***A2 Unit: Power and Control - Crime & Deviance***



**Assess some of the ways in which a sociological understanding of deviance helps us to analyse any other areas of sociological interest that you have studied.**

This part-question includes assessment of links between Crime and Deviance and other areas of sociology.

Sociological approaches to crime and deviance have developed many concepts that have been applied to the study of other areas of sociological interest, including labelling, moral panics and the notion of subculture.

Labelling' is an idea used by interactionist sociologists to illustrate the way no social act is deviant until it is labelled `deviant'. **Becker** argued that no action is inherently `deviant' but is labelled as such in a process of negotiation of meaning in social interaction. Whether an act or actor is labelled deviant or criminal depends upon who commits the act, when and where, who observes it and the process of negotiation that takes place. Becker applied this idea to the study of teacher-pupil relationships (SL = Education). He showed that teachers have an image of the 'ideal pupil' who is courteous, hard working and academically able. Teachers judge pupils against this `ideal pupil' and middle-class pupils are far more likely to fit this model of a pupil than are working-class students. Students will experience their 'label' and may come to believe that they are as the teacher defines them and to take on the characteristics of the label - 'becoming' the label. The idea of `labelling' gives an insight into the power of teachers to influence the behaviour and academic performance of students and thus have a major impact on the attainment of different groups of students. However, Becker's claims have been criticised as being over-deterministic as pupils do not have to accept teacher's labels, as **Fuller's** research indicated, pupils can `refuse' labels'.

Another important concept developed within sociological approaches to crime and deviance is that of `subcultures'. Rather than accepting the functionalist view that there is a single dominant culture in society, many sociologists have argued -in different ways - that there are a range of subcultures, many of them deviant or criminal. This concept has been applied in research into pupil subcultures in schools (SL = Education). Several sociologists have pointed to the way pupils respond to their experience of schooling in collective manner, forming subcultures. A subculture is set of values, attitudes and behaviours employed by a group - in this case, of pupils - which usually differ to the dominant culture of the school. Generally this is often a counter-school culture such as that found by **Willis** in his study **'Learning to Labour'.** Willis found that 'the lads' - a group of working class boys - developed behaviours to help them deal with the school situation. For example, 'having a laugh' was important to them in order to handle the monotony of school. **Hargreaves** also argued that setting and banding contributed to the creation of pupil subcultures within a school. Pupils in top sets tended to create a conformist subculture which accepted school while those that did not often grouped together to form a non-conformist subculture. However, many such studies have often been criticised for either using too small a sample, as in the case of Willis, or for offering too simplistic a categorisation of pupil subcultures.

'Moral panics' - or deviancy amplification - as it is referred to by most sociologists, is the idea that by exaggerating the extent and nature of particular forms of deviance, the media actually increases the real level of deviant behaviour. **Cohen** refers to the groups identified in this way as `folk devils' - frightening `bogeyman' figures which create fear and uncertainty in the eyes of the public. Although other groups are also involved, including the police, courts, politicians and the general public, the mass media is usually identified as the principal contributor to the process of deviancy amplification. Most moral panics relate to marginalised, relatively powerless groups in society. Some moral panics have a social impact that goes wider than just the particular `folk devil'. **Middleton and Golding's** 'Images of Welfare' examined the way negative images of welfare dominated the press during the late 1970s and early 1980s. They suggested that the media created a 'scroungerphobia' about welfare claimants through a host of stories focusing on themes of benefit fraud. This 'moral panic' they argue, paved the way for cuts in public expenditure on welfare, by making the general public unsympathetic. Studies such as this often have difficulty in uncovering direct proof of their claim for manipulation by a ruling class and have rely upon more circumstantial evidence for their claims.'

**In an exam, you may also be asked to use the Item - so make sure that you make at least two Item references in your answer.**

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**Assess some of the advantages in using participant observation to study criminal and deviant behaviour.**

This part-question includes assessment of links between Crime and Deviance and research methods.

`Participant observation involves the researcher immersing themselves in a social group to study them `from within', sharing their experiences and seeing what they do rather than what they say they do. Participant observation is a research technique favoured by interpretivist sociologists because it is a very effective way of uncovering the meanings held by a social group. Sustained participation in a group's activities allows the observer to build up a clear understanding of their world-view. Interpretivists do not accept that there is a single 'social reality'. When they look at the social world they see as many versions of 'reality' as there are social actors and groups. This is particularly appropriate to the study of crime and deviance because there is usually an `official' view of the criminal or deviant which may or may not match the view the criminal or deviant has of themselves. For this reason - and because criminal and deviant groups are often `closed' and difficult to study other than observing them covertly - participant observation has been seen by many sociologists as a very effective way to study deviant behaviour.

Interpretivists argue that participant observation has a number of characteristics that contribute towards the creation of data that is high in validity. This is a naturalistic approach to the collection of evidence. The social group is observed in it's 'natural setting', acting normally and - especially with covert participant observation - largely unaffected by the presence of the observer. It could be argued that the only way to study behaviour such as youth delinquency or pilfering from work is to be within the group in its usual social environment. **Ditton**, in his study of stealing by bread salesmen, believed that had he made his real role known, the thefts would have stopped. Observation of a group's normal social routines is likely to produce a more authentic account of their world-view than asking questions. It is often said that in PO studies, you see what a group does rather than what it says it does. This is particularly true of the study of groups whose activities are either illegal or considered deviant. People with `something to hide' may be unlikely to answer survey questions accurately but be more likely to display their normal behaviour, especially if they are being observed covertly. **Yablonsky** noted how the teenage gangs he studied associated attempts to use surveys with authority and as a result, were uncooperative.

It is also an open research process. Whereas with surveys the researcher is limited by hypotheses or by fixed data collection methods, participant observation is a fluid, flexible approach. The research process is directed less by the researcher and more by the research subjects. This allows alternative social realities to be expressed and this is particularly useful for revealing the world-views of criminals and deviants.

Participant observation offers the kind of sociological insight that surveys rarely produce. `Insight' is difficult to define but can be taken to mean the perceptions a sociologist can make when the layers of social norms and conventions are peeled back. The flexibility of participant observation is also an advantage when studying criminal and deviant groups.

Structured research takes a long time to design and set up. On the other hand, participant observation is a flexible approach and should a research opportunity suddenly occur, the sociologist can seize the chance to join and study a group. **James Patrick** was offered the opportunity to go around with a Glasgow gang and had to take up or turn down the chance very quickly. There was no time to carefully design a research instrument, he simply had to join in and observe.

There are many advantages to using participant observation in the study of crime and deviance, mainly relating to uncovering an authentic picture of the world-views of `outsiders'. However, as well as having weaknesses in terms of a lack of reliability and unrepresentativeness, this claim of greater validity has been challenged. Ultimately, all observation is limited by what the observer sees and how they interpret what they see. This is particularly so when the subject matter - crime and deviance - may be far removed from the world-view of the researcher. How can the academic observer be certain that they have understood the meaning of events from the point of view of those involved in criminal or deviant behaviour? Attempts to get around this problem by operating overtly may only reduce validity further by altering the behaviour of those being observed.'

