Chapter 7
Deviance
Deviance

What is it?

- A behavior, trait, or belief that departs from a norm and generates a negative reaction in a particular group.

- Defining something as deviant requires us to examine the group norms, and how the group reacts to the behavior.
What is deviant in one culture may not be deviant in another culture!
Theories of deviance

Functionalism

- Deviance serves a *function* in our society.

- According to Emile Durkheim, deviance serves a positive social function by clarifying moral boundaries and promoting social cohesion.
Theories of deviance

**Conflict Theory:**

- Deviance is a result of social *conflict*.
- In order for the powerful to maintain their power, they marginalize and criminalize the people who threaten their power. Inequality is reproduced in the way deviance is defined.
Theories of deviance

Structural Strain Theory:

- Developed by Robert Merton
- States that there are goals in our society that people want to achieve, but they cannot always reach these goals. This creates stress (or strain) because people realize the goals, but do not have the means to achieve these goals.
Theories of deviance

Structural Strain Theory Table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural Goals</th>
<th>Institutionalized Means</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>Conformity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reject</td>
<td>Innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reject</td>
<td>Ritualism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accept</td>
<td>Retreatism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

NEW MEANS: Rebellion

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Figure 7.1
Structural Strain Theory:

Conformists accept the goals of the society and the means of achieving those goals.
Theories of deviance

Structural Strain Theory:

**Innovators** accept the goals of the society, but they look for new, or *innovative* ways of achieving those goals.
Theories of deviance

Structural Strain Theory:

- Ritualists aren’t interested in the goals of the society but they do accept the means of achieving those goals.
Theories of deviance

Structural Strain Theory:

**Retreatists** don’t accept the goals of the society or the means of achieving those goals.
Theories of deviance

Structural Strain Theory:

Rebels don’t accept the goals of the society or the means of achieving those goals, so they create their own goals using new means.
Theories of deviance

Differential Association:

- A symbolic interactionist perspective developed by Edwin Sutherland.

- States that we learn deviance from hanging around deviant peers.
Theories of deviance

**Labeling Theory:**

- A symbolic interactionist perspective developed by Howard Becker.

- States that deviance is caused by external judgments (labels) that change a person’s self-concept, and the way that others respond to that person!
Theories of deviance

Labeling Theory:

- Becker suggests that “Labeling” can lead to a self-fulfilling prophecy—a prediction that causes itself to come true.
Stigma

- Coined by Ervin Goffman

- Describes any physical or social attribute that devalues a person or group’s identity, and which may exclude those who are devalued from normal social interaction.
Deviant Identities

Passing

- Sometimes stigmatized individuals will try to pass as if they are part of the mainstream.
Crime:

- If a behavior is considered deviant, it means that it violates the values and norms of a group, not that it is inherently wrong.

- However, research on deviance also includes crime.
Deviance and Crime

**Crime:**
- The violation of a norm that has been codified into law.
In the United States, serious crimes are punished by imprisonment. In other cultures, types of punishments can include:

- Shunning
- Banishment
- Corporal punishment
Deviance and Crime

- Crime and punishments can change over time.
Deviance and Crime

Control & Punishment:

- Deterrence: prevent crime by threatening harsh penalties
- Retribution: retaliate or revenge for a crime that’s been committed
Deviance and Crime

Control & Punishment:

- Incapacitation: remove criminals from society by imprisoning them

- Rehabilitation: reform criminals so that they may re-enter society
Can there be *positive* deviance?

**Positive Deviance**

An act that is outside of the norm, but may actually be heroic rather than negative.
According to structural strain theory, which group of people would be most likely to renounce the culture’s goals and means entirely and live outside of conventional norms altogether?

a. Deviants
b. Innovators
c. Ritualists
d. Retreatists
e. Rebels
A professional gambler who makes $250,000 per year would likely be considered what, according to structural strain theory?

a. A deviant  
b. An innovator  
c. A ritualist  
d. A retreatist  
e. A rebel
Eddie’s family just moved to a new city. He finds new friends, but they’re always “up to something” according to Eddie’s mom. For instance, all of the kids dyed their hair green, and so did Eddie. Then, all of the kids got their noses pierced, and so did Eddie. Which sociologist would be interested in studying this situation?

a. Robert Merton  
b. Edwin Sutherland  
c. Howard Becker  
d. Erving Goffman  
e. Jack Katz
Body modification used to be used as a way to mark someone in society with shame. Now, however, body modification is now generally considered a voluntary mark of body decoration. What does this tell us about society?

a. Body modification has always been artistic, people just used to interpret it the wrong way.
b. What is considered “deviant” changes over time.
c. Subcultures have always been around; they just don’t have to hide anymore.
d. All of the above are true
e. None of the above are true
According to Merton’s structural strain theory, an individual who deals drugs in order to get rich would be called a(n):

a. conformist
b. innovator
c. ritualist
d. retreatist
A student, continually told that he is stupid and will never amount to anything, who eventually drops out of school, is an example of:

a. tertiary deviation
b. anomie
c. self-fulfilling prophecy
d. sanctions
Additional Art for Chapter 7
Structural Strain
Fat Actress
### Theory in Everyday Life

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Perspective</th>
<th>Approach to Deviance</th>
<th>Case Study: Plagiarism</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>STRUCTURAL-FUNCTIONALISM</strong></td>
<td>Deviance clarifies moral boundaries and promotes social cohesion.</td>
<td>Punishing those who plagiarize separates those who should be in college from those who aren’t responsible enough.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structural Strain Theory</td>
<td>An individual’s position in society determines whether they have the means to achieve goals or must otherwise turn to deviance.</td>
<td>A student’s attitude about plagiarizing depends on whether she has the means to write the paper.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CONFLICT THEORY</strong></td>
<td>Definitions and rules of deviance are applied unequally based on power.</td>
<td>Students with fewer resources are punished more harshly and have fewer options afterward; students with more money or connections can either transfer to another school or rely on parents for help.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SYMBOLOIC INTERACTIONISM</strong></td>
<td>Deviance is learned through interactions with others who break the rules.</td>
<td>Students learn to cheat because they hang out with other students who plagiarize.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Differential Association Theory</td>
<td>Deviance is determined by the audience; applying deviant labels to an individual may lead them to further deviance.</td>
<td>Plagiarism may be labeled deviant in U.S. courses but not in Russia or India; a student who is caught plagiarizing may come to believe she is unable to write without cheating.</td>
</tr>
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<td>Labeling Theory</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Tiny Toones Break-Dancing School
Imitation of Life
United Against Prejudice
Cyberbullying
Why Is There So Much Deviance on Television?
Crime in the United States, 1986–2007 (Figure 7.2, top)
Crime in the United States, 1986–2007 (Figure 7.2, bottom)
Positive Deviance
This concludes the Lecture PowerPoint presentation for Chapter 7

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