

“A” Level Sociology

A Resource-Based Learning Approach

Deviance and Social Control

Unit: New Left Realism

Introduction

In the early **1980's**, two "new" approaches to the study of crime and deviance began to emerge in **Britain** and **America**, both of which focused upon the "**realities**" of crime (specifically) - but from **different ends of the political spectrum**.

In **Britain**, the "**New Left Realism**" started to develop through the work of writers such as **Lea and Young** ("What Is To Be Done About Law And Order?", 1984), while the "**New Right Realism**" (confusing isn't it?) developed around the work of **Wilson** ("Thinking About Crime", 1977) in **America** and writers such as **Clarke and Mayhew** ("Designing out Crime", 1980) in **Britain**.

While, as you might expect, the two basic approaches address the "**problem**" of crime from quite different political starting points, they have a couple of ideas in common:

1. Both view crime as a form of "**social problem**" - not only for **control agencies** but also for the **victims** / potential victims of crime.
2. Both produce ideas that attempt to **locate crime** within a **wider political** (albeit different) **context** - the "**New Realism**".

In this set of Notes, therefore, what I propose to do is:

- a. **Outline the basic elements of each perspective.**
- b. **Evaluate their overall strengths, weaknesses and general contributions** to our understanding of the phenomenon of crime / deviance.

This set of Notes focuses on New Left Realism and a subsequent set focuses on New Right Realism.

New Left Realism

For the past 30 years, **Jock Young** has been recognized as one of the major **British** writers in the field of crime and deviance. His intellectual career encompasses **Interactionism** (see "The Role of the Police as... Amplifiers of Deviance"), **Radical Criminology** (see "The New Criminology", 1973 - with Paul Walton and Ian Taylor) and now **New Left Realism** (see "What Is To Be Done About Law And Order?" - with John Lea) and, for this reason alone, perhaps, his work represents an interesting area of study. For the sake of **theoretical continuity** and **clarity**, therefore, this brief look at New Left Realism will focus on the work produced by Young in this area...

A **New Left Realist approach** to the study of crime begins by doing two things:

Firstly, it **rejects** "partial" theories of crime because they are guilty of either:

- a. An **over-concentration** on the operation of **control agencies** (for example, **Functionalism** and **Subcultural theory**) or
- b. An **over-concentration** on the **experiences** of **criminals** and the attempt to "understand" their point of view as either:

"Victims" of a **labelling process** (**Interactionism**) or

"Political catalysts" against **bourgeois hegemony** (**Radical Criminology / Marxist Subcultural theory**).

Secondly, it **synthesizes** various elements from **past theoretical perspectives** into a "new realistic" approach to crime and deviance that seeks to understand:

- a. The **effect** that crime has on its **victims** (mainly, but not exclusively, the working class).
- b. The **social origins of crime**, mainly in terms of the cultural background and development of criminals.

As you may recall from a previous set of Notes (**Radical Criminology**), I outlined 7 ideas proposed by **Taylor, Walton and Young** that represented the **core** of any "theoretically-adequate conceptualisation of deviance". I further suggested that radical criminologists had singularly failed to operationalise these ideas

Before we look in more detail at **the New Left Realist** position of Lea and Young, it is perhaps worth noting that it is as initially **critical** of "**Radical Criminology**" as it is of "**Orthodox (or conservative) Criminology**". This is perhaps interesting mainly because Young, as we have seen, was one of the prime movers behind the development of Radical Criminology in Britain.

It is also significant that New Left Realism does not claim - as Radical Criminologists tended to claim - to be a form of "Marxist criminology". It is perhaps interesting to note that in the follow-up to "The New Criminology", the book edited by Taylor, Walton and Young ("Critical Criminology", 1975) contained a fierce critique of Radical Criminology - and its pretensions to be a "Marxist" form of theorizing - by **Paul Q. Hirst**. A reply to the criticism by Hirst was included from Taylor and Walton - but not Young - which may (or indeed may not) be indicative of the change of theoretical direction eventually taken by Jock Young.

