# Deviance and Social Control

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# Learning Objectives

After you have read this chapter, you should be able to:

- of deviance, the relativity of deviance, the need of norms, and the types of sanctions; contrast sociobiological, psychological and sociological explanations of deviance. (p. 158)
- 6.2 Contrast three theories of deviance: differential association, control, and labeling. (p. 162)
- be functional for society, how mainstream values can produce deviance (strain theory), and how social class is related to crime (illegitimate opportunities). (p. 168)
- 6.4 Explain how social class is related to the criminal justice system and how the criminal justice system is oppressive. (p. 174)
- 6.5 Be familiar with street crimes and prison, threestrikes laws, the decline in violent crime, recidivism, bias in the death penalty, the medicalization of deviance, and the need for a humane approach. (p. 175)
  - **6.1** Summarize the relativity of deviance, the need of norms, and the types of sanctions; contrast sociobiological, psychological and sociological explanations of deviance.

**deviance** the violation of norms (or rules or expectations)

In just a few moments I was to meet my first Yanomamö, my first primitive man. What would it be like? . . . I looked up [from my canoe] and gasped when I saw a dozen burly, naked, filthy, hideous men staring at us down the shafts of their drawn arrows. Immense wads of green tobacco were stuck between their lower teeth and lips, making them look even more hideous, and strands of dark-green slime dripped or hung from their noses. We arrived at the village while the men were blowing a hallucinogenic drug up their noses. One of the side effects of the drug is a runny nose. The mucus is always saturated with the green powder, and the Indians usually let it run freely from their nostrils. . . . I just sat there holding my notebook, helpless and pathetic. . . .

The whole situation was depressing, and I wondered why I ever decided to switch from civil engineering to anthropology in the first place.... [Soon] I was covered with red pigment, the result of a dozen or so complete examinations.... These examinations capped an otherwise grim day. The Indians would blow their noses into their hands,

"They would "clean" their hands by spitting slimy tobacco juice into them."

flick as much of the mucus off that would separate in a snap of the wrist, wipe the residue into their hair, and then carefully examine my face, arms, legs, hair, and the contents of my pockets. I said [in their language], "Your hands are dirty"; my comments were met by the Indians in the following way: they would "clean" their hands by spitting a quantity of slimy tobacco juice into them, rub them together, and then proceed with the examination.

This is how Napoleon Chagnon describes the culture shock he felt when he met the Yanomamö tribe of the rain forests of Brazil. His following months of fieldwork continued to bring surprise after surprise, and often Chagnon (1977) could hardly believe his eyes—or his nose.

If you were to list the deviant behaviors of the Yanomamö, what would you include? The way they appear naked in public? Use hallucinogenic drugs? Let mucus hang from their noses? Or the way they rub hands filled with mucus, spittle, and tobacco juice over a frightened stranger who doesn't dare to protest? Perhaps. But it isn't this simple. As we shall see, deviance is relative.

### What Is Deviance?

Sociologists use the term **deviance** to refer to any violation of norms, whether the infraction is as minor as driving over the speed limit, as serious as murder, or as humorous as Chagnon's encounter with the Yanomamö. This deceptively simple definition takes us to the heart of the sociological perspective on deviance, which sociologist Howard S. Becker (1966) described this way: *It is not the act itself, but the reactions to the act, that make something deviant.* What Chagnon saw disturbed him, but to the Yanomamö, those same behaviors represented normal, everyday life. What was deviant to Chagnon was *conformist* to the Yanomamö. From their viewpoint, you *should* check out strangers the way they did—and nakedness is good, as are hallucinogenic drugs. And it is natural to let mucus flow.

**The Relativity of Deviance.** Chagnon's abrupt introduction to the Yanomamö allows us to see the *relativity of deviance*, a major point made by symbolic interactionists. Because different groups have different norms, *what is deviant to some is not deviant to others*. This principle applies not just to cultures but also to groups within the same society. Look at the photo on the next page and the one on page 161. This principle also applies to norms of sexuality, the focus of the Cultural Diversity box on page 160.

The relativity of deviance also applies to **crime**, the violation of rules that have been written into law. In the extreme, an act that is applauded by one group may be so despised by another group that it is punishable by death. Making a huge profit on business deals is one example. Americans who do this are admired. Like Donald Trump and Warren Buffet, they may even write books about their exploits. In China, however, until recently, this same act was considered a crime called *profiteering*. Those found guilty were hanged in a public square as a lesson to all.

The Chinese example also lets us see how even within the same society, the meaning of an act can change over time. With China's switch to capitalism, making large profits has changed from a crime punishable by death to an act to be admired.

A Neutral Term. Unlike the general public, sociologists use the term *deviance* nonjudgmentally, to refer to any act to which people respond negatively. When sociologists use this term, it does *not* mean that they are saying that an act is bad, just that people judge it negatively. To sociologists, then, *all* of us are deviants of one sort or another, since we all violate norms from time to time.

**Stigma.** To be considered deviant, a person does not even have to *do* anything. Sociologist Erving Goffman (1963) used the term **stigma** to refer to characteristics that discredit people. These include violations of norms of appearance (a facial birthmark, a huge nose, ears that stick out) and norms of ability (blindness, deafness, mental handicaps). Also included are involuntary memberships, such as being a victim of AIDS or the brother of a rapist. The stigma can become a person's master status, defining him or her as deviant. Recall from Chapter 4 that a master status cuts across all other statuses that a person occupies.



# I took this photo on the outskirts of Hyderabad, India. Is this man deviant? If this were a U.S. street, he would be. But here? No houses have running water in his neighborhood, and the men, women, and children bathe at the neighborhood water pump. This man, then, would not be deviant in this culture. And yet, he is actually mugging for my camera, making the three bystanders laugh. Does this additional factor make this a scene of deviance?

#### How Norms Make Social Life Possible

No human group can exist without norms: *Norms make social life possible by making behavior predictable*. What would life be like if you could not predict what others would do? Imagine for a moment that you have gone to a store to purchase milk:

Suppose the clerk says, "I won't sell you any milk. We're overstocked with soda, and I'm not going to sell anyone milk until our soda inventory is reduced."

You don't like it, but you decide to buy a case of soda. At the checkout, the clerk says, "I hope you don't mind, but there's a \$5 service charge on every fifteenth customer." You, of course, are the fifteenth.

Just as you start to leave, another clerk stops you and says, "We're not working anymore. We decided to have a party." Suddenly a CD player begins to blast, and everyone in the store begins to dance. "Oh, good, you've brought the soda," says a different clerk, who takes your package and passes sodas all around.

Life is not like this, of course. You can depend on grocery clerks to sell you milk. You can also depend on paying the same price as everyone else and not being forced to attend a party in the store. Why can you depend on this? Because we are socialized to follow norms, to play the basic roles that society assigns to us.

Without norms, we would have social chaos. Norms lay out the basic guidelines for how we should play our roles and interact with others. In short, norms bring about **social order**, a group's customary social arrangements. Our lives are based on these arrangements, which is why deviance often is perceived as threatening: *Deviance undermines predictability, the foundation of social life*. Consequently, human groups develop a

**crime** the violation of norms written into law

stigma "blemishes" that discredit a person's claim to a "normal" identity

social order a group's usual and customary social arrangements, on which its members depend and on which they base their lives

### Cultural Diversity around the World

### **Human Sexuality in Cross-Cultural Perspective**

uman sexuality illustrates how a group's definition of an act, not the act itself, determines whether it will be considered deviant. Let's look at some examples reported by anthropologist Robert Edgerton (1976).

Norms of sexual behavior vary so widely around the world that what is considered normal in one society may be considered deviant in another. In Kenya, a group called the Pokot place high emphasis on sexual pleasure, and they expect that both a husband and wife will reach orgasm. If a husband does not satisfy his wife, he is in trouble—especially if she thinks that his failure is because of adultery. If this is so, the wife and her female friends will sneak up on her husband when he is asleep. The women will tie him up,

shout obscenities at him, beat him, and then urinate on him. As a final gesture of their contempt, before releasing him they will slaughter and eat his favorite ox. The husband's hours of painful humiliation are intended to make him more dutiful concerning his wife's conjugal rights.

People can also become deviants for following their group's ideal norms instead of its real norms. As with many groups, the Zapotec Indians of Mexico profess that sexual relations should take place exclusively between husband and wife. However, the Zapotec also have a covert norm, an unspoken understanding, that married people will have affairs but that they will be discreet about them. In one Zapotec community, the only person who did not have an extramarital affair was condemned



by everyone in the village. The reason was not that she did not have an affair but that she told the other wives who their husbands were sleeping with. It is an interesting case; if this virtuous woman had had an affair—and kept her mouth shut—she would not have become a deviant. Clearly, real norms can conflict with ideal normsanother illustration of the gap between ideal and real culture.

#### For Your Consideration

→ How do the behaviors of the Pokot wives and husbands mentioned here look from the perspective of U.S. norms? What are those U.S. norms? What norms did the Zapotec woman break? How does cultural relativity apply to the Pokot and Zapotec? (We discussed this concept in Chapter 2, pages 41-45.)



A Pokot married woman, Kenya

social control a group's formal and informal means of enforcing its norms

negative sanction an expression of disapproval for breaking a norm, ranging from a mild, informal reaction such as a frown to a formal reaction such as a fine or a prison sentence

positive sanction an expression of approval for following a norm, ranging from a smile or a good grade in a class to a material reward such as a prize

system of social control—formal and informal means of enforcing norms. At the center of social control are sanctions.

#### Sanctions

As we discussed in Chapter 2, people do not enforce folkways strictly, but they become upset when people break mores (MO-rays). Expressions of disapproval for deviance, called negative sanctions, range from frowns and gossip for breaking folkways to imprisonment and death for violating mores. In general, the more seriously the group takes a norm, the harsher the penalty for violating it. In contrast, positive sanctions from smiles to formal awards—are used to reward people for conforming to norms. Getting a raise is a positive sanction; being fired is a negative sanction. Getting an A in Intro to Sociology is a positive sanction; getting an F is a negative one.

Most negative sanctions are informal. You might stare if you observe someone dressed in what you consider to be inappropriate clothing, or you might gossip if a married person you know spends the night with someone other than his or her spouse. Whether you consider the breaking of a norm an amusing matter that warrants no sanction or a serious infraction that does, however, depends on your perspective. Let's suppose that

a woman appears at your college graduation in a bikini. You might stare, laugh, and nudge the person next to you, but if this is *your* mother, you are likely to feel that different sanctions are appropriate. Similarly, if it is *your* father who spends the night with an 18-year-old college freshman, you are likely to do more than gossip.

**In Sum:** In sociology, the term deviance refers to all violations of social rules, regardless of their seriousness. The term is neutral, not a judgment about the behavior. Deviance is so relative that what is deviant in one group may be conformist in another. Because of this, we must consider deviance from within a group's own framework: It is their meanings that underlie their behavior.

# Competing Explanations of Deviance: Sociobiology, Psychology, and Sociology

If social life is to exist, norms are essential. So why do people violate them? To better understand the reasons, it is useful to know how sociological explanations differ from biological and psychological ones. Let's compare them.

Biosocial Explanations. Sociobiologists explain deviance by looking for answers within individuals. They assume that genetic predispositions lead people to such behaviors as juvenile delinquency and crime (Lombroso 1911; Wilson and Herrnstein 1985; Barnes and Jacobs 2013). An early explanation was that men with an extra Y chromosome (the "XYY" theory) were more likely to become criminals. Another was that people with "squarish, muscular" bodies were more likely to commit street crime—acts such as mugging, rape, and burglary. These theories were abandoned when research did not support them.

With advances in the study of genetics, biosocial explanations are being proposed to explain differences in crime by sex, race-ethnicity, social class, and age (juvenile delinquency) (Walsh and Beaver 2009; Wiebe 2012). The basic explanation is that over the millennia, people with certain characteristics were more likely to survive than were people with different characteristics. As a result, different groups today inherit different propensities (tendencies) for empathy, self-control, and risk-taking.

A universal finding is that in all known societies, men commit more violent crimes than women do. There are no exceptions. Here is how sociobiologists explain this. It took only a few pelvic thrusts for men to pass on their genes. After that, they could leave if they wanted to. The women, in contrast, had to carry, birth, and nurture the children. Women who were more empathetic (inclined to nurture their children) engaged in less dangerous behavior. These women passed genes for more empathy, greater self-control, and less risk-taking to their female children. As a result, all over the world, men engage in more violent behavior, which comes from their lesser empathy, lower self-control, and greater tendency for taking risks.

But behavior, whether deviant or conforming, does not depend only on genes, add the biosocial theorists (Barnes and Jacobs 2013). Our inherited propensities (the *bio* part) are modified and stimulated by our environment (the *social* part). Biosocial research holds the potential of opening a new understanding of deviance.

**Psychological Explanations.** Psychologists focus on abnormalities *within* the individual. Instead of genes, they examine what are called **personality disorders**. Their supposition is that deviating individuals have deviating personalities (Mayer 2007; Yu et al. 2012) and that subconscious motives drive people to deviance.

Researchers have never found a specific childhood experience to be invariably linked with deviance. For example, some children who had "bad toilet training," "suffocating mothers," or "emotionally aloof fathers" do become embezzling bookkeepers—but others become good accountants. Just as college students and police officers represent a variety of bad—and good—childhood experiences, so do deviants. Similarly, people with "suppressed anger" can become freeway snipers or military heroes—or anything else. In short, there is no inevitable outcome of any childhood experience. Deviance is not associated with any particular personality.



Violating background assumptions is a common form of deviance. Although we have no explicit rule that says, "Do not put snakes through your nose," we all know that it exists (perhaps as a subcategory of "Don't do strange things in public"). Is this act also deviant for this man in Chennai, India?

genetic predisposition inborn tendencies (for example, a tendency to commit deviant acts)

**street crime** crimes such as mugging, rape, and burglary

personality disorders the view that a personality disturbance of some sort causes an individual to violate social norms **Sociological Explanations.** Sociologists, in contrast with both sociobiologists and psychologists, search for factors *outside* the individual. They look for social influences that "recruit" people to break norms. To account for why people commit crimes, for example, sociologists examine such external influences as socialization, membership in subcultures, and social class. *Social class*, a concept that we discuss in depth in Chapter 8, refers to people's relative standing in terms of education, occupation, and especially income and wealth.

To explain deviance, sociologists apply the three sociological perspectives—symbolic interactionism, functionalism, and conflict theory. Let's compare these three explanations.

**6.2** Contrast three theories of deviance: differential association, control, and labeling.

# The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

As we examine symbolic interactionism, it will become more evident why sociologists are not satisfied with explanations that are rooted in sociobiology or psychology. A basic principle of symbolic interactionism is that we are thinking beings who act according to how we interpret situations. Let's consider how our membership in groups influences how we view life and, from there, our behavior.

#### **Differential Association Theory**

**The Theory.** Going directly against the idea that biology or personality is the source of deviance, sociologists stress our experiences in groups (Deflem 2006; Chambliss 1973/2014). Consider an extreme: boys and girls who join street gangs and those who join the Scouts. Obviously, each will learn different attitudes and behaviors concerning deviance and conformity. Edwin Sutherland coined the term **differential association** to indicate this: From the *different* groups we *associate* with, we learn to deviate from or conform to society's norms (Sutherland 1924, 1947; McCarthy 2011).

Sutherland's theory is more complicated than this, but he basically said that the different groups with which we associate (our "different(ial) association") give us messages about conformity and deviance. We may receive mixed messages, but we end up with more of one than the other (an "excess of definitions," as Sutherland put it). The end result is an imbalance—attitudes that tilt us in one direction or another. Consequently, we learn to either conform or to deviate.

Families. You know how important your family has been in forming your views toward life, so it probably is obvious to you that the family makes a big difference in whether people learn deviance or conformity. Researchers have confirmed this informal observation. Of the many studies, this one stands out: Of all prison inmates across the United States, about *half* have a father, mother, brother, sister, or spouse who has served time in prison (*Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics* 2003:Table 6.0011; Glaze and Maruschak 2008:Table 11). In short, families that are involved in crime tend to set their children on a lawbreaking path.

**Friends, Neighborhoods, and Subcultures.** Most people don't know the term *differential association*, but they do know how it works. Most parents want to move out of "bad" neighborhoods because they know that if their kids have delinquent friends, they are likely to become delinquent, too. Sociological research also supports this common observation (Miller 1958; Fabio et al. 2011).

