

CRIME AND
DEVIANCE.

Crime and Deviance.

Our society has many sets of assumptions and expectations upon which we carry out our everyday behaviour. But what if we do not behave the way others expect? What happens if a guest does not bring a gift to a wedding ceremony? What happens if this guest brings a syringe and some white powder to the same party? Certain kinds of unpredictability are not welcome, and are even punished in our society. Who has the power to define other people's behaviours as unwelcome or punishable? That question can also be extended to what, how, where, and when is behaviour regarded Deviant?

Crime and deviance is an interesting and popular subject in the A level studies. Students answer an essay question, not a stimulus response question, on paper two. Students are allowed 45 minutes to answer this question. The following questions are of central importance when looking at the issue of crime and deviance.

- How can crime be functional to the well being of society?
 - Who makes the laws in Britain?
 - Whose interests do they reflect?
 - Is the law fair?
 - Who breaks the law and why?
 - What is the relationship between the media and crime?
 - Which political party is the best party at maintaining law and order?
 - Why do people commit suicide?
 - What is, "deviant."
1. Working in small groups attempt to arrive at some, "common sense" answers to the above.
 2. Place your answers on the white board.
 3. Where did you get the above, information" from?

WHAT THE SYLLABUS SAYS.

According to the A.E.B. syllabus, candidates should:

- be familiar with sociological explanations of crime, deviance, social order and social control;
- understand the social construction of conformity and non conformity, deviance and crime;
- explore the relationship between deviance, power and social control;
- consider explanations of the social distribution of crime and deviance by age, class, ethnicity, gender and region;
- consider societal reactions to crime and deviance, including the role of the media;
- consider the role of law enforcement agencies in relation to deviance, including the police, courts and the penal (prison) system;
- consider sociological explanations of youth subcultures and styles;
- consider the sociological issues raised by the study of suicide.

With this in mind ...

Objective Number One: Trends In Crime.

“Official statistics indicate that crime in Britain is continuing but the rate of increase is slowing down when compared to previous years.

Figures on how much crime is committed are published each year by the Home Office (a governmental department.).

The November 1993 figures show a 3.8% increase in the volume of crime. there was a total 5.7 million offences recorded between June 1992 and June 1993.

The most common crime is burglary, this accounts for over 50% of all crimes that were reported to the police.”

“Sociology Update.” 1994. Martyn Denscombe. Pages 24-26.

Sociology Review April 1996, an article by Robert Reiner makes the following points about the rising nature of crime ...

The 1944 and 1945 crime stats record substantial falls of nearly 6% per year, the government hailed this as a triumph of its law and order policies.

There has been a huge increase in recorded crime since the mid 1950s. The rise began around 1955.

The regular British Crime Surveys which the Home Office conducted during the 1980s show that the level of crime suffered by victims is much greater than that shown in official recorded stats.

Is the apparent increase in crime due to the fact that more crimes are being reported / recorded or are more crimes being committed?

During the 1970s there was a huge rise in the proportion of burglary victims who reported the offences. This was the product of the spread of household insurance and the increase in telephone ownership.

During the 1980s there was an enormous increase in crimes against the property of individuals. This doubled in a decade. Traditionally, people are most likely to record this type of crime. However, recently there has been a marked trend away from reporting such crimes due to the perception that the price of insurance cover will increase or, in extreme cases insurance cover may be denied.

With regards to the victims of crime there are two groups who are most prone to be the victims of crime. Violent crime victims, for example, fall into two categories, (a) young men who have been the victims of fights, (recent 1988 government campaign about the harm of drink and violence) and (b) women who have been assaulted in their homes.

Domestic violence.

“Most victims of violence, especially if they are women, suffer at the hands of those they know, often their nearest and supposedly dearest.”

With reference to who commits crime the answer is less clear... we know who goes to prison namely; “young, male, poorly educated, and, disproportionately the black, lumpenproletariat.” But this ignores two facts, (1) only 2% of the crimes reported to the British Crime Survey result in a conviction, (2) how much white collar crime is committed?

Reiner offers the following as possible explanations as to the causes of crime ...

Permissiveness, rising criminal opportunities, more motivated offenders, more vulnerable victims, increasing affluence in society, more cars, TVs, videos, etc, a profound change in

culture, “which can be best characterised by a gradual cultural erosion of deference and automatic acceptance of authority,” the adoption of free market economies, increased poverty, increased long term unemployment- especially amongst the young. The increase in the proportion of rape / assaults that are reported to the police may be due to the fact that there is “improved treatment by the police of victims of rape and domestic assault.”

- Working in small groups, research why burglary is the most frequent crime.

“ Burglaries are now so common that, statistically, someone’s home is broken into every 24 seconds of the year, and insurance companies are paying out £2 million a day.”

The British Crime Survey, which is also published by the Home Office covers crimes which are not reported to the police and those which are reported but are not recorded. It involves a survey of people to gather information on what proportion of people have been the victim of a crime in the last year. The British Crime Survey published in November 1993 estimates that there were 15 million criminal incidents in 1991, three times as great as the figure from police records.”

“Sociology Update.” 1994. Martyn Denscombe. Pages 24-26.

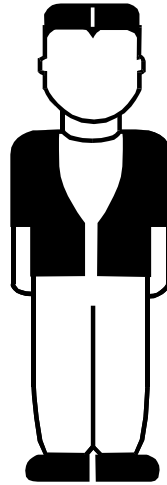
- Imagine that you have been the victim of the following crimes, state whether or not you would inform the police, and why.

CRIME.	TELL THE POLICE?	WHY?
VANDALISM		
ROBBERY		
BLACKMAIL		
RAPE		
ASSAULT		
CAR THEFT		
WHITE COLLAR CRIME.		