Whatever the actuality, it might be useful to look briefly at the **New Left Realist critique** of both **Orthodox** ("conservative") and **Radical Criminology**:

1. Orthodox (conservative) criminology:

For this type of criminology:

- Crime occurs because of a lack of adequate socialization into various non-criminal / deviant values - expressed best in the various ideas relating to the inadequate socialization of various classes / individuals. A conservative variant tends to see "criminals" as being "born bad".
- The criminal individual is seen to be a flawed personality - either biologically or socially.
- Crime represents an anti-social expression of discontent from people who lack "civilized values".
- The role of the State is basically a neutral one, insofar as it is held to protect the interests of the "law-abiding" against those of the "criminal".
- The role of the police is basically that of "problem solving" - the continual confrontation of lawlessness, the development of pragmatic solutions to crime and so forth.

2. Radical Criminology ("Left Idealism"):

For this type of criminology:

- Crime occurs because, fundamentally, economic deprivation (real or imagined) drives people into crime. people who turn to crime do so as a solution to their "absolutely deprived" position within capitalist society.
- The criminal - not the person who conforms - is seen to have a superior level of consciousness / understanding. In this respect, the criminal responds to the "degradations of capitalism" by "fighting back". Non-criminals are seen as being ideologically conditioned to accept a situation in which they are, ultimately, the losers.
- Crime represents a form of "proto-revolutionary" activity - it is a reaction to a system characterized by systematic under-privilege, degradation and so forth.

"It involves, if it is a theft, a redistribution of income, or if it is part of youth culture, symbolic and stylistic awareness of, say, the loss of traditional working-class community or the repressive nature of the system. In either case, it involves alternative values".

- The State is seen to be an instrument of a ruling class (hence the theoretical tradition underpinning Radical Criminology being that of Instrumental Marxism). The role of the State is one in which it actively promotes the interests of the rich and powerful at the expense of the poor and powerless.

- The police / judiciary are agents of a ruling class, insofar as they carry-out policies that are in the latter's general interest.
- The "problem of crime" is seen to be largely illusory, insofar as it is a problem for a ruling class - and their interests - rather than a problem for society as a whole. In this respect, "fear of crime" and "moral panics" represent periodic attempts to control people's behaviour through ideological means.

For **Lea and Young** in particular, there are a number of points - from a New Left Realist perspective - that can be made relating to crime and criminal behaviour, some of which are a clear **response** to the ideas at which we have just briefly looked.

Firstly, they argue that, logically, it is the **well-socialized individual** who should be most-likely to turn towards crime as a "solution" to their personal / social problems, primarily because Capitalism produces:

- a. **Egalitarian ideals** (for example, "political equality") and
- b. **Material shortages / deprivations.**

Thus, people who are socialized to expect / want material success but who are denied, for whatever reason, this success are more-likely to turn towards crime as a "solution" to this "problem".

Question:

This idea appears to be very similar to Merton's notion of a "disjunction of ends and means" in society. What similarities between the two can you identify?

Secondly, crime is seen to be a **group / cultural response** to something, rather than a simple matter of individual choice.

Crime will occur, for example, when:

- a. A social group comes to understand that it is being given a "raw deal" in society.
- b. It is easy - through experience - to see the discrepancy between the ideological impetus to consume commodities and the material denial of these socially-valued things.
- c. There exists no political channel through which these feelings of discontent can be expressed (in effect, there is no possibility of changing something by political means).

Thus, for crime to occur, there must be:

- a. **Economic / political discontent.**
- b. The **absence of economic / political opportunities** for the remedy / expression of this discontent.

Question:

With reference to the work you've just done above, how does Lea and Young's argument differ from that of Merton's?

Thirdly, Lea and Young's perspective on crime represents a theoretical return to a more-orthodox, classical, Marxist approach whereby crime is **not** seen as some form of "revolutionary" endeavour (a challenge to the ruling class' legal right to appropriate surplus value privately). Rather, crime is seen much as Marx himself saw crime - as a reactionary form of behaviour which represented a diversion from the development of real political solutions to the experience of degradation, exploitation and so forth suffered by the working class.

