

Understanding Deviance: Connecting Classical and Contemporary Perspectives

Preface

Tammy L. Anderson

Acknowledgments

Part 1: Classic and Contemporary Approaches to Deviance

Section 1. Defining Deviance

Introduction

Tammy L. Anderson.

1. *Rules for the Distinction of The Normal and the Pathological*

Emile Durkheim

Durkheim defines deviance from a statistical standpoint, or by the prevalence of deviance in society. He seeks an objective criterion by which social phenomena can be rendered normal, or pathological and deviant. From this perspective, Durkheim claims to measure the condition of society. His approach to deviance is different from the moral and social reaction definitions of deviance included in this section.

2. *Notes on the Sociology of Deviance*

Kai T. Erikson

Erickson relies on morals, customs, and traditions that are often tied to religious doctrine to define deviance. His view is that deviance sets boundaries for acceptable behavior and strengthens solidarity among citizens. His approach breaks from Durkheim's statistical view and is more in tune with Becker's social reaction approach.

3. *Definitions of Deviance and Deviance and the Responses of Others from Outsiders*

Howard S. Becker

Becker's work is considered a classic social reaction definition where deviance is anything people so label. He argues that deviance is not an objective fact, contrary to Durkheim's position. Instead, Becker reasons, it is something people define and redefine through social interaction.

4. *Defining Deviance Down*

Daniel Moynihan

Moynihan's article is a newer classic in the field of deviance that cautions against reclassifying unacceptable behaviors as acceptable, or trivializing their significance and impact. By moving away from objective standards for behavior and endorsing a core set of values, as Becker and Erickson propose, Moynihan believes society enters dangerous territory and compromises itself.

5. *Connections: Definitions of Deviance and the Case of Underage Drinking and Drunk Driving*

Tammy L. Anderson

In this original connections essay, I compare the positions on deviance of Durkheim, Erickson, Becker, and Moynihan by using the case of teenage drunk driving and binge drinking in the United States. The essay illustrates the divergent viewpoints of these key deviance scholars at work in our lives today.

Critical Thinking Questions

Section 2. Functionalism, Anomie, General Strain Theory

Introduction

Tammy L. Anderson.

6. *Social Structure and Anomie*

Robert Merton

Sociologist Robert Merton explains deviance as a result of anomie, a state of normlessness in society. His macro-level or environmental theory focuses on unreasonable cultural goals and institutional obstacles to attaining those goals. This tension between goals and obstacles produces anomie and leads to deviance. Thus, his approach focuses on the structural arrangements in society rather than on individual behavior or group interaction.

7. *Homeboys, New Jacks, and Anomie*

John M. Hagedorn

In this article, Hagedorn reports on his ethnographic study of African-American gang members in Milwaukee. He finds that race-related inequality and anomie leads to criminal behavior for some inner-city black males. His work endorses Merton's macro-level theory, but adds racial discrimination as another structural obstacle that can lead to deviance.

8. *A General Strain Theory of Community Differences in Crime Rates*

Robert Agnew

Agnew extends Merton's classic theory of anomie by linking micro-level factors, such as personal experiences and values and how individuals feel about them, to the more macro-level causes Merton uses to explain anomie and deviance. Agnew's efforts result in a newer theory of crime—General Strain theory—that describes community deviance as a result of both environmental and individual influences.

9. *Connections: Understanding Doping in Elite Sports through Anomie and General Strain Perspectives*

Tammy L. Anderson

In this original connections essay, I use the case of doping in elite sports to show the differences and similarities between Merton and Hagedorn's anomie approach and

Agnew's General Strain theory. I highlight, both the weaknesses and strengths of macro-level or environmental, and micro-level or individual level, explanations of deviance in our society.

Critical Thinking Questions

Section 3. Social Disorganization and Collective Efficacy

Introduction

Tammy L. Anderson

10. *Introduction and Growth of Chicago and Differentiation of Local Areas from Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas*

Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay

In this reading, Shaw and McKay describe crime and delinquency as a result of socially disorganized neighborhoods. By focusing on things such as poverty, crowding, ethnic diversity, and population turnover in Chicago, Shaw and McKay offer social disorganization theory to the field of deviance. This theory explains crime as a function of neighborhoods, not individual behavior.

