

# CHAPTER 7

## Deviance and Social Control



## Your Sociological Imagination

What would a Martian, after watching an evening of prime time television, think about American culture? If the impression of our culture were formed solely from these programs, the Martian likely would conclude that the inhabitants of earth are an exceptionally violent people. If the Martian then began to display violent behavior, could we conclude that he or she had been watching too much television?

Before answering this question, think for a moment about these statistics: Children aged two to eleven spend an average of twenty-eight hours per week watching television (compared to thirty hours in school). Fifty-seven percent of television programming contains violence. In one-quarter of the violent interactions, a gun is used. Finally, in about three-quarters of all violent scenes, the persons committing the violent acts go unpunished (National Television Violence Study, 1998).

In the past sociologists have hesitated to link violent behavior with exposure to television violence. But after hundreds of studies, researchers now confirm a link between televised aggression and personal aggressiveness. This link between imagined and actual violence is an example of culturally transmitted social behavior.

As humans learn the culture around them, they adopt certain patterns of behavior. In this chapter we will examine the learned behavior called *deviance*.

### Sections

1. **Deviance and Social Control**
2. **Functionalism and Deviance**
3. **Symbolic Interactionism and Deviance**
4. **Conflict Theory and Deviance**
5. **Crime and Punishment**

### Learning Objectives

After reading this chapter, you will be able to

- ❖ define deviance.
- ❖ define social control and identify the major types of social control.
- ❖ discuss the positive and negative consequences of deviance.
- ❖ differentiate the major functional theories of deviance.
- ❖ discuss the conflict theory view of deviance.
- ❖ describe four approaches to crime control.

**SOCIOLOGY**  
*Online*



#### Chapter Overview

Visit the *Sociology and You* Web site at [soc.glencoe.com](http://soc.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 7—Chapter Overviews** to preview chapter information.

# Section 7

## Deviance and Social Control

### Key Terms

- deviance
- negative deviance
- positive deviance
- deviant
- social control
- social sanctions

### Section Preview

**D**eviance is the violation of social norms. It is difficult to define because not everyone agrees on what should be considered deviant behavior.

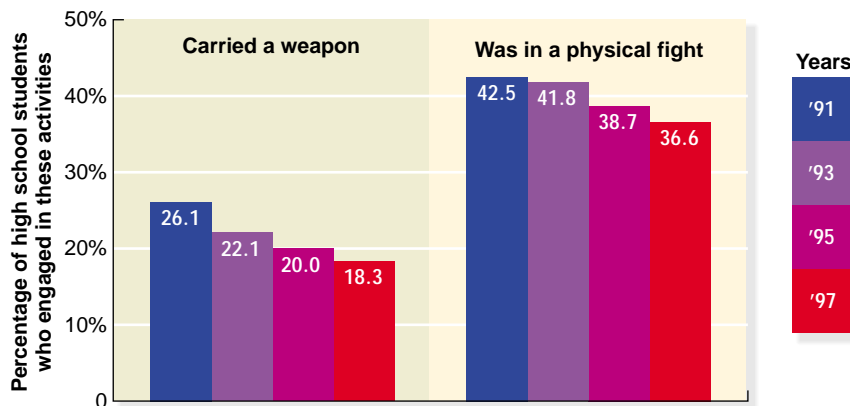
#### deviance

behavior that departs from societal or group norms

### The Nature of Deviance

**D**eviance refers to behavior that departs from societal or group norms. It can range from criminal behavior (recognized by almost all members of a society as deviant) to wearing heavy makeup (considered deviant by some religious groups). Some people violate norms by robbing banks or committing assault or murder. Incidents of deviance sometimes receive a great deal of attention because they involve prominent figures whose behavior is captured on national television. Former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson, in a bout with the current champion, Evander Holyfield, actually bit off the tip of Holyfield's right ear and spat it onto the ring mat. Figure 7.1 illustrates the frequency of two types of juvenile deviance.

These examples appear clear-cut, but deviance is not always so easy to identify. Because deviance is a matter of social definition, it can vary from group to group and society to society. In a diverse society like that of the United States, it is often difficult to agree on what is or is not deviant behavior. In a groundbreaking study, Simmons (1969) polled people on this issue:



**Figure 7.1 Two Types of Youth Deviance.**

What does the graph say about the trend in youth violence?

Source: *Journal of the American Medical Association* 282 (August, 1999): 440–446.

*The sheer range of responses [to the question “What constitutes deviant behavior?”] predictably included homosexuals, prostitutes, drug addicts, radicals, and criminals. But it also included liars, career women, Democrats, reckless drivers, atheists, Christians, suburbanites, the retired, young folks, card players, bearded men, artists, pacifists, priests, prudes, hippies, straights, girls who wear makeup, the President of the United States, conservatives, integrationists, executives, divorcees, perverts, motorcycle gangs, smart-alec students, know-it-all professors, modern people, and Americans.*

To this list, one researcher would add obese people. For a week, she wore a “fat suit,” adding 150 pounds to her normal body weight, in order to experience firsthand what it feels like to be

an overweight woman in American society. She concluded that American “society not only hates fat people, it feels entitled to participate in a prejudice that at many levels parallels racism and religious bigotry” (Lampert, 1993:154).

Deviance may be either *positive* or *negative*. **Negative deviance** involves behavior that fails to meet accepted norms. People expressing negative deviance either reject the norms, misinterpret the norms, or are unaware of the norms. This is the kind of behavior popularly associated with the idea of deviance. There is, however, another type of deviance. **Positive deviance** involves overconformity to norms—leading to imbalance and extremes of perfectionism. Positive deviants idealize group norms. In its own way, positive deviance can be as disruptive and hard to manage as negative deviance. Think about the norms related to personal appearance in American society. The mass media are constantly telling young people that “lean is mean.” Negative deviants will miss the mark on the obese side. Positive deviants may push themselves to the point of anorexia. Most young people will weigh somewhere between these two extremes.

Minor instances of behavior that some might consider deviant occur frequently in modern societies. For that reason, sociologists generally reserve the term *deviance* for violations of significant social norms. Significant norms are those that are highly important either to most members of a society or to the members with the most power. For a sociologist, a **deviant** is a person who has violated one or more of society’s most highly valued norms. Reactions to deviants are usually negative and involve attempts to change or control the deviant behavior.



*Singapore political opposition leader Chee Soon Juan is selling his book without a license, an example of negative deviance in that culture.*

#### negative deviance

involves behavior that underconforms to accepted norms

#### positive deviance

involves behavior that overconforms to social expectations

#### deviant

a person who breaks significant societal or group norms



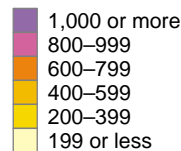
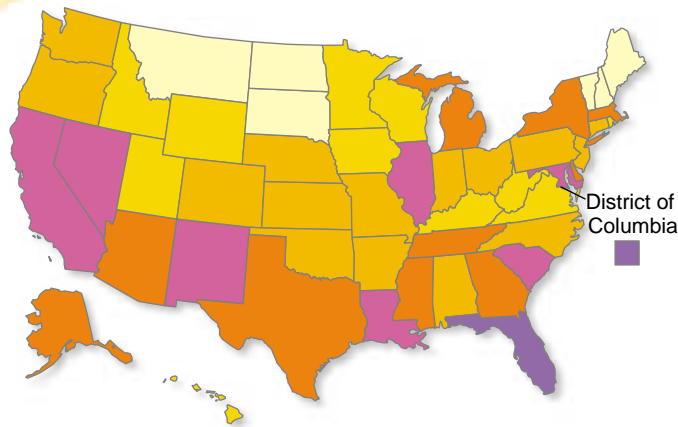
*This anorexic teenager in a made-for-television movie is displaying positive deviance. How would you explain to her mother that her child’s behavior is “positive”?*

## Snapshot of America



### Violent Crime

Although experiencing a recent decline, the U.S. has one of the highest violent crime rates of the major industrialized countries. In fact, the U.S. has the highest murder, rape, and robbery rates, and keeps pace in burglaries and auto thefts. This map indicates the number of violent crimes by state per 100,000 residents.

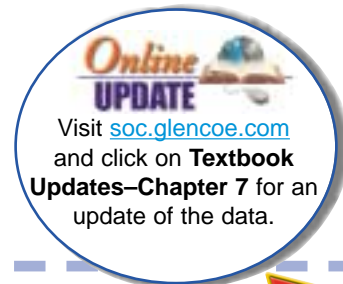


**Number of Violent Crimes Reported per 100,000 Population**

### Interpreting the Map

1. Create a graph showing how the violent crime rate in your state compares with the rates in other states?
2. Pose a question which relates to the relative ranking of your state with other states.
3. What sociological conclusion can you draw from this map?

Adapted from *The World Almanac of the U.S.A.*, Mahwah, NJ, 1998.



**CLICK HERE**

## Social Control

All societies have ways to promote order, stability, and predictability in social life. We feel confident that drivers will stop for red lights, that waiters will not pour soup in our laps, and that store clerks will give us the correct change. Without **social control**—ways to promote conformity to norms—social life would be unpredictable, even chaotic. There are two broad types of social control: internal and external.

### social control

ways to encourage conformity to society's norms

**What is internal social control?** Internal social control lies within the individual. It is developed during the socialization process. You are practicing internal social control when you do something because you know it is the right thing to do or when you don't do something because you know it would be wrong. For example, most people most of the time do not steal. They act this way not just because they fear arrest or lack the opportunity to steal but because they consider theft to be wrong. The norm against stealing has become a part of them. This is known as the *internalization* of social norms.

**CONTENTS**

**What is external social control?** Unfortunately for society, the process of socialization does not ensure that all people will conform all of the time. For this reason, external social control must also be present. External social control is based on **social sanctions**—rewards and punishments designed to encourage desired behavior. Positive sanctions, such as awards, increases in allowances, promotions, and smiles of approval, are used to encourage conformity. Negative sanctions, such as criticism, fines, and imprisonment, are intended to stop socially unacceptable behavior.

Sanctions may be formal or informal. Ridicule, gossip and smiles are examples of informal sanctions. Imprisonment, low grades, and official awards are formal sanctions.

#### social sanctions

rewards or punishments that encourage conformity to social norms



*Because of its hurtful nature, gossip can be a very effective informal sanction.*

## Section 1 Assessment

1. What is the term sociologists use for behavior that significantly violates societal or group norms?
2. State a major problem sociologists have in defining deviance.
3. What is the purpose of a social sanction?