[**Paul Hirst's** chapter in "Critical Criminology" ("Marx and Engels on Law, Crime and Morality") is a theoretically-difficult exposition of this basic idea - have a look at it only if you want to explore this idea in more detail and feel you understand the background to Marx's ideas on Law and Crime...]

As **evidence** to support the above position, Lea and Young argue that:

1. The vast majority of criminals appear to hold conventional social values. Like everyone else in Capitalist society, their socialization stresses such things as:

- Individualism,
- Competition.
- The desire for material success / status.
- Sexism, racism, machismo and other ideological forms.

Question:

Which sociologist have you encountered who also stressed the idea of conventional values in their theoretical explanation of juvenile deviance?

Albert Cohen	David Matza
Robert Merton	Stan. Cohen
Karl Marx	Talcott Parsons

2. Criminal behaviour has no individual political dimension because:

- a. Most working-class crime involves the working-class as victims.
- b. Black criminality is mainly directed towards other blacks.

While **crime** in general has some form of **political dimension** (mainly because people do not tolerate it and attempt to find ways of eliminating it), it is important to note that, unlike Radical Criminology, New Left Realism sees criminal behaviour as being the expression of Capitalist principles in an illegitimate form.

The individual criminal / deviant simply appropriates surplus value for themselves, much as the Capitalist does. However, this doesn't mean that we should see the criminal and the Capitalist as one and the same. The difference between them is that the latter is involved in the general economic productive process (they enable goods to be produced in society by combining with Labour), whilst the former has no productive part to play at all - they simply take the product of other's labour whilst giving nothing in return.

3. In relation to Radical Criminology, **Lea and Young** argue that it is the **lack** of any **organized**, political, ideology that targets Capitalism as the root of people's oppression that makes what they term "Left Idealism" inadequate as a theoretical explanation of crime / deviance. As they note:

"The radicals are correct when they see crime as a reaction to an unjust society. but they make a crucial mistake: they assume that the reaction to a just cause is necessarily a just one. On the contrary: it is often exactly the opposite. the reaction to poverty among poor whites, for example, may be to parade around waving Union Jacks: it may be the tawdry nationalism of the National front. The reaction to relative deprivation may, as Paul Willis ["Learning To Labour] has so ably shown, be sexism, racism and anti-intellectualism. Crime is one form of egoistic response to deprivation. its roots are in justice but its growth often perpetuates injustice."

The Use of Official Statistics.

While we have dealt, at various points in the course, with the **sociological / methodological problems** involved in using **Official Statistics** as indicators of crime and criminality (see the **Notes** on **Official Statistics** for further details), the **New Left Realist position** in relation to these **secondary sources** of data is somewhat different. The argument here is that such **statistics may** be a very **useful** source of data if they are **interpreted** and **applied critically** (usually - but not necessarily - in conjunction with **self-report / victimisation studies**).

While we have looked in some detail at ideas concerning the relative levels of **reliability** and **validity** of Official Statistics (and concluded that their validity may be questionable because of the types of definitions used, the way in which laws may be selectively applied and the "problem" of hidden deviance - in its various forms), the **New Left Realist position** is that, for all their **undoubted faults**, such statistics can tell us something about the nature of crime and criminality in the society in which they are produced. In this respect, **victimisation studies** (such as the **British Crime Survey**, for example) can be seen to **compliment** Official Statistics, rather than invalidate them, on the basis that such studies are held to actually confirm the basic trends that are discernible from crime statistics.

Thus, for example, both victimisation and official statistical studies **confirm** basic **trends** such as the greater involvement of the young in criminal activity. In addition, most criminal activity involves working class males rather than, for example, middle class females.

Lea and Young argue that, in relation to conventional, conservative, theories of crime, the evidence from both Official Statistics and victimisation studies simply serves to **confirm** their basic implication that the lower classes are the social group that is most heavily involved in criminal activity.

In relation to **Radical Criminology**, however, this evidence causes a fundamental problem, since they want to argue that:

- a. Crime is a response to some form of economic deprivation.
- b. The criminalisation of the lower classes results from the "over-policing" of the activities of the powerless by the powerful. That, in effect, the working class are no-more criminal than the middle / upper classes - it is simply the imbalance in power relations which creates this impression.