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**Assess some of the problems with using self-report studies as a source of information about criminal and deviant behaviour.**

This part-question includes assessment of links between Crime and Deviance and research methods.

`Self-report studies survey a sample of people about their involvement in criminal and deviant behaviour. People are asked to report their own criminal and deviant behaviour through ticking a checklist of possible crimes or deviant actions and by indicating how often there has been any involvement in any of them. These surveys are sometimes longitudinal, being repeated in order to give a picture of reported criminal and deviant behaviour over time. They developed from dissatisfaction with official statistics as a source of information about the real extent and nature of crime and deviance. Sociologists hoped that they could avoid the kind of bias that affects official data about crime by asking people how much crime they have been involved in. Self-reporting is also a way to identify the extent of deviant behaviour.

Self-report studies have many of the problems of survey-based research in general but they also exhibit some weaknesses specific to surveying criminal and deviant behaviour.

The first concern is whether people report what they actually do? There is often a great difference between what people say they do and what they actually do and this is particularly problematic when the behaviour concerned is criminal or in some way deviant. Partly this is a problem of how well people recall their involvement with crime or deviance and partly how far are they prepared to report this involvement.

There may be `dark figures' relating to the level of crime and deviance that result from either over- or under-reporting - or both. Although people may be prepared to report their involvement in relatively minor crimes and deviant acts, they may be less prepared to report any association with more major acts.

Domestic violence and abuse, murder and serious assault, as well as white-collar crime (which may lead to being sacked) are examples of crimes that people are less likely to report in studies.

So self-report studies may be more appropriate to the investigation of minor rather than major criminal and deviant behaviours.

A further problem lies in the construction of the checklist of criminal and deviant behaviours to be applied in the study of crimes and deviant behaviour. `Deviance' is defined very subjectively and consequently, any list of `deviant' behaviours is likely to be interpreted in very different ways by different respondents.

Some checklists have focused on crimes which are more likely to be associated with particular age, class or gender groups and this can lead to a distortion in the results of the survey. Some `self-report studies' have focused primarily on youth crime and delinquency and this can also have a distorting effect especially if the results of the study are picked up and reported in the media, reinforcing negative attitudes towards young people.

The wording used to describe particular acts and how respondents interpret this wording is a problem. For example, what does `serious assault' mean? The way people understand this term might be quite different to the legal definition which makes direct comparison with recorded crimes of this nature more difficult.

The response rate when the issue being examined relates to crime and deviance is a very important consideration. If one of the aims of a `self-response study' is to identify the distribution of deviant and criminal behaviour among different social groups, then a differential response rate by these groups would distort the results.

Self-report studies partially compensate for the problems with official crime statistics as well as helping the sociologist to examine the nature and extent of deviant behaviour as well - something missing from official figures. However, `self-report studies' also have difficulties many of which reflect the problems inherent in studying behaviour which appears to contravene social norms. This approach may be more appropriate for the study of minor crimes and deviance than major crimes.`

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**Assess some of the problems sociologists find in using official statistics as a source of information about criminal and deviant behaviour.**

This part-question includes assessment of links between Crime and Deviance and research methods.

`Official crime statistics published by the Home Office give information on the numbers of different types of crimes committed and the social background of offenders. Published annually they are used to formulate and monitor government policies concerning law and order. Some sociologists, particularly Positivists, have seen them as an invaluable source of data about criminal behaviour because patterns, correlations and trends can be identified from these figures. However, they have been criticised by Marxists, feminists and interactionists in terms of just what official crime statistics really tell us about crime and deviance. These criticisms relate to the central issues of defining crime, the processes by which acts `become' crimes and the accuracy of crime statistics.

Interactionists argue that crime statistics are socially constructed. **Becker** pointed out that whether an act is classed as `deviant' or not depends not on the act but on the audience(s) reaction to the act. So whether an act becomes a `crime' in the official sense depends upon the decisions made by the public, police, courts and others. If what appears in the crime statistics is socially constructed, then the official figures will reflect these processes and decisions, not the real level of crimes committed. Given that social class, ethnicity, gender and other factors affect these decisions, the result might be very distorted. For example, **Cicourel** found that working class youths who were arrested were likely to be labelled as delinquents by police because they fitted the police's idea of a “typical delinquent”, while middle class youths were able to negotiate, presenting themselves as remorseful and able to reform. So the positivist approach of studying those who have been labelled in order to find cause of crime is therefore pointless as such research can only find the social factors that lead acts to be labelled as `crimes'.

Marxists have argued that crime statistics reflect class relations in a capitalist society. Depending on social class, some types of behaviour are more likely to be classified as `crimes, enforced and therefore recorded in official data. One type of crime less likely to appear in the statistics than others is white collar crime. Crimes committed by high status people in the course of their professional or business occupation include bribery and corruption, tax and other fraud, insider dealing and professional misconduct are often undetected and when they do come to light they are often dealt with internally rather than going to court. Therefore white-collar crime is less likely to appear in crime statistics than crimes committed by the working-class. Marxists are also interested in corporate crime where corporations break the law in pursuit of higher profits. The very limited enforcement and punishment - often derisory - of these crimes means that they rarely appear in official crime statistics. The overall result is that official crime data `criminalises' the working-class by systematically distorting the real distribution of crime in capitalist society.

So there are problems with the way official crime statistics indicate the relationship between social class ethnicity, gender, and other social characteristics and crime. The importance of these problems cannot be underestimated. Sociological explanations of the causes of crime are often based on an analysis of the distribution of crime in society as recorded in official crime statistics. If those official figures are in any major way inaccurate, then these theories are possibly explaining relationships that do not really exist, which undermines the whole enterprise. Positivist ideas have been undermined by the recognition that some types of crime tend to be absent from the statistics and by the argument that the statistics are socially constructed and that we need to be aware of the factors which lead to some acts being counted as crimes and some people labelled as criminals, but not others.

It must be said that although there are problems with official statistics about crime, sociologists have tried to counter-balance their weaknesses through techniques such as victimisation surveys and self-report studies. Although these have their uses, it should also be said that they share some of the weaknesses of official crime statistics. It should also be noted that crime statistics are still the most useful data sociologists have in terms of providing a society-wide picture, however flawed, of criminal behaviour.'

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**Assess some of the sociological explanations for the increase in recent years in the official crime rate.**

This part-question includes assessment of links between Crime and Deviance and sociological theory.