In some neighborhoods, violence is so woven into the subculture that even a wrong glance can mean your death ("Why you lookin' at me?") (Gardiner and Fox 2010). If the neighbors feel that a victim deserved to be killed, they refuse to testify because "he got what was coming to him" (Kubrin and Weitzer 2003). Killing can even be viewed as honorable:

Sociologist Ruth Horowitz (1983, 2005), who did participant observation in a lower-class Chicano neighborhood in Chicago, discovered how the concept of "honor" propels young

differential association Edwin Sutherland's term to indicate that people who associate with some groups learn an "excess of definitions" of deviance, increasing the likelihood that they will become deviant men to deviance. The formula is simple. "A real man has honor. An insult is a threat to one's honor. Therefore, not to stand up to someone is to he less than a real man."

Now suppose you are a young man growing up in this neighborhood. You likely would do a fair amount of fighting, since you would interpret many things as attacks on your honor. You might even carry a knife or a gun, because words and fists wouldn't always be sufficient. Along with members of your group, you would define fighting, knifing, and shooting quite differently from the way most people do.

Sociologist Victor Rios (2011), who did participant observation of young male African American and Latino gang members in Oakland, California, reports that these same ideas of masculinity continue. They also continue to produce high rates of violence, including homicide.

Members of the Mafia also intertwine ideas of manliness with killing. For them, to kill is a measure of their manhood. If some Mafia member were to seduce the capo's wife or girlfriend, for example, the seduction would slash at the capo's manliness and honor. This would require swift retaliation. The offender's body would be found in the trunk of a car somewhere with his penis stuffed in his mouth.

Not all killings, however, receive the same respect, for "the more awesome and potent the victim, the more worthy and meritorious the killer" (Arlacchi 1980).

From this example, you can again see the relativity of deviance. Killing is deviant in mainstream society, but for members of the Mafia, *not* to kill after certain rules are broken would be the deviant act.

**Prison or Freedom?** As was mentioned in Chapter 3, an issue that comes up over and over again in sociology is whether we are prisoners of socialization. Symbolic interactionists stress that we are not mere pawns in the hands of others. We are not destined to think and act as our groups dictate. Rather, we *help to produce our own orientations to life*. By joining one group rather than another (differential association), for example, we help to shape the self. One college student may join a feminist group that is trying to change ideas about fraternities and rape, while another associates with women who shoplift on weekends. Their choices point them in different directions. The one who joins the feminist group may develop an even greater interest in producing social change, while the one who associates with shoplifters may become even more oriented toward criminal activities.

#### **Control Theory**

Do you ever feel the urge to do something that you know you shouldn't, even something that would get you in trouble? Most of us fight temptations to break society's norms. We find that we have to stifle things inside us—urges, hostilities, raunchy desires of various sorts. And most of the time, we manage to keep ourselves out of trouble. The basic question that **control theory** tries to answer is, With the desire to deviate so common, why don't we all just "bust loose"?

The Theory. Sociologist Walter Reckless (1973), who developed control theory, stressed that we have two control systems that work against our motivations to deviate. Our *inner controls* include our internalized morality—conscience, religious principles, ideas of right and wrong. Inner controls also include fears of punishment and the desire to be a "good" person (Hirschi 1969; McShane and Williams 2007). Our *outer controls* consist of people—such as family, friends, and the police—who influence us not to deviate.



This Russian godfather is leaving a Moscow court just after he was acquitted of a double murder. Do you understand how the definitions of deviance that Mafia members use underlie their behavior?

control theory the idea that two control systems—inner controls and outer controls—work against our tendencies to deviate

The social control of deviance takes many forms, including the actions of the police. Shown here is a tugof-war between police and sit-down protestors at a rally in Belfast, Ireland.



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degradation ceremony a term coined by Harold Garfinkel to refer to a ritual whose goal is to remake someone's self by stripping away that individual's self-identity and stamping a new identity in its place

labeling theory the view that the labels people are given affect their own and others' perceptions of them, thus channeling their behavior into either deviance or conformity

techniques of neutralization ways of thinking or rationalizing that help people deflect (or neutralize) society's norms The stronger our bonds are with society, the more effective our inner controls are (Hirschi 1969). These bonds are based on *attachments* (our affection and respect for people who conform to mainstream norms), *commitments* (having a stake in society that you don't want to risk, such as your place in your family, being a college student, or having a job), *involvements* (participating in approved activities), and *beliefs* (convictions that certain actions are wrong).

This theory is really about *self*-control, says sociologist Travis Hirschi. Where do we learn self-control? As you know, this happens during our childhood, especially in the family when our parents supervise us and punish our deviant acts (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Church et al. 2009). Sometimes they use shame to keep us in line. You probably had that finger shaken at you. I certainly recall it aimed at me. Do you think that more use of shaming, discussed in the Down-to-Earth Sociology box on the next page, could help strengthen people's internal controls?

#### **Applying Control Theory.**

Suppose that some friends invite you to go to a nightclub with them. When you get there, you notice that everyone seems unusually happy—almost giddy. They seem to be euphoric in their animated conversations and dancing. Your friends tell you that almost everyone here has taken the drug Ecstasy, and they invite you to take some with them.

What do you do?

Let's not explore the question of whether taking Ecstasy in this setting is a deviant or a conforming act. This is a separate issue. Instead, concentrate on the pushes and pulls you would feel. The pushes toward taking the drug: your friends, the setting, and perhaps your curiosity. Then there are your inner controls—those inner voices of your conscience and your parents, perhaps of your teachers, as well as your fears of arrest and the dangers of illegal drugs. There are also the outer controls—perhaps the uniformed security guard looking in your direction.

So, what *would* you decide? Which is stronger: your inner and outer controls or the pushes and pulls toward taking the drug? It is you who can best weigh these forces, since they differ with each of us. This little example puts you at the center of what control theory is all about.

#### **Labeling Theory**

Suppose for one undesirable moment that people think of you as a "whore," a "pervert," or a "cheat." (Pick one.) What power such a reputation would have—over both how others would see you and how you would see yourself. How about if you became known as "very intelligent," "truthful in everything," or "honest to the core"? (Choose one.) You can see how this type of reputation would give people different expectations of your character and behavior—and how the label would also shape the way you see yourself.

This is what **labeling theory** focuses on: the significance of reputations, how reputations or labels help set us on paths that propel us into deviance or divert us away from it.

**Rejecting Labels: How People Neutralize Deviance.** Not many of us want to be called "whore," "pervert," or "cheat." We resist negative labels, even lesser ones than these that others might try to pin on us. Did you know that some people are so successful at rejecting labels that even though they beat people up and vandalize property, they consider themselves to be conforming members of society? How do they do it?

Sociologists Gresham Sykes and David Matza (1957/1988) studied boys like this. They found that the boys used five **techniques of neutralization** to deflect society's norms.

Denial of responsibility. Some boys said, "I'm not responsible for what happened because . . ." And they were quite creative about the "becauses." Some said that what happened was an "accident." Other boys saw themselves as "victims" of society. What else could you expect? "I'm like a billiard ball shot around the pool table of life."

### Down-to-Earth Sociology

#### **Shaming: Making a Comeback?**

haming can be effective, especially when members of a primary group use it. In some communities, where the individual's reputation was at stake, shaming was the centerpiece of the enforcement of norms. Violators were marked as deviant and held up for all the world to see. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter, town officials forced Hester Prynne to wear a scarlet "A" sewn on her dress. The "A" stood for Adulteress. Wherever she went, Prynne had to wear this badge of shame—every day for the rest of her life.

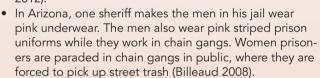
As our society grew large and urban, the sense of community diminished, and shaming lost its effectiveness. Shaming is now starting to make a comeback.

• In Houston, Texas, a couple stole \$265,000 from the crime victims' fund. The couple was sentenced to stand in front of a local mall for ve hours every weekend for six years with a sign reading, "I am a thief." They also

had to post a sign outside their house stating they were convicted thieves ("Woman Ordered to . . . " 2012).

• In Cleveland, Ohio, a judge ordered a woman who drove on a sidewalk in order to pass a school bus to hold a sign at the intersection reading, "Only

an idiot would drive on the sidewalk to avoid a school bus" ("Woman Ordered to . . . '



- Online shaming sites have also appeared. Captured on cell phone cameras are bad drivers, older men who leer at teenaged girls, and people who don't pick up their dog's poop (Saranow 2007).
- In Spain, where one's reputation with neighbors still matters, debt collectors, dressed in tuxedos and top hats, walk slowly to the front door. The sight shames debtors into paying (Catan 2008).

Sociologist Harold Garfinkel (1956) gave the name degradation ceremony to an extreme form of shaming. The individual is called to account before the group, witnesses denounce him or her, the offender is pronounced guilty, and steps are taken to strip the individual of his or her identity

as a group member. In some courts martial, officers who are found quilty stand at attention before their peers while others rip the insignia of rank from their uniforms. This procedure screams that the individual is no longer a member of the group. Although Hester Prynne was not banished from the group physically, she was banished morally; her degradation ceremony proclaimed her a moral outcast from the community. The scarlet "A" marked her as not "one of them."

Although we don't use scarlet "A"'s today, informal degradation ceremonies still occur. Consider what happened to this New York City police officer (Chivers 2001):

Joseph Gray had been a police officer in New York City for fifteen years. As with some of his

> fellow officers, alcohol and sex helped relieve the pressures

> > of police work. After spending one afternoon drinking in a topless bar, blearyeyed, Gray plowed his car into a vehicle carrying a pregnant woman, her son, and her sister. All three died. Gray was accused of manslaughter and drunk

New York television stations kept hammering this story to as Gray left police headquarters after resigning, an angry

The New York Times and the public. Three weeks later, This 19-year-old in Wisconsin was given a reduced jail sentence for holding this sign in front of his former place of work. crowd surrounded him. Gray

> hung his head in public disgrace as Victor Manuel Herrera, whose wife and son were killed in the crash, followed him, shouting, "You're a murderer!" (Gray was later convicted of drunk driving and manslaughter.)

#### For Your Consideration

- → How do you think law enforcement officials might use shaming to reduce law breaking?
- → How do you think school officials could use shaming?
- → Suppose that you were caught shoplifting at a store near where you live. Would you rather spend a week in jail with no one but your family knowing it or a week walking in front of the store you stole from wearing a placard that proclaims in bold red capital letters: "I AM A THIEF!" and in smaller letters: "I am sorry for stealing from this store and making you pay higher prices"? Why?

Denial of injury. A favorite explanation was "What I did wasn't wrong because no one got hurt." The boys would call vandalism "mischief," gang fights a "private quarrel," and stealing cars "borrowing." They might acknowledge that what they did was illegal but claim that they were "just having a little fun."

Denial of a victim. Some boys thought of themselves as avengers. Trashing a teacher's car was revenge for an unfair grade, while shoplifting was a way to get even with "crooked" store owners. In short, even if the boys did accept responsibility and admit that someone had gotten hurt, they protected their self-concept by claiming that the people "deserved what they got."

Condemnation of the condemners. Another technique the boys used was to deny that others had the right to judge them. They accused people who pointed their fingers at them of being "hypocrites": The police were "on the take," teachers had "pets," and parents cheated on their taxes. In short, they said, "Who are they to accuse me of something?"

Appeal to higher loyalties. A final technique the boys used to justify their activities was to consider loyalty to the gang more important than the norms of society. They might say, "I had to help my friends. That's why I got in the fight." Not incidentally, the boy may have shot two members of a rival group, as well as a bystander!

**In Sum:** These techniques of neutralization have implications far beyond this group of boys, since it is not only delinquents who try to neutralize the norms of mainstream society. Look again at these techniques—don't they sound familiar? (1) "I couldn't help myself"; (2) "Who really got hurt?"; (3) "Don't you think she deserved that, after what she did?"; (4) "Who are you to talk?"; and (5) "I had to help my friends—wouldn't you have done the same thing?" All of us attempt to neutralize the moral demands of society; neutralization helps us to sleep at night.

Embracing Labels: The Example of Outlaw Bikers. Although most of us resist attempts to label us as deviant, some people revel in a deviant identity. Some teenagers, for example, make certain by their clothing, music, hairstyles, and body art that no one misses their rejection of adult norms. Their status among fellow members of a subculture—within which they are almost obsessive conformists—is vastly more important than any status outside it.

gang. Sociologist Mark Watson (1980/2006) did participant observation with outlaw bikers. He rebuilt Harleys with them, hung around their bars and homes, and went on "runs" (trips) with them. He concluded that outlaw bikers see the world

One of the best examples of a group that embraces deviance is a motorcycle

this conventional world in contempt, gang members pride themselves on breaking its norms and getting in trouble, laughing at death, and treating women as lesser beings whose primary value is to provide them with services—especially sex. They take pleasure in shocking people by their appearance and behavior. They pride themselves in looking "dirty, mean, and generally undesirable." Outlaw bikers also regard themselves as losers, a view that becomes woven into their unusual embrace of deviance.

as "hostile, weak, and effeminate." Holding

Labels Can Be Powerful. To label a teenager a delinquent can trigger a process that leads to greater involvement in deviance (Lopes et al. 2012). Because of this, judges sometimes use diversion. To avoid the label of delinquent, they

While most people resist labels of deviance, some embrace them. In what different ways do these photosfiillustrate the embracement of deviance?



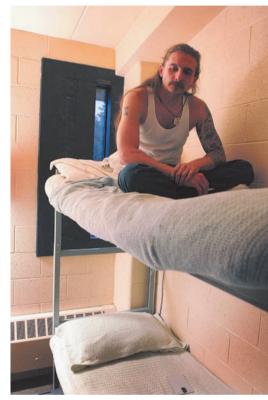
*divert* youthful offenders away from the criminal justice system. Instead of sending them to reform school or jail, they assign them to social workers and counselors. In the following Thinking Critically section, let's consider how powerful labeling can be.

#### THINKING CRITICALLY

#### The Saints and the Roughnecks: Labeling in Everyday Life

s you recall from Chapter 4, the Saints and the Roughnecks were high school boys. Both groups were "constantly occupied with truancy, drinking, wild parties, petty theft, and vandalism." Yet their teachers looked on the Saints as "headed for success" and the Roughnecks as "headed for failure." By the time they finished high school, not one Saint had been arrested, while the Roughnecks had been in constant trouble with the police.

Why did the members of the community perceive these boys so differently? Chambliss (1973/2014) concluded that social class created this split vision. As symbolic interactionists emphasize, social class is like a lens that focuses our perceptions. The Saints came from respectable, middle-class families, while the Roughnecks were from less respectable, working-class families. These backgrounds led teachers and the authorities to expect good behavior from the Saints but trouble from the Roughnecks. And, like the rest of us, teachers and police saw what they expected to see.



Stereotypes, both positive and negative, help to form the perception and reaction of authorities. What stereotypes come to mind when you look at this photo?

The boys' social class also affected their visibility. The Saints had automobiles, and they did their drinking and vandalism out of town. Without cars, the Roughnecks hung around their own street corners. There, their drinking and boisterous behavior drew the attention of police, confirming the negative impressions that the community already had of them.

The boys' social class also equipped them with distinct *styles of interaction*. When police or teachers questioned them, the Saints were apologetic. Their show of respect for authority elicited a positive reaction from teachers and police, allowing the Saints to escape school and legal problems. The Roughnecks, said Chambliss, were "almost the polar opposite." When questioned, they were hostile. Even when these boys tried to assume a respectful attitude, everyone could see through it. As a result, the teachers and police let the Saints off with warnings, but they came down hard on the Roughnecks.

Certainly, what happens in life is not determined by labels alone, but the Saints and the Roughnecks did live up to the labels that the community gave them. As you may recall, all but one of the Saints went on to college. One earned a Ph.D., one became a lawyer, one a doctor, and the others business managers. In contrast, only two of the Roughnecks went to college. They earned athletic scholarships and became coaches. The other Roughnecks did not fare so well. Two of them dropped out of high school, later became involved in separate killings, and were sent to prison. Of the final two, one became a local bookie, and no one knows the whereabouts of the other.

#### For Your Consideration

- → Did you see anything like this in your high school? If so, how did it work?
- → Besides labels, what else could have been involved in the life outcomes of these boys?
- → In what areas of life do you see the power of labels?

