

# An introduction to crime and deviance

## Crime and Deviance

Crime	Deviance
murder	burping after a meal
smoking in a restaurant 2015	eating smelly food on a bus
speeding	not attending church
prostitution	playing loud music
shop lifting	pushing in a queue
graffiti on a train	binge drinking
pregnant at 16	smoking in restaurant in 2005
taking money, you were incorrectly given	downloading music
beating someone up with a weapon	
drinking a can of beer on a bus in London	

Crime – act that goes against the law and is punished by legal system

Deviant- behaviour that goes against norms and values of society/ may disrupt social order

-Society sees most crimes as deviant

-However not all deviant acts are considered criminal

Crime and deviance aren't universal concepts, they are social constructs, it could depend on

- Age eg teenage pregnancy is deviant
- Location e.g. Saudi Arabia women driving
- Culture
- Historical relativity eg slavery

Why do people commit crime?

Biological theories; something genetically wrong with criminals – born a criminal

**Lombroso**- stated criminals have abnormal characteristics which made them stand out

- Criminals could be identified by; large jaw, monobrow, big ears

Psychological theories: links to genetics but refers to personality traits e.g. brain abnormalities

Why my crimes are not reported....

- Embarrassment
- Fear of retaliation
- Fear of disbelief
- Unaware of being a victim
- Don't trust police
- No evidence/ can't prove crime

How is crime measured in the UK?

1. Police recorded stats.
2. Victim survey
3. Self-report studies

Recording crime

**Moore, Aiken and Chapman (2000)** see the police as filters, only recording some crimes that are recorded

1. Seriousness of the offence
2. Social status of victim (important people tend to get a more favoured response than WC)
3. Discretion (less likely to be arrested if you are smart, respectful, polite and co-operate with the police)

Police targeting/ priorities- may be focused on tackling specific crimes

**40% of all crimes missing from all statistics**

- Because not all crime is recorded it creates a large dark figure of crime

Trends in crime

- 1950-1980 = time of economic growth and social anomie (out of place / a change) with changes in roles of women and society
- 1980- mid 1990 = RAPID INCREASE economic recession led to higher relative deprivation (feeling deprived in relation to others) and unemployment
- Mid 1990-2016 = GRADUAL ANNUAL DECLINE could be changed in reporting – new types of crime not included e.g., cyber crime

### Victim Surveys

-a sample of the population is asked whether they have been a victim of crime and if they have reported it to the police

- CSEW – crime survey for England and Wales conducted by Home Office since 1982
- Can also be local e.g., Islington Crime Survey 1986

### CSEW

-crimes covered = burglary, car crime, theft, vandalism, violent (structured interview & closed questions)

-research is carried out all over England and Wales

-random visits to homes

-victimless crimes, business involved crimes and crimes with no victim to interview aren't covered/addressed

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
Provides an understanding of unreported/ unrecorded crimes	Often relies on people's memory
Gives a good pattern of victimisation	Victims may classify crimes incorrectly
Overcomes police not recording crimes	Victimless crimes not reported

Reasons the police may be more/less likely to report crime

- Social status
- Seriousness
- Co-operating
- Police targets

3 methods used to collect data on crimes in UK

- Police recorded stats
- Self-report study
- Victim survey CSEW

## Self-report study

- surveys conducted to ask people if they have committed a crime
- sometimes carried out by government or sociologists

Strengths	Weaknesses
Useful for revealing the sorts of people who commit crimes	Validity; relies on truthfulness of respondents
Can reveal hidden offenders who haven't been caught by police and their characteristics	Relevance: most crimes uncovered are trivial
Useful for understanding victimless crime i.e., drug use	Representativeness: most conducted on young people as they're easier to study – they're not professional criminals

However,....

Help determine if there is systematic bias in CJS

This may mean that some offenders are more likely to get categorised as criminals whilst others get away with murder

## Media and crime

- we live in a media saturated society.

### Media content and crime

-media is obsessed with crime

-**Greer and Reiner**: increase in newspaper coverage over recent decades especially tabloids.

-TV news coverage like tabloids

-Key theme in TV dramas

-computer games have a high % of violent/criminal content

### Representations of crime

-violent and sexual offences are overrepresented

-property crime is underrepresented despite constituting most crimes reported to police / in victim surveys

-media exaggerates police success in tackling crime.

-**Newburn**: news coverage can be misleading.

-disproportionately features older and higher status offenders

-exaggerates risk of being a victim of crime, especially if you're white, higher status or female

-presents crime as a series of individual events without examining patterns/underlying causes

However

-increasingly tendency to show police as corrupt and less successful and coverage of misuse of power

### Selection of content

-**Jewks**: specific news values applying to crime stories

- Celebs
- Unexpectedness

- Simplicity
- Violence
- Proximity (closer to home)

**Falson:** dramatic fallacy (media overplays extraordinary crimes)

**S. Cohen and Young:** the news manufactures a picture of the crimes present in a society.

**Reiner: 3 trends in crime coverage**

1. Accenture's the negatives – bad news drives out the goods.
2. Highlight's victim culture – audiences positioned to identify with victims.
3. Law and order portrayed as the only way to tackle frightening crime waves.

**How does media cause crime?**

- hypodermic needle model = media injects ideas into you = passive audience

- copycat violence
- desensitisation = violence and crime are normalised
- drip drip effect = slow, gradual, overtime
- bandura bobo doll = imitation
- Disinhibition = loose internal regulation on what's right and wrong
- Arousal = excitement of crime e.g., risk taking

**Greer and Reiner: criminogenic media**

-**opportunity:** encourages consumption which creates more targets for crime

-**absence of controls:** may portray CJS as corrupt/incompetent discouraging cooperation with the police. Glamorises offenders.

-**means:** transmits techniques of committing crime (GTA shows you how to break into a car)

- **motive:** e.g., increases feeling of relative deprivation (feeling deprived of what others have)

**Evaluation**

-media shows punishment = boundary maintenance

-catharsis = violent games let off steam

-sensitisation = see impact of crime on victims

-increased awareness

-increased surveillance due to media = increase chance of being caught

-not all audience is passive

**Greer and Reiner:** several factors influence whether witnessing violence has an effect (not just seeing crime in media causes crime e.g., poor socialisation)

**Does media create new opportunities for crime?**

-social media platforms allow revenge porn

-fake social media platforms = people discriminate e.g., hate comments, racism etc

-scammers e.g., fake texts

-grooming

**Media creating new opportunities for crime.**

**Jewkes:** internet creates new opportunities to commit conventional crimes e.g., fraud and new crimes using new tools – software privacy.

**Wall: 4 categories of cyber crime**

- Cyber trespass
- Cyber deception/theft = all hard to trace
- Cyber pornography
- Cyber violence and stalking