It is to be hoped that you have now discovered why people report some crimes to the police and why many more go unreported.

Objective Number Two: Common Sense Notions of, “The Criminal.”

Working individually draw the outline of a person.



Then label this person how you feel best represents the most typical criminal. You may wish to consider some of the following ...

- Hair.
 - Gender.
 - Age.
 - Occupation.
 - Style of dress.
 - Speech code.
 - Family background.
 - Name.
 - Build.
 - Any physical peculiarities. (Pages 582- 583 of, “Sociology. Themes and Perspectives.” M. Haralambos. Lombrosso is often mis-quoted by students ensure that you are aware of why we are using him. Do not forget to question the ethics of his methodology.
1. Collate your findings on the white board. To what extent did they support common sense notions of criminality?
 2. What type of criminal would be excluded by the stereotype that you have created?
 3. Why is it that people believe in this stereotype?

Some plates from Lombrosso's text ...

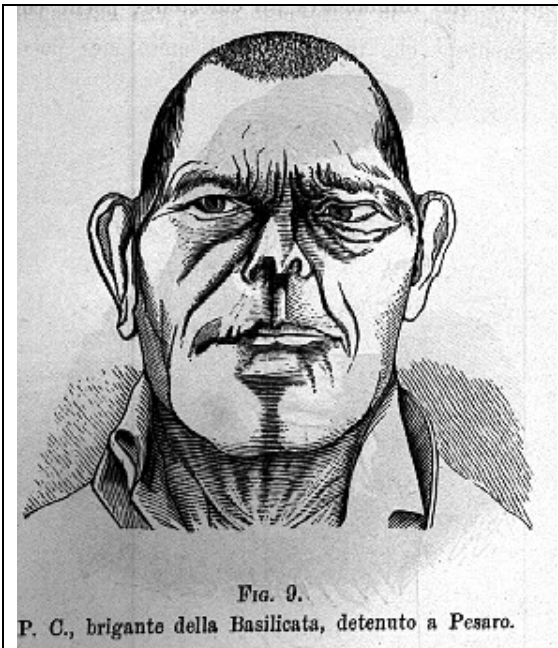


Fig. 9.
P. C., brigante della Basilicata, detenuto a Pesaro.

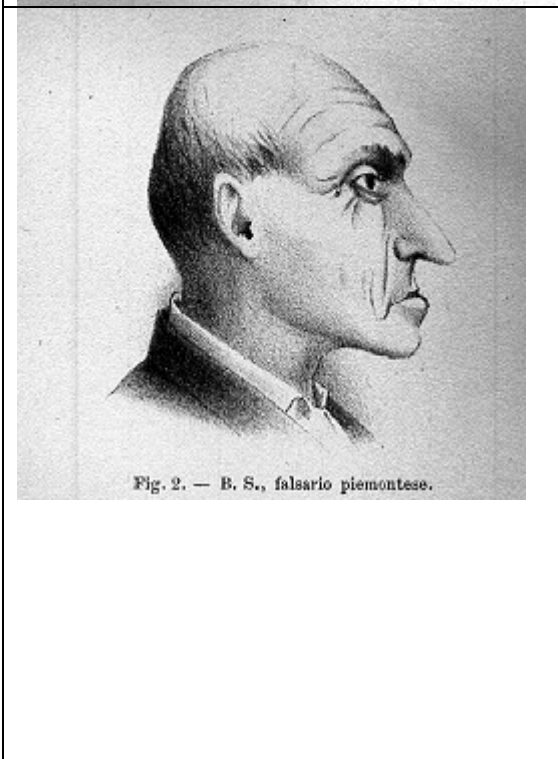
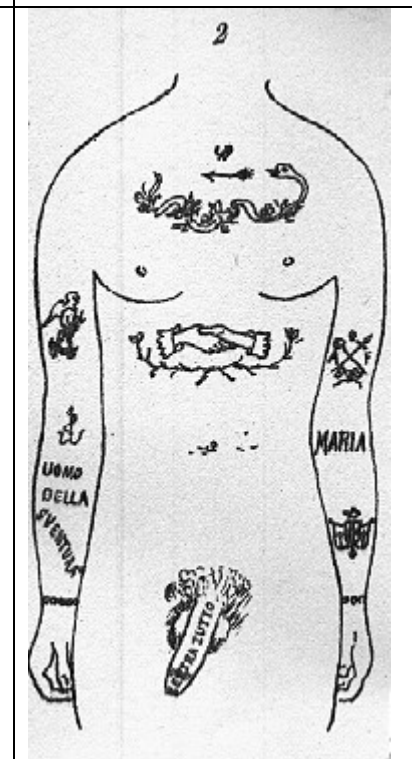


Fig. 2. — B. S., falsario piemontese.



Objective Three Juvenile Crime

Juvenile Crime, in law, term denoting various offences committed by children or youths under the age of 18. Such acts are sometimes referred to as juvenile delinquency. Children's offences typically include delinquent acts, which would be considered crimes if committed by adults, and status offences, which are less serious mis-behavioural problems such as truancy and parental disobedience. Both are within the **jurisdiction** of the youth court; more serious offences committed by **minors** may be tried in criminal court and be subject to prison sentences.

In law, a crime is an illegal act committed by a person who has criminal intent. A long-standing presumption held that, although a person of almost any age can commit a criminal act, children under 14 years old were unlikely to have criminal intent. In recent cases the judges have found themselves asking the defendants moral questions to ascertain whether or not the defendants know the difference between right and wrong.