11. *Collective Efficacy Theory: Lessons Learned and Directions for Future Inquiry*

Robert J. Sampson

In the late 1990s, Sampson and a team of sociologists at the University of Chicago expanded Shaw and McKay's landmark study to attribute community crime rates to collective efficacy, meaning the degree to which neighborhood residents share a mutual trust, sense of solidarity and willingness to intervene when problems arise. In this reading, Sampson argues that a neighborhood's ability to control the wrong-doing of its residents, its collective efficacy, will protect it from high rates of crime and deviance.

12. *The Urban Ecology of Bias Crime: A Study of Disorganized and Defended Neighborhoods*

Ryken Grattet

Grattet contributes to the social disorganization and collective efficacy frameworks by studying bias or hate crimes in Sacramento, California. He finds that intergroup conflict, stemming from intolerance to ethnic and racial diversity, leads to an "ownership" mentality that causes people to defend "their" neighborhoods by committing crimes against those different from them.

13. *Connections: The Prison Community from a Social Disorganization and Collective Efficacy Perspective*

Lori Sexton

This connections essay by Lori Sexton advances the social disorganization-collective efficacy continuum by showing its relevance beyond city neighborhoods to places such as prisons. Sexton describes the cultural aspects touched on by Sampson and Grattet to explain the predicament of transgender prisoners. In doing so, she validates the power of both the social disorganization and collective efficacy frameworks to explain a broad range of deviant behaviors.

Critical Thinking Questions

Section 4. Social Pathology, Degeneracy and Medicalization

Introduction

Tammy L. Anderson

14. *Social Pathology: A Systematic Approach to the Theory of Sociopathic Behavior*

Edwin Lemert

In this famous excerpt, Lemert criticizes psychiatrists' efforts to develop a theory of sociopathic behavior throughout the 19th and early 20th centuries. He rejects efforts to differentiate between normal and pathological behavior and contests psychiatrists' claims that pathological behavior has a medical basis. He ultimately concludes that "normal" and "pathological" are subjectively defined and contingent on people's reactions.

15. *Whatever Happened to Social Pathology? Conceptual Fashions and the Sociology of Deviance*

Joel Best

Joel Best traces the rise and fall of "social pathology" in this article. He notes that the term meant many things over the course of time, including disease and illness in society, but that sociologists abandoned it because they could not agree on a clear, working definition.

16. *The Shifting Engines of Medicalization*

Peter Conrad

Conrad explains the social changes and forces that led to a wide variety of behaviors, traits and conditions being defined as "bona fide" medical problems rather than deviant. He describes the transition to medically-based definitions of deviance and validates the new term "medicalization" in sociology.

17. *Connections: Mental Illness as Degeneracy and Disease*

Victor Perez

This original connections essay by Victor Perez uses mental illness to trace the "circular thinking" between degeneracy, social pathology and medicalization in the sociology of deviance. His essay shows how sociology has been involved in a love/hate relationship with the fields of medicine and psychiatry and why sociologists ultimately abandoned the concepts of degeneracy and social pathology for the idea of medicalization.

Critical Thinking Questions

Section 5. Labeling, Resistance, and Edgework

Introduction

Tammy L. Anderson.

18. *Beyond Mead: The Societal Reaction to Deviance*

Edwin W. Lemert

In this article, Lemert shows how social control strengthens when, to satisfy our needs for safety, protection, and order, we give up our values and rights to authorities. This process features the identification of harmful acts requiring social control, and the targeting and labeling of those considered harmful.

19. *Edgework: A Social Psychological Analysis of Voluntary Risk Taking*

Stephen Lyng

In this modern classic, sociologist Stephen Lyng defines a new term called “edgework,” which features risking harm for a thrill. Edgework is a manipulation of the boundaries between safety and harm, order and chaos, and norms and deviance. People engage in edgework to resist being oppressed, constrained or socially controlled in the ways Lemert described.

20. *Resistance as Edgework in Violent Intimate Relationships of Drug-Involved Women*

Rajah Valli

This article provides another provocative example of edgework. The drug-addicted women Valli studied use certain kinds of intimidation and violence to push back against their abusive male partners. This edgework is thrilling and returns some semblance of control to the women Valli studied, but it also invites retaliation from abusive spouses.

21. *Connections: Labeling, Resistance and Edgework through Parkour*

John J. Brent

In this connections essay, Brent uses the youthful activity of parkour, otherwise known as urban free-running, to contrast Lemert’s ideas on social control and labeling with Lyng and Valli’s perspectives on edgework and resistance. He shows that urban free-runners risk significant injury when violating norms on urban space. They do this to protest social control, earn the respect of their peers, and increase their skills. The essay shows how the labeling perspective is about the loss of freedom, while resistance and edgework are about reclaiming it.

