**Crime and Deviance**

**AN INTRODUCTION TO CRIME AND DEVIANCE**

Definitions

* **Crime-** An act which breaks the criminal laws of society.
* **Deviance-** refers to the behaviour which is disapproved of by most people in society and which does not conform to society's norms and values.

**TOPIC 1: FUNCTIONALIST, STRAIN AND SUBCULTURAL THEORIES**

**Durkheim's functionalist theory:**

* Socialisation and Social control are two key mechanisms which allow social solidarity to occur in society.

The inevitability of crime:

* Functionalists see too much crime as destabilising society.
* They also see crime as inevitable and universal- Durkheim, '*crime is normal... an integral part of all healthy societies.'*
* There are two reasons why C&D are found in all societies; 1.Not everyone is equally effectively socialised into the shared norms and values. 2. Different groups develop their own subculture and what the members of the subculture regard as normal, mainstream culture may see as deviant.
* Durkheim also discusses that in modern societies there is a tendency towards *anomie* (normlessness). The diversity of modern societies means that the collective conscience is weakened, and this results in higher levels of C&D.

The positive functions of crime:

* For Durkheim, crime also fulfils two important functions; boundary maintenance and adaptation.
* **Boundary Maintenance-** In Durkheim's view, the purpose of punishment is to reaffirm society's shared rules and reinforces social solidarity, this is done through the rituals of the courtroom which dramatises the wrongdoing and stigmatises the offender. This reaffirms the values of the law-abiding majority and discourages others from rule breaking.
* **Adaptation-** For individuals that want change, there must be some scope for them to challenge and change existing norms and values which is deviance. However, in the long run their values may give rise to a new culture and morality. If those with new ideas are suppressed, society will stagnate and be unable to make necessary adaptive changes. Thus for Durkheim, neither a very high nor a very low level of crime is desirable.

Other functions of crime:

* Cohen identifies another function of deviance; a *warning* that an institution is not functioning properly. Functionalists such as Erikson build on Durkheim's point and argue that if crime and deviance perform positive social functions, then perhaps it means society is actually organised so as to promote deviance.

Criticisms:

* Durkheim doesn't explain how much of deviance is needed for society to function successfully.
* It can be argued that functionalists explain the existence of crime in terms of its supposed function but this doesn't mean society actually creates crime in *advance* with the *intention* of strengthening solidarity.
* Functionalism looks at what functions crime serves for society as a whole and ignores how it might affect different groups or individuals within society. - Is solidarity reinforced within the victim?
* Crime doesn't always promote solidarity. It may have the opposite effect leading to people becoming isolated e.g. forcing women to stay indoors for fear of attack.

Hirschi: 'Control Theory'

* Developed Durkheim's idea of shared values into the idea of social bonds.
* According to Hirschi, there are four types of social bonds:

1. **Attachment-** we care about others?
2. **Commitment-** what would we lose?
3. **Involvement-** has time for crime?
4. **Belief-** believes in obeying rules?

* If shared bonds are not strong, it will lead to crime and deviance.
* According to Hirschi, the family is crucial in developing the strength/weakness of social bonds. This was reinforced by the study conducted by Farrington and West.
* They carried out a longitudinal study of working class males between 1953 to the late 1980s. 6% of their sample did 50% of the crime.
* There as a direct correlation between crime and poor parenting, with the parenting more likely to be both poor and single parent.

**Merton's strain theory:**

* Strain theory argues that people engage in deviant behaviour when they are unable to achieve socially approved goals by legitimate means. Merton adapted Durkheim's concept of anomie to explain deviance. Merton's explanation combines two elements:
* **Structural factors-** society's unequal opportunity structure.
* **Cultural factors-** the strong emphasis on success goals and the weaker emphasis on using legitimate means to achieve them.
* For Merton, deviance is the result of a strain between two things; 1. The goals that a culture *encourages* individuals to achieve. 2. What the institutional structure of society *allows* them to achieve legitimately.

The American Dream

* The ideology of the 'American Dream' tells Americans that their society is a meritocratic one where there is opportunity for all. However, in reality many disadvantaged groups are denied opportunities e.g. inadequate schooling.
* The resulting strain produces frustration and this in turn creates a pressure to resort to illegitimate means such as crime. Merton calls this pressure to deviate, *the strain to anomie.* The pressure to deviate is further increased by the fact that American culture puts more emphasis on achieving success at any price that upon doing it by legitimate means.
* To summarise, the goal creates a desire to succeed, and lack of opportunity creates a pressure to adopt illegitimate means, while the norms are not strong enough to prevent some from succumbing to this temptation.

Deviant adaptations to strain

* Merton argues that an individual's position in the social structure affects the way they adapt and respond to the strain to anomie. Logically, there are five different types of adaption:
* **Conformity-** Individuals accept the culturally approved goals and strive to achieve them legitimately. This is most likely amongst the middle class.
* **Innovation-** Individuals accept the goals of money success but use ‘new’, illegitimate means such as theft to achieve it.
* **Ritualism-** Individuals give up on trying to achieve the goals, but have internalised the legitimate means and so they follow the rules for their own sake.
* **Retreatism-** Individuals reject both the goals and the legitimate means and become dropouts.
* **Rebellion-** Individuals reject the existing society’s goals and the legitimate means, but replace them with new ones in a desire to bring about revolutionary change and create a new kind of society.

Evaluation of Merton:

* He explains patterns shown in official crime statistics; e.g. most crime in property crime because American society values material wealth so highly.
* His theory is criticised as it takes official statistics at face value. These over-represent working-class crime, so Merton sees crime as a mainly working-class phenomenon.
* Marxists argue that it ignores the power of the ruling class to make and enforce the laws in ways that criminalise the poor but not the rich.
* It assumes there is value consensus- that everyone strives for ‘money success’ – and ignores the possibility that some may not share this goal.
* It only accounts for utilitarian crime for monetary gain, and not crimes of violence, vandalism etc. It is also hard to see how it could account for state crimes such as genocide.
* It explains how deviance results from *individuals* adapting to the strain to anomie but ignores the role of group deviance, such as delinquent subcultures.

**Subcultural strain theories:**

* Subcultural strain theories see deviance as a product of a delinquent subculture with different values from those of mainstream society.

A.K. Cohen: Status Frustration:

* Cohen agrees with Merton that deviance is largely a lower-class phenomenon. However, Cohen criticises Merton’s explanation of deviance on two grounds:
* 1. Merton sees deviance as an *individual* response to strain, ignoring the fact that much deviance is committed in or by groups, especially among the young.
* 2. Merton focuses on *utilitarian* crime committed for material gain. He largely ignores crimes such as assault, which may have no economic motive.
* Cohen focused on deviance among working class boys and argued that they faced anomie because of a middle class dominated school system. Their inability to succeed in this middle class world leaves them at the bottom of the status hierarchy.
* In Cohen’s view, they resolve their frustration by rejecting mainstream middle class values and they turn instead to other boys in the same situation, forming or joining a delinquent subculture.

Alternative status hierarchy:

* According to Cohen, the delinquent subculture inverts the values of mainstream society- turns them upside down. The subculture praise what society condemns. The subculture’s function is that it offers the boys an alternative status hierarchy in which they can achieve, having failed in the legitimate opportunity structure.
* A strength of Cohen’s theory is that it offers an explanation of non-utilitarian deviance among the working class. Cohen’s ideas of status frustration, value inversion and alternative status hierarchy help to explain non-economic delinquency such as vandalism.
* However, Cohen assumes that working class boys start off sharing middle-class success goals, only to reject these when they fail. He ignores the possibility that they didn’t share the goals of the middle class and so never saw themselves as failures.

Cloward and Ohlin: three subcultures:

* Cloward and Ohlin agree with Merton that working class youths are denied legitimate opportunities to achieve ‘money success’, and that their deviance stems from the way they respond to this situation.
* Cloward and Ohlin attempt to explain why different subcultures respond in different ways to a lack of legitimate opportunities. In their view, the key reason is not only unequal access to the *legitimate* opportunity structure but unequal access to *illegitimate* opportunity structures.
* Cloward and Ohlin argue that different neighbourhoods provide different illegitimate opportunities for young people. They identify three types of deviant subcultures that result:
* **Criminal subcultures** provide youths with an apprenticeship for a career in utilitarian crime. They arise in neighbourhoods where there is a longstanding and stable local criminal culture with an established hierarchy of professional adult crime.
* **Conflict subcultures** arise in areas of high population turnover. This results in high levels of social disorganisation and prevents a stable professional criminal network developing. Its absence means that the only illegitimate opportunities available are within loosely organised gangs.
* **Retreatist subcultures**- ‘Double failures’- those who fail in both legitimate and illegitimate opportunity structures. According to Cloward and Ohlin, many turn to a retreatist subculture based on illegal drug use.

Evaluation of Cloward and Ohlin

* They agree with Merton and Cohen that most crime is working-class, thus ignoring crimes of the wealthy. Their theory is too deterministic and over-predicts the extent of working class crime. They ignore the wider power structure, including who makes and enforces the law.
* They provide an explanation for different *types* of working-class deviance in terms of different subcultures. However, they draw the boundaries too sharply between the different types. In Cloward and Ohlin’s theory, it would not be possible to belong to more than one of these subcultures simultaneously e.g. some ‘retreatist’ users are also drug dealers making a living from this utilitarian crime.
* Strain theories have been called *reactive* theories of subculture. This is because they explain deviant subcultures as forming in reaction to the failure to achieve mainstream goals. Such theories have been criticised for assuming that everyone starts off sharing the same mainstream success goal.
* Matza claims that most delinquents are not strongly committed to their subculture, as strain theories suggest, but merely drift in and out of delinquency.

Miller: 'Focal Concerns'

* Miller argues that the lower class with its own values and culture passed on down through the centuries, not a 'subculture'.
* The working class has six focal concerns:

1. Smartness- witty, look good
2. Trouble- violence
3. Excitement- thrill seeking
4. Toughness- masculine, strong
5. Autonomy- don't get pushed around
6. Fate- accept life, wider fate.

* The six focal concerns cause crime and deviance.

Evaluation of Miller

* Too deterministic- he talks about the idea of how you're born into a subculture.
* What about interaction with other classes e.g. through school?
* Don't the 'focal concerns' apply to all males across all classes.

Matza: 'Drift theory' and Subterranean Values

* Everyone has subterranean values (bad temptations that we have the potential to do).
* Matza is a critic. Matza states that through subterranean values, individuals justify themselves:
* **Appeal to higher loyalties-** e.g. appeal to religion
* **Denial of responsibility-** when you refuse to take responsibility.
* **Denial of the victim-** doesn't deserve to be a victim.
* **Denial of injury-** when you justify yourself.
* **Condemnation of condemns-** condemning someone who is wrong e.g. serial killer.

Drift theory

* Young people feel like they lack control. They do not feel the constraining bonds of society. At this stage, young people will drift in and out of crime. They are susceptible to peer pressure. It doesn't mean you'' have a deviant career and settle into normal jobs and become less law abiding adults.

Evaluation of Matza:

* Why do youth commit crime to gain control? Other actions?
* What about working class dominance?
* Sincerity about guilt doubtful?
* Difficult to prove 'drift' and too deterministic.

British Studies

* **Wilmott-** studied on working class London. He looked at young people and tried to find a subculture but found none. He explained crime because individuals were bored and visible.
* **Downes-** conducted his study in East London (deprived area). His study was based on adolescents and he found no evidence for subcultures but found evidence to support Matza's idea of leisure values. Leisure values- young people are in the stage of life when they want to have fun.
* Both of these criticise subcultural theorists. USA vs. UK criticisms- Little evidence in Britain to support American subcultural theories. Both structural strain between deviant minority and mainstream majority & terms of culture ad behaviour. Finally, later studies reject subculture anyway and move towards Marxist approaches.

Recent Strain theories:

* Recent theories have argued that young people may pursue a variety of goals other than money success e.g. popularity with peers.
* Like earlier strain theorists, they argue that failure to achieve these goals may result in delinquency. They also argue that middle-class juveniles too may have problems achieving such goals, thus offering an explanation for middle-class delinquency.

**TOPIC 2: LABELLING THEORY**

**The social construction of crime:**

* For Becker, a deviant is simply someone to whom the label has been successfully applied, and deviant behaviour is simply behaviour that people so label.
* This leads labelling theorists to look at how and why rules are made. They are particularly interested in the role of *moral entrepreneurs.* These are people who lead a moral ’crusade’ to change the law in the belief that it will benefit those to whom it is applied. However, Becker argues that this new law invariably has two effects:
* The creation of a new group of ‘outsiders’- outlaws or deviants who break the new rule.
* The creation or expansion of a social control agency (police) to enforce the rule and impose labels on offenders.
* Becker notes that social control agencies themselves may campaign for a change in the law to increase their own power. Thus it is not inherent harmfulness of a particular behaviour that leads to new laws being created but rather the efforts of powerful individuals and groups to redefine that behaviour as unacceptable.

Who gets labelled?

Whether a person is arrested, charged and convicted depends on factors such as:

* Their interactions with agencies of social control e.g. police
* Their appearance, background and personal biography
* The situation and circumstances of the offence.

