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This A Level Course Companion has been designed specifically to support teaching and learning, using a systematic approach closely based on the AQA specification. The Crime and Deviance companion takes each point on the specification and breaks it down into sections. Each section makes a clear link to the specification, provides a checklist of what needs to be known and then explains key content, using both classic and some more contemporary studies and examples.

The sections are:
- Functionalist explanations of crime, deviance, social order and social control
- Marxist explanations of crime, deviance, social order and social control
- Interactionist explanations of crime, deviance, social order and social control
- Realist explanations of crime, deviance, social order and social control
- The social distribution of crime and deviance by ethnicity
- The social distribution of crime and deviance by gender
- The social distribution of crime and deviance by social class
- Globalisation and crime in contemporary society
- The media and crime
- Green crime
- Human rights and state crime
- Victims
- Crime control and the role of the Criminal Justice System
- Prevention, surveillance and punishment

Each section includes regular evaluation of theories, studies or perspectives. The evaluations are written in the explicit and developed way that students need to try to emulate in the exam. Each section concludes with a list of possible exam questions along with expert examiner hints. While potential questions are endless (especially in relation to specific wording and items), all the types of questions that could be asked are included, providing the opportunity to write about all the core content.

It is important to remember that in sociology you are encouraged to apply themes, knowledge and analysis across topic areas, including between different substantive topics. When attempting questions from one section, you should always be aware that you can and should use information from other sections. Two key features of this companion help to facilitate this synoptic approach. These are:
- "making the link": where a connection between content in this module and that of another (usually from the first year) is explicitly explored.
- "links to core themes": where AQA's core themes of socialisation, culture and identity, social differentiation and power and stratification are applied to each area of the specification

The language is designed to be reader-friendly, yet packed with key terminology, and in the sort of academic style that A Level students need to develop in order to excel in their exams.
FUNCTIONALIST EXPLANATIONS OF CRIME, DEVIANCE, SOCIAL ORDER AND CONTROL

Specification: sociological explanations of crime, deviance, social order and social control.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

Outline, explain, analyse and evaluate the following sociological theories:
- Emile Durkheim on deviance and anomie
- Robert Merton’s Strain Theory
- Travis Hirschi and Bonds of Attachment
As well as some functionalist subcultural theories, such as:
- Albert Cohen
- Cloward and Ohlin
- Walter Miller

Outline, analyse and evaluate the key features of functionalist explanations of crime, deviance, social order and social control, including key concepts:
- Consensus
- Deviance
- Anomie
- Subculture

Emile Durkheim on Deviance

Durkheim is often seen as the founding father of functionalist sociology, and his ideas about deviance must be understood in the context of his views about society as a whole. He had an organic analogy of society; he perceived it as akin to a human body: the various organs (institutions) had to function correctly for the whole to be in good health. Although excessive deviance could be symptomatic of an unhealthy or dysfunctional society, perhaps surprisingly, Durkheim argued that deviance itself was functional, normal and inevitable.

Durkheim suggested that deviance had the following functions:
- Boundary maintenance
- Social change

Durkheim argued that in a functioning society there is a value consensus (a shared set of norms and values) into which, thanks to various social institutions, the vast majority in a society have been socialised. One of the ways in which this consensus is reinforced is through the policing of the margins: the formal and informal sanctions used to either reward those who conform or punish those who deviate. Indeed, our shared disapproval of deviant behaviour strengthens our social solidarity. Durkheim argues that even in a "society of saints" there would still be deviance. In other words, as deviance describes any behaviour that goes against the norms, values and expectations of a society, all societies have deviance, even though the sorts of behaviour considered deviant might vary from society to society.

Deviance also facilitates social change. If people never deviated from a society’s norms and values
then society would never change; and change can be a very good thing (although functionalists would promote incremental, organic change rather than radical change). An organic process of social change is started by society responding positively to deviant behaviour. Slowly, the deviant behaviour becomes normal and, among other changes, this can lead to alterations in the law, e.g. changing attitudes to homosexuality in the 20th century.

A further function of deviance was suggested by Kingsley Davies (1967): deviance acted as a safety valve for society. He gives the example of prostitution, suggesting that it has the positive function of releasing men’s sexual tension. (Clearly this is a very controversial argument!)

Durkheim argued that too much or too little deviance was bad for society, suggesting there was either too much or too little social order and control. For example, he argued that there was less deviance in pre-industrial society because of the mechanical solidarity of the society (the nature of the economy and the society meant that social bonds were very tight). The increased isolation and privatised nature of modern industrialised societies increased the likelihood of deviance. Durkheim also argued that when societies underwent rapid change (as during industrialisation, for example) there would be increased deviance because of something he called anomie: normlessness or an absence of social control and cohesion.

