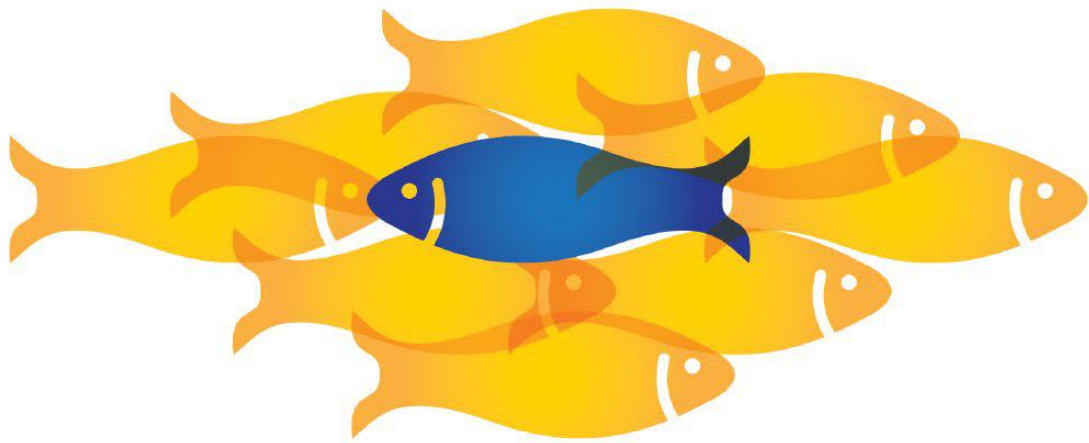


# PERSPECTIVES **ON** DEVIANC **AND** SOCIAL CONTROL



MICHELLE INDERBITZIN • KRISTIN A. BATES • RANDY R. GAINNEY

SECOND EDITION



# **Perspectives on Deviance and Social Control**

**Second Edition**

*Michelle dedicates this book to her students, past and present, inside and outside, who offer inspiration, creative challenges, and, most importantly, real hope for a better future.*

*Kristin dedicates this book to Jeff, William, and Christopher, who are welcome reminders that the world can be a really cool place.*

*Randy dedicates this book to Beth, our new lives, and the many adventures we have yet to come.*

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# Perspectives on Deviance and Social Control

**Second Edition**

**Michelle Inderbitzin**

*Oregon State University*

**Kristin A. Bates**

*California State University, San Marcos*

**Randy R. Gainey**

*Old Dominion University*



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FOR INFORMATION:

SAGE Publications, Inc.  
2455 Teller Road  
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E-mail: [order@sagepub.com](mailto:order@sagepub.com)

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United Kingdom

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3 Church Street  
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Singapore 049483

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## • Foreword •

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**B**y the time sociology came to universities at the beginning of the 20th century, all the “good” topics had been snatched up by earlier arrivals: Historians got to write about wars and kings and queens, economists acquired the market as their special turf, and political science took control of the state and government. Sociology was left with whatever topics were left over, especially (chief among these less desirable subjects) the “bad behavior” nice people didn’t like in the increasingly urbanized society they lived in: slums, gangs, prostitution, alcoholism, and crime. No one had to worry, then, about defining this field or justifying all these disparate topics being treated under one heading. It seemed obvious to all right-thinking people that these things were problems that needed looking into. Sociologists took them over as their own, and the nature of these problems (and the solutions to them everyone hoped the new science would provide) defined the nature of the field.

Since university disciplines like to make sense of what they are doing, sociologists soon began to look for a unifying thread, for what all these things had in common that justified calling studying them a scientific field. Once you question the commonsense idea that they all simply exemplified “bad behavior” or “social problems,” you commit yourself to finding a more logical and scientifically defensible description of what you’re doing. Sociologists worked hard to come up with that definition. What they came up with, in the end, was not a definition but definitions, lots of them. To go beyond saying these were all simply differing versions of badness, to define what made bad people’s behavior bad, created great difficulties because people don’t agree on that kind of definition. The commonsense understanding of “badness” included a mixture of very different things: drunkenness, stealing, craziness—the definition really consisted of nothing more than a list of activities that the law banned. Because legislatures make laws not to define the subject matter of a science but rather to satisfy constituents, the science part comes hard.

For many years, taking commonsense ideas of bad behavior at face value and accepting conventional definitions of what “bad” was, sociologists tried to make science by accepting and trying to prove and improve upon equally commonsense explanations of why people behaved badly. They mostly relied on one of two ideas. On one hand, some theories said that people did bad things because they were inherently bad—there were plenty of genetic theories in the early history of criminology, identifying potential criminals by physical markers of bad heredity—similar to the markers of feeble-mindedness, another topic that sociology and criminology had on their hands—or because they lived in bad circumstances, which turned otherwise normal children into delinquents, sane people into the mentally ill, and healthy people into alcoholics and drug addicts.

These general ideas, scarcely worth being dignified as general theories, for many years dominated the classes taught under such titles as “Social Disorganization” or

“Social Problems.” Textbooks and lectures proceeded along a well-marked path of problems, dominated by well-known kinds of crimes—starting with juvenile delinquency and following criminal types through more adult crimes like robbery, theft, burglary, and murder—and equally familiar kinds of personal pathologies, revolving around pleasurable forms of behavior that right-thinking people thought were wrong—sex, drugs, and alcohol, all three leading to mental illness. Teachers and books rehearsed the numerous and varied things that had been found to be correlated with bad behaviors and presumably to cause them: living in a slum neighborhood, coming from a broken home (that is, a household not headed by a married heterosexual couple), low educational achievement, and a long list of other phenomena usually correlated with some measure of social class so that, in some fundamental sense, the cause of all this pathology seemed to be being poor.

Such an approach did not produce a lot of results. What one study found was often contradicted by another study, and eventually, some sociologists and criminologists began to take a more neutral approach to these subject matters, seeing them not as signs of bad character or heredity but rather as signs of a mixed-up society, whose operations and organization made it likely that some sizable number of people would find it attractive and/or profitable to engage in behavior that led them into conflict with the law (as the gang members in *West Side Story* sang, “We’re not depraved, we’re deprived!”).

Since finding the causes of bad behavior in society did not produce reliable results any more than genetic and psychological theories had, some sociologists began to look further. They asked about a larger spectrum of things and focused on what we might call “the crime industry,” the agencies and organizations that made laws that defined what things were crimes, that devoted themselves to finding people who had violated these laws, adjudicating their cases and administering the punishments and forms of supervision the resolution of those cases dictated: the legislatures that made the laws, the police who found the guilty parties, the courts where their cases were decided, the jails and prisons where they served their sentences, and the parole offices and officers that oversaw those who came out at the other end of this process.

All this research is best summarized, as the authors of this book have done, by considering the variety of theories that sociologists and criminologists have created to make sense of this confusing mass of ideas and of the research the variety of ideas has engendered. Reading their crisp, informative summaries of so many conflicting ideas and then the wisely chosen illustrative examples of what you get from each approach will give students the best possible introduction to a lively and still developing field of research.

*Howard S. Becker*



## • Preface •

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**W**hile there are many textbooks and readers on deviant behavior currently on the market, this book is unique because it is framed within and written entirely from a sociological perspective. We explain the development of major sociological theoretical perspectives and detail how those theories have been used to think about and study the causes of deviant behavior and the reactions to it. We find the theories fascinating, and we think you will, too. We have provided many specific examples of deviant behavior and social control within the text so that students will have numerous opportunities to apply the concepts and theories and make connections to their everyday lives. In the following, we describe how *Perspectives on Deviance and Social Control*, Second Edition, differs from existing texts on the market.

In contrast to most of the popular readers and textbooks on deviant behavior, this book is primarily organized around theories and perspectives of deviance, rather than types of deviant behavior or a singular approach to understanding deviance. We have aimed for a combination of both depth and breadth in this book; in taking a broad sociological perspective, we focus on theory but also include full chapters on researching deviance, the societal responses to deviance, and deviant careers.

We hope this book will serve as a guide to students delving into the fascinating world of deviance and social control for the first time, offering clear overviews of issues and perspectives in the field as well as introductions to classic and current research. *Perspectives on Deviance and Social Control*, Second Edition, is intended to replace standard deviance textbooks or readers; it can be used in both undergraduate and graduate deviance courses.

### Overview of Features

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*Perspectives on Deviance and Social Control*, Second Edition, includes topics generally found in textbooks on deviant behavior, with significant focus on the major sociological theories of deviance and discussion of rulemaking and societal reaction to deviance. This book offers clear explanations and discussion of concepts and theories and carefully selected examples to illustrate relevant topics. This book features the following:

1. An introductory section explaining the sociological perspective on deviance and social control. This section provides an overview on the organization and content of the book and also introduces relevant themes, issues, and concepts to assist students in understanding the different perspectives. Along with the introduction, we have full chapters on the diversity of deviance and methods of researching deviance to introduce students to the broader issues in the field.

2. Each chapter includes five different features or sections that prompt students to engage with the material, apply the concepts, and learn more about current research. These features include the following:
  - *Deviance in Popular Culture*—offers several examples of films and/or television shows and encourages students to apply the concepts and theories to the behavior depicted in these examples
  - *Explaining Deviance in the Streets and Deviance in the Suites*—explores the impact of social class and status on different types of deviance and the reactions to such behavior
  - *Ideas in Action*—highlights examples of current policies or programs designed to address deviant behaviors from the perspective(s) covered in each chapter
  - *Now You*—asks students to apply the material they learned in the chapter to specific questions or examples
  - *Global Perspectives on Deviance*—illustrates the wide range of deviance by covering examples of research, policies, and practices from around the world
3. Each chapter includes discussion questions and exercises or assignments that will give students a chance to test and extend their knowledge of the material.
4. The book contains a glossary of key terms.

## Structure of the Book

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We chose very deliberately to organize our book around sociological theories rather than around types of deviance. This is in direct opposition to most of the competing texts on the market, and it is one of the reasons you might consider using our book. We believe the theoretically based approach offers students fertile ground for learning and exploring the realm of deviant behavior and social control. Once they learn the different theoretical perspectives, students will be able to apply the different theories to virtually any type of deviant behavior and, furthermore, be able to compare and contrast the theoretical models and decide for themselves which offers the most compelling explanation for the behavior. This is the kind of understanding and flexibility we hope our students achieve; while studying types of deviance is certainly interesting, being able to consider both individual and macro-level causes and explanations seems to us the larger and more important goal.

The book is divided into 12 chapters that cover an overview of the field of deviance and social control, methods and examples of researching deviance, the major theoretical traditions used in studying deviance, and a glimpse into the social control of deviance and deviant careers. The theory chapters each provide an overview of a theoretical perspective and its development, critiques of the perspective, and examples of current developments and research in that theoretical tradition. The chapters are as follows:

**Chapter 1. Introduction to Deviance:** We first provide the basic building blocks for studying deviant behavior from a sociological perspective. Different conceptions of deviance are described, and students are encouraged to develop and use their sociological imagination in studying deviant behavior. We explain the organization of the book and why we believe theory is so critical to understanding and researching deviance.