Cicourel- the negotiation of justice

* Cicourel found that officers’ *typifications-* their common sense theories or stereotypes of what the typical delinquent is like- led them to concentrate on certain ‘types’. This resulted in law enforcement showing a class bias, in that working class areas and people fitted the police typifications most closely. Cicourel found that other agents of social control within the criminal justice system reinforced this bias.
* In Cicourel’s view, justice is not fixed but negotiable. E.g. when a middle class youth is arrested, he is less likely to be charged because his background doesn’t fit with the police’s ‘typical delinquent’.

Topic vs resource

* Cicourel's study has implications for the use we make of official crime statistics. He argues that these statistics do not give us a valid picture of the patterns of crime and cannot be used as a *resource.* Instead we should treat them as a *topic* for sociologists to investigate.

**The effects of labelling**

Primary and secondary deviance

* Primary deviance refers to deviant acts that have not been publicly labelled. Lemert argues that it is pointless to seek the causes of primary deviance since it is so widespread that it is unlikely to have a single cause.
* Secondary deviance is the result of societal reaction- that is, of labelling. Once an individual is labelled, others may come to see him only in terms of the label. This becomes his *master status* or controlling identity, overriding all others.
* This may lead to a *self-fulfilling prophecy* in which the individual acts out or lives up their deviant label, thereby becoming what the label says they are. Lemert refers to the further deviance that results from acting out the label as *secondary deviance.*
* Secondary deviance is likely to provoke further hostile reactions from society and reinforce the deviant’s ‘outsider’ status. This may lead to the individual joining a deviant subculture that offers deviant career opportunities and role models, rewards deviant behaviour, and confirms his deviant identity.
* The work of Lemert illustrates the idea that it is not the act itself, but the hostile societal reaction by the social audience, that creates serious deviance. Ironically, therefore, the social control processes that are meant to produce law abiding behaviour may in fact produce the very opposite.

Deviance amplification

* The deviance amplification spiral is a term used to describe a process in which the attempt to control deviance leads to an increase in the level of deviance. This leads to greater attempts to control it and, in turn, this produces yet higher levels of deviance. More and more control produces more and more deviance, in an escalating spiral or snowballing feedback process.
* The example of Mods and Rockers can be used to explain deviance amplification spiral – A moral panic which received press exaggeration lead to growing concern with moral entrepreneurs calling for a ‘crackdown’. The police responded by arresting more youths and imposing higher penalties. This seemed to confirm the truth of the original media reaction and provoked more public concern, in an upward spiral of deviance amplification. At the same time, the demonising of the mods and rockers as ‘folk devils’ caused further marginalisation and resulted in more deviant behaviour on their part.

Labelling and criminal justice policy

* Labelling theory has import policy implications. They add weight to the argument that negative labelling pushes offenders towards a deviant career. Therefore logically, to reduce deviance, we should make and enforce fewer rules for people to break.
* Labelling theory implies that we should avoid publicly ‘naming and shaming’ offenders, since this is likely to create a perception of them as evil outsiders and, by excluding them from mainstream society, push them into further deviance.

Reintegrative shaming

Braithwaite identifies a more positive role for the labelling process. He distinguishes between two types of shaming (negative labelling):

* **Disintegrative shaming,** where not only the crime, but also the criminal, is labelled as bad and the offender is excluded from society.
* **Reintegrative shaming,** by contrast labels the act but not the actor- as if to say, ‘he has done a bad thing’, rather than ‘he is a bad person’.
* The policy of reintegrative shaming avoids stigmatising the offender at the same time as making aware of the negative impact of their actions upon others and then encourages others to forgive him and accept them back into society.
* This makes it easier for both offender and community to separate the offender from the offence and re-admit the wrongdoer back into mainstream society. Braithwaite argues that crime rates tend to be lower in societies where reintegrative rather than disintegrative shaming is the dominant way of dealing with offenders.

Evaluation of labelling theory:

* It tends to be deterministic, implying that once someone is labelled, a deviant career is inevitable.
* Its emphasis on the negative effects of labelling gives the offender a kind of victim status. Realist sociologists argue that his ignores the real victims of crime.
* By assuming that offenders are passive victims of labelling, it ignores the fact that individuals may actively choose deviance.
* It fails to explain why people commit primary deviance in the first place, before they are labelled.
* It implies that without labelling, deviance would not exist. This leads to the strange conclusion that someone who commits a crime but is not labelled has not deviated.
* It fails to analyse the source of power in creating deviance. For example, Marxists argue that it fails to examine the links between the labelling theory and capitalism.

**TOPIC 3: MARXIST THEORIES**

**Traditional Marxism:**

Criminogenic capitalism:

* For Marxists, crime is inevitable in capitalism because capitalism is *criminogenic*- by its very nature it causes crime.
* Poverty may mean that crime is the only way the working class can survive.
* Crime may be the only way they can obtain the consumer goods encouraged by capitalist advertising, resulting in theft.
* Alienation and lack of control over their lives may lead to frustration and aggression, resulting in non-utilitarian crimes such as violence.
* The need to win at all costs or go out of business, along with the desire of self-enrichment, encourages capitalists to commit white collar and corporate crime e.g. tax evasion.

Snider: 'Corporation Crime'

* Snider argues that corporation crime is the most serious crime in modern industrial countries. She showed this by carrying out research and found out that street crime in the USA cost $4 billion to fix whereas corporation crime cost $80 billion to fix.
* She also argues that the state wants to attract and protect investment, hence that is why they fail to regulate with laws such as health and safety in the workplace.
* Finally she argues that there is little prosecution of corporation crime due to it being costly and there being little chance of success.

Gordon: 'Law Enforcement'

* Gordon argues, crime is a rational response to the capitalist system and hence it is found in all social classes- even though the official statistics make it appear to be largely working-class phenomenon.

Why?

1. **Economic infrastructure** influences social relationships, values (max profit and wealth).
2. **Economic self interest** above collective well being.
3. **Competition** encourages individual achievement at expense of others e.g. aggression.

How does law enforcement support capitalism?

* By punishing the w/c, blaming them and drawing attention away from the 'system'.
* Imprisoning the w/c neutralises opposition 'legitimately'.
* Defining criminals as enemies of the state justifies to keep them hidden- if made public they could question the whole 'system'.

The state and law making:

* Marxists see law making and law enforcement as only serving the interests of the capitalist class e.g. Chambliss argues that laws to protect private property are the cornerstone of the economy. Chambliss illustrates this with the case of the introduction of English law into Britain's East African colonies. The British introduced a tax payable in cash to force the African population to work for them. Since cash to pay the tax could only be earned by working on the plantations, the law served the economic interests of the capitalist plantation owners.
* The ruling class also have the power to prevent the introduction of laws that would threaten their interests e.g. there are few laws that challenge the unequal distribution of wealth. Snider argues that the capitalist state is reluctant to pass laws that regulate the activities of businesses or threaten their profitability.

Selective enforcement:

* Marxists argue that although all classes commit crime, when it comes to the application of the law by the justice system, there is selective enforcement. While powerless groups such as the working class and ethnic minorities are criminalised, the courts tend to ignore the crimes of the powerful.

Ideological functions of crime and law:

* Pearce argues that laws that appear to benefit the working class often benefit the ruling class too e.g. by keeping workers fit for work. Furthermore, because the state enforces the law selectively, crime appears to be largely a working-class phenomenon. This divides the working class by encouraging workers to blame the criminals in their midst for their problems, rather than capitalism.

Evaluation of traditional Marxism:

* Traditional Marxism shows the link between law making and enforcement and the interests of the capitalist class. By doing so, it puts into a wider structural context the insights of labelling theory regarding the selective enforcement of the law.
* It largely ignores the relationship between crime and important non-class inequalities such as gender.
* It is too deterministic and over-predicts the amount of crime in the working class; not all poor people commit crime despite the pressures of poverty.
* Not all societies have high crime rates; Japan has a homicide rate of 1.0 per 100,000 whereas the US have a homicide rate at 5.6 per 100,000. However, Marxists point out that societies with little or no state provision, e.g. USA, tend to have higher crime rates.
* Left realists argue that Marxism focuses largely on the crimes of the powerful and ignores intra-class crimes (where both the criminal and victim are working class) such as burglary, which cause great harm to victims.

**Neo-Marxism: Critical Criminology**

* Neo-Marxists are sociologists who have been influenced by many of the ideas put forward by traditional Marxism, but they combine these with ideas from other approaches.
* Taylor et al agree with traditional Marxists that:
* Capitalist society is based on exploitation and class conflict and characterised by extreme inequalities of wealth and power.
* The state makes and enforces laws in the interests of the capitalist class and criminalises members of the working class.
* Capitalism should be replaced by a classless society which would reduce the extent of crime or even rid society of crime entirely.
* However, the views of Taylor et al also differ significantly from those of traditional Marxists.

Anti-determinism:

* Taylor et al argue that traditional Marxism is *deterministic.* They reject theories that claim crime is caused by external factors such as subcultures.
* Taylor et al take a more *voluntaristic* view. They see crime as meaningful action and a conscious choice by the actor. They argue that crime often has a political motive, e.g. redistribution of wealth. Criminals are not passive puppets whose behaviour is shaped by the nature of capitalism: they are deliberately striving to change society.
* Taylor et al share with traditional Marxism the goal of a classless socialist society and social equality, but they also emphasise the importance of individual *liberty* and *diversity.* They argue that individuals should not be labelled deviant just because they are different, as in capitalist society- instead, they should be free to live their lives as they wish.

A fully social theory of deviance:

* Taylor et al aim to create a ‘fully social theory of deviance’- a comprehensive understanding of crime and deviance that would help to change society for the better. This theory would have two main sources:
* Traditional Marxist views on the unequal distribution of wealth and the power to enforce the law.
* Ideas from interactionism and labelling theory of the meaning of the deviant act for the actor and society and what effect this has on the individual.

In their view, a complete theory of deviance needs to unite six aspects:

1. **The wider origins of the deviant act** in the unequal distribution of wealth and power in capitalist society.
2. **The immediate origins of the deviant act-** the particular context in which the individual decides to commit the act.
3. **The act itself** and its meaning for the actor- e.g. was it a form of rebellion against capitalism?
4. **The immediate origins of social reaction-** the reactions of those around the deviant e.g. police and community, to discovering the deviance.
5. **The wider origins of social reaction** in the structure of capitalist society- especially the issue of who has the power to define actions as deviant and why some acts are treated more harshly than others.
6. **The effect of labelling** on the deviant’s future actions- e.g. why does labelling lead to deviance amplification in some cases but not others?

Evaluation of critical criminology:

* Feminists criticise it for being ‘gender blind’, focusing excessively on male criminality and at the expense of female criminality.
* Left realists criticise Neo-Marxists in two ways; 1. Firstly, critical criminology romanticises working-class criminals as ‘Robin Hoods’ who are fighting capitalism by re-distributing wealth. However in reality these criminals simply prey on the poor. 2. Secondly Taylor et al do not take such crime seriously and they ignore its effects on working-class victims.
* Burke argues that critical criminology is both too general to *explain* crime and too idealistic to be useful in *tackling* crime. However, Stuart Hall et al have applied Taylor et al’s approach to explain the moral panic over mugging in the 1970s.

**TOPIC 4: REALIST THEORIES**

* Right realism sees crime as a growing problem that destroys communities, undermines social cohesion and threatens society’s work ethic. Right realists criticise other theories for failing to offer any practical solutions to the problem of rising crime.
* They also regard theories such as labelling as too sympathetic to the criminal and too hostile to the forces of law and order. Right realists are less concerned to understand the causes of crime and more concerned with providing realistic solutions.

The causes of crime:

* Right realists reject the idea put forward by Marxists and other structural or economic factors such as poverty. For right realists, crime is the product of three factors: individual biological differences, inadequate socialisation and the underclass, and rational choice to offend

Biological differences

* Wilson and Herrnstein put forward a biosocial theory of criminal behaviour. In their view, crime is caused by a combination of biological and social functions. Biological differences between individuals make some people innately more strongly predisposed to commit crime than others. Similarly, Herrnstein and Murray argue that the main cause of crime is low intelligence, which they also see as biologically determined.

Socialisation and the underclass

* Charles Murray argues that the crime rate is increasing because of a growing underclass or ‘new rabble’ that is defined by their deviant behaviour and those who fail to socialise their children properly. According to Murray, the underclass is growing both in the US and the UK.
* Lone mothers are ineffectively socialisation agents especially for boys. Absent fathers means that boys lack male role models and as a result, young males turn to other, often delinquent, role models on the street and gain status through crime rather than supporting their families through a steady job.
* For Murray, the underclass is not only a source of crime. Its very existence threatens society’s cohesion by undermining the values of hard work and personal responsibility.
* Murray argues that crime is increasing in both the USA and the UK as a result of welfare dependency as individuals become dependent on the state which leads to a decline in marriage and growth of lone parent families.

