

# SOCIOLOGY and GIS:

## Mapping across Disciplines

### LESSON PLAN

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**Title of Lesson**     **Mapping Racial Demographics in Ohio and in our prisons**  
**Author**             Dana Johnson, Associate Professor, Sinclair Community College

**Time Required**     75 minutes

**Materials**             Compass rose  
                              Map legend  
                              Computers (Laptops)  
                              Cones and Placeholder Markers  
                              Appendix A: Student Activity

**Preparation:** Prior to this lesson, instructor should be familiar with prison population, specifically, the growth of the prisons and the prison population since the 1980s (e.g. What policies led to the buildup of prisons?) Also, instructor should be familiar with the demographics of the prison population (gender, race, age).

The instructor should be familiar with the demographics (age, race, and gender) of the population in the Ohio Prison system. *In the United States, black people are incarcerated at more than five times the rate of white people (NAACP Criminal Justice Fact Sheet. 2018). As a result, black people are disproportionately represented in our prisons: In 2016, black people made up 12 percent of our country's population but accounted for 33 percent of our prison population. Conversely, white people made up 64 percent of the U.S. population but only 30 percent of our prison population (Pew Research. 2018).*

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#### Objectives

Students will learn how to pose spatial questions on the topic of Ohio demographics and prison population by:

- Reviewing the population demographics of the U.S., Ohio, and selected Ohio towns/cities.
- Comparing how Ohio prisons may replicate national prison trends.
- Considering the reasons if/why/how prison populations have changed over time.

#### Essential Questions

- How can we use maps to think about the connections between prison population and Ohio's total population?

- How can maps be used to understand, question and analyze the impact of prison population (demographics) and location?

## National Geography Standards

- How to use maps and other geographic representations, geospatial technologies, and spatial thinking to understand and communicate information.
- The characteristics, distribution, and migration of human populations on Earth's surface.

## Instructional Process

1. **Review rules of learning with the Giant Map. No shoes, writing utensils, or sliding on the map.**
2. **Introduce students to the map.**
  - Ask how we know which direction is north/south and add the compass rose to the map.
  - Ask what the colors and lines indicate on the map and add the legend to the map.
  - Discuss how the alpha-numeric grid is used to describe a location. Give a couple of examples. Where is Dayton (Toledo, Columbus...) located using the grid?

3. **Introduce the topic:**

The sociological perspective invites us to look at our familiar surroundings in a fresh way. It encourages us to take a new look at the world, in a way that looks at the totality of social life, an emphasis on context, or setting in which behavior and interaction takes place.

Today we will explore how visualizing data on a map can lead us to ask questions or think about relationships/patterns differently, particularly as it relates to prison location, inmate population, and community setting. Today, then, we will construct a map specifically thinking about whether Ohio's incarcerated population reflects Ohio's total population.

4. Ask students to think about demographics of populations, particularly, gender, race/ethnicity, and age. Consider: What categories are used and how are these categories defined? How do we collect this data? How is the data reported? The numbers that we use today are from the U.S. Census. Race categories change over time. Table 1 reports only two race categories (African American/Black and White). Individuals identifying in two or more categories are not included in this count.

5. Using the Big Ohio map, we are going to put a cone on each city listed on Table 1.

6. The next step is to understand the racial make up of each city (or a selected subset of Ohio cities). Here we want to represent the population of selected cities by their racial makeup. It is easiest to do a demonstration city. Let's use Dayton. Using Table 1 and the small 'poker' chips, place a chip for each 5 percentage point for Per Black and Per White. For example, for Dayton you

would place 8 blue chips (representing approximately 40% Black) and 11 red chips (representing approx. 55% White). You ask students to complete placing the chips representing race for each city. Students may work in pairs to complete the map. You may want to complete the example of London which we use in the next step.