Since ancient times, enlightened legal systems have distinguished between juvenile delinquents and adult criminals. Generally, the immature were not considered morally responsible for their behaviour. Under the **Code Napoléon** in France, for example, limited responsibility was ascribed to children under the age of 16. Despite the apparent humanity of some early **statutes**, however, the punishment of juvenile offenders was often severe until the 19th century.

Juvenile Crime in the United Kingdom

Prior to the 20th century, juvenile offenders were often treated as adults. The first development contrary to this in the United Kingdom was the establishment of Borstal training centres in place of normal imprisonment, which were intended to build up the offender's character. They were unsuccessful. The Conservative government introduced American – styled, "Boot Camps" in the mid 1990s. The first one was at Colchester, Essex. After winning the 1997 General Election the labour Government has decided to peruse this experiment no further. . The police are encouraged to caution juveniles who admit an offence, unless they are persistent offenders.

When juvenile offenders are dealt with more formally they are tried by a dedicated youth court, having as little contact with the mainstream system as possible. There is considerable emphasis on parental responsibility, and the parents may be ordered to pay the juvenile's fine, or be liable to pay a sum of money if the child is in trouble again.

The children's help-line CHILDLINE has stated that the adult world of the court is no place for children – whether they are the defendant or the injured party. Such courts were designed in part to scare adults. This is not appropriate for children.

If the courts need to punish juveniles, they can utilise community sentences. Attendance centre orders, for example, require juveniles to attend during their leisure hours at centres where they will be given a programme of constructive activities. Supervision orders put juveniles under the supervision of a social services department, and may include compulsory activities. Those aged 15 and over may also be

sentenced to probation orders (supervision), community service orders (compulsory work under supervision), or a combination of both.

If juveniles are to be detained, those aged 15 or over may be held in a young offender institution for between 2 and 12 months. Younger offenders can only be detained in the most serious of cases, and there are national units to deal with them. Offenders aged 10 to 13 can be detained only if convicted of **manslaughter** or **murder**.

Causes of Delinquency

Many theories concerning the causes of juvenile crime focus either on the individual or on society as the major contributing influence. Theories centring on the individual suggest that children engage in criminal behaviour because they were not sufficiently penalised for previous delinquent acts or that they have learned criminal behaviour through interaction with others. A person who becomes socially alienated may be more inclined to commit a criminal act. Theories focusing on the role of society in juvenile delinquency suggest that children commit crimes in response to their failure to rise above their socio - economic status, or as a repudiation of middle-class values.

Most theories of juvenile delinquency have focused on children from disadvantaged families, ignoring the fact that children from affluent homes also commit crimes. The latter may commit crimes because of the lack of adequate parental control, delays in achieving adult status, or simply because they get enjoyment from it.

The family unit has also experienced changes within the past two or three decades. More families consist of one-parent households or two working parents; consequently, children are likely to have less supervision at home than was common in the traditional family structure. This lack of parental supervision is thought to have an influence on juvenile crime rates. Other identifiable causes of delinquent acts include frustration or failure in school, the increased availability of drugs and alcohol, and the growing incidence of child abuse and child neglect. All these conditions tend to increase the probability of a child committing a criminal act, although a direct causal relationship has not been established.

Treatment of Offenders

The juvenile justice system tries to treat and rehabilitate youngsters who become involved in delinquency. The methods can be categorised as community treatment, residential treatment, non - residential community treatment, and institutionalisation.

In most instances community treatment involves placing the child on **probation**. When the child is not believed to be harmful to others, he or she is placed under the supervision of an officer of the youth court and must abide by the specific rules that are worked out between the officer and the child. In some instances community treatment also takes the form of restitution, in which the child reimburses the victim either through direct payment or through some form of work or public service.

Residential treatment generally takes place in a group home where the juvenile is provided with psychological and vocational counselling. Other forms of residential treatment include rural programmes such as forestry camps and work farms. Youngsters placed in non - residential community-based treatment programmes do not reside at the facility. Instead, they live at home and receive treatment from mental health clinics or similar services.

Institutionalisation is the most severe form of treatment for juvenile offenders. The child is incarcerated in a secure facility and denied freedom to come and go in the community. The institution is responsible for the child's counselling, education, recreation, room and board, and other daily activities.

No specific treatment has been proven to be more effective than another.

Effectiveness is typically measured by recidivism rates—that is, by the percentage of children treated who subsequently commit additional criminal acts. The recidivism rates for all forms of treatment, however, are about the same. That a large percentage of delinquent acts are never discovered further complicates this measurement. Thus, an absence of subsequent reported delinquent acts by a treated child may mean nothing more than that the child was not caught.

Juvenile Crime in Other Nations

Comparisons of the juvenile crime rates in various countries are severely limited by wide variations in national legal systems, categories of criminal behaviour, and methods of reporting crimes; certain similarities are apparent, however. For example, Canadian, Australian, and European victimisation studies show the actual number of crimes to be several times those known to the authorities. According to one study in Finland, the serious crimes known to the police were only 5 per cent of the total that occurred.

The major causes of delinquency in various countries are related to each nation's economic and social environment. In Brazil, for instance, the incidence of widespread poverty and the number of abandoned children in large city slums are primary causes of juvenile crime. Delinquency research in India suggests that the primary causes are the changing social system, the population explosion, and shifting morals and values. Egypt reports that known delinquency has doubled in recent times, coupled with a decline in available services for offenders; many of these juvenile delinquents have been faced with very difficult social circumstances, such as surviving as abandoned children in city streets. Many countries, such as Japan, report a decline in the number of juvenile delinquents that parallels a decline in the number of young people generally. Almost universally reported is the fundamental change in or breakdown of traditional patterns of family living, and this is cited as a major cause of juvenile crime around the world.

Why did the Conservative government introduce Boot Camps?