`From the mid 1950s onwards, the official crime rate has been rising, steeply at times, in Britain, and in most other industrial countries. Although there have been periods when there have been slight falls, as in the mid 1990s, the overall trend is upwards. One possible explanation of the recent increase in the official crime rate lies in the crime rate itself. There are significant concerns about the usefulness of these statistics. Not only do laws change over time (in the 1990s there have been new laws against trespass and public order offences), but the interpretation of the law by police and judges changes and changing moral values affect the number of offences which come to light (for example, child abuse and racially motivated attacks have become increasingly seen as unacceptable). This means the statistics in, say, 1949, were not measuring the same phenomena in the same way as in 1999.

Sociologists have been aware for many years that there is a `dark figure' of crime that goes unrecorded or unreported. It may well be that any increase in the recorded crime rate results not from an increase in the real amount of crime, but from changes in laws, recording and so on. However, it is possible that the statistics do accurately reflect changes in the total number of all crimes, that the proportion that remain unrecorded - the so-called “dark figure”- remains constant. This would mean that there has indeed been a dramatic increase in the number of crimes over the last 40 years or so. One explanation which accepts this broad position, and looks for increases in other phenomena which may be correlated or causally related, are New Left Realists, where crime is seen as related to growing relative deprivation and marginalisation. **Lea and Young** use the concepts of relative deprivation, marginalisation and subculture to explain crime. Relative deprivation refers to the gap between the expectations people have, and the reality of what they can obtain; second generation Afro-Caribbean’s, for example, expected to be able to compete for jobs on equal terms with whites but found their path blocked by discrimination. Crime can thus arise from the experiences of particular groups even if living standards in general are rising. Marginalisation is being pushed to the fringes of society, for example, in not having representatives or organisations to speak up for you. Subcultures arise in response to such problems; they are not completely separate from wider society since they share, for example, a high value placed on material wealth. In these ways crime is related to the economic structure of society.

Right realism is based on the assumption that people are naturally selfish and that this selfishness must be controlled by laws which reflect shared moral values. People make rational choices, weighing up the costs and benefits of lines of action. Those who choose crime responsible for the consequences. The rise in crime suggests that perceived costs are not high enough, and should be increased, for example, through harsher sentences. Right realists reject economic factors such as poverty and unemployment as responsible for crime, instead they point to rising crime during periods of rising living standards as evidence for an alternative, cultural explanations such as declining morality and increasing disrespect for authority. **Murray** in the USA blamed the welfare state for creating dependency and for weakening the work ethic. An underclass comprising “fatherless families”, with boys growing up without suitable male role models and passing on anti-social behaviour to future generations, is seen as responsible for a lot of crime. The role of governments is to recreate strong communities to foster shared values and so prevent crime, and to make deterrents more effective. In the USA, polices based on this line of thinking have led to huge increases in the numbers of people charged and imprisoned.

Although we cannot be certain whether or how fast crime is rising there has been a great deal of sociological research into contemporary crime patterns. Explanations which generally accept the statistics offer a range of reasons often associated with political standpoints. Underlying many of them is the idea that we live in a less deferential society where there are more opportunities for crime.'

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**Assess some of the ways in which social control operates in society, In your answer make reference to examples from Families and Households, Health or Mass Media.**

This part-question includes assessment of links between Crime and Deviance and other areas of sociology.

`Social control refers to the ways in which people are persuaded or forced to act in predictable, orderly ways. For minor acts of deviance this can be informal, through various techniques of persuasion used by family, friends and colleagues, but for crime, or for deviance which is seen as serious, such as behaviour attributed to mental illness, there exist in modern society planned, programmed responses by specialised agencies such as the police and courts and social work departments. As the term itself suggests, social control can be seen in operation throughout society, affecting all aspects of social behaviour. Some groups feel the force of social control more than others; for example, the concept has been used by some feminists to explain why females commit much less crime than men.

Social control is a concept closely linked to socialisation (SL = Family and Education). During socialisation in the family, school and elsewhere, we learn the norms, values and roles to enable us to live as members of a society, but it is social control that pushes us towards conforming The feminist **Heidensohn** used the concept of social control to explain why women commit less crime than men. She argued that women are subject to greater social control which gives them fewer opportunities to commit crime. From sociological studies of family relationships we know that the roles of wife and mother are powerful ones so a woman who breaks the associated expectations risks being seen as “unnatural”. The role of the family in controlling female behaviour was highlighted by **Carlen**, who found that the female offenders she studied had rejected the “gender deal” and thus escaped an important area of social control. These responsibilities in the domestic sphere limit outside activities. When women do work, it is likely to be in occupations where the opportunities for white collar crime are limited. Public spaces are also more difficult and even dangerous for women than for men (for example, a woman alone in a pub may attract unwanted attention). **Lees** has shown how the behaviour of teenage girls is constrained by the negative labels they can acquire from their peers by transgressing even in minor ways. The impact of social control on the family can therefore be seen in many ways. Feminists see a clear link between patriarchy, social control and the family. The family is a strongly patriarchal structure and this acts a major constraint on the activities of women. Patriarchal family structure channels their activities into the domestic sphere, reducing their opportunities for crime other than that related to this subordinate role. For example, one of the few crimes in which there are more prosecutions of women is failing to ensure that children attend school - an extension of the female child-rearing responsibility.

Both interactionists and Marxists use the concept of deviancy amplification - often referred to as `moral panics'. Both also locate moral panics in specific contexts, but Marxists emphasise how a moral panic can suit the ruling class identifying “enemies within”, deflecting the blame for social problems and justifying a strengthening of state power (e.g. new laws, or supplying the police with new weapons. This makes deviancy amplification a powerful method of enforcing social control as tensions within society can be deflected towards a `folk devil' and away form the real cause of conflict. For example, **Middleton and Golding's** 'Images of Welfare' examined the way negative images of welfare dominated the press during the late 1970s and early 1980s. They suggested that the media created a 'scoungerphobia' about welfare claimants through a host of stories focusing on themes of benefit fraud. This 'moral panic' they argue, paved the way for cuts in public expenditure on welfare, by making the general public unsympathetic. Studies such as this often have difficulty in uncovering direct proof of their claim for manipulation by a ruling class and have rely upon more circumstantial evidence for their claims. The multitude of ways in which social control can be exercised through many, if not all, social institutions perhaps in itself strong evidence for the existence and role of social control in an society characterised by inequality.'

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**Assess some sociological explanations of the relationship between crime and ethnicity.**

This part-question includes assessment of links between Crime and Deviance and sociological theory.

Early theories of crime have little to say about the relationship, if any, between crime and ethnicity. In Britain, it became considered an important area of study firstly with **Hall et al's** account of the moral panic (SL = Media) over mugging in the 1970s, then as a response to the inner city “riots” of the early 1980s. In both cases the concern was with the real or alleged criminality of Afro-Caribbean men, who are over-represented in official statistics, but it is just as striking that Britain's Asian minorities are under-represented, appearing to commit less crime than the white majority. There are also differences by age, gender and locality.

