

5. Deviance and Crime

Objectives

- Learn about deviant behavior
- Understand criminal behavior and the justice system

Vocabulary

anomie theory of deviance	deviance	labeling theory	social controls
blue collar	differential association	plea bargaining	stigma
crime	external social controls	primary deviance	structural strain
cultural transmission theory	frustration-aggression theory	recidivism	white collar
	internal social controls	secondary deviance	white-collar crime

Background

In this chapter, students learn what deviance and crime are and the roles they play in society. As they view these interesting topics from a sociological standpoint, students can learn to approach these topics intelligently.

Students learn that deviance occurs when a person's behavior violates the norms of a society, though what is considered deviant varies from culture to culture. They also examine ways in which a society determines and reacts to deviance. Students learn that whether or not something is deviant is determined by two factors: the extent of disapproval and the degree of societal outrage. They find out that societies use both internal and external social controls to punish wrongdoing and to reinforce positive norms.

Students then consider the positive effects that can result from deviance. They come to see how, ironically, deviant behavior can result in promoting public unity, relieving tension, clarifying norms, and identifying problems. Students also examine the negative consequences of deviance.

The issue of why individuals act in a deviant way is the next area examined. They consider early theorists' views that deviance could be explained by one's

physical makeup, as well as more recent theories that abnormal chromosome combinations may predispose a person to deviance. Students ponder psychological explanations, like Sigmund Freud's view that deviance results from an underdeveloped superego, and the frustration-aggression theory holding that deviance is a form of aggression resulting from an individual's frustration. Students then consider how groups of people can deviate from social norms. The sociological perspectives and theories of functionalists, conflict theorists, and interactionists are then detailed for students to assess.

Students next learn that, when deviance becomes dangerous and involves lawbreaking, it is considered criminal behavior. They find out that laws divide different kinds of crimes into specific categories and study five of these areas—violent crime, crimes against property, organized crime, white-collar crime, and victimless crime. Finally, they examine the criminal justice system.

Further Resources

Silberman, Charles E. *Criminal Violence, Criminal Justice*. New York: Random House, 1980.

For Discussion

Review

1. What constitutes deviant behavior?
2. What are the two main types of social controls?
3. What are the seven index crimes for which the FBI tabulates data?
4. What are the three major elements of the criminal justice system?

Critical Thinking

1. To determine whether an act is deviant, why must we always know the context in which it occurred?
2. Of the three early theorists, Cesare Lombroso, Ernest Hooten, and William Sheldon, whose theory do you consider the most logical? Whose do you find the most illogical? Why?
3. Why do functionalists feel there are positive and negative consequences for social stability?
4. What are some of the reasons that violent crime rates declined significantly in the late 1990s? What else may have contributed to these declines?
5. Why do you think the rehabilitation of criminals in prison has not been very successful? What would you suggest doing to improve this situation?

Activities

1. A Survey: Deviant Behaviors

Ask the class to formulate a list of ten deviant behaviors, ranging from mild to serious. Divide students into teams to conduct a school survey. Students should ask those surveyed to rate their disapproval of each behavior on a scale from one to ten, with ten being the worst. Combine and discuss the results. Which behaviors drew the most disapproval from your society?

2. Rehabing

Divide students into groups. Refer them to the box on page 87, and ask each group to come up with ideas or programs to rehabilitate drug dealers, gang members, and the like. Ask each group to present and explain three ideas to the class.

3. Internet: Lower Class Crime

In groups of five, have students research web sites on lower class crime. Ask them collect statistics and seek out specific reasons explaining why higher crime rates occur in lower class communities. Have groups present their findings to the class. Compare and discuss results.

4. Special Sources: Ask a Cop

Invite one or more police officers to class to discuss crime in your area. Before the visit, lead the class in setting goals for the visit and writing questions that solicit information as well as opinions from their visitor. After the visit, have them discuss what they learned.

Name _____

5. Deviance and Crime

As you read Chapter 5, write an answer to each question below.