Evaluating Durkheim

- Realists (of both left and right) criticise the idea that crime is both normal and functional. They point out that crime is a very real problem for victims and for society and that the sociology of crime and deviance should inform policy-makers in terms of how to prevent crime.
- Marxists argue that Durkheim fails to consider where the consensus comes from and in whose interests it exists. They point out that the laws are made by the state, usually working in the interests of the ruling class. Instead of there being a value consensus in the interests of society, there is ideology or hegemony in the interests of capitalism.
- Other functionalists note that while Durkheim goes some way to explain why some societies might have more crime and deviance than others, he does not consider why some individuals or groups in a society commit crime and others do not. While the existence of some crime in society is normal, most people most of the time do not to commit crime. These points, Durkheim addresses.

Robert Merton’s Strain Theory

Merton (1938) concluded that Americans were socialised into believing in the American Dream; that a consensus existed about what people’s social goals should be: success and material wealth. However, equal access to those goals did not exist: there was a strain between the socially-encouraged goals of society and the socially-acceptable means to achieve them. People were socialised into believing that to achieve the American Dream they had to work hard and they would succeed because the society was a meritocracy. Individuals made various adaptations in response to this strain, some of which were likely to lead to crime. The different adaptations were based on either accepting or rejecting the means and/or the goals:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADAPTATION</th>
<th>MEANS</th>
<th>GOAL</th>
<th>LIKELY CRIME?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CONFORMIST</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INNOVATOR</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RETREATIST</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RITUALIST</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✗</td>
<td>✗</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REBEL</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
So while some people will conform, work hard and try to achieve success despite the difficulties, others will adapt. The clearest adaptation that might lead to criminal activity is that of the innovator: they still want the material success, but they don't want to work hard at school so they find another route to their ends. While this might mean appearing on X Factor, it could also be robbing a bank. Either could lead to a criminal record.

Some might reject both the means and the goal, and drop out of society altogether. These are the retreatists, and Merton thought they might commit crimes such as illegal drug use. The other adaptation that might lead to criminal behaviour is rebellion: some people might want to replace the means and the goals with new ones and this could, in some cases, lead to illegal protest or political violence.

Evaluating Merton

- While Durkheim's concept of anomie was rather vague, Merton explains the idea in quite a detailed way: as the product of a strain between socially-accepted goals and the socially-accepted means to achieve them. While Merton's theory was based on 20th century America, it is transferable to any contemporary, western, developed capitalist society.

- Merton does not consider the source of social goals, nor in whose interests society is socialised into believing. Marxists would argue that the former is bourgeois ideology; that the latter is in the interests of capitalism. Everyone wants money to purchase consumer goods; they're also socialised into believing the best way to achieve that goal is to work extra hard for their bosses. This is not a value consensus ensuring social solidarity, of the sort that functionalists describe, but rather capitalist ideology or hegemony, serving the interests of the bourgeoisie at the expense of the proletariat.

- Nor does Merton spend any time considering why some people find it harder to achieve society's goals than others. He does not pursue the idea that inequality and unequal opportunities in society are a social problem, nor what the cause of that problem might be. Similarly, Merton does not consider why different people have different adaptations. While many people feel that the socially-accepted means to achieve their goals are too difficult, only a small number of them go on to commit crimes. Why? What makes the majority law-abiding most of the time? Are there sociological explanations for some people choosing to innovate while others retreat? Merton does not provide us with answers to those questions.

- Continuing from the previous point, Merton does not explain why groups of people are deviant in the same way. As previously mentioned, most people conform most of the time, but those who don't often socialise together (e.g. gangs). Merton does not address this, but it is taken up by functionalist subcultural theorists who have developed Merton's theory.

- Finally Merton presents a possible explanation for some crime; but what about non-utilitarian crime (crime from which the criminal does not materially benefit)? Although Merton suggests an explanation for some non-utilitarian crime (like drug abuse), there is nothing in his theory that would explain fighting or vandalism. While not being able to achieve the American Dream might encourage someone to rob a bank, there is no apparent reason why it would lead to someone to draw graffiti on a bridge or to beat someone up.

Travis Hirschi: Bonds of Attachment (1969)

Another important functionalist contribution to our understanding of crime and deviance comes from Travis Hirschi. While most sociologists who have thought about crime and deviance have focused on why people commit crimes, Hirschi focuses on why most people most of the time do not. How is social control achieved?
He identifies four "bonds of attachment" that keep people closely linked to the value consensus and ensure social control and order. These are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MEANING</th>
<th>ATTACHMENT</th>
<th>COMMITMENT</th>
<th>INVOLVEMENT</th>
<th>BELIEF</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much do we care what others think? We might particularly care about what our spouses or children would think if we committed crimes.</td>
<td>What have we got to lose? If we have a good job (for example) committing a crime puts a lot at risk.</td>
<td>How involved are we with society? What takes up our time? If we work and are involved in group hobbies or leisure activities or volunteering, would we have time to commit crime?</td>
<td>To what extent do we believe obeying the law is the right thing to do? How strong is our personal moral code?</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Turning this on its head: those who are more likely to commit crimes are those who do not have family attachments, work commitments, get involved in school or have a clear moral code. As such one could paint a picture of a likely criminal as someone marginalised, young and single.