Thus, if crime really does have its **root causes** in **economic deprivation**, it is logical to assume that the working class - as the most economically-deprived class in society - really must have a greater level of involvement in crime...

As **Lea and Young** argue:

"Our response to this contradiction is simply to ask why either-or is a realistic analysis. there is no doubt that different social categories of people behave differently both in their degree of orderliness and criminality and this relates to their position in the world; but there is also no doubt that the police react differently to different categories of people. If both these points are true, then the official statistics are a product of differences in the "real" rates of crime between groups and differences in the police predisposition to arrest them. Thus, the crime rate of old ladies is no doubt actually very low, but it probably appears even lower in the official statistics because of the police disinclination to suspect or arrest elderly persons. And as far as lower-working-class youths are concerned, the exact opposite is true".

The basic argument in relation to the above is that if Official Statistics had greater validity (if, for example, they picked-up every instance of a crime that was committed in our society) all that would occur is that the **true level** of middle / upper class crime would be revealed - but so too would far higher levels of working-class crime be revealed...

Thus, what would happen, according to the projections made by **Lea and Young**, is that we would have more valid evidence concerning such things as:

- The level of criminal activity in our society.
- The nature of criminal involvement across different classes.

What would **not happen**, however, is that crime would somehow disappear from people's perception of it as a "social problem" - something that affects them as they live-out their lives. In this respect, it would be little comfort to people to know that the middle / upper classes were heavily involved in crime "just like the working classes".

What **Lea and Young** argue here, therefore, is that Official Statistics create problems for sociologists in relation to the way they construct **theories** of crime and criminality. However, what we should be wary of doing is saying that, because Official Statistics are not a particularly valid basis for the construction of theories, criminal activity is, in itself, of little consequence.

In relation to this "New Realist" position, therefore, the argument is that:

- Statistical data is valid up to a certain point - it gives us a broad indication of levels of criminal activity.
- It clearly underestimates middle and upper class crime - but the same is also true of working class crime.
- Crimes which are picked-up by such statistics are still crimes - they represent real concerns to real people.

From this position, **crime** can be seen to be a "**problem**" to the **victims of criminal behaviour** on a number of different levels:

1. Victims are mainly working-class, but crime affects individuals from all social classes (especially if we include the idea of a "fear of crime" - something that affects and restricts the way people feel able to behave).

Question:

An example of the above might be the crime of rape. Although women, statistically, have little chance of being raped in our society, the "fear of rape" affects female behaviour in a range of ways. Can you identify ways in which female behaviour might be restricted by this "fear of criminal assault"?

For example: restricts the places women feel they can go?

2. It creates a "problem of order" for a ruling class, since this class in particular needs an orderly society for the continuation of the production process. Additionally, however, people of all social classes want to feel safe as they go about their daily lives...

3. As I've suggested above, crime strikes at the heart of legal relationships. Without the maintenance of these legal relationships, crime becomes a problem.

In the above, the "realist" approach is evident on two levels of analysis:

Firstly, it is **literally** a realistic view of crime and the way in which it affects people's behaviour in general.

Secondly, methodologically this approach looks "**beneath the surface**" of what is apparent about crime and asks the question:

"What is really happening in this situation?"

In this, the social world is seen to consist of two basic levels:

a. **The level of everyday experience** - a form of "empirical reality" whereby our behaviour is affected in certain ways by the experience of crime.

b. **The underlying level** - a form of "theoretical reality" whereby we can look at the way in which empirical reality is constructed. In effect, it is at this level of analysis that we are able to construct explanations of "everyday events".

Two **examples** might be useful here:

1. When we turn-on a light switch and a lamp comes-on, we experience an "empirical reality"; in effect, we know that there is a relationship between a "switch" and "light", but we're not too bothered about the specific way that the two are related - all that matters to us, in our everyday life is that they are...

The "theoretical reality" that is present in this situation relates to both the mechanics of the situation (switches have to be connected, through wires, to light bulbs) and the physics involved (applying heat to a wire in a vacuum and so forth).

