

Chapter 10

Crime, deviance & social control



What will we cover in this Chapter?

- What are the causes of crime?
- What is deviance?
- What is the difference between crime and deviance?
- What is the significance of the term master status?
- Why do men commit more crime than women?
- Why are British teenagers some of the worst behaved in Europe?
- Why do young people commit more crime than any other group within society?
- What is the hidden figure of crime?
- Why does the hidden figure of crime exist?
- What is the difference between formal social control and informal social control?
- What are the agents of social control?
- How do various sociological perspectives interpret the importance of social control?
- Is society based upon consensus or conflict?

What are the causes of crime?

This is one of the most interesting questions presented within a study of human society. If we can identify the causes of crime we might be able to lower the rate of crime within our society. For obvious reasons, this question is of considerable interest to sociologists, politicians and of course the wider public. Of all the issues we consider within Sociology, this is arguably the most practical from the view of policy-makers.

There are various causes of crime and, as you will no doubt have already guessed, a debate amongst the diverse range of sociological perspectives upon this vexed question. Here are some of the most important factors;

- Perhaps the most significant of those factors we might consider relates to primary socialisation. It could be argued that criminals have not been taught the moral distinction between right and wrong. In the case of criminals raised in criminal families this argument is a persuasive one. Having said this, criminals come from all sections of society and due to the difficulty in accurately assessing the influence of primary socialisation, this opening argument is open to further research and discussion.
- In terms of secondary socialisation, peer pressure may contribute towards criminal activity. This is particularly noticeable amongst gangs, a point not lost amongst sociologists. During a seminal study conducted in the mid 1950s, Albert Cohen argued that members of gangs suffer from status frustration. This can result in reaction formation where young lower-class men find themselves replacing societal norms and values with alternative ones, such as becoming a delinquent in order to gain status from within the group. Under these circumstances peer pressure may

lead to criminal activity. For example, amongst certain social groups gaining an ASBO (Anti-Social Behavioural Order) is seen as a 'badge of honour.'

- Sociologists have argued that those who conduct criminal behaviour are highly likely to suffer from mental health problems such as schizophrenia. According to recent research, 90% of all prison inmates have mental health/substance misuse problems (www.policyreview.co.uk/policytracker/policytracker11.html), a statistic that clearly backs up the validity of this argument.
- Lack of job opportunities in areas plagued by high levels of crime is linked to relative deprivation, a sociological term defined as "the excess of expectations over opportunities" (http://www.acumenlegal.com/Criminal_Law/). A denial of legitimate job opportunities within deprived areas of the country, combined with a strong desire for material possessions, could be seen as a cause of crime. Having said this, we need to recognise that the majority of poor people never undertake any form of criminal behaviour.
- According to the New Right perspective crime is strongly linked to a breakdown in traditional norms and values. New Right theorists also claim that the decline in the number of nuclear families and the rise in lone-parent families/cohabitating couples with children have resulted in higher levels of crime amongst certain groups within society. This is particularly noticeable amongst boys raised without a strong male role model.
- The Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has argued that people steal status items (such as an iPod) in order to appear 'normal' in our highly materialistic society. In a culture where status and identity is so closely related to material possessions, it could be argued that materialism is a factor behind criminal activity.
- When considering the causes of crime sociologists have focused upon the failure of the prison service to adequately rehabilitate ex-offenders back into society. This has contributed to a very high rate of re-offending amongst former inmates. This is a particular problem amongst young male offenders, where the rate of re-offending stands at 74% (<http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/print.asp?id=339>).
- In a small number of cases crime may be the result of strong religious/political beliefs. Terrorist activity is often related to such beliefs, and whereas terrorism goes back to the time of Guy Fawkes the threat of terrorism has increased significantly since the attacks in America on September 11th 2001. Such activity has been difficult for the authorities to trace due to mistrust of the police within certain communities and the existence of ghettos within British society. Students of sociology should also be aware that paramilitaries in Northern Ireland have conducted criminal activity for many years within both the Protestant and Catholic communities. Protestors conducting in direct action on behalf of a political cause also break the law.
- One of the most straight-forward causes of crime occurs when an individual develops an addiction to drugs, alcohol, gambling, etc. Addicts often steal in order to satisfy their habit, and some even fall into a life of prostitution.