### Critical Thinking

4. **Applying Concepts** At some point in growing up, nearly everyone displays some minor deviant behaviors, such as cutting class or telling a lie. Getting “caught” in such behaviors generally results in attempts at social control. Recall such an instance for yourself. How successful were these controls in changing your behavior? (Be specific as to the types of social control and their precise application to you.)

“

No crime is rational.

Livy  
Roman historian

”

# Another Time

## Murder among the Cheyenne

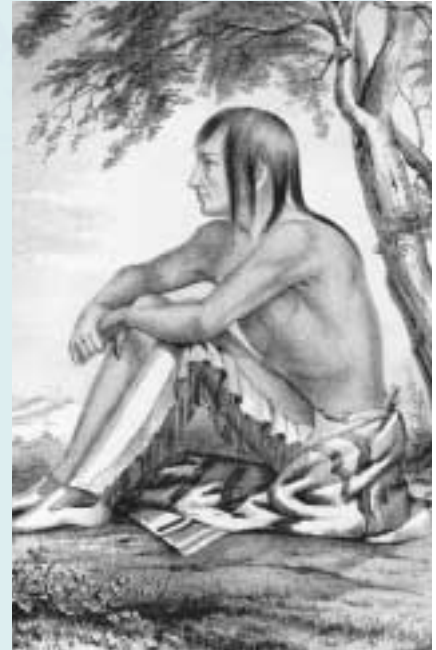
Historically, the Cheyenne believed that when a member of the tribe committed murder, the whole tribe suffered the consequences. The punishment for this terrible crime was banishment from the tribe. The Cheyenne way of dealing with murders illustrates both deviance and social control.

[The Cheyenne have] specific concepts related to the killing of a fellow tribesman and specific mechanisms for dealing with homicide when it does occur.

The first of these is purely mystical and relates to the major tribal fetish, the Four Sacred Arrows. A murderer becomes personally polluted, and specks of blood contaminate the feathers of the Arrows. The very word for murder is *he'joxones*, "putrid." A Cheyenne who kills a fellow Cheyenne rots internally. His body gives off a fetid odor, a symbolic stigma of personal disintegration, which contrition may stay, but for which there is no cure. The smell is offensive to other Cheyennes, who will never again take food from a bowl used by the killer. Nor will they smoke a pipe that has touched his lips. They fear personal contamination with his "leprous" affliction. This means that the person who has become so un-Cheyenne as to fly in the face of the greatest of Cheyenne injunctions is cut off from participation in the symbolic acts of mutuality—eating from a common bowl and smoking the ritual pipe. With this alienation goes the loss of many civil privileges and the cooperative assistance of one's fellows outside of one's own family. The basic penalty for murder is therefore a lifetime of partial social ostracism [forced isolation from society].

On the legal level, the ostracism takes the form of immediate exile imposed by the Tribal Council sitting as a judicial body. The sentence of exile is enforced, if need be, by the military societies. The rationalization of the banishment is that the murderer's stink is noisome to the buffalo. As long as an unatoned murderer is with the tribe, "game shuns the territory; it makes the tribe lonesome." Therefore, the murderer must leave.

Banishment is not in itself enough, however. His act has disrupted the fabric of tribal life. Symbolically, this is expressed in the soiling of the Arrows, the allegorical identity of the tribe itself. As long as the Arrows remain polluted, bad luck is believed to dog the tribe. Not only does the spectre of starvation threaten, but there can be no success



in war or any other enterprise. The earth is disjointed and the tribe out of harmony with it. The Arrow Renewal is the means of righting the situation. The oneness of the tribe is reasserted in the required presence at the ceremony of every family—save those of murderers. The renewed earth, effected by the rites in the Lone Tipi, is fresh and unsullied, once again free of the stain of killing.

Source: Excerpted from E. Adamson Hoebel, *The Cheyennes: Indians of the Great Plains* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), pp. 50–52. © 1960 by Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc. Reprinted by permission.

### Thinking It Over

Many societies, both in the past and today, placed responsibility for the behavior of an individual on the family or tribe. Would you favor similar laws in the U.S., such as those making parents accountable for their children's actions? Why or why not?

## Section 2

# Functionalism and Deviance

## Key Terms

- anomie
- strain theory
- control theory

## Costs and Benefits of Deviance

As you probably remember from earlier chapters, the functionalist perspective emphasizes social stability and the way the different parts of society contribute to the whole. It may surprise you to know that functionalists believe that some deviance can contribute to the smooth operation of society. Deviance, therefore, has both positive and negative consequences for society.

**What are some of the negative effects of deviance?** Deviance erodes trust. If bus drivers do not follow planned routes, if television stations constantly change their schedules, if parents are not consistent in their discipline, trust will be undermined. A society with widespread suspicion and distrust cannot function smoothly.

If not punished or corrected, deviance can also cause nonconforming behavior in others. If bus drivers regularly pass students waiting for the bus, the students may begin to heave rocks at the bus. If television stations offer random programming, customers may picket the stations in protest. If parents neglect their children, more teenagers may turn to delinquency. Deviance stimulates more deviance in others.

Deviant behavior is also expensive. It diverts resources, both human and monetary. Police may have to spend their time dealing with wayward bus drivers and angry students rather than performing more serious duties.

**How does deviance benefit society?** Society can sometimes benefit from deviance in spite of its negative effects. Emile Durkheim observed that deviance clarifies norms by exercising social control to defend its values; society defines, adjusts, and reaffirms norms. When parents are taken to court or lose their children because of neglect, for example, society shows other parents and children how it expects parents to act.

Deviance can be a temporary safety valve. Teens listen to music, watch television programs, and wear clothes that adults may view as deviating from expected behavior. This relatively minor deviance may act to relieve some of the pressure teens feel from the many authority figures in their lives, including parents, relatives, teachers, and clergy.

Deviance increases unity within a society or group. When deviance reminds people of something they value, it strengthens their commitment to that value. Consider

*How did the Reverend King's use of nonviolent deviance benefit American society?*

## Section Preview

According to functionalists, deviance has both negative and positive consequences for society. Functionalism also forms the basis for two important theories of deviance: strain theory and control theory.





spies who sell government secrets to an enemy, for example. When they are discovered, citizens who read or hear about them experience stronger feelings of patriotism.

Deviance promotes needed social change. Suffragettes who took to the streets in the early 1900s scandalized the nation but helped bring women the right to vote. Prison riots in the past have led to the reform of inhuman conditions.

### anomie

a social condition in which norms are weak, conflicting, or absent

### strain theory

theory that deviance is more likely to occur when a gap exists between cultural goals and the ability to achieve these goals by legitimate means



According to strain theory, what kind of deviance is homelessness?






## Strain Theory

According to Emile Durkheim, **anomie** (*AN-uh-me*) is a social condition in which norms are weak, conflicting, or absent. Without shared norms, individuals are uncertain about how they should think and act. Societies become disorganized. In 1968, sociologist Robert Merton adapted Durkheim's concept of anomie to deviant behavior and called his hypothesis the **strain theory**. Deviance, said Merton, is most likely to occur when there is a gap between culturally desirable goals, such as money and prestige, and a legitimate way of obtaining them. Every society establishes some goals and socially approved ways of reaching them. In the United States, an important goal is success and the material possessions that go with it. Education and hard work are two of the approved means for being successful. This is when people accept the goal and the means to achieve it; Merton calls this *conformity*. Wealthy people conform, but so do poor people who continue to work hard in low-paying jobs in the hope of improving life for themselves or their children.

**How do people respond to strain?** By definition, conformity is not deviant behavior. Each of the remaining four responses to strain are considered deviant, however. (See Figure 7.2.)

- ❖ In *innovation*, the individual accepts the goal of success but uses illegal means to achieve it. People engaging in this response may use robbery, drug dealing, or other lucrative criminal behavior to be successful. Innovation is the most widespread and obvious type of deviant response.
- ❖ In *ritualism*, the individual rejects the goal (success) but continues to use the legitimate means. Here people go through the motions without really believing in the process. An example is the teacher who goes about the daily routines of work without any concern for students or the quality of his or her teaching.
- ❖ *Retreatism* is a deviant response in which both the legitimate means and the approved goals are rejected. Skid-row alcoholics, drug addicts, and bag ladies are retreatists; they have dropped out. They are not successful by either legitimate or illegitimate means and they do not seek success.
- ❖ In *rebellion*, people reject both success and the approved means for achieving it. At the same time, they substitute a new set of goals and means. Some militia group members in the United States illustrate this response. They may live in near isolation as they pursue the goal of changing society through deviant means: creating their own currency, deliberately violating gun laws, and threatening (or engaging in) violent behavior against law enforcement officers.

## Figure 7.2 Merton's Strain Theory

Culturally Approved Goal: Success	Socially Accepted Way to Succeed: Hard Work	Conformity Response	Deviant Responses	Examples
Accepts goal of success	Accepts hard work as the appropriate way to succeed	<b>Conformity</b> —works hard to succeed		Business executive
Accepts goal of success	Rejects hard work as the appropriate way to succeed		<b>Innovation</b> —finds illegal ways to succeed	Criminal
Rejects goal of success	Accepts hard work as the appropriate way to succeed		<b>Ritualism</b> —acts as if he wants to succeed but does not exert much effort	Unmotivated teacher
Rejects goal of success	Rejects hard work as the appropriate way to succeed		<b>Retreatism</b> —drops out of the race for success	Skid row alcoholic
Rejects goal of success	Rejects hard work as the appropriate way to succeed		<b>Rebellion</b> —substitutes new way to achieve new goal	Militia group member 

Adapted from Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, rev. ed. New York: Free Press.

## Control Theory

Travis Hirschi's control theory (1972) is also based on Durkheim's views. According to **control theory**, conformity to social norms depends on the presence of strong bonds between individuals and society. If those bonds are weak—if anomie is present—deviance occurs.

In this theory, social bonds *control* the behavior of people, thus preventing deviant acts. People conform because they don't want to "lose face" with family members, friends, or classmates.

**control theory**  
theory that compliance with social norms requires strong bonds between individuals and society





*This young woman is completing her purchase in a clothing store. Relate this transaction to control theory and anomie.*

“

A loving person lives in a loving world. A hostile person lives in a hostile world. Everyone you meet is your mirror.