**Evaluating Hirschi**

- Hirschi asks a very pertinent question in terms of what stops people committing crime rather than just thinking about why they do commit crime. Of course, they are two sides of the same coin: an absence of the bonds of attachment is suggested as a reason for criminality. This is useful because it introduces ideas of how to prevent crime and how to achieve social order. Hirschi’s ideas have influenced social policymakers in that they are interested in how attachment can be promoted and deviance reduced. Promoting activities for young people, encouraging marriage and employment, encouraging values and morality in education are all ways in which policymakers could try and forge bonds of attachment and reduce deviance.

- As with other functionalist sociologists, Hirschi does not really address the issue of why some members of society have secure bonds of attachment and others are more marginalised. Marxists and feminists would point out that there is not a value consensus that benefits all members of society: instead, society is characterised by conflict. Capitalism produces detached, marginalised individuals deliberately as it creates in the unemployed a reserve army of labour whose existence helps the bourgeoisie keep wage levels down.

**Albert Cohen: Status Frustration (1955)**

Cohen set out to develop Merton’s strain theory and particularly to address questions about why groups commit crimes and why people commit non-utilitarian crimes. In doing so he developed a theory about subcultures. The key to subcultural theories is that actually deviants conform to norms and values, they just happen to be different norms and values from the rest of society.

Cohen argued that working-class boys often failed at school resulting in a low status. A response to this was the formation of subcultures or gangs with values that were largely the reverse of mainstream values. What was deemed taboo or deviant in mainstream society was praiseworthy and good in the subculture. Likewise what was considered praiseworthy in mainstream culture was deviant and discouraged in the subculture.
MAKING THE LINK

There is a very clear link between Cohen's idea - of a subculture born out of the frustration of working-class boys at school - and "the lads" identified by Paul Willis in his *Learning to Labour* (1977). As a Marxist, Willis went on to consider how such subcultures benefited capitalism and the bourgeoisie. Willis’s study, conducted twenty years later, found evidence of the formation of very similar subculture; these findings can be used to support Cohen's general theory.

Cohen’s theory sought to explain delinquency among particular groups in society (young, working-class males) and non-utilitarian crimes. Crimes like vandalism or fighting can be explained by the subcultures inverting the values of mainstream society, turning socially deviant acts into ones that are praiseworthy and a way of achieving status within the group.

Evaluating Cohen

- Cohen's suggestion that members of these delinquent subcultures consciously invert the norms and values of mainstream society has been criticised. When someone decides to smash up a bus shelter, it seems unlikely that they have consciously thought that mainstream society would consider this act unacceptable, and so praiseworthy in their subculture. Post-modernist sociologists like Lyng and Katz argue that it is more likely the individual is influenced by boredom or is seeking a "buzz". However, it could be countered that delinquents can be conscious of how deviant acts might provide an access to rewards and status within their group without individually inverting mainstream values every time they deviate.

- Cohen specifically says that this is a phenomenon relating to "working-class boys" and yet makes very few links between his theory and either social class or gender. Why do working-class boys particularly struggle to attain status at school or in mainstream society? Other sociologists, like Paul Willis, attempt to address that question, but Cohen does not. Furthermore, why boys? Indeed, if the reason for deviance is frustration at low status, many feminists would suggest that, in 1950's America, you would expect girls to be the ones forming the deviant subcultures. Therefore, while Cohen describes the real situation (in 1950's America delinquent subcultures were mostly made up of working-class boys), he only goes some way towards explaining why this is the case.

- Finally, a point in Cohen's favour is that he does successfully develop Merton's strain theory to provide an explanation for non-utilitarian crimes. Therefore, taken together, Merton and Cohen offer a functionalist explanation for a wide range of deviant behaviour.