**Chapter 2. The Diversity of Deviance:** In this chapter, we offer an overview of some of the many types of deviance and show how our conceptions of deviance vary widely and change over time. We encourage students to think broadly about deviance and to always consider the culture, context, and historical period in which the “deviant” act takes place.

**Chapter 3. Researching Deviance:** This chapter addresses the many ways one might go about researching deviant behavior and social control. We highlight different research methods and the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. Examples are used throughout to make abstract concepts concrete for students.

**Chapter 4. Anomie/Strain Theory:** This chapter looks at one of the first sociological theories of deviance and traces the development of anomie and strain theories from Durkheim’s, Merton’s, and Cloward and Ohlin’s macro-level ideas on how the very structure of society contributes to deviant behavior to Agnew’s general strain theory and Messner and Rosenfeld’s institutional strain theory, which offer contemporary views on individual and institutional strain and the resulting deviance.

**Chapter 5. Social Disorganization Theory:** We discuss another early sociological perspective on deviance in this chapter: social disorganization theory, developed from early research on Chicago to explain patterns of deviance and crime across social locations, such as neighborhoods. We offer an overview of the perspective and show how it is being used today to explain high levels of deviance and violence in particular neighborhoods.

**Chapter 6. Differential Association and Social Learning Theories:** How do individuals learn to become deviant? This chapter covers ideas and research that try to answer that exact question. We explain the key ideas of Sutherland’s differential association and Akers’s social learning theories and offer an overview of the development of a sociological perspective that argues that deviance is learned through communication with intimate others.

**Chapter 7. Social Control Theories of Deviance:** Social control theories begin by flipping the question; rather than asking why individuals deviate, social control theories ask, If we are born prone to deviance, what keeps us from committing deviant acts? In this chapter, we trace the development of social control and life course theories and look at the importance of the individual’s social bonds to conforming society.

**Chapter 8. Labeling Theory:** In this chapter, we look at the importance of being labeled deviant. We begin with a brief overview of symbolic interactionism, which then leads to a discussion of the labeling process and how it can affect individuals' self-concepts and life chances.

**Chapter 9. Marxist and Conflict Theories of Deviance:** Within the conflict perspective, power and inequality are key considerations in defining who and what is deviant in any given society. In this chapter, we begin with the ideas of Karl Marx and go on to show how Marxist perspectives have been used to study lawmaking and how the process of defining and creating deviant behavior is used to maintain positions of power in society.

**Chapter 10. Critical Theories of Deviance:** In this chapter, we focus on theories that examine deviance from a perspective that questions the normative status quo. We offer brief overviews of peacemaking criminology, feminist criminology, and critical race theory as alternative perspectives for studying deviance and social control.

**Chapter 11. Societal Responses to Deviance:** In this chapter, we offer a brief look into informal and formal social control of deviance. We discuss the medicalization (and medication) of deviance, mental hospitals, prisons and juvenile correctional facilities, felon disenfranchisement, and general effects of stigma on those labeled deviant.

**Chapter 12. Deviant Careers and Career Deviance:** While much attention is focused on getting into deviance, in this chapter, we consider the full deviant career, including desistance, or the process of exiting deviance.

Each chapter offers original material that introduces students to the issues, concepts, and theories covered in that chapter and contextualizes the examples used to show the wide variation in deviance and social control.

## New to This Edition

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*Perspectives on Deviance and Social Control* is a slimmed-down volume that follows the organization of our text/reader, *Deviance and Social Control: A Sociological Perspective*, Second Edition. This book offers a concise overview of the materials without including the additional readings found in *Deviance and Social Control*. In this new edition, we have updated the text, where appropriate, based on new examples and studies that illustrate the major sociological theories of deviance. While we included a chapter on global perspectives on deviance in the first edition, we have reorganized this new edition to include a section in every chapter that examines global issues in deviance and societal responses to deviant behavior or characteristics. We feel incorporating global examples into each chapter offers a better chance for students to be exposed to international perspectives while they are learning the substantive material, rather than our previous model of including global issues and examples in a separate chapter at the end of the book.

Many of the introductory vignettes that begin each chapter have been entirely changed or modified and help to provide a clear starting point for each theory and topic. In addition, the majority of inserts in each chapter including “Explaining Deviance in the Streets and Deviance in the Suites,” “Deviance in Popular Culture,” and “Now *You*” have been updated or changed in order to better orient students to the relevance of theory and research in understanding deviance and social control in modern society.

Key theoretical concepts have been expanded, and the new edition includes discussions of social constructionist conception, the looking-glass self, multicultural feminism, social control of mental illness, and restorative justice. Reflecting the impact of the digital world on our society, the new edition includes a closer look at the influence of the internet on deviance and subcultures and explores emerging topics such as the use of smartphones and social media, stigma management in the internet age, the #MeToo movement, and the effect of platforms like YouTube. Demonstrating recent trends and events today, the data have been updated throughout, and recent events like the Trump administration’s stance on transgender individuals serving in the military, The UnSlut Project, and the Black Lives Matter movement are considered. Additionally, pressing topics impacting society and students, such as human trafficking, school shootings, and world energy consumption rates, have been added.

A great deal of thinking and work was involved in the creation of this new edition, but the work was a labor of love as we grew as scholars rethinking and investigating the subject of deviance and reactions to deviance to date. We hope instructors assigning the text appreciate the changes; we welcome your feedback for subsequent editions. Feel free to contact any or all of the authors if you have suggestions.

## Digital Resources

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SAGE offers an exceptionally robust set of offerings for both student and instructor resources, all accessible from each title’s companion website. The Student Study Site is completely open access, making it as easy as possible for your students to use. The Instructor Teaching Site is verified and password-protected, offering you both peace of mind and a wealth of support for your courses.

Password-protected **Instructor Resources** include the following:

- A Microsoft® Word test bank is available containing multiple-choice, true/false, short-answer, and essay questions for each chapter. The test bank provides you with a diverse range of prewritten options as well as the opportunity for editing any question and/or inserting your own personalized questions to assess students’ progress and understanding.
- Editable, chapter-specific Microsoft® PowerPoint® slides offer you complete flexibility in easily creating a multimedia presentation for your course. Highlight essential content and features.

- Sample course syllabi for semester and quarter courses provide suggested models for use when creating the syllabi for your courses.
- Lively and stimulating chapter activities that can be used in class to reinforce active learning. The activities apply to individual or group projects.
- Video and multimedia links that appeal to students with different learning styles.
- EXCLUSIVE! Access to certain full-text SAGE journal articles that have been carefully selected for each chapter. Each article supports and expands on the concepts presented in the chapter.

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- Mobile-friendly eFlashcards reinforce understanding of key terms and concepts that have been outlined in the chapters.
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- EXCLUSIVE! Access to certain full-text SAGE journal articles have been carefully selected for each chapter. Each article supports and expands on the concepts presented in the chapter.
- Video and multimedia links that appeal to students with different learning styles.

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## • About the Authors •

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**Michelle Inderbitzin** primarily studies prison culture, juvenile justice, and transformative education. She is coeditor of the book *The Voluntary Sector in Prisons: Encouraging Personal and Institutional Change*, and she won the American Society of Criminology Teaching Award in 2017. Dr. Inderbitzin earned her PhD in sociology from the University of Washington and has been a faculty member at Oregon State University since 2001. Along with her on-campus classes on crime and deviance, she regularly teaches classes and volunteers in Oregon's maximum-security prison for men and state youth correctional facilities.

**Kristin A. Bates** is a professor of criminology and justice studies in the Department of Sociology at California State University, San Marcos. Her research focuses on racial, ethnic, and gender inequality in criminal justice policies. She is currently involved in a study examining the community impact of civil gang injunctions. She is coeditor of the book *Through the Eye of Katrina: Social Justice in the United States*, as well as coauthor of *Juvenile Delinquency in a Diverse Society*, both in their second editions. Dr. Bates earned her PhD in sociology from the University of Washington in 1998.

**Randy R. Gainey** is a professor in the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice at Old Dominion University. His research focuses on sentencing decisions, alternatives to incarceration, and neighborhood characteristics and crime. He is coauthor of two other books: *Family Violence and Criminal Justice: A Life-Course Approach*, now in its third edition, and *Drugs and Policing*. His articles have recently appeared in *Criminology*, *Justice Quarterly*, *Theoretical Criminology*, *The Prison Journal*, the *Journal of Criminal Justice*, and the *Journal of Crime and Justice*. Dr. Gainey earned his PhD in sociology in 1995 at the University of Washington.



# Introduction to Deviance

## Public Nudity

Founded in 1972, the Fremont Fair is one of Seattle's most beloved neighborhood street festivals, featuring a weekend of eclectic activities that celebrate the quirky community of Fremont, the self-proclaimed "center of the universe." Held annually in mid-June to coincide with the Summer Solstice, the event draws more than 100,000 people to shop, eat, drink, mingle, groove, and enjoy all manners of creative expression. Artistic highlights include craft and art booths, street performers, local bands, wacky decorated art cars, the free-spirited Solstice Parade produced by the Fremont Arts Council, and many other oddities that personify Fremont's official motto "Delibertus Quirkus"—Freedom to be Peculiar.

—Fremont Fair (2010; see also Fremont Fair, 2018b)

The Fremont Arts Council (FAC) is a community-based celebration arts organization. We value volunteerism; community participation; artistic expression; and the sharing of arts skills. We welcome the participation of everyone regardless of who they are, or what they think or believe.

The rules of the Fremont Solstice Parade, which make this event distinct from other types of parades, are:

- No written or printed words or logos
- No animals (except service animals)
- No motorized vehicles (except wheelchairs)
- No real weapons or fire

—Fremont Arts Council (2018)

It is true that a parade with no logos, animals, or motorized vehicles is different from most parades that we experience in the United States. But one more thing sets the Fremont Solstice Parade apart from other parades: the public displays of nudity. Every year at the parade, a contingent of nude, body-painted bicyclists (both men and women) ride through the streets of Fremont as part of the parade. Rain or shine (and let's face it, in June in Seattle, there can be a lot of rain), a large group of naked adults cycle down the street as the crowds cheer and wave. The Fremont City Council estimates that more than 100,000 people visit the weekend fair, and pictures show that the streets are crowded with parade watchers, from the very young to elderly.