Ken Keys  
U.S. author

”

**What are the basic elements of social bonds?** According to Hirschi, the social bond has four basic components:

1. **Attachment.** The stronger your attachment to groups or individuals, the more likely you are to conform. In other words, the likelihood of conformity varies with the strength of ties with parents, friends, and institutions such as schools and churches.
2. **Commitment.** The greater your commitment to social goals, the more likely you are to conform. The commitment of individuals who believe their hard work will be rewarded is greater than the commitment of people who do not believe they can compete within the system.
3. **Involvement.** Participation in approved social activities increases the probability of conformity. Besides positively focusing your time and energy, participation puts you in contact with people whose opinions you value.
4. **Belief.** Belief in the norms and values of society promotes conformity. A belief in the appropriateness of the rules of social life strengthens people's resolve not to deviate from those norms.

In short, when social bonds are weak, the chances for deviance increase. Individuals who lack attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief have little incentive to follow the rules of society.

## Section 2 Assessment

1. Which of the following is *NOT* one of the benefits of deviance for society?
  - a. It decreases suspicion and mistrust among members of a society.
  - b. It promotes social change.
  - c. It increases social unity.
  - d. It provides a safety valve.
  - e. It promotes clarification of norms.
2. Briefly describe the main idea of Merton's strain theory.
3. A high school teacher who simply goes through the motions of teaching classes without any thought of success is an example of which response in strain theory?
4. What are the four basic elements needed to create strong social bonds?

### Critical Thinking

5. **Applying Concepts** Describe someone you know (anonymously, of course) who falls into one of the four deviant response categories identified by strain theory. Use specific characteristics of this person to show the influence of different aspirations on economic decisions.



# Sociology Today

## Is Teen Smoking a Deviant Behavior?

Sociologist Philip Hilts believes that tobacco companies target young people in their advertisements and that the strategy has a sociological basis.

*[C]hildren are just beginning to shape their image of themselves, elbowing out a niche in the world, and must somehow differentiate themselves from parents and other adults, and get out from under what the authorities in life want from them. They dress differently, sometimes shockingly. They listen to different, sometimes shocking, music. In this quest, the children are worried, insecure, seeking to make choices and have them supported by their friends or others they respect. Most obviously, their choices are supported by each other. They have learned to lean on each other for aid and assent. Sometimes older siblings lend support. But because the insecurity is great, as many supports as possible are needed (Hilts, 1997:33).*

Cigarette advertising, claims Hilts, portrays smoking as another ally in teenagers' attempts to find their own identities. Smoking is portrayed as a pleasurable, cool way for them to declare their successful transition into adulthood. In other words, tobacco corporations assume correctly that teenagers are at a time in their lives when deviant behavior can serve a developmental need. To teens, smoking (like their choice of clothing, music, and slang) begins as simply a form of deviance.

### Doing Sociology

Do you agree with Hilts's analysis? State your arguments for or against it. Search magazines and newspapers for examples of advertising that emphasizes "young adult smokers" moving into adult activities. Or, see if you can find any advertisements that picture middle-aged or older people smoking. Why do you think these ads are virtually unknown?



*This mural advertising a brand of cigarettes is designed to attract the attention and admiration of teenagers.*

# Section 3

## Symbolic Interactionism and Deviance

### Key Terms

- differential association theory
- labeling theory
- primary deviance
- secondary deviance
- stigma

### Section Preview

The symbolic interactionist perspective yields two theories of deviance. We read in Chapter 3 that culture is learned. Sociologists believe that deviance is a learned behavior that is culturally transmitted. Labeling theory holds that an act is deviant only if other people name it so.

**differential association theory** theory that individuals learn deviance in proportion to number of deviant acts they are exposed to

**labeling theory** theory that society creates deviance by identifying particular members as deviant

### Differential Association Theory

According to symbolic interactionism, deviance is transmitted through socialization in the same way that nondeviant behavior is learned. For example, an early study revealed that delinquent behavior can be transmitted through play groups and gangs. Even when new ethnic groups enter neighborhoods, they learn delinquent behavior from the current residents. *Differential association* and *labeling theory* are both based on symbolic interactionism.

**How is deviance learned? Differential association theory** emphasizes the role of primary groups in transmitting deviance. Just as we learn preferences in religion and politics from others we associate with closely, people can learn deviance by association, as well. The more that individuals are exposed to people who break the law, the more apt they are to become criminals. Three characteristics affect differential association:

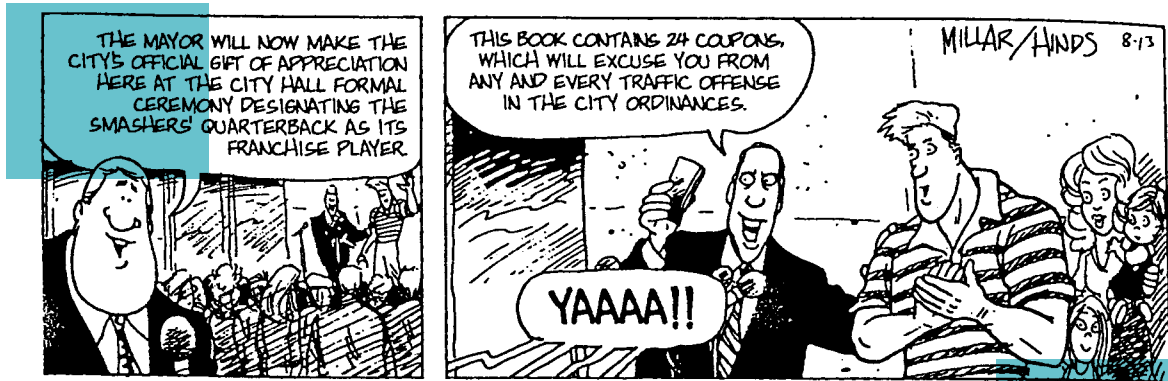
- ❖ *the ratio of deviant to nondeviant individuals.* A person who knows mostly deviants is more likely to learn deviant behavior.
- ❖ *whether the deviant behavior is practiced by significant others.* A person is more likely to copy deviant behavior from a significant other than from people less important to him or her.
- ❖ *the age of exposure.* Younger children learn deviant behavior more quickly than older children.

### Labeling Theory

Strain theory, control theory, and differential association theory help us understand why deviance occurs. **Labeling theory** explains why deviance is *relative*—that is, sometimes of two people breaking the norm only one may be labeled a deviant.

**Is deviance defined by the act or by the individual?** According to labeling theory, deviant behaviors are always a matter of social definition. In this view, deviance exists when some members of a group or society label others as deviants. Howard Becker, a pioneer of labeling theory, writes:





*Deviance is relative. Some members of a society, such as athletes and celebrities, are often treated more tolerantly.*

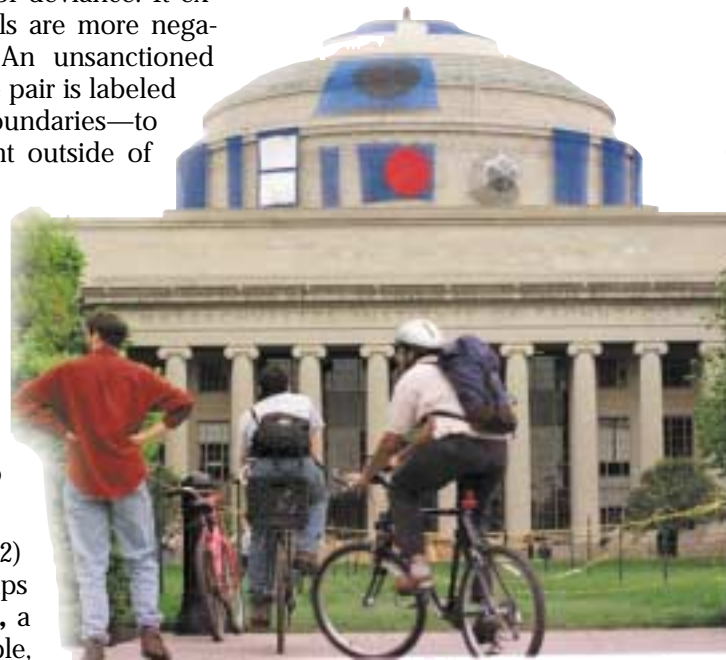
*Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying these rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an “offender.” The deviant is one to whom that label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label (Becker, 1991:9).*

Labeling theory allows us to understand the relativity of deviance. It explains, for example, why unmarried pregnant teenage girls are more negatively sanctioned than the teenage biological fathers. An unsanctioned pregnancy requires two people, but usually only one of the pair is labeled deviant. Traditionally, society expects females to set the boundaries—to be the ones to say “no.” When females become pregnant outside of marriage, they have violated this norm and are considered deviant. Even today, males are not considered as deviant, not because they do not literally bear the child, but because our ideas about their sexual responsibility are still different than for females. And, of course, it is easier to stigmatize women because advanced pregnancy is so visible. Labeling theory also explains why a middle-class youth who steals a car may go unpunished for “borrowing” the vehicle whereas a lower-class youth goes to court for stealing. Too often, lower-class youths are “expected” to be criminals while middle-class youths are not.

**Are there degrees of deviance?** Edwin Lemert’s (1972) distinction between primary and secondary deviance helps clarify the labeling process. In cases of **primary deviance**, a person engages only in isolated acts of deviance. For example, when college students are asked to respond to a checklist of unlawful activities, most admit to having violated one or more norms. Yet the vast majority of college students have never been arrested, convicted, or labeled as criminals. Certainly, those who break the law for the first time do not consider themselves criminals. If their deviance stops at this point, they have engaged in primary deviance; deviance is not a part of their lifestyles or

#### primary deviance

deviance involving occasional breaking of norms that is not a part of a person’s lifestyle or self-concept



*Student pranksters decorated the Massachusetts Institute of Technology dome to look like the Star Wars character, R2D2. Was this an example of primary or secondary deviance?*

**secondary deviance**

deviance in which an individual's life and identity are organized around breaking society's norms

self-concepts. Juveniles, likewise, may commit a few delinquent acts without becoming committed to a delinquent career or regarding themselves as delinquents.

**Secondary deviance**, on the other hand, refers to deviance as a lifestyle and as a personal identity. A secondary deviant is a person whose life and identity are organized around deviance. In this case, the deviant status overshadows all other statuses. Individuals identify themselves primarily as deviants and organize their behavior largely in terms of deviant roles. Other people label them as deviant as well and respond to them accordingly. When this occurs, these individuals usually begin to spend most of their time committing acts of deviance. Deviance becomes a way of life, a career (Kelly, 1996).

