



Deviance and Crime

In this chapter, you will learn about:

- deviant behavior
- criminal behavior and the justice system

Winston Churchill, the great British prime minister who led the country during the difficult years of the second world war, was known to hold meetings with his advisors in his bathroom while he was soaking in the tub. Simon Rodilla, an American, built a series of towers in the Watts area of Los Angeles out of bits of stone, steel, cement, and found objects like bottle caps, bits of broken china, and seashells. The writer Henry David Thoreau built himself a cabin of sticks and mud and lived for two years on what he could get from the woods. Such eccentric behavior—behavior that violates social norms—is called deviance.

Deviant behavior may serve both positive and negative social functions. Sociologists have offered explanations from biological, psychological, and sociological perspectives. If deviant behavior also breaks a law, it is called a crime, and the person who commits it is labeled a criminal. The criminal justice system is one of society's ways of dealing with criminal, deviant behavior.

What Is Deviance?

Sociologist Emile Durkheim once observed that behaviors that qualify one person for sainthood may condemn another to prison, a mental asylum, or the stake. Behavior that violates norms is called **deviance**. Durkheim was suggesting that no behavior is consistently considered to be deviant across circumstances, time, and cultures.

Social norms determine deviance, and because norms vary widely, the cultural definition of deviance differs, too. Also, to understand why a certain act is considered deviant, we must always know the context in which it occurred.

Deviance in Perspective

Some norms—such as crossing the street at the corner, writing thank-you notes for gifts received, or waiting your turn in lines—are often violated. Yet people who break them are not usually labeled “deviant.”

When a behavior is deviant, it brings about social disapproval from many members of a society. Deviant behavior is usually condemned and often punished. The punishment can be as simple as ignoring or isolating an offender, or it may be as strong as a fine, imprisonment, or death. In other words, deviance is a matter of degree.

Deviance is decided by **two** things:

1. **Extent of Disapproval.** The number of people who condemn an act must be considerable.
2. **Degree of Societal Outrage.** The hostility or outrage set off by the act must be intense.

If most people in a society strongly disapprove of and wish to punish an action, it almost certainly will be labeled deviant.

Social Controls and Conformity

Society employs **social controls** to prevent deviance. These are techniques and strategies for punishing wrongdoing and rewarding appropriate behavior. Social control occurs on all levels of society. Parents punish and reward their children, peer groups encourage adherence to dress codes and friendship norms, and the workplace requires adults to follow standards and rules. On the broadest societal level, all of us are subject to laws and government regulations that control deviant behavior.

Social controls are of **two** main types:

1. **Internal social controls** exist within the individual.

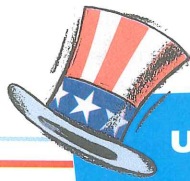
EXAMPLE: You experience a feeling of discomfort when you say something that is not true. Your conscience represents social controls working actively within you.

We all have internalized the norms of our society. That is the outcome of our socialization. Conformity, or going along with acceptable behavior to please others, provides predictable internal social controls on many actions.

2. **External social controls** go into effect when internal social controls don't work. Most people don't seriously think about committing murder or arson, but those who do pose a big threat to a society's well being. Laws

provide external social controls to prevent and punish those who commit certain deviant acts. The severity of external social controls depends on the seriousness of the violation.

EXAMPLES: A student who skips class may be subject to a detention. A member of a sports team may have to sit out a game because he or she violated the rules. A murderer may be sentenced to spend the remainder of life in jail.



U.S. Culture Connection

The Homeboy Graffiti Removal Crew

Gangs use graffiti to mark turf and to show disrespect for enemies, which has often spilled over into violence. In Los Angeles, "tagging"—drawing graffiti in public places—is not just an eyesore. It has led to gang warfare.

Recently, a ten-year-old girl was killed in the crossfire between two gangs arguing over their graffiti. In response, a Jesuit priest who had been working with gang

members for years devised some external social controls to help improve the neighborhood and prevent future violence. He started the "Homeboy Graffiti Removal Crew" by convincing former gang members to work for nine dollars an hour traveling around in a truck full of different colors of paint and stopping to paint over graffiti. According to one of the crew, who had done his share of "tagging" in the past, "I'm doing some good, and I love it. It's the first job I ever had."