- The socio-biological school of thought claims that criminals are biologically inferior to others. For instance during research undertaken in Italian prisons Cesare Lombroso claimed that criminals could be identified by their physical features. His argument was closely linked to widespread assumptions held at that time about evolution. Although Lombroso's views are now deeply unfashionable, there is still some validity to the socio-biology school of thought. For example, recent studies have shown that some criminals have a relatively high level of testosterone (<http://www.medicinenet.com/script/main/art.asp?articlekey=51013>). Chemical imbalances might also be linked to criminal behaviour⁵¹.
- Sociologists have also claimed that violent images can instigate criminal behaviour amongst certain people. Whereas the media often sensationalise stories about violent computer games/videos and so-called 'copycat' criminals, any actual correlation between violent images and criminal activity is very difficult to prove.

On a final note, there are a whole host of less significant factors that could be linked to criminal activity – such as ignorance of the law or a need to exert power over other people. The latter is common in relation to sexual crime such as rape. At this stage it should be clear that the answer to this question holds many different elements, and a good sociologist needs to weigh up each of the possible reasons in order to arrive at a persuasive conclusion.

What is deviance?

Deviance consists of behaviour that differs from the norms, values and mores of society. There are several illustrations of deviant behaviour such as using offensive language, writing graffiti on walls and substance abuse. As with the issue of crime, there is a debate within Sociology over the causes of such behaviour and its wider sociological significance.

The most common source of deviant behaviour derives from subcultures – particularly gangs – and it is interesting to note that when members of a subculture break the norms, mores and values of society they are actually conforming to what is acceptable behaviour within their own subculture. It is also interesting to note that behaviour considered deviant in one generation may be thought of as acceptable in another. The contrast between what is deviant behaviour in one culture and acceptable in another should also be of interest to any budding sociologist.

What is the difference between crime and deviance?

You will not be surprised to learn that virtually all criminal acts consist of deviant behaviour. This is because a crime consists of breaking the law and as laws derive from societal norms and values crime itself is an act of deviant behaviour. In contrast, not all deviant behaviour consists of breaking the law.

⁵¹ Lombroso viewed criminals as backward people exhibiting primitive behaviour and therefore the opposite of civilised people.

What is the significance of the term master status?

The impact of labelling certain groups and certain behaviour as deviant is of considerable interest to sociologists. Labelling people in a negative way can of course result in a self-fulfilling prophecy. For example, Aaron Cicourel discovered that people working for the Californian police held a stereotype as to what a young offender might be (black, working-class and with a rebellious attitude towards authority figures). He found that labelling from the police resulted in higher rates of crime amongst those groups being labelled. Some years later, an official inquiry held in the UK into police attitudes during the 1990s identified the existence of a "canteen culture" that generated a negative view of black people and reflected the "institutionalised racism" of the police force (MacPherson report, 1999). Such labelling may of course be linked to the relatively higher levels of crime amongst black people⁵².

When considering the impact of labelling we need to identify and discuss the term master status. In simple terms, master status is a label attached to someone, usually in the context of deviant behaviour. Over time that label becomes the most important aspect about that individual, both for the individual themselves and for how other members of society react to that individual. Obvious examples include labels such as thief, drug addict, prostitute, gang member, criminal, etc. Most of these labels tend to be expressed in a colloquial and highly negative manner (such as "he's a druggie" or "she's a whore") which leaves no-one in any doubt of the level of disapproval within society for such actions.

