

EVALUATE SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLANATIONS OF STATE CRIME



1. INTRO / DEFINE STATE CRIME

- Green & Ward: crimes committed by or with the complicity of state agencies
- Often linked to human rights abuses
- Evaluation angle: states have power to define, hide or justify harm



3. KELMAN & HAMILTON – CRIMES OF OBEDIENCE

- Individuals obey authority and commit harmful acts
- Key ideas: authorisation, routinisation, dehumanisation
- Helps explain torture, war crimes, genocide, police violence

- ★ AO3: strong because it shows how ordinary people become involved
- ☆ AO3: limitation = underplays ideology, leadership and wider politics



2. GREEN & WARD – INTEGRATED THEORY

- State crime occurs when there is: motivation + opportunity + weak controls
- **Motives:** political control, national security, economic interests
- **Opportunity:** secrecy, emergency powers, military/police force
- **Weak controls:** limited international enforcement

- ★ AO3: strong because it is holistic and links structure + power
- ☆ AO3: limitation = can be broad / descriptive rather than fully causal



6. STATE POWER / STATE-CORPORATE CRIME

- States control law, police, courts and media narratives
- Can act in partnership with corporate interests
- Marxist link: powerful groups benefit from state actions



- ★ AO3: strong because it highlights structural power and inequality
- ☆ AO3: limitation = not all state crime is driven by capitalism alone

4. COHEN – SPIRAL OF DENIAL

- States deny, reinterpret or justify abuses
- Links to techniques of neutralisation
- Makes state crime harder to challenge

- ★ AO3: strong for explaining concealment and continuation
- ☆ AO3: limitation = explains response to accusations more than original cause



5. BAUMAN – MODERNITY & BUREAUCRACY

- Modern bureaucracies divide responsibility
- Harm becomes routine, efficient and impersonal
- Useful for explaining the Holocaust and large-scale organised harm

- ★ AO3: strong because it shows role of systems, not just evil individuals
- ☆ AO3: limitation = may underplay racism, ideology and deliberate hatred



7. OVERALL JUDGEMENT / CONCLUSION

- Best explanation combines state power + obedience + denial
- State crime is prevalent because powerful institutions can commit, justify and conceal harm
- Final judgement: no single theory is enough on its own



8. EXAM TIPS

- ✓ Define state crime briefly in the intro
- ✓ Use named sociologists: Green & Ward, Kelman & Hamilton, Cohen, Bauman
- ✓ Compare explanations, do not just describe
- ✓ End each paragraph with a clear judgement