Rational choice theory

* Right realists argue that crime comes from rational choice theory, which assumes that individuals have free will and the power of reason. Clarke argues that the decision to commit crime is a *choice* based on a rational calculation of the likely consequences.
* If the perceived rewards of crime outweigh the perceived the costs of crime, or if the rewards of crime appear to be greater than those of non-criminal behaviour then people will be more likely to offend.
* Right realists argue that currently the perceived costs of crime are low and this is why the cry rate has increased.
* Felson’s routine activity theory discusses that for a crime to occur, there must be a motivated offender, a suitable target and the absence of a ‘capable guardian’.

Tackling crime

* Right realists do not believe it is fruitful to try to deal with the causes of crime since these cannot be changed easily. Instead they seek to devise practical measures to make crime less attractive. Their main focus is on control, containment and punishment of the offenders rather than eliminating the underlying causes of offending.
* Wilson and Kelling’s (1982) article *Broken Windows* argue that it is essential to maintain the orderly character of neighbourhoods to prevent crime taking hold. Any sign of deterioration, such as graffiti, must be dealt with immediately.
* They advocate a ‘zero tolerance’ policy towards undesirable behaviour such as prostitution. The role of the police should be to focus on controlling the streets so that law-abiding citizens feel safe.
* Crime prevention theories should reduce the rewards and increase the costs of crime to the offender e.g. by ‘target hardening’, greater use of prison and ensuring punishments follow soon after the offense to maximise their deterrent effect.

Criticisms of right realism

* Right realism ignores wider structural causes such as poverty.
* It overstates offenders’ rationality and how far they make cost-benefit calculations before committing a crime. While it may explain some utilitarian crime, it may not explain much violent crime.
* Its view that criminals are rational actors freely *choosing* crime conflicts with its view and their behaviour is *determined* by their biology and socialisation.
* It is preoccupied with petty street crime and ignores corporate crime, which may be more costly and harmful to the public.
* Advocating a zero tolerance policy gives police free rein to discriminate against ethnic minority youth, the homeless etc. It also results in displacement of crime to other areas. Jones notes how right realist policies have failed in the USA to prevent crime rate rising.

**Left Realism**

* Left realism developed as a response to two main factors; 1. The need to take the rising crime rate seriously and to produce practical solutions. 2. The influence of right realism on government policy.
* Like Marxists, left realists see society as an unequal capitalist one. However, left realists are reformist rather revolutionary socialists: they believe in gradual social change rather than a violent revolution to shake up the capitalist system.
* They believe we need to develop explanations of crime that will lead to practical strategies for reducing it in the here and now, rather than waiting for a revolution to abolish crime.

Taking crime seriously

* They accuse other sociologists for not taking crime seriously:
* **Traditional Marxists** have concentrated on crimes of the powerful. Left realists agree that this is important but they argue that it neglects working class crime and its effects.
* **Neo-Marxists** romanticise working class criminals as Robin Hoods, stealing from the rich as an act of political resistance to capitalism. Left realists point out that in fact working-class criminals mostly victimise other working-class people, not the rich.
* **Labelling theorists** see working class criminals as the victims of discriminatory labelling by social control agents. Left realists argue that this approach neglects the real victims- working-class people who suffer at the hands of criminals.
* Young argues that the increase in crime rate has led to an *aetiological crisis*- a crisis in explanation- for theories of crime. However, left realists argue that the increase is too great to be explained in this way and is a real one: more people are reporting crime because more people are actually falling victim to crime.
* Taking crime seriously also involves recognising who is most affected by crime. Local victim surveys show that disadvantaged groups have a greater risk of becoming victims, especially of burglary and violence.

The causes of crime

* Lea and Young identify three related causes of crime; relative deprivation, marginalisation and subculture.

Relative deprivation

* For Lea and Young, crime has its roots in deprivation. They identify how deprived someone feels in relation to others, or compared with their own expectations. This can lead to crime when people feel resentment that others unfairly have more than them and resort to crime to obtain what they feel they are entitled to.
* Lea and Young identified a paradox that today’s society is more prosperous and crime-ridden. Although people are better off, they are now more aware of relative deprivation due to the media, which raises everyone’s expectations for material possessions. Those who cannot afford them may resort to crime instead.
* For Young, ‘the lethal combination is relative deprivation and individualism’. Individualism is a concern with the self and one’s own individual rights, rather than those of the group. It causes crime by encouraging the pursuit of self-interest at the expense of others.
* For left realists, increasing individualism is causing disintegration of families and communities by undermining the values of mutual support and selflessness on which they are based. This the informal controls that such groups exercise over individuals, creating a spiral of increasing aggression and crime.

Marginalisation

* Marginalised groups lack both clear goals and organisations to represent their interests. Groups such as workers have clear goals and organisations put pressure on employers and politicians. As such, they have no need to resort to violence to achieve their goals.
* By contrast, unemployed youths are marginalised. They have no organisation to represent them and no clear goals, just a sense of resentment and frustration. Being powerless, to use political means to improve their position, they express their frustration through criminal means such as violence.

Subculture

* The left realist view of criminal subcultures is similar to the views of Merton, Cloward and Ohlin and Cohen. For left realists, a subculture is a group's collective solution to the problem of relative deprivation.
* However, different groups may produce different subcultural solutions to this problem. Weber outlines a 'theodicy of disprivilege'- turning to religion as it offers spiritual comfort and an explanation to their situation. Such religious subcultures may encourage respectability and conformity.
* Within the African community in Bristol, Pryce identified a variety of subcultures or lifestyles, including hustlers, Rastafarians, 'saints' and working class 'respectables'.
* For left realists, criminal subcultures still subscribe to the values and goals of mainstream society such as materialism and consumerism.

Late modernity, exclusion and crime

* Young argues that we are now living in the stage of late modern society, where instability, insecurity and exclusion make the problem of crime worse. He contrasts today's society with the period preceding it, known as the 'Golden Age' of modern capitalist society. This was a period of stability, full employment, security and most importantly, lower crime rates.
* Since the 1970s, instability, insecurity and exclusion have increased. De-industrialisation and the loss of unskilled jobs has led to an increase in unemployment and poverty, especially amongst the young and ethnic minorities. These changes have destabilised families and communities and contributed to rising divorce rates.
* Young also notes the growing contrast between *cultural inclusion*  and *economic exclusion* as a source of relative deprivation:
* Media-saturated late modern society promotes cultural inclusion: even the poor have access to the media's materialistic messages.
* Similarly, there is a greater emphasis on leisure, which stresses personal consumption and immediate gratification and leads to higher expectations for the 'good life'.
* At the same time, despite the ideology of meritocracy, the poor are systematically excluded from opportunities to gain the 'glittering prizes of a wealthy society'.
* Young's contrast between economic exclusion and cultural inclusion is similar to Merton's idea of anomie- that society creates crime by setting cultural goals, while denying people the opportunity to achieve them by legitimate means.

Tackling crime

* Left realists argue that we must both improve policing and control, and deal with the deeper structural causes of crime.

Policing and control

* Kinsey, Lea and Young argue that police clear-up rates are too low to act as a deterrent to crime and that police spend too little time actually investigating crime. The police depend on the public to provide them with information about crime. However with the police losing support, especially from inner cities, the flow of information dries up and the police have to rely on *military policing* such as using random stop and searches. This alienate communities who see the police as victimising local youth.
* Left realists argue that policing must therefore be made more accountable to local communities and must deal with local concerns. The police need to improve their relationship with local communities by spending time investigating crime and involving the public in policing policies.
* Left realists also argue that crime control cannot be left to the police alone- a *multi-agency approach*  is needed. This would involve agencies like local councils as well as voluntary organisations, as well as the public.

Tackling the structural causes

* Left realists argue that the causes of crime lie in the unequal structure of society and major structural changes are needed if they want to reduce levels of offending. We must become more tolerant of diversity and cease stereotyping whole groups of people as criminal.

Left realism and government policy

* Left realist views on government policy has strong similarities with the New Labour stance of being 'tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime'. E.g. New Labour's New Deal for unemployed youth and their anti-truanting policies attempt to reverse the exclusion of those young people who are at greatest risk of offending.
* However, Young regards many of these policies as nostalgic and doomed attempts to recreate the conditions of the 'Golden Age' of the 1950s. Young also criticises the record of governments. He argues that they have largely only addressed the symptoms such as anti-social behaviour- they have been tougher on crime than on tackling its underlying causes.

Evaluation of Left Realism

* Left realism has succeeded in drawing attention to the reality of street crime and its effects, especially on victims from deprived victims.
* Henry and Milovanovic argue that it accepts the authorities' definition of crime as being street crime committed by the poor, instead of defining the problem as being one of how powerful groups do harm to the poor.
* Marxists argue that it fails to explain corporate crime, which is much more harmful even if less conspicuous.
* Interactionalists argue that, because left realists rely on quantitative data from victim surveys, they cannot explain offenders' motives. Instead, we need qualitative methods to reveal their meanings.
* Their use of subcultural theory means that left realists assume that value consensus exists and that crime only occurs when this breaks down.
* Relative deprivation cannot fully explain crime because not all those who experience it commit crime. The theory over-predicts the amount of crime.
* It focuses on high-crime inner-city areas gives an unrepresentative view and makes crime appear a greater problem than it is.

Comparing right and left realism

* Both left and right realists see crime as a real problem and fear of crime as rational. On the other hand, they come from different ends of the political spectrum; right realists are neo-conservatives whereas left realists are reformist socialists. This is reflected in how they explain crime- right realists blame individual lack of self-control, while left realists blame structural inequalities and relative deprivation.
* Political differences are reflected in the aims and solutions to the problem of crime; the right prioritise social order, achieved through a tough stance against offenders whereas the left prioritises justice, achieved thorough democratic policing and reforms to create greater equality.

**TOPIC 5: GENDER, CRIME AND JUSTICE**

**Gender patterns in crime**

* Heidensohn observes that gender differences are perhaps 'the most significant feature of recorded crime'. Most crime appears to be committed by males.

Official statistics show that:

* Four out of five convicted offenders in England and Wales are male.
* By the age of 40, 9% of females had a criminal conviction, as against 32% of males.

Among offenders, there are some significant gender differences. For example, official statistics show that:

* A higher proportion of female than male offenders are convicted of property offences (except burglary) and of violence or sexual offences.
* Males are more likely to repeat offences, to have longer criminal careers and to commit more serious crimes.

Such statistics raise three important questions:

* Do women really commit fewer crimes, or are the figures an invalid picture of gender patterns of crime?
* How can we explain why those women who do offend commit crimes?
* Why do males commit more crimes than females?

Do women commit more crime?

* Some sociologists argue that they underestimate the amount of female as against male offending. Two arguments have been put forward to support this view:
* Typically female crimes such as shoplifting are less likely to be reported. It is less likely to get media attention than violent crimes usually committed by men.
* Even when women's crime are reported, they are less likely to be prosecuted or if they are prosecuted, they are more likely to be let off likely.

The chivalry thesis

* The thesis argues that most criminal justice agents, such as the police, are men and men are socialised to act in a 'chivalrous' way towards women.
* The criminal justice system is thus more lenient with women and so their crimes are less likely to end up in official statistics. This gives an invalid picture that exaggerates the extent of gender differences in rates of offending.
* Evidence from self-report studies suggests that female offenders are treated more leniently. Flood-Page et al found that, while only one in 11 female self-report offenders had been cautioned, the figure for males was over one in seven self-report offenders.
* Women are also more likely than men to be cautioned rather than prosecuted. For example, The Ministry of Justice found that 49% of females recorded as offending received a caution in 2007, whereas for males the figure was only 30%.

Evidence against the chivalry thesis

* Farrington and Morris' study of sentencing of 408 offences of theft in a magistrates' court found that women were not sentenced more leniently for comparable offences.
* If women appear to be treated more leniently, it may simply be because their offences are less serious. Furthermore, women offenders are less likely to show remorse, and this may help to explain why they are more likely to receive a caution instead of going to court.

Bias against women

* Many feminists argue that the criminal justice system is biased against women. Heidersohn argues, the courts treat females more harshly than males when they deviate from gender norms. For example:
* Double standards- courts punish girls but not boys for premature or promiscuous sexual activity.
* Women who do not conform to accepted standards of monogamous heterosexuality and motherhood are punished more harshly.
* Pat Carlin argues that when women are jailed, it is less for 'the seriousness of their crimes and more according to the court's assessment of them as wives, mothers and daughters.
* Feminists argue that these double standards exist because the criminal justice system is patriarchal.

**Explaining female crime**

* Sociologists take the view that social rather than biological factors are the causes of gender differences in offending. This is put forward in three main explanations of gender differences in crime; sex role theory, control theory and the liberation thesis.