Cloward and Ohlin: Illegitimate Opportunity Structures (1960)

Cloward and Ohlin sought to combine the theories of Merton and Cohen to explain the different kinds of criminal subcultures they identified in contemporary America. Echoing Merton, they argued that there was a "legitimate opportunity structure" (what Merton had meant by the socially-acceptable means to achieving social goals), but they also identified an alternative "illegitimate opportunity structure" which was available through gang membership. However, just as not all people could easily access the legitimate opportunity structure and material success (Merton's concept of strain), there could also be a strain in relation to illegitimate opportunity structures. Because someone is unable to become wealthy through working hard and gaining qualifications does not mean that they will easily find a criminal path to wealth and success. Some people live in locations where an existing criminal subculture already exists while others do not. Furthermore, the types of subcultures available vary. This goes some way to explaining why not all those who find legitimate opportunity structures blocked turn to crime.
Cloward and Ohlin suggest three types of deviant subculture:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SUBCULTURE</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRIMINAL SUBCULTURE</td>
<td>Organised crime (e.g. the mafia) where career criminals can socialise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>youths into their own criminal career that might result in material</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>success.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CONFLICT SUBCULTURE</td>
<td>Gangs organised by young people themselves, often based on claiming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>territory from other gangs in so-called &quot;turf wars&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RETREATIST SUBCULTURE</td>
<td>Those who are unable to access either legitimate or illegitimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>opportunity structures might drop out altogether (as Merton said) but</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>might do so as a group rather than individually. These groups might abuse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>drugs, for example.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Evaluating Cloward and Ohlin

- Although Cloward and Ohlin's three forms of subculture appear distinct, most criminal gangs would have elements of two or more of these subcultures. Drug use, for example, often plays a part in criminal gangs, while the sorts of "turf wars" carried out by "conflict subcultures" is often linked to organised crime, for instance drug dealing, rather than only being about conflict for its own sake. Thus, it is not clear that they have identified three distinct subcultures.

- As with other functionalist subcultural theories, Cloward and Ohlin write about working-class crime and predominantly about males, yet do not tackle broader issues relating to social class or gender. They do not question why, in the meritocratic society described by most functionalists, working-class youths are generally denied access to legitimate opportunity structures. Nor do they explain why girls, who are also denied access to these structures, do not react in the same ways that boys do.

Walter Miller: focal concerns (1958)

Miller suggested that working-class boys were socialised into a number of distinct values that together meant they were more likely than others to engage in delinquent or deviant behaviour. Miller described these values as "focal concerns".

These values are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONCERN</th>
<th>EXPLANATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXCITEMENT</td>
<td>They seek out excitement (particularly when not at work).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOUGHNESS</td>
<td>They wish to prove that they are tough / &quot;hard&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMARTNESS</td>
<td>They use wit (which might include &quot;smart&quot; remarks).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TROUBLE</td>
<td>Linked to excitement and toughness, they might well find themselves in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>trouble.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUTONOMY</td>
<td>They wish to be independent and not reliant on others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FATE</td>
<td>They believe that their future is already decided; what they do won't</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>influence it.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

None of these values on their own mean that crime is inevitable (many "lower-class boys" are also socialised with these focal concerns and stay out of trouble) but they do make crime more likely. Seeking excitement might lead to non-utilitarian crime; toughness, smartness and trouble might result in fighting. Autonomy might lead people to take matters into their own hands rather than asking for help; fatalism might mean that they do not consider the consequences of their actions as the future is already written.

Evaluating Miller

- Although subsequent sociologists have found evidence of some of Miller's focal concerns in working-class communities, it is not clear that what Miller refers to as the "lower class" really does have such distinct norms and values from the rest of society. Indeed, the argument that they might rather
contradicts the classic functionalist idea that the various institutions in society ensure social solidarity and value consensus.

- Again, Miller just talks about boys without really considering gender. Some feminist critics have pointed out that these focal concerns might be masculine values rather than lower-class ones! However, an alternative view is that many of these "concerns" are also those of working-class girls, and therefore might be features of "lower-class" values or indeed of youth in general. Indeed, as suggested by David Matza, perhaps we all share such "deviant" values but learn not to act on them.

**David Matza: Subterranean Values and "Drift" (1964)**

Matza presents an interesting functionalist alternative to subcultural theories where he suggests that, in fact, we all share the "delinquent" values that lead some people to criminal and deviant behaviour but that most of us, most of the time, are able to keep them supressed. This is a learned skill, however, so we are more likely to commit crime or engage in deviant behaviour when we are young and less so as we age. As such people are neither conformist nor deviant; instead, people are able to "drift" between both throughout their life.

Matza suggests that the proof for the existence of these subterranean ("underground") values comes from the fact that people seek to "neutralise" their deviant acts. If people really had a different set of values when they behaved deviantly, they would believe their deviant behaviour was appropriate/correct. However, people quickly seek ways to justify their behaviour or question their responsibility in terms of mainstream values. Therefore, according to Matza, they must understand and share those values. He suggests that people use a number of techniques of neutralisation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TECHNIQUE</th>
<th>EXAMPLE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denial of Responsibility</td>
<td>&quot;It wasn't me&quot; / &quot;it wasn't my fault&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial of Injury</td>
<td>&quot;It didn't hurt&quot; / &quot;they have insurance&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denial of the Victim</td>
<td>&quot;You deserved it&quot; / &quot;what did you expect?&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Condemnation of the Condemners</td>
<td>&quot;You're just as bad&quot; / &quot;You're only blaming me because...&quot;.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appeal to Higher Loyalties</td>
<td>&quot;I had to help my friends/family&quot; / &quot;I did it for my country / race / religion&quot;.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Evaluating Matza**

- These "techniques of neutralisation" have the appearance of excuses; they could simply be used in an attempt to avoid censure or punishment, rather than to "drift" back into mainstream values. A criminal can be aware of what most consider unacceptable without sharing that belief.

