Create a poster using some recent headlines on girls' criminality. Include reasons why we may question the headlines and the statistics.

An evaluation of the feminist analysis of crime and deviance

◆ The law may now serve women's interests rather than men's. This is the view of groups like Fathers for Justice, who argue that divorce law is now heavily weighted against men.

◆ Women and men's traditional socialisation has now changed. Many feminist accounts have ignored the way women can now participate in many areas of life and are free from control.

◆ Feminist explanations have ignored or underplayed the extent of crimes committed against men by women. Women are not just victims of domestic abuse; they also inflict abuse on their partners.

Geographical location

It is clear from the official data that crime rates vary according to location. Many of these trends may be explained by some of the theories that we have examined. Marxists may point to the poverty present in many cities, while functionalists may argue that there are greater chances of status frustration developing. However, a group of sociologists known as the Chicago School argue that there is something distinctive about cities which produces high crime rates.

Shaw and McKay (1942) developed a concentric zone model of city development that plotted crime according to the location of the offender. They argued that the city could be divided into five concentric zones. In particular they argued that zone two was prone to high levels of delinquency and that this was the result of a different value system emerging. Zone two was where many immigrants came to live as housing was cheap. These immigrants moved out as they became more successful and were replaced by the next group. The result of this is that the zone of transition experiences a high degree of social disorganisation and there are fewer controls on the people who live there. There is little chance of strong collective bonds and shared values developing. Shaw and McKay later redeveloped this idea to argue that the distinctive values were passed on from generation to generation by a process of cultural transmission (despite a high population turnover) where younger boys learn specific techniques and values from older boys. They argued that these values did not develop in other areas as children in wealthier neighbourhoods were subject to much greater control.

◆ These ideas have been influential and it is possible to see them in the work of a variety of writers. For instance, Baldwin and Bottoms (1976) argue that some council estates are prone to a process of 'tipping'. They argue that if an estate starts to develop an antisocial group within it, those who can will leave, while families of those who are antisocial will be attracted to the estate by their family ties and connections. The informal controls on people will start to break down and the estate will have been tipped – it has become a problem estate. Sampson (1997) has argued that violent crime is the result of the community's inability to achieve its objectives and a failure to establish trust and shared expectations about intervention when order is threatened. This occurs in neighbourhoods where poverty, family instability and high mobility occur.

Ethnicity and crime

According to the statistics, some ethnic minorities are more predisposed towards criminality and are also more likely to be victims of crime. A variety of models are used to explain this. In recent years attention has shifted from Afro-Caribbeans towards Asian criminality. The approach used in explaining the figures is also useful in this area. Some argue that crime is a real problem and others that there are problems with the statistics.

Crime as a real problem

Some early functionalists argued that crime and deviance could be understood by examining the culture of ethnic minorities. In particular they developed a host–immigrant model of ethnic relations, which argued that conflict was temporary. In particular it was argued that immigrants brought their own culture with them. Their distinctive values and norms represented a challenge to the culture of the host society, which meant that there would be conflict as people act according to their values and beliefs. An example of this can be found in the argument of a chief constable in 2008 that drink-driving was becoming a problem because East European immigrants thought it was acceptable to drink and drive. However, according to functionalists like Park (1950) these conflicts will disappear as the immigrant culture becomes absorbed into the host culture. There is a slight modification of the mainstream culture, but the major change occurs in the immigrant culture, which becomes assimilated. This means that immigrants lose their distinctive values – the source of conflict. Within this model there are two elements. The first is that this is a process that will happen as ethnic minorities come into contact with the mainstream culture – they shop, go to school and find jobs in the host society, and this means they will change, sometimes over generations. In addition to the first aspect of this model, which emphasises 'will', there is also a 'should'. In essence there is an expectation that ethnic minorities *should* lose their distinctive traditions and identity. The Irish community is held up as evidence here. They came to Britain in the 1800s and encountered many problems and racism. However as generations have passed so too has a sense of the Irish community in the UK. Occasionally we hear echoes from the past in the form of racist jokes about 'stupid' Irish people, but much of the discrimination they faced has died and so too has their own distinctive (deviant) behaviour. This model fell out of favour and politicians began to espouse multiculturalism. Many policies were developed to celebrate cultural difference and diversity in a climate of tolerance and respect. However, there are signs that many politicians are abandoning multiculturalism. The home-grown nature of British Islamic **terrorism** (2005) and the riots of 2001 have created calls for ethnic minorities to be assimilated rather than accepted as different. However, there are a number of problems with this approach:

1   The model presents a unified image of the host culture, but one may ask what British culture is. What is it that ethnic minorities are supposed to be absorbed into?

2   In focusing on the immigrant culture, it neatly sidesteps the problems created by the host culture. Many ethnic minorities may wonder why they are expected to conform to a culture that emphasises drunkenness and its effects in major towns and cities every Friday and Saturday night.