The Effects of Deviance

At the very least, deviant behavior is annoying and, in the extreme, it is dangerous. Yet good motives can impel people to break with social norms, and sometimes positive social change results from deviant activity.

Positive Social Functions

Although deviance is by definition behavior that poses a threat to the social order, it may actually have some positive effects as well.

- * **It Can Promote Unity.** A community that faces a common threat often unites to stop it.
EXAMPLE: A Midwestern community mainly ambivalent about problems of racial discrimination became mobilized in defense of an African-American family when their home was repeatedly attacked by racists who burned crosses on the lawn and left threatening messages on their telephone answering machine.
- * **It Can Relieve Tension.** Sometimes people who are frustrated with their social and economic situations express their unhappiness through deviant behavior. If the deviance is minor, such as playing pranks on neighbors, it may allow an individual to avoid more serious violations.

EXAMPLE: Opening fire hydrants on a hot summer day, while illegal, is preferable to more serious expressions of frustration, such as rioting.

- * **It Can Clarify Norms.** Defining what is deviant can help clarify existing norms.
EXAMPLE: A high school has a policy that students arrive on time to class, but due to a lax administration, students who come to class late are not penalized. A new principal comes in who first reminds everyone of the existence of the policy and then enforces it by giving out detentions to tardy students. This punishment resolves any uncertainty about the existing norms.
- * **It Can Identify Problems.** The difference between normal behavior and deviance may be blurred, especially when many people are breaking the rules. When a particular norm is frequently violated, it may be a signal that the norm doesn't make sense anymore. People leading social movements are often seen as deviant, but they can bring about positive changes in society.
EXAMPLE: During the 1950s and '60s, the people who first refused to follow segregation laws were deviants of their time, but now they are seen as brave reformers.



Anne Hutchinson: A Deviant Puritan

Anne Hutchinson made many people in colonial Boston uncomfortable when she criticized the exclusive rights of ministers to interpret the Bible. She began drawing audiences, and Puritan ministers feared that she was undermining church authority. Yet she was an upright citizen, and she was breaking no laws. How could they define her as a deviant? To solve their problem, they wrote a law that made what she was doing illegal, found her guilty, and banished her from the colony. Without

realizing it, Anne Hutchinson helped the Massachusetts Bay Colony redefine the norms that bound the community together.



Negative Social Functions

Minor deviations from social norms may actually be good for a society, but high levels of deviance are dangerous and seriously disrupt the social fabric.

* **Deviance Disrupts Norms.** When people break social norms, they call them into question. Others respond with anger, feeling their basic values are being threatened.

EXAMPLES: Artists who depicted religious figures in unholy situations or attitudes, people who wanted to fund abortions with public money and those who threatened and attacked doctors who performed abortions, students who protested the Vietnam War by burning

American flags—all threatened some people's sense of social order by disrupting norms.

* **Deviance Makes Life Unpredictable.**

Norms help assure citizens that life is predictable. Chaos results when people cannot expect each other to observe the norms.

EXAMPLE: Sexual offenders violate the basic trust that children have for adults. When a convicted child molester freed from jail moves into some communities, laws have been passed saying this information must be public. Residents feel they must know that someone among them does not observe a basic norm, so they can take extra precautions.



"We teach them that the world can be an unpredictable, dangerous, and sometimes frightening place, while being careful not to spoil their lovely innocence. It's tricky."

Ways of Explaining Deviance

What causes a person to be deviant? We all exhibit minor forms of deviant behavior. To be labeled a "deviant," a person either has to repeatedly violate norms or commit a single serious crime. Are deviants biologically different from other people? Do the answers lie deep in their personalities? Or does something in the social environment make them react negatively? These questions have intrigued people for centuries, and many explanations have been offered.

Biological Explanations

Some of the early scholars who attempted to explain deviant behavior looked at the physical nature of criminals.

