Key Ideas — Nature and Definition

- Deviance (norm or rule-breaking behaviour)
- Crime (specific form of deviance. Breaking of legal (state) norms / rules)
- Not all deviance is criminal. Some crimes (e.g. illegal parking) not seen as particularly deviant.
- Formal rules: laws, written rules /regulations (e.g. School rules)
- Informal rules: unstated / unwritten rules / norms (e.g. Picking your nose)
- Social Construction: Is deviance an absolute or relative concept?
- Historical differences (e.g. abortion, homosexuality, drug use)
- Cross-Cultural differences (e.g. alcohol use, dress codes)
- ✓ Suggests deviance is a relative concept.
- Societal and Situational deviance (Plummer): Behaviour considered deviant (illegal?) by society may be acceptable to subcultural groups (e.g. Bank robbery / homosexuality) and vice versa (abortion is legal in UK but unacceptable to some religious subcultures).
- Hagan: Conflict and Consensus crimes: Seriousness related to:
- ✓ Level of social agreement (High = serious / Low = non-serious)
- ✓ Level of social reaction (strong = serious / weak = non-serious)
- ✓ Assessment of personal / social harm / injury (High = serious)

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Key Ideas — Measurement, Extent and Distribution

Measurement (note concepts of reliability and validity)
- Official Crime Statistics (broadly reliable)
- Underestimation of crime (especially middle class / female)
- Overestimation of crime (especially working class / male)
- Reported to and recorded by police
- Self Report Surveys (validity? Jock Young) - e.g., British Crime Surveys
- Underestimation of some crime (domestic / sexual crime)
- Victim Surveys (valid): British Crime Surveys / Islington Crime Survey.
- Crime **recording** depends on: status of complainant, differential law enforcement polices, police and public perceptions, moral panics.
- Crime **reporting** depends on: Nature of offence, embarrassment, fear of reprisal, no faith in police, unaware of victimisation.
- Dark figure of crime: Some crime always reported (e.g. car theft) / Many crimes not reported (e.g. Theft, burglary, fraud)
- Interactionism - Official crime statistics reflect police / public perceptions
- Radical Criminology ("idealist"): Statistics represent official concerns.
- New Left Realism ("realist") - Statistics broadly reflect crime distribution.

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Key Ideas — Nature and Definition

Interactionism / Labelling theory: "Deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label" (Becker): i.e. what is deviant to you is normal to me.
- Primary deviance: Norm-breaking not publicly-labelled as deviant
- Secondary deviance: What happens after someone reacts to primary deviance (the consequences of the social reaction to deviant behaviour)
- Social reaction: Crucial variable for Interactionists (and Radical Criminologists). If no-one reacts deviance behaviour, the social consequences are minimal…
- Stigma: Possible consequence of being labelled deviant
- Non-culpable deviance: Behaviour for which individual is not held responsible (e.g. madness, disability, some forms of children's behaviour)
- Culpable deviance: Deviance for which individual is seen responsible.
- Different basic forms of deviance (Good / Admired; Bad; Odd)
- Folk devils (S.Cohen) - how and why some are scapegoated / stigmatised (symbolic embodiment of social fears). E.g. Youth subcultures
- Moral Panics (see: Deviancy Amplification): Role of media (and moral entrepreneurs) in creation of social concern about deviance.

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Key Ideas — Measurement, Extent and Distribution

Patterns of crime (based on Official Crime Statistics):
- Social Class - most crime committed by working class
- Gender - males generally more criminal than females
- Age - young (under 21) commit more crimes than adults (over 21)
- Ethnicity - young, working class, blacks commit more crimes
- Region - less crime in rural areas than in urban areas (inner cities, council housing estates especially). Different types of crime by region.
- Overall: Most criminal in our society are young, working class, males.

Explanations: Consider the following concepts:
- Socialisation / Social Control - Self controls; Informal controls (Tonnies: Gemeinschaft / Gesellshaft)
- Visibility of crimes (opportunistic, witnesses, identifiable victims)
- Policing strategies (some groups, regions, crimes, policed heavily)
- Lifestyles (e.g. Youth = socially active (clubs, pubs, etc.). Relationship between age / crime more to do with youth lifestyles than "age".
- Opportunity structures (e.g. men and women, young and old, etc. have different chances for committing crimes. Where opportunities similar (e.g. shoplifting, similar levels of crime for above groups). Middle class males commit different types of crime (fraud etc) than working class females.

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