The effect of labelling someone in this context is, of course, highly negative in terms of that person's self-esteem. From the individual's point of view, a master status is very difficult to shake off. All aspects of that person's behaviour tend to be seen through the prism of the master status, thus the impact of the label tends to be reinforced over time. It often changes the way an individual feels about themselves and can result in that person conforming to the label itself, thus reinforcing the bad situation they already find themselves in. This becomes a problem not just for the individual but for society itself.

Why do women commit less crime than men?

According to research conducted by the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies at King's College London;

- There are currently 4,500 women held in prisons throughout England and Wales and women consist of almost 6 % of the total prison population.
- In 2005 there were 30.7 million females compared with 29.5 million males in the UK population, yet male offenders in England and Wales outnumbered female offenders by more than four to one (<http://www.crimeinfo.org.uk/servlet/factsheetservlet?command=viewfactsheet&factsheetid=110&category=factsheets>).

Sociologists are interested in the question "why do women commit less crime than men?" because of what it reveals about gender differences within

⁵² On this point, it is interesting to note that according to a recent study jurors show greater leniency towards ethnic minorities due to perceived racism within the criminal justice system (Times, 13/6/07, p.9). A good sociologist must be aware of all aspects of the issues/question presented and of the wider sociological significance.

society and how they relate to criminal activity. One of the most important factors we need to consider is the impact of primary and secondary socialisation. From an early age, girls are encouraged to adopt and conform to traditional feminine characteristics (such as being nurturing, submissive, caring and placing the needs of others above themselves). These characteristics are as far removed from the stereotype of criminal activity as one could wish to be. As we have considered in previous Chapters, the impact of socialisation upon one's identity and behaviour is hugely significant. In contrast, boys are socialised into masculine characteristics (such as acting in a physical manner and competing with other males over their place within a hierarchy) which can - in certain situations - result in criminal activity.

Secondly, women have far less opportunities to conduct in criminal activity. During childhood girls receive a greater level of protection from physical/dangerous activity than boys, and during adolescence girls are given less freedom by their parents than teenage boys due to fears that they are more vulnerable to physical/sexual attack. By the time a young woman leaves the parental home she will gain a greater level of freedom, but this is often short-lived because during the life course she is likely to become a mother, which once again greatly limits the opportunities available to conduct in criminal activity. Within the overwhelming majority of societies women bear the main responsibility for emotional work within the family. This often consists of taking care of children and their male partners, although this may also involve looking after an elderly relative. Women therefore have far less chance to conduct in criminal activity than men. They may also be more conscious of how criminal activity might stigmatise both themselves and their family. The judgement of others may be the most powerful deterrent of all!

A third factor to consider is peer pressure. Females tend to strongly disapprove of deviant/criminal behaviour amongst other females, although the rising number of girl gangs does to some extent challenge this argument. In addition, girls do not have to prove themselves in the same way that boys have to validate their masculinity amongst their peers. Males face a much greater degree of peer pressure to conduct in behaviour that might result in breaking the law. This is particularly relevant in situations where an authority figure is involved in some way.

Women also face less pressure to be the breadwinner within the family. Whilst a man who cannot provide for his family may feel less of a man, a woman is much less likely to face this issue. Women may also have a wider network of people who will assist them in times of difficulty. However, another reason why women commit less crime than men may be due to biological (as opposed to societal) factors. Studies have shown that male criminals often have a very high level of testosterone, and the fact that male offenders outnumber female offenders in England and Wales by more than four to one may well have some link with hormones. Testosterone can instigate aggressive behaviour, whereas oestrogen does not. Females also place far less emphasis upon taking risks than testosterone-fuelled males. Inevitably, this may result in a higher level of crime amongst males because of the risk in getting caught.

Why are British teenagers some of the worst behaved in Europe?