Early Theorists

Three theorists whose ideas may seem strange today include:

1. **Cesare Lombroso**, a 19th-century Italian physician, who suggested that criminals were biologically less advanced than law-abiding citizens.
2. **Ernest Hooten**, a U.S. anthropologist, who concluded in 1939 that criminals were genetically and physically "degenerate" human beings.
3. **William Sheldon**, a U.S. psychologist, who stated in 1949 that body type could be linked to criminal behavior, and that the same genes that produce a stocky body type (the mesomorph) also produce an inclination to break social rules.

Chromosomes

In the 1960s, Menachem Amir and Yitzchak Berman suggested there was a link between criminal behavior and genetics. They reported that a high percentage of men who had committed violent crimes were found to have a combination of chromosomes that rarely occurs—XYY instead of the normal XY for males. A later investigation revealed that Richard Speck, a Chicago man who was convicted of killing seven nurses in one night, had this abnormality.

It is important to note that the XYY pattern is very rare. The overwhelming majority of those who commit crimes have a normal arrangement of chromosomes.

Psychological Explanations

Psychologists and sociologists have both suggested that some types of personality are more often associated with deviant behavior than others. One hypothesis is that while everyone has inner impulses to deviate from the norm, some people are less able to control them.

Freud's Explanation

Sigmund Freud argued that children, through identification with their parents, acquire a *superego*, or conscience, that forbids deviant behavior. Freud's psychoanalytic theory suggests that criminal behavior may indicate an underdeveloped superego. Other psychologists have argued that an overdeveloped superego may also lead to deviance. They suggest that people who are ashamed of their urges may commit deviant acts to receive the punishment they feel they deserve.

Frustration-Aggression Theory

The **frustration-aggression theory** suggests that deviance is a form of aggression toward others and society produced by an individual's frustration. When a person has a need that is not fulfilled, he or she becomes frustrated and vents frustration in aggression. The degree of frustration is based on the strength of the needs that are not met, and the degree of aggression is related to the amount of frustration.

EXAMPLE: Poor living conditions may frustrate a person. Suppose a tenant has her electricity cut off because she didn't pay the bill. Her frustration with her poor

housing and her inability to pay bills or make life better would grow. She may be more likely to behave aggressively—slam doors, break something, yell at or harm her children.

Sociological Explanations

While biological and psychological explanations may help us understand something about an *individual's* deviance, only sociological explanations help us understand why *groups* of people deviate from social norms. Sociological explanations shed light on why rates of deviance vary from country to country, group to group, or neighborhood to neighborhood. The different sociological perspectives each offer explanations.

Functionalist Perspective

According to functionalists, deviance is a common part of human society. It has both positive and negative consequences for social stability. On the positive side, deviance helps define the limits of proper behavior. To explain the negative consequences, functionalists talk in terms of **structural strain**. When people cannot reach goals the society admires, the structure of society is strained. Deviance becomes a way of life for many.

The most famous structural strain theory is the **anomie theory of deviance** devised by sociologist Robert K. Merton. *Anomie* is a state in which there are either no rules for behavior or there are so many that people don't know which to follow. The norms have broken down.



Emile Durkheim's Legacy

Emile Durkheim used the term *anomie* to describe the loss of direction felt in a society when social control had become ineffective. He saw anomie as a breakdown of norms, or "normlessness." It often occurs during or after a time of great change and disorder. In 1789 when

revolution toppled France's government, chaos followed. Different factions fought for political and economic control. Since the country's rules and laws were overturned, citizens were in a state of anomie. Without the old structure, people lost their direction, and many resorted to rioting, looting, and murder.

Merton focuses on the high value U.S. society places on the goal of economic success and the means of achieving it. The socially approved means are getting a good education, acquiring the necessary skills for a good job, and working hard. Yet not all Americans have an equal opportunity to get a good education and acquire the skills for a good job. Poverty, poor schools, a culture that does not value study—all these things may pose impossible hurdles.

Merton argues that when people cannot achieve the goals that society values by legitimate means, they fall victim to anomie and will pursue their goals in deviant ways.

