Deviance and Social Control
What is Deviance?

“"It is not the act itself, but the reactions to the act, that make something deviant.”"

- Howard Becker, 1966

**Definition:** Violation of Norms
Deviance Terminology

- **Deviance**
  - Violation of Rules or Norms
  - Examples: Minor- Jaywalking, Major- Murder

- **Criminal Deviance**
  - Violation of Norms that have been written into Laws

- **Stigma**
  - Discredit ones claim to a “Normal” Identity
  - Examples: blindness, mental handicaps, birthmarks
  - Defines a person’s master status, superseding all other statuses the person occupies
What is Deviance?

- Relative Deviance
- What is Deviant to Some is not Deviant to Others
- “Deviance” is Nonjudgmental Term
Examples of Relative Definitions of Deviance:
Using Mental Health Examples

- Definitions of mental disorders occur in much the same fashion that other forms of deviance receive their definitions.
- Many times the definition is quite vague and varies "depending on the culture, audience, and context."
- Behavior alone does not add up to mental disorder. Context is important
Class Context

- If a poor woman shoplifts a roast, people call her a common criminal.
- On the other hand, if a rich woman steals a roast, her deviant status is kleptomaniac -- a form of mental illness.
Sexual Context

- If a woman is sexually promiscuous, she might find herself labeled as a nymphomaniac, while a man is a stud, macho, swinger, etc.
Professional vs. Domestic Context

- A man may be punctual and obedient during the week while he is at work, but on Saturday afternoon he raises hell while watching the afternoon football game.
- Both behaviors, while appearing contradictory, are "normal" in their respective contexts.
- But, if he took Saturday's behavior to the office he would find himself labeled as strange and he might even get fired.
- On the other hand, passive behavior at a Saturday afternoon football game would be considered a social drag and his peers would not want to watch football with him anymore.
Abstinence for two years after marriage in the West would be viewed as weird and grounds for annulment.

Such behavior is, however, required for newlyweds in the Dani Tribe of New Guinea.

Sexual activity for the Dani before two years would be viewed as sexual deviance.
Time Context

- People used to be burned at the stake for engaging in behavior that most twentieth-century people see as normal.
Norms Make Social Life Possible

- Makes Behavior Predictable
- No Norms = Social Chaos
- Social Control
  - Group’s Formal and Informal Means of Enforcing Norms
Sanctions

- When a norm is violated, sanctions are imposed:
  - Negative Sanctions
    - Examples: frowns, gossip, imprisonment
  - Positive Sanctions
    - Examples: smiles, awards
Shaming and Degradation Ceremonies

- Shaming is a Sanction
- Can Be Centerpiece of Public Ritual
- Effective when used by primary group or in a small community
- Degradation Ceremony
  - Formal attempt to label someone as an outsider
  - Example: Court Martial
Explanations of Deviance

Sociobiology- Look for Answers Inside Individuals

- Genetic Predispositions

  - Examples:
    - Intelligence- Compared WWI recruits with prisoners: 47% of recruits vs 20% of prisoners!!!?
    - XYY- extra chromosome in men leads to crime (1/1,800-3000)
    - Body type- squarish, muscular persons more likely to commit street crime
Body Type

- Study-200 boys, Hayden Goodwill Institute. 7 point somotyping scale, 650 psychological attributes. Disproportionately mesomorphic—more prone to delinquency.
- Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck (1950's): 800 adjudicated delinquents/matched sample of non-delinquents ==> delinquents more likely to be mesomorphs.
Psychology

- Focuses on Abnormalities Within Individuals
- Personality Disorders
  - Example: bad toilet training, suffocating mothers
Explanations of Deviance

Sociology

- Look for Answers Outside Individuals
- Social influences may “recruit” some people to break norms
  - Socialization
  - Membership in Subcultures
  - Social Class
Symbolic Interactionist Perspective
Differential Association Theory

- Those who associate with groups oriented toward deviant activities are more likely to engage in deviant activities
  - Families
  - Friends, Neighbors
  - Subcultures
Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

Control Theory

- Everyone is propelled towards deviance, but a system of controls work against these motivations to deviate
- Inner Controls- our capacity to withstand temptations toward deviance
  - Examples
    - Morality and Conscience
    - Religious Principles
    - Fear of punishment
    - Desire to be good
- Strong bonds to society, based on attachments, commitments, involvements, and beliefs, lead to more effective inner controls.
Symbolic Interactionist Perspective
Control Theory

- Outer Controls- involve groups that influence us not to deviate
  - Examples:
    - Family
    - Friends
    - Police
Symbolic Interactionist Perspective
Labeling Theory

- View that the labels people are given affect their own and others’ perceptions of them, thus channeling their behavior either into deviance or into conformity.