- Others have pointed out that some of these "techniques of neutralisation" may be deviant values. The belief that victims are partly responsible for their victimhood, or that higher loyalties justify crimes might well be examples of the deviant norms and values of a criminal subculture.

- However, Matza is correct that many people may be delinquents when they are young and then go on to lead respectable lives as adults, for example, as bank managers or politicians. In such cases, it is not that they have been socialised into a different, minority set of norms and values. Their ability to conform to mainstream values when they mature and take on responsibilities shows that they were as socialised into the value consensus as those who did not participate in deviant behaviour in their youth.
Overall Evaluation of Functionalist Explanations

- Marxists in particular argue that functionalists fail to consider where the rules or the laws come from. Although Durkheim and others argue in favour of (organic) social change, they appear to view the law as merely a legal reflection of the value consensus of society: a set of rules that almost everyone agrees with. Those who disagree are deviants, or delinquents in subcultures. However, in reality, laws do not just, or even, reflect the collective conscience of a society, but are created by the powerful: the state. Marxists argue between themselves about the extent to which the state works in the interests of the ruling class, but they all agree that it usually does. Therefore, laws reflect the interests of a powerful minority rather than the collective conscience of the whole of society.

- Feminists question the fact that functionalist theories of crime and deviance appear to ignore gender altogether. There is a gender blindness in the theories: most refer to "lower class boys" but pay no attention to the presence or absence of girls in these subcultures. It is as if females do not exist. New Right thinkers, like Charles Murray, raise the issue of gender (but not in a way that would satisfy feminists) by suggesting male criminality is mostly women's fault. Matrifocal, single-parent families do not provide boys with positive male role models and thus contribute to the creation of an underclass. But most of the classic functionalist theories do not even blame women: they just ignore them.

- Some post-modernists focus on the way in which crime is quite pointless, rather than functional. It is something that occurs because of boredom, for some excitement, rather than because of shared subcultural values or in order to facilitate social change. These ideas are developed by Lyng in his work on "edgework": the idea that people like taking risks, including involvement in criminal behaviour. And by Katz who explores how crime can seem thrilling and alluring. However, it is possible to develop some of these ideas in terms of functionalist theory. Not everyone is attracted to a life of crime; many people few if any risks. Those who do might be socialised into doing so by belonging to a deviant subculture. Risk-taking might be a "focal concern". Furthermore, if people commit crime out of boredom, this may relate to the functionalist position that deviance provides a safety valve in society, as described by Kingsley Davis (1976). Minor crime can release some of the tensions in society that, if not relieved, could lead to more significant problems.

- Realist sociologists (of left and right) are concerned with functionalist sociology of crime and deviance which explores deviance as an interesting phenomenon, but does not help solve crime as a really existing problem. Certainly, the concept that crime is functional and normal is of little comfort to the victims of crime. Even ideas like strain theory are of limited usefulness to policy-makers; however, left realists would argue that it supports their argument that relative deprivation causes crime; that policies should promote equality. Meanwhile, right realists would argue that Hirschi's ideas on social bonds and social control offer some support for their theories. See realist explanations for crime, deviance, social order and social control

Links to Core Themes

- One of the core themes of A Level sociology is socialisation and this concept is fundamental to functionalist ideas. It is through socialisation that a value consensus is created and continued. It is also through subcultural socialisation (the "incorrect" socialisation) that people are taught deviant norms and values.

- If people are socialised first in the family and then through a range of institutions such as school, media, etc., how do some people end up not sharing the value consensus: that is, why is it normal and inevitable that some people will be deviant? One explanation comes from subcultural theories: if family and friends are part of delinquent subcultures, then the norms and values some are socialised into will be deviant. This fits well with New Right explanations of crime and deviance: they argue that...
the welfare-dependent underclass socialises subsequent generations inadequately, leading to a dysfunctional society.

- Other core themes include social differentiation and power and stratification. The Marxist and feminist criticisms of functionalist explanations of crime, deviance, social order and social control are based on the observation that functionalism presupposes a society based on consensus rather than one built on conflict. If, in fact society is made up of different social groups with different interests, then the issue of deviance is fundamentally linked to the issue of power. Deviants are not deviating from a value consensus but deviating from the rules established in law by the powerful group or groups in society, whether they be the ruling class or men.