Functionalist sex role theory

* Parsons traces differences in crime and deviance to the gender roles in the conventional nuclear family. While men take the instrumental, breadwinner role, performed largely outside the home, women perform the expressive role where they take the main responsibility for socialising the children in the home.
* It tends to be the boys that reject feminine models of behaviour that express emotion. Instead boys distance themselves from such models by engaging in 'compensatory compulsory masculinity' through aggression and anti-social behaviour, which can slip into delinquency.
* Because men have much less of a socialising role than women in the nuclear family, socialisation can be more different for boys than for girls. According to Cohen, this relative lack of an adult male role model means boys are more likely to turn to all male street gangs as a source of masculine identity.
* New Right theorists argue that the absence of a male role model leads to boys turning to criminal street gangs as a source of identity.
* Although the theory tries to explain gender differences in crime in terms of behaviour learned through socialisation, it is ultimately based on biological assumptions about sex differences.
* Feminists locate their explanations in the patriarchal nature of society and women's subordinate position in it.

Heidensohn; Patriarchal control

* Heidensohn argues that the most striking thing about women's behaviour is how *conformist* it is- they commit fewer crimes than men. In her view, this is because patriarchal society imposes greater control over women and this reduces their opportunities to offend.
* **Control at home-** Women's domestic role imposes severe restrictions on their time and movement and confines them to the house for long periods, thus reducing opportunities to offend. Dobash and Dobash argue that men exercise control through their financial power e.g. denying women funds for leisure activities, thereby restricting their time outside the home.
* **Control in public­-** Women are controlled in public by the threat of male violence against them, especially sexual violence. The Islington Crime Survey found that 54% of women avoided going out after dark for fear of being victims of crime, against 14% of men.
* **Control at work-** Women's behaviour at work is controlled by male supervisors and managers. Sexual harassment is widespread and helps keep women 'in their place'. Furthermore, women's subordinate position reduces their opportunities to engage in major criminal activity e.g. the 'glass ceiling' prevents women rising to senior positions where there is greater opportunity to commit fraud.

Carlen: class and gender deals

* Using unstructured interviews, Carlen conducted a study of thirty nine 15-46 year old working class women who had been convicted for a range of crimes. She argues that most convicted serious female criminals are working-class.
* Carlen argues that working class women are generally led to conform through the promise of two types of rewards or 'deals':
* **The class deal:** women who work will be offered material rewards, with a decent standard of living and leisure opportunities.
* **The gender deal:**  patriarchal ideology promises women material and emotional rewards from family life by conforming to the norms of a conventional domestic gender role.
* If these rewards are not available or worth the effort, crime becomes more likely. Carlen argues that this was the case with the women in her study.
* In terms of the *class deal*, the women had failed to find a legitimate way of earning a living and this left them feeling oppressed and the victims of injustice. E.g. thirty-two of them had always been in poverty.
* In terms of the *gender deal* for conforming to patriarchal family norms, most of the women had either not had the opportunity to make a deal, or saw few rewards and many disadvantages in family life. E.g. some had been abused physically by their fathers.
* Many of the women had reached the conclusion that 'crime was the only route to a decent standard of living. They had nothing to lose but everything to gain.' Carlen concludes that poverty and being brought up in care or an oppressive family life were the two main causes of their criminality.

Evaluation

* Heidensohn shows the many patriarchal controls that help prevent women from deviating.
* Carlen shows how the failure of patriarchal society to deliver the promised 'deals' to some women removes the controls that prevent them from offending.
* Carlen's sample was small and may be unrepresentative, consisting as it did largely of working-class and serious offenders.

The liberation thesis

* Adler argues that, as women become liberated from patriarchy, their crimes will become as frequent and serious as men's. Adler argues that changes in the structure of society has lead to changes in women's offending behaviour, e.g. through greater opportunities in education because of a lack of patriarchal control.
* As a result, women now commit typically 'male' offences such as white collar crimes. This because of women's greater self confidence and assertiveness, and the fact that they now have greater opportunities in the legitimate structure.

Criticisms of the liberation thesis

Critics reject Adler's thesis on several grounds:

* The female crime rate began in the 1950s- long before the women's liberation movement, which emerged in the late 1960s.
* Most female criminals are working class- the group least likely to be influenced by women's liberation, which has benefited middle class women more.
* There is little evidence that the illegitimate opportunity structure of professional crime has opened up to women.
* However, Adler's thesis does draw attention to the importance of investigating the relationship changes in women's position and changes in patters of female offending.
* However, it can be argued that she overestimates both the extent to which women have become liberated and the extent to which they are now able to engage in serious crime.

**Why do men commit crime?**

Masculinity and crime

* Messerschmidt argues that masculinity is a social construct or 'accomplishment' and men have to constantly work at constructing and presenting it to others.
* Messerschmidt argues that different masculinities co-exist within society, but that one of these, *hegemonic masculinity,* is the dominant, prestigious form that most men wish to accomplish.
* However, some men have *subordinated masculinities* e.g. gay men, who have no desire to accomplish hegemonic masculinity. Messerschmidt sees C&D as resources that different men may use for accomplishing masculinity e.g. class differences among youths leads to different forms of rule breaking to demonstrate masculinity.
* **White middle-class youths** have to subordinate themselves to teachers in order to achieve middle-class status, leading to an *accommodating masculinity* in school. Outside school, their masculinity takes an oppositional form e.g. through vandalism.
* **White working-class youths**have less chance of educational success, so their masculinity is oppositional both in and out of school. It is constructed around sexist attitudes, being tough and opposing teachers' authority.
* **Black lower working-class youths** may have fewer expectations of a reasonable job and may use gang membership to express their masculinity, or turn to serious property crime to achieve material success.
* Messerschmidt argues that while middle class males commit white collar crime to accomplish hegemonic masculinity, poorer groups may use street robbery to achieve a subordinated masculinity.

Criticisms of Messerschmidt

* Is masculinity an *explanation* of male crime, or just a *description* of male offenders? Messerschmidt is in danger of a circular argument that masculinity explains male crimes because they are crimes committed by males.
* Messerschmidt fails to explain why not all men use crime to accomplish masculinity.
* He over-works the concept of masculinity to explain virtually all male crimes, from joy riding to embezzlement.

Winlow: post-modernity, masculinity and crime

* Globalisation has led to a shift from a modern industrial society to a late modern de-industrialised society. This has led to a loss of many manual jobs. Meanwhile, there has been an expansion of the service sector including pubs and bars.
* Winlow's study of bouncers in Sunderland, an area of de-industrialisation and unemployment. Working as bouncers in the clubs provided young men with both paid work and the opportunity for illegal business ventures in drugs and alcohol as well as the opportunity to demonstrate their masculinity through the use of violence.
* Winlow notes that in *modern society*, there has always been a violent, conflict subculture in Sunderland, in which 'hard men' earned status through their ability to use violence. However, the absence of a professional criminal subculture meant there was little opportunity for a career in organised crime.

Bodily Capital

* Under *postmodern* conditions, an organised professional criminal subculture has emerged as a result of the new illicit business opportunities to be found in the night-time economy. In this subculture, the ability to use violence becomes not just a way of displaying masculinity, but a commodity with which to earn a living.
* The men use their *bodily capital* to maintain their reputation e.g. the bouncers seek to develop their physical assets by bodybuilding.
* Winlow notes that this is not just a matter of being able to use violence and win fights, but of maintaining the sign value of their bodies, 'looking the part' so as to discourage competitors from challenging them. This reflects the idea that in postmodern society, signs take on a reality of their own independent of the thing they supposedly represent.
* Winlow's study shows how the expression of masculinity changes with the move from a modern, industrialised society to a postmodern, de-industrialised one. At the same time, this change opens up new criminal opportunities for men who are able to use violence to express masculinity, by creating the conditions for the growth of an organised criminal subculture.

**TOPIC 6: ETHNICITY, CRIME AND JUSTICE**

**Ethnicity and criminalisation**

* Black people, and to a lesser extent Asians, are over-represented in the system.
* Black people make up just 2.8% of the population, but 11% of the prison population.
* Asians make up 4.7% of the population, but 6% of the prison population.
* By contrast, white people are under-represented at all stages of the criminal justice process.
* Such statistics simply tell us about involvement with the criminal justice system e.g. differences in stop and search may be simply be due to policing strategies or to discrimination by individual officers.

Alternative sources of statistics

* We can call on two other important sources of statistics that can throw a more direct light on ethnicity and offending. These are victim surveys and self-report studies.

Victim surveys

* We can gain information about ethnicity and offending from such surveys when they ask victims to identify the ethnicity of the person who committed the crime against them.
* Victim surveys also show that a great deal of crime is intra-ethnic - that is, it takes place *within* rather than between ethnic groups e.g. according to the British Crime Survey (2007), in 90% of crimes where the victim was white, at least one of the offenders was also white.

However, victim surveys do have several limitations:

* The rely on victims' memory of events. Evidence suggests that white victims may 'over-identify' blacks- saying the offender was black even when they are not sure.
* They only cover personal crimes, which make up only about a fifth of all crimes.
* They exclude the under 16s: minority ethnic groups contain a higher proportion of young people.
* They exclude crimes by and against organisations, so they tell us nothing about the ethnicity of white-collar criminals.
* As a result, victim surveys can only tell us about the ethnicity of a small proportion of offenders, which may not be representative of offenders in general.

Self-report studies

* Self report studies ask individuals to disclose their own dishonest and violent behaviour. Based on a sample of 2,500 people, Graham and Bowling found that blacks (43%), and whites (44%) had very similar rates of offending, while Indians (30%), Pakistanis (28%) and Bangladeshis (13%) had much lower rates.
* The findings of self-report studies challenge the stereotype of black people as being more likely than whites to offend, though they support the widely held view that Asians are less likely to offend. However, self-report studies have their limitations in relation to ethnicity and offending.
* Overall, the evidence on ethnicity and offending is somewhat inconsistent e.g. while official statistics point to the likelihood of higher rates of offending by blacks, this is generally not borne out by the results of self-report studies.

Ethnicity, racism and the criminal justice system

Policing

* There has been many allegations of oppressive policing of minority ethnic since the 1970s, including : *'mass stop and search operations, armed raids and a failure to respond effectively to racist violence.'*

Stop and search

* Members of minorities ethnic groups are more likely to be stopped and searched by the police. Police can use this power if they have 'reasonable suspicion' of wrongdoing.
* Compared with white people, black people are seven times more likely to be stopped and searched and Asian people over twice as likely. It should be noted that only a small proportion of stop and searches result in arrest.
* Statistics from 2006/7 shows that Asians were over three times more likely to be stopped and searched than other people under the Terrorism Act.
* It is therefore unsurprising that members of minority ethnic communities are less likely to think the police acted politely when stopping them.

Explaining stop and search patterns

* **Police racism-** Phillips and Bowling point out that many officers hold negative stereotypes about ethnic minority as criminals, leading to deliberate targeting for stop and search. Such stereotypes are endorsed and upheld by the 'canteen culture' of rank and file officers.
* **Ethnic differences in offending-** An alternative explanation is that stop and searches simply reflect ethnic differences in levels of offending. However, it is useful to distinguish between low discretion and high discretion. In low discretion stops, police act on relevant information about a specific offence e.g. a victim's description of the offender. In high discretion stops, police act without specific intelligence. This is where officers use their stereotypes, that disproportionality and discrimination are most likely.
* **Demographic factors-** Ethnic minorities are over-represented in the population groups who are most likely to be stopped such as the young. These groups are all more likely to be stopped, regardless of their ethnicity, but they are also groups who have a higher proportion of ethnic minorities in them, and so minorities get stopped more.

Arrests and cautions

* Figures for England and Wales in 2006/7 show that the arrest rate for blacks was 3.6 times the rate for whites. By contrast, once arrested, blacks and Asians were less likely than whites to receive a caution.
* One reason for this may be that members of ethnic minorities groups are more likely to deny the offence and to exercise their right to legal advice. However, not admitting the offence means they cannot be let off with a caution and are more likely to be charged instead.

Prosecution

* The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is the body responsible for deciding whether a case brought by the police should be prosecuted in court. Studies suggest that the CPS is more likely to drop cases against ethnic minorities. Bowling and Phillips argues that this may be because the evidence presented to the CPS by the police is often weaker and based on stereotyping of ethnic minorities as criminals.

Trial

* When cases do go ahead, members of minority ethnic groups are more likely to elect for trial before a jury in the Crown Court, rather than in a magistrates' court, perhaps due to mistrust of magistrates' impartiality. However, Crown Courts can impose more severe sentences if convicted.

Convictions

* It is therefore interesting to note that black and Asian defendants are less likely to be found guilty; in 2006/7, 60% of white defendants were found guilty as against only 52% of blacks and 44% of Asians.
* This suggests discrimination, in that the police and CPS may be bringing weaker or less serious cases against ethnic minorities that are thrown out by the courts.

Sentencing

* In 2006/7, custodial sentences were given to a greater proportion of black offenders (68%) than white (55%) or Asian offenders (59%), whereas whites and Asians were more likely than blacks to receive community sentences. This may be due to differences in the seriousness of the offences, or in defendants' previous convictions.
* However, a study of five Crown Courts found that, even when such factors were taken into account, black men were 5% more likely to receive a custodial sentences on average three months longer than white men.

Pre-sentence reports

* One possible reason for harsher sentences is the pre-sentence reports (PSRs) written by probation officers. Hudson and Bramhall argue that PSRs allow for unwitting discrimination. They found that reports on Asian offenders were less comprehensive and suggested that they were less remorseful than white offenders. They place this bias in the context of the 'demonising' of Muslims in the wake of the events of 11 September 2001.