The relationship between crime and ethnicity is clearly not straightforward. **Hall** looks at the moral panic over “mugging” in the early 1970s, using Marxist insights. Through selective and stereotypical reporting, young black men were represented as potential muggers and given the role of folk devils. In fact, mugging (not an official category of crime in any case) was not increasing dramatically. Hall et al find an explanation for the moral panic in the crisis of British capitalism. Faced with a series of endemic problems it was powerless to deal with, the state deflected attention on to a small group who could be scapegoated and on whom the state could be portrayed as cracking down firmly, using new repressive policing which would be useful in tackling future unrest. Young blacks were suitable for this role because of their visibility and powerlessness in the sense of lacking organisations or representatives to speak on their behalf. Hall et al see black street crime as exaggerated, but real, part of a survival strategy by a group that had been hit hard by economic crisis. Other moral panics, however, have not accompanied crisis, and the link must be considered not proven.

**Gilroy** differs from Hall's approach in treating black crime as political. He agrees that young blacks are targeted by the media and the police, but argues that black crime is different in that it is a conscious continuation, in a new context, of anti-colonial struggles in the West Indies. It is therefore political and potentially revolutionary, a political response to inequality and discrimination. Rastafarianism, for example, is not just a religion, it contains a set of revolutionary political ideas about overthrowing white authority (“Babylon”), and tends to bring its followers into confrontation with the police over, for example, marijuana use. Like other Marxists studying crime, Gilroy can be seen as reading meanings which may not be there into the behaviour of young blacks; they are unlikely to agree with his explanation of their behaviour. Moreover, there is evidence that the first generation of immigrants from the West Indies were very law abiding, with low crime rates, despite experience of liberation movements on their islands of origin; there is then no continuation, although crime among the second generation may still be attributable to opposition to a system seen as unfair.

New Left Realists, such as **Lea and Young**, reject the romanticising, as they see it, of black crime by writers such as Gilroy. They argue that high levels of crime really do exist in inner city areas where there are often high numbers of members of ethnic minorities, and draw attention to the fact that those who live here are the main victims of crime as well. Their explanation of crime is based on the concepts of relative deprivation, marginalisation and subculture. Minorities suffer relative deprivation not only in fields shared with sections of the white working class, such as high unemployment and poor environment, but also racial discrimination and racially motivated attacks. Young unemployed blacks are marginalised in that they are unorganised and have few pressure groups to lobby on their behalf, so their frustrations are more likely to be expressed in illegal activity.

Through the arguments over ethnic minorities and crime run two sets of ideas. On the one hand, it has often been claimed that black crime is no higher than crime by the majority, that the official statistics reflect discriminatory practices by the police and courts. Sometimes questioning this claim can be presented as racist. On the other hand, however, and sometimes in the same accounts, it is claimed that high rates of some crimes, especially street crimes, are to be expected, part of the survival strategy of a reserve army of labour which finds itself unwanted, an understandable response to disadvantage and discrimination.'

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**Assess some of the reasons why females appear to commit less crime than males.**

This part-question includes assessment of links between Crime and Deviance and sociological theory.

`Official statistics suggest that female crime is on a smaller scale to that of male crime and consequently it is often seen as of little importance, limited to shoplifting and prostitution. These “malestream” assumptions have been challenged since the 1970s by feminists who argue that female crime may be underestimated, that it requires explanation and that the key to understanding male crime may lie in understanding why women commit less crime. It has been suggested that the criminology suffers from inherent male bias and needs to be transformed if it is to make further progress.

There have been several attempts, not always by feminists, to ascertain whether women really do commit little crime. Official figures show that five times as many crimes are committed by men as by women, with considerable variation between types of crime. It has been suggested that this is because women are better at concealing evidence of crimes they have committed. Self-report studies such as that by **Campbell** tend to show that men do commit more crime, but that the ratio is considerably smaller - more like 2:1 male crimes for every female one, rather than 5:1. Such studies do have considerable problems; as well as difficulty in knowing whether respondents are telling the truth, the research tends to be done only with teenagers and about trivial offences. **Box** suggests that for serious offences the 5:1 ratio suggested by official statistics is accurate.

It is possible that the low numbers of women in the official figures may be the result of different treatment by the police and courts. It has been suggested that there is a “chivalry factor” which leads to leniency towards women; the police may be more likely to caution than to charge, the courts to acquit or impose lesser sentences. This can be seen as reflecting the assumption (by men) that females involved in crime are likely to have been “led on” by a male companion. On the other hand it has also been claimed that women are sometimes treated more harshly, especially when the offence involves breaking expectations of female behaviour, such as harming children. The two views are not incompatible; there may be a double standard, with leniency for lesser offences but harsher treatment when gender role expectations are broken.

Overall it seems then that females do commit considerably less crime than males, though not to the extent suggested by official statistics. The question why do women commit less crime than men has directed research towards a different set of questions from earlier studies of crime, studying conformity as well as deviance. **Heidensohn** has suggested a set of factors relating to differential social control explains why women conform more. Females are socialised differently (SL = Family); the roles which girls learn stress caring, softness and attractiveness and are less likely to lead to potentially deviant behaviour than male roles which approve aggression and toughness. The crimes which women commit do seem to be related to female gender roles; shoplifting to the role of mother and provider and prostitution to the role of sex servant. Heidensohn argues that women, being subject to greater social control, have fewer opportunities for crime. In the domestic sphere they usually have responsibilities which curtail outside activities. They are less likely to be in occupations where white collar crime is possible, and many public spaces have greater danger and difficulty for women than for men (for example, a woman alone in a pub may attract unwelcome attention). **Lees** has shown how what teenage girls can do is constrained by the negative labels they can acquire among peers by transgressing even in small ways.

Social control then prevents women committing crime; why then do some women commit crime? One answer is provided by **Carlen**, based on her research with female offenders. Her respondents had rejected or not entered into the “gender deal”. Patriarchal ideology promises women a satisfying life through bringing up children and supporting a husband - being a good wife and mother. Carlen's women had rejected these roles, sometimes because of very negative experiences of family life as children. In doing so they escaped a powerful area of social control, raising the possibility of offending.

Traditional studies of crime have been based on a range of sexist assumptions which must be challenged; a new approach, asking new questions and using different methods, has been shown to be needed. Early studies of crime and criminals tended to focus almost exclusively on men, although this was rarely made explicit. Official statistics suggested that female crime was on a small scale and it was seen as of little importance, limited to shoplifting and prostitution. These “malestream” assumptions have been challenged since the 1970s by feminists who argue that female crime may be underestimated, that it requires explanation and that the key to understanding male crime may lie in understanding why women commit less crime. It has been suggested that the criminology suffers from inherent male bias and needs to be transformed if it is to make further progress. Functionalist, Marxist, sub cultural and interactionist approaches to crime all tended to ignore women. Heidensohn suggests several reasons for this. Sociology was (and to a lesser extent still is) dominated by men, who tended to accept stereotypical ideas about females. They found female crime uninteresting and unimportant; and those who did try to study it struggled to find it (**Thrasher**, for example, could find only one female gang for his study of gangs). Male sociologists were attracted by the apparent glamour of some male deviance, of gangs, drug taking and so on, and they would have had difficulty in gaining access to female groups and subcultures even had they been interested. Heidensohn argues that all these early theories of crime can be undermined by asking how they would account for females. For example, **Albert Cohen's** work on status frustration among working class adolescent boys failing at school has no account of how girls reacted to similar situations and experiences.