On the Fremont Fair webpage, the traditions of the "free-spirited event" are explained:

**What is the etiquette with body paint?** We won't deny it, the Fremont Fair and Fremont Solstice Parade are partially famous for body-painted bicyclists and revelers. If you are one of the body painted participants please note: The Fremont restaurants and bars greatly appreciate if you can carry a towel with you to place on the chair/booth you dine and drink in. If you don't, they are left scrubbing for weeks to come, which is a mess and can permanently damage decor. They love to have you in their establishments, but please be respectful of their furnishings. Also, remember that many families with small children attend the fair. Please be considerate of children's eye level. Plus, if you are not on a bike you should cover it up.

**Is the Fremont Fair appropriate for children?** The Fremont Fair welcomes family members of all ages! In fact, there are special activities just for kids and families. However, Solstice-goers should be aware this is a very eclectic and free-spirited event. Some Solstice guests appear in full or partial body paint, and a variety of other colorful costumes (this is typically limited to Saturday's festivities.) (Fremont Fair, 2018a)

Contrast this event with the following stories of flashers across the country during the Summer Solstice weekend in 2017. A quick Google search of "flasher in June 2017" brings up four articles about police in Arizona, Oklahoma, Texas, and Ontario, Canada, looking for men who exposed themselves in public in the months of May and June.

In each of these cities, men exposed themselves on the street or in parks to various passersby (mostly women). In each instance, the behavior of the men was reported to the police and/or reported on social media. And in at least one instance, the flasher was arrested and charged with a crime.

While all of these events center on public displays of nudity, one is celebrated while the others are vilified. Why?



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**PHOTOS 1.1 and 1.2** When is a public display of nudity considered deviant? When is it celebrated?

## Introduction

You might expect that a book about deviance would start with a definition of deviance. But like all things worth studying, a simple definition does not exist. For example, in the stories above, one public display of nudity was not only welcomed but celebrated by 6-year-olds and grandmothers alike, but another display led to arrest and possible jail time. Why? This chapter and this book explore how it can be that the Fremont Solstice Parade was celebrated in the same summer that a flasher was arrested and held on \$50,000 bail until charged.

## Conceptions of Deviance

All deviance textbooks offer their “conceptions of deviance.” Rubington and Weinberg (2008) argue that there are generally two conceptions of deviance: “objectively given” and “subjectively problematic.” Clinard and Meier (2015) also suggest two general conceptions of deviance, the **normative conception** and the reactionist or **relativist conception**. Thio, Taylor, and Schwartz (2012) argue that we can view deviance from a **positivist perspective** or a **social constructionist perspective**.

While none of these authors are using the same language, they are defining similar conceptions of deviance. The first conception—that of an “objectively given,” normative, or positivist conception of deviance—assumes that there is a general set of norms of behavior, conduct, and conditions on which we can agree. **Norms** are rules of behavior that guide people’s actions. Sumner (1906) broke norms down into three categories: folkways, mores, and laws. **Folkways** are everyday norms that do not generate much uproar if they are violated. Think of them as behaviors that might be considered rude if engaged in, like standing too close to someone while speaking or picking one’s nose. **Mores** are “moral” norms that may generate more outrage if broken. In a capitalist society, homelessness and unemployment can elicit outrage if the person is considered unworthy of sympathy. Similarly, drinking too much or alcoholism may be seen as a lapse in moral judgment. Finally, the third type of norm is the **law**, considered the strongest norm because it is backed by official sanctions (or a formal response). In this conception, then, deviance becomes a violation of a rule understood by the majority of the group. This rule may be minor, in which case the deviant is seen as “weird but harmless,” or the rule may be major, in which case the deviant is seen as “criminal.” The obvious problem with this conceptualization goes back to the earlier examples of reactions to public nudity, where we see that violation of a most “serious” norm (law) can receive quite different reactions. This leads to the second conception.

In 1956, Horace Miner published an article on the Nacirema, a poorly understood culture that he claimed engaged in body rituals and ceremonies that were unique, obsessive, and almost magical. He highlighted several of these beliefs and actions:

The fundamental belief of the Nacirema people is that the human body is ugly and prone to “debility and disease.”

The people engage in rituals and ceremonies in a “ritual center” considered to be a shrine. Affluent members of society may have more

than one shrine devoted to these rituals and ceremonies.

Each shrine has, near its center point, a box or chest filled with magical potions. Many believe they cannot live without these magical potions and so collect to the point of hoarding them, afraid to let them go even when it is determined they may no longer hold their magic.

The people have an “almost pathological horror and fascination with the mouth, the condition of which is believed to have

a supernatural influence on all social relationships. Were it not for the rituals of the mouth, they believe that their teeth would fall out, their gums bleed, their jaws shrink, their friends desert them, and their lovers reject them” (p. 504).

Miner never lets on that this fascinating culture that believes magic will transform its members’ ugly, diseased bodies is actually American (*Nacirema* spelled backward) culture. But his point is made: Our understanding

and interpretation of events and behaviors is often relative. If we step back from the everyday events in which we engage with little thought, our most accepted practices can be made to seem deviant.

Take a moment to examine an everyday activity that you engage in from the perspective of an outsider. What might watching television, going to a sporting event, babysitting, or surfing look like to those who have never experienced it? Can you write a description of this everyday event from an outsider’s point of view?

Miner [1956].

The second conception of deviance—the “subjectively problematic,” reactionist or relativist, social constructionist conception—assumes that the definition of deviance is constructed based on the interactions of those in society. According to this conception, behaviors or conditions are not inherently deviant; they become so when the definition of deviance is applied to them. The study of deviance is not about why certain individuals violate norms but, instead, about how those norms are constructed. Social constructionists believe that our understanding of the world is in constant negotiation between actors. Those who have a relativist conception of deviance define deviance as those behaviors that elicit a definition or label of deviance:

Social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labeling them as outsiders. For 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, 1973, p. 9)

This is a fruitful conceptualization, but it is also problematic. What about very serious violations of norms that are never known or reacted to? Some strict reactionists or relativists would argue that these acts (beliefs or attitudes) are not deviant. Most of us would agree that killing someone and making it look like he or she simply skipped the country is deviant. However, there may be no reaction.

A third conception of deviance that has not been advanced in many textbooks (for an exception, see DeKeseredy, Ellis, & Alvi, 2005) is a critical definition of deviance (DeKeseredy & Dragiewicz, 2012; Jensen, 2007). Those working from a **critical conception** of deviance argue that the normative understanding of deviance is established by those in power to maintain and enhance their power. It suggests that explorations of deviance have focused on a white, male, middle- to upper-class

TABLE 1.1 ● Conceptions of Deviance			
Conceptions of Deviance	Assumptions	Definition of Deviance	Example Research Question
Normative or Positivist	There is a general set of norms of behavior, conduct, and conditions on which we can agree.	Deviance is a violation of a rule understood by the majority of the group.	"What leads an individual to engage in deviant behavior?"
Relativist or Social Constructionist	Nothing is inherently deviant; our understanding of the world is in constant negotiation between actors.	Deviance is any behavior that elicits a definition or label of deviance.	"What characteristics increase the likelihood that an individual or a behavior will be defined as deviant?"
Critical	The normative understanding of deviance is established by those in power to maintain and enhance their power.	Instead of focusing on individual types of deviance, this conception critiques the social system that exists and creates such norms in the first place.	"What is the experience of the homeless, and who is served by their treatment as deviant?"

understanding of society that implies that people of color, women, and the working poor are by definition deviant. Instead of focusing on individual types of deviance, this conception critiques the social system that exists and creates such norms in the first place. This, too, is a useful and powerful approach, but there are still some things that the vast majority of society agrees are so immoral, unethical, and deviant that they should be illegal, and that the system can serve to protect our interests against.

Given that each of these conceptualizations is useful but problematic, we do not adhere to a single conception of deviance in this book because the theories of deviance do not adhere to a single conception. You will see that several of our theories assume a normative conception, whereas several assume a social constructionist or critical conception. As you explore each theory, think about what the conception of deviance and theoretical perspective mean for the questions we ask and answer about deviance (Table 1.1).

As Justice Potter Stewart of the Supreme Court once famously wrote about trying to define obscene materials, "I shall not today attempt

further to define the kinds of material I understand to be embraced within that shorthand description; and perhaps I could never succeed in intelligibly

doing so. But I know it when I see it" (*Jacobellis v. Ohio*, 1964). Those who do not study deviance for a living probably find themselves in the same boat; it may be hard to write a definition, but how hard could it be to "know it when we see it"?

Choose a busy place to sit and observe human behavior for one hour. Write down all the behaviors that you observe during that hour. Do you consider any of these behaviors to be deviant?

Which conception of deviance are you using when you define each as deviant? Might there be some instances (e.g., places or times) when that behavior you consider to be nondeviant right now might become deviant? Finally, bring your list of behaviors to class. In pairs, share your list of behaviors and your definitions of deviant behaviors with your partner. Do you agree on your categorization? Why or why not?

## The Sociological Imagination

Those of us who are sociologists can probably remember the first time we were introduced to the concept of the **sociological imagination**. C. Wright Mills argues that the only way to truly understand the experiences of the individual is to first understand the societal, institutional, and historical conditions that individual is living under. In other words, Mills believes that no man, woman, or child is an island. Below is an excerpt from Mills's (1959/2000) profound book, *The Sociological Imagination*.

Men do not usually define the troubles they endure in terms of historical change and institutional contradiction. The well-being they enjoy, they do not usually impute to the big ups and downs of the societies in which they live. Seldom aware of the intricate connection between the patterns of their own lives and the course of world history, ordinary men do not usually know what this connection means for the kinds of men they are becoming and for the kinds of history-making in which they might take part. They do not possess the quality of mind essential to grasp the interplay of man and society, of biography and history, of self and world. They cannot cope with their personal troubles in such ways as to control the structural transformations that usually lie behind them. . . .

The sociological imagination enables its possessor to understand the larger historical scene in terms of its meaning for the inner life and the external career of a variety of individuals. It enables him to take into account how individuals, in the welter of their daily experience, often become falsely conscious of their social positions. With that welter, the framework of modern society is sought, and within that framework the psychologies of a variety of men and women are formulated. By such means the personal uneasiness of individuals is focused upon explicit troubles and the indifference of publics is transformed into involvement with public issues.

The first fruit of this imagination—and the first lesson of the social science that embodies it—is the idea that the individual can understand his own



**PHOTO 1.3**

The salad bar can represent the restriction on choices that individuals have. We can only make our salad with the ingredients offered to us on the salad bar.

experience and gauge his own fate only by locating himself within his period, that he can know his own chances in life only by becoming aware of those of all individuals in his circumstances. In many ways it is a terrible lesson; in many ways a magnificent one. . . .

In these terms, consider unemployment. When, in a city of 100,000, only one man is unemployed, that is his personal trouble, and for its relief we properly look to the character of

the man, his skills, and his immediate opportunities. But when in a nation of 50 million employees, 15 million men are unemployed, that is an issue, and we may not hope to find its solution within the range of opportunities open to any one individual. The very structure of opportunities has collapsed. Both the correct statement of the problem and the range of possible solutions require us to consider the economic and political institutions of the society, and not merely the personal situation and character of a scatter of individuals. . . .