Prison

* In 2007, just over a quarter of male prison population were from minority ethnic groups, including 15% Black and 7% Asian. Among British nationals, 7.4 per 1,000 black people were in jail compared with 1.7 per 1,000 Asians and 1.4 per 1,000 white people.
* As such, blacks were five times more likely to be in prison than whites. Black and Asian offenders are more likely than whites to be serving longer sentences.
* Within the total prison population, all minority groups have a higher than average proportion of prisoners on remand (awaiting trial). This is because ethnic minorities are less likely to be granted bail while awaiting trial.
* Finally, we can note the existence of similar patterns in the US where two out of five prisoners held in local jails are black, while one in five are Hispanic.

**Explaining the differences in offending**

There are two main explanations for ethnic differences in the statistics:

* **Left realism:** the statistics represent real differences in rates of offending.
* **Neo-Marxism:** the statistics are a social construct resulting from racist labelling and discrimination in the criminal justice system.

Left Realism

* Lea and Young argues that ethnic differences in the statistics reflect real differences in the levels of offending by different ethnic groups. Left realists see crime as a product of relative deprivation, subculture and marginalisation.
* They argue that racism has led to the marginalisation and economic exclusion of ethnic minorities, who face higher levels of unemployment, poverty and poor housing. At the same time, the media's emphasis on consumerism promotes a sense of relative deprivation by setting materialistic goals that many members of minority groups are unable to reach by legitimate means.
* One response is the formation of delinquent subcultures, especially by young employed black males. This produces higher levels of *utilitarian*  crime such as theft as a means of coping with relative deprivation. Furthermore, these groups are marginalised which leads their frustration to produce *non-utilitarian* crime such as violence.
* Lea and Young acknowledge that the police often act in racist ways and that this results in the unjustified criminalisation of some members of minority groups. However, they do not believe that discriminatory policing fully explains the differences in the statistics.
* Lea and Young thus conclude that the statistics represent real differences in levels of offending between ethnic groups, and that these are caused by real differences in levels of relative deprivation and marginalisation.
* Similarly, Lea and Young argue that we cannot explain the differences between minorities in terms of police racism.
* However, Lea and Young can be criticised for their views on police racism e.g. arrest rates in Asians may be lower than blacks not because they are less likely to offend, but because police stereotypes the two groups differently, seeing Asians as passive and Blacks as dangerous.
* Furthermore, these stereotypes may have changed since 9/11, because police now regard Asians too as dangerous.

Neo-Marxism

* Gilroy and Hall illustrate the view that differences in offending between ethnic groups are the outcome of a process of social construction and that it stereotypes ethnic minorities as inherently more criminal than the majority population.

Gilroy: the myth of black criminality

* Gilroy argues that the idea of black criminality is a myth created by racist stereotypes of African Caribbeans and Asians. In reality, these groups are no more criminal than any other. However, as a result of the police and criminal justice system acting on these racist stereotypes, ethnic minorities come to be criminalised and therefore to appear in greater numbers in the official statistics.
* In Gilroy's view, ethnic minority crime can be seen as a form of political resistance against a racist society, and this resistance has its roots in earlier struggles against British imperialism.
* Most blacks and Asians in the UK originated from former British Colonies, where their anti-imperialist struggles taught them how to resist oppression. E.g. through rioting. When they found themselves facing racism in Britain, they adopted the same forms of struggle to defend themselves, but their political struggle was criminalised by the British state.

However, Lea and Young criticise Gilroy on several grounds:

* First-generation immigrants in the 1950s and 60s were very law-abiding, so it is unlikely that they passed down a tradition of anti-colonial struggle to their children.
* Most crime is intra-ethnic (both the victim and offender are of the same ethnicity), so it can't be seen as an anti-colonial struggle against racism. Lea and Young argue that, like the critical criminologists, Gilroy romanticises street crime as somehow revolutionary, when it is nothing of the sort.
* Asian crime rates are similar to or lower than whites. If Gilroy were right, then the police are only racist towards blacks and not Asians, which seems unlikely.

Hall et al: policing the crisis

* Hall et al argues that the 1970s saw a moral panic over black 'muggers' that served the interests of capitalism. They argues that the ruling class are normally able to rule the subordinate classes through consent. However, in times of crisis, this becomes more difficult. In the early 1970s, British capitalism faced a crisis. High inflation and rising unemployment were provoking widespread industrial unrest and strikes.
* At such times, when opposition to capitalism begins to grow, the ruling class may need to use force to maintain control. However, the use of force needs to be seen as legitimate or it may provoke even more widespread resistance.
* The 1970ss saw the emergence of a media-driven moral panic about the supposed growth of a 'new' crime- mugging. In fact there was no evidence of a significant increase in this crime at the time.
* Hall et al argues that the emergence of the moral panic as a specifically 'black' crime at the same time as the crisis of capitalism was no coincidence- in their view, the moral panic and the crisis were linked. The myth of the black mugger served as a scapegoat to distract attention from the true cause of problems such as unemployment.
* The black mugger came to symbolise the disintegration of the social order- the feeling that the British way of life was 'coming apart at the seams.' The moral panic served to divide the working class on racial grounds and weaken the opposition to capitalism, as well as winning popular consent for more authoritarian forms of rule that could be used to suppress opposition.
* However, Hall et al do not argue that black crime was solely a product of media and police labelling. The crisis of capitalism was increasingly marginalising black young through unemployment, and this drove some into a lifestyle of hustling and petty crime as a means of survival.

Hall et al have been criticised on several grounds:

* Downes and Rock argue that Hall et al are inconsistent in claiming that black street crime was not rising, but also that it *was* rising because of unemployment.
* They do not show *how* the capitalist crisis led to a moral panic, nor do they provide evidence that the public were in fact panicking or blaming crimes on blacks.
* Left realists argue that inner-city residents' fears about mugging are not panicky, but realistic.

**Ethnicity and victimisation**

* Racist victimisation occurs when an individual is selected as a target because of their race, ethnicity or religion. Racist victimisation is nothing new, but was brought back into greater public focus with the racist murder of the black teenager Stephen Lawrence in 1993 and the subsequent inquiry into the handling of the police investigation.

Extent and risk of victimisation

* The police recorded 61,000 *racist incidents* in England and Wales in 2006/7- mostly damage to property or verbal harassment.
* However, most incidents go unreported. The British Crime Survey estimates there were around 184,000 racially motivated incidents in 2006/7.
* The police also recorded 42,600 *racially or religiously aggravated offences* in 2006/7, mostly harassment. 10,600 people were prosecuted or cautioned for racially aggravated offences in 2006.
* The 2006/7 British Crime survey shows that people from mixed ethnic backgrounds had a higher risk (36%) of becoming a victim of crime than did blacks (27%), Asians (25%) or whites (24%).
* Ethnic groups with a high proportion of young males are thus likely to have higher rates of victimisation. However, some of these factors (such as unemployment) are themselves partly the result of discrimination.
* These statistics do not capture the victims' experience of victimisation. Sampson and Phillips note that racist victimisation tends to be ongoing over time, with repeated 'minor' instances of abuse and harassment interwoven with periodic incidents of physical violence.
* The resulting long-term psychological impact needs to be added to the physical injury and damage to property caused by offenders.

Responses to victimisation

* Responses have ranged from situational crime prevention measures such as fireproof doors, to organised self-defence campaigns aimed at physically defending neighbourhoods from racist attacks
* Such responses need to be understood in the context of accusations of under-protections by the police, who have often ignored the racist dimensions of victimisation and failed to record or investigate reported incidents properly.

**TOPIC 7: CRIME AND THE MEDIA**

**Media representations of crime**

* The media over-represents violent and sexual crime. One review by Marsh of studies of news reporting in America found that a violent crime was 36 more times likely to be reported than a property crime.
* The media portrays criminals and victims as older and more middle class than those typically found in the criminal justice system. Felson calls this the ‘age fallacy’.
* Media coverage exaggerates police success in clearing up cases. This is partly because the police are a major source of crime stories and want to present themselves in a good light.
* The media exaggerates the risk of victimisation, especially to women, white people and higher status individuals.
* Crime is reported as a series of separate events without structure and without examining underlying causes.
* The media overplay extraordinary crimes and underplay ordinary crimes- Felson calls this the ‘dramatic fallacy’. Similarly, media images lead us to believe that to commit crime one needs to be daring and clever- the ‘ingenuity fallacy’.

News values and crime coverage

* The distorted picture of crime painted by the news media reflects the fact that news is a social construction- news does not simply exist ‘out there’ waiting to be gathered in.
* Rather, it is the outcome of a social process in which some potential stories are selected while others are rejected. As Cohen and Young note, news is not discovered but *manufactured*.
* News values are the criteria by which journalists and editors decide whether a story is newsworthy enough to make it into the newspaper or news bulletin. If a crime story can be told in terms of some of these criteria, it has a better chance of making the news. Key news values influencing the selection of crime stories include: Immediacy, dramatisation, higher status individuals, violence and risk.
* One reason why the news media give so much coverage to crime is that news focuses on the unusual and extraordinary and this makes deviance newsworthy by definition, since it is abnormal behaviour.
* This usually leads to a 'crackdown' on the group. However, this may create a self-fulfilling prophecy that amplifies the very problem that caused the panic in the first place.

Mods and rockers

* Cohen examines the media's response to disturbances between two groups of largely working-class teenagers, the mods and the rockers, at English seaside responds from 1964 to 1966. Mods wore smart dress and rode scooters; rockers wore leather jackets and rode motorbikes.
* Although the disorder was relatively minor, the media over-reacted. In his analysis, Cohen uses the analogy of a disaster, where the media produces an inventory or stocktaking of what happened. Cohen says this inventory contained three elements:
* **Exaggeration and distortion-** the media exaggerated the numbers involved and the extent of the violence and damage, and distorted the picture through dramatic reporting.
* **Prediction-** the media regularly assumed and predicted further conflict and violence would result.
* **Symbolisation­-** The symbols of the mods and rockers were all negatively labelled and associated with deviance.
* Cohen argues that the media's portrayal of events produced a deviance amplification spiral by making it seem as if the problem was spreading and getting out of hand. This led to calls for an increased control response from the police and courts. This produced further marginalisation and stigmatisation of the mods and rockers as deviants.
* The media further amplified the deviance by defining the two groups and their subcultural style. This led to more youths adopting these styles and drew in more participants for future clashes. This encouraged polarisation and helped to create a self-fulfilling prophecy of escalating conflict as youths acted out the roles the media had assigned them.
* Cohen notes that in large scale modern societies, most people have no direct experience of the events themselves and thus have to rely on the media for information about them.

The wider context

* Cohen argues that moral panics often occur at times of social change, reflecting the anxieties many people feel when accepted values seem to be undermined. He argues that the moral panic was a result of a *boundary crisis,* where there was uncertainty about the where the boundary law between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in a time of change.
* From a functionalist perspective, moral panics can be seen as ways of responding to the sense of anomie or normlessness created by change. By dramatising the threat to society in the form of a folk devil, the media raises the collective consciousness and reasserts social controls when central values are threatened.
* In addition, commentators have claimed to identify numerous other examples of folk devils and moral panics in recent decades e.g. single parents.

Criticisms of the idea of moral panics

* It assumes that the societal reaction is a disproportionate over-reaction- but who is to decide what a proportionate reaction, and what is a panicky one? This relates to the left realist view that people's fear of crime is in fact rational.
* What turns the 'amplifier' on and off: why are the media able to amplify some problems into a panic, but not others? Why do panics no go on increasing indefinitely once they have started?
* Do today's media audiences, who are accustomed to 'shock, horror' stories, really react with panic to media exaggerations? McRobbie and Thornton argue that moral panics are now routine and have less impact.

Global cyber-crime

* As Jewkes notes, the internet creates opportunities to commit both 'conventional crimes' such as fraud and 'new crimes using new tools', such as software piracy. Wall identifies four categories of cyber crime:
* **Cyber-trespass-** crossing boundaries into others' cyber property. It includes hacking and sabotage, such as spreading viruses.
* **Cyber-deception and theft-** including identity theft, 'phishing' and violation of intellectual property rights.
* **Cyber-pornography-** including porn involving minors and opportunities for children to access porn on the Net.
* **Cyber-violence-** doing psychological harm or inciting physical harm. Cyber-violence includes cyber stalking, hate crimes against minority groups etc.
* Policing cyber-crime is difficult partly because of the sheer scale of the Internet and the limited resources of the police and also because of its globalised nature, which poses problems of jurisdiction.
* However, the new ICT also provides the police and state with greater opportunities for surveillance and control of the population. As Jewkes argues, ICT permits routine surveillance through the use of CCTV cameras, electronic databases, digital fingerprinting and 'smart' identity cards.

**TOPIC 8- GLOBALISATION, GREEN CRIME, HUMAN RIGHTS AND STATE CRIMES**

**Crime and Globalisation**

* Globalisation refers to the increasing interconnectedness of societies, so that what happens in one locality is shaped by distant events and vice versa.