3   This model tends to emphasise the problems created by the immigrants rather than examining the racism in the host society. As we shall see, this racism may well provoke conflict and create anger amongst ethnic minorities.

Marxists reject the cultural arguments put forward by functionalists. They argue that conflicts over race are caused by the capitalist system and that capitalism generates racism. According to Castles and Kosack (1973) this is because the capitalist class can use ethnic minorities as cheap labour; racism serves to justify their low wages and poor living conditions. At the same time, racism means that white workers who are unemployed or paid low wages, unable to get a good school for their child or adequate care when they are sick, blame ethnic minorities: they direct their anger at the 'other'. Their anger is misdirected: the real source of their low wages and poor life chances is the exploitation created by the capitalist class, whose dominance is maintained by racist ideologies perpetuated in institutions like the media and schools. In some ways this model attempts to explain the victimisation of ethnic minorities, but later writers have also developed an explanation of black criminality.

Hall et al. (1979) argue that capitalism is prone to booms and slumps. Ethnic minorities are made redundant in the slumps. If they are lucky they get the worst jobs in the labour market. Turning

to crime is motivated by economic hardship, and hustling, dealing drugs or prostitution are ways of making money. Lea and Young, left realists, argue that crime is the result of relative deprivation and marginalisation (1984).

This argument is a challenge to those who argue that ethnic minority crime is a reaction to racism and the idea that crime is part of a political struggle against the white oppressor (Gilroy, 1983). This challenge is sustained by the fact that much ethnic minority crime is directed at ethnic minorities rather than the white colonial oppressor. However, Desai (1999) has argued that Asian crime has increased in recent years. This is due to groups of Asian males who are willing to move outside their own cultural group in a way their parents did not. They are more willing to stand up against racism, sometimes aggressively, to defend their community and fight for their families and friends. Their violence may be seen as a defence against a society that has marginalised them.

Abbas (2005) argues that the current climate of Islamophobia has the potential to make Asian crime and victimisation much worse. He argues that there have been more attacks on Asians since 9/11 and that many policies have continued to send out negative images to the Asian community. The danger is that the increased stereotyping of Islam as a negative force will have a negative impact. In particular the marginalisation that ethnic minorities face will create a spiral of deviance and conflict. The more Asians are stigmatised and the greater 'the War on Terror', the more they will be pushed into the arms of the terrorists. Indeed, this may well be one of the terrorists' aims.

Activity 18

As class, research recent policies towards ethnic minorities and debate whether we should enforce assimilation or pursue multiculturalism.

Weblinks

You could look at the role of religion through research conducted by Andrew Holden, see 'Websites', page ii.

Problems with the statistics

The idea of over-representation of ethnic minorities is that the statistics on crime and ethnicity are flawed. A number of issues need to be examined. The two most important are the idea of a moral panic and the nature of the criminal justice system.

Hall et al. (1979) have argued that Afro-Caribbeans were labelled as criminal by the media. They were portrayed as being involved in robbings, knifings and murders. This was a media exaggeration, but it was believed. The panic over this new crime wave was sustained by comments by politicians, judges and police. Mugging came to be seen as a black crime, due to the coverage in the media. Hall et al. found no evidence that violent crime was either black or rising. The panic was created due to the needs of the capitalist system. At the time, capitalism was undergoing an economic crisis as inflation and unemployment were rising, and also there was a crisis of legitimation or hegemony. The focus on black crime was able to justify greater police powers over the whole population. This greater attention focused police resources on mugging and more trouble was found. Hall et al. argue that there is a reality to some crime, but their work is a useful illustration of the idea that our images of ethnicity and crime are affected by the media. The idea of a moral panic is discussed in more detail in a later section (see pages 34–36).

The notion that there is a moral panic about ethnicity can also be seen in the work of Alexander (2000). She argues that there are media concerns about Asian and in particular Muslim youth. However, she argues that while there were conflicts between Asian and black youth, the idea of an Asian gang is inaccurate, because locality and individuals were more significant than the group and the group did not treat all black men as the same. She argues that there is fragmentation and diversity in the group and that media portrayals were inaccurate.

Sociology of crime and deviance

There is also evidence that ethnic minorities are more likely to be treated differently by the criminal justice system. The Macpherson inquiry (1999), set up after the murder of Stephen Lawrence, found the police to be **institutionally racist**. The police were likely to stereotype ethnic minorities as criminal, which will affect the way they deal with ethnic minorities. Phillips and Bowling (2002) argue that the situation has changed little, because ethnic neighbourhoods are over-policed and the police use military-style methods. A study conducted by Mhlanga (1999) found that the CPS was more likely to terminate a case involving ethnic minorities. This may be an indication of the willingness of the police to put forward cases involving ethnic minorities. Hood (1992) found that the courts were more willing to give a black man a custodial sentence than a white man, and black men were also given longer prison sentences. Asian men were likely to be given even longer prison sentences than black men. Finally, self-report studies conducted by the Home Office also show that black and white people commit similar amounts of crime.