According to research conducted in 2006 by the Institute for Public Policy Research, British teenagers are among the worst behaved in Europe (<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/6109916.stm>). The report claims that the principal reason for such behaviour is largely cultural. Researchers found that southern European nations with a strong Catholic tradition and a focus on the family did not suffer from the same level of juvenile delinquency as their British counterparts. It is the norm within such societies for families to socialise together on a regular basis, providing children with the love and comfort they need. Children are also presented with a more positive view of the family, which results in greater self-esteem and less of a need to seek the approval of their peers within a subculture. Scandinavian countries with an extensive welfare state and a strong sense of social solidarity also have better behaved children than their British counterparts. As well as cultural factors, sociologists have argued that the relatively high rate of anti-social behaviour amongst British teenagers can in part be attributed to the decline of manufacturing industries since the 1980s (an issue considered in the previous Chapter). In parts of the country with a high incidence of anti-social behaviour young males have been denied the sense of identity and source of income that was readily available to their fathers' generation. Combined with an anti-school/authority culture, the outlook for these young men is very bleak. Statistics confirm that those in education employment or training (NEETs) are more likely to turn towards a life of crime and anti-social behaviour than other members of society⁵³.

In contrast to other European countries British children miss out on the development of those so-called "soft skills" necessary for one's social and personal development. Soft skills are becoming increasingly important within an economy heavily dependent upon the service (or tertiary) sector. The IPPR report claims that social skills are as important, if not more important, than the academic qualifications taught via formal education. Trends within the structure of the family - such as an increase in the level of divorce and the growing number of single-parents - is another factor we might consider. This argument is closely associated with the New Right perspective.

Having discussed this question in detail it must be said that only a minority of young people engage in anti-social behaviour. It is undoubtedly the case that British teenagers are unfairly stereotyped by the media. Sociologists describe this phenomenon as deviancy amplification, a term used to describe a situation in which the media focuses upon the anti-social behaviour of a deviant group (such as young people wearing hoodies). This can often result in (and reflect) a moral panic amongst many people within society. As sociology students, you need to be aware of deviancy amplification and the influence of the media (an issue which goes back to Chapter 2 on 'Identity and Behaviour').

Why do young people commit more crime than any other group within society?

Sociologists have often considered why the peak age of criminality is during one's teenage years. There are several factors we might identify;

- Young people are much more likely to be a member of a subculture, usually as a search in defining one's identity, and criminal activity tends

⁵³ At the time of writing there were over a million NEETs aged between 16 and 24 (This Week, 1/9/07, p.20) with the number of NEETs having increased by 130,000 since 1997 (Times, 11/9/07, p.14).

to be high amongst certain subcultures. The most obvious example consists of gangs whose members are prone to feuding and contesting territory with other gangs. This is a major problem within many deprived inner-city areas and has led to a spate of shootings in cities such as London, Manchester and Liverpool.

- Deviant behaviour amongst young people may be understood as part of challenge to traditional notions of authority within society. Young people have often questioned existing structures of authority and deviant behaviour is undoubtedly a part of that. From the hippy generation of the 1960s to the chavs of today, young people have always questioned authority and rebelled against normal codes of behaviour. Whilst this can be a positive thing, it can also result in criminal activity.
- Youths are often negatively labelled by other members of society, which is a particular problem amongst those who feel there is very little chance of escaping from a life of little/no job opportunities. They may feel that society has given up on them. In such cases, young people may need love and understanding from other members of society (particularly their parents). This point was addressed by the Conservative leader David Cameron during his so-called "hug-a-hoodie" speech in 2006.
- Adolescent males often experience peer pressure which consists of trying to prove their masculinity. This often takes the form of dares and risks. Somewhat inevitably, this aversion to risky behaviour can result in criminal activity⁵⁴.
- Young people are more likely than older people to be part of the underclass. Members of the underclass feel cut off from society and adopt a set of norms and values that may contribute towards criminal activity.
- Teenagers have far less responsibility than adults and a greater level of freedom from their parents than young children. With fewer limitations upon their behaviour teenagers are therefore more inclined than other social groups to commit crime.
- Teenagers are more likely to pursue a hedonistic lifestyle than other social groups, and some forms of criminal activity (such as shoplifting and joy riding) are often associated with a rush of adrenaline. A low boredom threshold is also be related to this point.
- A strong desire for commercial goods in order to gain status and identity, combined with a lack of employability within the workplace, may on occasions tempt certain teenagers towards committing criminal activity. This usually consists of stealing in order to acquire material items.