What we experience in various and specific milieux, I have noted, is often caused by structural changes. Accordingly, to understand the changes of many personal milieux we are required to look beyond them. And the number and variety of such structural changes increase as the institutions within which we live become more embracing and more intricately connected with one another. To be aware of the idea of social structure and to use it with sensibility is to be capable of tracing such linkages among a great variety of milieux. To be able to do that is to possess the sociological imagination. (*The Sociological Imagination* by C. Wright Mills [2000] pp. 3–11. By permission of Oxford University Press, USA.)

One of our favorite examples of the sociological imagination in action is the “salad bar” example. In the United States, one of the persistent philosophies is that of individualism and personal responsibility. Under this philosophy, individuals are assumed to be solely responsible for their successes and failures. This philosophy relies heavily on the notion that individuals are rational actors who weigh the costs and benefits of their actions, can see the consequences of their behavior, and have perfect information. The salad bar example helps those who rely heavily on this conception of the individual to see the importance of social structure to individual behavior.

No one doubts that when you order a salad bar at a restaurant, you are responsible for building your own salad. Every person makes his or her own salad, and no two salads look exactly alike. Some make salads with lots of lettuce and vegetables, very little cheese, and fat-free dressing. Others create a salad that is piled high

with cheese, croutons, and lots and lots of dressing. Those who are unhappy with their choices while making their salad have only themselves to blame, right? Not necessarily.

A salad is only as good as the salad bar it is created from. In other words, individuals making a salad can only make a salad from the ingredients supplied from the salad bar. If the restaurant is out of croutons that day or decided to put watermelon out instead of cantaloupe, the individual must build his or her salad within these constraints. Some individuals with a great sense of personal power or privilege may request additional items from the back of the restaurant, but most individuals will choose to build a salad based on the items available to them on the salad bar. In other words, the individual choice is constrained by the larger social forces of delivery schedules, food inventory, and worker decision making. The sociological imagination is especially important to understand because it is the building block for our understanding of deviance and sociological theory.

The sociological imagination helps us understand the impact of social forces on both engaging in and reacting to deviance. One of the easiest reactions to or assumptions about people who engage in deviance is that they are “sick” or “mentally ill.” This assumption is what we refer to as **pathologizing** individuals. It puts all the responsibility for their actions onto them without asking what impact the social forces and social structures around them might have. The sociological imagination reminds us that individuals exist in a larger social system, and they impact that larger social system just as it impacts them. One of the ways to systematically understand these impacts is to understand sociological theory.

## DEVIANCE IN POPULAR CULTURE

Many types of deviance are portrayed and investigated in popular culture. Films and shows on television, the internet, and social media, for example, illustrate a wide range of deviant behavior and social control. There are often several interpretations of what acts are deviant. How do you know when an act or person is deviant? One way to develop your sociological imagination is to watch films or shows, listen to music, and engage with social media from a critical perspective and to think about how different theories would explain the deviant behavior and the reactions portrayed. Films, music, and social media offer examples of cultural norms, different types of deviant behavior, and coping with stigma.

Television—reality shows and the TLC network in particular—features a number of programs offering an inside view of people perceived as deviant or different in some way and how they deal with stigma from various sources.

The internet may be one of the best places to go for examples of deviance and social control. It is all right at our fingertips all the time.

In each of the chapters that follow, we will suggest one or more features of pop culture for you to watch from the theoretical perspective outlined in the chapter. We think you'll soon agree: Deviance is all around us.

## The Importance of Theory and Its Relationship to Research

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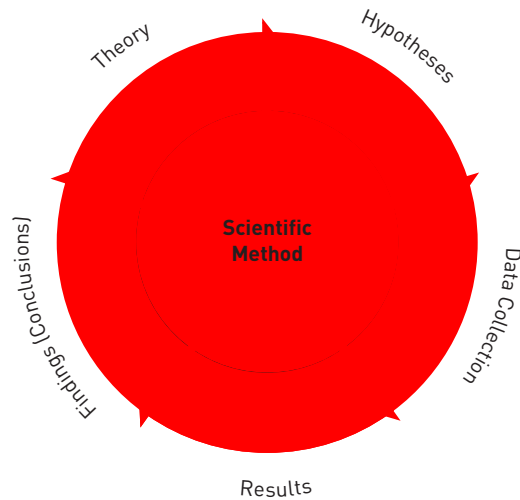
The three of us (the authors of this book) spent many hours discussing the importance of **theory** as we wrote this book. Why did we choose to write a textbook about deviance with theory as the central theme? Many of you may also be asking this question and worrying that a book about theory may suck the life right out of a discussion about deviance. Really, who wants to be thinking about theory when we could be talking about “nuts, sluts, and perverts” (Liazos, 1972)? But this is precisely why we must make theory central to any discussion of deviance—because theory helps us *systematically* think about deviance. If it weren’t for theory, classes about deviance would be akin to watching MTV’s *Jersey Shore* (Family Vacation edition) or Bravo’s *The Real Housewives of New Jersey* (why is New Jersey so popular for these shows?)—it may be entertaining, but we have no clearer understanding of the “real” people of New Jersey when we are done watching.

Theory is what turns anecdotes about human behavior into a systematic understanding of societal behavior. It does this by playing an intricate part in research and the scientific method.

The **scientific method** is a systematic procedure that helps *safeguard against researcher bias* and the power of anecdotes by following several simple steps (Figure 1.1). First, a researcher starts with a research question. If the researcher is engaging in deductive research, this question comes from a theoretical perspective. This theory and research question help the researcher create hypotheses (testable statements) about a phenomenon being studied. Once the researcher has created hypotheses, he or she collects data to test these hypotheses. We discuss data and data collection methods for deviance research in detail in Chapter 3. The researcher then analyzes these data, interprets the findings, and concludes whether or not his or her hypotheses have been supported. These findings then inform whether the theory the researcher used helps with our understanding of the world or should be revised to take into consideration information that does not support its current model. If a researcher is engaging in inductive research, he or she also starts with a research question, but in the beginning, the researcher’s theory may be what we call “grounded theory.” Using qualitative methods, such as participant observation or in-depth interviews, the researcher would collect data and analyze these data, looking for common themes throughout. These findings would be used to create a theory “from the ground up.” In other words, while a deductive researcher would start with a theory that guides every step of the research, an inductive researcher might start with a broad theoretical perspective and a research question and, through the systematic collection of data and rigorous analyses, would hone that broad theoretical perspective into a more specific theory. This theory would then be tested again as the researcher continued on with his or her work, or others, finding this new theory to be useful and interesting, might opt to use it to inform both their deductive and inductive work.

If we go back to our example of reality shows about people from New Jersey, we may see the difference between an anecdote and a more theoretically grounded understanding of human behavior. After watching both *Jersey Shore* and *The Real*

**FIGURE 1.1 • The Scientific Method Allows Us to Systematically Examine Social Phenomena Such as Deviance**



*Housewives of New Jersey*, we may conclude that people from New Jersey are loud, self-absorbed, and overly tan (all three of which might be considered deviant behaviors or characteristics). However, we have not systematically studied the people of New Jersey to arrive at our conclusion. Using inductive reasoning, based on our initial observation, we may start with a research question that states that because the people of New Jersey are loud, self-absorbed, and overly tan, we are interested in knowing about the emotional connections they have with friends and family. (We may suspect that self-absorbed people are more likely to have relationships with conflict.) However, as we continue along the scientific method, we systematically gather data from more than just the reality stars of these two shows. We interview teachers, police officers, retired lawyers, and college students. What we soon learn as we analyze these interviews is that the general public in New Jersey is really not all that tan, loud, or self-absorbed, and they speak openly and warmly about strong connections to family and friends. This research leads us to reexamine our initial theory about the characteristics of people from New Jersey and offer a new theory based on systematic analysis. This new theory then informs subsequent research on the people of New Jersey. If we did not have theory and the scientific method, our understanding of deviance would be based on wild observations and anecdotes, which may be significantly misleading and unrepresentative of the social reality.

In addition to being systematic and testable (through the scientific method), theory offers *solutions to the problems* we study. One of the hardest knocks against the study of deviance and crime has been the historically carnival sideshow nature (Liazos, 1972) of much of the study of deviance. By focusing on individuals and a certain caste of deviants (those without power) and using less-than-systematic methods,

deviance researchers were just pointing at “nuts, sluts, and preverts” and not advancing their broader understanding of the interplay of power, social structure, and behavior. Theory can focus our attention on this interplay and offer solutions beyond the individual and the deficit model, which focuses on the individual (or group) in question and blames the deviance on something broken, lacking, or deficient in him or her. Bendle (1999) also argued that the study of deviance was in a state of crisis because researchers were no longer studying relevant problems or offering useful solutions. One of Bendle’s solutions is to push for new theories of deviant behavior.

Theoretical solutions to the issue of deviance are especially important because many of our current responses to deviant behavior are erroneously based on an individualistic notion of human nature that does not take into account humans as social beings or the importance of social structure, social institutions, power, and broad societal changes for deviance and deviants.

## RECENT STUDY IN DEVIANC

### THE POVERTY OF THE SOCIOLOGY OF DEVIANC: NUTS, SLUTS, AND PREVERTS

Liazos (1972) argues that the study of deviance used to be the study of “nuts, sluts, and preverts,” a sensationalistic ritual in finger-pointing and moralizing. The focus was on individuals and their “aberrant” behavior. This meant that the most harmful behaviors in society—the ones that affected us most thoroughly—were ignored and, in being ignored, normalized. Liazos referred to these forms of deviance as *covert institutional violence*.

According to Liazos, the poverty of the study of deviance was threefold: First, even when trying to point out how normal the “deviance” or “deviant” is, by pointing out the person or behavior, we are acknowledging the difference. If that difference really were invisible, how and why would we be studying it? This meant by even studying deviance, a moral choice had already been made—some differences were studied; some were not. Second, by extension, deviance research rarely studied elite deviance and structural deviance, instead focusing on “dramatic” forms of deviance, such as prostitution, juvenile delinquency, and homosexuality. Liazos argues that it is important to, instead, study covert institutional violence, which leads to such things as poverty and exploitation.

Instead of studying tax cheats, we should study unjust tax laws; instead of studying prostitution, we should study racism and sexism as deviance. Finally, Liazos argues that even those who profess to study the relationship between power and deviance do not really acknowledge the importance of power. These researchers still give those in positions of power a pass to engage in harmful behavior by not defining much elite deviance as deviance at all.

The implication of this is that those who study deviance have allowed the definition of deviance to be settled for them. And this definition benefits not only individuals in power but also a system that has routinely engaged in harmful acts. While Liazos wrote this important critique of the sociology of deviance in 1972, much of his analysis holds up to this day. In this book, we examine theories expressly capable of addressing this critique.