1 Create a table with the two headings below and place the different theories and ideas you have covered under the headings. It is possible to place a theory under both headings.

The statistics reveal the truth	The statistics are constructed

Functionalism   Interactionism   Studies of ethnicity
Marxism   New right   Subculture
Left realism   Feminism   New criminology

2 Explain your table to the rest of the class.

Section summary

The main theories to consider in this section are functionalism, new right, interactionism, Marxism, new criminology, subculturalism, left realism and feminism.

Use the following words to write a paragraph explaining the key themes of this section.

- Anomie
- Cultural deprivation
- Labelling
- Criminalised
- Material deprivation
- Chivalry thesis
- Institutional racism

Stretch and Challenge Activity

From your awareness of today's society, identify a modern deviant culture that may produce crime and deviance. Examine this group in relation to the theories you have learnt about and discuss how effectively the theories would explain this group.

1 Watch an episode of *Friends* and conduct a content analysis of the main male and female characters.

2 Identify ways in which the main male and female characters may be seen to be equal but different.

3 Is there evidence of equality and inequality in their roles and the way they are presented?

4 Are there ways in which the characters conform to more traditional gender stereotypes?

5 Discuss your views in class.

Gauntlett's (2008) analysis of gender representations in films since the 1990s shows men and women as having similar skills and talents to each other. He refers to films like *Spiderman 3*, *Knocked Up* and *Fantastic Four: Rise of the Silver Surfer* as examples of modern films that present a challenge to conventional masculinity by showing more traditional masculine behaviour to be fundamentally flawed. Females in these films are more assertive.

However, Gauntlett notes that men still tend to take the leading roles, act as heroes to save women, and are more likely than women to be lead characters as they get older, for example Sean Connery, Harrison Ford and Bruce Willis.

1 Use content analysis to consider three contemporary films that you have seen recently.

2 What roles did the males and females take, including lead characters?

3 What skills and talents did they have in the films?

4 Compare the differences and similarities between the male and female characters and list these.

5 Present your findings in the form of a film review.

Watch the film *Knocked Up* and discuss the gender representations within the film.

Stretch and Challenge Activity

1 Using semiology, identify the signs and codes used to convey particular messages about gender roles.

2 Find further examples of research into the use of stereotypes. Note down the key points and any evaluative comments you can make.

3 Evaluate the extent to which *Knocked Up* demonstrates a shift in representations of gender. Can you identify aspects of hegemonic gender roles within the film?

Other research into media representations of gender is less optimistic than Gauntlett's; this will be discussed later in the section when we consider feminist explanations of media representation.

Ethnicity

Media representations of **ethnicity** vary across different ethnic groups, with some groups being represented more negatively than others. As with gender, the representations also vary across media products. There are, for example, satellite channels dedicated to specific minority ethnic groups and the representations in programmes from these sources will differ from those from more mainstream sources. For example, there are channels that offer representations of ethnicity that reflect the lived experience and culture of minority ethnic groups. These channels present representations that are appreciated by their target audience but may be less engaging to groups outside of this ethnicity. In addition, the emergence of hybrid identities within minority ethnic groups adds a further layer of complexity when considering media representations, since such identities may challenge assumptions about the experience of some ethnic groups.

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Sociology of the mass media

Patterns, trends and sociological explanations

For example, fusion music that combines two or more genres drawn from minority ethnic groups can be difficult to categorise.

Research into representations of ethnicity in the media tends to find that minority ethnic groups are presented in a limited range of stereotypical roles, are under-represented and are often seen in roles constructed from a white perspective, usually because they are produced by white media professionals. It has been argued that, in terms of media representations, minority ethnic groups have been stereotyped, marginalised or excluded.

Moore et al. (2005) identify five stereotypes commonly used to portray black people in the media:

◆ as criminals, for example the word 'black' is often used in descriptions of criminals but 'white' is not generally used in this way. Hall's study *Policing the Crisis* (Hall et al., 1995) discusses the use of this stereotype

◆ as a threat – for example tabloid scares about immigrants and asylum seekers taking jobs and using the resources of the welfare state

◆ as abnormal – ways in which the media present the cultural practices of minority ethnic groups as odd, for example arranged marriages

◆ as unimportant – for example the way in which priority is given to the reporting of issues affecting white people

◆ as dependent – images of less developed countries tend to focus on what has been described as 'coup–war–famine–starvation syndrome' with little discussion of their exploitation by western countries.

