Your notes

GCSE Sociology: revision notes

Patterns of crime

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Patterns in official statistics

- Class: working-class people are over-represented in official crime statistics and prisons. But white-collar and **corporate crime** is less likely to be detected or prosecuted.
- Gender: most offenders convicted are male, especially for violent crime. Women are more likely to be convicted of offences such as shoplifting.
- Age: offending peaks in the late teens and early twenties, then falls.
- Ethnicity: Black people are over-represented in **stop and search** and prison statistics. Explanations include police racism and targeting, as well as social and economic disadvantage.
- **Locality**: crime rates are generally higher in urban areas than rural ones, such as in Guernsey's quieter parishes compared with big cities.

Explaining the patterns

- **Official statistics** may reflect policing practices and labelling rather than who really commits crime.
- Poverty and lack of opportunity may explain some patterns, as may **gender socialisation** (boys encouraged to be aggressive and take risks).

Victims

- Young men are the group most likely to be victims of violent crime; women are more likely to be victims of domestic abuse and sexual offences.

Key terms

Official statistics	Numbers collected by the government, such as police recorded crime.
Corporate crime	Crime committed by companies for their benefit.
Stop and search	Police powers to stop and search people.

Over-representation	A group appearing more in statistics than its share of the population.
Locality	The area where crime happens.
Gender socialisation	Learning expected behaviour for one's gender.

Quick questions

Cover the answers and test yourself: remembering is what makes it stick.

1. Which age group commits the most crime according to official statistics?
2. Which gender makes up most convicted offenders?
3. Which crime is less likely to be detected?
4. Who is over-represented in stop and search statistics?
5. Where are crime rates generally higher?
6. Why might official statistics not show the true picture of crime?
7. What is corporate crime?
8. Which group is most likely to be victims of violent crime?

Answers

1. Late teens and early twenties
2. Male
3. White-collar crime
4. Black people
5. Urban areas
6. They may reflect policing practices and labelling
7. Crime committed by companies for their benefit
8. Young men

What to do next

Practise 10 questions on this topic

Try 4 exam questions, with mark schemes

Read the lesson, one step at a time

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