Possible Exam Questions

Outline **two** functions of crime and deviance. (4 marks)

*Exam Hint: This question could be answered using different perspectives. For example, you could suggest that crime serves an ideological function, and so use a Marxist perspective to answer the question.*

Outline **three** criticisms of the view that crime is caused by deviant subcultures. (6 marks)

**ITEM A**

Society sets goals for people, but not everyone has an equal chance of achieving those goals by legitimate means. Barriers to achievement might include where people live and educational attainment. There are a variety of ways in which subcultures can respond to this.

Applying material from **Item A**, analyse **two** ways in which deviant subcultures respond to blocked opportunities. (10 marks)

*Exam Hint: there are "hooks" in the item which you should refer to in your answer. However, you must use those hooks, develop them and explicitly answer the question!*

**ITEM B**

Unlike other sociological perspectives such as Marxism, Functionalist sociologists have a positive view of crime and deviance, seeing it as a necessary and useful part of social life. Functionalist sociologists believe that crime performs a range of important social functions such as maintaining boundaries and promoting social change. However, critics argue that crime is an inevitable feature of an unequal society and, therefore, is a sign of social dysfunction.

Applying material from Item B and elsewhere, evaluate functionalist explanations of crime and deviance. (30 marks)

*Exam Hint: Although reasonable marks can be achieved focusing largely on an evaluation and analysis of functionalism, clearly this sort of question provides an opportunity for a debate between perspectives. You could explicitly evaluate certain points using Marxism or Realism, for example. Do what it says in the question: explicitly use information from the item as well as from your own knowledge. Application marks (AO2) are awarded for how well this material is applied and developed in answering the question. You would not be expected to outline all of the theories included in this section for full marks. Sometimes there is a trade-off between breadth and depth.*
Some sociologists would argue that a lack of opportunity in society is one of the main reasons why individuals commit crime. Some argue that without legitimate means of achieving in society, individuals may turn to crime. However, it could also be argued that a lack of opportunity does not necessarily result in crime: women, for example, have a much lower rate of offending than men, despite our male-dominated society.

Applying material from Item B and your knowledge, evaluate the view that a lack of opportunity in society is the main cause of criminality. (30 marks)
MARXIST EXPLANATIONS OF CRIME, DEVIANCE, SOCIAL ORDER AND SOCIAL CONTROL

**Specification:** sociological explanations of crime, deviance, social order and social control

**WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW**

Outline, analyse, evaluate and apply Marxist explanations of crime, deviance, social order and social control, including:

- Classical Marxist approaches to crime (e.g. Chambliss and Pearce)
- Neo-Marxist approaches to crime and critical criminology (e.g. Stuart Hall and Taylor and Young)

Marxist ideas will also be considered in the section *the social distribution of crime and deviance by social class.*

Classical Marxist Explanations of Crime, Deviance, Social Order and Social Control

Key Marxist ideas include:

- Capitalism is *criminogenic* (it actually causes crime)
- Capitalism requires social control in order to prevent revolution
- Laws exist to protect the interests of the ruling class, and law enforcement (or *agents of social control*) are only interested in controlling the proletariat and protecting the bourgeoisie

Marxists argue that the economic system of capitalism itself causes crime. The whole system is based on the exploitation of the working class by the ruling class, leading to the ever-increasing wealth of one class and ever-increasing poverty of the other. It is therefore not surprising that those who cannot afford the basic necessities of life might turn to crime to provide what their employers do not. Furthermore, it is to be expected that the exploited working class will sometimes express their frustration and anger at their exploitation through violence or criminal damage. Furthermore, the values of capitalism are, potentially, criminal values: that the aim of capitalist society is to get as much money and wealth as possible, irrespective of how that might harm other people. This encourages crimes of the rich (fraud, etc.), and of less fortunate others who are persuaded this is an appropriate way to behave.

Marxists would further question who the real criminals are; the employer paying poverty wages or the worker trying to feed his or her family? Therefore, some Marxist criminology can be described as *transgressive criminology* as Marxists are not just interested in acts that are against the law, but also in legal acts that cause harm.

One reason for this is that they see the law as something created by the ruling class to serve their own interests, which are coincident with the capitalist system. From this perspective, legal acts might be harmful; at the same time, sections of society may consider some technically illegal activity harmless or even admirable (like revolutionary activism).

Chambliss (1976) argues that most law in the US (and the UK) is *property law* and this primarily protects people who own property. In his famous 1978 study of Seattle, he went further to argue...
that members of the ruling class were part of a crime syndicate who used their wealth and influence to bribe officials and avoid punishment. He wrote that this included politicians and business owners. His argument was that the criminal justice system was not really there to catch them; nominally universal laws were applied selectively to control the working class while protecting the rich.