Secondary deviance is reflected in the words of Carolyn Hamilton-Ballard—known as “Bubbles” to her fellow gang members in Los Angeles:

*Because of my size, I was automatically labeled a bully-type person. . . . I mean, people saw that Bloods jacket and since everybody thought I was crazy, I started acting crazy. At first it was an act, but then it became me. After being the target for drive-bys and going through different things, that became my life-style. I started retaliating back and I got more involved (Johnson, 1994:209).*



*John Dillinger was at one time the FBI's “public enemy number 1.” Explain why Dillinger is considered a secondary deviant.*

**stigma**

an undesirable trait or label that is used to characterize an individual

**What are the consequences of labeling?** Labeling people as deviants can cause them pain and suffering, as well as determine the direction of their lives. Erving Goffman examined some of the negative effects of labeling when he wrote about **stigma**—an undesirable characteristic or label used by others to deny the deviant full social acceptance. For example, an ex-convict is not accepted by many members of society. Why? Because a stigmatic label—*jailbird*—spoils the individual's entire social identity. One stigma, a prison record, is used to discredit the individual's entire worth. The same

may be true for a person with a disability or an unemployed person.

The words of a forty-three-year-old bricklayer, who was unemployed during the Depression, illustrate this point.

*How hard and humiliating it is to bear the name of an unemployed man. When I go out, I cast down my eyes because I feel myself wholly inferior. When I go along the street, it seems to me that I can't be compared with an average citizen, that everybody is pointing at me with his finger. I instinctively avoid meeting anyone. Former acquaintances and friends of better times are no longer so cordial. They greet me indifferently when we meet. They no longer offer me a cigarette and their eyes seem to say, "You are not worth it, you don't work."*

### Section 3 Assessment

- Which of the following describes what is meant by differential association?
  - Crime is more likely to occur among individuals who have been treated differently.
  - People may become criminals through close association with criminals.
  - Crime is not transmitted culturally.
  - Crime comes from conflict between two cultures.
- Name the sociological theory that takes into account the relativity of deviance.
- What is secondary deviance?
- What are the social consequences of labeling?

### Critical Thinking

- Analyzing Information** Think of someone you know or know of who has been labeled as deviant by some members of society. Analyze the consequences of this labeling for the person identified as a deviant.
- Drawing Conclusions** What actions could be taken against students who are viewed as secondary deviants?



*This young man in New York City in the 1940s probably felt the stigma of being unemployed. How does this stigma relate to the labeling of deviants?*



# Section 4

## Conflict Theory and Deviance

### Key Terms

- victim discounting
- white-collar crime

### Section Preview

The conflict perspective looks at deviance in terms of social inequality and power. The most powerful members of a society determine who will be regarded as deviant. Conflict theorists point to some disproportional statistical relationships between minorities and crime.

### Deviance in Industrial Society

From the conflict perspective, deviance in an industrial society is behavior that those in control see as threatening to their interests. Consequently, the rich and powerful use their positions to determine which acts are deviant and how deviants should be punished.

Sociologist Steven Spitzer (1980) proposed some basic ways in which the culture of an industrial society defends itself against deviants.

1. Critics of industrial society are considered deviants because their beliefs challenge its economic, political, and social basis.
2. Because industrial society requires a willing workforce, those who will not work are considered deviants.
3. Those who threaten private property, especially that belonging to the rich, are prime targets for punishment.
4. Because of society's need for respect of authority, people who show a lack of respect for authority—agitators on the job, people who stage nonviolent demonstrations against established practices—are treated as deviants.
5. Certain activities are encouraged depending on how well they fit within industrial society. For example, violent behavior in sports is accepted because it fosters competition, achievement, teamwork, and winning (Eder, 1995; Adler and Adler, 1999).



*Conflict theorists predict that this suspect's race is likely to have a negative impact on his treatment in the criminal justice system.*

### Race, Ethnicity, and Crime

The relationship between minorities and the judicial system is another way to view deviance from the conflict perspective.

**What is the relationship between race, ethnicity, and crime?** Supporters of the conflict perspective believe that minorities receive unequal treatment in the American criminal justice system. They cite statistics showing that African Americans and Latinos are dealt with more harshly than whites. This is true throughout the criminal justice process—from arrest



through indictment, conviction, sentencing, and parole (Schaefer, 1993; Skolnick, 1998).

Even when the criminal offense is the same, African Americans and Latinos are more likely than whites to be convicted, and they serve more time in prison than whites. Although African Americans account for only 12 percent of the total population in the United States, more than 43 percent of inmates under the death penalty are African American. In interracial murders, an African American is thirteen times as likely to be sentenced to death for the murder of a white person as a white person is for murdering an African American.

Nearly one-half of all homicide victims in the United States are African American. Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority of prisoners on death row are there for murdering whites (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1998a). Prosecutors are less likely to seek the death penalty when an African American has been killed, and juries and judges are less likely to impose the death penalty in cases involving African American victims.

**Why are minorities and whites treated so differently?** The conflict theory suggests several reasons for differences in the way minorities and whites are treated in the criminal justice system. For one thing, conflict theorists point to the fact that minorities generally do not have the economic resources to buy good legal services. Thus, the outcomes of their trials are not likely to be as favorable to them.

Another source of difference involves the fact that crimes against whites tend to be punished more severely than crimes against minorities. Sociologists who follow the conflict perspective believe that this happens because society sees minority interests as less important than the interests of whites. **Victim discounting** reduces the seriousness of crimes directed at members of lower social classes (Gibbons, 1985). According to the logic behind victim discounting, if the victim is less valuable, the crime is less serious, and the penalty is less severe.

*Even when they have committed the same crimes, African Americans and Latinos are more severely punished than whites.*

**victim discounting**  
process of reducing the seriousness of the crimes that injure people of lower status

## Figure 7.3 Focus on Theoretical Perspectives

**Deviance.** This figure illustrates approaches to understanding deviance using concepts associated with a particular theoretical perspective. Construct some examples of your own.

Theoretical Perspective	Sociological Concept	Example of Deviance
Functionalism	Anomie	Delinquent gangs sell drugs because they want success without holding conventional jobs.
Conflict Theory	White-Collar Crime	A convicted Wall Street stock broker (a more powerful member of society) may spend less time in prison than a factory worker (a less powerful member of society) found guilty of a less serious crime.
Symbolic Interactionism	Labeling	Some high school students reject dating because they have been consistently treated and described as “not cool.”

### White-Collar Crime

**white-collar crime**  
job-related crimes committed by high-status people

White-collar crime is yet another way to view deviance. According to Edwin Sutherland (1940, 1983), **white-collar crime** is any crime committed by respectable and high-status people in the course of their occupations. As one researcher put it, lower-status people commit crimes of the streets; higher-status people engage in “crimes of the suites.” Officially, the term *white-collar crime* is used for economic crimes such as price fixing, insider trading, illegal rebates, embezzlement, bribery of a corporate customer, manufacture of hazardous products, toxic pollution, and tax evasion.

**What are the costs of white-collar crime?** According to the U.S. Department of Justice, the costs of white-collar crime are eighteen times higher than the costs of street crime. Illegal working environments (for example, factories that expose workers to toxic chemicals) account for about one-third of all work-related deaths in the United States. Five times more Americans are killed each year from illegal job conditions than are murdered on the streets.

### What kinds of punishment do the majority of white-collar criminals receive?

Despite the fact that white-collar crime costs taxpayers hundreds of billions of dollars every year, the people that commit these crimes are treated more leniently than other criminals. In federal court, where most white-collar cases are tried, probation is granted to 40 percent of antitrust-law violators, 61 percent of fraud defendants, and 70 percent of embezzlers. In general, convicted white-collar criminals are less likely to be imprisoned. If they are imprisoned, they receive shorter average sentences and are more likely to be placed in prisons with extra amenities, such as tennis courts or private rooms. Both Charles Colson and G. Gordon Liddy, convicted conspirators in the Watergate cover-up in the early 1970s, served their sentences in minimum-security federal facilities.



*White-collar criminals often receive milder punishments than other criminals. G. Gordon Liddy, shown here outside the radio station that broadcasts his national radio show, spent four years in prison for Watergate-related crimes during the Nixon administration.*

## Section 4 Assessment

- Which of the following IS NOT one of the basic ways in which the culture of an industrial society defends itself in the face of deviance?
  - People whose beliefs clash with those of industrial society are labeled deviants.
  - Industrial society requires a willing work force.
  - Innovation is rewarded.
  - People who fail to show respect for authority are likely to be considered deviant.
- What is the term that describes reducing the seriousness of crimes against victims from lower social classes?
- What is white-collar crime?

### Critical Thinking

- Evaluating Information** How could the conflict theory be misused to rationalize deviant behavior?
- Summarizing Information** Using the concept of victim discounting, explain why lower-class criminals are usually punished more severely than white-collar criminals for the same crime.

“

The reason that crime doesn't pay is that when it does it is called something else.

Dr. Lawrence Peter  
American author

”



# Focus on Research

## Case Study: Saints and Roughnecks

In this classic study, William Chambliss (1973) observed the behavior of two white teenage gangs at “Hanibal High School” over a two-year period. In addition to gang activity, Chambliss documented the responses of parents, teachers, and police to the delinquent behavior.

**The Saints** On weekends the automobile was even more critical than during the week, for on weekends the Saints [a delinquent high school gang] went to Big Town—a large city with a population of over a million. . . . Every Friday and Saturday night most of the Saints would meet between 8:00 and 8:30 and would go into Big Town. Big Town activities included drinking heavily in taverns or nightclubs, driving drunkenly through the streets, and committing acts of vandalism and playing pranks. . . .

Searching for “fair game” for a prank was the boys’ principal activity after they left the tavern. The boys would drive alongside a foot patrolman and ask directions to some street. If the policeman leaned on the car in the course of answering the question, the driver would speed away, causing him to lose his balance. The Saints were careful to play this prank only in an area where they were not going to spend much time and where they could quickly disappear around a corner to avoid having their license plate number taken.

Construction sites and road repair areas were the special province of the Saints’ mischief. A soon-to-be-repaired hole in the road inevitably invited the Saints to remove lanterns and wooden barricades and put them in the car, leaving the hole unprotected. The boys would find a safe vantage point and wait for an unsuspecting motorist to drive into the hole. Often, though not always, the boys would go up to the motorist and commiserate [sympathize] with him about the dreadful way the city protected its citizenry.