Merton identifies five ways in which individuals respond to culturally approved goals and ways of reaching them: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, or rebellion. Conformers work hard to achieve economic success, and

their behavior is not deviant. The **four** deviant behavior patterns are:

- 1. Innovation.** Deviant innovators accept society's goals, but they find alternative ways of reaching them.
EXAMPLE: Trading in drugs or stolen merchandise is against the law. Those who engage in these activities are pursuing the goal of economic success, but not by following socially accepted rules.
- 2. Ritualism.** Instead of violating the norms for achievement, ritualists observe rules of behavior. However, they don't believe that they can achieve their goals, so they experience anomie. They feel their behavior is pointless and hopeless. Their outward behavior is a sham.
EXAMPLE: A middle manager in business continues to go through the paces of the "rat race" in corporate life, though he knows he will never be promoted.

3. Retreatism. Retreatists reject both the cultural goals and socially acceptable means of reaching them. They “retreat” from society to become loners or drifters.

EXAMPLES: Drug addicts, alcoholics, and “bums.”

4. Rebellion. Finally, people who are alienated from both the goals and the standards of their culture may come up with new ideals and new rules for pursuing them.

EXAMPLES: Idealists who believe that the goal of economic success should be replaced with a general sharing of wealth; members of right-wing militia groups that make freedom from government control their main goal and use their guns and rifles to threaten social stability.

Conflict Perspective

Sociologists with a conflict perspective see deviance as the result of competition and social inequality. Deviant people with power break norms in an effort to maintain their power. Deviant people without power act either to obtain a slice of the economic pie or to compensate for low self-esteem and feelings of powerlessness.

Why are most of the people arrested for crimes from the lower classes? A conflict theorist might argue that it is the result of a power struggle (conflict) between the people in power and those who threaten their power base. Business leaders and others in power promote law-enforcement efforts that are directed toward the types of crimes committed by the working and lower classes—drug traffic, shoplifting,

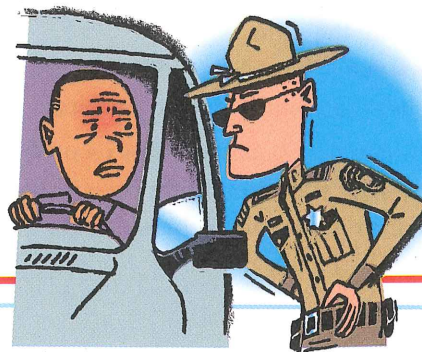


U.S. Culture Connection

Racial Profiling

Social observers point out that a disproportionate number of people of color are stopped and arrested by police for all types of suspected criminal activity, from murder and assault to traffic infractions. The practice of “racial profiling” has been an issue in many communities, and public mores are beginning to reject it. Evidence of discrimination in a police department

can become a major news story, as the public demands the retraining of police officers and changes in official policy.



holdups. Upper-class crimes such as bribery and misuse of funds are pursued less vigorously and with much less public attention.

Interactionist Perspective

Interactionists focus on everyday interactions among people and how these interactions influence people to commit deviant acts. They also are interested in why crime occurs on some occasions and not on others. The interactionist perspective is emphasized in **two** theories:

1. **Cultural transmission theory** holds that deviance is learned through interactions with others. In the 1930s, sociologist Edwin Sutherland pioneered a theory of delinquency and deviance. He said criminal behavior was not biologically determined but was learned. Sutherland said that if most of a person's interactions are with deviant individuals, the person is likely to be deviant. On the other hand, if most of a person's associates conform to social norms, the individual will also conform. Through a socialization process called **differential association**, individuals acquire the behavior patterns of the group of people with whom they associate the most.

EXAMPLE: The culture within a gang teaches the members to be deviant.

Differential association helps us understand why some neighborhoods have high crime rates and others do not.

2. **Labeling theory** says deviant behavior is not the result of biology or of individual psychology, but is the result of social control. It explains that deviance is what we call it. Not just the violation of a norm, but the behavior that gets its perpetrator *labeled* as deviant is what defines deviance.

Sociologists Edwin Lemert and Howard Becker note that, once a person is labeled as a deviant, he or she becomes more deviant. The deviant comes to see himself or herself that way.

EXAMPLE: When a person is labeled "insane," that can become a step in the development of his or her mental illness.

Labeling does not cause the original deviant act or acts, but it can cause further deviance. Deviance becomes a master status.