Another area in which women are involved in crime is as victims although the evidence about females as victims is contradictory; the **British Crime Survey** found men to be at greater risk. The crimes women fear most, such as sexual assaults, are rare, yet many women fear crime when (or if) they go out, especially at night. Others argue that this fear is based on a realistic view; women, especially those in inner cities, really are at risk. Some crimes, such as rape and domestic violence, can be described as gendered in that the offenders are almost always male and the victims female. Considering this, and the fact that such crimes are underestimated, requires a different approach to studying crime from “malestream” sociology.

Feminists have not only changed the questions asked in the study of crime, they have also changed the ways the questions are asked. They have tended to prefer qualitative research, trying to understand the meanings women give to their actions through informal interviewing and ethnography. They have also tried to tackle the issue of power in research situations, developing more democratic methods which allow the respondents to take some part in shaping the research. In trying to explain female crime, feminists such as **Cain** argue that it is necessary to consider women's lives as a whole, not just crime; the answers are more to do with women than with crime. Traditional studies of crime have been based on a range of sexist assumptions which must be challenged; a new approach, asking new questions and using different methods, has been shown to be needed.

In an exam, you may also be asked to use the Item - so make sure that you make at least two Item references in your answer.

**ESSAY DECODES**



*EXEMPLAR ANSWERS:*



*TASK = WHY NOT ADD REFERENCE TO MORE SOCIOLOGISTS / THEORIES AND INCLUDE YOUR OWN EVALUATION / VIEW?*



WARNING: THE TRICK TO A GOOD GRADE IS NOT TO LEARN THESE OFF BY HEART AND THEN REGURGITATE THEM IN THE EXAM, BUT TO HAVE THE KNOWLEDGE AND ARGUMENTS IN YOUR HEAD AND THEN KNOW WHICH BITS TO SELECT AND APPLY IN ORDER TO ANSWER THE SPECIFIC QUESTION ON THE EXAM PAPER NOT THE QUESTION THAT YOU HAD HOPED FOR - A CLASSIC MISTAKE CANDIDATES KEEP ON MAKING!

AS YOU READ THE `MODEL' ANSWERS (WHICH DOES NOT MEAN THEY ARE PERFECT) SEE HOW THEY DIRCETLY ANSWER THE SPECIFIC QUESTION!

**To what extent do functionalist subcultural theories help to explain the relationship between deviance and society?**

This part-question includes assessment of your understanding of the relationship between Crime and Deviance and sociological theory.

**Decode**:

This question has a strong focus on sociological theory. The central focus is on functionalist subcultural theories which explain deviance as a result of subcultures based on values in opposition to or completely different from those of the central value system. Most of the essay should concentrate on these approaches. Other theoretical approaches to include - as a counter-balance/alternatives to functionalist subcultural theories include Marxists and left realists who have used the idea of subculture but in very different ways to functionalists.

**Subcultural theories:**

**Cloward and Ohlin**, building on **Merton's** strain theory: there is an illegal opportunity structure parallel to the legal one - criminal, conflict and retreatist subcultures.

**Albert Cohen:** Subcultural values can provide ways for individuals seen as failures by wider society to gain respect and prestige - subcultures as a collective response to status frustration.

**Miller**: rather than distinctive deviant subcultures, crime is caused by the extension of normal working class values (toughness, acceptance of violence etc.) Most of these subcultural theories stress subcultural values as being completely different from mainstream values.

Functionalists like **Eisenstadt** also suggested that a distinct youth culture was functional in adolescence to help young people make the transition to adult life.

*Criticisms*



The theories belong to a particular period in the sociology of crime - the 1940s to 1960s -and have been superseded by newer approaches.

Most research was about adolescent boys, focused on juvenile delinquency rather than other forms of deviance and ignored female deviance.

Most of the theories are based on American research. British research found little evidence of distinctive subcultures but rather showed that delinquents were no different in their values.

This idea of the ordinariness of delinquents was supported by **Matza's** proposal that we all share conventional and subterranean values, but that delinquents fail to confine behave following subterranean values to appropriate situations.

The theories tend to be deterministic - they suggest that delinquents are driven by outside forces rather than having any choice - interactionists have argued very differently.

Marxists and left realists later used the concept of subculture, looking at resistance to hegemony by working class youth.

*Evaluation*



The theories can be criticised in many ways; in particular they seem dated, deterministic. However they played a part in the development of the sociology of crime, and the concept of subculture remains relevant in several perspectives.

*Conclusion*



`The functionalist subcultural theories of deviance belong to a particular period in the development of sociological theories of crime and deviance, and like much of functionalism can appear dated today. The subcultures written about in the 1950s are not much in evidence today; the concept of subculture has been used by later writers, but in rather different ways. In the 1990s even the idea that subcultures in some way are a response to the place in the social structure has been questioned by postmodernists who see style without substance or significance in modern youth subcultures. The exclusive focus on males in functionalist subcultural theories makes them seem a part of “malestream” sociology; they are unable to explain female deviance. Most of the theories were also about American subcultures, and even at the time there was little evidence of equivalent subcultures in Britain. British delinquents seem to have accepted the mainstream values of society rather than developing subcultural ones. Being derived from social systems approaches, the theories also tend to be deterministic, seeing the deviants as driven by outside forces rather than recognising their ability to be reflexive. Despite these significant failings, the theories formed a basis for later work; later Marxist, interactionist and New Left Realist approaches all make some use of the ideas generated.'

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`Established accounts of crime and deviance from functionalist, Marxist and interactionist perspectives are increasingly challenged by new approaches'. Evaluate this claim.

This part-question includes assessment of your understanding of the relationship between Crime and Deviance and sociological theory.

**Decode**:

This question is very obviously focused on sociological theory and Crime and Deviance.

**WARNING**!

There is a real danger with questions as open-ended as this that you present a list of theories - you should keep a firm grip over the structure of the answer and try to avoid it becoming an `all I know about…' kind of response. The question specifies what it means by “established accounts” but allows you to select which “new approaches” you will consider. You should not simply describe the new approaches, but explain in what ways they challenge the established accounts, and also any points of agreement or similarity. The new approaches you are most likely to consider are New Left Realism, Right Realism and feminism, but there are other possibilities such as the post structuralism of **Foucault** applied to social control.