How do labels work? How labels work is complicated because it involves the selfconcept and reactions that vary from one individual to another. To analyze this process would require a book. Here, let's just note that unlike its meaning in sociology, in everyday life the term *deviant* is emotionally charged with a negative judgment. This label closes doors of opportunity. It can lock people out of conforming groups and push them into almost exclusive contact with people who have been similarly labeled.

In Sum: Symbolic interactionists examine how people's definitions of the situation underlie their deviating from or conforming to social norms. They focus on group membership (differential association), how people balance pressures to conform and to deviate (control theory), and the significance of people's reputations (labeling theory).

6.3 Explain how deviance can be functional for society, how mainstream values can produce deviance (strain theory), and how social class is related to crime (illegitimate opportunities).

# The Functionalist Perspective

When we think of deviance, its dysfunctions are likely to come to mind. Functionalists point out that deviance also has functions.

#### Can Deviance Really Be Functional for Society?

Most of us are upset by deviance, especially crime, and assume that society would be better off without it. In contrast to this common assumption, the classic functionalist theorist Emile Durkheim (1893/1933, 1895/1964) came to a surprising conclusion. Deviance, he said—including crime—is functional for society. Deviance contributes to the social order in these three ways:

- 1. Deviance clarifies moral boundaries and affirms norms. By moral boundaries, Durkheim referred to a group's ideas about how people should think and act. Deviant acts challenge those boundaries. To call a member into account is to say, in effect, "You broke an important rule, and we cannot tolerate that." Punishing deviants affirms the group's norms and clarifies what it means to be a member of the group.
- 2. Deviance encourages social unity. To affirm the group's moral boundaries by punishing deviants creates a "we" feeling among the group's members. By saying, "You can't get away with that," the group affirms the rightness of its ways.
- 3. Deviance promotes social change. Not everyone agrees on what to do with people who push beyond the accepted ways of doing things. Some group members may even approve of the rule-breaking behavior. Boundary violations that gain enough

support become new, acceptable behaviors. Deviance, then, may force a group to rethink and redefine its moral boundaries, helping groups—and whole societies—to adapt to changing circumstances.

In the Down-to-Earth Sociology box on the next page, you can see these three functions of deviance, as well as the central point of symbolic interactionism, that *deviance* involves a clash of competing definitions.

#### Strain Theory: How Mainstream Values Produce Deviance

Functionalists argue that crime is a *natural* outcome of the conditions that people experience, not some alien element in our midst (Agnew 2012). Even mainstream values can generate crime. Consider what

Every society has boundaries that divide what is considered socially acceptable from what is not acceptable. This woman in Great Britain is challenging those boundaries.



### Down-to-Earth Sociology

# Running Naked with Pumpkins on Their Heads or Naked on a Bike: Deviance or Freedom of Self-Expression?

hey can hardly sleep the night before Halloween, thinking about how they will carve their pumpkins and all the fun to come. When night falls, they put sneakers on their feet, the pumpkins on their heads, and run into the street. There is nothing between the pumpkins and the sneakers—except whatever nature endowed them with (Simon 2009).

They join one another for their annual chilly, late-night run. Do the gawkers bother them? Maybe a little, but it's all in good fun. The crowd is waiting, hooting and hollering and waving them on.

"Not so fast," reply the police in Boulder, Colorado, where the naked pumpkin run is held on the last day of each October. "You are breaking the law."

If the naked pumpkin run isn't enough, the Boulder police also have to deal with the annual World Naked Bike Ride, which has become so popular that it is held in 70 cities around the world (Vigil 2009). The naked bike rides

seem to be a celebration of youth and freedom—and as older people join in, just freedom and maybe the joy of being alive.

Though the Boulder police have prided themselves on tolerance, they don't see the run and ride in quite the same way as the participants do. "The law," they say, "clearly states that no one can show genitalia in public."

"Are women's breasts genitalia?" they've been asked. "No, those are okay," replied the police. "But watch the

rest of it—uh, that is, don't watch . . . uh, that is, don't show anything else. You know what we mean. If you do, we will arrest you, and you'll end up on the sexual offenders list."

"Bad sports," reply the naked pumpkin runners and the naked bike riders, pouting just a bit. "You're trying to ruin our fun."

> "We didn't make the laws," the police reply, not pleased about the many who have become angry at their lack of understanding. "We just enforce them"

Trying to recover their tolerance, the police add, "Just wear a thong or a jock strap, and run and ride to your hearts' content."

The American Civil Liberties Union has stepped into the fray, too, saying that nakedness is a form of free speech. Participants should be able to express their, well, whatever it is they are expressing.



World Naked Bike Ride, New Orleans, Louisiana.

#### For Your Consideration

→ Here is a basic principle of deviance: As people break rules, sometimes deliberately to test the boundaries of acceptable behavior, the group enforces its norms, or bends them to accommodate the deviants. How do the naked pumpkin runners and the naked bike riders illustrate this principle? What do you think the result will be in Boulder, Colorado?

sociologists Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin (1960) identified as the crucial problem of the industrialized world: the need to locate and train talented people—whether they were born into wealth or into poverty—so that they can take over the key technical jobs of society. When children are born, no one knows which ones will have the ability to become dentists, nuclear physicists, or engineers. To get the most talented people to compete with one another, society tries to motivate *everyone* to strive for success.

We are quite successful in getting almost everyone to want **cultural goals**, success of some sort, such as wealth or prestige. But we are far from successful when it comes to providing everyone access to the **institutionalized means**, the legitimate ways to success. People who find their way to success blocked can come to see the institutionalized goals (such as working hard or pursuing higher education) as not applying to themselves. Sociologist Robert Merton (1956, 1949/1968) referred to this situation as *anomie*, a sense of normlessness. These people experience frustration, or what Merton called *strain*.

Table 6.1 on the next page presents a summary of Merton's **strain theory**. The most common reaction to means and goals is *conformity*. Most people find at least adequate access to the institutionalized means and use them to try to reach cultural goals. They try to get a quality education, good jobs, and so on. If well-paid jobs are unavailable,

**cultural goals** the objectives held out as legitimate or desirable for the members of a society to achieve

institutionalized means approved ways of reaching cultural goals

strain theory Robert Merton's term for the strain engendered when a society socializes large numbers of people to desire a cultural goal (such as success), but withholds from some the approved means of reaching that goal; one adaptation to the strain is crime, the choice of an innovative means (one outside the approved system) to attain the cultural goal

#### TABLE 6.1 How People Match Their Goals to Their Means Do They Feel the Strain Mode of Cultural Institutionalized That Leads to Anomie? Adaptation Goals Means Conformity Accept Accept **Deviant Paths:** Yes I. Innovation Accept Reject 2. Ritualism Reject Accept 3. Retreatism Reject Reject 4. Rebellion Reject/Replace Reject/Replace

Source: Based on Merton 1968.

they take less desirable jobs. If they can't get into Harvard or Stanford, they go to a state university. Others take night classes and go to vocational schools. In short, most people take the socially acceptable path.

**Four Deviant Paths.** The remaining four responses, which are deviant, represent reactions to the gap that people find between the goals they want and their access to the institutionalized means to reach them. Let's look at each. *Innovators* are people who accept the goals of society but use illegitimate means to try to reach them. Embezzlers, for instance, accept the goal of achieving wealth, but they reject the legitimate avenues for doing so. Other examples are drug dealers, robbers, and con artists.

The second deviant path is taken by people who start out wanting the cultural goals but become discouraged and give up on achieving them. Yet they still cling to conventional rules of conduct. Merton called this response *ritualism*. Although ritualists have given up on getting ahead at work, they survive by rigorously following the rules of their job. Teachers whose idealism is shattered (who are said to suffer from "burnout"), for example, remain in the classroom, where they teach without enthusiasm. Their response is considered deviant because they cling to the job even though they have abandoned the goal, which may have been to stimulate young minds or to make the world a better place.

People who choose the third deviant path, *retreatism*, reject both the cultural goals and the institutionalized means of achieving them. Some people stop pursuing success and retreat into alcohol or drugs. Although their path to withdrawal is considerably different, women who enter a convent or men a monastery are also retreatists.

The final deviant response is *rebellion*. Convinced that their society is corrupt, rebels, like retreatists, reject both society's goals and its institutionalized means. Unlike retreatists, however, rebels seek to give society new goals, as well as new means for reaching them. Revolutionaries are the most committed type of rebels.

Merton either did not recognize *anarchy* as applying to his model or did not think of it. In either case, the angry *anarchist* who wants to destroy society is not shown on Table 6.1. Like the retreatist and the rebel, this frustrated individual has given up on both society's goals and means. Unlike the rebel, however, he or she does not want to replace the goals and means with anything. And unlike the retreatist, he or she does not want to withdraw and let others live in peace. Instead, he or she wants to annihilate everyone.

**In Sum:** Strain theory underscores the sociological principle that deviants are the product of society. Mainstream social values (cultural goals and institutionalized means to reach those goals) can produce strain (frustration, dissatisfaction). People who feel this strain are more likely than others to take deviant (nonconforming) paths.

# Illegitimate Opportunity Structures: Social Class and Crime

Over and over in this text, you have seen the impact of social class on people's lives—and you will continue to do so in coming chapters. Let's look at how the social classes produce different types of crime.

**Street Crime.** In applying strain theory, functionalists point out that industrialized societies have no trouble socializing the poor into wanting to own things. Like others, the poor are bombarded with messages urging them to buy everything from iPhones and iPads to designer jeans and new cars. Television and movies are filled with images of middle-class people enjoying luxurious lives. The poor get the message—full-fledged Americans can afford society's many goods and services.

Yet, the most common route to success, education, presents a bewildering world. Run by the middle class, schools are at odds with the background of the poor. In the schools, what the poor take for granted is unacceptable, questioned, and mocked. Their speech, for example, is built around nonstandard grammar. It is also often laced with what the middle class considers obscenities. Their ideas of punctuality and their poor preparation in reading and paper-and-pencil skills also make it difficult to fit in. Facing such barriers, the poor are more likely than their more privileged counterparts to drop out of school. Educational failure, of course, slams the door on many legitimate avenues to success.

Not all doors slam shut, though. Woven into life in urban slums is what Cloward and Ohlin (1960) called an **illegitimate opportunity structure**. An alternative door to success opens: "hustles" such as robbery, burglary, drug dealing, prostitution, pimping, and gambling (Anderson 1978, 1990/2006; Duck and Rawls 2011). Pimps and drug dealers, for example, present an image of a glamorous life—people who are in control and have plenty of "easy money." For many of the poor, the "hustler" becomes a role model.

It should be easy to see, then, why street crime attracts disproportionate numbers of the poor. In the Down-to-Earth Sociology box on the next page, let's look at how gangs are part of the illegitimate opportunity structure that beckons disadvantaged youth.

White-Collar Crime. As with the poor, the *forms* of crime of the more privileged classes also match their life situation. And how different their illegitimate opportunities are! Physicians don't hold up cabbies, but they do cheat Medicare. Investment managers like Bernie Madoff run fraudulent schemes that cheat people around the world. Mugging, pimping, and burgling are not part of this more privileged world, but evading

income tax, bribing public officials, and embezzling are. Sociologist Edwin Sutherland (1949) coined the term **white-collar crime** to refer to crimes that people of respectable and high social status commit in the course of their occupations.

A special form of white-collar crime is **corporate crime**, executives breaking the law in order to benefit their corporation. For example, to increase corporate profits, Sears executives defrauded \$100 million from victims so poor that they had filed for bankruptcy. To avoid a criminal trial, Sears pleaded guilty. This frightened the parent companies of Macy's and Bloomingdales, which were doing similar things, and they settled out of court (McCormick 1999). Not one of the corporate thieves at Sears, Macy's, or Bloomingdales spent even a day in jail.

Citigroup, another household name, is notorious for breaking the law. In 2004, this firm was fined \$70 million for stealing from the poor (O'Brien 2004). But, like a career criminal, this company continued its law-breaking ways. In 2008, Citigroup was caught red-handed "sweeping" money from its customers' credit cards, even from the cards of people who had died. For this, Citigroup paid another \$18 million in penalties (Read 2008). Then, in 2010, Citigroup paid a \$75 million penalty

illegitimate opportunity structure opportunities for crimes that are woven into the texture of life

white-collar crime Edwin Sutherland's term for crimes committed by people of respectable and high social status in the course of their occupations; for example, bribery of public officials, securities violations, embezzlement, false advertising, and price fixing

corporate crime crimes committed by executives in order to benefit their corporation

Explore on MySocLab
Activity: How are Crime and
Punishment Distributed across the
United States?

White collar crime usually involves only the loss of property, but not always. To save money, Ford executives kept faulty Firestone tires on their Explorers. The cost? The lives of over 200 people. Shown here in Houston is one of their victims. She survived a needless accident, but was left a quariplegic. Not one Ford executive spent even a single day in jail.



### Down-to-Earth Sociology

#### Islands in the Street: Urban Gangs in the United States

angs, part of urban life around the world, can be ruthless.

Just to gain respect, gang members can harm others
(Densley 2012). Let's look at why people join gangs.
For more than ten years, sociologist Martín Sánchez-

Jankowski (1991) did participant observation of thirty-seven African American, Chicano, Dominican, Irish, Jamaican,

and Puerto Rican gangs in Boston, Los Angeles, and New York City. The gangs earned money through gambling, arson, mugging, armed robbery, and selling moonshine, drugs, guns, stolen car parts, and protection. Sánchez-Jankowski ate, slept, and fought with the gangs, but by mutual agreement he did not participate in drug dealing or other illegal activities. He was seriously injured twice during the study.

Contrary to stereotypes, Sánchez-Jankowski did not find that the motive for joining was to escape a broken

home (there were as many members from intact families as from broken homes) or to seek a substitute family (the same number of boys said they were close to their families as those who said they were not). Rather, the boys joined to gain access to money, to have recreation (including sex and drugs), to maintain anonymity in committing crimes, to get protection, and to help the community. This last reason may seem

surprising, but in some neighborhoods, gangs protect residents from outsiders and spearhead political change (Kontos et al. 2003). The boys also saw the gang as an alternative to the dead-end—and deadening—jobs held by their parents.

Neighborhood residents are ambivalent about gangs. On the one hand, they fear the violence. On the other

> hand, gang members are the children of people who live in the neighborhood, many of the adults once belonged to gangs, and some gangs provide better protection than the police.

> Particular gangs will come and go, but gangs will likely always remain part of the city. As functionalists point out, gangs fulfill needs of poor youth who live on the margins of society.



#### For Your Consideration

- → What functions do gangs fulfill (what needs do they meet)?
- → Suppose that you have been hired as an urban planner for the city of Los Angeles. How could you arrange to meet the needs that gangs fulfill in ways that minimize violence and encourage youth to follow mainstream norms?

for misleading investors. In 2012, Citigroup paid a fine of over a *half billion dollars* for deceiving investors in subprime mortgages (Kapner 2012). Another big-name criminal is Bank of America, which paid *one billion dollars* for its lawbreaking (Raice and Timiraos 2012). Despite their many crimes, *not one of these corporate crime chiefs spent a day in jail.* 

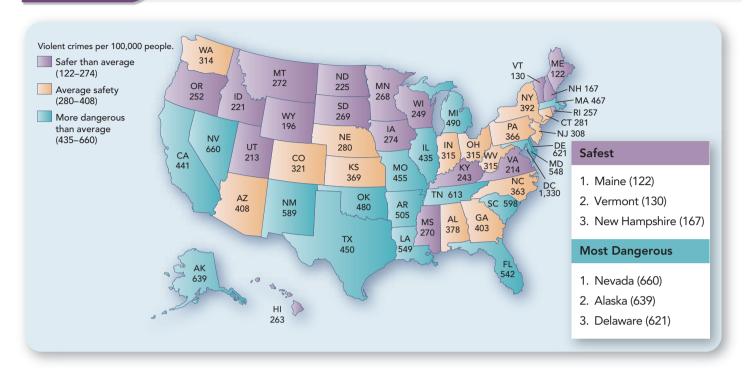
If these same executives had used guns to rob people on the street, you know what would have happened. White-collar crime, in contrast, is seldom taken seriously. This is unfortunately so even when those crimes result in death. In the 1930s, workers were hired to blast a tunnel through a mountain in West Virginia. The company knew the silica dust would kill the miners, and in just three months about 600 died (Dunaway 2008). No owner went to jail. In the 1980s, Firestone executives recalled faulty tires in Saudi Arabia and Venezuela but allowed them to remain on U.S. vehicles. When their tires blew out, about 200 Americans died (White et al. 2001). Not a single Firestone executive went to jail.