Lemert and Becker identify two types of deviance. **Primary deviance** is the original nonconforming act or acts, which occur before a person gets labeled as deviant. **Secondary deviance**, in contrast, is the result of labeling. Secondary deviance can start a spiral of **stigma**—outward symbols that set a deviant apart from the rest of society.

EXAMPLES: Arrest records, jail time, bad publicity, and other marks of disgrace.

Criminal Behavior

Criminals pose such a serious threat to social order that we separate them from the rest of society and put them under lock and key. Their behavior is not only deviant, but dangerous. The justice system serves to find and apprehend suspected criminals, judge their guilt or innocence, and punish, or possibly correct, their behavior.

What Is Crime?

Crime is deviant behavior that is prohibited by law and is punishable by the government. Laws divide crimes into categories depending on the seriousness of the offense, the age of the offender, the potential punishment that can be administered, and the court that holds jurisdiction over the case.

EXAMPLES: Murder is treated differently from disorderly conduct; teenage offenders generally are not punished as severely as older criminals; and some crimes violate state laws, whereas others violate federal laws.

Statistics and Trends

The Uniform Crime Report, published every year by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), compiles data from local police departments into national statistics. More than 1.6 million violent crimes are reported each year in the United States, including more than 19,000 homicides.

Although Americans continue to regard crime as a major social problem, violent crime rates declined significantly in the

Did You Know?



How Accurate Are Crime Reports?

Social scientist Donald Black cautions us that formal crime statistics may not be as accurate as we think. Why? Sometimes victims don't report crimes. People are less likely to report a crime if family or friends are involved. Victims of sexual assault often don't report the crime, perhaps out of fear that the authorities won't believe them.

According to Black, police are more likely to file formal reports on serious crimes when the victims are from the higher social classes. An officer is also more likely to file a formal complaint if the person making the complaint shows courtesy and respect.

late 1990s. Why? Many explanations were offered, including:

- * A booming economy and falling unemployment rates.
- * Local and national crime-prevention programs.
- * A large increase in the prison population, which keeps inmates from committing crimes in the community at large.

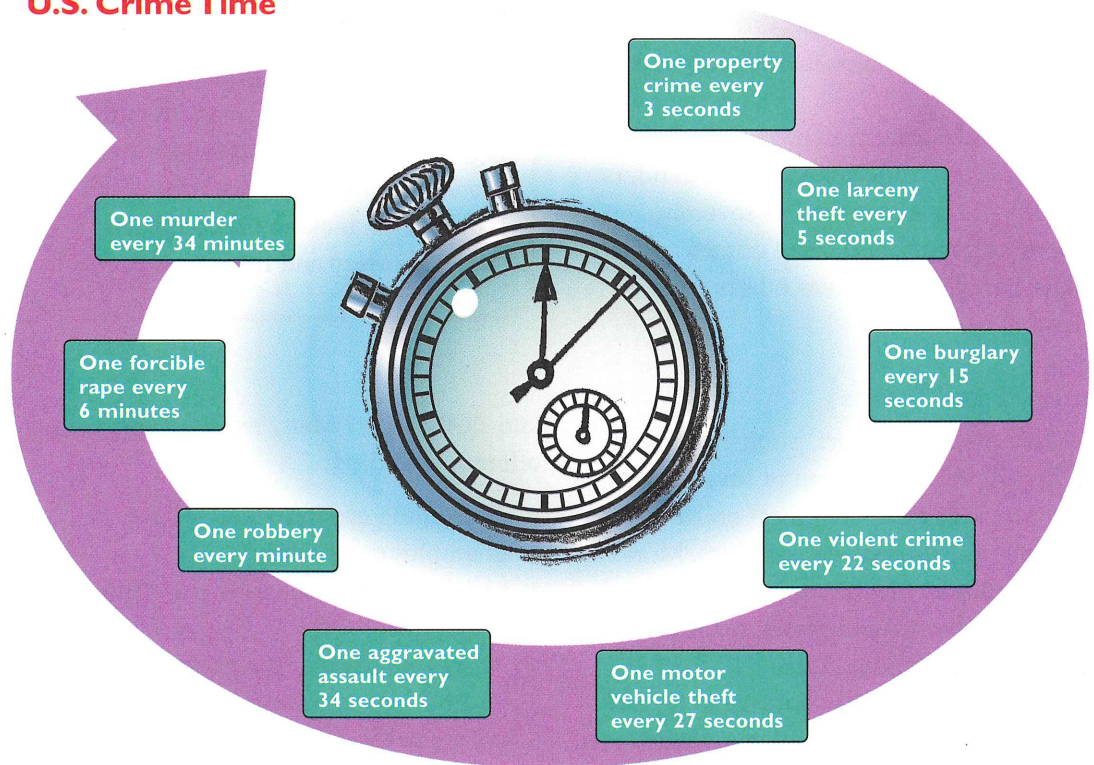
In spite of this trend, the numbers of reported crimes in the United States remain well above those of other nations. The “crime clock” shown below can give you an idea of how often crimes occur in the United States.