Leaving the scene of the open hole and the motorist, the boys would then go searching for an appropriate place to erect the stolen barricade. An “appropriate place” was often a spot on a highway near a curve in the road where the barricade would not be seen by an oncoming motorist. The boys would wait to watch an unsuspecting motorist attempt to stop and (usually) crash into the wooden barricade.

A stolen lantern might well find its way onto the back of a police car or hang from a street lamp. Once a lantern served as a prop for a reenactment of the “midnight ride of Paul Revere” until the “play,” which was taking place at 2:00 A.M. in the center of a main street of Big Town, was interrupted by a police car several blocks away. The boys ran, leaving the lanterns on the street . . . .

**The Roughnecks** [T]ownspeople never perceived the Saints' . . . delinquency. The Saints were good boys who just went in for an occasional prank. After all, they were well dressed, well mannered and had nice cars. The Roughnecks [a delinquent gang at the same high school] were a different story. Although the two gangs of boys were the same age, and both groups engaged in an equal amount of wild-oat sowing, everyone agreed that the not-so-well-dressed, not-so-well-mannered, not-so-rich boys were heading for trouble. . . .

From the community's viewpoint, the real indication that these kids were in for trouble was that they were constantly involved with the police. Some of them had been picked up for stealing, mostly small stuff, of course, "but still it's stealing small stuff that leads to big time crimes." "Too bad," people said. "Too bad that these boys couldn't behave like the other kids in town; stay out of trouble, be polite to adults, and look to their future." . . .

The fighting activities of the group were fairly readily and accurately perceived by almost everyone. At least once a month, the boys would get into some sort of fight, although most fights were scraps between members of the group or involved only one member of the group and some peripheral hanger-on. Only three times in the period of observation did the group fight together: once against a gang from across town, once against two blacks and once against a group of boys from another school. For the first two fights the group went out "looking for trouble"—and they found it both times. The third fight followed a football game and began spontaneously with an argument on the football field between one of the Roughnecks and a member of the opposition's football team.

More serious than fighting, had the community been aware of it, was theft. Although almost everyone was aware that the boys occasionally stole things, they did not realize the extent of the activity. Petty stealing was a frequent event for the Roughnecks. Sometimes they stole as a group and coordinated their efforts; other times they stole in pairs. Rarely did they steal alone. . . . Types of thievery varied with the whim of the gang. Some forms of thievery were more profitable than others, but all thefts were for profit, not for thrills.

Roughnecks siphoned gasoline from cars as often as they had access to an automobile, which was not very often. Unlike the Saints, who owned their own cars, the Roughnecks would have to borrow their parents' cars, an event which occurred only eight or nine times a year. The boys claimed to have stolen cars for joy rides from time to time.

Source: Excerpted from William J. Chambliss, "The Saints and the Roughnecks," *Society* 11 (November/December, 1973):24–31.

### Working with the Research

1. From your understanding of Chambliss's study, is deviance socially created? Explain.
2. Which of the three major theoretical perspectives best explains Chambliss's findings? Support your choice.



# Section 5

## Crime and Punishment

### Key Terms

- crime
- criminal justice system
- deterrence
- retribution
- incarceration
- rehabilitation
- recidivism

### Section Preview

Crime statistics in the U.S. come from two major sources: the FBI and the Census Bureau. Differences in statistics between the two agencies are due to differences in methods of collecting data. Four approaches to crime control are deterrence, retribution, incarceration, and rehabilitation.

#### crime

acts committed in violation of the law

*The job of this forensic scientist is to examine evidence—fingerprints, DNA, handwriting, firearms—for indications that a crime has occurred.*

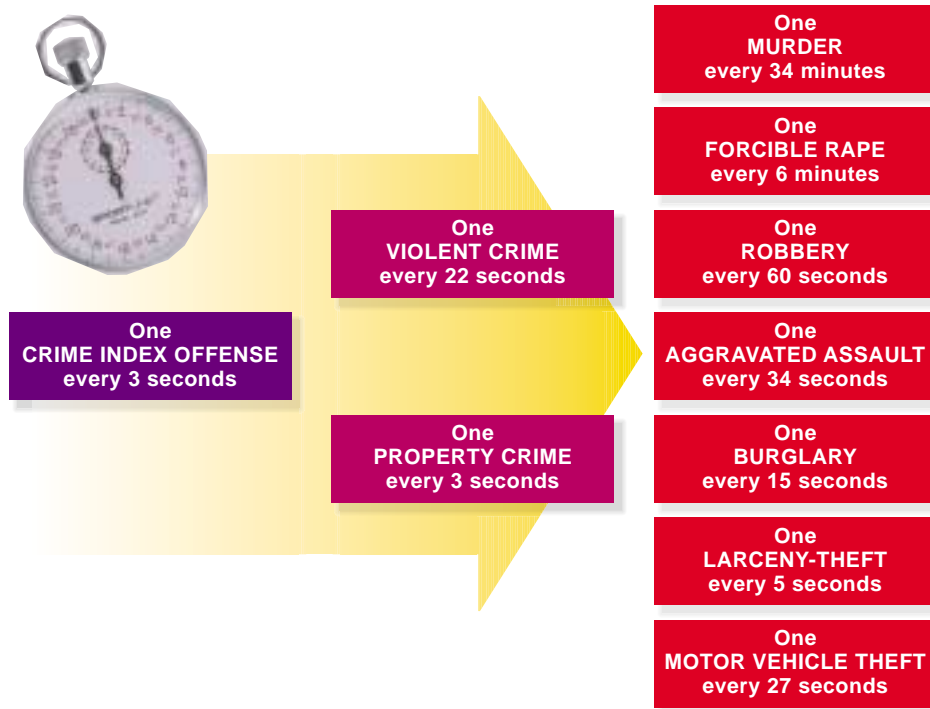
### Measurement of Crime

Most Americans think of **crime**—acts in violation of statute law—including a narrow range of behavior. On the contrary, more than 2,800 acts are classified as federal crimes. Many more acts violate state and local statutes.

**How much crime is there in the United States today?** Crime increased sharply between the 1960s and the 1990s. For example, the FBI Index of violent crime has increased from a big city offense rate per 100,000 of 860 in 1969 to 1207 in 1999. Violent crime rates are considerably higher in the U.S. than in most other industrialized countries.

*Today the rate of homicide death for a young man is 23 times higher in the U.S. than in England. In 1995, handguns were used to kill 2 people in New Zealand, 15 in Japan, 30 in Great Britain, 106 in Canada, 213 in Germany, and 9,390 in the United States (To Establish Justice, 1999:iv).*





**Figure 7.4 FBI's Crime Clock: 1999. How often do Americans commit crimes?**

The number to the far left, of course, does not mean that one Crime Index offense actually occurs every three seconds. It does mean that when all Crime Index offenses for 1999 are divided by the total number of seconds in a year there are enough of them to be spaced out every three seconds.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Uniform Crime Reports*, 1999.

**How are crime statistics collected?** The major source of American crime statistics is the Federal Bureau of Investigation's *Uniform Crime Reports* (UCR). These official statistics are gathered from police departments across the country. Reports are submitted voluntarily by law enforcement agencies.

**What do UCR statistics cover?** Nine types of crimes (called crime index offenses) are tracked: murder, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, arson, and hate crimes.

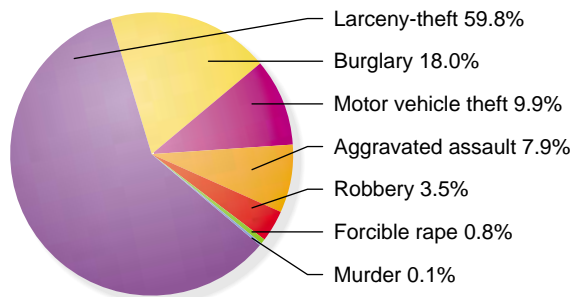
Figure 7.4 shows UCR statistics on the frequency of seven of these crimes in the United States in 1999. Figure 7.5 presents another view of the 1998 statistics. Crimes known to the police totaled 11,635,900 (total violent crime plus total property crime). As the table shows, both violent crime and property crime have declined since 1990. Since murder receives the most publicity, it can be used to highlight this general, across-the-board reduction in

Types of crime	Number of crimes	Crime rate per 100,000 residents	1990–1999	
			Percent change in crime rate	Percent change in number of crimes
<b>Violent crime</b>	<b>1,430,690</b>	<b>524.7</b>	<b>-28.3</b>	<b>-21.4</b>
Murder	15,530	5.7	-39.4	-33.7
Forcible rape	89,110	32.7	-20.6	-13.1
Robbery	409,670	150.2	-41.6	-35.9
Aggravated assault	916,380	336.1	-20.7	-13.1
<b>Property crime</b>	<b>10,284,500</b>	<b>3,742.1</b>	<b>-26.5</b>	<b>-19.4</b>
Burglary	2,099,700	770.0	-37.7	-31.7
Larceny-theft	6,957,400	2,551.4	-20.1	-12.4
Motor vehicle theft	1,147,300	420.7	-36.0	-29.9

**Figure 7.5 Crimes in the United States, 1999.** If you were a law enforcement officer, would you be encouraged or discouraged by this data? Why?

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Uniform Crime Reports*, 1999.





**Figure 7.6 Types of Crimes Americans Commit.** This figure shows the contribution each major type of crime makes to the total of U.S. crime.

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Uniform Crime Reports*, 1999.

crime. The murder rate in the United States has declined more than 39 percent since the late 1980s. This decline has gained momentum since the mid-1990s. One major reason for this new downward crime trend is a recent reduction in juvenile crime.

Figure 7.6 indicates that violent crime—murder, forcible rape, aggravated assault, and robbery—made up 12.3 percent of the known crimes. Property crime—burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft—accounted for 87.7 percent.

**How reliable are UCR statistics?** The UCR statistics provide considerable information about crime. A major strength of this reporting system lies in the fact that experienced police officers decide if an incident should be reported as a crime. The UCR statistics also have serious limitations, however:

- ❖ The UCR tends to overrepresent the lower classes and undercount the middle and upper classes.
- ❖ Some crimes (amateur thefts, minor assaults) are not as likely to be reported to the police as murder and auto thefts.
- ❖ Prostitutes and intoxicated persons are subject to arrest in public places, but are fairly safe in private settings where the police cannot enter without a warrant.
- ❖ About two-thirds of U.S. crimes are not reported at all.
- ❖ Crime reporting varies from place to place and crime to crime and white-collar offenders are seldom included.