Consider this: Under federal law, causing the death of a worker by *willfully* violating safety rules is a misdemeanor punishable by up to six months in prison. Yet to harass a wild burro on federal lands is punishable by a year in prison (Barstow and Bergman 2003).

At \$500 billion a year (Reiman and Leighton 2010), "crime in the suites" costs more than "crime in the streets." This refers only to dollar costs. The physical and emotional costs are another matter. For example, no one has figured out a way to compare the suffering of rape victims with the pain of elderly couples who lost their life savings to Madoff's white-collar fraud.

#### FIGURE 6.1

#### How Safe Is Your State? Violent Crime in the United States



Note: Violent crimes are murder, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. I estimated Minnesota's rate, based on earlier data and reduced rates since then. The chance of becoming a victim of a violent crime is more than five times higher in Nevada, the most dangerous state, than in Maine, the safest state. Washington, D.C., not a state, is in a class by itself. Its rate of 1,330 is *eleven* times higher than Maine's rate.

Source: By the author. Based on Statistical Abstract of the United States 2013: Table 314.

Fear, however, centers on street crime, especially the violent stranger who can change your life forever. As the Social Map above shows, the chances of such an encounter depend on where you live. You can see that entire regions are safer—or more dangerous—than others. In general, the northern states are safer, and the southern states more dangerous.

Gender and Crime. Gender is not just something we do. Gender is a feature of society that surrounds us from birth. Gender pushes us, as male or female, into different corners in life, offering and nurturing some behaviors while it withdraws others. The opportunity to commit crime is one of the many consequences of how society sets up a *gender order*. The social changes that opened business and the professions to women also brought new opportunities for women to commit crime. From stolen property to illegal weapons, Table 6.2 shows how women have taken advantage of this new opportunity.

**In Sum:** Functionalists stress that just as the social classes differ in opportunities for income and education, so they differ in opportunities for crime. As a result, street crime is greater among the lower social classes and white-collar crime greater among the higher social classes. The growing crime rates of women illustrate how changing gender roles have given women more access to what sociologists call "illegitimate opportunities."

#### TABLE 6.2

#### Women and Crime:

#### What a Change

Of all those arrested, what percentage are women?				
Crime	1992	2010	Change	
Drunken driving	13.8%	23.7%	+72%	
Burglary	9.2%	15.3%	+66%	
Stolen property	12.5%	19.8%	+62%	
Car theft	10.8%	17.5%	+58%	
Aggravated assault	14.8%	21.5%	+45%	
Robbery	8.5%	12.2%	+44%	
Larceny/theft	32.1%	43.9%	+37%	
Arson	13.4%	17.0%	+27%	
Illegal drugs	16.4%	19.1%	+16%	
Forgery and counter-	34.7%	37.7%	+9%	
feiting				
Illegal weapons	7.5%	8.4%	+1%	
Fraud	42.1%	41.4%	-3%	

Source: By the author. Based on *Statistical Abstract of the United States* 2013:Table 338 and earlier years.

**6.4** Explain how social class is related to the criminal justice system and how the criminal justice system is oppressive.



In early capitalism, children worked alongside adults. At that time, just as today, most street criminals came from the *marginal working class*, as did the children shown in this 1911 yarn mill in Yazoo City, Mississippi.

## The Conflict Perspective

### Class, Crime, and the Criminal Justice System

TRW sold transistors to the federal government to use in its military satellites. The transistors failed, and the government had to shut down its satellite program. TRW said that the failure was a surprise, that it was due to some unknown defect. U.S. officials then paid TRW millions of dollars to investigate the failure.

Then a whistle blower appeared, informing the government that TRW knew the transistors would fail in satellites even before it sold them. The government sued Northrop Grumman Corporation, which had bought TRW, and the corporation was found guilty (Drew 2009).

What was the punishment for a crime this serious? The failure of these satellites compromised the defense of the United States. When the executives of TRW were put on trial, how long were their prison sentences? Actually, these criminals weren't even put on trial, and not one spent even a night in jail. Grumman was fined \$325 million. Then—and this is hard to believe—on the same day, the government settled a lawsuit that Grumman had brought against it for \$325 million. Certainly a rare coincidence.



Contrast this backdoor deal between influential people with what happens to the poor who break the law. A poor person who is caught stealing even a \$1,000 car can end up serving years in prison. How can a legal system that proudly boasts "justice for all" be so inconsistent? According to conflict theory, this question is central to the analysis of crime and the **criminal justice system**—the police, courts, and prisons that deal with people who are accused of having committed crimes. Let's see what conflict theorists have to say about this.

criminal justice system the system of police, courts, and prisons set up to deal with people who are accused of having committed a crime

# The Criminal Justice System as an Instrument of Oppression

Conflict theorists regard power and social inequality as the main characteristics of society. The criminal justice system, they stress, is a tool designed by the powerful to maintain their power and privilege. For the poor, in contrast, the law is an instrument of oppression (Spitzer 1975; Chambliss 2000, 1973/2014). The idea that the law operates impartially to bring justice, they say, is a cultural myth, promoted by the capitalist class to secure the cooperation of the poor in their own oppression.

The working class and those below them pose a special threat to the power elite. Receiving the least of society's material rewards, they hold the potential to rebel and overthrow the current social order (see Figure 8.5 on page 231). To prevent this, the law comes down hard on the poor and the underclass. They are the least rooted in society. They have only low-paying, part-time, or seasonal work—if they have jobs at all. Because their street crimes threaten the social order that keeps the elite in power, they are punished severely. From this class come *most* of the prison inmates in the United States.

The criminal justice system, then, does not focus on the executives of corporations and the harm they do through manufacturing unsafe products, creating pollution, and manipulating prices. Yet the violations of the capitalist class cannot be ignored totally; if they become too extreme, they might outrage the working class, encouraging them to rise up and revolt. To prevent this, a flagrant violation by a member of the capitalist class is occasionally prosecuted. The publicity given to

the case provides evidence of the "fairness" of the criminal justice system, which helps to stabilize the social system—and keeps the powerful in their positions of privilege.

The powerful are usually able to bypass the courts altogether, appearing instead before an agency that has no power to imprison (such as the Federal Trade Commission). These agencies are directed by people from wealthy backgrounds who sympathize with the intricacies of the corporate world. It is they who oversee most cases of price manipulation, insider stock trading, violations of fiduciary duty, and so on. Is it surprising, then, that the typical sanction for corporate crime is a token fine?

**In Sum:** Conflict theorists stress that the power elite developed the legal system, which is used to stabilize the social order. They use it to control the poor, who pose a threat to the powerful. The poor hold the potential of rebelling as a group, which could dislodge the power elite from their place of privilege. To prevent this, the criminal justice system makes certain that heavy penalties come down on the poor.

The cartoonist's hyperbole makes an excellent commentary on the social class disparity of our criminal justice system. Not only are the crimes of the wealthy not as likely to come to the attention of authorities as are the crimes of the poor, but when they do, the wealthy can afford legal expertise that the poor cannot.



"If you want justice, it's two hundred dollars an hour. Obstruction of justice runs a bit more."

Read on MySocLab

Document: The Rich Get Richer
and the Poor Get Prison

### Reactions to Deviance

Whether it involves cheating on a sociology quiz or holding up a liquor store, any violation of norms invites reaction. Before we examine reactions in the United States, let's take a little side trip to England. I think you'll enjoy this little excursion in the Cultural Diversity box on the next page.

**6.5** Be familiar with street crimes and prison, three-strikes laws, the decline in violent crime, recidivism, bias in the death penalty, the medicalization of deviance, and the need for a humane approach.

### Cultural Diversity around the World

#### "Dogging" in England

In some places in England, people like "dogging." This is their term for having sex in public so others can watch. The sex often is between strangers who have arranged to meet through the Internet.

"Dogging" is a strange term, and no one knows its origin. The term might come from voyeurs who doggedly follow people who are having sex. Or it might refer to the similarity to female dogs in heat that have sex with any dog around. Or it might even come from the statement "I'm just going to walk the dog," when they are really going out to do something else entirely.

Regardless of the term's origin, frolicking in the fields is popular. Internet sites even lay out basic rules, such as "Only join in if you are asked."

The Internet sites also rate England's dogging locations. The field in Puttenham, a village an hour's drive from London, is ranked Number 2 in England. The field is mostly used by homosexuals during the day, with heterosexuals taking over at night.

One motorist who stopped his car to use the bushes for a bathroom break was startled when a group of eager men surrounded him. He said that he took the quickest pee in his life.

Dogging isn't legal, but the police mostly ignore it. The police have even warned the public, but in a discreet English way. They have designated the field in Puttenham as a "public sex environment."

Some village residents are upset at the litter left behind, from condoms to tea cups. Others are upset that the dogging field is just 400 yards from the village nursery school. A woman who went to the police to complain showed them a pink vibrator she had found in the field. "What should we do with it?" asked the officer. Seeing that she was going to get nowhere, she said they could just put it in Lost and Found.



After listening to citizen complaints, the County Council Cabinet wanted to know if anyone had practical solutions. One suggested that the police patrol the site with dogs. Another said they should fill the field with bad-tempered bulls.

Distressed at such inconsiderate reactions, one empathetic cabinet member said, "If you close this site, they wouldn't have anywhere else to go. There might be an increase in suicides."

The citizens and Council members reached a compromise: They would put up a sign. "Don't have sex here" seemed too direct for the English, so the sign, much more polite and circuitous, says, "Do not engage in activities of an unacceptable nature."

Source: Based on Lyall 2010.

#### For Your Consideration

What do you think the police would do if there were a "dogging" field in your town? What do you think the public's reaction would be? Why do you think the police are so "heavy handed" in the United States while those in England take such a lighter approach?

#### **Street Crime and Prisons**

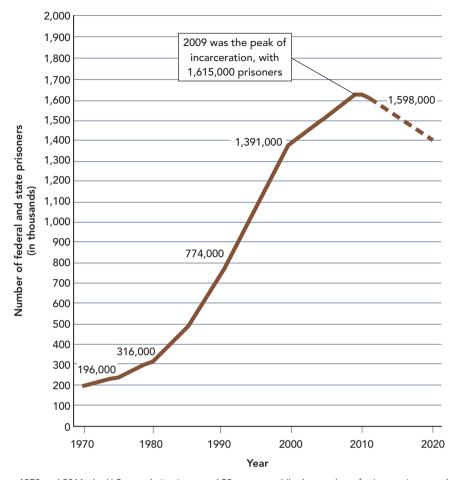
Let's turn back to the United States. Figure 6.2 on the next page shows the surge in the U.S. prison population. Arrests and convictions have increased at such a torrid pace that the states and federal government haven't been able to build prisons fast enough to hold all of their incoming prisoners. To keep up, they hired corporations to operate private prisons for them. About 130,000 prisoners are held in these "for-profit" prisons (Source-book of Criminal Justice Statistics 2010:Table 6.32.2009). Actually, the United States has even more prisoners than shown in Figure 6.2, since this total does not include jail inmates. If we add them, the total comes to about 2.3 million people—about one out of every 135 citizens. Not only does the United States have more prisoners than any other country in the world but it also has a larger percentage of its population in prison (Massoglia et al. 2013). Another way of putting this is that the United States has only 5 percent of the world's population but about 25 percent of the world's prisoners (Brayne 2013).

As you can see from Figure 6.2, the number of prisoners peaked in 2009. In 2010, there was a slight decrease of prisoners (1,000), with a larger drop of 16,000 in 2011.

#### FIGURE 6.2

#### How Much Is Enough? The Explosion in the

#### Number of U.S. Prisoners



Between 1970 and 2011, the U.S. population increased 52 percent, while the number of prisoners increased 715 percent, fourteen times faster than population growth. If the number of prisoners had grown at the same rate as the U.S. population, we would have about 298,000 prisoners, about one-fifth of today's total. Or if the U.S. population had increased at the same rate as that of U.S. prisoners, the U.S. population would be 1,465,000,000—more than the population of China.

Sources: By the author. Based on Carson and Sabol 2012; Statistical Abstract of the United States 1995: Table 349; 2013: Tables 2, 6, 354. The broken line is the author's estimate.

With the state and federal governments running out of money, severe complaints about taxes, and an easing of the enforcement of marijuana laws, I predict that this decrease is not temporary. The broken line on this figure gives a rough indication of what the future might look like.

Who has been put in our prisons? Let's compare the prisoners with the U.S. population. As you look at Table 6.3 on the next page, several things may strike you. Close to half (46 percent) of all prisoners are younger than 35, and almost all prisoners are men. Then there is this remarkable statistic: There are more African American prisoners than there are white prisoners. On any given day, *one out of every nine* African American men ages 20 to 34 is in jail or prison. For Latinos, the rate is one of twenty-six; for whites, one of one hundred (Warren et al. 2008).

Finally, note how marriage and education—two of the major ways that society "anchors" people into mainstream behavior—keep people out of prison. About



#### **TABLE 6.3**

#### Comparing Prison Inmates with the

#### **U.S. Population**

Characteristics	Percentage of Prisoners with These Characteristics	Percentage of U.S. Population Age 18 and Over with These Characteristics <sup>a</sup>
Age		
18–24	13.3%	13.1%
25–34	32.7%	17.8%
35–44	26.6%	17.1%
45–54	19.2%	18.8%
55 and older	8.1%	33.4%
Race-Ethnicity		
African American	37.9%	12.4%
White	32.2%	66.7%
Latino	22.3%	14.6%
Other <sup>b</sup>	7.8%	6.3%
Sex		
Male	93.2%	49.2%
Female	6.8%	50.8%
<b>Marital Status</b>		
Never married	48.3%	27.4%
Married	19.3%	55.9%
Divorced and Widowed	32.4%	16.8%
Education		
Less than high school	39.7%	12.4%
High school graduate	49.0%	30.7%
Some college <sup>c</sup>	9.0%	26.5%
College graduate	2.4%	30.4%

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup>Because this column refers to Americans age 18 and over, the percentages will not agree with other totals in this book. For education, the percentages are based on Americans age 25 and over.

Source: By the author. Based on Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 2004:Table 6.45.2003; 2011:Table 6. 33.2010; Statistical Abstract of the United States 2013:Tables 11, 56, 236.

half of prisoners have never married. And look at the power of education, a major component of social class. As I mentioned earlier, social class funnels some people into the criminal justice system and diverts others away from it. You can see how people who drop out of high school have a high chance of ending up in prison—and how unlikely it is for a college graduate to have this unwelcome destination in life.

For about the past twenty years or so, the United States has followed a "get tough" policy. One of the most significant changes was "three-strikes-and-you're-out" laws, which have had unintended consequences, as you will see in the following Thinking Critically section.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>b</sup>Sourcebook places Asian Americans and Native Americans in this category.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>c</sup>Includes associate's degrees.

#### THINKING CRITICALLY

# "Three Strikes and You're Out!" Unintended Consequences of Well-Intended Laws

s the violent crime rate soared in the 1980s, Americans grew fearful. They demanded that their lawmakers do something. Politicians heard the message, and many responded by passing "three-strikes" laws in their states. Anyone who is convicted of a third felony receives an automatic mandatory sentence. Although some mandatory sentences carry life imprisonment, judges are not allowed to consider the circumstances. While few of us would feel sympathy if a man convicted of a third brutal rape or a third murder were sent to prison for life, in their haste to appease the public the politicians did not limit the three-strike laws to *violent* crimes.

And they did not consider that some minor crimes are considered felonies. As the functionalists would say, this has led to unintended consequences. Here are some actual cases:

- In Los Angeles, a 64-year-old man who stole a package of cigarettes was sentenced to 25-years-to-life in prison (Phillips 2013).
- In Sacramento, a man passed himself off as Tiger Woods and went on a \$17,000 shopping spree. He was sentenced to *200 years* in prison (Reuters 2001).
- Also in California, Michael James passed a bad check for \$94. He was sentenced to 25 years to life (Jones 2008).
- A Florida man put a lockbox with cocaine in his girlfriend's attic. He was sentenced to 15 years in prison, but his girlfriend, a 27-year-old mother of three, was sent to prison for life. The judge said the sentence was unjust, but he had no choice (Tierney 2012).
- In New York City, a man who was about to be sentenced for selling crack said to the judge, "I'm only 19. This is terrible." He then hurled himself out of a courtroom window, plunging to his death sixteen stories below (Cloud 1998).