What method of punishment is the most appropriate for young offenders?

Read the following article from "Living Marxism." What are your views regarding the two boys who murdered James Bulger? Who was to blame for the murder?

"It took just 24 hours for the media to turn murder victim James Bulger into a symbol of the 1990s. It wasn't just the death of a little boy (allegedly at the hands of boys only just old enough to be prosecuted) that led the Guardian to describe the sordid affair as 'The murder of innocence'. It was the mob, the sight of angry 'common' people straining to deal out street justice to the accused. 'What has happened to the middle class values of restraint and decency?' 'How have we come to live in a society where 10-year old boys batter infants to death, and working class mothers - their own babies in prams - join lynch mobs?'

The answer penned by journalists from the Mirror to the Mail is essentially simple: the family has broken down. It started, they would have us believe, with the blurring of 'right' and 'wrong' in the 'anything-goes-society of the sixties' and has ended in a total

breakdown of relations between parents and children today. We need the family, they say, to teach children the unwritten rules of life. Who, if not mum and dad, will teach them to respect their elders and betters, abide by the law, and stick to an acceptable moral code?

The relationship between parents and children has become a leitmotiv of Britain's decline. In the days of Empire, we are told, when Britain was truly great, everybody knew their place. Colonies respected imperial powers, the working class knew its place, women respected men, children respected adults and the world was a safe place in which to live. Now, all is chaos in a savage world. Husbands neglect their wives, mothers neglect their children, and the whole fabric of British society is threadbare.

The Mother has the starring role in this immorality play: maternal neglect makes victims of children, and fails to quell the savagery of adults. And all that prevents a child from falling into the clutches of such savagery is its mother's apron strings.

Evil, we are told, stalks our offspring. In the week of the Bulger killing we read of a nine-year old trying to strangle a baby and a nurse who got kicks from killing kids in a Nottinghamshire hospital. The message to mums is clear: 'Your kids aren't safe anywhere out of your sight.'

A mother's responsibility is there by implication even if it is not made explicit. Mrs Bulger has not only lost a son, she has been put in the dock for leaving her baby outside a shop. Social commentators may not have openly pointed the finger of guilt, but the implication rang through the police warnings for parents not to let their kids out of their sight. Almost every caller to one Liverpool radio phone-in condemned her for neglect.

James' mother will take her share of the blame, and the mothers of the boys who took him will probably pick up the rest. They've already been pilloried for not recognising their offspring from the video pictures taken by a security camera. The Daily Mail was quick to point out that the accused were accompanied to court by social workers - no loving parents in sight. No doubt when the personal details of the alleged young killers are released we will find that they come from 'dysfunctional' families and were never taught right from wrong.

Last month was to mothers what the Glorious Twelfth is to grouse: the announcement of open season. The collective wail of despair in response to the Liverpool murder combined with a tirade against that other irresponsible mother: the infamous Yasmin Gibson, mother of 'Home Alone' Gemma. If Mrs Bulger was meant to symbolise a woman whose unconscious 'neglect' led to tragedy, Ms Gibson epitomised conscious neglect.

We were invited to stand back in amazement at the heartless audacity of a woman who would trot off on a Spanish holiday leaving 11-year old Gemma at home, alone. Well, not quite alone. She was, on closer inspection, spending the nights with one of two neighbours but going home to her own flat to change her clothes and do her homework. The staff at her £860-a-term theatre school didn't notice anything even slightly unusual about her. On the day that the story broke, when the press were crucifying her mother for neglect, and hounding the child to uncover the depth of her distress, Gemma

was unobtainable because she was recording the voice-over for a TV commercial. Hardly a case of gross abuse.

The great panic about parental neglect is precisely that - a panic. The James Bulger case was tragic, the Home Alone case was ridiculous, but neither represent 'moral decline'. Mothers have been leaving children outside shops for decades, and will continue to do so (what else can they do?). Mothers will also leave 11-year olds under the watchful eye of neighbours. And the chance of any ensuing tragedy is slight.

The reason why we don't usually hear about it when 11-year olds are left alone is because nothing happens to them. By the same token, nothing usually happens to toddlers waiting outside shops. In the 10 years between 1982 and 1991, according to Home Office figures, just 10 children under five have been killed by strangers, while 571 have been killed by someone known to them, usually a family member or neighbour. Statistically you could argue that a kid is safer waiting outside a shop, or indeed 'Home Alone' than in the bosom of its family.

Mothers have quite enough problems to contend with, without being made to feel guilty every time they take their eyes off their offspring. There are no lessons for them to learn from the recent great child-neglect/moral-collapse scandals, except perhaps this one: whether or not you have your child under surveillance, you can be pretty sure that someone is watching you. Mothers in Liverpool may feel comforted that the abduction of an infant, and his subsequent route through the city can be recorded on videotape with such precision, but it makes you wonder what else, who else they are watching the rest of the time."

Reproduced from Living Marxism issue 54, April 1993

Objective Number Four: Functionalist SOT. Merton.

1. What are your goals in life, what do you want to have done, achieved, experienced before you die?
2. How will you aim to achieve the above?

