

Candidate 3 evidence

1) One difference between common sense and sociological approaches would be that common sense approaches tend to be based on individual biases and prejudices in contrast sociological explanations/approaches are based on research and research based conclusions and responses based on fact. Another difference between sociological and common sense approaches is that common sense approaches often centre around issues such as unemployment for example the concept that someone on benefits is lazy. When in fact this is the result of poverty or failure of circumstances in contrast sociological explanations consider why this is an issue and attempt to establish a cause and sociological approaches look at society as a whole.

2) Consensus Theories such as functionalism take the view that for change in society there must be agreement by the majority before moving forward centring on norms and values. In contrast conflict theories such as Marxism advocate social revolution to achieve change regardless of agreement or lack of agreement for example having a revolution to replace capitalism with communism. A similarity of Conflict and Consensus Theories is that both take a structuralist (Macro) approach to society meaning they consider the individual unimportant focussing on the society as a whole. Functionalists for example advocate that society has a collective consciousness. This collective consciousness results in the loss of individual identity in events for example in punishment where everyone involved will feel a sense of justice regardless of the individual's crime or lack of a crime. Similarly, Marxists take the view that society should be considered as a whole in regard to socio-economic inequality

3a) The use of Focus Groups as a research method is highly effective allowing the sociologist to see how society or in this case, small groups from society, interact around social issues. Focus Groups are a qualitative of data collection tool allowing interaction between the sociologist and those participating in the study, for example, in this case the sociologist is engaging with young people who have experience of social media allowing for primary data collection. This is useful as it allows the sociologist to ensure that biases found in quantitative are not present, for example official statistics are often manipulated by the Government or officials, according to William Chambliss 75% of all government statistics may be fabricated. However, a potential issue with the use of Focus Groups is in selection process. Groups may be manipulated to reflect certain view points for example pro remain or pro leave focus groups in the European referendum may have distorted polling results.

Overall, Focus Groups are highly effective as a research method as they allow for a high level of interaction between the sociologist and their study group.

b) Young people are highly influenced by social media; this exposes them to potentially misleading sources of information.

c) The researcher could have operationalised his research by taking opinion surveys from the Focus Group to reach conclusion therefore allowing them to consider how social media impacts young people. Operationalisation of results would have allowed measured conclusions that either proved or disproved their hypothesis. However, the researcher could also have considered the responses to the questions asked as part of this data collation. The researcher could then have conducted a second Focus Group to see if their findings were proven or disproven so potentially researcher might arrive at misleading conclusions due to the sample size.

4) Weberianism or social action theory takes a micro approach to society focussing on the interactions of individuals with society rather than society as a whole, for example Weber argued that there were 4 types of action that an individual could take in relation to society. These are

rational action, traditional action, value action and emotional action. Rational action is the premeditated form of action, meaning that the individual had meticulously planned what they are intended to do, goal based. Traditional action centres around culture and the way in which the individual participates for example, curtsying to the Queen would be traditional action. Another example of traditional action would be Christmas. Value action centres around what the individual considers to be important for example, the family. Emotional action is not premeditated and focusses solely on the responses of the individual with society for example, non-premeditated murder. Another feature of Weberianism is that it considers the relationship between class and identity to be based on more than socio-economic status considering status and power to be culturally influenced. However, they do agree that society serves the interests of the Bourgeoisie through a false illusion of democracy.

5) Ervime Goffman in his asylum study aimed to prove the link between the total institution and the mortification of self. Goffman argued that through the process of mortification of self which is the loss of identity within asylums and total institutions individuals were broken down and rebuilt as conforming members of society. Goffman argued that individuals despite attempts by these institutions still possessed the ability to choose to conform or rebel against the institution. Goffman identified that institutions such as the army, prisons and asylums were all total institutions with the objective of removing individual identity for example, Goffman observed that asylums removed personal belongings and clothing from inmates who as a result were institutionalised. Another finding of Goffman's study was the immense power the medical profession was given over the patients under their care without correct oversight or checks and balances, often resulting in needless suffering and procedures such as a lobotomy. This suggested that medicalisation within total institutions attempted to remove the individual through a series of processes but were ultimately unsuccessful.

6) In significance of power and status, relation to both high and popular culture is based on the perception that only those who have access to wealth and power can access high culture. High culture consists of the things like the ballet, for example being able to afford to travel to St. Petersburg to see the Russian Ballet. This is the result of power and status as not everyone can access this culture. Therefore, in comparison to popular culture, high culture is reserved for the wealthy elite in society, or the Bourgeoisie. According to Neo-Marxists popular culture is designed to keep the masses or the proletariat distracted and stupid, preventing them from achieving class consciousness, however in relation to status and power low culture/popular culture is available to everyone for example, going to the cinema but does not compare with going abroad or travelling large distances to participate in high culture. It can be argued that those who have access to high culture possess both power and status in society and therefore can influence decision making and participate in societal oppression of the proletariat. In contrast those without access to high culture have no power or status in society. As a result of their socio-economic circumstances.

7) According to Functionalists the relationship between gender and identity is important as males and females have equally important roles in society they are just different, Functionalists advocate the nuclear family – the nuclear family is a married male and female couple with 2.5 children - and consider the family as the primary agent of socialisation that serves to teach children the norms and values of society. In contrast Feminists argue that gender is a social construct and is the result of secondary socialisation within the family feminists argue that this leads to the ascription of gender norms and stereotypes upon children for example, that girls like Barbie and pink, and boys like blue and Action Man. This serves only to reinforce patriarchal control over society.