As you explore each of the theories offered to you in this book, remember Liazos’s critique. Which theories are more likely to focus on “nuts, sluts, and preverts”? Which are more likely to focus on elite deviance and new conceptions of deviance?

## Global Perspectives on Deviance

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A recent issue of *USA Today* featured a short article on weird laws from around the world. While all are truly “weird,” some appear to actually have a rational reason for their existence while others do not. For example, in Rome, it is illegal to eat or drink near landmarks, and in Greece, it is illegal to wear stiletto heels. While both these laws appear to be rather random, when explored, they make perfect sense. The laws are designed to preserve the ancient landmarks found in both places. It is fairly obvious that eating and drinking in historic places could lead to sticky walls or ruined artifacts, but stiletto heels may be just as dangerous. It turns out that the pressure from a thin stiletto heel is roughly equal to the pressure of an elephant walking in the same spot. Thailand and Canada both have laws that dictate how people treat or use their currency. In Thailand, it is illegal to step on the nation’s currency. All currency in Thailand carries a picture of the king, and because the king is so revered, it is a great offense to treat the currency and thus the king disrespectfully. In Canada, it is illegal to use more than 25 pennies in a single transaction. Why? We’re not quite sure, except there appears to be a strong feeling that the penny is worthless—the government has phased out the coin. Not to be outdone, the United States has its fair share of weird laws, too. In Washington State, it is illegal to harass Bigfoot, Sasquatch, or any other undiscovered subspecies. In North Dakota, it is illegal to serve beer and pretzels at the same time at a bar or restaurant. And in Missouri, you can’t ride in a car with an uncaged bear.

One of the most interesting ways to examine deviance is to look at it in a cross-cultural or global context. It is easy to see how our understanding of deviance transcends or is impacted by differing beliefs and experiences when we compare across borders.

First, there is no greater example of the relativist nature of deviance than examining the laws of a country or region. While it is unlikely anyone is getting into a car with an uncaged bear anytime soon, it is much more likely that beer and pretzels will be served at the same time, that stiletto heels will be worn, and that someone might mistreat the currency of a country. While some might engage in these acts knowing their behavior will be defined as deviant, it is our bet that a good number will have no clue that their actions are defined as deviant, at least by the laws in that country. Second, the responses to these forms of deviance are also relative. While it is true that the law says you cannot eat or drink near historic landmarks in Rome, it is rarely enforced, and while the authors have not had the pleasure of drinking a beer in North Dakota, we bet we could find at least one restaurant that would serve us a pretzel, too. None of us are willing to test the uncaged-bear law.

In a book devoted to theory and social control, it is important to see how those theories can explain not only deviance in the United States, but how we experience deviance around the world.

## Explaining Deviance in the Streets and Deviance in the Suites

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We have included a section in each chapter that discusses a “street” deviance and juxtaposes it against an “elite” or “suite” deviance. We have chosen to do this because,

in many instances, street deviance is the focus of examinations. (Again, we gravitate to conversations of “nuts, sluts, and perverts” if we aren’t systematic.) We wanted to make sure for each street deviance we explored that we offered an exploration of an elite deviance, too. Depending on the chapter, we have chosen to do this in one of two ways. Some chapters focus on a single deviance that, while engaged in by a variety of individuals, is interpreted differently depending on the characteristics of who is engaging in it. For example, in Chapter 6, we describe two studies that focus on social learning theory and dating violence—one examining the relationship among college students and the other among homeless young adults. In Chapter 8, we focus on labeling theory and how the class characteristics of individuals impact the likelihood that they will be labeled a person with a drinking problem. Both of these approaches show that a single behavior is impacted by class—by affecting either the likelihood of engaging in the behavior or the likelihood that the behavior will be perceived as deviant. Finally, in some of our chapters, we choose to examine two separate forms of deviance, highlighting how a street deviance (one that often receives more attention, is perceived as more detrimental, or is perceived as likely to be engaged in by the poor) compares with an elite or suite deviance (often an action or behavior that many cannot agree is deviant or that is engaged in by those who have substantial amounts of power). For example, in Chapter 10, we use critical theories to discuss how changing technologies have affected pornography (our example of street deviance) and illegal government surveillance (our example of suite deviance). In chapters such as this, we want to highlight how a single theory may address behaviors that are often on very different ends of the power and class spectrum. In all of the chapters, we first offer a substantive discussion of the deviance before we analyze it from the perspective of the chapter.

## Ideas in Action

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For the purposes of this book, we are expanding the discussion of public policy to include public and private programs, which is why we have titled this section in each chapter “Ideas in Action.” While a single, concrete definition of public policy is elusive, there is general agreement that public policy is the sometimes unwritten actions taken by the city, state, or federal government. These actions may be as formal as a law or regulation or be more informal in nature, such as an institutional custom. While public policy is often associated with government guidelines or actions, we also find it important to highlight the work of public and private programs, nonprofits, and nongovernmental organizations. For this reason, our “Ideas in Action” section may highlight a private program or entity or a public (state or federal) guideline, rule, or law that affects our understanding or control of deviance.

Some argue that tension exists between public policies and private programs created to address deviance, crime, and public well-being. These tensions are twofold. The first argument involves what some argue is a movement of public well-being out of the public realm (the government) to a private and more likely profit-motivated industry (private programs). This shift is often referred to as neoliberalism.

The term neoliberalism refers to a political, economic, and social ideology that argues that low government intervention, a privatization of services that in the



past have predominately been the domain of government, an adherence to a free-market philosophy, and an emphasis on deregulation (Frericks, Maier, & de Graaf, 2009) is “the source and arbiter of human freedoms” (Mudge, 2008, p. 704). What may be one of the most important aspects of neoliberalism from the standpoint of those focused on social justice, then, is this link between the free markets and morality. While free markets have proven time and again to place the utmost emphasis on the profit motive (because this is what the free market is: an adherence to the notion of supply and demand)—this connection between free markets and “freedom” seems to intrinsically suggest that free markets, and, therefore, neoliberalism, have individual well-being as their focus.

However, individual well-being in the form of a guarantee that individuals will have access to the basic human needs of shelter, food, clothing, good health care, and safety from harm is not always produced by two of the most central components of neoliberalism—privatization and deregulation. In some ways, privatization and deregulation are opposite sides of the same coin. Privatization means the “opening up of the market” and the loosening of the rules (regulations) that are often the purview of the government. But privatization, at its core, is also the introduction of the profit motive into services that, at *their* core, are about protecting the human condition. A reliance on a neoliberal philosophy and free market economy means that we begin to evaluate everything through the lens of profit and cost-benefit analyses. We abdicate the responsibility of the state to private companies and then feign surprise when those companies defer to the profit motive. . . . In addition to the increased preference for free markets and profits, privatization both reduces state responsibility for the care of its citizens and masks the lack of preparation of the government to care for its citizens that quickly develops (Mitchell, 2001). (Bates & Swan, 2010, p. 442)

As you read and evaluate the policies and programs we have chosen, keep this argument in mind. Does it play out with the programs we discuss?

The second argument is that public programs may more likely focus on **suppression** (the social control of deviance), whereas private programs may more likely focus on rehabilitation and prevention. In general, suppression policies are those that focus on the punishment and social control of behavior deemed deviant. **Rehabilitation programs** focus on groups or individuals who are deemed likely deviant and involve attempts to change this assumed deviant behavior. **Prevention programs** may be focused on groups or individuals who are assumed to be more “at risk” for deviant behavior, or they may be focused on decreasing the likelihood of deviance in all groups equally. Many argue that there has been a buildup of suppression policies in the state and federal governments at the expense of rehabilitation and prevention programs. Meranze (2009) argues,

From the recently repealed Rockefeller drug laws through the expansion of the prison systems in Texas and Florida, onto the increasingly punitive response to poverty in the Clinton years, and the continuing disparity in sentencing laws, states and the federal government have chosen the Iron State over the Golden State. And whatever arguments there may be about the relative effectiveness



of imprisonment in affecting crime rates (a topic of great controversy amongst scholars and analysts), one thing seems certain: a policy that exacerbates the brutalization of society is not one that will make us safer. Investing in prisons means investing in institutions that produce neither goods nor new opportunities (aside from the limited jobs available for prison employees and the one-time opportunities in construction); money spent on imprisonment is money taken from rebuilding our worn out infrastructure, our schools, our communities, and our economic future. Insofar as corrections remains at the heart of our social policy—rather than as a supplemental or marginal support as it was throughout most of United States history—it is the Iron State stealing from the future of the Golden State. (para. 6)

Finally, according to Barlow and Decker (2010), “Policy ought to be guided by science rather than by ideology” (p. xi). As we have already briefly discussed, a central part of the scientific method is theory. Therefore, a book whose primary focus is a theoretical examination of deviance and social control should have as one of its central themes an examination of public policy from the viewpoint of each of these theories.

The reaction to deviance has often been spurred by interests well beyond science. Barlow and Decker (2010) point out,

The pen remains firmly in the hands of politicians and legislators, whose allegiance is less to the products of science—for example, how to deal with the AIDS pandemic, warnings about global warming, and the ineffectiveness of the Strategic Defense Initiative, or SDI (otherwise known as “Star Wars”)—than to the whims of voters and the personal agendas of their counselors and financial supporters. (pp. xi–xii)

This means the reactions to deviance have often focused on the stigmatization and criminalization of a variety of behaviors and, in many instances, on the harsh punishment of those behaviors.

We offer a wide variety of public policies, or “ideas in action,” that were designed to address deviant behaviors. It will be your job to evaluate these programs and policies for their intents and subsequent success.

In his 1972 article, “The Poverty of the Sociology of Deviance: Nuts, Sluts, and Perverts,” Alexander Liazos argues that the sociology of deviance focuses too much attention on individual idiosyncrasies and not enough attention on structural dynamics and the deviance of the powerful. One of the areas that we might examine for examples of individual, organizational, and

global deviance is the consumption of energy and the impact on climate change. While in certain segments of the population there is still an argument, there is a growing acceptance of the detrimental impact of industrialization on climate change. The following are several examples of individual and national behavior in response to this growing concern:

- In 1997, 192 out of 195 countries signed the Kyoto Protocol, pledging to lower greenhouse gas emissions. The agreement required that developed countries commit to lowering their emissions while developing countries were asked to *try* to lower emissions. The United States was one of the three countries that did not sign.
- In the summer of 2015, Shell Oil pulled its drilling rig into Puget Sound on the way up to the remote waters of the Chukchi Sea, off the coast of Alaska. Environmental activists known as kayaktivists protested the deep-sea drilling and the use of the Port of Seattle as a way station for drilling materials by surrounding the drilling rig with kayaks, thus blocking the movement of the rig, and later by blocking a Shell icebreaker headed to Alaskan waters by dangling from the St. Johns Bridge over the Willamette River while more kayaktivists surrounded the large vessel below (Brait, 2015).
- On December 12, 2015, in Paris, 195 countries adopted the Paris Agreement. In contrast to the Kyoto Protocol, this pact required that all countries address greenhouse gas emissions in some way. Some of the elements, like target reductions in carbon emissions, are voluntary, whereas other elements, such as verifying emissions, are legally binding (Davenport, 2015).
- During 2016 and the first part of 2017, there was a concerted protest over a proposed pipeline to ship Canadian oil through the United States (via North Dakota). Known as the Dakota Access Pipeline protests (#NODAPL), it was led by the Standing Rock Sioux, who were worried the pipeline would threaten ancestral burial grounds and access to clean water. The protests sparked international support, and in late 2016, the Obama administration denied the pipeline construction rights under the Missouri River. However, in early 2017, four days after being sworn in as president, Trump reversed that

decision, allowing the construction and expediting the environmental review.