Critical Thinking Questions

Section 6. Stigma, Carnival, and the Grotesque Body

Introduction

Tammy L. Anderson.

22. *Stigma and Social Identity from Stigma*

Erving Goffman

Goffman’s book made stigma a pivotal term in the sociology of deviance. Stigma is a special relationship between deeply discrediting traits or conditions that, in turn, tarnish reputations and reduce life chances. Goffman specified three types of stigma, including abominations of the body, which are highly relevant to the new field of body deviance discussed in this section. Goffman’s term contrasts with Bhaktin’s carnival of the grotesque in other readings in this section.

23. *Why do People get Tattoos?*

Miliann Kang and Katherine Jones

Kang and Jones write about tattooing in America. They argue that tattoos are a way for young people to resist social pressures to conform. This represents a break from Goffman's approach, which viewed body marks and deformities as a type of stigma that shames people.

24. *Big Handsome Men, Bears and Others: Virtual Constructions of 'Fat Male Embodiment'*
Lee F. Monaghan

*This reading by Monaghan uses Bhaktin's term **carnival of the grotesque**, an alternative to Goffman's stigma, to describe the celebration of outrageous, hairy, obese male bodies that are typically shamed in society. By establishing alternative settings (carnivals) with dramatically different codes and norms about comportment, these big handsome men exaggerate and take pride in their grotesque bodies and their sexual endeavors with people like them.*

25. *Connections: Explaining Body Deviance with Stigma and Carnival of the Grotesque*
David Lane

David Lane's original essay focuses on our bodies, our aesthetic traits, and the extent to which we define them as physical or social entities, or both. Lane uses Goffman's stigma and Bhaktin's carnival of the grotesque to understand two types of body deviance: tattooing and obesity. He carefully charts the value and limitations of both concepts, not only for these two cases, but also for the future of body deviance and aesthetic sociology. Critical Thinking Questions

Section 7. Deviant Careers, Identity and Lifecourse Criminology

Introduction

Tammy L. Anderson

26. *Kinds of Deviance: A Sequential Model from Outsiders*

Howard S. Becker

Becker uses a deviant career approach and qualitative methods to explain how people become enmeshed in deviant lifestyles and develop deviant identities. A deciding factor in Becker's view is the official labeling of deviance by authorities. The deviant career perspective, however, does not explain how and why people start smoking marijuana, or engaging in deviant activities in the first place.

27. *Crime and Deviance in the Lifecourse*

Robert Sampson and John Laub

Sampson and Laub present another viewpoint on deviance, based on lifecourse trajectories. Their lifecourse approach is concerned with long-term patterns of crime (trajectories) and the events that can alter their pathways (transitions). Unlike Becker's deviant career approach, Sampson and Laub's lifecourse perspective uses quantitative techniques to explain the causes of childhood crime and delinquency and how these behaviors change over time.

28. *Weighing the Consequences of a Deviant Career: Factors Leading to an Exit From Prostitution*

Sharon Oselin

Sharon Oselin adopts, both a deviant career, and a lifecourse criminology framework to explain the process of becoming a prostitute, living life as a sex worker, and trying to leave the profession behind for something better. Her work calls attention to the external causes that lead to prostitution (lifecourse criminology) as well as the self-identity issues that work to keep individuals from exiting prostitution (deviant career).

29. *Connections: Understanding Street Prostitution from Deviant Career and Life-Course Criminology Perspectives*

Emily Bonistall and Kevin Ralston

This original connections essay by Bonistall and Ralston uses the case of street-level prostitution to illustrate the similarities and differences between the classical deviant career perspective and the more contemporary lifecourse criminology framework. The essay helps us understand how various types of unconventional behavior develop, persist, and terminate.

Critical Thinking Questions

Section 8- Moral Panics and Risk Society

Introduction

Tammy L. Anderson

30. *Deviance and Moral Panics from Folk Devils and Moral Panics*

Stanly Cohen

This excerpt by sociologist Stanley Cohen defines and illustrates the classical deviance idea of “moral panic.” Cohen identifies two opposing parties involved in the creation and maintenance of these panics. The first group are “moral entrepreneurs,” who create the panics, using media outlets, when they fear society or its values and traditions are being compromised. Moral entrepreneurs target a second important group: folk devils, those believed to be responsible for the problem at hand.