The global criminal economy

* As Held et al suggest, there has also been a *globalisation of crime-* an increasing interconnectedness of crime across national borders. Globalisation creates new opportunities for crime, new means of committing crime and new offences. The same process has also brought about the spread of *transnational organised crime.*
* Castell argues that there is now a global criminal economy worth over £1 trillion per annum. This takes a number of forms:
* **Arms trafficking** to illegal regimes, guerrilla groups and terrorists.
* **Trafficking in nuclear materials**
* **Smuggling of illegal immigrants,** e.g. the Chinese Triad make an estimated $2.5 billion annually. Etc.
* Part of the reason for the scale of transnational organised crime is the demand for its products and services in the rich West. However, the global criminal economy could not function without a supply side that provides the source of the drugs, sex workers and other goods and services demanded in the West
* This supply is linked to the globalisation process. E.g. in Colombia, an estimated 20% of the population depend on cocaine production and cocaine outsells all of Colombia’s other exports combined.

Global risk consciousness

* Globalisation creates new insecurities and produces a new mentality of ‘risk consciousness’ in which risk is seen as global rather than tied to particular places.
* Whether such fears are rational or not are a different matter. Much of our knowledge about risks comes from the media, which often give an exaggerated view of the dangers we face. E.g. In the case of immigration, the media create moral panics about the supposed ‘threat’. Negative coverage of immigrants has led to hate crimes against minorities in the UK.
* One result is the intensification of social control at the national level. The UK has toughened its border control regulations e.g. fining airlines if they bring in undocumented passengers.
* Another result of globalised risk is the increased attempts at international cooperation and control in the various ‘wars’ on terror, drugs and crime- particularly since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001.

Globalisation, capitalism and crime

* Taylor argues that globalisation has led to changes in the pattern and extent of crime. He also argues that globalisation has created greater inequality and rising crime due to market forces.
* Globalisation has created crime at both ends of the social spectrum as it has allowed transnational corporations to switch manufacturing to low wage countries thus creating job insecurity.
* Deregulation means that governments have little control over their own economies e.g. creating jobs. Marketisation has encouraged people to see themselves as individual consumers, calculating the personal costs and benefits of each action, undermining social cohesion.
* All these factors create insecurity and widening inequalities that encourage people, especially the poor, to turn to crime. The lack of legitimate job opportunities destroys self-respect and drives the unemployed to look for illegitimate ones.
* At the same time, globalisation also creates criminal opportunities on a grand scale for elite groups. E.g. the deregulation of financial markets has created opportunities for insider trading and the movement of funds around the globe to avoid taxation.
* Globalisation has also led to new patterns of employment, which have created new opportunities for crime. It has led to the increased use of subcontracting to recruit ‘flexible’ workers, often working illegally. Taylor’s theory is useful in linking global trends in the capitalist economy to changes in the pattern of crime. However it does not adequately explain how the changes make people behave in criminal ways.

Patterns of criminal organisation

* Hobbs and Dunningham found that the way crime is organised is linked to the economic changes brought by globalisation. Increasingly, it involves individuals with contacts acting as a ‘hub’ around which a loose-knit network forms, composed of other individuals seeking opportunities, and often linking legitimate and illegitimate activities.

‘Glocal’ organisation

* These new forms of organisations sometimes have international links, especially with the drugs trade, but crime is still rooted in its local context.
* Hobbs and Dunningham therefore conclude that crime works as a ‘glocal’ system- it is still locally based, but with global connections. This means that the form it takes will vary from place to place, according to local conditions, even if it is influenced by global actors such as the availability of drugs from abroad.
* Hobbs and Dunningham argue that changes associated with globalisation have led to changes in patterns of crime e.g. the shift from the old rigidly hierarchical gang structure to loose networks of flexible, opportunistic, entrepreneurial criminals. However, it is not clear that such patterns are new, or that the older structures have disappeared.

McMafia

* This refers to the organisations that emerged in Russia and Eastern Europe following the fall of communism- itself a major actor in the process of globalisation. Glenny traces the origins of transnational organised crime to the break-up of the Soviet Union after 1989, which coincided with the deregulation of global markets.
* The collapse of the communist state heralded a period of increasing disorder. To protect their wealth, capitalists therefore turned to the ‘mafias’ that had begun to spring up. These were often alliances between former KGB men and ex-convicts.
* However, these mafias were unlike the Old Italian and American mafias. The new Russian mafias were purely economic organisations formed to pursue self-interest.
* With the assistance of these organisations, billionaires were able to find protection for their wealth and a means of moving it out of the country.

**Green Crime**

* Green or environmental crime can be defined as crime against the environment. The planet is a single eco-system, and threats to the eco-system are increasingly global rather than merely local in nature.

‘Global risk society’ and the environment

* Most of the threats to human well-being and the eco-system are now human-made rather than natural.
* Beck argues that in today’s late modern society, we can now provide adequate resources for all. However, the massive increase in productivity and the technology that sustains it have created new, ‘manufactured risks’- dangers that we have never faced before. Many of these risks involve harm to the environment and its consequences for humanity, such as global warming.

Green criminology

But what if the pollution that causes global warming or acid rain is perfectly legal and no crime has been committed- is this a matter for criminologists? We can identify two opposed answers to this question:

* **Traditional criminology** has not been concerned with such behaviour, since its subject matter is defined by the criminal law, and no law has been broken. The advantage of this approach is that it has a clearly defined subject matter. However, it is criticised for accepting official definitions of environmental problems and crimes, which are often shaped by powerful groups such as big business to serve their own interests.
* **Green criminology** takes a more radical approach. It stars from the notion of *harm* rather than criminal law. Green criminology is a form of *transgressive* *criminology*- it oversteps the boundaries of traditional criminology to include new issues. Furthermore, different countries have different laws, so that the same harmful action may be a crime in one country but not in another. Thus legal definitions cannot provide a consistent standard of harm, since they are the product of individual nation-states and their political processes. Green criminologists argue that powerful interests are able to define in their own interests what counts as unacceptable environmental harm.

Two views of harm

* In general, nation-states and transnational corporations adopt what White calls an *anthropocentric* or human centred view of environmental harm. This view assumes that humans have a right to dominate nature for their own ends, and puts economic growth before the environment.
* White contrasts this with an *ecocentric* view that sees humans and their environment as interdependent, so that environmental harm hurts humans also. This view sees both humans and the environment as liable to exploitation, particularly by global capitalism.

Types of green crimes

* Nigel South classifies green crimes into two types: primary and secondary.

Primary crimes

* Primary green crimes are ‘crimes that result directly from the destruction and degradation of the earth’s resources’. South identifies four main types of primary crime:
* **Crimes of air pollution-** Burning fossil fuels from industry and transport adds 3 billion tons of carbon to the atmosphere ever year.
* **Crimes of deforestation-** Between 1960 and 1990, one fifth of the world's tropical rainforest was destroyed, for example through illegal logging.
* **Crimes of species decline and animal rights-** 50 species a day are becoming extinct.
* **Crimes of water pollution-** Half a billion people lack access to clean drinking water and 25 million die annually from drinking contaminated water.

Secondary crimes

* Secondary green crime is crime that grows out of the flouting of rules aimed at preventing or regulating environmental disasters.
* **State violence against oppositional groups-** States condemn terrorism, but they have been prepared to resort to similar illegal methods themselves. As Day says, 'in every case where a government has committed itself to nuclear weapons or nuclear power, all those who oppose this policy are treated in some degree as enemies of the state'.
* **Hazardous waste and organised crime-** Disposal of toxic waste from the chemical, nuclear and other industries are highly profitable. Because of the high costs of safe and legal disposal, businesses may seek to dispose of such waste illegally. Illegal waste disposal illustrates the problems of law enforcement in a globalised world. The very existence of laws to regulate waste disposal in developed countries pushes up the costs to business and creates an incentive to dump illegally in Third World countries.

Evaluation of green criminology

* It recognises the growing importance of environmental issues and the need to address the harms and risks of environmental damage, both to humans and non human animals.
* However, by focusing on the much broader concept of harms rather than simply on legally defined crimes, it is hard to define the boundaries of its field of study clearly. Defining these boundaries involves making moral or political statements about which actions ought to be regarded as wrong. Critics argue that this is a matter of values and cannot be established objectively.

**State crimes**

* Green and Ward define state crime as 'illegal or deviant activities perpetrated by, or with complicity of, state agencies.' It includes all forms of crime committed by or on behalf of states and governments in order to further their policies.
* McLaughlin identifies four categories of state crime; **Political crimes** e.g. corruption, **Crimes by security and police forces** e.g. torture, **Economic crimes** e.g. violation of health and safety laws and **Social and cultural crimes** such as institutional racism.
* State crime is one of the most serious forms of crime for two reasons:

1. The scale of state crime

* The power of the state enables it to commit extremely large scale crimes with widespread victimisation. The state's monopoly of violence gives it the potential to inflict massive harm, while its power means it is well placed to conceal its crimes or evade punishment for them.
* However, the principle of national sovereignty- that states are the supreme authority within their own borders- makes it difficult for external authorities (e.g. EU) to intervene. This is despite the existence of international conventions and laws against acts such as genocide.

2. The state is the source of law

* It is the state's role to define what is criminal, and to manage the criminal justice system and prosecute offenders. State crime undermines the system of justice. Its power to make the law also means that it can avoid defining its own harmful actions as criminals.

Human rights and state crime

* One approach to the study of state crime is through the notion of human rights. Most definitions of human rights include the following:
* **Natural rights** that people are regarded as having simply by virtue of existing, such as rights to life.
* **Civil rights,** such as the right to vote, to privacy, to a fair trial, or to education.

Crime as the violation of human rights

* Critical criminologists argue that we should define crime in terms of the violation of basic human rights, rather than the breaking of legal rules. This means that states that deny individuals' human rights must be regarded as criminals.
* From a human rights perspective, the state can be seen as a perpetrator of crime and not simply as the authority that defines and punishes crime.
* If we accept a legal definition (that crimes are simply whatever the state says they are), we risk becoming subservient to the state that makes the law.
* However, Cohen criticises this view. For example, while 'gross' violations of human rights e.g. torture are clearly crimes, other acts, such as economic exploitation, are not self-evidently criminal, even if we find them morally unacceptable. Other critics are that there is only limited agreement on what counts as a human right e.g. while there would be little disagreement that life and liberty are human rights, some would argue that freedom from poverty is not.

State crime and the culture of denial

* Cohen sees the issue of human rights and state crime as increasingly central both to political debate and criminology, as a result of two factors; the growing impact of the international human rights movement and the increased focus within criminology upon victims.

The spiral of denial

* Cohen argues that while dictatorships generally simply deny committing human rights abuses, democratic states have to legitimate their actions in more complex ways. In doing so, their justifications follow a three-stage 'spiral of state denial':
* **Stage 1-** 'It didn't happen' e.g. the state claims there was no massacre but then human rights organisations, victims and the media show it did happen.
* **Stage 2-** 'If it did happen, "it" is something else'. The state says it is not what it looks like- it's 'collateral damage' or 'self-defence'.
* **Stage 3-** 'Even if it is what you say it is, it's justified'- e.g. 'to protect national security' or 'fight the war on terror'.

Neutralisation theory

* Cohen examines the ways in which states and their officials deny or justify their crimes. He draws on the work of Sykes and Matza, who identify five *neutralisation techniques* that delinquents use to justify their deviant behaviour.
* **Denial of victim-** They exaggerate; they are terrorists; they are used to violence; look what they do to each other.
* **Denial of injury-** They started it; we are the real victims, not them.
* **Denial of responsibility-** I was only obeying orders, doing my duty.
* **Condemning the condemners-** The whole world is picking on us; it's worse elsewhere; they are condemning us only because of their anti-Semitism.
* **Appeal to higher loyalty-** Self-righteous justifications- the appeal to the higher cause, whether the nation, the revolution, Zionism, Islam, the defence of the 'free world', state security etc.
* These techniques do not seek to deny that the even has occurred. Rather, as Cohen says, 'they seek to negotiate or impose a different construction of the even from what might appear to be the case.'

The social conditions of state crime

* It is often thought that those who carry out crimes such as torture must be psychopaths. However, research suggests that there is little psychological differences between them and 'normal' people.
* Instead sociologists argue that such actions are part of a role into which individuals are socialised. They focus on the social conditions in which such behaviour becomes acceptable or even required.
* Kelman and Hamilton identify three features that produce crimes of obedience:
* **Authorisation-** When acts are ordered or approved by those in authority, normal moral principles are replaced by the duty to obey.
* **Routinisation-** Once the crime has been committed, there is strong pressure to turn the act into routine which individuals can perform in a detached manner.
* **Dehumanisation-** When the enemy is portrayed as sub-human rather than human described as animals, monsters etc, the usual principles of morality do not apply.

