The Normality of Crime

- Crime/Deviance is normative. No society is exempt from it.
- In order for there to be no crime/deviance there would need to exist, in all conscience, like sentiments of like degrees.
  - Durkheim questions if this is even possible.

Deviance and Social Control

- The recognized violation of cultural norms.
- Not the act itself, but the reactions to the act, that make something deviant. - H. Becker
- Deviance is the flip side of conformity.
- Norms are sometimes difficult to identify.
  - We all seem to have a clearer sense of what is deviant.
  - Deviance helps us (society) to clarify our norms.

Deviance and Norms

- Norms vary across societies.
- What is deviant varies across societies.
- Norms change.
  - Over time.
  - Within a given culture.
  - Social Order and Social Control.
- What is deviant changes.
  - Over time.
  - Within a given culture.
Goffman’s Stigma

- **Stigma** – “any attribute that discredits a person or disqualifies him or her from ‘full social acceptance’” – Goffman
  
- **Discredited Identity**
  - Abominations of the body (violating norms of appearance).
  - Blemishes of individual character (violating norms of acceptable behavior).
  - Tribal Stigmas (violating norms of appropriate association).

Sanctions

- Sanctions are the way society perpetuates desired behavior and attempts to extinguish undesirable behavior.
  
- Sanctions function to maintain societies structure by (+) reinforcing desirable norms and (-) reacting to deviance.

Sociobiology and Deviance

- Early sociobiologists, such as Lombroso, theorized that some humans (men primarily) had genetic predispositions to engaging in crime / deviance.
  - Attempted to demonstrate that there were a relationships between head size, body type, arm length, etc. and deviance.
  - Research did not support his initial findings/hypotheses.
  
- Social Evolution - Having those characteristics that are best suited for survival will continue to be reproduced. As a result different groups inherit different tendencies for empathy, self-control, and risk-taking.

Psychological Explanations for Deviance

- Focused on the psyche and personality disorders.
  
- Id or subconscious motives drive peoples deviance.
  
- Personality disorders are manifest through “deviant” thoughts and subsequent behaviors.
Differential Association

- Based on the groups we associate with, we learn to deviate from or conform to society’s norms.
- Half of those serving time in prison have an immediate family member who has served time.
- Honor and respect and how we get it….
  - Poorer neighborhoods vs. middle to upper-middle class neighborhoods.

Law and Society

- Some norms are so important to a society they are formalized into laws.
- Law - Governmental social control.
  - The legal order reflects values of those in a position to exercise “legitimate” authority.
- Control Theory - Our connection to members of society lead us to systematically conform to society’s norms.

Control Theory

- Inner controls include:
  - Conscience
  - Religious beliefs, values, principles
  - Morality
  - Fear of punishment
  - Desire to be “good”
- Outer controls include:
  - Those external forces that encourage us to not deviate (family, friends, the police, etc.).
- The stronger our bonds with society, the more effective our inner controls are.
Labeling Theory

- Attempts to explain why some people are viewed as deviants while others are not, even when engaging in the same activities.
  - Also referred to as societal-reaction approach:
    - Again, response to an act, not the actual behavior, determines deviance.
- Primary Deviance
- Secondary Deviance
  - Once labeled one is unable to completely “shake” the label of being deviant.
    - “Achieved Master Status”

Retrospective and Projective Labeling

- Retrospective Labeling
  - Once a person’s deviant behavior becomes known their past behavior is seen through the lens of their now known deviance.
- Projective Labeling
  - Once a person’s deviant behavior becomes known it is supposed that the behavior is going to continue if gone unchecked / unmonitored.

Trying “to Pass”

- Camouflaging the attribute that would get them labeled as deviant.
- Because one is vulnerable to being found out, they are discreditable – in danger of feeling the full force of the stigma.
Neutralizing

- Those labeled as deviant will frequently engage in some form of “neutralizing”.
- Neutralizing could be thought of as a “face saving” tool used in the *Presentation of Self*....
- “That which we give”... not just directed at the participant, but even to ourselves.
- “I am not (at least not entirely) a deviant.”