31. *Moral Panics: Culture, Politics, and Social Construction*

Erich Goode and Nachman Ben-Yehuda

The article by Goode and Ben-Yehuda expands Cohen’s classic statement into a broader theory of moral panics by asking, “how do we know when a threat is real rather than an overblown moral panic?” They answer this question by giving us five determining criteria: concern, hostility, consensus, disproportionality, and volatility.

32. *Moral panic versus the risk society: the implications of the changing sites of social anxiety*

Sheldon Ungar

Ungar suggests there may be a better way to understand social threats to society. The idea of “risk society” focuses on events, conditions and phenomena that are

unpredictable, unlimited in scope, and not detectable by our physical senses. They originate in complex causes attributable to human decision-making, technological innovation and medical advancements. Risk society is also about social threats, as are moral panics, but the article suggests their origins and nature are more legitimate.

33. *Connections: [A]moral Panics and Risk in Contemporary Drug and Viral Pandemic Claims*

Philip R. Kavanaugh and R.J. Maratea

So what are the differences between the moral panic and risk society ideas and how and why do they matter? Kavanaugh and Maratea answer this question with two modern day examples: the methamphetamine epidemic and viral pandemics (bird flu). The connections essay explains that the moral distinction between methamphetamine addiction (often conceived as a moral panic) and viral pandemics (an example of risk in modern society) is not as clear as we might think.

Critical Thinking Questions

Section 9. Critical Criminology, Culture of Control, Mass Incarceration

Introduction

Tammy L. Anderson

34. *Child Saving Movement in Illinois from The Child Savers: The Invention of Delinquency*
Anthony M. Platt

Platt describes the creation of the modern juvenile court system, which was implemented to reverse the severe, and often inhumane, treatment of children in the 19th century. The new juvenile court system acted as a legal guardian to promote the successful development of youth, reasoning that such an approach would best combat deviance and delinquency. But ironically, this juvenile court model was gradually abandoned in the late stages of the 20th century, as youths increasingly began to be tried as adults, received harsher sentences, and the juvenile court returned to the punitive approach of the 19th century.

35. *The Hyper-Criminalization of Black and Latino Male Youth in the Era of Mass Incarceration*

Victor Rios

This article by Victor Rios is based on an ethnographic study of Black and Latino boys in San Francisco. In neighborhoods and at school, officials adopt a culture of control in dealing with minority youth. The boys are stigmatized as violent criminals and are referred to criminal justice agencies at rates much higher than their white counterparts. This criminalization of minority male youth contributes to the punitive trend of mass incarceration seen recently in the United States and contradicts the original intent of the juvenile court system Platt describes.

36. *Reforming Education Through Crime from Governing through Crime*

Jonathan Simon

This reading is about the daily effects we encounter from a society obsessed with surveillance, security, and punitive penal practices. Simon shows how government and other social institutions use punitive policies at schools to manage perceived threats to students' safety and security, what the author terms "governance through crime."

37. *Connections: The Social Control of Youth across Institutional Spheres*

Aaron Kupchik

Aaron Kupchik's original connections essay for this section explains the policy approaches to controlling juvenile deviance and crime over time and highlights the recent punitive expansion to school grounds through what the author calls "the school-to-prison pipeline." This causes students to miss school, drop out and earn criminal records, not diplomas. The policy achieves the opposite original intent of the juvenile justice system, outlined by Platt.

Critical Thinking Questions

Part 2. Emergent Possibilities and the Future of Deviance

Section 10. Queer Theory, Communities and Citizenship

Introduction

Tammy L. Anderson

38. *Coming Out all Over: Deviants and the Politics of Social Problems*

John I. Kitsuse

Kitsuse argues that homosexuals—and other marginal groups in society-- form separate communities to retain their unique cultural customs and lifestyles, but also seek the recognition, respect, rights and privileges heterosexuals and other "normal" citizens traditionally enjoy. He calls for sociology to move away from viewing deviant groups through a lens of stigma, discrimination and shame to one of citizenship and empowerment.

39. *There goes the Gayborhood*

Amin Ghaziani

Ghaziani's article reports on a new trend within the gay community that breaks with the tradition that Kitsuse and Taylor describe. Ghaziani explains that the decline in separate gay neighborhoods and communities is due to several factors (monogamy, marriage, and parenting to name a few) that have made gays and lesbians more likely to assimilate and integrate with their heterosexual friends and neighbors.