- Focuses on the Significance of Labels

- Labels Become Part of Self-Concept

- Propel Towards or Away from Deviance
Symbolic Interactionist Perspective
Rejecting Labels

- “Techniques of neutralization” are strategies deviants employ to resist society’s label

- Examples:
  - Denial of Responsibility
  - Denial of Injury
  - Denial of a Victim
  - Condemnation of Condemners
  - Appeal to Higher Loyalties
Most people resist being labeled deviant, but some revel in a deviant identity

- Embracing Labels - Outlaw Bikers
- The Power of Labels - Saints and Roughnecks
Functionalist Perspective
Can Deviance Be Functional?

- Clarifies Moral Boundaries and Affirms Norms
- Promotes Social Unity
- Promotes Social Change
Functionalist Perspective
Strain Theory

- What happens when people are socialized to desire cultural goals but denied the institutionalized means to reach them

- Strain Leads to Anomie
  - strain people experience when they are blocked in their attempts to achieve those goals
  - The most common reaction to cultural goals and institutionalized means is conformity (using lawful means to seek goals society sets).
Innovation

- Innovators are people who accept the goals of society.
- For some reason, like poverty, they cannot achieve societies' goals by legitimate means.
- They have to use illegitimate means such as stealing.
Functionalist Perspective
Four Responses to Anomie

- **Ritualism**
  - People who ritualize have similar problems that the innovator experiences, but for ritualists the individual *rejects the goals*, but accepts the means.
  - Example: choose to work hard knowing that he or she is not going to achieve the goals that society defines as worthy because they do not get paid enough.
Functionalist Perspective
Four Responses to Anomie

- **Retreatism**- rejecting cultural goals, dropping out
  - People who are retreatists reject both the means and goals of society.
  - Examples: Drug addicts and vagrants are examples of people who retreat.
Functionalist Perspective
Four Responses to Anomie

- Rebellion- seeking to replace society’s goals
  - The individual rejects the culture (values, goals, norms).
  - Pursue alternative cultures.
  - Examples: revolutionaries and some gangs.

- According to strain theory, deviants are not pathogenic individuals but the products of society.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Do They Feel the Strain That Leads to Anomie?</th>
<th>Mode of Adaptation</th>
<th>Cultural Goals</th>
<th>Institutionalized Means</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Conformity</td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td><strong>Deviant Paths:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1. Innovation</td>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>Reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Ritualism</td>
<td>Reject</td>
<td>Accept</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Retreatism</td>
<td>Reject</td>
<td>Reject</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Rebellion</td>
<td>Reject/Replace</td>
<td>Reject/Replace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Based on Merton 1968.
Robert K. Merton's Deviance Typology

Institutionalised means

Accept

Conformity

Innovation

Reject

Ritualism

Retreatism

New means

Rebellion

New goals
• Explain why social classes have distinct styles of crime
• Unequal Access to Institutional Means to Success
• Street Crime
  – robbery, burglary, drug dealing, prostitution, pimping, gambling
• White-Collar Crime
  – crimes that people of respectable and high social status commit in the course of their occupations
  – Very costly
  – Can involve physical harm, sometimes death
  – Example: unsafe working conditions kill about 100,000 Americans each year, or about five times the number of people killed by street crime
• Gender and Crime
  – Growing number of female offenders
Figure 8.1 Some States Are Safer: Violent Crime in the United States

Violent crimes are murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. As this figure illustrates, violent crime varies widely among the states. The chances of becoming a victim of these crimes are ten times higher in South Carolina, the most dangerous state, than in North Dakota, the safest state. Washington, D.C., not a state, is in a class by itself. Its rate of 1,371 is three times the national average and over 17 times North Dakota’s rate.

Source: By the author. Based on Statistical Abstract of the United States 2007: Table 297.
## Table 8.2

**Women and Crime: What a Difference a Dozen Years Make**

Of all those arrested, what percentage are women?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>1992</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Car Theft</td>
<td>10.8%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
<td>+58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burglary</td>
<td>9.2%</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>+54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stolen Property</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>+49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggravated Assault</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>+39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drunken Driving</td>
<td>13.8%</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>+35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robbery</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>11.0%</td>
<td>+29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arson</td>
<td>13.4%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>+21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Larceny/Theft</td>
<td>32.1%</td>
<td>38.2%</td>
<td>+19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Drugs</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
<td>+15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgery and Counterfeiting</td>
<td>34.7%</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
<td>+14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illegal Weapons</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>8.2%</td>
<td>+9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>42.1%</td>
<td>45.0%</td>
<td>+7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract of the United States* 2007:Table 317.*
Violent crime rates by gender 1973-2003, per 1,000 people; (data: Bureau of Justice Statistics).
The Conflict Perspective

- Means of social control represent interests of the wealthy and powerful
- Criminal justice system focused on violations of the working class
- Publicity of white-collar crime provides evidence of fairness
- Law is an instrument of oppression - a tool designed to maintain the powerful in privileged positions and keep the powerless from rebelling and overthrowing social order
Reaction to Deviance