**Are any other crime statistics available?** In response to these criticisms, the *National Crime Victimization Survey* (NCVS) was launched in the early 1970s. This survey is conducted semiannually for the Bureau of Justice Statistics by the U.S. Census Bureau.

The NCVS has two advantages. First, it helps make up for the underreporting of crime. Second, its surveys are more scientifically sound than methods used in the UCR. At the very least, the NCVS is an increasingly important supplement to the FBI's official statistics. Together they provide a more complete account of the extent and nature of crime in the United States (Wright, 1987; U.S. Department of Justice, 1999).

## Juvenile Crime

Juvenile crime refers to legal violations among those under 18 years of age. Juvenile offenders are the third largest category of criminals in the United States. Teenage criminal activity includes theft, murder, rape, robbery, assault, and the sale of illegal substances. Juvenile delinquent behavior includes deviance that only the young can commit, such as failing to attend school, fighting in school, and underage drinking and smoking.

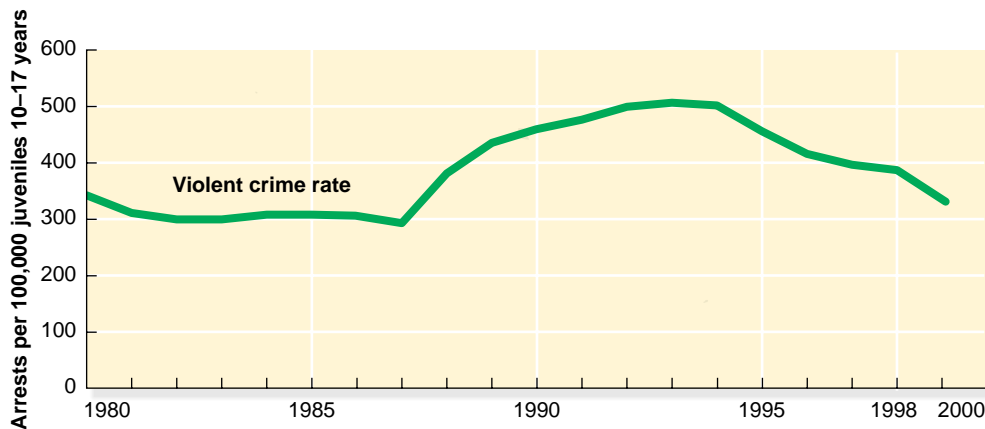
**What is the trend in juvenile crime?** Violent juvenile crime reached its lowest level in a decade in 1999, a fall of 36 percent since 1994 (Office of Justice Programs, 2000). During the 1990s

- ❖ the juvenile murder arrest rate dropped by 68 percent
- ❖ juvenile arrests for weapons violations declined by a third
- ❖ the juvenile rape arrest rate went down by 31 percent

**SOCIOLOGY**  
*Online*

Student Web Activity  
Visit the *Sociology and You* Web site at  
[soc.glencoe.com](http://soc.glencoe.com) for an  
activity on juvenile crime.





**Figure 7.7 Juvenile Violent Crime Declines.** Why is the juvenile violent crime rate in the U.S. dropping?

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Juvenile Offenders and Victims*, 1999, and Office of Justice Programs, 2000.

There were also fewer juvenile victims of murder—down from almost 3,000 to about 2,000. Juvenile crime, in short, returned to the rates typical of the years prior to the crack epidemic of the late 1980s.

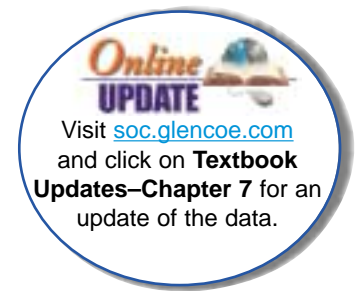
**Why has juvenile crime gone down?** Several factors are said to account for this decline in juvenile crime. For one, there has been a decline in the demand for crack cocaine. Remaining crack gangs that provided guns to juveniles have reached truces. Repeat violent juvenile offenders have been given stiffer sentences. Finally, police are cracking down on illegal guns on the street.

## Approaches to Crime Control

The **criminal justice system** is made up of the institutions and processes responsible for enforcing criminal statutes. It includes the police, courts, and correctional system. A criminal justice system may draw on four approaches to control and punish lawbreakers—*deterrence*, *retribution*, *incarceration*, and *rehabilitation*.

**Does punishment discourage crime?** The **deterrence** approach uses the threat of punishment to discourage criminal actions. A basic idea of this approach is that punishment of convicted criminals will serve as an example to keep other people from committing crimes. There is considerable debate on the effectiveness of deterrence (DiIulio and Piehl, 1991). Research indicates that the threat of punishment *does* deter crime if potential lawbreakers know two things: that they are likely to get caught and that the punishment will be severe. In the U.S., however, the punishment for crime is usually not certain, swift, or severe. Consequently, punishment does not have the deterrent effect that it could have (Pontell, 1984).

Capital punishment (the death penalty) is a special case. Over four thousand people have been executed in the United States since 1930, the year the federal government began gathering statistics on capital punishment. Unless



**criminal justice system**  
system comprising institutions and processes responsible for enforcing criminal statutes

**deterrence**  
discouraging criminal acts by threatening punishment



# Tech Trends

## Look Out for Identity Thieves!

One of the newest forms of deviance is “identity theft.” An identity thief “steals” credit information belonging to another person, then commits fraud with it. The results for victims can be devastating.

In testimony before the Maryland legislature, one couple reported that a thief used their credit cards to purchase five automobiles. Graciela has been a victim of identity theft for more than ten years. A thief gained access to her Social Security number, birth certificate, and driver’s license. With this information, the imposter has obtained credit cards, purchased furniture, bought cars, and obtained welfare. (All of these examples, and more, are available through the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse, <http://www.privacyrights.org>, a nonprofit group for consumers’ privacy rights.)

Beth Givens of the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse explains that identity theft can occur in many ways. A thief can steal a wallet or purse, get copies of credit card slips from trash, or steal someone’s mail. There are also high-tech methods of identity theft. The most common method is to illegally gain access to credit rating company computers. These companies maintain credit reports that provide valuable information about a consumer—Social Security number, birth date, credit card numbers, and address. Although credit rating companies try to prevent high-tech identity theft, the very nature of their service makes this information accessible through computer terminals. This access is an open invitation to criminals.

The victims of identity theft obviously suffer great damage. Unless the thief is caught in the act, there seems to be little the police can do to stop this kind of crime. Many victims also have to deal with abusive collection agencies. It has taken some people ten years or more to clean up the mess the thieves have created. Victims are often scarred emotionally and report feelings of violation, hopelessness, and great anger.

The goal of today’s identity thieves is to get items at no cost, not to take over the victims’ identities. But what if identity theft also involved losing one’s identity? What would happen if a person’s identity were actually “stolen”? This was the topic of a film called *The Net*. In this movie, a woman’s entire identity is erased. The villains in the movie steal the documents that would prove her identity and destroy all of her existing computer records. Using her photograph and Social Security number, they create a whole new identity for her, including a new name, a bad credit report, and a criminal record. As the woman in the movie says, “They knew everything about me. It was all on the Internet.”



### Analyzing the Trends

Which theoretical perspective would be most useful in analyzing identity theft? Explain your choice, and apply that perspective to the issue of identity theft.

it is premeditated, a murder is an extremely emotional and irrational act. Under such circumstances, you would not expect the threat of capital punishment to be a deterrent, and research shows that it is not. If the death penalty were a deterrent to murder, a decline in its use should be followed by an increase in the murder rate. Research indicates, however, that the murder rate remains constant, or even drops, following a decline in the use of the death penalty (Sellin, 1991; Lester, 1998; Sarat, 1998).

### Do Americans believe capital punishment deters criminals?

Despite those findings, about three-fourths of Americans believe that the death penalty acts as a deterrent to murder. Actually, attitudes regarding the ability of the death penalty to prevent crime do not seem to affect attitudes toward the death penalty itself. Of those Americans who favor the death penalty, over three-fourths indicate they would continue to favor it even if confronted with conclusive evidence that the death penalty does not act as a deterrent to murder and that it does not lower the murder rate. Feelings of revenge and a desire for retribution, then, appear to contribute more to the support of capital punishment than do its deterrent effects. When asked to choose, a significantly higher proportion of the American population support the death penalty for murder (66 percent) than oppose it (26 percent; Gallup, 2001).

### Why does the attitude toward the death penalty vary?

Attitudes toward the death penalty in the United States vary according to race and ethnicity. Over three-fourths of whites favor the death penalty compared with 40 percent of African Americans and 52 percent of Latinos. This racial and ethnic variation in attitude toward the death penalty is not surprising. The less favorable African American and Latino attitude is due, in part, to the fact that, when convicted, they are more likely than whites to receive the death penalty (Spohn, 1995). While African Americans comprise only about 13 percent of the U.S. population, they make up 43 percent of death row inmates. Racial minorities constitute half of all inmates in U.S. prisons.

**What is retribution?** **Retribution** is a type of punishment intended to make criminals pay compensation for their acts. It comes from the idea of “an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.” The law allows designated officials to exact retribution. However, it does not allow individuals to take personal vengeance. If a mother “takes the law into her own hands” by shooting her son’s killer, she must also answer to society for her action.

**Why does society keep criminals in prisons?** The basic idea behind **incarceration**—keeping criminals in prisons—is that criminals who are not on the street cannot commit crimes. Recently, the United States has taken a tougher stance in favor of the incarceration approach with such bills as the *three strikes law*. As a result, the number of local, state, and federal prisoners increased by almost 700,000 between 1990 and 2000, and is expected to exceed 2 million very shortly. In more repressive societies, such as the former Soviet Union and present-day Nationalist China, people may spend their entire lives in prison camps for crimes ranging from political opposition to murder.