#### For Your Consideration

Apply the symbolic interactionist, functionalist, and conflict perspectives to the three-strikes laws. For symbolic interactionism, what do these laws represent to the public? How does your answer differ depending on what part of "the public" you are referring to? For functionalism, who benefits from these laws? What are some of the functions of three-strikes laws? Their dysfunctions? For the conflict perspective, which groups are in conflict? Who has the power to enforce their will on others?

→ With the economic crisis, some states have concluded that they can't afford to lock so many people up. California is releasing some prisoners whose third crime was not violent (Phillips 2013). What is your opinion of this?

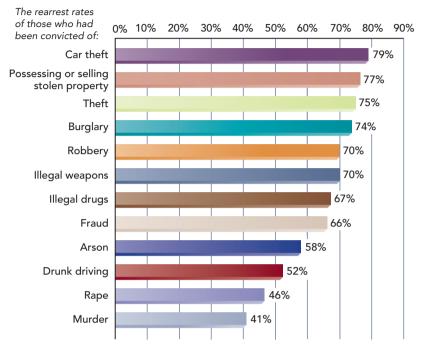
#### The Decline in Violent Crime

As you have seen, judges have put more and more people in prison, and legislators have passed the three-strikes laws. As these changes took place, the crime rate dropped sharply. Sociologists conclude that getting tough on criminals reduced crime, but it is only one of the reasons that violent crime dropped (Baumer and Wolff 2013). Other reasons include higher employment, less illegal drug use, a lower birth rate, and even abortion. There are even those who say that the best explanation is the elimination of lead in gasoline (Drum 2013). We can rule out employment: When the unemployment rate shot up with the economic crisis, the lower crime rates continued (Oppel 2011). This matter is not yet settled. We'll see what answers future research brings.

#### FIGURE 6.3

#### Recidivism of U.S. Prisoners

Of 272,000 prisoners released from U.S. prisons, what percentage were rearrested within three years?



Note: The individuals were not necessarily rearrested for the same crime for which they had originally been imprisoned.

Source: By the author. Based on Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 2003:Table 6.50, the latest data available.





recidivism rate the percentage of released convicts who are rearrested

capital punishment the death penalty

#### **Recidivism**

If a goal of prisons is to teach their clients to stay away from crime, they are colossal failures. We can measure their failure by the **recidivism rate**—the percentage of former prisoners who are rearrested. For people sent to prison for crimes of violence, within just three years of their release, two out of three (62 percent) are rearrested, and half (52 percent) are back in prison (*Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics* 2003:Table 6.52). Since this research, the rates have dropped slightly ("State of Recidivism" 2011). Looking at Figure 6.3, which gives a breakdown of three-year recidivism by type of crime, it is safe to conclude that prisons do not teach people that crime doesn't pay.

#### The Death Penalty and Bias

As you know, capital punishment, the death penalty, is the most extreme measure the state takes. As you also know, the death penalty arouses both impassioned opposition and support. Advances in DNA testing have given opponents of the death penalty a strong argument: Innocent people have been sent to death row, and some have been executed. Others are just as passionate about retaining the death penalty. They point to such crimes as those of the serial killers discussed in the Down-to-Earth Sociology box on page 182.

**Geography.** Apart from anyone's personal position on the death penalty, it certainly is clear that

the death penalty is not administered evenly. Consider geography: You can see from the Social Map on the next page that where people commit murder greatly affects their chances of being put to death.

**Social Class.** The death penalty also shows social class bias. As you know from news reports, it is rare for a rich person to be sentenced to death. Although the government does not collect statistics on social class and the death penalty, this common observation is borne out by the education of the prisoners on death row. *Half* of the prisoners on death row (50 percent) have not finished high school (*Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics* 2009:Table 6.81).

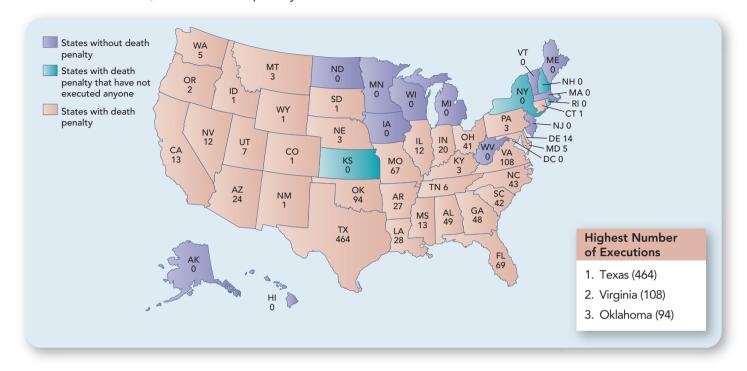
**Gender.** There is also a gender bias in the death penalty—so strong that it is almost unheard of for a woman to be sentenced to death, much less executed. Although women commit 9.6 percent of the murders, they make up only 1.8 percent of death row inmates (*Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics* 2009:Table 6.81). Even on death row, the gender bias continues: Of those condemned to death, the state is more likely to execute a man than a woman. As Figure 6.5 on the next page shows, only 0.9 percent of the 5,093 prisoners executed in the United States since 1930 have been women. This gender bias could reflect the women's previous offenses and the relative brutality of their murders, but we need research to determine if this is so.

Race–Ethnicity. At one point, racial–ethnic bias was so flagrant that it put a stop to the death penalty. Donald Partington (1965), a lawyer in Virginia, was shocked by the bias he saw in the courtroom, and he decided to document it. He found that 2,798 men had been convicted for rape and attempted rape in Virginia between 1908 and 1963—56 percent whites and 44 percent blacks. For rape, 41 men had been executed.

#### FIGURE 6.4

#### **Executions in the United States**

Executions since 1977, when the death penalty was reinstated.



Source: By the author. Based on Statistical Abstract of the United States 2013: Table 360.

For attempted rape, 13 had been executed. All those executed were black. Not one of the whites was executed.

After listening to evidence like this, in 1972 the Supreme Court ruled in *Furman v. Georgia* that the death penalty, as applied, was unconstitutional. The execution of prisoners stopped—but not for long. The states wrote new laws, and in 1977, they again began to execute prisoners. On Table 6.4, you can see the race–ethnicity of the prisoners who are now on death row. Since the death penalty was reinstated, 65 percent of those put to death have been white and 35 percent African American (*Statistical Abstract* 2013:Table 359). (Latinos are evidently counted as whites in this statistic.)

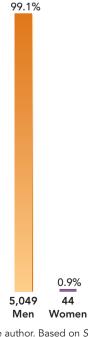
# TABLE 6.4 The Race–Ethnicity of the 3,170 Prisoners on Death Row

	Percentage Percentage		
	on Death Row	in U.S. Population <sup>a</sup>	
Whites	43%	66.7%	
African Americans	42%	12.4%	
Latinos	12%	14.6%	
Asian Americans	1%	5.1%	
Native Americans	1%	1.1%	

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>a</sup>Ages 18 and over.

Sources: By the author. Based on Sourcebook of Criminal Justice Statistics 2013: Table 6.80.2012; Statistical Abstract of the United Sates 2013: Table 11.

# FIGURE 6.5 Who Gets Executed? Gender Bias in Capital Punishment



Source: By the author. Based on Statistical Abstract of the United States 2013:Table 359.

#### Deviance and Social Control

serial murder the killing of several victims in three or more separate events

In North Carolina, African Americans who kill whites are three times as likely to be sentenced to death as are whites who kill African Americans (Radelet and Pierce 2011). We don't have this statistic for other states.

The official responses to deviance that we have discussed assume that the state (government) is functioning. What happens when the state breaks down? Let's consider this in the Thinking Critically section on the next page.

### Down-to-Earth Sociology

#### The Killer Next Door: Serial Murderers in Our Midst

ere is my experience with serial killers. As I was watching television one night, I was stunned by the images coming from Houston, Texas. Television cameras showed the police digging up dozens of bodies from under a boat storage shed. Fascinated, I waited impatiently for spring break. A few days later, I drove from Illinois, where I was teaching, to Houston, where 33-year-old Dean Corll had befriended Elmer Wayne Henley and David Brooks, two teenagers from broken homes. Together, they had killed twenty-seven boys. Elmer and David would pick up young hitchhikers and deliver them to Corll to rape and kill.

Sometimes they even brought him their own high school classmates.

I talked to one of Elmer's neighbors, as he was painting his front porch. His 15-year-old son had gone to get a haircut one Saturday morning. That was the last time he saw his son alive. The police refused to investigate. They insisted that his son had run away. On a city map, I plotted the locations of the homes of the local murder victims. Many clustered around the homes of the teenage killers.

I decided to spend my coming sabbatical writing a novel on this case. To get into the minds of the killers, I knew that I would have to "become" them day after day. Corll kept a piece of plywood in his apartment. In each of its corners, he had cut a hole. He and the boys would spread-eagle their handcuffed victims on this board and torture them for hours. Sometimes, they would even pause to order pizza. I began to

wonder about immersing myself in torture and human degradation. Would I be the same person afterward? I decided not to write the book.

The three killers led double lives so successfully that their friends and family were unaware of their criminal activities. Henley's mother swore to me that her son couldn't possibly be guilty—he was a good boy. Some of Elmer's high school friends told me that that his being involved in homosexual rape and murder was ridiculous—he was interested only in girls. I was interviewing them in Henley's bedroom, and for

proof, they pointed to a pair of girls' panties that were draped across a lamp shade.

**Serial murder** is killing three or more victims in separate events. The murders may occur over several days, weeks, or years. The elapsed time between murders distinguishes serial killers from *mass murderers*, those who do their killing all at once. Here are some infamous examples:

- During the 1960s and 1970s, Ted Bundy raped and killed dozens of women in four states.
- Between 1974 and 1991, Dennis Rader killed ten peopla in Wishita Kanasa Badan badan itan

ple in Wichita, Kansas. Rader had written to the newspapers, proudly calling himself the BTK (Bind, Torture, and Kill) strangler.

- In the late 1980s and early 1990s, Aileen Wuornos hitchhiked along Florida's freeways. She killed seven men after having had sex with them.
- The serial killer with the most victims appears to be Harold Shipman, a physician in Manchester, England. From 1977 to 2000, during house calls, Shipman gave lethal injections to 230 to 275 of his elderly female patients.
- In 2009, Anthony Sowell of Cleveland, Ohio, was discovered living with eleven decomposing bodies of women he had raped and strangled (UPI 2009).

Is serial murder more common now than it used to be? Not likely. In the past, police departments had little communication with one another, and seldom did anyone connect killings in different jurisdictions. Today's more efficient communications, investigative techniques, and DNA matching make

it easier for the police to know when a serial killer is operating in an area. Part of the perception that there are more serial killers today is also due to ignorance of our history: In our frontier past, for example, serial killers went from ranch to ranch.



Ted Bundy is shown here on trial in Miami for killing two women, both college students. You can get a glimpse of his charm and wit and how, like most serial killers, he blended in with society. Bundy was executed for his murders.

#### **For Your Consideration**

→ Do you think that serial killers should be given the death penalty? Why or why not? How does your social location influence your opinion?

#### THINKING CRITICALLY

#### Vigilantes: When the State Breaks Down

any of us chafe under the coercive nature of the state: the IRS, Homeland Security, the many police agencies from the CIA, FBI, and NSA to who knows how many other groups summarized with three capital letters. Little cameras litter society, seemingly watching our every move.

We certainly have given up a lot of freedoms—and we are likely to give up many more in the name of security. We can chafe and complain all we want. This is the wave of the future, seemingly an unstoppable one.

There is another side to what is happening. As many fear, the many guns that the many uniformed and plainclothes men and women are carrying can be trained on us. But for now, they bring security. They indicate that the state is operating; perhaps overreacting, but operating effectively nonetheless.

What happens when the state fails, when men and women in an official capacity carry guns and shields but can't be effective in protecting citizens from the bad guys who are carrying guns—and using them to enforce their way?



A boy walks past a member of the unofficial "community police" in Cruz Grande, Guerrero, Mexico.

One reaction is vigilantism, people taking the law into their own hands. This is what happened in what we call the Wild West. Citizens armed themselves, formed posses, chased the bad guys, and dispensed quick justice at the end of a rope. You've seen the movies.

And this is what is happening in Mexico right now.

The state in Mexico has failed at all levels, from the local to the national. Citizens live in fear since the bad guys, in this case the drug lords, have gained much control. They have infiltrated the police, from the local cops to the *federales*. Even the head of Mexico's national drug enforcement agency was on the drug lords' payroll. Army generals, supposedly part of the war against drugs, take money to protect drug deals. They even use army vehicles to transport drugs. The corruption goes beyond belief, reaching even into the presidential palace. (But why the rush to judgment? Perhaps the president's brother was given a billion-dollar tip by some taxi driver who said he was a good passenger.)

The arrests are countless, the executions (shooting deaths by the police and the army) in the thousands. The death toll continues to mount, now over 60,000 police, drug dealers, and regular citizens.

The result, other than the many deaths? Failure to secure the people's safety.

The Mexican people, then, have begun to take the law into their own hands. In the state of Guerrero, country folk have grabbed their old hunting rifles, put on masks, raided the homes of drug dealers, and put them in makeshift jails. They have set up blockades on the roads leading to their little towns. They won't let drug dealers, or any strangers, in. They won't even let the federal police, the state police, or the army in. These "enforcers of the law" are too corrupt, they say. We can trust only the neighbors we grew up with.

The reaction of the local police, the honest ones? "Maybe they can do something about the problem. We can't. If we try, the drug dealers will go to our homes and kill our families. They don't know who these masked men are."

The reaction of the state governor? "Good job."

The reaction of the regular citizens? Relief. And pleasure at being able to go out at night again and drink a little tequila and dance in the town square.

The masked men are going to hold their own trials. They haven't strung anyone up yet. But what will they do? If they send the men they convict to prison, well, the prison guards and administrators are corrupt, too. In one prison (in Gomez Palacio), the administrators even loaned the prisoners their guns and cars, and let the prisoners out to kill members of a rival drug gang. Afterward, the men dutifully returned to the prison, turned in the cars and guns, and went back to their cells. Incredible, I know. But true. Based on Sheridan 1998; Malkin 2010; Archibold 2012; Casey 2013.

#### **For Your Consideration**

- → We don't yet know the consequences of this incipient vigilante movement in Mexico. But what else can the citizens do?
- → How much freedom are you willing to give up to have security? Is there a balance somewhere?

#### The Trouble with Official Statistics

We must be cautious when it comes to official crime statistics. According to official statistics, working-class boys are more delinquent than middle-class boys. Yet, as we have seen, who actually gets arrested for what is influenced by social class, a point that has farreaching implications. As symbolic interactionists point out, the police follow a symbolic system as they enforce the law. Ideas of "typical criminals" and "typical good citizens" permeate their work. The more a suspect matches their stereotypes of a lawbreaker (which they call "criminal profiles"), the more likely that person is to be arrested. **Police discretion**, the decision whether to arrest someone or even to ignore a matter, is a routine part of police work. Official crime statistics reflect these and many other biases.

Crime statistics do not have an objective, independent existence. They are not like oranges that you pick out in a grocery store. Rather, they are a human creation. If the police enforce laws strictly, crime statistics go up. Loosen up the enforcement, and crime statistics go down. New York City provides a remarkable example. To keep their crime statistics low, the police keep some crime victims waiting in the police station for hours. The victims give up and leave, and the crime doesn't enter any official record. In other cases, the police simply listen to crime victims but make no written record of the crime (Baker and Goldstein 2011). It is likely that such underreporting occurs in most places.

As a personal example, someone took my mailbox (rural, located on the street). When I called and reported the theft, a police officer arrived promptly. He was incredible friendly. He looked around and spotted the mailbox in the ditch. He retrieved it and then personally restored it to its post. He even used his tools to screw it back on. He then said, "I'm chalking this one up to the wind." I didn't object. I knew what he was doing. No crime to report, no paperwork for him, and the area has one less incident to go into the crime statistics.

#### The Medicalization of Deviance: Mental Illness

When the woman drove her car into the river, drowning her two small children strapped to their little car seats, people said that she had "gone nuts," "went bonkers," and just plain "lost it" because of her problems.