What is the hidden figure of crime?

According to government statistics, the level of crime has fallen by nearly a third since 1997 and the chances of being a victim of crime is at its lowest for a quarter of a century (Economist, 9/9/06, p.38). However, we need to treat these figures with considerable caution. The hidden (or dark) figure of crime is a sociological term used to describe the level of unreported crime within society. As the term clearly implies, the actual level of crime is always higher than the statistics suggest. The government aims to address this problem by conducting a victim study called the British Crime Survey, which most sociologists accept provides a more accurate picture of crime levels. As sociologists, we need to consider the possible reasons why crime goes unrecorded and unreported.

⁵⁴ However, as males progress along the life course the need to prove their masculinity via risk taking and criminal behaviour declines significantly.

Why does the hidden figure of crime exist?

Perhaps the most significant reason why a victim of crime may decide not to contact the police is the low likelihood of gaining a conviction. The clear-up rate of crime currently stands at 20%

(<http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/news/article-23412867-details/Tens+of+thousands+of+CCTV+cameras,+yet+80%25+of+crime+unsolved/article.do>), although this figure differs considerably from one crime to another. Without an eyewitness or CCTV footage a victim of crime may feel that the effort required to report the crime is ultimately not worth the hassle.

Victims of crime may also fear reprisals from the perpetrators. This is undoubtedly a very strong deterrent from actually reporting a crime. For example, prostitutes often face the threat of punishment if they contact the police. Their families may also be threatened, even if those family members live in another country. Moreover, those operating in criminal activity rarely wish to report a crime for fear of attracting the attention of the police.

Another factor we need to consider is the degree of shame and embarrassment felt by the victim. This is a particular problem amongst victims of sexual crime, who sometimes feel that others might stigmatise them in some way. Certain cultures within society also find it very difficult to accept that such crimes exist amongst their members, particularly within the family. This can usually result in strong peer pressure placed upon the victim to “keep quiet.” Victims may also feel that the authorities may not treat them in an appropriately sensitive manner. Although it is difficult to identify the true extent of this problem, research conducted by the Fawcett Society claimed that 40% of adults who have been raped tell no one about their traumatic experience (Times, 26/11/07, p.23). This problem is exacerbated by the low clear-up rate in rape cases of just 6% (Guardian, 14/1/08, p.1).

Students should also be aware that in certain parts of the UK (such as inner-city areas of Northern Ireland) the authorities responsible for law and order are not trusted within the local community. Within such areas crime is rarely reported to the official authorities. Instead, punishments for criminal activity are conducted by the unofficial ‘police’ who consist of paramilitary groups such as the Ulster Defence Association and the Irish Republican Army. A form of street justice operates which does not register on the official statistics. This may take the form of a practise dating back to the Crusades called ‘tarring and feathering’ – where hot tar is poured over the alleged criminal before feathers are thrown at them. Kneecapping is another common method of street punishment by Republican/Loyalist paramilitaries.

The attitude and response of the police is an important sociological factor in the context of this particular question. Disadvantaged groups within society sometimes feel that the authorities will not deal with crime in a satisfactory manner. This may be due to racist, sexist and homophobic attitudes within the police force. People who suffer mental health problems are also reluctant to report crime because they feel that the criminal justice system stigmatises them. For example according to a report published in 2007 30% of victims with mental health problems admitted telling no one about it, and of those victims around a third felt they would not be believed. 60% of those who did report a crime thought that the authorities had failed to treat them seriously

(Times, 29/11/07, p.34). In relation to this point, people who have had a negative experience of the criminal justice system in the past (for whatever reason) also tend to be put off reporting crime, and on a more mundane level, victims of so-called 'petty theft' may not think it is worth the effort to contact the police and report the crime due to the material insignificance of the item(s) stolen.