*Demonstrators protest in support of and in opposition to the death penalty. Based on the evidence, do you think support for the death penalty is motivated by deterrence or retribution?*

**retribution**  
punishment intended to make criminals pay compensation for their acts

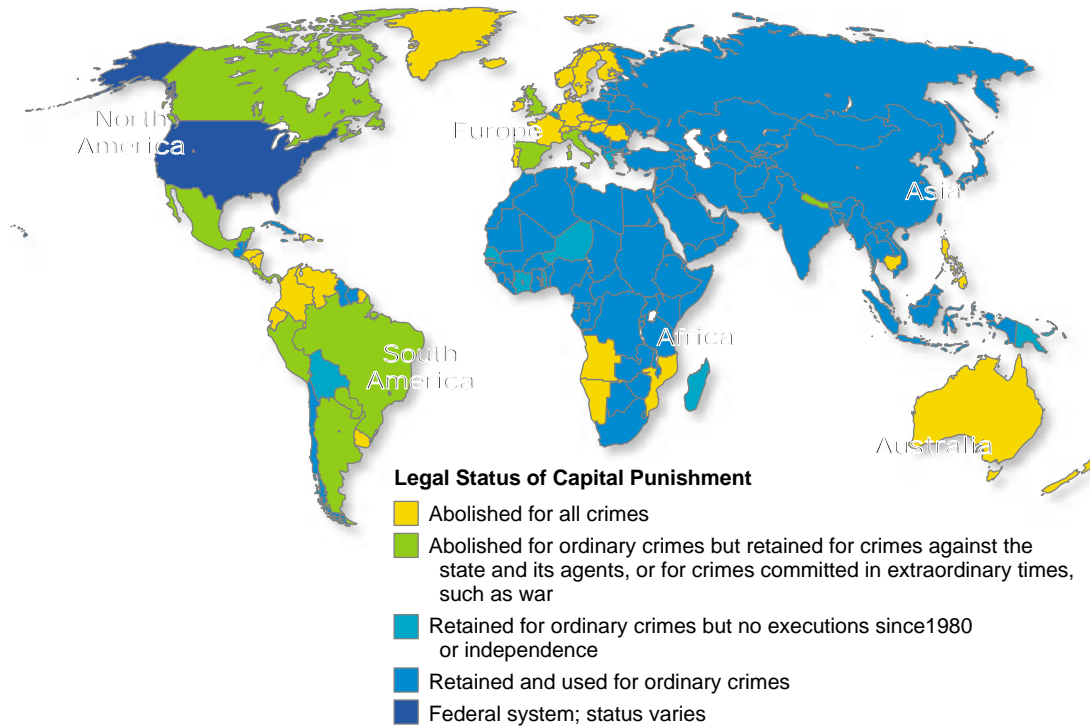
**incarceration**  
a method of protecting society from criminals by keeping them in prisons

# World View



## Death Penalty Policy

Countries vary in their approach to the control of crime. The most extreme form of social control, the death penalty, is utilized in many countries, while some countries have abolished capital punishment completely. This map shows variations in national policy regarding the death penalty.



### Interpreting the Map

1. Do you notice any pattern in the use of the death penalty? Describe it.
2. What additional information would you need to determine if capital punishment is an effective deterrent to crime? Explain.

Adapted from *The State of the World Atlas*, 5th ed. New York: Penguin Books.

#### rehabilitation

process of changing or reforming a criminal through socialization

**Do prisons rehabilitate criminals?** **Rehabilitation** is an approach to crime control that attempts to resocialize criminals. Most prisons have programs aimed at giving prisoners both social and work skills that will help them adjust to normal society after their release. Unfortunately, 30 to 60 percent of those released from penal institutions are sent back to prison in two

to five years. This return to criminal behavior is called **recidivism**. The relatively high rate of recidivism makes it seem unlikely that prison rehabilitation programs are working (Elikann, 1996; Zamble and Quinsey, 1997). Reasons for the high rate of recidivism include

- ❖ the basic nature of the offenders
- ❖ influences of more hardened criminals
- ❖ the stigma of being an ex-convict.

It is difficult to change attitudes and behavior within the prison subculture. Conformity with the “inmate code” stresses loyalty among inmates as well as opposition to correctional authorities. Also, a released prisoner is likely to bring the toughness reinforced in prison life to the workplace. This transfer of prison norms does not work because most jobs in the service economy require interpersonal skills (Hagan, 1994b).

**What are some alternatives to prisons?** If prisons do not rehabilitate, what are some alternatives? Several are being considered.

1. *A combination of prison and probation.* A mixed or split sentence, known as *shock probation*, is designed to shock offenders into recognizing the realities of prison life. Prisoners serve part of their sentences in an institution and the rest on probation.
2. *Community-based programs.* These programs are designed to reintroduce criminals into society. By getting convicts out of prison for at least part of the day, community-based programs help break the inmate code. At the same time, prisoners have a chance to become part of society—participating in the community but under professional guidance and supervision.
3. *Diversion strategy.* Diversion is aimed at preventing, or greatly reducing, the offender’s involvement in the criminal justice system. Diversion involves a referral to a community-based treatment program rather than a prison or a probationary program. Because offenders are handled outside the formal system of criminal law, authorities believe the offenders will not acquire stigmatizing labels and other liabilities (Morris and Tonry, 1990; Lanier and Henry, 1997).

**Will any of these alternatives work?** Most of the alternative programs have not been sufficiently evaluated to determine how well they work. Continued use of these alternatives will depend on what American voters believe are the appropriate functions of prisons. These programs can exist only so long as rehabilitation has a high priority. Recently, Americans have taken a harsher view toward criminals, so support for alternatives may be eroding.

### recidivism

a repetition of or return to criminal behavior



*These juveniles are in the Texas-based Del Valle Correctional Boot Camp. What is the reasoning behind this alternative to imprisonment?*

Rank	Country	Prisoners*	Population (in millions)	Incarceration rate per 1,000
1	United States	1,630,940	272.5	5.99
2	Russia	1,051,515	146.5	7.18
3	Germany	71,047	82.0	0.87
4	Poland	57,320	38.7	1.48
5	England and Wales	55,537	59.4	0.93
6	France	54,014	59.1	0.91
7	Italy	48,747	57.7	0.84
8	Spain	42,105	39.4	1.07
9	Japan	40,389	126.7	0.32
10	Canada	33,785	30.6	1.10

\*In latest year for which figures are available.



**Figure 7.8 Top Ten Countries in Number of Prisoners.** What can you conclude from this table about a possible relationship between level of economic development and crime?

Sources: Russell Ash. *The Top 10 of Everything 1999*. New York and the Population Reference Bureau, 1999.

## Section 5 Assessment

- Indicate whether the approaches to punishment listed below are rehabilitation (R), deterrence (D), retribution (Rb), or incarceration (I).
  - imprisonment without parole
  - longer prison sentences
  - extremely harsh prison conditions
  - psychological counseling in prison
  - swift justice
- According to the FBI's *Uniform Crime Reports*, has crime in the United States increased or decreased since 1989?
- Do you believe that the cultural values of American society affect the policies of government regarding approaches to crime control? Why or why not?
- Has research supported the position that the death penalty deters crime?

### Critical Thinking

- Synthesizing Information** The text outlines several distinct approaches to crime control. Choose one approach, and explain why you believe it is or is not successful. Use functionalism, conflict theory, or symbolic interactionism as a reference point.
- Evaluating Information** What are your beliefs on capital punishment? Defend your viewpoint.

“

Violence is the last refuge of the incompetent.

Isaac Asimov  
author

”



# CHAPTER 7 ASSESSMENT

## Summary

### Section 1: Deviance and Social Control

**Main Idea:** Deviance is the violation of social norms. It is difficult to define because not everyone agrees on what should be considered deviant behavior.

### Section 2: Functionalism and Deviance

**Main Idea:** According to functionalists, deviance has both negative and positive consequences for society. Functionalism also forms the basis for two important theories of deviance: strain theory and control theory.

### Section 3: Symbolic Interactionism and Deviance

**Main Idea:** The symbolic interactionist perspective yields two theories of deviance. We read in Chapter 3 that culture is learned. Sociologists believe that deviance is a learned behavior that is culturally transmitted. Labeling theory holds that an act is deviant only if other people name it so.

### Section 4: Conflict Theory and Deviance

**Main Idea:** The conflict perspective looks at deviance in terms of social inequality and power. The most powerful members of a society determine who will be regarded as deviant. Conflict theorists point to some disproportional statistical relationships between minorities and crime.

### Section 5: Crime and Punishment

**Main Idea:** Crime statistics in the U.S. come from two major sources: the FBI and the Census Bureau.



**Self-Check Quiz**  
Visit the *Sociology and You* Web site at [soc.glencoe.com](http://soc.glencoe.com) and click on **Chapter 7—Self-Check Quizzes** to prepare for the chapter test.

## Reviewing Vocabulary

Complete each sentence using each term once.

- |                                 |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| <b>a.</b> deviance              | <b>i.</b> deterrence                      |
| <b>b.</b> stigma                | <b>j.</b> control theory                  |
| <b>c.</b> social control        | <b>k.</b> recidivism                      |
| <b>d.</b> white-collar crimes   | <b>l.</b> rehabilitation                  |
| <b>e.</b> social sanctions      | <b>m.</b> differential association theory |
| <b>f.</b> anomie                | <b>n.</b> retribution                     |
| <b>g.</b> Uniform Crime Reports | <b>o.</b> labeling theory                 |
| <b>h.</b> strain theory         |   |
- The tactic that uses intimidation to prevent crime is called \_\_\_\_\_.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ is the approach to crime control that attempts to resocialize criminals.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ is an undesirable characteristic or label used to deny the deviant acceptance.
  - A violation of social norms is called \_\_\_\_\_.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ are crimes committed by high-status people in the course of their occupation.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ is a theory that states that people are defined by those in power as deviant.
  - The theory that states that deviance exists when there is a gap between culturally desirable goals and means is called \_\_\_\_\_.
  - The theory that conformity to social norms depends on a strong bond between individuals and society is known as the \_\_\_\_\_.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ are rewards or punishments designed to encourage desired behavior.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ is a theory that states that deviance is learned in proportion to exposure to deviant acts.
  - When past offenders return to prison, such an occurrence is called \_\_\_\_\_.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ are ways for promoting conformity to norms.



# CHAPTER 7 ASSESSMENT

13. \_\_\_\_\_ is the social condition in which norms are weak, conflicting or absent.
14. The major source of American statistics on crime gathered from police departments is known as \_\_\_\_\_.
15. \_\_\_\_\_ is the practice in which criminals pay compensation equal to their offenses.