- On June 1, 2017, the United States announced its withdrawal from the Paris Agreement, making it the only country to not participate. Given the rules of the agreement, the United States cannot officially pull out of the agreement until November 2020.

Figure 1.2 is a table depicting the projected world energy consumption rates to 2040.

For over the past 200 years, the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal and oil, and deforestation have caused the concentrations of heat-trapping “greenhouse gases” to increase significantly in our atmosphere. These gases prevent heat from escaping to space, somewhat like the glass panels of a greenhouse.

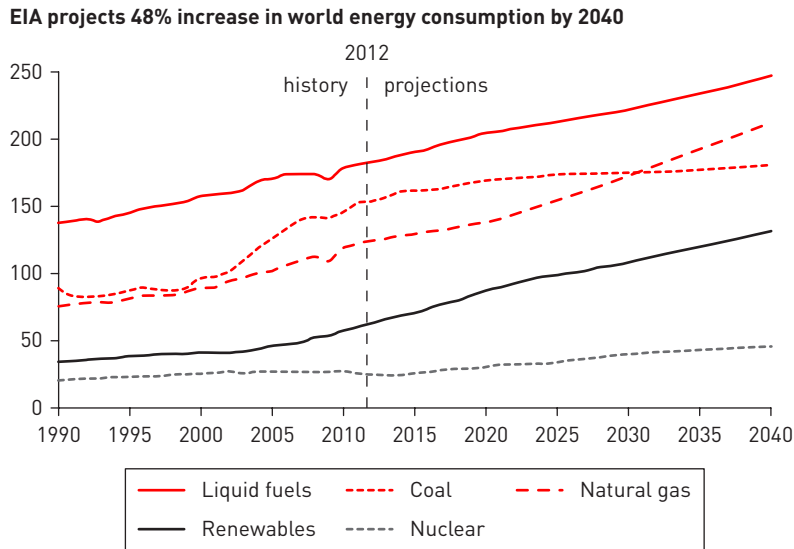
Greenhouse gases are necessary to life as we know it, because they keep the planet’s surface warmer than it otherwise would be. But, as the concentrations of these gases continue to increase in the atmosphere, the earth’s temperature is climbing above past levels.

Figure 1.2 shows that renewable sources of energy will increase at a greater rate than any other source in the next several decades, but fossil fuels will still be the leading energy source even in 2040 if the projection is correct.

Using your sociological imagination, how might you discuss the figures and examples as indicators of deviance? How might the relationship between the U.S. government, lobbyists, and oil companies affect the conversation around climate change? Pretend you are an oil executive. Which might be more deviant in your view: the breakdown of U.S. energy consumption, the research on climate change, or the Paris Agreement? Why? Now pretend that you are an oceanographer studying changes in the Gulf of Mexico, a zoologist studying polar bear migration, an activist hanging off a bridge, or a tribal elder in North Dakota. What might you define as deviant? Why? Would these groups define the same information as deviant? Do you consider either the breakdown of the world consumption of energy or the discussion of climate change to be deviant? Why or why not?

(Continued)

(Continued)

**FIGURE 1.2 ● World Energy Consumption by Source, 1990–2040 (Quadrillion BTU)**

The U.S. Energy Information Administration's recently released *International Energy Outlook 2016* (IEO2016) projects that world energy consumption will grow 48% between 2012 and 2040. Most of this growth will come from countries that are not in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), including countries where demand is driven by strong economic growth, particularly in Asia. Non-OECD Asia, including China and India, accounts for more than half of the world's total increase in energy consumption over the projection period.

Concerns about energy security, effects of fossil fuel emissions on the environment, and sustained, long-term high world oil prices support expanded use of nonfossil renewable energy sources and nuclear power.

Renewables and nuclear power are the world's fastest-growing energy sources over the projection period. Renewable energy increases by an average 2.6% per year through 2040; nuclear power increases by 2.3% per year.

Even though nonfossil fuels are expected to grow faster than fossil fuels (petroleum and other liquid fuels, natural gas, and coal), fossil fuels still account for more than three-quarters of world energy consumption through 2040. Natural gas, which has a lower carbon intensity than coal and petroleum, is the fastest-growing fossil fuel in the outlook, with global natural gas consumption increasing by 1.9% per year. Rising supplies of tight gas, shale gas, and coalbed methane contribute to the increasing consumption of natural gas.

**Source:** U.S. Energy Information Administration, *International Energy Outlook 2016*. Downloaded from <https://www.eia.gov/todayinenergy/detail.php?id=26212> on April 21, 2018.

## Conclusion: Organization of the Book

We start your introduction to deviance by examining the diversity of deviance, how our definitions of deviance change over time, and how we research deviance. Then, we focus on theories of deviance, starting with the traditional, positivist theories of deviance and moving to social constructionist and critical theories of deviance.

We also try to present the theories in a fairly chronological manner. While all these theories are still in use in the study of deviance, some have been around longer than others. Positivist theories have been around longer than social constructionist theories, and within positivist theories, anomie has been around longer than social disorganization. We think this offers you a general road map of how thinking and theories have developed about deviance. In each of these chapters, we present the classical versions of each theory and then the contemporary version, and along the way, we explore several types of deviance that may be explained by each given theory. Then, in our final chapters, we examine our individual and societal responses to deviance and end with an exploration of global deviance, reactions, and social control.

This book has been written with a heavy emphasis on theory. In seven chapters, we explore nine theories. Anomie and strain theory, among the first of the truly sociological explanations of the causes of deviant behavior, seek to understand deviance by focusing on social structures and patterns that emerge as individuals and groups react to conditions they have little control over. Social disorganization theory was developed to explain patterns of deviance and crime across social locations, such as neighborhoods, schools, cities, states, and even countries. In Chapter 6, we focus on differential association and social learning theory. These theories focus on the importance of learning in the development of deviance. Social control theory is our last traditional or normative theory. Control theorists assert that human beings are basically antisocial and assume that deviance is part of the natural order in society; individuals are motivated to deviate. Our first social constructionist theory is labeling theory. Labeling theorists examine the social meaning of deviant labels, how those labels are understood, and how they affect the individuals to whom they are applied. Our next theories are Marxist and conflict theory. These theories focus on the effect of power on the creation and maintenance of laws (and policies) that benefit one group over another. For a book on deviance, then, we might say that Marxist and conflict theorists are interested in why and how some groups are defined as deviant and how their behavior, now defined as deviant, gets translated into illegal behavior through the application of the law. Finally, our last theory chapter focuses on critical theories. Critical theories question the status quo, examining societal responses to deviance often from the perspective of those with less societal power. While there are quite a few critical theories, we have decided to share critical race theory, feminist theory, and peacemaking theory.

We think you will agree, as you read the book, that these theories are an important organizational tool for understanding (1) why deviance occurs, (2) why some behavior may or may not be defined as deviant, and (3) why some individuals are more likely to be defined as deviant. It is important to note that you probably won't have the same level of enthusiasm for every theory offered here. Some of you will really "get" anomie theory, whereas others might be drawn to labeling or feminist theory. Heck, we feel the same way. But what is important to remember is that *all* of these theories have been supported by research, and all help answer certain questions about deviance.

Along the way, we present examples of specific acts that may be considered deviant in both the research and pop culture. You will be introduced, at the beginning of each chapter, to a vignette that discusses a social phenomenon or behavior. As you learn more about theory, you can decide for yourself how and why these acts and actors may be defined as deviant. One of our goals for you is to help you start to think sociologically and theoretically about our social world and the acts we do and do not call deviant.

Choose a behavior, action, or group that you consider to be deviant. Explain why you consider your example to be deviant, and then explain which conception of deviance you are using when you make your determination.

Choose any film or television show. While watching the show, examine its treatment of “deviant” behavior. Is there a character that

others treat as different or deviant? Why do others treat him or her this way? Is there a character that you would describe as deviant? Is he or she treated this way by others in the show? What conception of deviance are you using to determine the deviant behavior on the show?

Why is theory important to our understanding of deviance?

Critical conception 5

Folkways 4

Laws 4

Mores 4

Normative conception 4

Norms 4

Pathologizing 9

Positivist perspective 4

Prevention programs 15

Rehabilitation programs 15

Relativist conception 4

Scientific method 10

Social constructionist

perspective 4

Sociological imagination 7

Suppression 15

Theory 10

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# 2

## The Diversity of Deviance

### The Most Tattooed Man in the World

What would you think if you were walking down the street and passed a man covered entirely in leopard spots? It would probably make you look twice and would qualify as a deviant appearance in most of the world. Would you wonder what he was thinking, how it felt to live within those spots, and why he would choose such a visible form of body modification? Tom Leppard once held the title of the most tattooed man in the world, with 99% of his body covered in tattooed leopard spots. For more than 20 years, Leppard lived as something of a hermit in a shack with no electricity or furniture on the Scottish island of Skye. Despite his solitary lifestyle, Leppard clearly enjoyed the attention of strangers, at least to some degree. He spoke of choosing his leopard appearance and his visible status: “I’ve loved every minute and when you’re covered in leopard tattoos you certainly get noticed—I became a bit of a tourist attraction on Skye” (Irvine, 2008, para. 7).



**PHOTO 2.1** What would you think if you were at the grocery store and ran into Tom Leppard, who has tattooed leopard spots over 99% of his body?

## Introduction

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Now that you've been introduced to the concept of deviance and the importance of understanding deviant behavior from a theoretical perspective, we want to spend some time exploring the various forms that deviance can take. When you think about deviance, what do you typically think about? Take a moment to quickly think of five types of deviant behavior. What immediately comes to mind? You probably came up with examples that reflect criminal behavior, such as drug dealing, assault, robbery, or homicide. These are quite common responses, especially given the way the media cover crime and deviance. Yet deviance is not always criminal in nature. Nor does it always reflect an act or a behavior. There is a much broader array of what constitutes deviance in our society. In short, deviance can take many forms.