**TOPIC 9- CONTROL, PUNISHMENT AND VICTIMS**

**Crime prevention and control**

Situational crime prevention

* Clarke describes situational crime prevention as a ‘pre-emptive approach that relies, not on improving society or its institutions, but simply on reducing opportunities for crime’ He identifies three features of measures aimed at situational crime prevention:
* They are directed at specific crimes.
* They involve managing or altering the immediate environment of the crime.
* They aim at increasing the effort and risks of committing crime and reducing the rewards.
* For example, target hardening measures such as locking doors increase the effort of a burglar needs to make.
* Underlying situational crime prevention approaches is an ‘opportunity’ or rational choice theory of crime. This is the view that criminals act rationally, weighing up the costs and benefits of a crime opportunity before deciding whether to commit it.
* This contrasts with theories of crime that stress ‘root causes’ such as the criminal’s early socialisation. Clarke argues that most theories offer no realistic solutions to crime. The most obvious thing to do is to focus on the immediate crime situation, since this is where scope for prevention is greatest. Most crime is opportunistic, so we need to reduce the opportunities.

Displacement

* One criticism of situational crime prevention measures is that they do not reduce crime; they displace it. After all, if criminals are acting rationally, presumable they will respond to target hardening simply by moving to where targets are softer.
* Displacement can take several forms:
* **Spatial-** moving elsewhere to commit the crime.
* **Temporal-** committing it at a different time.
* **Target-** choosing a different victim.
* **Tactical-** using a different method.
* **Functional-** committing a different type of crime.

Evaluation

* Situational crime prevention works to some extent in reducing certain kinds of crime. However, with most measures there is likely to be some displacement.
* It ignores white-collar, corporate and state crime, which are more costly and harmful.
* It assumes criminals make rational calculations. This seems unlikely in many crimes of violence and crimes committed under the influence of drugs.
* It ignores the root causes of crime such as poverty. This makes it difficult to develop long-term strategies for crime reduction.

Environmental crime prevention

* Wilson and Kelling use the phrase ‘broken windows’ to stand for all the various signs of disorder and lack of concern for others that are found in some neighbourhoods e.g. graffiti. They argue that leave broken windows unrepaired, tolerating graffiti etc., sends out a signal that no one cares.
* In such neighbourhoods, there is an absence of both formal social control (the police) and informal control (the community). The police are only concerned with serious crime and turn a blind eye to petty nuisance behaviour, while respected members feel intimidated and powerless. Without action, the situation deteriorates, tipping the neighbourhood into a spiral of decline. Respectable members move out and the area becomes magnet for deviants.

Zero Tolerance policing

* Wilson and Kelling’s solution to crack down on any disorder is by a twofold strategy. First, an *environmental improvement strategy*: any broken window must be repaired immediately, abandoning cars towed without delay etc.
* Secondly, the police must adopt a *zero tolerance policing strategy.* Instead of merely reacting to crime, they must proactively tackle even the slightest sign of disorder, even if it’s not criminal. This will halt neighbourhood decline and prevent serious crime taking root.

The evidence

* A ‘Clean Car Program’ in New York has been a success for zero tolerance policing. Cars were taken out of service immediately if they had any graffiti on them, only returning once clean. As a result, graffiti was largely removed from the subway. Other success programs include drug dealing and fare dodging.
* However, it is not clear how far zero tolerance was the cause of the improvements.
* The NYPD benefited from 7,000 extra officers.
* There was a general decline in the crime rate in major US cities at the time- including ones where police did *not* adopt a zero tolerance policy.
* There was a decline in the availability of crack cocaine.
* Nonetheless, zero tolerance has been very influential globally.

Social and community crime prevention

* Social and community prevention strategies place the emphasis firmly on the potential offender and their social context. The aim of these strategies is to remove the conditions that predispose individuals to crime in the first place. These are longer-term strategies, since they attempt to tackle the root causes of offending.
* The causes of crime are often rooted in social conditions such as poverty, more general social reform programmes addressing these issues may have a crime prevention role, even if this is not their main focus.

What is missing?

* These approaches focus on fairly low-level and/or interpersonal crimes of violence. This disregards the crimes of the powerful and environmental crimes.
* Whyte points out that there is no logical reason why such activities should not be included in the crime and disorder partnership agendas- yet despite their potential and actual effect on the health of local communities, they are not.

**Punishment**

* One measure that many believe in crime prevention is of course punishment. Two main justifications have been offered for punishment; reduction and retribution.

Reduction

One justification for punish offenders is that it prevents future crime. This can be done through:

* **Deterrence-** Punishing the individual discourages them from future offending. ‘Making an example’ of them may also serve as a deterrent to the public at large.
* **Rehabilitation** is the idea that punishment can be used to reform or change offenders so they no longer offend. Rehabilitation policies include providing education so they are able to ‘earn an honest living’ on release.
* **Incapacitation** is the use of punishment to remove the offender’s capacity to offend again. Policies have included imprisonment, execution etc. Incapacitation has proved increasingly popular with politicians, with the American ‘three strikes and you’re out’ policy and the view that ‘prison works’ because it removes offenders from society.
* This justification is an *instrumental one*- punishment is a means to an end, namely crime reduction.

Retribution

* Retributions means ‘paying back’. It is a justification for punishing crimes that have already been committed, rather than preventing future crimes. It is based on the idea that offenders deserve to be punished.
* Furthermore, society is entitled to take its revenge on the offender for having breached its moral code. This is an *expressive* rather than instrumental view of punishment- it expresses society’s outrage.

Durkheim: a functionalist perspective

* Durkheim argues that the function of punishment is to uphold social solidarity and reinforce shared values. Punishment expresses society’s emotions of moral outrage at the offence. Through rituals of order, society’s shared values are reaffirmed and its members come to feel a sense of moral unity.

Two types of justice

Durkheim identifies two types of justice, corresponding to two types of society.

* **Retributive justice-** In traditional society, there is little specialisation, and solidarity between individuals is based on their similarity to one another. This produces a strong collective conscience. Punishment is severe and cruel, and its motivation is purely expressive.
* **Restitutive justice-** Durkheim calls this Restitutive justice, because it aims to make restitution- to restore things to how they were before the offence. Its motivation is instrumental, to restore society’s equilibrium. Punishment is still an expressive element, because it still expresses collective emotions.
* In reality, traditional societies often have Restitutive rather than retributive justice.

Marxism: capitalism and punishment

* For Marxists, the *function of punishment* is to maintain the existing social order. As part of the RSA, it is a means of defending ruling-class property against the lower classes/
* The form of punishment reflects the economic base of society. As Rusche and Kirchheimer argue, each type of economy has its own corresponding penal system. They argue that under capitalism, imprisonment becomes the dominant form of punishment because of capitalist economy is based on the exploitation of wage labour.

Foucault: birth of the prison

* Foucault opens with a striking contrast between two different forms of punishment, which he sees as examples of *sovereign power* and *disciplinary power.*
* **Sovereign power** was typical of a period before the 19th century when the monarch had power over people and their bodies. Inflicting punishment on the body was the means of asserting control. Punishment was a *spectacle* e.g. public execution.
* **Disciplinary power**becomes dominant from the 19th century. In this form of control, a new system of discipline seeks to govern not just the body, but the mind or ‘soul’. It does so through *surveillance.*
* Foucault argues that the prison is one of the range of institutions that began to subject individuals to disciplinary power to induce conformity through self-surveillance.
* In Foucault's view, disciplinary power has now infiltrated ever part of society, bringing its effects to the human 'soul'. Thus he argues that the change in the form of punishment from sovereign to disciplinary power also tells us about how power operates in society as a whole.
* Foucault has been criticised on several grounds:
* The shift from corporal punishment to imprisonment is less clear than he suggests.
* Unlike Durkheim, he neglects the expressive aspects of punishment.
* He exaggerates the extent of control e.g. Goffman shows how inmates are able to resist controls in institutions.

The changing role of prisons

* Until the 18th century, prison was used mainly for holding offenders *prior* to their punishment. It was only following the Enlightenment that imprisonment began to be seen as a form of punishment itself, where offenders would be 'reformed' through hard labour, religious instruction and surveillance.

Imprisonment today

* Imprisonment is regarded as the most severe form of punishment. However, it is not proved an effective method of rehabilitation- about two thirds of prisoners commit further crimes on release. Many critics regard prisons as simply an expensive way of making bad people worse.
* 'Populist punitiveness' is where politicians seek to gain electoral popularity by promising tougher sentences for offenders. As a result, the prison population has grown by 70% to a total of 77,000 from 1993 to 2005.
* One consequence is overcrowding which adds to the existing problems of poor sanitation, lack of edible food and clothing shortages. (Carrabine et al 2008)
* This country imprisons a higher proportion of people than almost any other in Western Europe. E.g. in England and Wales, 139 out of 100,000 are in prison. Corresponding figures for other countries are France 99, Germany 91 and Sweden 64.
* The prison population is largely male (only about 5% are female), young and poorly educated. Black and ethnic minorities are over-represented.

The era of mass incarceration?

* David Garland argues that the USA and the UK are moving towards an era of mass incarceration. The number of prisons has risen massively since the 1970s with there being 1.5 million state and federal prisoners in the USA.
* Garland argues that once figures reach these proportions, '*it ceases to be the incarceration of individual offenders and becomes the systematic imprisonment of whole groups of the population'.*
* This may have an ideological function. As Downes argues, the US prison system soaks up about 30-40% of the unemployed, thereby making capitalism look more successful.
* Garland argues that the reason for mass incarceration is the growing politicisation of crime control. For most of the last century, there was a consensus, which Garland calls 'penal welfarism'- the idea that punishment should reintegrate offenders into society.
* However, since the 1970s, there has been a move towards a new consensus based on more punitive and exclusionary 'tough on crime' policies, and this has led to rising numbers in prison.
* Another reason is the use of prison to wage America's 'war on drugs'. This is because drug use is so widespread, it has produced 'an almost limitless supply of arrestable and imprisonable offenders'.

Transcarceration

* There has been a trend towards transcarceration- the idea that individuals become locked into a cycle of control, shifting between different carceral agencies during their lives. E.g. someone might have been brought up in care, sent to a young offenders' institution, then adult prison etc.
* Some sociologists see transcarceration as a product of the blurring of boundaries between criminal justice and welfare agencies. E.g. Health services are increasingly being give a crime control role, and they often engage in multi-agency working with the police, sharing data on the same individuals.

Alternatives to prison

* In the past, a major goal in dealing with young offenders was 'diversion'- diverting them away from contact with the criminal justice system to avoid the risk of a Self-Fulfilling Prophecy.
* In recent years, there has been a growth in the range of community-based, such as curfews, community service orders etc. However, at the same time, the numbers in custody have been rising steadily, especially amongst the young.
* This has led Cohen to argue that the growth of community controls has simply cast the *net of control* over more people. Cohen argues that the increased range of sanctions available simply enable control to penetrate even deeper into society.

**The victims of crime**

* The United Nations defines victims as those who have suffered harm (including mental, physical or emotional suffering, economic loss and impairment of their basic rights) through acts or omissions that violate the laws of the state.
* Christie, takes a different approach, highlighting the notion that 'victim' is socially constructed. The stereotype of the 'ideal victim' favoured by the media, is a weak, innocent and blameless individual- such as a baby or old woman- who is the target of a stranger's attack.
* We can identify two broad perspectives on the study of victims: positivist victimology and critical victimology.

Positivist victimology

* It aims to identify the factors that produce *patterns in victimisation-* especially those that make some individuals or groups more likely to be victims.
* It focuses on *interpersonal crimes of violence.*
* It aims to identify victims who have *contributed to their own victimisation.*
* The early positivist studies focused on the idea of *victim proneness-* to identify the social and psychological characteristics of victims that make them different from non-victims.
* Wolfgang's study of 588 homicides in Philadelphia found that 26% of homicides involved *victim precipitation-*the victim triggered the events leading to the homicide.

Evaluation

* It ignores situations where victims are unaware of their victimisation, as with some cases against the environment, and where harm is done but no law is broken.
* This approach identifies certain patterns of interpersonal victimisation, but ignores wider structural factors such as poverty and patriarchy.
* Wolfgang shows the importance of the victim-offender relationship and the fact that in many homicides, it is a matter of chance which party becomes the victim.

Critical victimology

* Critical victimology focuses on two elements:
* **Structural factors** such as patriarchy and poverty, which places powerless groups such as women and the poor at greater risk of victimisation. As Mawby argues, victimisation is a form of *structural powerlessness.'*
* **The state's power to apply or deny the label of victim-** 'Victim' is a social construct in the same way as 'crime'. Through the criminal justice process, the state applies the label of victim to some but withholds it from others.
* Tomb and Whyte show that 'safety crimes', where employers' violations of the law lead to death or injury to workers, are often explained away as the fault of 'accident prone' workers.
* Tomb and Whyte note the ideological function of this 'failure to label.' By concealing the true extent of victimisation and its real causes, it hides the crimes of the powerful and denies the powerless victims any redress.

Evaluation

* Critical victimology disregards the role victims may play in bringing victimisation on themselves through their own choices or their own offending.
* It is valuable in drawing attention to the way that 'victim' status is constructed by power and how this benefits the powerful at the expense of the powerless.