<p>Social Structure and Anomie.</p> <p><u>“Social Theory and Social Structure”</u> <u>1968</u></p>	<p>Value consensus ... all members of society share the same goals. <u>What are the goals in Britain?</u> All members do not share the same opportunity of realising these goals... deviance. In societies like USE and GB great emphasis is placed on the goals and less emphasis is placed on how one should realise these goals. Merton outlines five ways in which members of a society can react to the dominant goals. <u>How do you react to the goals?</u> 1) Conformity, accept both the goals and the ways of achieving them. 2) Innovation, accept the goals but not the means of accepting them ... turn to crime instead. “Members of the lower strata are most likely to select this route to success.” 3) Ritualism largely abandoned the commonly held success goals, e.g. the lower middle class, their occupations provide little opportunity to realise success, however their socialisation involves stronger emphasis on conformity. 4) Retreatism, least common response ... have strongly internalised both the goals and the means of achieving them yet are unable to achieve success, = abandoning both the goals and the means of achieving ... drop out of society. 5) Rebellion, Reject both goals + means replace with others. Typical of members of the rising class.</p>
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Robert K. Merton, an American sociologist, borrowed Durkheim's concept of anomie to form his own theory, called Strain Theory. It differs somewhat from Durkheim's in that Merton argued that the real problem is not created by a sudden social change, as Durkheim proposed, but rather by a social structure that holds out the same goals to all its members without giving them equal means to achieve them. It is this lack of integration between what the culture calls for and what the structure permits that causes deviant behaviour. Deviance then is a symptom of the social structure. Merton borrowed Durkheim's notion of anomie to describe the breakdown of the normative system.

Merton's theory does not focus upon crime persay, but rather upon various acts of deviance, which may be understood to lead to criminal behaviour. Merton notes that there are certain goals which are strongly emphasised by society. Society emphasises certain means to reach those goals (such as education, hard work, etc.,) However, not everyone has the equal access to the legitimate means to attain those goals. The stage then is set for anomie/strain.

Merton presents five modes of adapting to strain caused by the restricted access to socially approved goals and means. He did not mean that everyone who was denied access to society's goals became deviant. Rather the response, or modes of adaptation, depend on the individual's attitudes toward cultural goals and the institutional means to attain them. The conformist is the most common mode of adaptation. Such individuals accept both the goals as well as the prescribed means for achieving the goal. Conformists will accept, though not always achieve, the goals of society and the means approved for achieving them. Innovators accept societal goals but have few legitimate means to achieve those goals, thus they innovate (design) their own means to get ahead. The means to get ahead may be through robbery, embezzlement or other such criminal acts. Ritualists, the third adaptation, abandon the goals they once believed to be within their reach and thus dedicate themselves to their current lifestyle. They play by the rules and have a daily, safe routine. Retreatists, the fourth fifth adaptation is given to those who give up not only the goals but also the means. They often retreat into the world of alcoholism and drug addiction. These individuals escape into a non-productive, non-striving lifestyle. The final adaptation, that of rebel, occurs when the cultural goals and the legitimate means are rejected. Individuals create their own goals and their own means, by protest or revolutionary activity.

Adaptation	Means --	Goal
Conformist	Accepts --	Accepts
Innovator	Rejects --	Accepts
Ritualist	Accepts --	Rejects
Retreatist	Rejects --	Rejects
Rebel	Revolts	Creates New.

In groups contemplate, and answer, the following ...

- How could one criticise the work of Merton?
- Do many people in Britain suffer from Anomie?
- Looking at the types and levels of crime that occur in Modern Britain could one conclude that Merton's theories are correct?

Write an essay plan for this above point.

Objective Number Five: Becker And Crime And Deviance.

Overview of Labelling Theories

A group of labelling theorists began exploring how and why certain acts were defined as criminal or deviant and why other such acts were not. They questioned how and why certain people thus became defined as criminal or deviant. Such theorists viewed criminals not as evil persons who engaged in wrong acts but as individuals who had a criminal status placed upon them by both the criminal justice system and the community at large. From this point of view, criminal acts thus themselves are not significant, it is the social reaction to them that are. Deviance and its control then involves a process of social definition which involves the response from others to an individual's behaviour which is key to how an individual views himself. To make this point, let's briefly examine a crucial point made by sociologist Howard S. Becker, in 1963.

"Deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an offender. The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label."

Labelling theory focuses on the reaction of other people and the subsequent effects of those reactions which create deviance. When it becomes known that a person has engaged in deviant acts, she or he is then segregated from society and thus labelled, "whore," thief, "abuser," "junkie," and the like. Becker noted that this process of segregation creates "outsiders", who are outcast from society, and then begin to associate with other individuals who have also been cast out. When more and more people begin to think of these individuals as deviants, they respond to them as such; thus the deviant reacts to such a response by continuing to engage in the behaviour society now expects from them.

Howard S. Becker, it could be argued, has been the most influential theorists in the area of Crime and Deviance. He argues that,

"Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance and by applying those rules to particular people and labelling them as outsiders."

This quote is of central importance when analysing the subject of crime and deviance it comes from Becker's book, "Outsiders." This book was the result of a piece of participant observation undertaken by Becker, in the 1950s, investigating how Jazz musicians were ostracised by the rest of society and how they were placed on the periphery of ("outside") society. This was due to the view that jazz musicians were linked to the smoking of Marijuana which was seen to be morally unacceptable in America in the 1950s.

- Can you think of any other groups who have been placed at the outside of society?
- You may wish to consider the following categories...
 1. Youth subcultures.
 2. Music.
 3. Fashion.
 4. Politics.
 5. Way of life.

One can conclude, therefore, that there is no single act that has been classified as deviant at all times all over the world. deviance, therefore is specific to both time and location. "There is no such thing as a deviant act. An act only becomes deviant when others perceive and define it as such." Source: "Sociology. Themes and Perspectives. M. Haralambos. Page 611.

- Can you think of an exception to this rule?
- Consider how the following are perfectly acceptable in some places and times but are considered, "deviant" in other places or times.

