How is crime related to race, class, and gender?

Most crimes are committed by young people. The age group most likely to commit a crime is 15 to 25 years of age. Crimes by young people attract a lot of media attention and

pressure out on governments to prevent crimes by young people is increasing.

Juvenile delinquency: refers to people under the age of majority (18 years old in the UK) who commit offences that would have led to criminal charges in an adult court if they were older.

Most countries have separate systems, such as juvenile courts and juvenile detention centres to deal with juvenile delinquents. This to try to prevent juveniles to contact with and being influenced by older offenders.

Some offences by younger people are status offences that is, they are offences only because of the age of the person committing them. example, might be smoking or drinking alcohol under age.

Some offences by younger people are status offences that is, they are offences only because of the age of the person committing them. example, might be smoking or drinking alcohol under age.

Most offences by juveniles, though, would also be offences if they were committed by adults, such as theft and damage to property.

Many explanations for offenders by young people have been suggested. Some of the factors associated with higher rates of offending among young people are listed below:

- **Boys are more likely to offend than girls. This has been explained by the greater likelihood in most cultures for males to behave in ways that demonstrate their masculinity by being aggressive and competitive.**
- **Boys from minority ethnic groups are more likely to offend than boys from majority ethnicities. This is related to living in poverty.**

- **Parenting styles that are very lenient to very strict seem more likely to lead to delinquent children.**
- **Criminal parents or older siblings influence delinquency. Young people in single-parent families are more likely to offend.**

Older people:

Very little crime is committed by older people. As modern industrial societies experience ageing population crimes by older people may make up a growing proportion of all crimes.

In Japan one in seven of all crimes, including 150 murders, were committed by people aged over 65. The Japanese government has begun building special prison accommodation for elderly people. Rise in crime by older people in Japan may be linked to growing economic problems. Older people may also feel less connected to their families and communities.

Social class:

Working-class crime: Official statistics suggest that most crimes are committed by members of the working class, this has led to research into why there should be higher rates of criminality in this social group. Working-class crime is also referred to as blue-collar crime.

Some explanations for blue-collar crime are listed below:

- **They have been socialised into a different set of values from the middle class. It has been suggested that working-class people have a separate culture with different values that are more likely to lead its members into crime.**
- **Relative deprivation:** For example, members of the working-class maybe more likely to steal consumer goods that they see the middle-class enjoying but that they cannot obtain legitimately.

Marxists argue that the official statistics only show what has been defined as a crime. In Marxists, the true criminals are those who

benefit from a system based on exploitation. Working-class leaders who might challenge the system can be charged with offences and imprisoned. It is only to be expected that the working class will be overrepresented among criminals, they argue. The law is selectively enforced so that the powerful are less likely to have actions defined as criminal.

Middle class:

Statistics show that less crime is committed by the middle class than by other classes.

White-collar crimes are those that middle-class people are able to commit because of their occupation. They are non-violent and the motive is usually financial gain. The middle classes usually have more opportunities for occupational crime because their jobs give them access to money, resources and information.

White-collar crimes are less likely to be defined as crimes and to be treated differently. Middle class people are more skilled at negotiating the criminal justice system. They understand their rights and will be well represented. White-collar offenders do not fit the stereotype of a typical offender.

Ruling-class crime:

Many actions of the ruling-class are therefore not defined as crimes. State crimes are crimes committed by the state or its representatives. In such crimes the laws of the country are ignored or broken, or international law or treaties are broken, such as the treaty on human rights to which the country has agreed.

- **International crimes by states include:**
- **war crimes,**
- **genocide,**
- **bribery, corruption**
- **health and safety violations.**
- **False and deceptive advertising**
- **False accounting, such as concealing profits to avoid tax.**

Some crimes are not considered crimes because they violate widely accepted international norms.

In general, crime rates for a variety of crimes are higher among minorities than among Whites, among poorer persons than among middle- or upper-class persons, and among men than among women. Women, especially minority women, are more likely to be victimized by serious crimes such as rape or violence from a spouse or boyfriend.

Gender:

There are far more male than female criminals, according to official statistics. One crime for which numbers of offences by men and women are similar is splitting.