Neutralizing Techniques

- Denial of responsibility.
- Appeal to higher loyalties.
- Condemnation of the condemners.
- Denial of injury.
- Denial of the victim.

Labeling the Saints and the Roughnecks

- Both groups engaged in many of the same behaviors.
- Teachers and the community saw one group as headed for success in life and the other headed toward a life of trouble/crime.
- Different interactions with the community based on class differences.
- Distinctly different life outcomes.
Durkheim’s Basic Insight

- Deviance clarifies moral boundaries and affirms cultural values and norms.
- Responding to deviance brings people together; encourages social unity.
- Deviance encourages social change.

Durkheim and Deviance

- Collective Conscience – The totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of the same society.
- Because norms exist outside of the individual, sociologists look for causes of deviance in the same place: outside the individual.
- Revisiting Suicide.

Durkheim’s Suicide

- Suicide was higher in industrializing societies than in non-industrializing societies.
- Suicide was higher among Protestants than Catholics.
- Structural Strain.
  - Egoism
  - Anomie

Durkheim and Merton

- Durkheim hypothesized that once society completed its transition from premodern to modern, anomie would go away.
- Robert K. Merton believed anomie was built into the social structure.
Merton’s Goals and Means

- Culturally approved goals -
- Legitimate Means -
- Everything is fine in a society in which there is a good match between the **culturally approved goals** and the availability of **legitimate means** to reach those goals.

Disjunction, Anomie, and Deviance

- In modern western society there tends to be a significant gap between goals and means.
  
  - **Anomie exists when a system of cultural values extols, virtually above all else, certain success goals for the population at large while the social structure rigorously restricts or completely closes access to approved modes of reaching goals for a considerable part of the same population.** -Merton, 1938

- Merton argued that under such circumstances “deviant behavior ensues on a large scale.”

Merton’s Strain Theory
Legitimate vs. Illegitimate Means

- Cloward and Ohlin extended Merton’s analysis of unequal distribution of legitimate means to culturally emphasized (approved) goals by suggesting that there also exists an unequal distribution of illegitimate means to success.

- Learning to Smoke Pot
  - Learning to smoke
  - Learning to perceive the effect
  - Learning to enjoy the effect

Neutralizing and White-Collar Crime

- Antitrust Violators
  - Historical Continuity
  - Action as Blameless
  - Critical of Prosecutors
  - Profit and Survival – What it means to be in business in a capitalistic society.

- Tax Violators
  - Historical Tradition

- Violation of Financial Trust
  - The offender must exercise restraint in the committing of the offense (as part of the effort to not get caught).
  - Once exposed, the offender can point to the restraint on his part as evidence that he is not really a criminal.

- Fraud
  - Those who commit fraud are most likely, among white-collar criminals, to admit to having committed any crime at all.
  - Often the blame is placed on others.
Conflict Paradigm

- Who is in a position to determine what is deviant or criminal and what is not?
- People or groups with power protect their own interests and define deviance to suit their needs.
  - Differential Justice:
    - Differences in the way social control is exercised over different groups.

The Normality of Crime – Deux

- *Imagine a society of saints… crimes.. unknown; faults which appear invisible to us will become scandalous.*
- Durkheim argues that we cannot reinforce strong states of common consciousness without reinforcing the more feeble states.
  - Weaker states (norms) that are attenuated / prolonged / thinner.
- In other words, the collective conscience is relative.

The Norm

- “Respect for that which is another’s”
  - Robbery and bad taste injure the same altruistic sentiment.
  - The sentiment exists along a continuum.
  - There are varying degrees of response.
    - Robbery: Crime – Punishable.
    - Bad Taste: Merely blamed – informal sanction

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<th>Bad Taste</th>
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The Consequence

- Should we eliminate from all public consciousness the notion of robbery we would then become more sensitive to bad taste.
- Elements thought to be in the poorest taste would become more discernible and thereby punishable.