Thus, physical or empirical reality only exists because there is an underlying reality (the one that is specified theoretically or "realistically"). We call this a "realist" methodology because:

- a. For all intents and purposes, pressing a switch causes a light to appear.
 - b. However, this "causal" (or positivistic) relationship is itself dependent upon a number of other causal relationships (the relationship between electrons, wires, vacuums and so forth). Thus, the real cause of light appearing is not the "pressing of a light switch - it simply appears to us that this is the cause...
2. If we **apply** this idea **sociologically**, the role of the State is illustrative here:
- a. In Capitalist society, the role of the State is ultimately one of trying to maintain the status quo. This ultimately favours the activities of a ruling class, since it is this class that dominates economically and has the most to gain from the continuation of "things as they are". However, since a situation of disorder, war, chaos, etc. is not very pleasant, all social classes have some level of interest in "maintaining social order" (it's just that a ruling class basically benefits twice over).
 - b. In this respect, the State has the appearance of neutrality in the class struggle, since the basic need to maintain order in society has what Marxists (amongst others) call a "dialectical" quality. Whilst I don't want to delve into this theoretically-murky area too deeply, what it basically means is that in order to maintain the real interests of a ruling class, the State must also maintain the interests of other classes ("people in general"). In effect, it cannot do one without the other, since both are part of the same situation.

If people are to feel safe, maintain orderly relationships and so forth, then this is clearly in "everybody's" interest - the spin-off from this, however, is that those who basically benefit in other ways from this "maintenance of order" will, in reality, benefit the most overall (they feel safe etc., plus they can accumulate wealth).
 - c. In realist terms, the role of the State appear to be a neutral one ("empirical reality"), whilst it is, in fact, a highly partial role. Thus,

The State attempts to maintain a particular kind of social order - one that allows a Capitalist class to accumulate wealth privately.

As a condition of this occurring, the State has to try to maintain orderly forms of social relationships in society (people, for example, cannot be allowed to rob, cheat and kill each other).
- In this respect, it becomes a matter of theoretical priority:

In **positivistic** terms (or from a Functionalist perspective if you prefer) , the role of the State is largely neutral (it doesn't favour the interests of any one class over another), since it's primary role is seen to be the maintenance of social order.

In **realist** terms (or from a Marxist Conflict perspective), the role of the State is highly partial (it favours a ruling class the most), since its primary role is seen to be the promotion of a particular economic form of production (Capitalism) that needs social order if it is to continue over time.

Having looked at various aspects of "New Left Realism" as it relates to criticisms of other, competing, theories, it would now be useful to look at the way in which **New Left Realists** have argued we can construct a social **theory of crime and deviance**.

In their attempt to construct such a "theory of crime and deviance", New Left Realist's such as **Lea and Young** argue that we need, as sociologists, to adopt a "**multi-causal**" approach. By this they mean two things:

Firstly, no single factor can adequately account for the range and variety of criminal / deviant behaviour in society (e.g. Status frustration, economic deprivation and so forth).

Secondly, each factor in the equation:

- **Subculture**,
- **Relative deprivation** and
- **Marginalisation**

is only significant when as it can be **linked to the other factors**.

Thus, if only one factor is present in people's lives, it will have little significance. What is important, therefore, is the way in which the three factors appear at the same time.

For **example**, "**relative deprivation**" is **not**, by itself, a **sufficient explanation** of why people turn to crime, mainly because:

- a. Not everyone who can be shown to be "relatively deprived" turns to crime.
- b. Relative deprivation may be a significant factor in explaining various forms of economic crime (theft, burglary etc.), but wholly inadequate in explaining why people murder each other, commit acts of sexual crime and so forth.

Finally, before we discuss the above in more detail we have to be clear that New Left Realism does **not** advocate a crass, causal, approach to the explanation of criminal behaviour.

For example, the notion that "Unemployment (relative deprivation) causes crime" can be easily refuted (disproved) simply by showing that not all unemployed people resort to crime. However, it can be shown that there is a positive correlation between the two ideas. thus, unemployment can be linked to crime on the basis that our society propagates an ideology of consumerist values (in simple terms, that your value as a person is linked to your ability to buy things - status symbols, for example).