AGE AND CRIME

The age group of 14-20 represents approximately one third of all those found guilty of crime. However, most young people do not continue with their criminal behaviour into adulthood

- × Young people commit most crime
- × Youth crime = juvenile delinquency/delinquents

Factors causing youth crime

- × Peer pressure
- × Frustration
- × Seek excitement
- × Poor discipline
- × Labelled by society and treated unfairly

Why are youth seen as a problem?

- Media portrayal = folk devil
- Media moral panic (hoodies)
- Seen as disrespectful, trouble ASBO, alcohol/drugs, knife crime

Strategies

- ASBOS
- Dispersal orders
- Tagging
- Fining parents

Female crime:

Some writers have noted that the statistics do not reflect the true rate of female crime. One possibility is that women are less likely to be convicted of crimes because they receive different treatment from the police and courts. Later sociologists did not accept that the low rates of female criminality needed no explanation. They suggested factors including those listed below: Girls and boys are socialised

differently. Female have fewer opportunities to commit crime. More women spend more time outside the home. Female experience greater social control in public than males. It has become more acceptable in some modern industrial societies for families to behave in ways previously associated with males, such as drinking alcohol to excess and engaging in rowdy public behaviour. Women have less desire and less opportunity to engage in deviancy or crime. In the last few decades the number and proportion of crimes committed by females has be increasing.

Male crime:

Why is it that males commit crime than females?

One arguments put forward is that criminal behaviour is a way of achieving or asserting masculinity. Men show that they are men in different ways, such as working hard and supporting a family. But some may turn to crime and deviance to achieve this or to compensate for their inability to support a family. Examples of this may include:

- **Adventurous, risk-taking behaviour to display masculinity may involve criminality (for example, stealing, football hooliganism).**
- **Asserting masculinity by showing aggression towards other men or towards women (for example, domestic violence by a man to his female partner)**

Ethnicity:

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

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

CRIME AND ETHNICITY

More Afro-Caribbean men in prison

Why are so many in prison?

- ✗ Unemployment and poverty = frustration
- ✗ Racism in society = unemployment
- ✗ Poor socialisation and values (Cultural = attitudes/lifestyle)
- ✗ Police racism/biased courts = stereotyping and more arrests



SOCIAL CONTROL

- **The ways in which people are persuaded or forced to follow the rules, norms and values of society.**
- **Agents of social control are the institutions in society that encourage us to follow the rules, e.g. family, police, schools, etc.**
- **FORMAL social control:**
Based on written rules agencies of formal social control = police, courts, prisons etc.

INFORMAL social control:

- **Based on social approval or disapproval**
- **Agencies of informal social control = family, schools, peer group, workplace, mass media, religion.**

Criminal behaviour

Deviant behaviour

Crime consists of behaviour that breaks the law (e.g. murder, theft)	Deviancy consists of behaviour that differs from the norms and values of wider society
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Those who exhibit deviant behaviour act and dress in a way that differs to the norms and values of wider society. One example of a deviant group is goths. Most cases of deviant behaviour are legal, but in some cases their behaviour can result in criminal activity. A group of people who exhibit deviant behaviour share their own norms and values that form a distinct subculture.

Explanations of crime

Key words:

Delinquency- The undesirable, antisocial behaviour of young people.

Peer Group Pressure – Pressure exerted by people close to us in age e.g. friends or workmates in the attempt to do or not do certain things. Peer group pressure does not always have to be a negative thing it could also be a positive thing.

Labelling- Thinking of a person or a group of people in a particular way, often negatively, presuming that all of the group are a particular type of person.

Gender socialisation- Teaching males and females the expected patterns of behaviour for their gender in society.

Police targeting- Where the police focus on a particular group of people in society, believing them to be more likely to be involved in criminal behaviour than other groups.

Discrimination- Treating people differently because of their social characteristics e.g. not giving someone a job because she is female.

Racism- a form of discrimination; treating someone differently to others in society because of their ethnicity.

Alienation- Not feeling part of the wider society or culture; feeling separate and cut off from it.

Self-fulfilling prophecy- A way of thinking about a person or group of people, usually negative, that causes that person or group of people to behave in a way that makes the belief reality.