International Crime

Comparing crime data from the United States with statistics from other countries is difficult because information is not gathered in uniform ways. However, some differences seem clear.

- * Rates of violent crime such as murder, rape, and robbery are much higher in the United States than in Western Europe.
- * England, Italy, Australia, and New Zealand all have higher rates of motor vehicle theft than the United States.
- * Overall, Japan’s crime rate is consistently low. Tokyo has the lowest rates of murder, rape, robbery, and theft of any major city in the world.
- * Crime in Russia has skyrocketed since the overthrow of Communist party rule in 1991.

U.S. Crime Time



Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports (1999)



The Gun Myth

Why is the U.S. rate of violent crime so much higher than that in other modern democracies? One common idea is that citizens have tolerated many forms of violence since the country was settled. Guns have come to symbolize individual independence, and the right to bear arms is a tradition as old as our country.

Historian Michael A. Bellesiles refutes this argument in what he calls the "Gun Myth." According to his research, guns were rare in the United States before the Civil War. The early guns and muskets

were too clumsy, inaccurate, and dangerous for the ordinary person to handle. The murder rate in early America was very low outside Indian warfare, and murders that did occur were committed with knives. Guns became more common only after the 1840s invention of Samuel Colt's pistol and the Minie ball of the Civil War.

Today, guns are a major ingredient of modern U.S. street crime. According to the FBI, in 2000, 70 percent of reported murders, 40 percent of reported robberies, and 20 percent of all reported aggravated assaults involved a firearm.

Types of Crime

The FBI tabulates data for **seven** index crimes:

1. Murder.
2. Rape.
3. Robbery.
4. Assault.
5. Burglary.
6. Larceny theft.
7. Motor vehicle theft.

The first four are violent crimes against people, and the last three are property crimes. Arson is often included as an additional property crime. The chart on page 98

shows the relative proportion of the seven index crimes in 1999. **Three** kinds of crimes are not indexed:

1. Organized crime.
2. White-collar crime.
3. Victimless crime.

Violent Crime

Murder, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault make up a small percentage of all crimes, but by their very nature, even at low rates these crimes are considered to be a great threat to society.

African-American males are much more likely to be victims of violent crimes than

U.S. Index Crime Offenses	
Percent Distribution	
Forcible rape	0.8%
Murder	0.1%
Robbery	3.5%
Aggravated assault	7.9%
Motor vehicle theft	9.9%
Burglary	18.0%
Larceny theft	59.8%

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reports (1999)

anyone else. Their victim rate is about 5 times that of African-American females, over 7 times that of white males, and about 22 times that of white females.

Crimes against Property

Burglary, larceny (theft other than auto), motor vehicle theft, and arson are about ten times more common than crimes of violence. Crimes against property involve no violence and no force or threat of force against individuals. Most people who commit property crimes do not wish to confront their victims or hurt them physically, nor do they wish to get hurt themselves.

Organized Crime

Networks of criminal groups make up the large-scale, professional, criminal syndicates known as organized crime. They control such illegal businesses as drug

trafficking and prostitution and are also major stockholders in such legitimate businesses as hotels and restaurants. They look to invest their illegally earned profits in businesses in which it is relatively easy to keep fraudulent accounts.

While they employ violent acts such as beatings, kidnappings, murder, and arson, organized crime most often works carefully to avoid public attention.

Organized crime is rarely prosecuted because of public apathy and the close connections crime figures have to people in power positions in society.