In this respect, feelings of relative deprivation may make the "crime option" more likely - but we still, as sociologists, have to explain why some unemployed people actually choose the option of crime whilst others (apparently) do not. This is where other factors (such as the sub-cultural group to which one belongs) come into play, since this combination of social factors can help to explain how and why people make rational choices about whether or not to commit criminal acts based upon the social factors that surround them.

In this sense, the **complexity of human behaviour** is **stressed** (people do **not automatically react** to something like unemployment by choosing crime as a solution to their material problems), insofar as New Left Realism tries to show how the **structural conditions** that act upon the individual **limit, constrain** and **condition** their perception about what represents a "**rational choice**" in any given situation.

Having got that out of the way, let's now look in a bit more detail at each of the factors identified above by Lea and Young. Although I've discussed each individually (for the purpose of theoretical elaboration), keep what I've just noted in mind - we can only understand criminal behaviour in terms of a combination of each of the following factors...

1. Subculture:

a. This use of the term "sub-culture" reflects a fairly mainstream sociological usage, whereby sub-cultures are seen as a form of collective response to the particular social situation within which a social group develops. In this respect, whilst there is a tendency for such sub-cultures to be "oppositional" in relation to their basic aims, it is perfectly possible to see them in "independent" sub-cultural terms (since, as I've previously suggested, criminals appear to basically want what everyone else in society has been encouraged to want - wealth, status, power and so forth).

b. The structural position of social groups within Capitalist society is important - hence working-class youths (especially males), for example, are more-likely to develop distinctive sub-cultural styles than middle-class youths (the obvious "exception that proves the rule" being hippies - a largely middle-class youth sub-culture. However, hippies too could be seen as a sub-cultural response to a particular structural situation - namely, the Vietnam War - that directly affected the lives of this particular group of people - they did not want to fight in this war).

c. A balance has to be struck between:

- Understanding the subjective interpretations of the participants within a sub-cultural grouping (for example, what they believe their behaviour represents) and,
- Understanding the objective social conditions that give rise to behaviour that is criminal / deviant.

As in the above example, hippy sub-cultures could be seen to develop out of a fear of having to go to war. For middle-class youth - where their future social / economic options were far more attractive than those of working-class black / white youths - this prospect was not particularly appealing.

Subjectively, however, the participants in this sub-culture tend to couch their behaviour in terms of various ideological pronouncements concerning "peace", "love" and the like.

d. Sub-cultural values, in this respect, are not independent of the culture in which they arise (although these values may, of course, be expressed in ways that are not approved-of). Thus, for Lea and Young, it is precisely because working-class youths, for example, accept the general values of Capitalist society that they indulge in criminal behaviour - the pursuit of desired ends by illegitimate means...

In general, the **strength** of the above subcultural conception is that it is **not** restricted to "working-class youth". On the contrary, it is applicable across a whole range of groupings. Thus,

1. Subcultures support individual members in their behaviour by the strength of the moral ties which bind them together.

The directors of a company, for example, who deal illegally in shares, fix prices and so forth may do so in a social context whereby their behaviour is supported by a culture that sees such behaviour as permissible (as long as you don't become too greedy, obvious, etc. This is similar to Ditton's findings ("Part-time Crime") in relation to the (criminal) activities of bread salesmen and their employers.

2. It explains why the old / females and so forth as less involved in crime. They are more socially isolated (for various reasons) and thereby do not experience support for their behaviour amongst their peers, significant others and so forth.

"Individualistic crimes" (such as wife-beating, sexual crimes and so forth) can also be explained in terms of an overall social / cultural context that, whilst officially condemning such behaviour may either "turn a blind eye" to it or not police it very effectively.

2. Relative Deprivation:

This involves **subjective feelings** of "being deprived" and the concept has been used by sociologists such as **Merton** or **Townsend** ("Poverty in the United Kingdom" in various ways. What it involves, in effect, is the recognition that concepts such as poverty or wealth are subjective social categories that are relative to an individual's perception of what other people possess, what this individual might reasonably expect to possess in terms of the overall standard of living in society, their immediate social grouping and so forth.

