

A Level Sociology (9699)

Unit Seven: Crime and Deviance

Recommended Prior Knowledge

The idea of the social construction of reality that was introduced in unit one forms a key theme in unit seven. It would also be helpful for the students to have a basic understanding of how the criminal law operates in modern societies, including in their own country.

Context

There are links with unit eight through the discussion of the role of the mass media as a factor shaping societal reaction to crime and deviance. The strengths and limitations of official crime statistics are examined and this helps to illustrate debates about the usefulness of secondary data from unit two. Comparisons between biological, psychological and sociological theories of crime and deviance can be used to exemplify the relationship between Sociology and other academic subjects (unit one).

Outline

The unit explores the social construction of reality as evidenced by the composition of official crime statistics, the activities of the law enforcement agencies, and the notions of deviancy amplification, moral panics, labelling, and self-fulfilling prophecy. Different theories of crime and deviance are assessed and conclusions reached about the importance of power, control and ideology in the maintenance of social order.

AO	Learning outcomes	Suggested Teaching activities	Learning resources
7.1	<p>The Social Construction of Crime and Deviance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognise that definitions of crime and deviance differ between societies and across time. • Discuss the social construction of crime and deviance with reference to labelling, moral panics, and self-fulfilling prophecy. • Assess the relationship between deviance, power and social control. 	<p>Distinguish between crime and deviance. Use examples to illustrate how definitions of crime and deviance vary between societies and across time.</p> <p>Move on to examine how attitudes and responses are shaped by societal reaction to crime and deviance. In that context, discuss the role of the mass media in deviancy amplification and introduce the concepts of labelling, stigma, moral panics and self-fulfilling prophecy.</p> <p>Conclude this part of the unit by assessing the relationship between deviance, power and social control.</p> <p>Class activity</p> <p>Present to the class a selection of newspaper articles on the subject of crime and deviance. Invite contributions from the group in analysing the articles using the concepts of labelling,</p>	<p>Barnard, A. et al, pp189-190 defines the concepts of crime and deviance. The social construction of crime and deviance is illustrated by the discussion on pp207-213.</p> <p>The Classic Collection video, Stanley Cohen on <i>Folk Devils and Moral Panics</i> is a useful source for illustrating the social construction of crime and deviance.</p> <p>For helpful summary notes on the general topic, see the Crime and Deviance section of the Outlines feature of the following site:</p> <p>www.sociology.org.uk</p>

AO	Learning outcomes	Suggested Teaching activities	Learning resources
7.2	<p>Measurement and Patterns of Crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the strengths and limitations of official crime statistics. Discuss self-report and victim studies. Provide different explanations of the social distribution of crime by age, social class, ethnicity, gender and locality. 	<p>stigma, stereotyping, moral panic and deviancy amplification. Draw conclusions about the differences between factual reporting of crime and the social construction of reality.</p> <p>Begin by presenting examples of official crime statistics. Consider the categorisations used and some trends in the statistics. Lead on to a discussion of the strengths and limitations of official crime statistics. Discuss the 'dark figure' and the factors that influence the reporting and recording of crime. Examine the merits of self-report and victim surveys as alternatives to official statistics.</p> <p>Present evidence to illustrate the social distribution of crime by age, social class, ethnicity, gender and locality. Discuss different explanations for why some groups are more highly represented than others in the crime statistics.</p> <p>Class activity</p> <p>Compile a list of different crimes. Invite the class to consider how likely it is for each crime to be reported to the police and why. Also consider the social distribution of those likely to commit or be convicted of each crime from the list. Discuss why some groups are more highly represented than others within the official crime statistics.</p>	<p>Barnard, A. et al, pp190-192, examines the strengths and limitations of official crime statistics. It also contains a discussion of the value of self-report and victim surveys.</p> <p>Barnard, A. et al, pp193-198 examines the social distribution of crime by social class, ethnicity and gender.</p> <p>For materials on trends and patterns in crime, see;</p> <p>www.crime.org</p> <p>www.crimestatistics.org.uk</p>
7.3	<p>Theories of Crime and Deviance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Compare biological, psychological and sociological theories of crime. Assess functionalist, Marxist, interactionist and feminist approaches to the study of crime and deviance. Recognise the contribution of 	<p>Use examples (such as the work of Lombroso, Bowlby and Eysenck) to illustrate non-sociological theories of crime and deviance.</p> <p>Assess these theories and compare them with sociological accounts. Take care to distinguish between functionalist, interactionist and Marxist approaches. Also consider feminist and post-modernist contributions to the study of crime and deviance.</p> <p>Class activity</p>	<p>Barnard, A. et al, pp198-216 reviews the main theories of crime and deviance.</p> <p>Haralambos, 423-428, provides a useful summary of post-modernist contributions to the study of crime and deviance.</p>

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	post-modernist writers to the study of crime.	Invite different members of the class to give a presentation summarising how property crime would be explained from a particular sociological perspective. Ask for presentations on the functionalist, Marxist, interactionist, feminist, and post-modernist perspectives. Invite the group to assess the strengths and limitations of each perspective.	