White-Collar Crime

The label **white collar** refers to people in management, politics, the professions, and office workers. It is distinguished from **blue collar**, which refers to factory workers and manual laborers, such as miners or workers on road repair crews. These terms are status labels. A crime committed by a person of high social status in the course of his or her professional life is called **white-collar crime**. Business owners, corporate officers and managers, and politicians often have access to large sums of money that do not belong to them. For some, the temptation to illegally manipulate those resources is irresistible.

EXAMPLES of white-collar crime include:

- * Tax evasion.
- * Fraud.
- * Embezzlement.
- * Price fixing.
- * Stock manipulation.
- * Political corruption.

These actions are often concealed, so white-collar crime rates are difficult to determine. However, investigative reporting and government supervision have revealed many high-profile cases of insider trading on Wall Street, political corruption, and computer crimes.

Victimless Crime

These activities are outlawed, but the only victims are the participants themselves.

EXAMPLES:

- * Gambling.
- * Public drunkenness.
- * Prostitution.
- * Drug possession and sale.

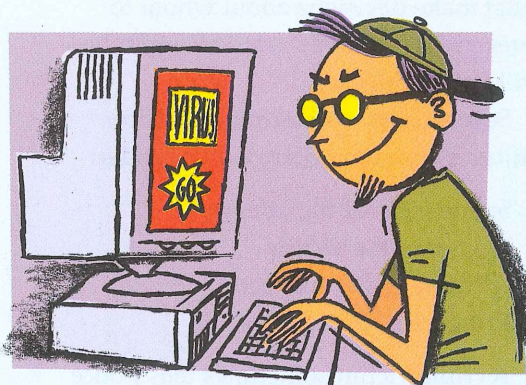
These crimes are not included in the FBI's index crimes. To apprehend the offenders, the police often must rely on undercover work, informants, and luck to gather evidence and make arrests. Only a small fraction of offenders is actually arrested.



White-Collar Crime: "The Love Bug"

Highly skilled computer experts from around the world have made news in recent years by "hacking" into supposedly secure web sites. Sometimes the motivation is economic—to "fix" books, transfer funds, conceal embezzlement, or gain advantage over business competitors. However, more often the motivation is unclear. In early 2000, some computer hackers in the Philippines intentionally placed a Valentine's Day "love bug" message in e-mail attachments that corrupted computers all over the world.

The "virus" was traced to the hackers, who had no apparent economic motive for their actions.



The Criminal Justice System

The U.S. criminal justice system has the responsibility of protecting society from dangerous crime. In **four** steps, the justice system performs its function:

1. Apprehending suspected offenders.
2. Determining their innocence or guilt.
3. Deciding their punishment.
4. Keeping the guilty separated from other citizens.

There are **three** major elements of the criminal justice system:

1 Police

In the United States, state and local police generally have control over who is arrested for committing a crime. Although we might expect the police to arrest everyone who is accused of a crime, in reality the police have to make a lot of choices. Police must make decisions about whom to arrest, who is merely warned, and who will not be pursued.

Several factors determine a police officer's decision to arrest an offender:

- * Seriousness of the offense.
- * Wishes of the victim.
- * Attitude of the suspect.
- * Presence of bystanders.

A crime victim sometimes tells police not to pursue an offender, especially if that person is a relative.

EXAMPLE: A victim of domestic abuse may be primarily interested in having the police stop the immediate attack. He or she may be unwilling later to press charges.

Offenders are more likely to be arrested if they are aggressive or if bystanders witness the crime. Police are more likely to arrest members of minority groups than whites, a common accusation backed by research.

2 Courts

Once the police make an arrest, the courts take responsibility for:

- * Determining guilt or innocence.
- * Assigning some form of punishment.

In reality, most cases don't go through this formal process. To save time and money, cases are often settled by **plea bargaining**. In a plea bargain, the accused person pleads guilty to a crime less serious than the crime of which he or she is accused. In return for the guilty plea, the accused person receives a lighter sentence than would have been recommended for the original offense. Research shows that offenders who plea bargain often get lighter sentences than those who plead innocent but are found guilty.

