Your notes

GCSE Sociology: revision notes

Measuring crime

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Police recorded crime

- **Police recorded crime** statistics count crimes reported to and recorded by the police.
- They miss the "dark figure" of crime: crimes that are not reported or not recorded.
- Reasons for not reporting: the crime seemed too trivial, fear of the offender, distrust of the police, embarrassment, or the victim didn't realise a crime had happened.

Victim surveys

- The **Crime Survey for England and Wales** asks a large sample of people about crimes they have experienced, whether or not they reported them.
- It gives a fuller picture, including unreported crime, but misses some crimes (such as crimes against businesses or **victimless crimes**) and relies on people's memory and honesty.

Self-report studies

- Self-report studies ask people to reveal crimes they have committed.
- They can uncover hidden crime and offenders who were never caught, but people may lie or exaggerate.

Using the data

- Sociologists compare sources to get a more accurate picture of crime. Changes in statistics can reflect changes in reporting and recording, not just changes in crime.

Key terms

Police recorded crime	Crimes reported to and recorded by the police.

Dark figure of crime	Crime that is not reported or recorded.
Victim survey	A survey asking people about crimes they have experienced.
Crime Survey for England and Wales	A large victim survey.
Self-report study	A survey asking people about crimes they have committed.
Victimless crime	A crime without a clear victim, such as drug use.

Your notes

Quick questions

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

1. What is the dark figure of crime?
2. What is a victim survey?
3. What is a self-report study?
4. Why might a victim not report a crime?
5. What is an advantage of victim surveys?
6. What is a weakness of self-report studies?
7. What is a victimless crime?
8. What do police recorded crime statistics count?

Answers

1. Crime that is not reported or recorded
2. A survey asking people about crimes they have experienced
3. A survey asking people about crimes they have committed
4. Fear of the offender
5. They include unreported crime
6. People may lie or exaggerate
7. A crime without a clear victim
8. Crimes reported to and recorded by the police

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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