What is the difference between formal social control and informal social control?

Sanctions are the main method by which people conform to the norms and values of society. As we considered in the opening Chapter sanctions consist of both punishment and rewards. In this section of the course we are primarily concerned with punishments derived from the various methods of social control, of which there are two types (formal and informal).

Formal social control consists of official institutions designed to exert punishment for behaviour that fails to conform to the norms and values of society, particularly criminal behaviour. Informal social control consists of punishments applied in everyday situations. This may consist of little more than a show of disapproval for deviant behaviour, perhaps via one's body language. In the context of a school it may consist of being told off by the teacher or when a student is put in detention. Whatever the punishment sociologists have a keen interest in how the behaviour of individuals is influenced by formal/informal social control.

What are the agents of social control?

There are various agents of social control, many of which will already be familiar to you from our study of primary and secondary socialisation in Chapter 2. Each agent of social control has the ability to impose a punishment upon those individuals who do not conform to various norms and values.

The most influential agents of social control are – of course – parents. As we have discussed before, it is undoubtedly the case that children are greatly influenced by their parents in many aspects of their behaviour. Even when a child leaves the parental home the influence of parents does not entirely diminish. Many children aim to seek the approval of parents in some way, and will behave in a certain manner in order to avoid the disapproval of their parents. As such, sanctions imposed by parents will greatly affect a child's behaviour. Parents are therefore the first and most important agent of social control.

Over the life course an individual will interact with many other aspects of social control. For example within schools teachers impose a degree of social control over the behaviour of students. This is because we often seek the approval of others and wish to avoid the condemnation of others. Outside of school, peer groups can have a huge impact upon a student's behaviour. For instance, a student might change their behaviour (particularly their accent and manners) in order to fit in with a particular group. This is because failure to conform may result in rejection from that particular group. As you are no doubt aware, the approval/disapproval of others can have a major impact upon our self-esteem.

Both religion and the media are agents of informal social control. In the case of religion, rewards and punishments are imposed by a higher entity than anything that exists on Earth. As such, religion can have a huge influence upon an individual's behaviour. Religious values may also be reinforced via families, schools (particularly single-faith schools) and to a lesser extent peer groups. The impact of the media is, however, less straight-forward. Whilst few would deny that the media can influence an individual's behaviour, it is very difficult for sociologists to identify a tangible link. Take the case of young girls pressurised into being thin due to the media's fixation upon what a beautiful woman should look like. This may take the form of TV programmes presenting size zero models as the feminine ideal, or advertisements for slimming products aimed at females. Whilst the media may have some influence upon female consumers, cases of anorexia and bulimia may be due to psychological problems and a plea for parental/societal attention rather than the media itself.

Formal social control is imposed via those institutions which form the criminal justice system. All societies have agents of formal social control whose aim is to punish behaviour that breaks the law. Without deterrents such as prison and the death penalty anarchy would ensue and society would be characterised by what the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes called "a war of all against all." Formal social control is very much the last resort within society. In most cases, agents of informal social control prevent most of us from committing criminal activity.

How do various sociological perspectives interpret the importance of social control?

As mentioned in the previous question, no society could function effectively without some form of punishment for behaviour that breaks the law, although what one society depicts as criminal behaviour differs considerably to another. For example, in societies based upon Sharia law adultery is punishable by stoning the perpetrator. The fairness of the legal process also differs greatly from one society to another. For instance in a dictatorship, the criminal justice system is set up to punish people who are perceived of as a threat to the established order. This may take the form of torture and imprisonment for trade unionists, intellectuals and non-violent pressure groups. However in a democracy, the legal process is much fairer. For example in the UK a suspect is innocent until proven guilty and has the right to a fair trial. Having said all this, it will not surprise you to find that there is considerable disagreement amongst sociologists as to the significance of social control.