Functionalists argue that men should act as the primary bread winner for the family while females remain at home in their biological role as mothers with the primary objective of raising children. Feminists' argue that this is oppression as women should not be defined by their sex and should be allowed to participate in the workforce. Feminists argue that gender should not influence a woman's identity and instead should be allowed to progress naturally based on experiences and development. Functionalists, in contrast argue strongly that gender identity is important and should be reinforced to maintain society. Feminists also argue that the notion of women remaining solely to care for children and her husband within the family as oppressive and argue that the family is a social construct that is not necessary in society however Functionalists totally disagree. Additionally, Feminists argue that the family is often a cover for domestic abuse as argued by Dobash & Dobash in their study *Violence against Wives*.

In conclusion the relationship between gender and identity is one that must be considered carefully. The Functionalist argument that women's primary role should be care givers has some weight however, the Feminist view that women should not be defined by their gender identity and sex is perhaps more valid in today's social conditions.

Overall the relationship between gender and identity is of much debate but Feminist perspectives of gender are more valid in this case.

8) The sociological debate surrounding the issue of crime and deviance is one of great contention. Some sociologists argue that crime and deviance are interchangeable phrases to define non-conformance to social norms and values. According to Stan Cohen in his 1972 study, *"Folk Devils & Moral Panics"* youth sub-culture is suppressed and considered deviant because it fails to conform to the parent culture. The definition of crime is any action that breaches a codified law. The definition of deviance on the other hand is any activity that is considered to be non-conformist without breaching a codified law.

According to sociologist William Chambliss in his study *"Saints & Roughnecks"* which focusses on two social groups, one middle class and one upper class who are defined differently for their deviant behaviour. Chambliss argues that the upper class children are looked upon as deviant while the middle class children are looked upon as criminal despite both groups committing criminal acts that clearly violated codified laws for example, the middle class group of youths were caught stealing while the upper class group were caught speeding (racing) in another town. The social perception of both groups however, was different as the upper class group had social power and status on their side and therefore are less likely to be prosecuted. The middle class children on the other hand did not possess the same levels of power and status and therefore were prosecuted and treated as criminals – this shows the levels of inequality in the justice system which is controlled by the elite in society. Marxists argue that this is a result of societal oppression and exploitation by the bourgeoisie against the proletariat. In contrast Functionalist argue that this is a result of the reinforcement of social norms and values because these youths broke the law.

Functionalist perspectives of crime and deviance focus on the reinforcement of social norms and values. Functionalists argue that crime is functional and has two purposes in society these are to challenge norms and values and persuade the majority of the need for social change or to reinforce societal agreement around what is acceptable and what is not. Marxists in contrast do not see crime as having a purpose instead arguing that it is necessary as a result of oppression and exploitation and is a method of survival for some groups. Marxists argue that corporate crime perpetuated by

international corporations is more damaging to society than regular blue collar crime. This is because of the societal cost of tax evasion or money laundering because it deprives the whole society of more than a single violent crime. According to Chambliss this costs, on average 80.6 billion a year.

However, Functionalists argue that violent crime is more of a social issue than corporate crime arguing that corporate crime doesn't result in deaths on the streets and is the result of ingenuity, however, Functionalists do acknowledge that if society was in agreement that this was an issue it would legislate to prevent further criminal deviance. This view is supported by Durkheim.

Durkheim in his study *Le Suicide* argues that societal deviance decreases during time of national emergency for example, war. However, in times of economic uncertainty suicide rates increase. Durkheim argues that this is a result of egotistic suicide, meaning that the individual maybe too proud to ask for help or thinks that they are a burden upon society. This would suggest there is a correlation between suicide and the economy.

An alternative perspective to both Marxists and Functionalists perspectives on crime and deviance would be the Interactionist approach. As taken by Stan Cohen who argues that Government action against youth sub-culture results in nothing more than the alienation of youth in society. Cohen found in his study "Folk Devils & Moral Panics" that the appeasement of the moral entrepreneurs (middle class) resulted in an unnecessary government action to combat sub-culture as the result of the deviance amplification spiral as the result of media misreporting and fabrications. Cohen found that the police reports taken from Clacton did not line up accurately with the media reports of violence between the mods and rockers suggesting that the media had deliberately exaggerated the confrontation between the two groups. This supports the Marxist point of view suggesting that crime and deviance is perpetuated as a method of social control against those that have no power in society.

Cohen also found that this created a self-fulfilling prophecy so when the groups met again at Brighton beach violent clashes took place with the destruction of private and public property causing moral outrage and a demand for government action. Resulting in section 9 of the public order act. Cohen's argument clearly supports the view that society serves a small group of elite that have control over what is moral and what is not. In this case the majority view was manipulated by the media who applied pressure on parliament to take action. The conservative new right government was in power at the time, then attempted to use their action against the mods and the rockers and other deviant sub-cultures as a political victory and further their support in their country. This supports the arguments made by Chambliss and the Marxist perspective as 75% of all laws in the UK focus on property rights. This suggest that the parliament is serving the interest of business owners in society, at that expense of youth culture portraying them as criminal and deviant.

In conclusion the Functionalist and Marxists responses to crime and deviance clearly indicate division with Functionalists arguing that crime has a function in society while Marxists argue that it is the result of societal oppression and exploitation. However, the Interactionist approach taken by Stan Cohen suggests that the Marxist perspective of exploitation through a ruling elite who is serviced by a bourgeoisie parliament results in the oppression of individuals in society when they do not conform to the social norms and values of the majority which are often based upon prejudice and misconceptions.

Overall the sociological debate surrounding crime and deviance has made little progress in regard to change with Functionalist new right perspectives being held by the majority despite consensus that

they system is not working, therefore in my opinion, the issue of crime and deviance is the result of common sense and Functionalist approaches within society instead of interactionist or Marxist approaches which in this case, are more valid – when considering the socio-economic impact of crime upon society.