**New Approaches:**

**New Left Realism** e.g. **Lea and Young**: Like Marxists, are clearly on the side of the working class, but unlike Marxists are more concerned with street crimes, burglary etc. than with corporate crime. Most offenders are members of the working class who are marginalised, experience relative deprivation or belong to a subculture. The majority of victims are working-class. Criticised by Marxists for not seeing crime in the context of capitalist society.

**Right Realism and Control Theory:** covers a range of ideas but united by the view that some people will always commit crime if they see a chance to benefit, but that crime can be controlled by target hardening, surveillance etc. Advocates strong punishment to prevent crime e.g. “three strikes and you're out” in USA.

Both the above were responses to a feeling that the older theories were not realistic and offered few practical ways of tackling crime. The older theories were seen as excusing criminal behaviour or even romanticising it, and not being concerned for the victims of crime.

**Feminism**: The older theories were part of “malestream” sociology, seeing crime by women as insignificant and unworthy of study. Feminist criminologists take female crime seriously, asking why, according to statistics, women commit fewer crimes and why men commit more. Radical feminists see crime and official responses to it as reinforcing patriarchal ideology.

**Evaluation**:

The newer approaches all in different ways build on concepts and methods used in the older approaches. There was what **Paul Rock** called a “theory bottleneck” in the sociology of deviance in the 1970s. The older approaches seemed to offer few ways forward, and to be of little use in tackling crime. The newer approaches are a response to this. The newer approaches have often been more clearly focused on what can or should be done about crime and have resulted in particular polices- especially true of Right Realism (zero tolerance, target hardening, children's curfews) but also of feminism (ways of reducing women's fear of crime - more street lighting, CCTV etc.)

The older approaches seemed to offer few ways forward; all seemed flawed and above all none seemed to generate ideas that could lead to policies that would reduce crime. Understanding crime seemed to have become completely detached from the ability to do anything about it; Marxism and interactionism in different ways seemed to condone some crime, or at least absolve the criminals of blame.

The realist approaches that emerged in the 1980s were a response to these problems. Despite the differing political motivation, they focused on what could be done about crime. Right realism and associated right-wing ideas have led to a burgeoning crime control industry with a whole range of new ideas for preventing crime in specific situations (without perhaps reducing crime overall).

Left realism sides with the working-class as the main victims of crime, but sees a need not only to be “tough on crime” but also to tackle the underlying problems which generate it, such as marginalisation and relative deprivation. Feminism, redressing the older concentration on men, has focused attention on social control and has also generated ideas for reducing the crimes women fear.

However all these approaches build on the earlier ones, for example, taking a concept like subculture and reinterpreting it for new circumstances. There has been continuity as well as new developments in the recent sociology of crime and deviance.'

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Evaluate the contribution of feminist approaches to an understanding of deviance.

This part-question includes assessment of your understanding of the relationship between Crime and Deviance and sociological theory.

**Decode**:

There is a clear focus on sociological theory in this question and by exploring the contribution of feminists you cannot but make lots of synoptic references to sociological theory. Using other, `malestream' approaches, will also help to reinforce synoptic links to theory. You need to show the ways in which feminism has contributed to the understanding of deviance by comparing it to earlier “malestream sociology” The question is not about deviance by females only; look at feminism's contribution to understanding of male crime, and crime in general, as well Show that you are aware that there are differences among feminists; do not treat it as a single set of ideas Feminist Approaches:

Characteristics and Examples

Before the influence of feminist ideas in the 1970s, accounts of crime tended to assume that crime was a male phenomenon and looked for explanations of male crime. Female crime was regarded as rare and unimportant. For example, **Albert Cohen's** work on subcultures is about boys; girls are not considered. These accounts can be described as part of “malestream sociology”.

Feminist thinking led to the recognition not only that female crime also had to be explained, but that the apparently small amount of female crime might help to explain the higher rates of male crime.

**Heidensohn**: social control explains why women commit less crime than men. Women's opportunities to commit crime are lesser because their behaviour is more controlled. Girls are socialised differently and supervised more (SL = Family). Women have traditionally been confined to the home and to limited kinds of work.

**Carlen**: social control theory does not explain why some women do commit crime. Women make a “gender deal” to behave in a feminine way; this involves accepting patriarchal ideology which is transmitted by family, school and media (pure SLs). Women who are treated as criminals have often broken the gender deal. Those who break the law but not the gender deal (remain “good” wives and mothers) are less likely to be criminalised because they are not seen as “doubly deviant”.

Ethnographic studies of female offenders were carried out e.g. **Campbell's** research on girl gangs and **Carlen's** on female prisoners. While there had been earlier ethnographic studies of males, feminist thinking led to a greater use of participant observation and informal interviewing in studying crime.

Feminism has also contributed to the recent focus on victims of crime. Some crimes of which women are often victims, such as harassment and spouse abuse, were once seen as trivial or even acceptable. The seriousness of these crimes, often committed over a long period, is now recognised.

*Evaluation*



Feminism has led to a rethinking of the questions which are asked when sociologists study crime. Gender is now seen as a - perhaps the - central issue; it is certainly the best indicator in predicting crime. Women are now studied as both offenders and as victims of crime. The difference in offending rates between males and females is often now seen as the key to understanding crime.

**Opening Paragraph**



`Before the influence of feminism began to be felt in the 1970s, studies of crime (by male sociologists) had tended to assume that crime was a male phenomenon; women were invisible. Female crime was seen as so rare as to be unimportant or to be explained by biological or psychological factors. Most earlier sociological accounts of crime, whether functionalist, Marxist or interactionist, were part of what has been called “malestream” sociology, based on male assumptions. Albert Cohen's study of the status frustration of boys failing at school has nothing to say about girls in the same situation. Feminists not only insisted that female crime should be taken seriously, but argued that gender was a key issue in understanding crime. The apparently low rates of crime for women might help us understand why men commit so much more crime; Heidensohn described how the greater social control experienced by women reduced the opportunities to commit crime. Feminism also changed criminology in encouraging a greater use of ethnographic methods and in considering victims of crime. Crimes of which women are often victims, such as harassment and domestic violence, which had once been seen as trivial or even acceptable, began to be recognised and taken more seriously.'

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Assess the functionalist claim that `agreement on basic values means that deviant behaviour is limited to a small number of people who are punished for their behaviour.' Illustrate your answer with reference to any other areas of sociology with which you are familiar.

This part-question includes assessment of your understanding of the relationship between Crime and Deviance and other areas of sociology.

*Decode*



The quotation contains three propositions which must be considered:

That there is agreement on basic values - consensus. This view is associated with functionalists who, for example, see the process of socialisation in the home and at school as the means by which the consensus is sustained. However, this has been challenged from other perspectives such as Marxism which, for example, sees the school as a mechanism for social reproduction (SL = Education).