Graham (1976) illustrated Chambliss’s point further by looking at how the government policed the illegal trade in drugs, particularly amphetamines. Even though there was a "war on drugs" in the US at the time, Graham found that politicians agreed not to greatly restrict amphetamine production and distribution because most of it was made and sold by large pharmaceutical companies rather than "criminals". There was a "war on drugs" but only on those drugs that didn't make a profit for the bourgeoisie.

Pearce (1976 – a popular year for classical Marxist criminology) argued that even laws that appeared to help workers really helped the bourgeoisie. His focus was on health and safety laws which provided the ruling class with a healthy workforce. Later Marxist studies, like Snider’s (1993) concluded that such laws were not enforced especially strongly anyway; that laws appearing to be in the interests of the working class were more "for show" while those that protected the ruling class were rigorously enforced.

Marxists take a particular interest, then, in white-collar crime, corporate crime and state crime and the ways in which these crimes are controlled much less than petty crime and anti-social behaviour.

Evaluating Classical Marxism

- The existence of crime in non-capitalist societies, especially communist societies, for example, the Soviet Union in the 20th century or modern-day Cuba has been used to challenge the concept of capitalism being criminogenic. Marxists would counter that crime in Cuba, for instance, might still be capitalist in origin because it continues to cause poverty in non-capitalist countries; that capitalism is criminogenic does not mean that there are no other causes of crime.

- In contemporary society, property law does not protect the ruling class alone. The vast majority of people in a society like the UK own some property; therefore laws about theft or burglary are not only bourgeois laws. However, Marxists would counter this proposition by arguing that the criminal justice system would take property crimes against the rich more seriously than property crimes against the poor, both in terms of the rigour with which the police would investigate the crime and the sentence handed down.

- While there is significant debate within Marxism about the extent to which the state serves the interests of the ruling class, non-Marxists would point out that in modern democracies, law-makers are elected by everyone (over 18) and include people from a range of political positions and social backgrounds. Furthermore, most criminal laws are not controversial: there is a real consensus about the vast majority of crimes.

- Also, the state has also created lots of laws that protect workers. While Marxists like Pearce (1976) argue that such laws still help employers (see above), laws governing minimum wage or rights for trade unions were clearly introduced in the interests of the proletariat, not the bourgeoisie. While some Marxists might suggest that such laws are in the long-term interests of capitalism because they prevent revolution, it is clear that employers can be contained by the law too.

- These theories seem to present working-class criminals as passive: people who cannot help but commit crime because of their economic circumstances. Neo-Marxists challenge this idea, arguing that crime is a conscious choice.
Neo-Marxism and Critical Criminology

Some Marxists who sought to adapt Marx's ideas (known as neo-Marxists) took onboard some of the above criticisms, particularly concerning the apparent passivity of the working class. Neo-Marxists recognised that working-class criminals made an active choice to break the law. However, they argued that sometimes this was a positive political act against the bourgeoisie: e.g. the Black Panthers – a radical black rights group in the US in the 1960s and 1970s who did engage in criminal activity in the course of their political activism. This neo-Marxist approach to crime and deviance became known as critical criminology or, sometimes, radical criminology.

Young and Taylor's The New Criminology (1976) tried to establish the "fully social theory of deviance". When considering any deviant act, they argued that Marxists should consider:

- The structure of society and where power resides
- The structural "macro" background to the deviant act
- The immediate cause of the deviant act and the act itself
- The impact of the act (both immediate and on a larger scale)
- The societal reaction to the act (this links closely with interactionist explanations of crime, deviance, social order and social control)
- The impact of that reaction (both on the individual and on society)

This conceptual outline shows the clear influence of interactionism on their approach, despite their analysis being clearly Marxist. Concepts like labelling (to be explored in a future section) are key to this approach to crime and deviance.

Stuart Hall (1978) applied the critical criminology approach to black muggers in the 1970’s UK. His arguments will also be considered when we explore the social distribution of crime by ethnicity and the media and crime; but some key findings were:

- There was what Marxists call a "crisis of capitalism" (an economic recession).
- The resulting unemployment had a disproportionate impact on black people, some of whom chose to enter the informal economy (aspects of which involved crime) rather than do "white man's shit work".
- The ruling class sought to divide the working class to prevent anti-capitalist political activism: turning white workers against black workers was one approach to this.
- A moral panic about street crime by black people was fostered, leading to a crackdown by the police and a crime wave fantasy (see the media and crime).
- This was one means by which revolution or radical political change was prevented.