3 The Correctional System

If an accused person is found guilty, the courts assign a punishment called a correction. The punishment may be a fine, but for more serious crimes it is often imprisonment. Corrections serve **four** major functions for society:

1. **Retribution.** Punishing an offender is a way for the victim and society to “get even.”
2. **Deterrence.** Corrections are meant to discourage offenders from committing crimes again and provide a warning to others not to pursue a life of crime. How well deterrence works is open to question. For example, a *New York Times* study showed that 10 of the 12 states that in the year 2000 did not allow the death penalty actually had lower homicide rates than the states that did allow it. Proponents of harsh penalties would argue that other factors may explain this difference.
3. **Rehabilitation.** Some prison authorities and criminologists believe that criminals should be reformed so that they may return to society as law-abiding citizens. Efforts at rehabilitation in prisons are not very successful, in part because in

prisons criminals associate with other criminals like themselves. Deviant behavior is reinforced by association with other deviants. Rehabilitation requires major change in the prison culture. However, when rehabilitation works, it can be the beginning of a new way of life for some individuals.

4. **Social Protection.** Whether criminals are locked in a prison or put to death, one major function of corrections is served—the criminals cannot commit additional crimes. In this way, law-abiding citizens are protected from the threat of future criminal activity.

One way to judge how effective corrections are is the rate of **recidivism**—the tendency to return to previous, that is, criminal, behavior. In the United States, around half of all persons released from prison are later arrested for another offense.

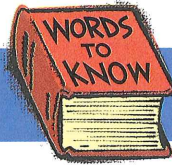
Chapter 5 Wrap-up

DEVIANCE AND CRIME

Deviant behavior violates a society's norms. One person's deviance affects other members of society, sometimes positively, but more often negatively. Societies exercise both internal and external social controls to reward positive behavior and punish wrongdoing.

The sociological perspectives differ in their outlook on deviant behavior. A functionalist might view it in terms of the anomie theory of deviance. A sociologist using the conflict perspective will focus on competition and social inequality as explanations for deviance. An interactionist may look at differential association and labeling theory.

When deviance takes the form of lawbreaking, it is criminal behavior. There are a range of types of crime. For the most serious, deviance can have major consequences for the deviant individual, such as the death penalty. Society responds to criminal behavior through the attentions and resources of a criminal justice system.



anomie theory of deviance—sociological view that deviance is the result of a breakdown in the norms of society (anomie). *p. 91*

blue collar—status label that refers to factory workers and manual laborers, such as miners or workers on road repair crews. *p. 98*

crime—deviant behavior that is prohibited by law and is punishable by the government. *p. 95*

cultural transmission theory—sociological view that deviance is a behavior learned through interaction with others. *p. 94*

deviance—behavior that violates social norms and brings social disapproval and intense hostility from many members of a society. *p. 86*

differential association—socialization process in which individuals acquire the behavior patterns of the group of people they associate with the most. *p. 94*

external social controls—checks on an individual's behavior that come from others and from society at large. *p. 87*

frustration-aggression theory—psychological explanation of deviance that suggests deviance is a form of aggression toward society produced by an individual's frustration. *p. 91*

internal social controls—checks on behavior that exist within a person as a result of having internalized society's norms through the socialization process. *p. 86*

labeling theory—view that identifying an individual as a deviant causes deviance to become a master status. *p. 94*

plea bargaining—negotiation process that allows an accused person to plead guilty to a lesser charge in return for a lighter sentence. *p. 100*

primary deviance—original nonconforming act or acts that occur before a person gets labeled as deviant. *p. 94*

recidivism—tendency to return to previous (criminal) behavior. *p. 101*

secondary deviance—nonconformity that results from an individual's being labeled a deviant. *p. 94*

social controls—techniques and strategies for punishing wrongdoing and rewarding appropriate behavior. *p. 86*

stigma—outward symbols that set a deviant apart from the rest of society. *p. 94*

structural strain—stress on the social structure when individuals cannot achieve the goals society values; structural strain invites deviant behavior. *p. 91*

white collar—status label that refers to people in management, politics, the professions and to office workers. *p. 98*

white-collar crime—illegal acts committed by persons of high social status in the course of their professional lives, such as embezzlement. *p. 98*