Neither Mental Nor Illness? When people cannot find a satisfying explanation for why someone does something weird or is "like that," they often say that a "sickness in the head" is causing the unacceptable behavior. To *medicalize* something is to make it a medical matter, to classify it as a form of illness that properly belongs in the care of physicians. For the past hundred years or so, especially since the time of Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), the Viennese physician who founded psychoanalysis, there has been a growing tendency toward the **medicalization of deviance**. In this view, deviance, including crime, is a sign of mental sickness. Rape, murder, stealing, cheating, and so on are external symptoms of internal disorders, consequences of a confused or tortured mind, one that should be treated by mental health experts.



police discretion the practice of the police, in the normal course of their duties, to either arrest or ticket someone for an offense or to overlook the matter

medicalization of deviance to make deviance a medical matter, a symptom of some underlying illness that needs to be treated by physicians

medicalization the transformation of a human condition into a matter to be treated by physicians

Thomas Szasz (1986, 1998, 2010), a renegade in his profession of psychiatry, disagrees. He argues that what are called *mental illnesses* are *neither mental nor illnesses*. They are simply problem behaviors. Szasz breaks these behaviors for which we don't have a ready explanation into two causes: physical illness and learned deviance.

Some behaviors that are called "mental illnesses" have physical causes. That is, something in an individual's body results in unusual perceptions or behavior. Some depression, for example, is caused by a chemical imbalance in the brain, which can be treated by drugs. The behaviors that are associated with depression—crying, long-term sadness, and lack of interest in family, work, school, or grooming—are only symptoms of a physical problem.

Attention-deficit disorder (ADD) is an example of a new "mental illness" that has come out of nowhere. As Szasz says, "No one explains where this disease came from or why it didn't exist 50 years ago. No one is able to diagnose it with objective tests." ADD is diagnosed because a teacher or parent is complaining about a child misbehaving. Misbehaving children have been a problem throughout history, but now, with doctors looking to expand their territory, this problem behavior has become a sign of "mental illness" that they can treat.

All of us have troubles. Some of us face a constant barrage of problems as we go through life. Most of us continue the struggle, perhaps encouraged by relatives and friends and motivated by job, family responsibilities, religious faith, and life goals. Even when the odds seem hopeless, we carry on, not perfectly, but as best we can.

Some people, however, fail to cope well with life's challenges. Overwhelmed, they become depressed, uncooperative, or hostile. Some strike out at others, and some, in Merton's terms, become retreatists and withdraw into their apartments or homes, refusing to come out. These may be inappropriate ways of coping, stresses Szasz, but they are *behaviors*, *not mental illnesses*. Szasz concludes that "mental illness" is a myth foisted on a naive public. Our medical profession uses pseudoscientific jargon that people don't understand so it can expand its area of control and force nonconforming people to accept society's definitions of "normal."

Szasz's controversial claim forces us to look anew at the forms of deviance that we usually refer to as mental illness. To explain behavior that people find bizarre, he directs our attention not to causes hidden deep within the "subconscious" but, instead, to how people learn such behaviors. To ask, "What is the origin of someone's inappropriate or bizarre behavior?" then becomes similar to asking "Why do some women steal?" "Why do some men rape?" "Why do some teenagers cuss their parents and stalk out of the room, slamming the door?" The answers depend on those people's particular experiences in life, not on an illness in their mind. In short, some sociologists find Szasz's renegade analysis refreshing because it indicates that social experiences, not some illness of the mind, underlie bizarre behaviors—as well as deviance in general.

#### The Homeless Mentally III

Jamie was sitting on a low wall surrounding the landscaped courtyard of an exclusive restaurant. She appeared unaware of the stares elicited by her layers of mismatched clothing, her matted hair and dirty face, and the shopping cart that overflowed with her meager possessions.

After sitting next to Jamie for a few minutes, I saw her point to the street and concentrate, slowly moving her finger horizontally. I asked her what she was doing.

"I'm directing traffic," she replied. "I control where the cars go. Look, that one turned right there," she said, now withdrawing her finger.

"Really?" I said.

After a while she confided that her cart talked to her.

"Really?" I said again.

People whose behaviors violate norms are often called mentally ill. "Why else would they do such things?" is a common response to deviant behaviors that we don't understand. Mental illness is a label

that contains the assumption that there is something wrong "within" people that "causes" their disapproved behavior. The surprise with this man, who changed his legal name to "Scary Guy," is that he speaks at schools across the country, where he promotes acceptance, awareness, love, and understanding.



Mental illness is common among the homeless. This photo was taken in Boston, but it could have been taken in any large city in the United States.

"Yes," she replied. "You can hear it, too." At that, she pushed the shopping cart a bit.

"Did you hear that?" she asked.

When I shook my head, she demonstrated again. Then it hit me. She was referring to the squeaking wheels!

I nodded.

When I left Jamie, she was pointing a finger toward the sky, for, as she told me, she also controlled the flight of airplanes.

To most of us, Jamie's behavior and thinking are bizarre. They simply do not match any reality we know. Could you or I become like Jamie?

Suppose for a bitter moment that you are homeless and have to live on the streets. You have no money, no place to sleep, no bathroom. You do not know *if* you are going to eat, much less where. You have no friends or anyone you can trust. You live in constant fear of rape and other violence. Do you think this might be enough to drive you over the edge?

Consider just the problems involved in not having a place to bathe. (Shelters are often so dangerous that many homeless people prefer to sleep in public settings.) At first, you try to wash in the restrooms of gas stations, bars, the bus station, or a shopping center. But you are dirty, and people stare when you enter and call the management when they see you wash your feet in the sink. You are thrown out and told in no uncertain terms never to come back. So you get dirtier and dirtier. Eventually, you come to think of being dirty as a fact of life. Soon, maybe, you don't even care. The stares no longer bother you—at least not as much.

No one will talk to you, and you withdraw more and more into yourself. You begin to build a fantasy life. You talk openly to yourself. People stare, but so what? They stare anyway. Besides, they are no longer important to you.

Jamie might be mentally ill. Some organic problem, such as a chemical imbalance in her brain, might underlie her behavior. But perhaps not. How long would it take you to exhibit bizarre behaviors if you were homeless—and hopeless? The point is that *living on the streets can cause mental illness*—or whatever we want to label socially inappropriate behaviors that we find difficult to classify. *Homelessness and mental illness are reciprocal*: Just as "mental illness" can cause homelessness, so the trials of being homeless, of living on cold, hostile streets, can lead to unusual thinking and behaviors.

#### The Need for a More Humane Approach

As Durkheim (1895/1964:68) pointed out, deviance is inevitable—even in a group of saints.

Imagine a society of saints, a perfect cloister of exemplary individuals. Crimes, properly so called, will there be unknown; but faults which appear invisible to the layman will create there the same scandal that the ordinary offense does in ordinary society.

With deviance inevitable, one measure of a society is how it treats its deviants. Our prisons certainly don't say much good about U.S. society. Filled with the poor, uneducated, and unskilled, they are warehouses of the unwanted. White-collar criminals continue to get by with a slap on the wrist while street criminals are punished severely. Some deviants, who fail to meet current standards of admission to either prison or mental hospital, take refuge in shelters, as well as in cardboard boxes tucked away in urban recesses. Although no one has *the* answer, it does not take much reflection to see that there are more humane approaches than these.

Because deviance is inevitable, the larger issues are to find ways to protect people from deviant behaviors that are harmful to themselves or others, to tolerate behaviors that are not harmful, and to develop systems of fairer treatment for deviants. In the

absence of fundamental changes that would bring about an equitable society, most efforts are, unfortunately, like putting a Band-Aid on a gunshot wound. What we need is a more humane social system, one that would prevent the social inequalities that are the focus of the next four chapters.

# **MySocLab**



Study and Review on MySocLab

# 6

# Summary and Review

#### What Is Deviance?

**6.1** Summarize the relativity of deviance, the need of norms, and the types of sanctions; contrast sociobiological, psychological and sociological explanations of deviance.

**Deviance** (the violation of norms) is relative. What people consider deviant varies from one culture to another and from group to group within the same society. As symbolic interactionists stress, it is not the act but the reactions to the act that make something deviant. All groups develop systems of **social control** to punish **deviants**—those who violate their norms. Pp. 158–161.

# How do sociological and individualistic explanations of deviance differ?

To explain why people deviate, sociobiologists and psychologists look for reasons *within* the individual, such as **genetic predispositions** or **personality disorders**. Sociologists, in contrast, look for explanations *outside* the individual, in social experiences. Pp. 161–162.

# The Symbolic Interactionist Perspective

**6.2** Contrast three theories of deviance: differential association, control, and labeling.

#### How do symbolic interactionists explain deviance?

Symbolic interactionists have developed several theories to explain deviance such as **crime** (the violation of norms that are written into law). According to **differential association** theory, people learn to deviate by associating with others. According to **control theory**, each of us is propelled toward deviance, but most of us conform because of an effective system of inner and outer controls. People who have less effective controls deviate. Pp. 162–164.

**Labeling theory** focuses on how labels (names, reputations) help to funnel people into or divert them away from deviance. People often use **techniques of neutralization** to deflect social norms. Pp. 164–168.

### The Functionalist Perspective

**6.3** Explain how deviance can be functional for society, how mainstream values can produce deviance (strain theory), and how social class is related to crime (illegitimate opportunities).

#### How do functionalists explain deviance?

Functionalists point out that deviance, including criminal acts, is functional for society. Functions include affirming norms and promoting social unity and social change. According to **strain theory**, societies socialize their members into desiring **cultural goals**. Many people are unable to achieve these goals in socially acceptable ways—that is, by **institutionalized means**. *Deviants*, then, are people who either give up on the goals or use disapproved means to attain them. Merton identified five types of responses to cultural goals and institutionalized means: conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion. Because of **illegitimate opportunity structures**, some people have easier access to illegal means of achieving goals. Pp. 168–173.

### The Conflict Perspective

**6.4** Explain how social class is related to the criminal justice system and how the criminal justice system is oppressive.

#### How do conflict theorists explain deviance?

Conflict theorists take the position that the group in power imposes its definitions of deviance on other groups. From this perspective, the law is an instrument of oppression used by the powerful to maintain their position of privilege. The ruling class, which developed the **criminal justice system**, uses it to

punish the crimes of the poor while diverting its own criminal activities away from this punitive system. Pp. 174–175.

#### Reactions to Deviance

**6.5** Be familiar with street crimes and prison, three-strikes laws, the decline in violent crime, recidivism, bias in the death penalty, the medicalization of deviance, and the need for a humane approach.

# What are common reactions to deviance in the United States?

In following a "get-tough" policy, the United States has imprisoned millions of people. African Americans and Latinos make up a disproportionate percentage of U.S. prisoners. The death penalty shows biases by geography, social class, gender, and race–ethnicity. Pp. 175–184.

#### Are official statistics on crime reliable?

The conclusions of both symbolic interactionists (that the police operate with a large measure of discretion) and conflict theorists (that a power elite controls the legal system) indicate that we must be cautious when using crime statistics. P. 184.

#### What is the medicalization of deviance?

The medical profession has attempted to **medicalize** many forms of **deviance**, claiming that they represent mental illnesses. Thomas Szasz disagrees, asserting that these are problem behaviors, not mental illnesses. The situation of homeless people indicates that problems in living can lead to bizarre behavior and thinking. Pp. 184–186.

#### What is a more humane approach?

Deviance is inevitable, so the larger issues are to find ways to protect people from deviance that harms themselves and others, to tolerate deviance that is not harmful, and to develop systems of fairer treatment for deviants. Pp. 186–187.

### Thinking Critically about Chapter 6

- 1. Select some deviance with which you are personally familiar. (It does not have to be your own—it can be something that someone you know did.) Choose one of the three theoretical perspectives to explain what happened.
- **2.** As explained in the text, deviance can be mild. Recall some instance in which you broke a social rule in dress,
- etiquette, or speech. What was the reaction? Why do you think people reacted like that? What was your response to their reactions?
- **3.** What do you think should be done about the U.S. crime problem? What sociological theories support your view?

**achieved statuses** positions that are earned, accomplished, or involve at least some effort or activity on the individual's part

acid rain rain containing sulfuric and nitric acids (burning fossil fuels release sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxide that become sulfuric and nitric acids when they react with moisture in the air)

**activity theory** the view that satisfaction during old age is related to a person's amount and quality of activity

**age cohort** people born at roughly the same time who pass through the life course together

**ageism** prejudice and discrimination directed against people because of their age; can be directed against any age group, including youth

**agents of socialization** people or groups that affect our self concept, attitudes, behaviors, or other orientations toward life

**aggregate** individuals who temporarily share the same physical space but who do not see themselves as belonging together

agricultural society a society based on large-scale agriculture

**alienation** Marx's term for workers' lack of connection to the product of their labor; caused by workers being assigned repetitive tasks on a small part of a product—this leads to a sense of powerlessness and normlessness; others use the term in the general sense of not feeling a part of something

**alterative social movement** a social movement that seeks to alter only some specific aspects of people and institutions

**anarchy** a condition of lawlessness or political disorder caused by the absence or collapse of governmental authority

**anomie** Durkheim's term for a condition of society in which people become detached from the usual norms that guide their behavior

anticipatory socialization the process of learning in advance an anticipated future role or status

apartheid the separation of racial-ethnic groups as was practiced in South Africa

**applied sociology** the use of sociology to solve problems—from the micro level of classroom interaction and family relationships to the macro level of crime and pollution

**ascribed status** a position an individual either inherits at birth or receives involuntarily later in life

assimilation the process of being absorbed into the mainstream culture

authoritarian leader an individual who leads by giving orders

**authoritarian personality** Theodor Adorno's term for people who are prejudiced and rank high on scales of conformity, intolerance, insecurity, respect for authority, and submissiveness to superiors

authority power that people consider legitimate, as rightly exercised over them; also called *legitimate power* 

**back stages** places where people rest from their performances in everyday life, discuss their presentations, and plan future performances

**background assumption** a deeply embedded, common understanding of how the world operates and of how people ought to act

**basic** (or **pure**) **sociology** sociology in everyday life logical research for the purpose of making discoveries about life in human groups, not for making changes in those groups

**basic demographic equation** the growth rate equals births minus deaths plus net migration

**bilineal system** (of descent) a system of reckoning descent that counts both the mother's and the father's side

**biotech society** a society whose economy increasingly centers on modifying genetics to produce food, medicine, and materials

blended family a family whose members were once part of other families

**body language** the ways in which people use their bodies to give messages to others

**bonded labor (indentured service)** a contractual system in which someone sells his or her body (services) for a specified period of time in an arrangement very close to slavery, except that it is entered into voluntarily

**born again** a term describing Christians who have undergone a religious experience so life-transforming that they feel they have become new persons

**bourgeoisie** Marx's term for capitalists, those who own the means of production

**bureaucracy** a formal organization with a hierarchy of authority and a clear division of labor; emphasis on impersonality of positions and written rules, communications, and records

capital punishment the death penalty

**capitalism** an economic system built around the private ownership of the means of production, the pursuit of profit, and market competition

case study an intensive analysis of a single event, situation, or individual

**caste system** a form of social stratification in which people's statuses are lifelong conditions determined by birth

**category** people, objects, and events that have similar characteristics and are classified together

**charisma** literally, an extraordinary gift from God; more commonly, an outstanding, "magnetic" personality

**charismatic authority** authority based on an individual's outstanding traits, which attract followers

**charismatic leader** literally, someone to whom God has given a gift; in its extended sense, someone who exudes extraordinary appeal to a group of followers

**checks and balances** the separation of powers among the three branches of U.S. government—legislative, executive, and judicial—so that each is able to nullify the actions of the other two, thus preventing any single branch from dominating the government

**church** according to Durkheim, one of the three essential elements of religion—a moral community of believers; also refers to a large, highly organized religious group that has formal, sedate worship services with little emphasis on evangelism, intense religious experience, or personal conversion

**citizenship** the concept that birth (and residence or naturalization) in a country imparts basic rights

**city** a place in which a large number of people are permanently based and do not produce their own food

city-state an independent city whose power radiates outward, bringing the adjacent area under its rule

class conflict Marx's term for the struggle between capitalists and workers
 class consciousness Marx's term for awareness of a common identity based on one's position in the means of production

**class system** a form of social stratification based primarily on the possession of money or material possessions

**clique** (cleek) a cluster of people within a larger group who choose to interact with one another

**coalition** the alignment of some members of a group against others

**coercion** power that people do not accept as rightly exercised over them; also called *illegitimate power* 

cohabitation unmarried couples living together in a sexual relationship

**colonialism** the process by which one nation takes over another nation, usually for the purpose of exploiting its labor and natural resources

compartmentalize to separate acts from feelings or attitudes

**conflict theory** a theoretical framework in which society is viewed as composed of groups that are competing for scarce resources