Evaluating Neo-Marxism and Critical Criminology

- Only a very small portion of crime could be considered as politically-motivated or part of anti-capitalist activism. While theorists might attach such a motive to all manner of crime (from burglary to vandalism), it rarely seems to be a motive that criminals themselves would claim.
- Left realists point out that most victims of crime are working class. Therefore, Marxists should produce solutions to the problem of crime, rather than simply trying to understand (and, some would suggest, excuse) working-class criminals.
- Some argue that Stuart Hall's theory about black muggers is a conspiracy theory. Nobody could prove that anyone deliberately set out to divide the working-class to prevent revolution. Even Hall himself recognised that a significant factor in the media's decision to sensationalise such crimes was because it sold newspapers rather than prevented revolutions.
Overall Evaluation of Marxist Explanations

- Marxist explanations for crime and deviance are accused of being reductionist: they "reduce" everything to economics. Post-modernists, for example, would argue that society is complex and fragmented and that while capitalism and economic class might well influence people’s behaviour there are many other equally important influences. Wealth is not the only source of power; class is not the only important identity.

- Realist sociologists (left and right) accuse Marxists of presenting criminals as "the real victims" (victims of capitalism). They suggest that Marxists ignore the real victims, and only appear interested in victims of the crimes of the rich. As previously mentioned, left realists point out that this is particularly ironic because most victims of crime are working class.

- As with the main functionalist views on crime and deviance, feminists note that women are largely absent from the most well-known Marxist and neo-Marxist accounts. Of course, the main reason for that is that men are much more likely to commit crimes than women are and this is addressed in the social distribution of crime by gender (below).

- Some would argue that typically proletarian crimes are treated more seriously than typically bourgeois (or white collar) crimes, not because the state is acting on behalf of the ruling class but because those crimes are actually more serious. Although white-collar crimes like fraud might involve larger sums of money, crimes like robbery and assault are more violent and personal and the perpetrators are therefore a greater risk to public safety. However, Marxists who have been influenced by labelling theory (see interactionist explanations) would argue that the same type of crime can be treated very differently depending on the social class of the perpetrator because of the label given to the act: e.g. an Oxford medical student recently stabbed her boyfriend during a drug-and-alcohol-fuelled argument; the judge considered not giving her a custodial sentence because of her "extraordinary talent".

Links to Core Themes

- Issues of power and stratification lie at the heart of Marxism. For Marxists, the ruling bourgeois class have the power in society and the state works largely or wholly in their interests (and therefore in the interests of preserving the capitalist system). Laws, then, are made by the ruling class to control the working class.

- Marxists see socialisation not as the transmission of the shared norms and values of society that make society work, but as the transmission of bourgeois ideology. Crime and the law plays its role in this process. The institutions of law and order serve capitalism and the ruling class by presenting the agents of social control and the repressive state apparatus (such as the police) as a benevolent force protecting the rest of society from villains, rather than as a repressive force controlling them to serve capitalism. Furthermore (as Pearce argued) the presence of apparently worker-friendly laws (like health and safety at work regulations) further creates a false class consciousness where workers think that the state is looking out for their interests, when in reality it does the very opposite.

Exam Hint: Remember, if you are asked a theory question about Crime and Deviance, you can always include other theories in your answer (although you should always be careful to make sure you link your point explicitly to the question). Try to use other perspectives to specifically evaluate a particular point you are making rather than simply listing different perspectives. This makes for explicit evaluation rather than juxtaposition.
Possible Exam Questions

Outline two ways in which the law performs an ideological function for capitalism. (4 marks)

Outline two ways in which capitalism might cause crime. (4 marks)

ITEM A

Some Marxists argue that crimes committed by the rich tend to be ignored, or they can afford to get away with them (through paying for the best lawyers or bribing officials). Other Marxists point out that most laws are designed to control the working class or benefit the ruling class anyway, even those that appear to benefit workers.

Using Item A analyse two ways in which the way society responds to crime and deviance benefits the wealthy. (10 marks)

Exam Hint: There are (at least) two “hooks” in the item. Your task is to identify those hooks and develop them. Developing them requires explicitly linking the hook to the question, applying relevant sociological content to illustrate your points and analysing and evaluating them. It is important to ensure that the two “ways” requested in the question are clearly identified and distinct from one another.

ITEM B

Some Marxist sociologists argue that capitalism itself causes crime. A system that makes some people very rich and others very poor is likely to lead to crime on the part of some of the poor, both in order to get food and shelter and out of frustration at the unfairness of the system.

Applying material from Item B and your own knowledge, evaluate the usefulness of Marxist approaches in understanding crime and deviance. (30 marks)
## CHECKLIST

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<th>Content</th>
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<td><strong>Crime &amp; Deviance</strong></td>
<td>Crime, deviance, social order and social control.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Distribution of Crime</strong></td>
<td>The social distribution of crime and deviance by ethnicity, gender and social class, including recent patterns and trends in crime.</td>
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<td><strong>Globalisation &amp; Crime</strong></td>
<td>Globalisation and crime in contemporary society; the media and crime; green crime; human rights and state crimes.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Crime Control</strong></td>
<td>Crime control, surveillance, prevention and punishment, victims, and the role of the criminal justice system and other agencies.</td>
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