Functionalists believe that various agents of social control are vital towards the maintenance of an orderly society. The New Right takes a very similar view. However, the two main conflict perspectives upon society (Marxism and feminism) take a very different stance. Karl Marx argued that the economic structure of society (capitalism) determines the superstructure (which includes education, politics and in the context of this question the law). Social control is therefore designed to maintain the status quo within society and in doing so protect the dominant position of the bourgeoisie and ensure that the proletariat remain subordinate. The Marxist view reflects

the old adage about the legal system - "property is nine-tenths the law." Feminists take a very similar stance to Marxists in terms of how the various agents of social control maintain the power of one group (men) over another (women).

Is society based upon consensus or conflict?

The final question we will consider in this section is fundamental towards an understanding of how society operates. In order to answer this, we need to analyse the four main sociological perspectives and assess where they stand on this intriguing question.

The functionalist perspective claims that society is both stable and orderly and therefore characterised by a consensus in which people conform to the norms, mores and values of society. This is because functionalists view society as a human body in which each part is comparable to different organs. As such, we all have a function to play in order for society to work. One of the most important of all functionalists – Emile Durkheim – argued that members of society were held together via a moral force called a "collective consciousness" (Osborne and Van Loon, 1999, p.35). As with other functionalists, he claimed that society operated on the basis of a shared consensus. As Talcott Parsons once claimed, social life is characterised by "mutual advantage and peaceful co-operation" (Osborne and Van Loon, 1999, p.92). The New Right takes a very similar view to functionalists, claiming that society would benefit greatly from a return to traditional values in order to bind disparate members of society together.

The Marxist perspective claims that all societies are based upon class conflict between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. There is a deep and irreconcilable division within society in which power is unevenly distributed between the two classes. The bourgeoisie use their power to exploit and manipulate the proletariat via the apparatus of the state (which includes the criminal justice system). Only a full-scale revolution can transform society from one based upon conflict and competition to one based upon equality and co-operation. This type of society would be called a Communist society in which the State would wither away and the people would be free.

The feminist perspective states that society is divided between men and women with power concentrated into the hands of the former. Society is based upon patriarchy in which women are kept in a powerless position. Only a major shift in the distribution of power between the genders can change the basis of society, although there are significant differences amongst feminists (such as liberal feminists, Marxist feminists and radical feminists) as to how this might occur. So whereas feminists (and Marxists) claim that society is characterised by conflict, functionalists and advocates of the New Right take an entirely opposite view. Having considered all sides of the argument, what do you think?

Now that you have finished this section on Crime, Deviance and Social Control you may wish to answer the following questions;

Revision Questions – Crime, deviance & social control

- 1 Define the term crime.
- 2 Both feminists and Marxists take a conflict view of society. Which theoretical perspective takes a consensual view of society?
- 3 Define the term deviance.
- 4 What is the rate of re-offending amongst young males?
- 5 List the various punishments issued against someone who has broken the law.
- 6 Define the term status frustration.
- 7 What do sociologists mean by the hidden figure of crime?
- 8 What is the detection rate in cases of rape?
- 9 What is the difference between white - collar crime and blue - collar crime?
- 10 What is the name of the sociologist associated with the term status frustration?
- 11 Give an example of white collar crime.
- 12 Name an agent of formal social control.
- 13 Name an agent of informal social control.
- 14 At what rate do male offenders in England and Wales outnumber female offenders?
- 15 What is meant by the term "juvenile delinquency"?
- 16 What was the name of the sociologist who described society as characterised by "mutual advantage and peaceful co-operation"?
- 17 Define the term deviancy amplification.
- 18 Name three effects of a high level of crime upon a neighbourhood.
- 19 Describe the process of tarring and feathering.
- 20 What was the name of the philosopher who described a state of nature as "a war of all against all"?