- Degradation ceremony - public trial
- Imprisonment
  - Popular reaction
  - Does not teach inmates to stay away from crime
  - US has more criminals in prison than every other nation, and a larger percentage of its population in prison
  - African Americans are disproportionately represented in prison
Figure 8.2  
How Much Is Enough? The Explosion in the Number of U.S. Prisoners

Sources: By the author. Based on Statistical Abstract of the United States 1995:Table 349; 2007:Table 334. The broken line is the author’s estimate.
### Table 8.3  Inmates in U.S. State Prisons

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
<th>Percentage of Prisoners with These Characteristics</th>
<th>Percentage of U.S. Population with These Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18–24</td>
<td>26.4%</td>
<td>9.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>13.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35–44</td>
<td>25.2%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45–54</td>
<td>10.4%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 and older</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>22.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race-Ethnicity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>47.3%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>36.9%</td>
<td>66.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latino</td>
<td>14.2%</td>
<td>14.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Americans</td>
<td>0.6%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Americans</td>
<td>0.9%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>93.4%</td>
<td>49.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>6.3%</td>
<td>50.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never Married</td>
<td>59.8%</td>
<td>28.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
<td>15.5%</td>
<td>10.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>17.3%</td>
<td>58.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
<td>1.1%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than high school</td>
<td>39.7%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school graduate</td>
<td>49.0%</td>
<td>32.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some college</td>
<td>9.0%</td>
<td>25.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College graduate</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>27.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(BA or higher)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comparison of International Incarceration Numbers, total people in prison; selected countries, 2002; (data: United Nations).
Comparison of International Incarceration rates per 100,000 people; selected countries, 2002; (data: United Nations).
Reaction to Deviance

- **Recidivism**
  - (the proportion of persons rearrested) in the US is high

- For those sentenced to prison for crimes of violence, within just three years of their release, 62 percent are rearrested, and 52 percent are back in prison.
**Figure 8.3** Recidivism of U.S. Prisoners

Of 272,000 prisoners released from U.S. prisons, what percentage were rearrested within three years?

The rearrest rates of those who had been convicted of:

- Stealing cars: 79%
- Possessing or selling stolen property: 77%
- Larceny: 75%
- Burglary: 74%
- Robbery: 70%
- Illegal weapons: 70%
- Illegal drugs: 67%
- Fraud: 66%
- Arson: 58%
- Drunk driving: 52%
- Rape: 46%
- Murder: 41%

*Note:* The individuals were not necessarily rearrested for the same crime for which they had originally been imprisoned.

*Source:* By the author. Based on *Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 2003*: Table 6.50.
Reaction to Deviance

- The Death Penalty Bias
- Many argue that there are biases in the use of the death penalty.
- These reflect regional, gender, social class, as well as racial and ethnic biases.
Figure 8.4  Executions in the United States

Executions since 1977, when the death penalty was reinstated.

Source: By the author. Based on Statistical Abstract of the United States 2007:Table 341.
Figure 8.5  Women and Men on Death Row

98.4%

Men

1.6%

Women

Source: By the author. Based on Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 2006:Table 6.81.
Reactions to Deviance

- The definition of behavior as deviant varies across societies, groups, and time periods.

- Legal Change in US
  - Hate Crimes
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Directed Against</th>
<th>Number of Victims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race-Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African Americans</td>
<td>3,494</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whites</td>
<td>1,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latinos</td>
<td>646</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Americans</td>
<td>272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Americans</td>
<td>102</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religion</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>1,086</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslims</td>
<td>202</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholics</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protestants</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sexual Orientation</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male Homosexual</td>
<td>902</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female Homosexual</td>
<td>213</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homosexuals (general)</td>
<td>314</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heterosexuals</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bisexual</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disabilities</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Statistical Abstract of the United States* 2007: Table 308.
Reactions to Deviance

- Crime Statistics
- Caution is needed in interpreting official crime statistics because the reactions of authorities are influenced by social class of the offender
- Police discretion—deciding whether to arrest someone or to ignore a situation—is a routine part of police work.
  - Crime statistics reflect this and many other biases.
Percent of total crime reported to police, average from 1992-2003; (data: Bureau of Justice Statistics).
Reactions to Deviance

- **Medicalization of Deviance**
  - view of deviance as a symptom of some underlying illness that needs to be treated by physicians
  - Thomas Szasz argues that mental illness is simply problem behaviors: some forms of “mental” illnesses have organic causes (e.g., depression caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain); while others are responses to troubles with various coping devices.
  - suggests that social experiences, and not some illness of the mind, underlie bizarre behaviors.
  - Being mentally ill can sometimes lead to other problems like homelessness; but being homeless can lead to unusual and unacceptable ways of thinking that are defined by the wider society as mental illness.
Reactions to Deviance

- With deviance inevitable, one measure of society is how it treats its deviants.
- The larger issues are how to protect people from deviant behaviors that are harmful to their welfare, to tolerate those that are not, and to develop systems of fairer treatment for deviants.