## Reviewing the Facts

1. In a famous study known as the Minneapolis Domestic Violence Study, sociologists discovered that arresting someone for hitting his wife did not necessarily stop him from hitting her again. What is the name of the theory upon which they based their hypothesis that arrest would stop the behavior?
2. A group of lower-class youths are accused of a crime for behavior that higher-status teens have engaged in without punishment. What sociological term describes this process?
3. When a high school student admits to cheating on a test, this behavior is labeled as primary deviance. Explain why.
4. Give two reasons why the crime statistics reported by the Uniform Crime Reports differ from those statistics reported by the National Crime Victimization Survey. Which report would you consider more reliable and why?
5. What is the strain theory?
6. Robert Merton's strain theory of deviance is based on four types of responses. Using the chart below, list each response. Then, from the perspective of means and goals explain each response and give an example.

### MERTON'S DEVIANT RESPONSES TO STRAIN

Response	Explanation	Example
Innovation	Individual accepts success as a goal but uses illegal means to achieve it.	Shoplifter

## Thinking Critically

1. **Interpreting Information** Use the information in this chapter to explain the following statement: "Deviance, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder."
2. **Applying Concepts** There is a chain of restaurants in this country known for the outrageous behavior of its servers. At these restaurants, servers might purposely spill drinks and food on the patrons. Despite this apparently deviant behavior, patrons seem to love the restaurants and recommend them to friends. How do these restaurants, which clearly violate concepts of social control, continue to attract customers?
3. **Making Inferences** If a person is rarely deviant, people come to expect that behavior. If a person is often deviant, people expect *that* behavior. What do you think happens when people are deviant occasionally? How might unpredictability of behavior be more alarming or disturbing?
4. **Drawing Conclusions** Some states are considering life imprisonment with no chance of parole as an alternative to the death penalty. The states argue that the capital punishment process is more costly than imprisonment over time. Proponents also claim that offenders given lifetime sentences are more likely to develop remorse for their crimes. Do you think this argument has merit? Why or why not?
5. **Evaluating Information** The conflict perspective says that the capitalistic society of the United States—with its emphasis on gaining wealth—is really responsible for crime. Find examples to support or to refute the hypothesis that crime is the result of society's materialistic values.
6. **Analyzing Information** The chapter case study "Saints and Roughnecks" describes how social class contributed to people's perceptions of the level of deviance of two groups of boys. Some students complain that there are special groups in their schools (athletes, honor students, and so forth) that never seem to be held responsible for their actions. Is this true of your school? If so, why? If not, what do you credit for the even-handed discipline?

## Sociology Projects

- 1. Random Acts of Kindness and Positive Deviance** Go out of your way to help a stranger (not a friend or family member). You might give someone directions, help someone to carry parcels, or even smile and say a friendly hello. (*Important note:* Remember to keep safety and sensitivity to others' feelings in mind when you approach people you don't know.) Write answers to the following questions to help you evaluate the stranger's reactions to your act.
  - a. How do you think the traits of the individual you helped (race, age, gender) affected the situation?
  - b. Why did you choose your particular act of kindness?
  - c. How did you feel while performing the random act of kindness?
  - d. What surprised or impressed you the most about the individual's reaction?
- 2. Categorizing Deviance** As you read in the quotation on page 204, in a diverse society such as that of the United States, many groups of people may be categorized as deviant by someone. List the groups named in the quotation on a piece of paper. For each group, assign a number from 1 to 7, with 1 being the most deviant and 7 the least deviant. Afterward, compare your list with those of two or three of your classmates to see if there was any agreement. Discuss possible reasons for major differences.
- 3. Deviant Crimes** What crimes today do people consider the most severe? Working individually, make a list of the five crimes you consider the most deviant, with the first item on the list the most deviant, the second item the next most deviant, and so forth. Next, assign a punishment for each crime. Does the crime warrant the death penalty? Life imprisonment? After you have completed your list, work with two or three classmates until you agree on a new list. You must reach consensus on the crimes included on the list, their rankings, and the punishment assigned to each. Finally, compare your

group's results with the results of other groups in your class. What have you learned about the difficulty of reaching agreement on this sensitive topic?

- 4. The Role of the Media** The text discussed how race is an important factor in understanding deviance. Another factor you might wish to consider is the role of the media in shaping our perceptions of crime and criminals. Your task is to collect one crime-related newspaper article per day for one week. Analyze the article for information such as the race, age, gender, and status, of the accused. Also consider the geographic location of the crime. How does the newspaper describe the area where the crime took place? Do you detect any bias in the type of words used to report these incidents?
- 5. Preparing a News Broadcast** As an extension of the project above (i.e., number 4), imagine yourself as a news anchor on the local news. Choose one of the stories that you have collected. Limiting yourself to one paragraph, prepare your news broadcast using the facts as reported in the newspaper. Now, evaluate your broadcast and write another version that is neutral (i.e., gives no indication of race, gender or age). Which version do you feel the program producer would choose to put on the air? Why?

## Technology Activity



- 1.** Using the Internet, your school or local library, find a murder case from the year 1900. Find a similar type of murder case from the year 2000. Consider how each murder was reported and punished (i.e., the type of approach to crime control that was used). Design a database to illustrate similarities and differences between the two deviant acts. What can you conclude about society's view of deviance at the time the crime was committed?

## Chapter 7



# Enrichment Reading

## The Police and the Black Male

by *Elijah Anderson*

The police, in the Village-Northton [neighborhood] as elsewhere, represent society's formal, legitimate means of social control. Their role includes protecting law-abiding citizens from those who are not law-abiding by preventing crime and by apprehending likely criminals. Precisely how the police fulfill the public's expectations is strongly related to how they view the neighborhood and the people who live there. On the streets, color-coding often works to confuse race, age, class, gender, incivility, and criminality, and it expresses itself most concretely in the person of the **anonymous** black male. In doing their job, the police often become willing parties to this general color-coding of the public environment, and related distinctions, particularly those of skin color and gender, come to convey definite meanings. Although such coding may make the work of the police more manageable, it may also fit well with their own **presuppositions** regarding race and class relations, thus shaping officers' perceptions of crime "in the city." Moreover, the anonymous black male is usually an **ambiguous** figure who arouses the utmost caution and is generally considered dangerous until he proves he is not. . . .

To be white is to be seen by the police—at least superficially—as an ally, eligible for consideration and for much more deferential treatment than that accorded to blacks in general. This attitude may be grounded in the backgrounds of the police themselves. Many have grown up in . . . "ethnic" neighborhoods. They may serve what they perceive as their own class and neighbor-

hood interests, which often translates as keeping blacks "in their place"—away from neighborhoods that are socially defined as "white." In trying to do their job, the police appear to engage in an informal policy of monitoring young black men as a means of controlling crime, and often they seem to go beyond the bounds of duty. . . .

On the streets late at night, the average young black man is suspicious of others he encounters, and he is particularly wary of the police. If he is dressed in the uniform of the "gangster," such as a black leather jacket, sneakers, and a "gangster cap," if he is carrying a radio or a suspicious bag (which may be confiscated), or if he is moving too fast or too slow, the police may stop him. As part of the routine, they search him and make him sit in the police car while they run a check to see whether there is a "detainer" on him. If there is nothing, he is allowed to go on his way. After this ordeal the youth is often left afraid, sometimes shaking, and uncertain about the area he had previously taken for granted. He is upset in part because he is painfully aware of how close he has come to being in "big trouble." He knows of other youths who have gotten into a "world of trouble" simply by being on the streets at the wrong time or when the police were pursuing a criminal. In these circumstances, particularly at night, it is relatively easy for one black man to be mistaken for another. Over the years, while walking through the neighborhood I have on occasion been stopped and questioned by police chasing a mugger, but after explaining myself I was released.

Many youths, however, have reason to fear such mistaken identity or harassment, since they might be jailed, if only for a short time, and would have to post bail money and pay legal fees to **extricate** themselves from the mess. . . . When law-abiding blacks are ensnared by the criminal justice system, the scenario may proceed as follows. A young man is **arbitrarily** stopped by the police and questioned. If he cannot effectively negotiate with the officer(s), he may be accused of a crime and arrested. To resolve this situation he needs financial resources, which for him are in short supply. If he does not have money for any attorney, which often happens, he is left to a public defender who may be more interested in going along with the court system than in fighting for a poor black person. Without legal support, he may well wind up “doing time” even if he is innocent of the charges brought against him. The next time he is stopped for questioning he will have a record, which will make detention all the more likely.

Because the young black man is aware of many cases when an “innocent” black person was wrongly accused and detained, he develops an “attitude” toward the police. The street word for police is “the man,” signifying a certain machismo, power, and authority. He becomes concerned when he notices “the man” in the community or when the police focus on him because he is outside his own neighborhood. The youth knows, or soon finds out, that he exists in a legally precarious state. Hence he is motivated to avoid the police, and his public life becomes severely **circumscribed**. . . .

To avoid encounters with the man, some streetwise young men camouflage themselves, giving up the urban uniform and emblems that identify them as “legitimate” objects of police attention. They may adopt a more conventional presentation of self, wearing chinos, sweat suits, and generally more conservative dress. Some youths have been known to “ditch” a favorite jacket if they see others wearing one like it, because wearing it increases their chances of being mistaken for someone else who may have committed a crime.

But such strategies do not always work over the long run and must be constantly modified. For instance, because so many young ghetto blacks have begun to wear Fila and Adidas sweat suits as status symbols, such dress has become incorporated into the public image generally associated with young black males. These athletic suits, particularly the more expensive and colorful ones, along with high-priced sneakers, have become the leisure dress of successful drug dealers. . . .

### What Does it Mean?

#### ambiguous

capable of being understood in two or more ways

#### anonymous

lacking individuality, distinction, or recognition

#### arbitrarily

without meaning; resulting from the unrestrained exercise of power

#### circumscribe

reduce the range or scope of action

#### extricate

to remove from an entanglement

#### presuppositions

assumed knowledge

Ed. note: This article is based on the author’s field research on two city neighborhoods he calls Village-Northton.

From: Elijah Anderson, *Streetwise* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), pp. 190–206. © 1990 University of Chicago Press. Reprinted by permission of the publisher and author.

### Read and React

1. According to the article, what are some consequences to black youth of being arrested, innocent or not?
2. What presuppositions regarding race and class exist in your neighborhood?
3. Do you think color-coding exists in your town or city? Why or why not?