Thus, the millionaire in a society of billionaires is, to all intents and purposes, "relatively deprived".

3. Marginalisation:

For **Lea and Young**, the preponderance of male, working-class, youths in crime involvement is related to their marginal status in society (insofar as they are both young and relatively poor). The expression of discontent at this marginal status - where it is progressively denied to this group either:

- Politically or
- Economically

is likely to result in criminal activity - the social expression of social marginalisation.

A somewhat **ironic** point to note, in this respect, is that the restrictions placed on Trade Union activity by successive Conservative governments in Britain during the 1980's may have contributed to criminal behaviour by denying people a legitimate form of social expression for their economic / political grievances...

Finally, in relation to the three factors noted above, it is worth noting once again that, for **Lea and Young**, when some - or all - aspects of the three factors **combine**, **increased criminal activity is likely to result...**

Question:

**Can The Model Be Operationalised?
A Checklist Example.**

Put a tick in the appropriate column / row if you think that each group has the characteristic outlined by Lea and Young.
Add your own groups to test...

	Subculture	Relative Deprivation	Political Marginalisation
Working-class males			
Working-class females			
Middle-class males			
Middle-class females			
Upper-class males			
Upper-class females			
The Young			
The middle-aged			
The elderly			
Homosexual Men			
Drug Abusers			

Evaluation

1. Much "New Left Realism" appears to be a relatively sophisticated rehash of various sociological explanations of deviance (Merton, Matza, Cohen and the like) with a "Marxist" gloss...
2. Simply because police practices, the collection of Official statistics and so forth under-estimate the extent of middle and upper class crime, why should we assume that levels of working-class crime are under-estimated (and by how much?).

The problem here is that whilst we might reasonably suspect various levels of under-estimation, it is simply not possible to quantify (even in very broad terms) the possible extent of this under-estimation. In simple terms, if "levels of crime" are realistically unquantifiable, then any attempt to quantify them will be based upon assumption - and this is hardly reliable or valid...

3. The idea that the police, for example, concentrate upon working-class forms of crime because "that is what people want" tends to oversimplify the picture in terms of both power and ideology. Thus, in relation to the criticism identified by **Moore** ("Investigating Deviance") that,

"Orthodox Marxists criticise the stress placed by New Left Realism on working-class crime and its causes. They suggest instead that much more attention needs to be paid to white-collar crime and to the process of law creation"

and **Moore's** observation that,

"Lea and Young have replied that they agree corporate crime is "worse", but that in everyday life it is street crime that worries people",

it seems odd that the ideological dimension should be so easily dismissed. Why, for example, does "street crime" worry people more than corporate crime? There is a distinct lack of analysis evident in relation to this type of question.

One argument might be that "street crime" is considered to be a problem because people have direct experience of it (in a way that they do not in relation to fraud, for example). However, we then have to ask how "real" is this "experience" - how many people have actually experienced this form of crime, as opposed to having read about in the newspaper or heard about through television and radio?

In addition, it is fairly well-known that "the fear of crime" tends to be out of proportion to the danger people are actually in (concerning whether or not they are likely to fall victim to crime). If people fear becoming a victim because of the way, for example, the mass media reports and portrays crime, then could this form of ideological explanation not be relevant in relation to Lea and Young's argument?

4. Lea and Young's theory is too ambitious - it tries to encompass all kinds of criminal behaviour. Do different forms of crime have different causes?
5. In relation to the above, Lea and Young's multi-causal approach does seem to apply well to some forms of crime and to some criminals (economic crime, working-class males), but rather less well to other forms of crime and criminals (individualistic crimes such as sexual assaults, middle / upper class males).
6. Finally, self-report studies tend to suggest that female involvement in crime (especially young females) is far higher than is suggested in Official Statistics - yet

according to Lea and Young's form of analysis Official Statistics tend to portray a relatively accurate picture of the extent of female crime (which is "confirmed" by their multi-causal theoretical approach).