

### What is crime?

An activity that breaks the law and receives an official sanction distributed by the legal system, e.g. prison.

### What is deviance?

An activity that goes against social norms and values and/or society's expectations, e.g. verbal abuse.

### Downes & Rock:

*'deviance may be considered as banned or controlled behaviour which is likely to attract punishment or disapproval.'*

**REMEMBER: all crimes are deviant, but not all deviant acts are crimes.**

## Crime and deviance as a social construct

**Foucault** argues that definitions of criminal deviance has changed throughout history, e.g. homosexuality, smoking.

**Plummer** argues a deviant act depends on others' reactions and/or the situation, e.g. a soldier can kill in combat but not in the street, nakedness is acceptable in the home but not in public.

**Becker:** *'Deviancy is not a quality of the act a person commits but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an 'offender'. Deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label.'* He argued that the same behaviour can receive different interpretations depending on the situation (also the class and status of the person).

**Deviance as relative:** What is deviant to some may not be to others, e.g. some African tribes allow underage girls to marry, however this is illegal in Western societies.

**Status of the person:** An act by someone in power may not be considered as deviant as those without, e.g. an MP vs. an unemployed person.

**Deviancy amplification:** A method used by the mass media whereby a deviant act is increased due to exaggeration and causes a moral panic.

Deviance changes over time and place as values, norms and other social expectations change, therefore it is relative.

### Moral panics (Stan Cohen):

A moral panic occurs when *'a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests.'*

Moral panics occur due to a deviancy amplification spiral, i.e. a process whereby a deviant act is exaggerated by the media and worsens due to society's reaction.

Some examples include: the Mods and Rockers incident in the 60s, publication of celebrities as paedophiles, terrorism and Islamophobia after 9/11, football hooliganism in the 80s, benefit fraud, muggings in the 80s (Stuart Hall), etc.

**SOCIAL CONTROL:** The way that the norms, rules, laws and structures of society regulate human behaviour. It is a necessary part of social order, for societies could not exist without controlling their populations. Social control is achieved through social, economic, and institutional structures.

**Formal social control:** Institutions whose responsibility is to enforce the law in a formal manner, e.g. the criminal justice system or obtaining a record and a prison sentence.

**Informal social control:** Agents that are responsible for enforcing social control but not in a legal manner (via norms, values and society's expectations) e.g. family, school, religion. These are based upon a range of sanctions including a frown, comments and/or exclusion.

**Actuarialism: Feeley and Simon** argue the division of people into potentially deviant groups (via the labelling process) and therefore controlling them on this basis.

**Labelling: Becker** (interactionist) argues that labelling is a method used to control people's behaviour.

**Foucault** believes that society is a 'battleground between competing interests'.

**Stan Cohen** (subculturalist) argues that subtle methods are used to control the public, including CCTV and tagging (using curfews), and private companies are enlisted by the state to enforce these methods. **This is a process of privatisation.**

**Rusche and Kirchheimer** (marxists) argue the punishment as a form of control that is received by the lower classes reflect the interests of the ruling classes, e.g. slavery.

**Durkheim** (functionalist) believes that informal social control coerces people to conformity.

**Right Realists** support a **zero tolerance policy** towards crime and deviance, e.g. one that the Mayor of NY, Rudi Giuliani, enforced to clear up crime in the city.

**Don't forget criticism  
– this is also important for the exam!**