In this chapter, we discuss the diversity and relativity of deviance and explore its many manifestations in American society. It is our hope that by introducing you to deviance in its varied forms, you'll gain a deeper understanding of its nature before we move on to learning about how deviance is researched (Chapter 3), explained (Chapters 4–10), and responded to both in American society and in a global context (Chapters 11–12). This chapter on the different types of deviance is a good place to begin an analysis of the sociological field of deviance and the phenomena it investigates.

A chapter on types of deviance is difficult to write because deviance as a field of study is very subjective. Many textbooks offer a survey or overview of different types of deviant behavior, devoting entire chapters to such topics as **physical deviance**, **sexual deviance**, drug use, mental disorders, and corporate deviance. As authors of this text, we do not necessarily agree with those categories or characterizations of different behaviors, attitudes, and physical attributes as deviant. Rather than writing simply from our own points of view and trying to persuade you to adopt our perspectives, however, in this chapter, we offer a glimpse into the field of deviance as it has been defined, studied, and treated throughout the years.

## Deviance and Its Varied Forms

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While deviant behavior and crime certainly overlap, deviance encompasses much more than crime. Sociologists who have studied deviance have researched and written about a range of topics, including the disabled (E. Goffman, 1963), the mentally ill (B. Link, Phelan, Bresnahan, Stueve, & Pescosolido, 1999), the voluntarily childless (K. Park, 2002), the homeless (L. Anderson, Snow, & Cress, 1994), Jewish resisters during the Holocaust (Einwohner, 2003), topless dancers (Thompson, Harred, & Burks, 2003), bisexuals (Weinberg, Williams, & Pryor, 2001), anorexics and bulimics (McLorg & Taub, 1987), self-injurers (P. A. Adler & P. Adler, 2007), and gay male Christian couples (Yip, 1996), to name just a few. This research is in addition to the many studies of criminal deviance, too numerous to list here. You can get a sense of the range of deviant behavior and how it has been studied simply by exploring the contents of the academic journal that is devoted to this very topic: *Deviant Behavior*. In addition to this introductory chapter exploring the many forms of deviance, we include short summaries of recent research on different types of deviant behavior in each chapter of this book.

The diversity of deviance and how drastically norms and attitudes may change over time is attested to in research conducted by J. L. Simmons (1965), who, several decades ago, surveyed 180 individuals, asking them to “list those things or types of persons whom you regard as deviant” (p. 223). More than 250 different acts and persons were listed. The range of responses not only included expected items such as prostitutes, drug addicts, and murderers but also liars, Democrats, reckless drivers, atheists, the self-pitied, career women, divorcées, prudes, pacifists, and even know-it-all professors! The most frequent survey responses are listed in Table 2.1.

Imagine conducting a similar survey today. Which responses from this list might still occur with some frequency? Which might be less frequent? Whatever you imagined, there is little doubt that the list would look different today compared with 1965, reflecting the key point that what constitutes deviance changes depending on the historical context, something we discuss more later on in this chapter. For now, we want you to simply recognize the sheer range of deviance and its diversity.

It would be nearly impossible to describe deviance in *all* its varied forms. Rather than try to provide an exhaustive list of the different realms of deviance, we have chosen to highlight a few to illustrate the broad spectrum of behaviors, attitudes, and characteristics that have been deemed deviant by at least some segments of the larger society.

TABLE 2.1 • Most Frequent Responses to the Question, “What Is Deviant?”	
Response	Percentage
Homosexuals	49
Drug addicts	47
Alcoholics	46
Prostitutes	27
Murderers	22
Criminals	18
Lesbians	13
Juvenile delinquents	13
Beatniks	12
Mentally ill	12
Perverts	12
Communists	10
Atheists	10
Political extremists	10

Source: Simmons (1965).



## RECENT STUDY IN DEVIANCE

### STRICT CONFORMITY AS DEVIANCE

A student film, *55: A Meditation on the Speed Limit*, which can be viewed on YouTube ([www.youtube.com/watch?v=1B-0x0ZmVIU](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1B-0x0ZmVIU)), illustrates a potential problem with strict conformity. In the five-minute video, college students filmed an experiment where they managed to have cars in every lane of the freeway

driving exactly the speed limit. This created a wall of traffic and frustrated drivers in the cars behind them, leading to visible road rage. Do you think strict conformity can also be a form of deviance? Why or why not? Can you think of other circumstances in which strict conformity might be considered deviant?

## Physical Deviance and Appearance: Ideals of Beauty, Self-Harm, and Body Modification

Physical deviance is perhaps the most visible form of deviance, and it can evoke stereotypes, **stigma**, and discrimination. Sociologists have described two types of physical deviance: (1) violations of aesthetic norms (what people should look like, including height, weight, and the absence or presence of disfigurement) and (2) physical incapacity, which would include those with a physical disability (Goode, 2005).

Erving Goffman (1963) opens his book *Stigma* with a letter a 16-year-old girl wrote to Miss Lonelyhearts in 1962. The young girl writes about how she is a good dancer and has a nice shape and pretty clothes, but no boy will take her out. Why? Because she was born without a nose.

I sit and look at myself all day and cry. I have a big hole in the middle of my face that scares people even myself. . . . What did I do to deserve such a terrible bad fate? Even if I did do some bad things, I didn't do any before I was a year old and I was born this way. . . . Ought I commit suicide? (reprinted in E. Goffman, 1963, first page)

As suggested by the letter to Miss Lonelyhearts, physical deviance may be viewed as a marker of other forms of deviance. In other words, passersby may notice people with numerous tattoos, heavily muscled female bodybuilders, or those with visible physical disabilities and may attribute other characteristics to those individuals. You may notice, for example, when talking to a person who is hard of hearing that others in the conversation may slow their speech considerably and use smaller words, as well as speaking louder than usual; this suggests an implicit assumption that the individual has difficulty understanding as well as hearing.

Our ideas of what is acceptable or desirable in terms of physical appearance vary widely, depending on the context. You can get a sense of this by visiting a local museum or simply flipping through an art book showing paintings and photographs of women thought to be very beautiful in their time. From the rounded curves of the

women painted by Peter Paul Rubens in the 1600s (which is where the term *Rubenesque* originated to describe an hourglass figure) to the very thin flappers considered ideal in the 1920s to Marilyn Monroe in the 1950s, Twiggy in the 1960s, Cindy Crawford in the 1980s, Kate Moss in the 1990s, and Kim Kardashian in 2010, our ideals of beauty and the most desired body types clearly change and evolve over time.

Along with professionally styled hair and makeup and the use of meticulous lighting and camera angles, editors can now touch up photographs to remove wrinkles and traces of cellulite and to make beautiful models' already thin limbs and waists trimmer and more defined. This is of concern to sociologists because setting a truly unattainable standard for the ideal physical appearance can lead to deviant behavior, including harmful eating disorders, such as anorexia nervosa or bulimia, or unnecessary plastic surgeries.

Another form of physical deviance is **self-injury**—cutting, burning, branding, scratching, picking at skin or reopening wounds, biting, hair pulling, and bone breaking. Patricia A. Adler and Peter Adler (2007) found that most self-injurers never seek help from mental health professionals and that most of the self-incurred wounds do not need medical attention; thus, the majority of self-injurers remain hidden within society. Why would anyone purposely hurt him- or herself? Adler and Adler explain the reasoning behind this:

Although self-injury can be morbid and often maladaptive, our subjects overwhelmingly agree that it represents an attempt at self-help. They claim that their behaviors provide immediate but short-term release from anxiety, depersonalization, racing thoughts, and rapidly fluctuating emotions. . . . It provides a sense of control, reconfirms the presence of one's body, dulls feelings, and converts unbearable emotional pain into manageable physical pain. (p. 540)

Adler and Adler (2007) suggest that self-injury is currently being “demedicalized”—shifted out of the realm of mental illness and categorized instead as deviance, characterized by the voluntary choice of those involved. We will return to the idea of the medicalization—or demedicalization—of deviance in our discussion of the social control of deviance in Chapter 11.

Adler and Adler's argument that self-injury is now viewed as a form of personal expression was supported in a recent study of nonsuicidal women at a small, liberal arts women's college. Kokaliari and Berzoff (2008) found that 91 of the 166 participants in their survey—more than 50% of respondents—reported purposely injuring themselves, including scratching, cutting, burning, self-hitting, and self-biting. The researchers conducted interviews with 10 of the college women and found that the women had been raised to be self-sufficient, independent, and in control. Emotions were often discouraged in their families. Many of the women described their use of self-injury as a “quick fix” to alleviate difficult or painful emotions and allow them to continue being productive in their daily lives.

While there are certainly other forms of physical deviance, **body modification** is the last example we will discuss. Body modification includes extreme tattooing, like Mr. Leppard from the opening story, who paid to have more than 99% of his body

## DEVIANCE IN POPULAR CULTURE

A wide variety of deviance can be examined by paying careful attention to popular culture. Below are a number of documentary films and television shows that offer concrete examples of specific cultural norms, different types of deviant behavior, and how individuals cope with stigma. What messages about norms and acceptable behavior are portrayed in each of these examples? What is the deviant behavior in each film or episode? What does the reaction to the deviant behavior tell you about the larger culture?

### Films

*Audrie & Daisy* (2016)—An American documentary about different high school girls who were assaulted by boys in their community; when news and images of the assaults were shared online, the girls were cyberbullied and ended up in such emotional and psychological distress that they each attempted suicide.

*Dark Days* (2000)—A documentary featuring people living in the tunnels under the subway system in New York City. Filmed in black-and-white, it shows how one segment of the homeless population built homes and a community under the city.

*Deliver Us From Evil* (2006)—A documentary investigating sexual abuse within the Catholic Church. The focus is on Father Oliver O'Grady, a pedophile who sexually assaulted dozens of children.

*Devil's Playground* (2002)—A documentary following four Amish teenagers through the experience of Rumspringa, during which they are given freedom to experience the outside world before deciding whether or not to commit to a lifetime in the Amish community.

*Enron: The Smartest Guys in the Room* (2005)—A documentary investigating white-collar crime and the greed that toppled what was once the

seventh-largest corporate entity in the United States and left 20,000 employees without jobs.

*Food, Inc.* (2008)—An investigation into the global food production system, showing that a handful of multinational corporations largely control our food supply, with a clear focus on profit rather than health.

### Television

Reality television and the TLC network, particularly, feature a number of programs offering an inside view of people perceived as deviant or different in some way and showing how these people deal with stigma from various sources. Older shows include *Hoarders*; *Little People, Big World*; and *My Five Wives*. Current shows include the following:

*Dr. Pimple Popper*—Dr. Sandra Lee, a top dermatologist, works to remove lumps and bumps that patients find unsightly or embarrassing, effectively “changing lives one pop at a time.”

*The Little Couple*—Follows Bill Klein and Jen Arnold. The TLC website proclaims that they’re “just like your average couple—except for the fact that they’re both under 4 feet tall!”