That deviant behaviour is limited to a small number of people. It can be argued that in fact most (or even all) people break norms and laws at some time. that deviant behaviour is punished. Against this it can be argued that much deviant behaviour goes undetected or unpunished - some crimes such as domestic violence are largely `hidden' and go unrecorded and unreported (SL = Family). Note that the question refers to deviant behaviour, not just crime. As this question asks you to make synoptic links to other areas of sociology, you need to make as many such links as possible throughout your response.

In support of the statement Functionalists describe a central value system about which there is consensus. Those who do act in deviant ways will be punished to demonstrate to all the boundaries of acceptable behaviour - for example some religious sects are closed down by the state because they step outside agreed values.

**Subcultural theories:** members of a subculture such as a gang may be conforming to the values of the subculture while offending against those of wider society - for example, sect members may conform to the values of the sect rather than society.

**Questioning the statement:**

The view that there is agreement on values: Marxists see the apparent consensus as showing the existence of a dominant ideology. Laws serve the interests of the ruling class. For example, schools are hierarchically structured and pupils are taught to accept the authority of teachers. Society today can be seen as comprising many different groups with different values so there is no central value system (functionalism) or dominant ideology (Marxism). This means less agreement on what is deviant, and tolerance of a wider range of behaviour.

The view that there are only small numbers of deviants, who are punished: Self-report studies show that many people say that they have broken some laws - supports interactionist view that there is no real difference between criminals and non-criminals other than that criminals get labelled as such. However, the results of such research are questionable. Most offences people admit to are trivial so we need to distinguish different types of crime or deviance.  Victimisation studies and police clear-up rates suggest much crime goes undetected and unpunished. Marxists: it is white collar and corporate crime that is least likely to be punished.

*Evaluation*



The statement derives from a functionalist point of view and can be challenged in several ways. However the fact that society defines some behaviour as acceptable and some as not does suggest some degree of consensus. There is disagreement at the moment over, for example, fox hunting and euthanasia, but general agreement on many other activities.

**Opening paragraph**



`The view in the question demonstrates a functionalist approach to the study of crime. The functionalist view of society in general is that it is founded on consensus; the law reflects basic moral values on which there is general agreement. **Durkheim** refers to the shared values as the conscience collective, which everyone is taught through the process of socialisation in the family and throughout society. The self-control everyone learns prevents most crime, but the law is necessary to deal with the small number of crimes which do occur. These crimes are necessary and beneficial, and their punishment serves as a reminder to all about what is acceptable and what is not. However, too much crime has a destabilising effect on society. Later writings in this tradition, such as Merton's strain theory and the subcultural approaches of **Albert Cohen** and others, see the basic values as breaking down for individuals and groups in particular situations. This approach can be challenged in several ways. There is evidence that a huge amount of crime and deviance goes unrecorded - for example, how much classroom deviance ends up in any kind of official record? - and that most people break the law at some time; social control seems to be less strong than argued by functionalists. Marxists reject the idea of consensus on values; any apparent consensus in fact shows the hegemony of a dominant ideology imposed by the ruling classes.

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Evaluate sociological explanations for the increase in recent years, according to official statistics, in the crime rate.

This part-question includes assessment of your understanding of the relationship between Crime and Deviance and sociological research methods.

*Decode*



This question tells you that the crime rate has been increasing but then qualifies this by adding “according to official statistics”. This gives the question its particular `spin' in terms of links to research methods - in this case, official statistics as a source of data about crime. Your answer should include both those explanations which accept the statistics as measuring the “real” amount of crime and those which question the statistics. Keeping this focus on official crime statistics will generate appropriate synoptic links. Try to relate these two sets of explanations to the positivist and interpretivist traditions; positivists are likely to accept statistics, interpretivists to question them. Again, this will keep a focus on links to methods, in this case, to methodology. It is unlikely to make much difference whether you interpret “recent” to mean the last 5, 10 or 25 years (though any of these would be acceptable)

*Explanations which accept the statistics*



Functionalists - crime rise indicates rejection of some of society's values -

Merton's strain theory New Right - crime rise as result of decline in morals and values, need to be tougher

Hirschi's control theory - crime rise as result of weakening of controls that normally deter

New Left Realism - crime rise as result of growing relative deprivation and marginalisation

Marxists and anti-racists - rise in some crime as indicating rebellion or resistance against capitalism and/or racism e.g. high levels of crime by Afro-Caribbean’s

Some feminists- rise in male crime linked to changes in masculinity - growth of “yob culture”

*Explanations which question the statistics*



Marxists - statistics tend to measure mainly types of crime committed by the working class while ignoring crimes committed by those higher up the social scale

Interactionists - statistics as social constructions - a rise in crime rate can be result of changes in measuring crime, introducing new laws, changes in policing practice

Alternative research methods, e.g. victim surveys like the British Crime Survey, often suggest different trends (though over a period of many years the overall trend is undoubtedly up).

*Evaluation*



Even according to the statistics some crimes are rising faster than others and some may even be falling. We cannot be certain whether or how fast crime is rising. Explanations which generally accept the statistics offer a range of reasons often associated with political standpoints. Underlying many of them is the idea that we live in a less deferential society where there are more opportunities for crime. Even if the statistics are questionable, it can still be useful to look at reasons why they show an upward trend.

*Opening paragraph*



`From the mid 1950s onwards, the official crime rate has been rising, steeply at times, in Britain, and in most other industrial countries. Although there have been periods when there have been slight falls, as in the mid 1990s, the overall trend is upwards. While all sociologists recognise that the statistics do not provide a full, accurate count of all crimes, there are significant differences of opinion about what useful information, if any, the statistics provide. It is possible that the statistics do accurately reflect changes in the total number of all crimes, that the proportion that remain unrecorded - the so-called “dark figure”- remains constant. This would mean that there has indeed been a dramatic increase in the number of crimes over the last 40 years or so. Among the explanations which accept this broad position, and look for increases in other phenomena which may be correlated or causally related, are New Left Realism, where crime is seen as related to growing relative deprivation and marginalisation, and control theory, where crime is seen as a result of the weakening of controls which used to inhibit crime. On the other hand, other approaches question the value of the statistics, seeing them as social constructions. Not only do laws change over time (in the 1990s there have been new laws against trespass and public order offences), but the interpretation of the law by police and judges changes and changing moral values affect the number of offences which come to light (for example, child abuse and racially motivated attacks have become increasingly seen as unacceptable). This means the statistics in, say, 1949, were not measuring the same phenomena in the same way as in 1999. Phenomenological approaches go even further, arguing that no act becomes a crime until it is labelled as such by agents of social control, so that there can be no hidden amount of crime.'

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`Assess the comparative usefulness of qualitative and quantitative data in the sociological study of criminal and deviant behaviour.'