**conspicuous consumption** Thorstein Veblen's term for a change from the thrift, saving, and investing of the Protestant ethic to showing off wealth through spending and the display of possessions

**contact theory** the idea that prejudice and negative stereotypes decrease and racialethnic relations improve when people from different racial-ethnic backgrounds, who are of equal status, interact frequently

**continuity theory** a theory focusing on how people adjust to retirement by continuing aspects of their earlier lives

**contradictory class locations** Erik Wright's term for a position in the class structure that generates contradictory interests

**control group** the subjects in an experiment who are not exposed to the independent variable

**control theory** the idea that two control systems—inner controls and outer controls—work against our tendencies to deviate

**convergence theory** the view that as capitalist and socialist economic systems each adopt features of the other, a hybrid (or mixed) economic system will emerge

**core values** the values that are central to a group, those around which people build a common identity

**corporate crime** crimes committed by executives in order to benefit their corporation **corporate culture** the values, norms, and other orientations that characterize corporate work settings

cosmology teachings or ideas that provide a unified picture of the world
 counterculture a group whose values, beliefs, norms, and related behaviors place its members in opposition to the broader culture

**credential society** the use of diplomas and degrees to determine who is eligible for jobs, even though the diploma or degree may be irrelevant to the actual work

crime the violation of norms written into law

**criminal justice system** the system of police, courts, and prisons set up to deal with people who are accused of having committed a crime

**crude birth rate** the annual number of live births per 1,000 population

crude death rate the annual number of deaths per 1,000 population

cult a new religion with few followers, whose teachings and practices put it at odds with the dominant culture and religion

**cultural capital** privileges accompanying a social location that help someone in life; included are more highly educated parents, from grade school through high school being pushed to bring home high grades, and enjoying cultural experiences that translate into higher test scores, better jobs, and higher earnings

**cultural diffusion** the spread of cultural traits from one group to another; includes both material and nonmaterial cultural traits

cultural goals the objectives held out as legitimate or desirable for the members of a society to achieve

cultural lag Ogburn's term for human behavior lagging behind technological innovations

**cultural leveling** the process by which cultures become similar to one another; refers especially to the process by which Western culture is being exported and diffused into other nations

**cultural relativism** not judging a culture but trying to understand it on its own terms

**cultural transmission of values** the process of transmitting values from one group to another; often refers to how cultural traits are transmitted across generations; in education, the ways in which schools transmit a society's culture, especially its core values

cultural universal a value, norm, or other cultural trait that is found in every group

**culture** the language, beliefs, values, norms, behaviors, and even material objects that characterize a group and are passed from one generation to the next

**culture of poverty** the assumption that the values and behaviors of the poor make them fundamentally different from other people, that these factors are largely responsible for their poverty, and that parents perpetuate poverty across generations by passing these characteristics to their children

**culture shock** the disorientation that people experience when they come in contact with a fundamentally different culture and can no longer depend on their taken-forgranted assumptions about life

currency paper money

**deferred gratification** going without something in the present in the hope of achieving greater gains in the future

**degradation ceremony** a term coined by Harold Garfinkel to refer to a ritual whose goal is to remake someone's self by stripping away that individual's self-identity and stamping a new identity in its place

deindustrialization the process of industries moving out of a country or region

**democracy** a government whose authority comes from the people; the term, based on two Greek words, translates literally as "power to the people"

**democratic leader** an individual who leads by trying to reach a consensus

**democratic socialism** a hybrid economic system in which the individual ownership of businesses is mixed with the state ownership of industries thought essential to the public welfare, such as the postal service, natural resources, the medical delivery system, and mass transportation

**demographic transition** a three-stage historical process of change in the size of populations: first, high birth rates and high death rates; second, high birth rates and low death rates; and third, low birth rates and low death rates; a fourth stage of population shrinkage in which deaths outnumber births has made its appearance in the Most Industrialized Nations

**demographic variables** the three factors that change the size of a population: fertility, mortality, and net migration

**demography** the study of the size, composition, (growth or shrinkage), and distribution of human populations

**denomination** a "brand name" within a major religion; for example, Methodist or Baptist

deviance the violation of norms (or rules or expectations)

**dialectical process (of history)** each arrangement of power (a thesis) contains contradictions (antitheses) which make the arrangement unstable and which must be resolved; the new arrangement of power (a synthesis) contains its own contradictions; this process of balancing and unbalancing continues throughout history as groups struggle for power and other resources

dictatorship a form of government in which an individual has seized power

**differential association** Edwin Sutherland's term to indicate that people who associate with some groups learn an "excess of definitions" of deviance, increasing the likelihood that they will become deviant

**diffusion** the spread of an invention or a discovery from one area to another; identified by William Ogburn as one of three processes of social change

**direct democracy** a form of democracy in which the eligible voters meet together to discuss issues and make their decisions

**disabling environment** an environment that is harmful to health

**discovery** a new way of seeing reality; identified by William Ogburn as one of three processes of social change

**discrimination** an act of unfair treatment directed against an individual or a group

**disengagement theory** the view that society is stabilized by having the elderly retire (disengage from) their positions of responsibility so the younger generation can step into their shoes

**disinvestment** the withdrawal of investments by financial institutions, which seals the fate of an urban area

**divine right of kings** the idea that the king's authority comes from God; in an interesting gender bender, also applies to queens

division of labor the splitting of a group's or a society's tasks into specialties

**documents** in its narrow sense, written sources that provide data; in its extended sense, archival material of any sort, including photographs, movies, CDs, DVDs, and so on

**dominant group** the group with the most power, greatest privileges, and highest social status

downward social mobility movement down the social class ladder

**dramaturgy** an approach, pioneered by Erving Goffman, in which social life is analyzed in terms of drama or the stage; also called *dramaturgical analysis* 

dyad the smallest possible group, consisting of two persons

**ecclesia** a religious group so integrated into the dominant culture that it is difficult to tell where the one begins and the other leaves off; also called a *state religion* 

economy a system of producing and distributing goods and services

**ecosabotage** actions taken to sabotage the efforts of people who are thought to be legally harming the environment

**edge city** a large clustering of service facilities and residential areas near highway intersections that provides a sense of place to people who live, shop, and work there

**egalitarian** authority more or less equally divided between people or groups (in heterosexual marriage, for example, between husband and wife

**ego** Freud's term for a balancing force between the id and the demands of society **endogamy** the practice of marrying within one's own group

**enterprise zone** the use of economic incentives in a designated area to encourage investment

**environmental injustice** refers to how minorities and the poor are harmed the most by environmental pollution

**environmental sociology** a specialty within sociology whose focus is how humans affect the environment and how the environment affects humans

**estate stratification system** the stratification system of medieval Europe, consisting of three groups or estates: the nobility, clergy, and commoners

**ethnic cleansing** a policy of eliminating a population; includes forcible expulsion and genecide

**ethnic work** activities designed to discover, enhance, maintain, or transmit an ethnic or racial identity

ethnicity (and ethnic) having distinctive cultural characteristics

**ethnocentrism** the use of one's own culture as a yardstick for judging the ways of other individuals or societies, generally leading to a negative evaluation of their values, norms, and behaviors

**ethnomethodology** the study of how people use background assumptions to make sense out of life

**exchange mobility** a large number of people moving up the social class ladder, while a large number move down; it is as though they have *exchanged* places, and the social class system shows little change

exogamy the practice of marrying outside of one's group

**experiment** the use of control and experimental groups and dependent and independent variables to test causation

**experimental group** the group of subjects in an experiment who are exposed to the independent variable

**exponential growth curve** a pattern of growth in which numbers double during approximately equal intervals, showing a steep acceleration in the later stages

 $\begin{tabular}{ll} \bf expressive \ leader & an individual who increases harmony and minimizes conflict in a group; also known as a {\it socioemotional leader} \end{tabular}$ 

**extended family** a family in which relatives, such as the "older generation" or unmarried aunts and uncles, live with the partents and their children

**face-saving behavior** techniques used to salvage a performance (interaction) that is going sour

**false class consciousness** Marx's term to refer to workers identifying with the interests of capitalists

family two or more people who consider themselves related by blood, marriage, or adoption

**family of orientation** the family in which a person grows up

family of procreation the family formed when a couple's first child is born

fecundity the number of children that women are capable of bearing

**feminism** the philosophy that men and women should be politically, economically, and socially equal; organized activities on behalf of this principle

**feminization of poverty** a condition of U.S. poverty in which most poor families are headed by women

**feral children** children assumed to have been raised by animals, in the wilderness, isolated from humans

fertility rate the number of children that the average woman bears

folkways norms that are not strictly enforced

formal organization a secondary group designed to achieve explicit objectives

front stage a place where people give their performances in everyday life

**functional analysis** a theoretical framework in which society is viewed as composed of various parts, each with a function that, when fulfilled, contributes to society's equilibrium; also *known as functionalism* and *structural functionalism* 

**functional illiterate** a high school graduate who has difficulty with basic reading and math

**gatekeeping** the process by which education opens and closes doors of opportunity; another term for the *social placement* function of education

**Gemeinschaft** a type of society in which life is intimate; a community in which everyone knows everyone else and people share a sense of togetherness

**gender** the behaviors and attitudes that a society considers proper for its males and females; masculinity or femininity

**gender socialization** learning society's "gender map," the paths in life set out for us because we are male or female

**gender stratification** males' and females' unequal access to property, power, and prestige

**generalized other** the norms, values, attitudes, and expectations of people "in general"; the child's ability to take the role of the generalized other is a significant step in the development of a self

**genetic predisposition** inborn tendencies (for example, a tendency to commit deviant acts)

**genocide** the annihilation or attempted annihilation of a people because of their presumed race or ethnicity

**gentrification** middle-class people moving into a rundown area of a city, displacing the poor as they buy and restore homes

**Gesellschaft** a type of society that is dominated by short-term impersonal relationships, individual accomplishments, and self-interest

**gestures** the ways in which people use their bodies to communicate with one another **glass ceiling** the mostly invisible barrier that keeps women from advancing to the top levels at work

**global superclass** the top members of the capitalist class, who, through their worldwide interconnections, make the major decisions that affect the world

**globalization** the growing interconnections among nations due to the expansion of capitalism

**globalization of capitalism** capitalism (investing to make profits within a rational system) becoming the globe's dominant economic system

**goal displacement** an organization replacing old goals with new ones; also known as goal replacement

**grade inflation** higher grades given for the same work; a general rise in student grades without a corresponding increase in learning

**graying of America** the growing percentage of older people in the U.S. population **group** people who have something in common and who believe that what they have in

common is significant; also called a *social group* **group dynamics** the ways in which individuals affect groups and the ways in which

groups influence individuals

groupthink a narrowing of thought by a group of people, leading to the perception

that there is only one correct answer and that to even suggest alternatives is a sign of disloyalty

growth rate the net change in a population after adding births, subtracting deaths,

and either adding or subtracting net migration; can result in a negative number

hidden curriculum the unwritten goals of schools, such as teaching obedience to

authority and conformity to cultural norms **homogamy** the tendency of people with similar characteristics to marry one another

**Horatio Alger myth** the belief that due to limitless possibilities anyone can get ahead if he or she tries hard enough

household people who occupy the same housing unit

**human ecology** Robert Park's term for the relationship between people and their environment (such as land and structures); also known as *urban ecology* 

**humanizing the work setting** organizing a workplace in such a way that it develops rather than impedes human potential

**hunting and gathering society** a human group that depends on hunting and gathering for its survival

**hypothesis** a statement of how variables are expected to be related to one another, often according to predictions from a theory

id Freud's term for our inborn basic drives

ideal culture a people's ideal values and norms; the goals held out for them

ideology beliefs about the way things ought to be that justify social arrangements

**illegitimate opportunity structure** opportunities for crimes that are woven into the texture of life

**impression management** people's efforts to control the impressions that others receive of them

**incest** sexual relations between specified relatives, such as brothers and sisters or parents and children

**incest taboo** the rule that prohibits sex and marriage among designated relatives **inclusion** helping people to become part of the mainstream of society; also called *mainstreaming* 

income money received, usually from a job, business, or assets

**independent variable** a factor that causes a change in another variable, called the *dependent variable* 

**individual discrimination** person-to-person or face-to-face discrimination; the negative treatment of people by other individuals

**Industrial Revolution** the third social revolution, occurring when machines powered by fuels replaced most animal and human power

industrial society a society based on the harnessing of machines powered by fuels

in-group a group toward which one feels loyalty

**institutional discrimination** negative treatment of a minority group that is built into a society's institutions; also called *systemic discrimination* 

institutionalized means approved ways of reaching cultural goals

**instrumental leader** an individual who tries to keep the group moving toward its goals; also known as a *task-oriented leader* 

**intergenerational mobility** the change that family members make in social class from one generation to the next

internal colonialism the policy of exploiting minority groups for economic gain interview direct questioning of respondents

**interviewer bias** effects of interviewers on respondents that lead to biased answers **invasion-succession cycle** the process of one group of people displacing a group

whose racial-ethnic or social class characteristics differ from their own **invention** the combination of existing elements and materials to form new ones; identified by William Ogburn as one of three processes of social change

**iron law of oligarchy** Robert Michels' term for the tendency of formal organizations to be dominated by a small, self perpetuating elite

**labeling theory** the view that the labels people are given affect their own and others' perceptions of them, thus channeling their behavior into either deviance or conformity

laissez-faire capitalism literally "hands off" capitalism, meaning that the government doesn't interfere in the market

laissez-faire leader an individual who leads by being highly permissive

language a system of symbols that can be combined in an infinite number of ways and can represent not only objects but also abstract thought

latent functions unintended beneficial consequences of people's actions

**leader** someone who influences other people

leadership styles ways in which people express their leadership

**life course** the stages of our life as we go from birth to death

**life expectancy** the number of years that an average person at any age, including newborns, can expect to live

**life span** the maximum length of life of a species; for humans, the longest that a human has lived

lobbyists people who influence legislation on behalf of their clients

**looking-glass self** a term coined by Charles Horton Cooley to refer to the process by which our self develops through internalizing others' reactions to us

machismo an emphasis on male strength and dominance

macro-level analysis an examination of large-scale patterns of society; such as how Wall Street and the political establishment are interrelated

**macrosociology** analysis of social life that focuses on broad features of society, such as social class and the relationships of groups to one another; usually used by functionalists and conflict theorists

#### G-4 GLOSSARY

**Malthus theorem** an observation by Thomas Malthus that although the food supply increases arithmetically (from 1 to 2 to 3 to 4 and so on), population grows geometrically (from 2 to 4 to 8 to 16 and so forth)

mandatory education laws laws that require all children to attend school until a specified age or until they complete a minimum grade in school

manifest functions the intended beneficial consequences of people's actions

market forces the law of supply and demand

marriage a group's approved mating arrangements, usually marked by a ritual of some sort

mass hysteria an imagined threat that causes physical symptoms among a large number of people

mass media forms of communication, such as radio, newspapers, and television that are directed to mass audiences

master status a status that cuts across the other statuses that an individual occupiesmaterial culture the material objects that distinguish a group of people, such as their

art, buildings, weapons, utensils, machines, hairstyles, clothing, and jewelry

**matriarchy** a society in which women-as-a-group dominate men-as-a-group; authority is vested in females

matrilineal system (of descent) a system of reckoning descent that counts only the mother's side

**McDonaldization of society** the process by which ordinary aspects of life are rationalized and efficiency comes to rule them, including such things as food preparation

means of production the tools, factories, land, and investment capital used to produce wealth

**mechanical solidarity** Durkheim's term for the unity (a shared consciousness) that people feel as a result of performing the same or similar tasks

**medicalization** the transformation of a human condition into a medical matter to be treated by physicians

**medicalization of deviance** to make deviance a medical matter, a symptom of some underlying illness that needs to be treated by physicians

megacity a city of 10 million or more residents

**megalopolis** an urban area consisting of at least two metropolises and their many suburbs

**meritocracy** a form of social stratification in which all positions are awarded on the basis of merit

metaformative social movement a social movement that has the goal to change the social order not just of a country or two, but of a civilization, or even of the entire world

metropolis a central city surrounded by smaller cities and their suburbs

metropolitan statistical area (MSA) a central city and the urbanized counties adjacent to it