The view that the media adopt a negative approach to representing minority ethnic groups is supported in a classic study by van Dijk (1991). He found evidence of unconscious racism in media reporting of minority ethnic groups. Van Dijk argued that the negative language used and lack of reference to quotes from minority ethnic sources resulted in biased reporting that demonstrated a white perspective on news stories.

Malik (2002) is concerned that contemporary media do not accurately reflect the ethnic reality of the contemporary UK.

'The reality of a lived multiculturalism is not represented on British television and the media in general can by no means be seen as ethnically neutral. Although it is now common to see Black and Asian people on British television who do not necessarily function to solely "carry" the race theme, the repertoire of imagery still remains limited. We rarely see strong Asian women ... or Black factual commentators outside sports programmes, and there are still too few Black people actually reaching the industry's boardrooms. Television is still far too "White"'; an admission made by the BBC's newly appointed Director General, Greg Dyke, following his visit around BBC departments (Dyke said this in a speech delivered at the CRE's Race in the Media Awards in April 2000) (Malik, 2002, page 366).

1 List the concerns expressed by Malik about the British media.

2 Do you agree with Greg Dyke that television is still far too 'White'? Construct arguments for and against this view.

Stretch and Challenge Activity

What do you think Malik means by 'a lived multiculturalism'? Can you think of examples of films or television programmes that represent the reality of 'a lived multiculturalism'?

Barker (1999) notes developments but also sees ambiguities in the representations of minority ethnic groups in the soap opera *Eastenders*. The drama can be seen as representing a multi-ethnic community, since a range of black and Asian characters take up significant roles. However, the series has been criticised for using stereotypes by casting Asians as doctors and shopkeepers. Barker also refers to the way the programme can be seen as failing to engage with wider structural forms of racism by presenting it as the product of an individual character trait. Finally, he draws attention to the criticism that the black and Asian characters take a more marginal place in the drama and that the central characters are white.

1 Identify the characters in *Eastenders* who come from a minority ethnic background.

2 How far do characters from minority ethnic backgrounds conform to ethnic stereotypes?

3 Are they central characters in the programme?

4 Are issues of ethnicity and racism considered? If so, how are they dealt with?

Overall, research points to some change in media representations of ethnic groups, with a greater diversity of roles and more positive images being portrayed. However, these changes are not accepted uncritically and there are concerns that minority ethnic groups continue to be presented in stereotyped and marginalised ways. It is also important to be aware that representations vary across different ethnic groups and can also be seen to respond to wider social factors, for example it is argued that the impact of the events of 9/11 has changed representations of some Asian groups.

Further evidence to support the view that media representations of ethnic minority groups are problematic can be found later in this subsection when we consider the neo-Marxist explanation of media representations.

@ Weblinks

Useful information on the experience of minority ethnic groups and discussion of media representations of such experience can be found in web-based resources and, in particular, in blogs that allow the exchange of ideas, including blogs on 'ethnicity' and on 'hybrid identity' (see 'Websites', page ii).

Age

Research into media representations of **age** tends to focus on two particular aspects: representations of young and old. Representations of young people are also addressed on pages 34–36 and 133–134, where moral panics are considered.

As with media representations of gender and ethnicity, research into age has found the use of stereotypes across a range of media products.

Draw up a list of the stereotypes that you think are most likely to be used to represent young and old people. Discuss which group is most likely to be negatively represented and the reasons why this might be the case.

Representations of youth in the early 1950s offered positive images that reflected and celebrated the relative freedom and prosperity being enjoyed by young people. More recently, youth culture is frequently represented in the media as a problem: young people are seen as deviating from society's norms and values and as a threat. Dominant images of young people tend to link them with binge-drinking, drug-taking, knife crime and other violent incidents.

Osgerby (2002) studied the shifts in media representations of youth in the second half of the twentieth century, although he noted a recurring theme of 'youth-as-trouble', a phrase coined by Hebdige (1988). Osgerby contends that shifts in media representations of youth reflect wider cultural developments and mirror the spirit of the times. He illustrates this view by referring to the way in which the media represented youth positively in the 1950s and early 1960s in a post-war mood of hope and prosperity. This contrasted with darker images of teenage violence in the 1970s and 1980s, which seemed to reflect concerns about growing lawlessness and social breakdown.

Research into older age groups similarly indicates a changing scene. Researchers note a shift away from narrow stereotypes of 'grumpy old men' and 'doddery old codgers' towards more varied images that acknowledge changes in ageing and the social trend towards older and younger groups sharing leisure interests.

Biggs (1993) identifies trends in the representations of ageing including:

◆ older people appearing in considerable numbers in soap operas

◆ negative portrayals of old age in sitcoms

◆ a move towards a more active view of older people, in which old people are portrayed as participating in leisure activities and in society as a whole.