1. What are some positive social functions of deviance?

2. What are four deviant behavior patterns? Explain.

3. What are some differences between violent crime, crimes against property, organized crime, white-collar crime, and victimless crime?

4. In what four steps does the justice system perform its function?

5. What four major functions does the correctional system serve? Explain.

Name _____

5. Deviance and Crime

Find the best answer for each item. Then circle the correct answer.

- What is deviant behavior?
 - behavior that is strictly criminal
 - behavior that breaks certain rules, but is never criminal
 - behavior that violates norms
 - behavior that occurs only in social situations
- Which term describes checks on behavior that exist within a person as a result of having internalized society's norms through the socialization process?
 - recidivism
 - primary deviance
 - internal social controls
 - social controls
- Which term describes checks on an individual's behavior that come from others and from society at large?
 - external social controls
 - internal social controls
 - differential association
 - plea bargaining
- What is the psychological explanation that suggests deviance is a form of aggression toward others and society produced by an individual's frustration?
 - frustration-aggression theory
 - cultural transmission theory
 - anomie theory of deviance
 - labeling theory
- What is the term for the outward symbols that set a deviant apart from the rest of society?

a. structural strain	c. primary deviance
b. stigma	d. secondary deviance
- What is the term for the sociological view that deviance is the result of a breakdown in the norms of society?
 - structural strain
 - frustration-aggression theory
 - anomie theory of deviance
 - labeling theory
- What is the socialization process in which individuals acquire the behavior patterns of the group of people they associate with the most?
 - differential association
 - secondary deviance
 - recidivism
 - stigma
- What is the view that identifying an individual as a deviant causes deviance to become a master status?
 - cultural transmission theory
 - anomie theory of deviance
 - frustration-aggression theory
 - labeling theory
- What is the negotiation process that allows an accused person to plead guilty to a lesser charge in return for a lighter sentence?
 - recidivism
 - differential association
 - plea bargaining
 - white collar crime
- What is the tendency to return to previous (criminal) behavior?

a. recidivism	c. stigma
b. secondary deviance	d. social strain

Name _____

5. Deviance and Crime

Read each description, and write the letter of the correct term on the line.

1. Deviance is determined by two things, _____ and _____.
 - a. the degree/the intent
 - b. the extent of damage/societal reaction
 - c. the extent of disapproval/the degree of societal outrage
 - d. previous criminal activity/breaking the law
2. Norms help assure citizens that life is _____.
 - a. purposeful
 - b. predictable
 - c. interesting
 - d. liberated
3. According to functionalists, deviance is a common part of human society that has _____.
 - a. positive consequences for social stability
 - b. negative consequences for social stability
 - c. both positive and negative consequences for social stability
 - d. no effect on social stability
4. People who reject both the cultural goals and socially acceptable means of reaching them are called _____.
 - a. innovators
 - b. retreatists
 - c. ritualists
 - d. idealists
5. The theory that deviance is learned through interactions with others is called _____.
 - a. secondary deviance
 - b. labeling theory
 - c. primary deviance
 - d. cultural transmission theory
6. Criminal activity by large-scale organizations that involve things like drug trafficking, hijacking of merchandise, and loan sharking is known as _____.
 - a. organized crime
 - b. white-collar crime
 - c. victimless crime
 - d. blue-collar crime
7. Police are more likely to arrest _____ than _____, a common accusation backed by research.
 - a. whites/minority group members
 - b. gang members/students
 - c. students/gang members
 - d. minority group members/whites
8. Once arrested, the responsibility for determining a person's guilt or innocence and assigning some form of punishment is on the _____.
 - a. police
 - b. witnesses
 - c. courts
 - d. accused
9. When a law prevents crime, this is an example of _____.
 - a. deterrence
 - b. rehabilitation
 - c. social protection
 - d. retribution
10. Around _____ of all persons who are released from prison are later arrested for another offense.
 - a. one-third
 - b. one-quarter
 - c. two-thirds
 - d. one-half

Essay Question

Do you think the crime rate would go down if the United States were tougher in its punishment of criminals? Why or why not?