**micro-level analysis** an examination of small-scale patterns of society; such as how the members of a group interact

**microsociology** analysis of social life that focuses on social interaction; typically used by symbolic interactionists

**minority group** people who are singled out for unequal treatment and who regard themselves as objects of collective discrimination

modernization the transformation of traditional societies into industrial societies

monarchy a form of government headed by a king or queen

monopoly the control of an entire industry by a single company

monotheism the belief that there is only one God

**moral panic** a fear gripping a large number of people that some evil threatens the wellbeing of society; followed by hostility, sometimes violence, toward those thought responsible

**mores** norms that are strictly enforced because they are thought essential to core values or the well-being of the group

**multiculturalism (**or **pluralism)** a policy that permits or encourages ethnic differences

**multinational corporations** companies that operate across national boundaries; also called *transnational corporations* 

**negative sanction** an expression of disapproval for breaking a norm, ranging from a mild, informal reaction such as a frown to a formal reaction such as a prize or a prison sentence

**neocolonialism** the economic and political dominance of the Most Industrialized Nations over the Least Industrialized Nations

**net migration rate** the difference between the number of immigrants and emigrants per 1,000 population

**new technology** the emerging technologies of an era that have a significant impact on social life

**nonmaterial culture** a group's ways of thinking (including its beliefs, values, and other assumptions about the world) and doing (its common patterns of behavior, including language and other forms of interaction); also called *symbolic culture* 

**nonverbal interaction** communication without words through gestures, use of space, silence, and so on

norms expectations of "right" behavior

nuclear family a family consisting of a husband, wife, and child(ren)

**oligarchy** a form of government in which a small group of individuals holds power; the rule of the many by the few

operational definition the way in which a researcher measures a variable

**organic solidarity** Durkheim's term for the interdependence that results from the division of labor; as part of the same unit, we all depend on others to fulfill their jobs

out-group a group toward which one feels antagonism

**pan-Indianism** an attempt to develop an identity that goes beyond the tribe by emphasizing the common elements that run through Native American cultures

**participant observation (**or **fieldwork)** research in which the researcher participates in a research setting while observing what is happening in that setting

**patriarchy** men-as-a-group dominating women-as-a-group; authority is vested in

**patrilineal system (**of **descent)** a system of reckoning descent that counts only the father's side

patterns of behavior recurring behaviors or events

**peer group** a group of individuals, often of roughly the same age, who are linked by common interests and orientations

**personality disorders** the view that a personality disturbance of some sort causes an individual to violate social norms

**Peter Principle** a tongue in-cheek observation that the members of an organization are promoted for their accomplishments until they reach their level of incompetence; there they cease to be promoted, remaining at the level at which they can no longer do good work

**pluralism** the diffusion of power among many interest groups that prevents any single group from gaining control of the government

pluralistic society a society made up of many different groups

**police discretion** the practice of the police, in the normal course of their duties, to either arrest or ticket someone for an offense or to overlook the matter

**political action committee (PAC)** an organization formed by one or more special-interest groups to solicit and spend funds for the purpose of influencing legislation

 $\boldsymbol{polyandry} \quad a \ form \ of \ marriage \ in \ which \ women \ have \ more \ than \ one \ husband$ 

polygyny a form of marriage in which men have more than one wife

**population** a target group to be studied

**population pyramid** a graph that represents the age and sex of a population (see Figure 20.7)

**population shrinkage** the process by which a country's population becomes smaller because its birth rate and immigration are too low to replace those who die and emigrate

**population transfer** the forced transfer of a minority group

**positive sanction** an expression of approval for following a norm, ranging from a smile or a good grade in a class to a material reward such as a prize

positivism the application of the scientific approach to the social world

**postindustrial (information) society** a society based on information, services, and high technology, rather than on raw materials and manufacturing

postmodern society another term for postindustrial society

**poverty line** the official measure of poverty; calculated to include incomes that are less than three times a low-cost food budget

**power** the ability to carry out one's will, even over the resistance of others

**power elite** C. Wright Mills' term for the top people in U.S. corporations, military, and politics who make the nation's major decisions

prejudice an attitude or prejudging, usually in a negative way

prestige respect or regard

**primary group** a small group characterized by cooperative intimate, longterm, face-to-face associations

**proactive social movement** a social movement that promotes some social change

profane Durkheim's term for common elements of everyday life

**proletariat** Marx's term for the exploited class, the mass of workers who do not own the means of production

**propaganda** in its broad sense, the presentation of information in an attempt to influence people; in its narrow sense, one-sided information used to try to influence people

**property** material possessions: animals, bank accounts, bonds, buildings, businesses, cars, cash, commodities, copyrights, furniture, jewelry, land, and stocks

**Protestant ethic** Weber's term to describe the ideal of a self-denying, highly moral life accompanied by thrift and hard work

**public** in this context, a dispersed group of people relevant to a social movement; the sympathetic and hostile publics have an interest in the issues on which a social movement focuses; there is also an unaware or indifferent public

public opinion how people think about some issue

**public sociology** applying sociology for the public good; especially the use of the sociological perspective (how things are related to one another) to guide politicians and policy makers

race a group whose inherited physical characteristics distinguish it from other groupsracism prejudice and discrimination on the basis of race

random sample a sample in which everyone in the target population has the same chance of being included in the study

**rapport (ruh-POUR)** a feeling of trust between researchers and the people they are studying

rationality using rules, efficiency, and practical results to determine human affairs rationalization of society a widespread acceptance of rationality and social organizations that are built largely around this idea

rational-legal authority authority based on law or written rules and regulations; also called bureaucratic authority

**reactive social movement** a social movement that resists some social change **real culture** the norms and values that people actually follow; as opposed to *ideal culture* 

recidivism rate the percentage of released convicts who are rearrested redemptive social movement a social movement that seeks to change people and institutions totally, to redeem them

**redlining** a decision by the officers of a financial institution not to make loans in a particular area

**reference group** a group whose standards we refer to as we evaluate ourselves **reformative social movement** a social movement that seeks to reform some specific aspect of society

reliability the extent to which research produces consistent or dependable results
 religion according to Durkheim, beliefs and practices that separate the profane from the sacred and unite its adherents into a moral community

**religious experience** a sudden awareness of the supernatural or a feeling of coming in contact with God

replication the repetition of a study in order to test its findings

**representative democracy** a form of democracy in which voters elect representatives to meet together to discuss issues and make decisions on their behalf

**research method** (or **research design**) one of seven procedures that sociologists use to collect data: surveys, participant observation, case studies, secondary analysis, documents, experiments, and unobtrusive measures

**reserve labor force** the unemployed; unemployed workers are thought of as being "in reserve"—capitalists take them "out of reserve" (put them back to work) during times of high production and then put them "back in reserve" (lay them off) when they are no longer needed

**resocialization** the process of learning new norms, values, attitudes, and behaviors **resource mobilization** a theory that social movements succeed or fail based on their ability to mobilize resources such as time, money, and people's skills

**respondents** people who respond to a survey, either in interviews or by self-administered questionnaires

**revolution** armed resistance designed to overthrow and replace a government **rising expectations** the sense that better conditions are soon to follow, which, if unfulfilled, increases frustration

rituals ceremonies or repetitive practices; in religion, observances or rites often intended to evoke a sense of awe of the sacred

role the behaviors, obligations, and privileges attached to a status

**role conflict** conflicts that someone feels *between* roles because the expectations are at odds with one another

**role performance** the ways in which someone performs a role; showing a particular "style" or "personality"

role strain conflicts that someone feels within a role

**romantic love** feelings of erotic attraction accompanied by an idealization of the other

**routinization of charisma** the transfer of authority from a charismatic figure to either a traditional or a rational-legal form of authority

ruling class another term for the power elite

sacred Durkheim's term for things set apart or forbidden that inspire fear, awe, reverence, or deep respect

sample the individuals intended to represent the population to be studied
 sanctions either expressions of approval given to people for upholding norms or expressions of disapproval for violating them

**Sapir-Whorf hypothesis** Edward Sapir and Benjamin Whorf's hypothesis that language creates ways of thinking and perceiving

scapegoat an individual or group unfairly blamed for someone else's troubles

**science** the application of systematic methods to obtain knowledge and the knowledge obtained by those methods

scientific method the use of objective, systematic observations to test theories
secondary analysis the analysis of data that have been collected by other researchers
secondary group compared with a primary group, a larger, relatively temporary, more anonymous, formal, and impersonal group based on some interest or activity

**sect** a religious group larger than a cult that still feels substantial hostility from and toward society

segregation the policy of keeping racial-ethnic groups apart

**selective perception** seeing certain features of an object or situation, but remaining blind to others

self the unique human capacity of being able to see ourselves "from the outside"; the views we internalize of how others see us

**self-fulfilling prophecy** Robert Merton's term for an originally false assertion that becomes true simply because it was predicted

**self-fulfilling stereotype** preconceived ideas of what someone is like that lead to the person's behaving in ways that match the stereotype

serial murder the killing of several victims in three or more separate events

sex biological characteristics that distinguish females and males, consisting of primary and secondary sex characteristics

**sexual harassment** the abuse of one's position of authority to force unwanted sexual demands on someone

**sign-vehicle** an individual who significantly influences someone else **sign-vehicle** the term used by Goffman to refer to how people use social setting, appearance, and manner to communicate information about the self

slavery a form of social stratification in which some people own other people
 small group a group small enough for everyone to interact directly with all the other members

social change the alteration of culture and societies over time

**social class** according to Weber, a large group of people who rank close to one another in property, power, and prestige; according to Marx, one of two groups: capitalists who own the means of production or workers who sell their labor

**social construction of reality** the use of background assumptions and life experiences to define what is real

social control a group's formal and informal means of enforcing its norms
 social environment the entire human environment, including interaction with others
 social facts Durkheim's term for a group's patterns of behavior

**social inequality** a social condition in which privileges and obligations are given to some but denied to others

**social institution** the organized, usual, or standard ways by which society meets its basic needs

**social integration** the degree to which members of a group or a society are united by shared values and other social bonds; also known as *social cohesion* 

**social interaction** one person's actions influencing someone else; usually refers to what people do when they are in one another's presence, but also includes communications at a distance

**social location** the group memberships that people have because of their location in history and society

social mobility movement up or down the social class ladder

**social movement** a large group of people who are organized to promote or resist some social change

**social movement organization** an organization to promote the goals of a social movement

**social network** the social ties radiating outward from the self that link people together **social order** a group's usual and customary social arrangements, on which its members depend and on which they base their lives

**social placement** a function of education—funneling people into a society's various positions

**social promotion** passing students on to the next level even though they have not mastered basic materials

**social stratification** the division of large numbers of people into layers according to their relative property, power, and prestige; applies to both nations and to people within a nation, society, or other group

#### G-6 GLOSSARY

**social structure** the framework of society that surrounds us; consists of the ways that people and groups are related to one another; this framework gives direction to and sets limits on our behavior

**socialism** an economic system built around the public ownership of the means of production, central planning, and the distribution of goods without a profit motive

**socialization** the process by which people learn the characteristics of their group—the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, norms, and actions thought appropriate for them

society people who share a culture and a territory

**sociobiology** a framework of thought in which human behavior is considered to be the result of natural selection and biological factors

sociological perspective understanding human behavior by placing it within its broader social context

sociology the scientific study of society and human behavior

**special-interest group** a group of people who support a particular issue and who can be mobilized for political action

**spirit of capitalism** Weber's term for the desire to accumulate capital—not to spend it, but as an end in itself—and to constantly reinvest it

**split labor market** workers split along racial–ethnic, gender, age, or any other lines; this split is exploited by owners to weaken the bargaining power of workers

**state** a political entity that claims monopoly on the use of violence in some particular territory; commonly known as a country

**status** the position that someone occupies in a social group; also called *social status* **status consistency** ranking high or low on all three dimensions of social class

**status inconsistency** ranking high on some dimensions of social class and low on others; also called *status discrepancy* 

status set all the statuses or positions that an individual occupies

**status symbols** indicators of a status, especially items in that display prestige

**stereotype** assumptions of what people are like, whether true or false

**stigma** "blemishes" that discredit a person's claim to a "normal" identity

**strain theory** Robert Merton's term for the strain engendered when a society socializes large numbers of people to desire a cultural goal (such as success), but withholds from some the approved means of reaching that goal; one adaptation to the strain is crime, the choice of an innovative means (one outside the approved system) to attain the cultural goal

**stratified random sample** a sample from selected subgroups of the target population in which everyone in those subgroups has an equal chance of being included in the research

street crime crimes such as mugging, rape, and burglary

**structural mobility** movement up or down the social class ladder that is due more to changes in the *structure* of society than to the actions of individuals

**subculture** the values and related behaviors of a group that distinguish its members from the larger culture; a world within a world

**subsistence economy** a type of economy in which human groups live off the land and have little or no surplus

suburb a community adjacent to a city

**suburbanization** the migration of people from the city to the suburbs

**superego** Freud's term for the conscience; the internalized norms and values of our social groups

**survey** the collection of data by having people answer a series of questions

**sustainable environment** a world system that takes into account the limits of the environment, produces enough material goods for everyone's needs, and leaves a heritage of a sound environment for the next generation

**symbol** something to which people attach meaning and then use to communicate with one another

symbolic culture another term for nonmaterial culture

**symbolic interactionism** a theoretical perspective in which society is viewed as composed of symbols that people use to establish meaning, develop their views of the world, and communicate with one another

system of descent how kinship is traced over the generations

taboo a norm so strong that it brings extreme sanctions, even revulsion, if violated

**taking the role of the other** putting yourself in someone else's shoes; understanding how someone else feels and thinks, so you anticipate how that person will act

teamwork the collaboration of two or more people to manage impressions jointly

**techniques of neutralization** ways of thinking or rationalizing that help people deflect (or neutralize) society's norms

**technology** in its narrow sense, tools; its broader sense includes the skills or procedures necessary to make and use those tools

**terrorism** the use of violence or the threat of violence to produce fear in order to attain political objectives

**theory** a general statement about how some parts of the world fit together and how they work; an explanation of how two or more facts are related to one another

**Thomas theorem** William I. and Dorothy S. Thomas' classic formulation of the definition of the situation: "If people define situations as real, they are real in their consequences"

**total institution** a place that is almost totally controlled by those who run it, in which people are cut off from the rest of society and the society is mostly cut off from them.

totalitarianism a form of government that exerts almost total control over people

**tracking** the sorting of students into different programs on the basis of real or perceived abilities

traditional authority authority based on custom

**transitional adulthood** a period following high school during which young adults have not yet taken on the responsibilities ordinarily associated with adulthood; also called adultalescence.

**transitional older years** an emerging stage of the life course between retirement and when people are considered old; about age 63 to 74

**transnational social movements** social movements whose emphasis is on some condition around the world, instead of on a condition in a specific country; also known as *new social movements* 

triad a group of three people

**underclass** a group of people for whom poverty persists year after year and across generations

**universal citizenship** the idea that everyone has the same basic rights by virtue of being born in a country (or by immigrating and becoming a naturalized citizen)

**unobtrusive measures** ways of observing people so they do not know they are being studied

upward social mobility movement up the social class ladder

**urban renewal** the rehabilitation of a rundown area, which usually results in the displacement of the poor who are living in that area

**urbanization** the process by which an increasing proportion of a population lives in cities and has a growing influence on the culture

validity the extent to which an operational definition measures what it is intended to measure

value cluster values that together form a larger whole

value contradiction values that contradict one another; to follow the one means to come into conflict with the other

values the standards by which people define what is desirable or undesirable, good or bad, beautiful or ugly

variable a factor thought to be significant for human behavior, which can vary (or change) from one case to another

**voluntary associations** groups made up of people who voluntarily organize on the basis of some mutual interest; also known as *voluntary memberships* and *voluntary organizations* 

**voter apathy** indifference and inaction on the part of individuals or groups with respect to the political process

war armed conflict between nations or politically distinct groups

WASP white anglo saxon protestant

wealth the total value of everything someone owns, minus the debts

white ethnics white immigrants to the United States whose cultures differ from WASP culture

white-collar crime Edwin Sutherland's term for crimes committed by people of respectable and high social status in the course of their occupations; for example, bribery of public officials, securities violations, embezzlement, false advertising, and price fixing

**world system theory** how economic and political connections developed and now tie the world's countries together

**zero population growth** women bearing only enough children to reproduce the population

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