*My Giant Life*—Follows women who are at least 6 feet, 6 inches tall, generally a foot taller than the average female, and how their height can make ordinary tasks and relationships challenging.

*My 600-lb. Life*—Documents extremely overweight individuals as they face surgeries, addictions, and challenges of personal relationships and everyday life.

In paying attention to popular culture and how different subcultures and characteristics are portrayed, we can easily see that deviance is all around us.

covered in inked leopard spots. Mr. Leppard is not alone in his love of extreme tattoos: The most heavily tattooed people in the world are often referred to by the image their tattoos portray—the list includes “Cat Man,” “Zombie Boy,” “Red Skull,” and “The Lizardman,” to name a few (L. Mitchell, 2015). Beyond extreme tattoos, body modification includes piercings, scarification, and reconstructive and cosmetic surgery. The reasons for body modification vary, but more than 3,500 people have joined the Church of Body Modification and view their physical changes as a way to spiritually strengthen the connection between body, mind, and soul.

Individuals choose to engage in body modification, but the choice may not be respected by the larger society. In September 2010, 14-year-old high school freshman Ariana Iacono was suspended from school for wearing a small stud in her nose and thus violating the school’s dress code, which forbids piercings. The girl and her mother were members of the Church of Body Modification, an organization that only approves new members to join if they can clearly describe their spirituality and how it relates to body modification on the membership application ([www.uscobm.com](http://www.uscobm.com)). Iacono claimed that the nose ring was a religious symbol, but school administrators were unsympathetic, arguing that she had not met the criteria for a religious exemption (Netter, 2010).

## Relationships and Deviance

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Sexually unconventional behavior is another central topic of discussion when it comes to deviance. As a society, we are generally intrigued by others’ intimate relationships and sexual practices. Goode (2005, p. 230) asks, Why are there so many norms about sexual behavior? And why are the punishments for violating sexual norms so severe? Concerning the first question, Goode rightly claims the ways that we violate mainstream society’s norms by engaging in variant sexual acts are almost infinite. The realm of sexual deviance may include exotic dancers, strippers, sex tourism, anonymous sex in public restrooms, bisexuality, online sexual predators, prostitutes, premarital chastity, and many others. As with virtually every kind of deviance, sexual deviance is largely determined by the community, culture, and context.

Even within the United States, there is considerable disagreement about what sexual activities should and should not be allowed. The issue of same-sex marriage is one example where community values were quite recently tested and defined on political ballots across the country. Another example where context matters is prostitution. While considered a crime in most of the country, prostitution is legal in many areas of Nevada. Certain counties in Nevada are allowed to regulate and license brothels, a multimillion-dollar industry based on legalized prostitution.

While societal norms shape our conceptions of appropriate sexual behavior, those boundaries are regularly tested by new fads and businesses and by many different **subcultures** making up their own rules as they go along. The Ashley Madison Agency, for example, bills itself as the world’s premiere discreet dating service; it is marketed to those who are married and wish to have affairs. The agency’s slogan captures the intent succinctly: “Life is short. Have an affair.” The Ashley Madison Agency courts publicity, advertising widely on billboards, in magazines, and on television commercials.

Interested adults can go on the website and purchase the “Affair Guarantee” package; if they do not find a suitable partner within three months, they can get a refund. With more than 7 million anonymous members, it is clear that there is widespread interest in relationships outside of marriage. The need for anonymity and discretion also suggests that there is still enough stigma attached to such relationships that it is preferable to shop for a partner before identifying oneself.

This need for privacy was tested when The Ashley Madison Agency was hacked in August 2015, and an estimated 37 million users’ information was breached. Some subscribers received extortion letters, demanding payment lest the blackmailers share the information with the individual’s family, friends, and social networks (Ridley, 2015). At least one man, a married pastor and seminary professor, killed himself after he was identified as an Ashley Madison client (Segall, 2015). Ashley Madison’s parent company expressed condolences for the pastor’s death while placing the blame squarely on the hackers, releasing a statement that read: “Dr. Gibson’s passing is a stark, heart-wrenching reminder that the criminal hack against our company and our customers has had very real consequences for a great many innocent people” (Segall, 2015). While the lines of exactly which behaviors one might consider deviant may be blurred in this case, it is clear that it ended in tragedy for Dr. Gibson, his family, and his community.

This was not, however, the end of the story for The Ashley Madison Agency. By 2018, Ashley Madison claimed 191,000 daily active users, with more than 1.4 million unique connections made every month (Flynn, 2018). There were more than 5.6 million accounts registered in 2017, and the company’s decision to market to women seems to have paid off as the ratio of male to female active paid users of the site was 1 to 1.13 (Flynn, 2018).

**Polygamy** is another frequently discredited form of relationship. In the United States, monogamy is the legal norm, yet some religions and subcultures still allow and encourage men to take multiple wives. The conflict between a subculture’s values and the larger societal norms came vividly into play in 2008 when the State of Texas conducted a military-style raid on the Yearning for Zion Ranch, a polygamous religious sect of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints.

Warren S. Jeffs, the leader of the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, had been convicted a year earlier on felony charges as an accomplice to rape for his role in coercing the marriage of a 14-year-old girl to her 19-year-old cousin. When the raid on the Yearning for Zion Ranch took place, Jeffs was in the early phases of a 10-year-to-life sentence while awaiting trial on other sex charges in Arizona.

On the basis of an accusation of sexual abuse from an anonymous 16-year-old girl, SWAT teams raided the Yearning for Zion Ranch and forcibly removed more than 400 children from their homes and families. Texas child welfare officials believed that the children were in danger; they suspected young girls were being made into child brides, among other physical and sexual abuse occurring within the polygamous community.

This clash of cultures and values played out dramatically in the media. After being removed from their homes and the insular community in which they were raised, the children of the ranch were suddenly exposed to many strangers, different foods, varied styles of dress, and a new set of norms. When some of their mothers voluntarily left

the ranch to be with the children, they were visibly out of their element in their prairie dresses and old-fashioned hairstyles, forced to move to the suburbs and shop at Walmart rather than tend to their gardens and livestock on the ranch.

In the end, the telephone calls that set the raid in motion may have been a hoax or a setup, but the damage was irreparably done. The children of the Yearning for Zion Ranch were returned to their parents approximately two months later, but the trauma inflicted on the families from such a forced separation could not be taken back. While this was clearly a difficult situation for everyone involved, it presents sociologically interesting questions about what is deviant and who gets to decide this. Those living at the Yearning for Zion Ranch were nearly self-sufficient and seemed to live quietly by their own rules and norms within its bounds. At what point do you think it would be appropriate for the State of Texas to step in and take the children away from their families? Who should ultimately decide? Who are the deviants in this case—the polygamous families or the State of Texas for breaking up those families and traumatizing a whole community? These are interesting and complex questions without easy answers, which is part of what makes deviance such a fascinating—and ever-changing—field of study.



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**PHOTO 2.2**  
Community members from the Yearning for Zion Ranch react after the state of Texas forcibly removed more than 400 children from their homes and families.

## Deviance in Cyberspace: Making Up the Norms as We Go

One way to clearly see that our ideas about deviance and deviant behavior change over time is to consider the creation of whole new categories of deviant behavior. As new technology has developed, brand-new forms of deviance have also taken shape. Cyberdeviance, for example, is a relatively new phenomenon, but it already has many different forms and a potentially huge impact on daily lives: Russia stands accused of tampering with the U.S. presidential election in 2016, phishing scams and hackers threaten to steal consumer information and identities for their own profit, and cyberterrorism is a real threat to businesses and economies around the world.

One dramatic example of violent ideas spreading through social media is the rise of the “Incel Rebellion,” fueled by individuals who define themselves as “involuntarily celibate” (Futrelle, 2018). The “incel” subculture first came to light in 2014 when Elliot Rodger killed six people in what he deemed an act of retribution for all of the women who had rejected him. Others, including Alek Minassian, the suspect in the Toronto van killing in 2018, have followed Rodger’s ideas and built their own subculture promoting hatred and resentment. As Futrelle (2018) describes the incel culture, “Incels direct so much hatred at the outside world—and at women in particular—that it’s easy

to lose sight of the many ways incel culture promotes a deep and hopeless form of self-hatred . . . Incels hate women, yes, but they hate themselves nearly as much, and the incel culture not only encourages both kinds of hatred, but it teaches them there is no way out” (para. 8–9).

On perhaps a smaller but still impactful scale for the individuals involved, we might also investigate the online pedophile subculture, cyberbullying, online misbehavior of college students, sexting, and the illegal downloading of music, movies, and readings as examples of cyberdeviance. If such behavior is prevalent, particularly among younger people and hidden populations, should it still be considered deviant? That question is difficult to answer; norms and laws are being created and modified all the time, even as technology improves and offers new possibilities for deviant behavior. Here and throughout the book, we offer select examples of cyberbehavior; you can consider whether you believe such behavior is deviant or not.

Kristi Blevins and Thomas Holt (2009) conducted research into a subculture that crosses the boundaries between cyberdeviance and criminal deviance when they focused on the online subculture of “johns,” or the male heterosexual clients of sex workers. Blevins and Holt explored web forums in a number of U.S. cities in an attempt to identify the norms and values in the mostly hidden world of the client side of sex work. The authors analyzed web forums where heterosexual johns shared questions and information while seeking to minimize exposure to law enforcement. Blevins and Holt particularly focused on the “argot,” or specialized language, of the virtual subculture of johns, and they used extensive quotes to illustrate their points. Three themes related to argot emerged from their analysis. The first theme was “experience,” which, among other things, categorized the johns across a hierarchy from novices or “newbies” to the more experienced “mongers, trollers, or hobbyists” (note that the derogatory term *john* was not used in the argot of the subculture). The second theme was “commodification”—the notion that the prostitutes themselves and the acts the johns wanted were a commodity that came with a cost. This issue raised a great deal of discussion over how much different prostitutes or different sexual acts were worth or likely to cost. Finally, a related theme of “sexuality,” or the various sexual acts desired or experienced, was examined, along with the unique argot for a host of sexual activities. The language and subject matter are crude but offer a glimpse at the subcultural norms and values of these online communities or subcultures of johns.

Adler and Adler’s (2007) study of self-injury, as described above, has also crossed into cyberspace. They explain,

In the past, self-injurers suffered alone and in silence; today, the Internet has enabled the rise of safe subcultural spaces and helped facilitate the transformation of self-injury from a purely psychological phenomenon into something sociological. . . . In the early 2000s, the Internet offered a way for self-injurers to express hidden sides of themselves they could not share with friends or family members. . . . Isolated and stigmatized as suicidal or mentally ill, they sought to find people who might tell them that they weren’t alone or crazy. (P. A. Adler & P. Adler, 2012, p. 60)