Sociological Approaches to Crime:

Functionalism and the New Right (Remember Durkheim's F.I.N)	Inadequate socialisation within your family can cause crime. Children's whose parents fail to take responsibility for socialising them correctly are prone to crime. Single parent families produce the most criminal and deviant as socialisation can be inadequate.
Marxism (Remember the 'triangle of inequality')	This approach links crime to the social inequalities that are built into capitalism. In a Capitalist society, not everyone can access wealth and status so some people commit crime to acquire the consumer goods and material possessions that others have and that the media promote. According to the Marxist approach, the legal system

	<p>operates in favour of the rich. Rich people who commit fraud or tax evasion are less likely to be convicted than working-class people who commit benefit fraud. White collar crime is a key concept to learn – this refers to middle class individuals committing crime. Corporate crime refers to a company committing crimes, for example, not adhering to health and safety laws at work.</p>
Labelling	<p>Labelling theory looks at how some people are labelled as deviant or criminal. A delinquent is someone who is labelled as such. Being labelled as criminal or deviant may be the result from the reaction of other people (such as the police) and may not be entirely due to an individual's actions or behaviour. Labelling someone as deviant may help to create a self-fulfilling prophecy by pushing someone further towards deviance. A master status is when someone is labelled as deviant or criminal and this becomes the most powerful label. For example, they may be a father or husband – but society would only see them as criminal or deviant.</p>
Sub-Cultural	<p>A subculture is a collection of people who have the same norms and values and these may differ from the rest of society. Vandalism and joy-riding are carried out by subcultures. Young males are the most likely group to join a subculture and may be because of status frustration. This means that they are fed up with their situation and are angry about it. They may also join a subculture because of peer pressure and material deprivation. Albert Cohen argues that working class boys joined delinquent subcultures to gain status with their peer group.</p>

Crime Statistics and the British Crime Survey:

For the examination you will need to know about crime statistics. Since the mid – 1990s, the level of crime has gradually declined. However, some types of crime have increased sharply in recent years; such as youth crime.

Official crime statistics fail to reflect the true level of crime. The existence of a hidden (or dark) figure of crime is due to several factors;

Some victims of crime might fear a reprisal if they go to the police. The public lacks confidence in the criminal justice system due to low clear-up rates, and lenient sentencing

There may be a time lag where people fail to realise that they have been a victim of crime (e.g. ID fraud)

In cases of petty theft, victims may feel there is little point contacting the police

Some victims of crime might be too embarrassed to report a crime. This is often the case amongst victims of domestic abuse

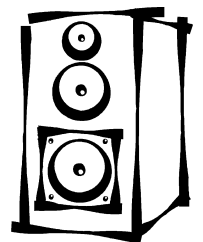
Self-report and victim studies (such as the British Crime Survey) provide a *more* accurate portrayal of the true level of crime. However, there is always a hidden figure of crime that fails to show up on the official statistics.

Crime and the media

Moral panic - Mass media exaggerate and distort an issue, causing public concern. E.g. paedophiles, asylum seekers, stabbings outside schools. Moral panics can lead to deviancy amplification!

Deviancy amplification – The process by which the mass media; through exaggeration and distortion, actually create more deviance. E.g. terrorist attacks

Sometimes “social problems” are just moral panics!



Why does more crime happen in URBAN AREAS?

- **More poverty and unemployment**
- **Police concentrate on patrolling urban areas**
- **More opportunities to commit crime**
- **Cities are more anonymous – weakens social controls**

How is globalisation affecting the development of deviance and crime?

International terrorism is a crime, and crime is thus global. Other global crimes of significance are bioterrorism and cyberterrorism. The al Qaeda terrorist organization, assumed to be the organization that destroyed the World Trade Center and killed over 3000 individuals, was centered in Afghanistan and was central to the international drug trade. Thus, crimes are clearly not just the acts of a crazed individual or small group of individuals, but the result of structural and cultural conditions.

Formal and informal social control:

Social control can be informal, through using various techniques of persuasion by family, friends and colleagues, or it can be imposed more formally by a wide range of institutions such as social work departments, medical authorities and the police. Some groups feel the force of social control than others, especially young people.

Informal social control: includes comments, ridicule, sarcasm and disapproving looks as **Sanction** and words of praise as rewards. It also includes the internalization by people of norms, so that people control their own behaviour and conform even when they are alone.