Patterns of victimisation

* **Class-** The poorest groups are more likely to be victimised e.g. crime rates are highest in areas of high unemployment and deprivation.
* **Age-** Younger people are at more risk of victimisation. Those most at risk of being murdered are infants under the age of one.
* **Ethnicity-** Minority ethnic groups are at greater risk than whites of being victims of crime in general, as well as of racially motivated crime.
* **Gender-** Males are at greater risk than females of becoming victims of violent attacks. About 70% of homicide victims are male.
* **Repeat victimisation-** refers to the fact that, if you have been a victim once, you are very likely to be one again. 4% of the population are victims of 44% of all crime.

The impact of victimisation

* Crime may have serious physical and emotional impacts on victims e.g. helplessness etc. Crime may also create indirect victims e.g. family, friends etc. Similarly, hate crimes against minorities can create 'waves of harm' that radiate out to affect others.
* **Secondary victimisation** is the idea that in addition to the impact of the crime itself, individuals may suffer further victimisation at the hands of the criminal justice system.
* **Fear of victimisation**- Crime may create fear of becoming a victim. Some sociologists argue that surveys show this fear to be often rational. Feminists have attacked the emphasis on 'fear of crime'. They argue that it focuses on women's passivity and their psychological state, when we should be focusing on their safety.

**TOPIC 10- SUICIDE**

**Durkheim, positivism and suicide**

* Durkheim believed that he could show that suicide had social causes and that this would prove that sociology was distinct and genuinely scientific discipline. While Durkheim accepts that some individuals may be psychologically more predisposed to suicide than others- e.g. as a result of depression- he rejects the view that psychological factors can explain the differences in suicide rates of whole groups or societies.

Suicide rates as social facts

* In Durkheim's view, our behaviour is caused by *social facts-* social forces found in the structure of society. Social facts have three features; 1. They are external to individuals; 2. They constrain individuals, shaping their behaviour and 3. They are greater than individuals- they exist on a different 'level' from the individual.
* For Durkheim, the suicide rate is a social fact.
* Using quantitative data, Durkheim analysed the suicide rates for various European countries over a period of several decades in the 19th Century. He noted four regular patterns:

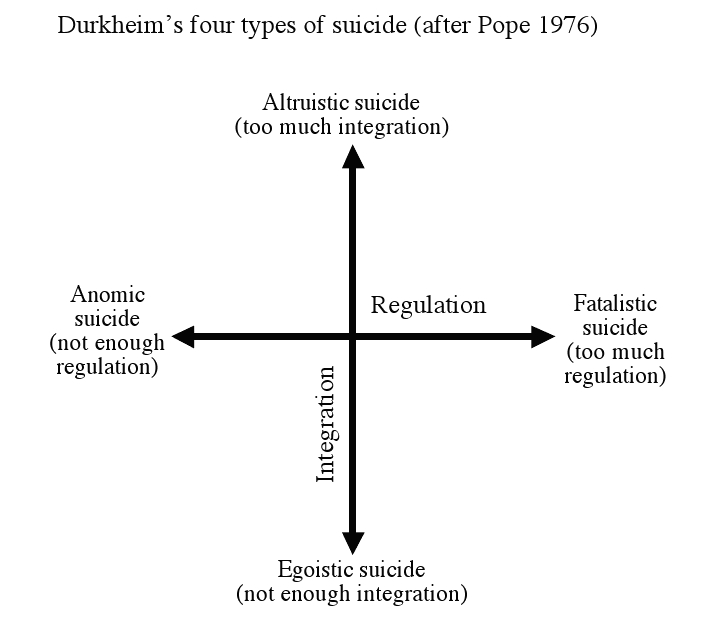
1. Suicide rates for any given society remained more or less constant over time.
2. When the rates did change, this coincided with other changes e.g. the rates rose at times of economic depression.
3. Different societies had different rates.
4. Within a society, the rates varied considerably between different social groups e.g. Catholics had lower rates than Protestants.

* For Durkheim, these patterns were evidence that suicide rates could not simply be the result of the motives of individuals. Durkheim explains the suicide rate as the effect of social facts or forces acting upon individuals. In different groups and societies, these forces act with different degrees of intensity, resulting in different suicide rates.

Durkheim's four types of suicide

Durkheim identifies two social facts that determine the rate of suicide:

* **Social integration**refers to the extent to which individuals experience a sense of belonging to a group and obligations to its members.
* **Moral regulation** refers to the extent to which individuals' actions and desires are kept in check by norms and values.
* Durkheim argues that suicide results from either too much or too little integration or regulation. This gives a fourfold typology (classification system) of suicide:



1. **Egoistic suicide** is caused by too little social integration. Durkheim argues that this is the most common type of suicide in modern society.
2. **Altruistic suicide** is the opposite of egoistic suicide and is caused by too much social integration. Altruism is the opposite of selfishness and involves putting others before oneself.
3. **Anomic suicide** is caused by too little moral regulation. Anomic suicide occurs where society's norms become unclear or made obsolete by rapid social change.
4. **Fatalistic suicide** is caused by too much moral regulation. Fatalistic suicide occurs where society regulates or controls the individual completely- where individuals find their 'futures pitilessly blocked and passions violently checked by 'oppressive discipline', crushing all hope.

Suicide and type of society

* **Modern industrial societies** have lower levels of integration. Individuals' rights and freedoms become more important than obligations towards the group. This weakens social bonds and gives rise to *egoistic suicides*.
* **Traditional pre-industrial societies** have higher levels of integration. This group is more important than the individual and this gives rise to *altruistic suicide.*

Later positivist approaches

* Gibbs and Martin argue that Durkheim does not operationalise his concept of integration (define it in such a way that it can be measured). They go on to define integration as a situation where there are stable and lasting relationships. They argue that these end to occur when an individual has *status integration*- compatible statuses that do no conflict with one another.
* Other aspects of Durkheim's study have also been criticised. E.g. it is argued that the statistics he used were unreliable and incomplete- in the 19th century, medical knowledge of the causes of death were limited and autopsies rarely performed. Also, many countries lacked the administrative system needed to collect and compile reliable statistics on a national basis.

**Interpretivism and suicide**

* Interpretivists focus on the meanings of suicide for those involved.

Douglas: the social meanings of suicide

* Douglas is interested in the meaning that suicide has for the deceased, and in the way that coroners label deaths as suicides. He criticises Durkheim's study of suicide on two main grounds.

1. The use of suicide statistics

* The decision to classify a death as suicide is taken by a coroner and influence by other social actors, and this may produce bias in the verdicts reached. Douglas argues that this may explain the patterns that Durkheim found. E.g. The finding that a high level of integration leads to lower suicide rates can be explained by the fact that well integrated individuals may have friends or relatives who might deny that the death was a suicide out of their own feelings of guilt.
* For Douglas, suicide verdicts and the statistics based on them are the product of interactions and negotiations between those involved- relatives, friends, doctors etc, and factors such as integration influence these negotiations.

2. Actors' meanings and qualitative data

* Douglas criticises Durkheim for ignoring the meanings of the act for those who kill themselves and for assuming that suicide has a fixed or constant meaning. In particular, Douglas notes that the meanings of suicide can vary between cultures.
* Douglas also rejects Durkheim's aim to categorise suicides in terms of their social causes. Instead we must classify each death according to its actual meaning for the deceased. To do this, we must use qualitative methods e.g. case studies. From this we can build a new typology of suicidal meanings.
* Although Douglas did not carry out any case studies himself, he suggests that in Western societies the social meanings of suicide include escape, repentance, revenge etc. However, he points out that suicide may have different meanings in different cultures e.g. religious ones such as transformation of the soul (getting to heaven).
* The analysis of suicide notes and so on would allow us to 'get behind' the labels that coroners attach to cases and discover the real meanings of the death for the person involved. From this we could get a better idea of the real rate of suicide.

Criticisms of Douglas

* Douglas produces a classification of suicide based on the supposed meanings for the actors. However there is no reason to believe that sociologists are any better than coroners at interpreting a dead person's meanings.
* Douglas is inconsistent, sometimes suggesting that official statistics are merely the product of coroners' opinions. At other times, he claims we really can discover the causes of suicide- yet how can we, if we can never know whether a death was a suicide and all we have is coroners' opinions?

Atkinson: ethnomethodology and suicide

* Ethnomethodology argues that social reality is simply a construct of its members. We create reality using a stock of taken-for-granted, commonsense knowledge. The sociologist's job is to uncover what this knowledge is and how we use it to make sense of the world.
* For Atkinson, we can never know the real rate of suicide, since we would have to know for sure what meanings the dead gave to their deaths, which is impossible. Therefore it is pointless trying to discover the 'real rate'.
* The statistics are neither right nor wrong-they too are merely interpretations made by certain officials, and so all we can study is how they were constructed. As Atkinson puts it, the only task for sociologists is to discover, 'How do deaths get categorised as suicide?'
* Atkinson therefore focuses on how coroners categorise deaths. To do so, he uses a range of qualitative methods, including conversations with coroners. From this research he concludes that coroners have a commonsense theory about the typical suicide. This includes what kind of person commits suicide, for what reasons, what is a typical mode or place of death and so on.
* Atkinson argues that coroners' commonsense theories lead them to see the following types of evidence as relevant:
* **A suicide note** or suicide threats prior to death.
* **Mode of death-** e.g. hanging is seen as 'typically suicidal'.
* **Location and circumstances-** Death by shooting is more likely to be recorded as suicide if it occurs in a deserted lay-by than when out with a hunting party.
* **Life history-** A disturbed childhood or mental illness or a difficult personal situation (e.g. divorce) are seen as likely causes of suicide.
* Atkinson concludes that coroners are engaged in analysing cases using taken-for-granted assumptions about what constitutes a 'typical suicide'. A verdict of suicide is simply an interpretation of a death based on these taken-for-granted assumptions.
* If correct, this poses serious problems for theories such as Durkheim's that treat statistics as facts- because all they are doing is spelling out the coroners' theories about suicide.

Evaluation of Atkinson

* Structuralists such as Hindess criticise ethnomethodologists' approach as self-defeating. Atkinson's view that the only thing we can study about suicide is coroners' interpretations can be turned back on him. If all we can have is interpretations of the social world, rather than objective truth about it then ethnomethodologists' own accounts are themselves no more than interpretations.
* However, most ethnomethodologists accept that their accounts are merely interpretations. Unlike positivists, who claim to produce objective, scientific accounts, they do not claim that their interpretations are superior to those of the people they study.

Taylor: realism and suicide

* Taylor argues that suicide statistics cannot be taken as valid. Taylor found that coroners saw factors such as a history of mental illness as indicators of suicidal intent and this increased the likelihood of a suicide verdict.
* Taylor also believes that we can explain suicide. He believes we can discover real patterns and causes, although unlike positivists, he does not base his explanation on suicide rates. Instead he adopts a *realist* approach. This aims to reveal underlying structures and causes.

Defining suicide

* Many theories of suicide focus on acts where the individual was intent on dying and that resulted in death. However, Taylor notes that in many cases, those who attempt suicide are not certain that their actions will kill them. Nor are all who attempt suicide simply aiming to die- some are communicating with others. Therefore, we should look at both successful and unsuccessful attempts and adopt a broader definition of suicide as:
* '*Any deliberate act of self-defence or potential self-damage where the individual cannot be sure of survival'.*

Types of suicide

The first two types are inner- or self-directed suicides, where the individual is psychologically detached from others. Because of this, the suicide attempt is a private, self-contained act. There are two types of ectopic(self-directed) suicide:

1. **Submissive suicides,** where the person is *certain**about themselves* e.g. they may know they have no future or no reason to go on(e.g. terminal illness).
2. **Thanatation suicides,** where they are *uncertain about themselves*e.g. they may be uncertain about what others thing of them.Their suicide attempt involves risk taking.

The other two types are *other-directed* suicides, where the individual has an overwhelming attachment to some other person(s). These suicides are not self-contained, but a way of communicating with others. There are two types:

1. **Sacrifice suicides,** where they are *certain about others* and know they have to kill themselves. Like submissive suicides, their attempt is deadly serious. Usually, either they or the other person has done something that makes it impossible for the individual to go on living e.g. betrayal through affair.
2. **Appeal suicides,** where the person is *uncertain about others*. They have doubts about their importance to the other an attempt suicide to resolve the uncertainty. The attempt is a form of communication that seeks to change the other's behaviour.

Evaluation

* Taylor's theory is based on his interpretations of the actors' meaning and there is no way of knowing if these are correct, especially in the case of those whose attempts succeeded. Also, individual cases may involve a combination of motives and be difficult to categorise.
* Taylor's small sample of case studies, while useful in giving insight into motives, is unlikely to be representative of suicides in general.
* Unlike Durkheim, Taylor has not connected the four types to wider society. However, there are similarities between the two:

1. Taylor's ideas of certainty and uncertainty parallel Durkheim's notions of fatalism and anomie respectively.
2. Taylor's self-directed and other-directed suicides parallel Durkheim's egoistic and altruistic suicides respectively.

* Nevertheless, his theory is original and useful in explaining some of the observed patterns of suicide. It also deals with both failed and unsuccessful suicide attempts.