ACT	WHERE AND WHEN IT WOULD BE SEEN TO BE DEVIANT.	WHERE AND WHEN IT WOULD BE SEEN TO BE ACCEPTABLE.
NUDITY		
TAKING A LIFE		
STEALING		
INVADING A COUNTRY		
SWEARING		
BEING A SOCIALIST		
RAPE		
SMOKING DOPE		
FIGHTING		

Becker also considers the effects of labelling. he uses the concepts of , “Self,” “Self - Fulfilling Prophecy, and, “Master Status” to explain the consequences of labelling.

Read pages; 611-613,321-322,274-9 of “Sociology. Themes and Perspectives. M. Haralambos.

Prepare a presentation, to be given to the other members of the group, using and reflecting a theoretical framework ... Answer the following questions ...

1. How do you construct your, “self?”
2. How important is your self to you?
3. List some of your statuses.
4. What is your, “Master Status?”
5. Has any agency ever attempted to redefine your statuses? If so, how was this managed? Was the attempt successful?
6. Which agency has the most power to redefine your statuses; Family, Police, Education, Welfare State, Other? Explain your answer.

Objective Number Six: Subcultures.

The main exponents in this school of thought are;

Albert + Cohen, "The Delinquent Boys."

Cloward + Ohlin, "Delinquency and Opportunity"

Miller, "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency."

Matza, "Delinquency and Drift."

Their work is well documented in "Sociology. Themes and Perspectives. M. Haralambos.

Overview of Subculture Theories

In criminology, subcultures theories emerged as a way to account for delinquency rates among lower-class males, of these the infamous teenage gang. Subculture theories believe that the delinquent subcultures emerged in response to the special problems that the members of mainstream society do not face.

The strain theorists explained crime as a result of frustrations suffered by lower-class individuals deprived of legitimate means to reach their goals. Cultural deviance theories assumed that people became deviant by learning the criminal values of the group to which they belonged to. This laid down the foundation for subculture theories during the 1950s.

A subculture is defined as a subdivision within the dominant culture that has its own norms, values and belief system. These subcultures emerge when individuals in similar circumstances find themselves virtually isolated or neglected by mainstream society. Thus they group together for mutual support. Subcultures exist within the larger society, not apart from it. The members of the subculture are different from the dominant culture.

Subculture theories help to explain why subcultures emerge (extension of strain), why they take a particular shape , and why they continue from one generation to another .

For instance, Marvin Wolfgang and Franco Ferracuti's Subculture of Violence thesis argues that the value system of some subcultures not only demands but also expects violence in certain social situations. It is this norm which affects daily behaviour that is in conflict with the conventional society. To better understand and appreciate subculture theories one must first probe into the historical time period of the 1950s. The values of the middle class were dominant and anything else was not considered normal.

Peaking urbanisation produced more and more deteriorated cities in America. The suburbs of the middle class were emerging. Delinquency was mainly perceived as a problem of the lower class. The middle class "we-they" separation led to seeing itself as the far superior class.

Cloward & Ohlin's Differential Opportunity Theory

In 1959, Richard Cloward noted that Merton's anomie theory specified only one structure of opportunity. He, however, argued for two and not one. He thus proposed that there are also illegitimate avenues of structure, in addition to legitimate ones. In 1960 he and Lloyd Ohlin worked together and proposed a theory of delinquent gangs known as Differential Opportunity Theory.

Delinquent subcultures, according to Cloward and Ohlin, flourish in the lower-classes and take particular forms so that the means for illegitimate success are no more equally distributed than the means for legitimate success.

They argue that the types of criminal subcultures that flourish depend on the area in which they develop. They propose three types of delinquent gangs.

- i. The first, the criminal gang, emerge in areas where conventional as well as non conventional values of behaviour are integrated by a close connection of illegitimate and legitimate businesses. This type of gang is stable than the ones to follow. Older criminals serve as role models and they teach necessary criminal skills to the youngsters.
- ii. The second type, the conflict or violent gang, is non-stable and non-integrated, where there is an absence of criminal organisation resulting in instability. This gang aims to find a reputation for toughness and destructive violence.
- iii. The third and final type, the retreatist gang, is equally unsuccessful in legitimate as well as illegitimate means. They are known as double failures, thus retreating into a world of sex, drugs, and alcohol. Cloward and Ohlin further state that the varying form of delinquent subcultures depended upon the degree of integration that was present in the community.

Cohen wrote in the mid 1950s. He was interested by the fact that many of the crimes that the delinquents, that he was studying, committed were non-utilitarian crimes. That is the perpetrators of the crime received no financial reward.

- Provide three examples of non-utilitarian crimes.

Cohen argued that these crimes were a direct response to status deprivation, and that this response was logical and rational. He argued that, "most delinquents are motivated by status deprivation, wherein they feel they are looked down upon by the rest of society and denied any status. They therefore develop a distinct set of values or a subculture which provides them with alternative ways of gaining status, and possibly leads them into delinquency." Source: "Investigating Deviance." Stephen Moore. Page 33.

- Why do delinquents suffer from status deprivation?
- How do they manage this situation?
- If Cohen is correct in his assumptions then what can be done to reduce the levels of juvenile delinquency in Modern Britain?
- What conditions need to be in place before, "the criminal structure" can exist?
- Do these conditions exist anywhere in Modern Britain? Support your answer.

Miller argues that there are six focal concerns of working class culture and that these can lead the working class male into crime. The six focal concerns are ...

- "Trouble. They accept that life involves violence and they will not run away from fights.
- Toughness. Males ought to demonstrate the qualities of manliness, being able to drink, play sport, etc.
- Smartness. This involves looking good and being smart.
- Excitement. They are always on the look out for some fun and enjoyment.
- Fate. They believe that there is little that they can do about their lives, what will be, will be
- Autonomy. Although they can do very little about the general conditions of their lives, they do not want any one to push them around." Source: "Investigating Deviance." Stephen Moore. Page 36. The result of this is that they resent authority when presented in the form of the police, the teacher, or the boss.