This part-question includes assessment of your understanding of the relationship between Crime and Deviance and sociological research methods.

*Decode*



There is a clear focus on research methods in the form of making direct comparisons between two types of data. ·Throughout your answer, constantly refer to qualitative and quantitative data in relation only to criminal/deviant behaviour. · A logical starting point is with methodology - the link between Positivism and quantitative data and the link between Interpretivism and qualitative data. · Avoid describing the methods that create these types of data, concentrate on the characteristics of the two kinds of data and their apparent strengths and weaknesses. · Apply the key concepts of validity, representativeness and reliability.

*Qualitative data*



Briefly explain what is meant by qualitative data, identifying the main methods associated with its production.

Refer to examples of crime/deviance studies that have used PO and unstructured interviews.

Identify the strengths some sociologists see in qualitative data as it relates to the study of crime/deviance.

Explain why interpretivist sociologists prefer its use.

Identify the weaknesses some sociologists see in qualitative data as it relates to the study of crime/deviance.

Explain why positivist sociologists criticise its use.

*Quantitative data*



Briefly explain what is meant by quantitative data, identifying the main methods associated with its production.

Refer to examples of crime/deviance studies that have used surveys and official crime statistics.

Identify the strengths some sociologists see in quantitative data as it relates to the study of crime/deviance.

Explain why positivist sociologists prefer its use.

Identify the weaknesses some sociologists see in quantitative data as it relates to the study of crime/deviance.

Explain why interpretivist and Marxist sociologists criticise its use.

*Evaluation*



Locate your evaluation within the quantitative/qualitative data, Positivist/Non-Positivist debate. ·

Keep to crime/deviance in your evaluation. ·

Make a final judgement in terms of validity, reliability and representativeness

*Opening paragraph*



`It is generally acknowledged that there are two broad methodological approaches within sociology, both with a long tradition and both with a contribution to make to our understanding of social behaviour. Structuralist sociologists operate within a Positivist framework and tend to collect and use quantitative data whereas Social Action theorists prefer to collect qualitative data. These approaches make different initial assumptions about the nature of society and social behaviour. Their different starting points generate different types of questions about criminal and deviant behaviour, lead to the use of different research techniques and have different views of the purpose of sociological research. Quantitative sociology is in the `scientific' mould of investigation whereas qualitative sociology is often depicted as being more `humanistic' in style. Positivist sociologists attempt to understand crime and deviance through the measurement of the extent and distribution of crime in society. This necessitates the collection of statistical data in order to uncover trends and patterns in criminal behaviour, using statistical correlations between factors to establish casual relationships. Interactionists on the other hand, see the aim of sociological investigation as the uncovering of the meanings social actors attach to events. The study of crime and deviance illustrates the differences between these two approaches in terms of what we want to know about criminal and deviant behaviour. Do we want to measure it - or understand it from the points of view of those involved?'

***THE PROBLEM***

You are in an exam hall and there are 3 things you need to do:

Understand the question and what needs to be done to answer it

Remember the sociological points / evidence / studies / theories that need to be used to directly answer and evaluate the specific Question

Write all this down before you run out of time

***THE SOLUTION***

Prepare a revision plan, sorting which areas you will revise & when

You will have to include sociologists in your sociological evidence used to support your arguments, so create some **revision cards**, writing the sociologist(s) on one side and their findings (plus criticisms & your evaluation) on the other. Test yourself and then turn over to see if you got the sociologist(s) and their findings correct

Complete the Learning Outcome (LO) questions to test your knowledge and understanding of the content (AO1)

Use the sample `A' grade essays you have in order to create a plan (following the A, B, C essay approach - where part A = the factor to be covered; B = linking the factor to the Q and C = Evaluating the significance of the factor) for the essay to help you develop the skill of structuring your answers.

Practice the skill of decoding the questions, paraphrasing them (putting them into your own words) as it would be such a shame if you could have answered the question really well if ONLY you had known what the hell it was asking you to do. Similarly, make sure you know all the important sociological terms and concepts so you are not thrown by these when they are used in exam questions

When you download the `model' answers you could try and reduce them to the bare essentials, underlining what you consider to be the points that are directly relevant to the question.

Add extra, relevant sociologists in the margin (or on the computer) of the sample essays in order to practise & improve in the skill of application. Which sociologist(s) might disagree with the point being made – juxtaposition.

You will have to include sociologists in your sociological evidence used to support your arguments, so create some revision cards, writing the sociologist(s) on one side and their findings (plus criticisms) on the other. Test yourself and then turn over to see if you got the sociologist(s) OR their findings correct

When you read the conclusion / points of evaluation **(in bold)** from the sample answers, explain whether you agree (in the third person)

Look at the past questions and create quick, 2 minute plans (useful practice for the exam)

Look at the Contents page for both booklets & explain whether and why each theory is either consensus or conflict (or both) and structuralist / interpretivist (or both)

The revision lessons will mainly be about AO2 skills, applying the knowledge you have learnt to past questions, rather than going over content already covered as exams are basically about you knowing which parts of your memorised revision & knowledge you need to apply and use for the specific question in front of you. This is why timed practise of past papers is so important. Your teacher will mark any you do out of class.

The two assessment objectives are:

**AO1 = Knowledge & Understanding - *Sociological Knowledge***

**A02 = Analysis and Evaluation - *What you do with that Knowledge:*** including your view on what other sociologists & theories believe and claim

At the end of the exam, always try and check your work (to help you do this and improve your answer at the end it is a good habit to start leaving gaps (of at least 2 lines at the end of each paragraph so when you do add new bits it does not look so cramped). Sloppy spelling & grammar creates a negative impression on the examiner

If you're stuck about remembering sociologists then write “(some) functionalist(s) state / believe / argue…” Don't make up sociologists!

Linked, do not just learn `model' answers off by heart and then regurgitate them hoping that enough of it sticks to get you a good grade - it won't!

THE BEST STUDENT IS NOT THE ONE THAT REMEMBERS THE MOST FACTS / SOCIOLOGISTS / THEORIES BUT THE ONE THAT CAN APPLY THEIR KNOWLEDGE (which might be less) TO THE SET QUESTION AND DEVELOP A VIEW THAT THEY CAN SUPPORT WITH SOCIOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

That's why practising on past papers and questions and reading about `model' answers (see material put on the college network) and thinking about how you could improve them with more sociologists / sociological evidence and evaluation is **THE KEY**

**Frequent Critical Comments made by the Examiner / Marker (so try to avoid them)**

Essentially Descriptive

Good Range but List Like

Lacks Clarity

Lacks Development

Limited Evaluation

Lacks Logical Expression

Lacks Sustained Focus on the Question Set

Lacks Theoretical Structure (basically knowledge and evaluation of theories undeveloped / unclear)

Limited Understanding

Limited Understanding of the Demands of the Question

Relevance Unclear