Formal social control: is enforced by government or its agencies such as the police and courts, or by people in positions of authority, such as teachers, in enforcing school rules. These agencies can impose punishments.

Controlling anti-social behaviour

Punishment	Definition
Antisocial behaviour order (ASBO)	Individual social orders, eg banning someone from an area

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

The impact of crime & deviance on society

Fear or worry about crime is one way that crime affects everyone to some degree, regardless of whether they have been victims of crime. Sometimes, the level of anxiety about crime (such as credit card fraud) is not in proportion to the actual risk of becoming a victim.

Crime can impact on local communities by generating fear of violence, burglary and car crime. It can lead people to worry about antisocial behavior in their own community and to feel unsafe walking alone after dark. Crime is seen as causing damaging tensions within communities. For example, it can lead people to believe that community ties are breaking down or that community life is being destroyed.

Antisocial behavior such as vandalizing bus shelters can have a negative impact on a community because it may lead some adults to label all local teenagers as a source of trouble. Crime and deviance could affect communities by

causing tension between some adults and some teenagers (for instance those who wear hoodies) and also by generating fear of young people among some adults.

If some people feel that there is tension and conflict in the local community, they may think that community ties are breaking down because of antisocial behavior. This impact could be seen as a problem because it is divisive and it damages social cohesion.

White-collar and corporate crime

White-collar and corporate crime can have financial, physical and social costs.

- Financial costs**
 - o E.g. results in loss of government revenue**
- Physical costs**
 - o E.g. physical harm and sickness can result from environmental pollution, the sale of unfit foods or exposure to substances such as asbestos at work**
- Social costs**
 - o E.g. mistrust between employers and employees**

Definitions of crime and deviance

Defining crime and deviance

Deviance refers to behavior that does not conform to a society's norms or rules. Some illegal acts are not necessarily seen as deviant, such as parking cars on double yellow lines. Whether an act is considered deviant or not depends on how people view and label the act. Historical evidence suggests that what is considered as 'deviant' can change over time. What is classed as criminal behavior can also vary between cultures and countries. E.g. alcohol consumption was illegal in the 1920s America and is still

restricted in some countries today. Many sociologists argue that while crime involves legally defined behavior, deviance is socially defined. It is judged according to the social setting or the context in which it takes place, and can vary across cultures.

Different explanations of crime & deviance

Explaining crime and deviance

There are several different sociological explanations for criminal and deviant behavior which focus on social factors.

- **Inadequate socialization within families**
 - o **This is an explanation of young people's involvement in crime and deviance. It highlights the negative influence of home environment and the failure of parents to socialize their children adequately.**
 - o **New Right approaches argue that children whose parents fail to take responsibility for socializing them to accept society's norms and values correctly are more prone to crime.**
- **Sub-cultural theories**
 - o **Sub-cultural theories explain crime and deviance in terms of the values of a particular subculture and the influence of the peer group. Young males in particular learn such deviant behavior by joining a peer group/gang where deviant behavior is the norm such as vandalism or joyriding. Albert Cohen, a sub-cultural theorist, argued that working-class boys joined delinquent subcultures to gain status within their peer group.**
- **Relative deprivation**
 - o **People feel relatively deprived when they see themselves as badly off relative to the living standards of the particular group that they may compare themselves to. For example, a bank clerk who wants a mansion with a pool like that**

owned by their regional manager may commit fraud to acquire the necessary funds because they could never afford it any other way.

- Marxist explanations

- o This approach links crime to social inequalities that are built into capitalism. In a capitalist society, not everyone can gain wealth and status so some people commit crime to acquire the consumer goods and material possessions that others have and that the media promotes. The Marxist approach is the belief that the legal system operates in favour of the rich. For example, rich people who commit expense account fraud or tax evasion are less likely to be convicted than working-class people who commit benefit fraud.**

- Labeling theory

- o Labeling theory explores how and why some people become labeled as deviant or criminal. Cicourel, a phenomenologist, argued that a delinquent is someone who has been labeled as such. Being labeled deviant/criminal may result from the reaction of other people (such as the police) and may not be entirely due to an individual's actions or behavior. Labeling someone may help to create a self-fulfilling prophecy by pushing that person further towards deviance/crime.**