Sykes and Matza's Techniques of Neutralisation

In the 1960s David Matza, and his associate Gresham Sykes, developed a different perspective on social control which explains why some delinquents drift in and out of delinquency. Neutralisation Theory, or Drift theory as it is often called, proposed that juveniles sense a moral obligation to be bound by the law. Such a bond between a person and the law remains in place most of the time, they argue. When it is not in place, delinquents will drift.

According to Sykes and Matza, delinquents hold values, beliefs, and attitudes very similar to those of law-abiding citizens. In fact, they feel obligated to be bound by law. Then, if bound by law, how can they justify their delinquent activities? The answer is that they learn "techniques" which enable them to "neutralise" such values and attitudes temporarily and thus drift back and forth between legitimate and illegitimate behaviours. They maintain that at times delinquents participate in conventional activities and shun such activity while engaging in criminal acts. Such a theory proposes that delinquents disregard controlling influences of rules and values and use these techniques of neutralisation to "weaken" the hold society places over them. In other words, these techniques act as defence mechanisms that release the delinquent from the constraints associated with moral order.

In *Delinquency and Drift* (1964), David Matza suggested that people live their lives on a continuum somewhere between total freedom and total restraint. The process by which a person moves from one extreme of behaviour to another extreme is called drift, and this is the very foundation of his theory.

Along with Sykes, Matza rejected the notion that subcultures of delinquency maintain an independent set of values than the dominant culture. They hold that delinquents actually do appreciate culturally held goals and expectations of the middle-class, but feel that engaging in such behaviour would be frowned upon by their peers. Such beliefs remain

almost unconscious, or subterranean, because delinquents fear expressing such beliefs to peers.

Techniques of Neutralisation suggest that delinquents develop a special set of justifications for their behaviour when such behaviour violates social norms. Such techniques allow delinquents to neutralise and temporarily suspend their commitment to societal values, providing them with the freedom to commit delinquent acts.

Sykes and Matza's theoretical model is based on the following four observations.

1. Delinquents express guilt over their illegal acts.
2. Delinquents frequently respect and admire honest, law-abiding individuals.
3. A line is drawn between those whom they can victimise and those they cannot.
4. Delinquents are not immune to the demands of conformity.

Thus, Sykes and Matza propose the five Techniques of Neutralisation.

Denial of responsibility.

Delinquent will propose that he/she is a victim of circumstance and that he/she is pushed or pulled into situations beyond his/her control. ("It wasn't my fault!")

Denial of injury.

Delinquent supposes that his/her acts really do not cause any harm, or that the victim can afford the loss or damage. ("Why is everyone making a big deal about it; they have money!")

Denial of the victim.

Delinquent views the act as not being wrong, that the victim deserves the injury, or that there is no real victim. ("They had it coming to them!")

Condemnation of the condemners.

Condemners are seen as hypocrites, or are reacting out of personal spite, thus they shift the blame to others, being able to repress the feeling that their acts are wrong. ("They probably did worse things in their day!")

Appeal to higher loyalties.

The rules of society often take a back seat to the demands and loyalty to important others. ("My friends depended on me, what was I going to do?!")

Sykes and Matza further argued that these neutralisations are available not just to delinquents but they can be found throughout society. Attempts have been made over the years to verify the assumptions made by Neutralisation Theory, and the results have, thus far, been inconclusive. Studies have indicated that delinquents approve of social values, while others do not. Other studies indicate that delinquents approve of criminal behaviour, while others seem to oppose it. Neutralisation Theory, however,

remains an important contribution to the field of crime and delinquency. Social bond theorist, Travis Hirschi, asked an important question: do delinquents neutralise law-violating behaviour before or after they commit an act? Neutralisation theory loses its credibility as a theory which explains the cause of delinquency if juveniles use techniques of neutralisation before the commission of a delinquent deed and therefore becomes a theory which simply describes reactions that juveniles incur due to their misdeeds. The theory does fail on the account that it doesn't clearly distinguish why some youths drift into delinquency and others do not. The theory remains too abstract and vague to be of any practical use unless we understand why drift occurs, critics have argued.

Group work ...

- Investigate either the newspapers or texts. Undertake a piece of literature content analysis. To what extent are these traits seen amongst the gangs that you have been studying?
- Construct a questionnaire that you could implement among a group of young delinquents. The questionnaire should attempt to discover why these people do the things that they do, NOT an attempt to place them on trial, or to judge them.
- Why is it that most of the sociology of crime and deviance concerns itself with male criminality? Is it not the case that women also commit crime, are deviant, form gangs, reject society's norms and values? Find examples of women and crime and deviance.

Objective Number Seven: Deviancy and the Media.

When analysing the impact of the media in; creating, managing, and influencing the ways in which criminality is reported it is necessary to establish a few ground rules.

1. The media refers to; radio, television, film, cable, extra-terrestrial communication, video, multi-media, newspapers, magazines, billboards, the internet etc.
2. The media does not represent the news in an unbiased way. All Information that is presented to us passes through filtration processes.
3. A story will only reach the audience if it is deemed to be, “newsworthy.” The story will have to clear certain hurdles before it is deemed newsworthy. What are these hurdles?
4. When Parliament goes into it’s summer recess (Mid June - Mid October) there are very few news stories of any worth. This is known as the, “Silly Season” it is a time when the media has been known to, “create” stories.
5. Much of the media is owned by people who have their own political agendas.
6. Much of the media is right of centre.

