Control, Punishment and Victims
Evaluation

• Situational crime prevention works to some extent in reducing certain kinds of crime. However, with most measures there is likely to be some displacement.

• It tends to focus on opportunistic petty street crime. It ignores white-collar, corporate and state crime, which are more costly and harmful.

• It assumes criminals make rational calculations. This seems unlikely in many crimes of violence + crimes committed under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

• It ignores the root causes of crime, such as poverty or poor socialisation. This makes it difficult to develop long-term strategies for crime reduction.

• CCTV surveillance has been criticised. Norris and Armstrong found that camera operators focus disproportionately on young males. For feminists, CCTV is an extension of the ‘male gaze’ and is part of the problem, not the solution.
Sociological Perspectives on Punishment
Durkheim: a Functionalist Perspective
Marxism: Capitalism and Punishment
Evaluation

• As Brookman notes, Wolfgang shows the importance of the victim-offender relationship and the fact that in many homicides, it is a matter of chance which party becomes the victim.

• This approach identifies certain patterns of interpersonal victimisation, but ignores wider structural factors influencing victimisation, such as poverty and patriarchy.

• It can easily tip over into victim blaming. E.g. Amir’s claim that 1 in 5 rapes are victim precipitated is not very different from saying that the victims ‘asked for it’.

• It ignores situations where victims are unaware of their victimisation, as with some crimes against the environment where harm is done but now law broken.
Evaluation

• Critical victimology disregards the role victims may play in bringing victimisation on themselves through their own choices (e.g. not making their home secure) or their own offending.

• It is valuable in drawing attention to the way that ‘victim’ status is constructed by power and how this benefits the powerful at the expense of the powerless.
Class

• The poorest groups are more likely to be victimised.
• E.g. crime rates are typically highest in areas of high unemployment and deprivation.
• The fact that marginalised groups are most likely to become victims is borne out by a survey of 300 homeless people (Newburn+ Rock 2006).
• This found that they were 12x more likely to have experienced violence than the general population.
• 1 in 10 had been urinated on while sleeping rough.