40. *Queer Presences and Absences: Citizenship, Community, diversity—or Death*

Yvette Taylor

This article by Taylor adopts a similar viewpoint on deviance and citizenship as Kitsuse, but also notes potential unintended consequences for "marginal groups" of securing equal rights and increased citizenship. One potential consequence is the loss of a unique gay or queer culture because equal treatment and recognition in society requires assimilating to society's dominant standards, ways, and ideals.

41. Connections: HIV and Bug Chasers across Queer Collectives

Holly Swan and Laura Monico

This connections essay notes that marginal or deviant communities exist within a spectrum of widely different social contexts. For example, sexual norms and behavior among gay men differ widely between the larger group of gay men who practice safe sex and bugchasers who voluntarily contract HIV so they can be “sexually free.” So, when we are tempted to classify homosexuals as a singular group who are either assimilating to heterosexual culture (as Ghaziani contends) or claiming their queer-centric ways (as Taylor argues), what Swan and Monico find instead is wide diversity within the pools of outcasts with multiple definitions of deviant and normal behavior.

Critical Thinking Questions

Section 11. Critical Race Theory, Multiculturalism, and Identity

Introduction

Tammy L. Anderson

42. *Deviance as Resistance: A new Research Agenda for the Study of Black Politics*

Cathy J. Cohen

This article outlines a critical race theory of “intentional deviance,” where racial and ethnic minorities or “outsiders” attempt to preserve their cultural heritages while conforming to the white, middleclass mainstream. The author argues this type of deviance is a daily burden for the majority of Black citizens, but is ultimately rewarding. By attending to this intentional deviance by the majority of black citizens, the sociology of deviance can, Cohen argues, move away from its near exclusive focus on the black underclass engaged in crime.

43. *The Battle of Los Angeles: The Cultural Politics of Chicana/o Music in the Greater Eastside*

Victor Hugo Viesca

This article describes how Hispanics in Los Angeles resist oppression and social control by participating in Latin Fusion music scenes. Through music, young Hispanics counter the harsh labels, stigma and discrimination they often face while being their authentic selves. Unlike Cohen’s focus on cultural balance, Viesca highlights the value of securing an outlet and space for multicultural expression.

44. *I was aggressive for the streets, pretty for the pictures: Gender, difference and the inner-city girl*

Nikki Jones

Nikki Jones profiles a young black female—Kiara-- who shows us that race, gender and class are ongoing performances that feature norm violation and consequences. As Cohen notes in his article in this section, Kiara balances her behavior and identity in “legit” white society with her inner-city home by “looking pretty for the pictures, but tough

enough for the streets.” The article demonstrates that norms and standards for behavior are determined by our demographic and cultural background, thus requiring the field of deviance to attend to diversity.

45. *Connections: Marginality, Identity and Music Scenes*

Tammy L. Anderson

In this connections essay I explain how music scenes, such as hip hop, homo hop, rave and EDM, Bhangra, Latin Fusion, and narcocorridos, not only teach us the link between multiculturalism, identity and marginality, but also how these social insights can be extended to the study of deviance. When young people participate in music scenes, they provide powerful lessons from which sociologists have much to learn.

Critical Thinking Questions

Section 12. Biomedicalization, BioPower and Biocitizens

Introduction

Tammy L. Anderson

46. *The Medicalization of Unhappiness*

Ronald W. Dworkin

The Dworkin reading in this section shows us that trends in medicalizing conditions – such as depression – and controlling them with medicines (like anti-depressants) will continue to expand into the future and will ultimately target our most simple human emotions and goals: everyday unhappiness or anxieties. The author worries that such broad criteria for mental illness will lead to overdiagnosis of “pathologies” and expand the unnecessary treatment of perfectly healthy people.

47. *Civilizing Technologies and the Control of Deviance*

Scott Vrecko

Vrecko’s provocative article asks us to consider who is responsible for “addressing deviance” as society shifts to biological and neuroscientific explanations for non-conformity and away from moral or social causes. The author envisions increased self-control, where we become good “biocitizens” who agree with medical classifications, conform to medical advice, and take initiatives to fix our own problems without inconveniencing others.

48. *Connections: BioMedicalization of Drug Addiction and the Reproduction of Inequality*

Tammy L. Anderson and Philip Kavanaugh

The readings in this section provide an overview of the shift in many societies to biomedical efforts to “fix” traits, behaviors and conditions now considered “illness” as opposed to previous approaches which explained these same behaviors as moral failings or deviant behavior. This connections essay I wrote with Phillip Kavanaugh uses the case of opiate addiction to raise troubling questions about the persistence of inequality in society.

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