Stephen Moore’s, “Sociology Alive” sums up how the media, “interacts” with the news. This is not the definitive answer, just a starting place. A worthwhile summary of Stuart Hall’s, “Policing The Crisis” can be found on pages 71-73 of, “Investigating Deviance.” by Stephen Moore

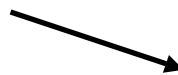
Look at the following diagram and then answer the following questions ...

1. Can you think of a, “news event” that conforms to this theory?
2. Which explanation for why the media exaggerate is the most convincing?
3. Can you think of any changes in the law that have been the result of deviancy amplification?

NB: “Sociology Review” February 1993 page 33 defines Folk Devils as “any stereotypically socially constructed cultural type identified as socially threatening by other members of society; e.g., in the late 1960 high profile and newsworthy youth subcultures such as Mods and Rockers. The folk devil is a cultural type akin to the hero and the villain. The term was developed by Cohen “Folk Devils and Moral Panics.” 1973, who explored the phenomenon of Mods and Rockers and sought to show how social typing , or labelling, of “Rule Breakers” occurs. Such people are labelled as “Socially Deviant” and threatening, and all subsequent interpretation of their actions is in terms of that status to which they have been assigned.

• Stage 1	• Stage 2	• Stage 3	• Stage 4	• Stage 5	• Stage 6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A group of people commit some anti social act for example football fans get into a fight. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The media picks up the story and uses it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group is labelled as bad, or other words to the same end. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The story appeals to the reader's interest. The story therefore becomes economically viable. That is more newspapers can be sold due to the story. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The heightened awareness produces yet more stories ... people report incidents because they have become newsworthy events. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further fear is produced and the country slips into a moral panic. The public demand new laws or at least changes to present legislation.

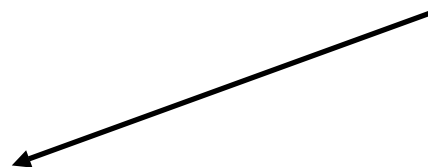
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• Responses...

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why do the media exaggerate?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of news explanation. At the time there is very little news around to interest the public, so journalists focus on the event, possibly exaggerating it to increase interest.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This explanation was suggested by Stanley Cohen in his study of Mods and Rockers in the 1960s.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Marxist approach ... Those in power wish to draw attention away from serious problems, such as unemployment. The activities of powerless groups are used as a decoy and then are made into scapegoats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This explanation was suggested by Stuart Hall in his study of black inner-city youths and the crime of mugging. ("Policing The Crises.")

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politicians: This is a useful bandwagon... I could do myself a lot of good Talking publicly about this." Or, "This is terrible and we must pass new laws.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public: Those in authority must do something to protect us."

Objective Number Eight: Gender and Crime .

The following is an extract from "Newsround" 20.1..1998...

"Girls are just as violent as boys."

"Adolescent girls are just as violent as boys of the same age, a report said today. The study of 300 girls aged 10-18 who were admitted to adolescent support centres shows that the extent of their behaviour was neither acknowledged nor reported to the police.

Many of them were victims of child abuse or prone to use drugs or self harm, but the report said that the violence could not be blamed only on abuse or psychiatric disorder. In May 1996 Louise Allen, 13, was kicked to death after stepping in to stop a fight at a funfair in Corby, Northamptonshire. Two other teenage girls served just over a year in a detention centre after admitting manslaughter.

Co-author of the report, Dr Anne Jasper, told BBC breakfast News: "The problem of not acknowledging that these girls are violent is that they then aren't managed in a way that makes it as safe as possible for those caring for them."

"The violence is often directed at those who look after them. So it's leaving those people at risk if all the people around them aren't acknowledging that they can be violent in their behaviour."

Dr Jasper, an adolescent forensic psychiatrist with Salford NHS trust added that the problem among girls must be recognised so that it can be tackled by the courts and support agencies."

Read and make notes on pages 93- 113 of "Investigating Deviance." by Stephen Moore. Then answer the following questions ...

1. Why has female crime referred to as the, "invisible" area in sociology?
2. Frances Heidensohn argues that there are four explanations as to why women are ignored in sociological investigations of crime and deviance. What are they?
3. Fill in the gap ... "The official statistics on crime are quite clear, that overall males are _____ times more as likely to commit crimes as females." Source: "Investigating Deviance." by Stephen Moore. Page 94.
4. What is the peak age for offences for girls?
5. What is the peak age for offences for boys?
6. How can this difference be explained?
7. What is the male / female ratio for serious motoring offences?
8. What is the male / female ratio for burglary?
9. What is the male / female ratio for robbery?

10. What is the male / female ratio for violence against the person?
11. What is the male / female ratio for the theft and handling?
12. What is the only crime that females exceed males?
13. Why is this the case?
14. What is a self report study?
15. How would the, "chivalry factor" help to keep women out of the official statistics for crime?
16. What do the initials NACRO stand for?
17. What was Heidensohn's main conclusion?
18. Are women treated fairer or harsher by the police, courts, judges? Explain your answer.
19. Why is it that female police officers have higher rates of arrest of women than male police officers?
20. What did Lombroso have to say concerning female crime?
21. What are Eysenck's two main personality types?
22. Which type is the most likely to commit crime?
23. How did Parsons explain female criminality?
24. Feminist researchers have offered three reasons to explain why so few females commit crime when compared to men. What are they?
25. To what extent can the Nuclear Family be seen to be a prison?
26. What are the three examples of constraints on women in public?
27. Are there any plausible explanations of the low rates of female criminality?

Essay Question ... "The most noticeable thing about women in criminological research is their absence! What explanations can you offer for the, "invisibility" of women?
Source: "Investigating Deviance." by Stephen Moore. Pages 93-103.