<b>Geography</b>	<b>Total Pop (2019)</b>	<b>Per_Afr Am/Black</b>	<b>Per_White</b>	<b>Per_Hisp</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Under 18</b>	<b>Over 65</b>
U.S.	328,239,523	13.4%	76.5%	18.3%	50.8%	22.4%	18%
Ohio	11,689,100	13%	81.9%	3.9%	51%	22.2%	17.1%
Columbus	898,553	28.5%	59.5%	5.9%	51.2%	22.5	10%
Cleveland	381,009	49.6%	39.8%	11.6%	51.8%	22.7%	13.5%
Dayton	140,407	39%	55.35	3.9%	51.2%	21.9%	12.4%
Cincinnati	303,940	42.7%	50.3%	3.7%	51.8%	21.9%	12.2%
Lebanon city	20,659	3.5%	91.3%	3.6%	52.8%	27.3%	12.7%
London city	10,328	3.8%	90.8%	1.1%	49.8%	22.4%	15.7%
Pickaway County	58,457	3.9%	93.7%	1.4%	47.5%	21.4%	15.7%
Mansfield City	46,599	19.2%	72%	2.9%	46.3%	19.7%	16.8%

The value of locating data on a map is that we often see relationships that we would have not thought about previously. Maps help us ask questions. Ask students: what kinds of things that they have noticed?

7. Let's think about individual prisons in Ohio. Let's work through an example. We now know the demographics of selected cities (for example, London, Ohio) (See Appendix D for a map of prisons in Ohio). How does the demographics of the prison (staff and incarcerated) in London compare with the nearby City of London? You could create a symbol with the information about the London Correctional Institute and place it on the map.

<b>Geography</b>	<b>Total Pop (2019)</b>	<b>Per_Afr Am/Black</b>	<b>Per_White</b>	<b>Per_Hisp</b>	<b>Female</b>

Ohio Total Staff	12,278	18.2%	79.1%		31.5%
Ohio Male Incarcerated Population	45,040	46.5%	49.5%		
Ohio Female Incarcerated Population	3,948	24.6%	73.8%		
London city (US Census Bureau 2019)	10,328	3.8%	90.8%	1.1%	49.8%
London Correctional Institute (LOCI) (incarcerated Pop) (June 2018)	2,273*	1038 (45.6%)	1235 (54.3%)		
LOCI (staff)	466 *	42.4%	55.9%		

\* Sources:

US and Ohio data retrieved from [https://www.insideprison.com/state\\_federal\\_prison\\_details.asp?ID=1238](https://www.insideprison.com/state_federal_prison_details.asp?ID=1238)  
London data retrieved from <https://drc.ohio.gov/Portals/0/JUNE2018%20A%26%20B.pdf>

Summary: How does the demographics of the incarcerated population in London Correctional Institute compare with the City of London where the prison is located?

8. The next step is to have students identify a prison near a prison and find the demographic information for the prison and city. Ask students working to create a symbol representing the prison and city demographics.

To get the population of the city: Go to the 'QuickFacts' on the US Census website. <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts> to find the population and percentages. T

To get the population and demographics of a nearby state run prison: Go to the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) "Institution Progress Report" and select a particular year that you are interested <https://drc.ohio.gov/reports/progress>. The reports provides a breakdown of gender and racial demographics for a month, by correctional facility.

If the focus of the activity is to look at inmate population within Ohio counties, you can look at the ODRC Institutional Census Report <https://drc.ohio.gov/reports/institution-census>. This annual report will list the county and give population of inmates, including race and gender demographics.

9. Ask students to put their symbol on the maps and then have them ) explain what they have found out about that particular correctional institute.

## Discussion

In the larger group, discuss their findings.

### Debriefing Discussion

Instructor will lead a discussion that allows students to report out their reactions to the exercise by asking general questions, such as:

- a. After reviewing how you answered the opening questionnaire, how accurate were your responses?
- b. What stood out to you the most about the map activity?
- c. What, if anything were you most surprised about the map activity?
- d. What, if anything were you least surprised about the map activity?
- e. What, if anything, are the racial, gender, age implications associated with the prison population?

### Extension Activities

**Suggested Preparation Activity:** This activity could be done in preparation for this lesson. You might introduce the topic by considering the incarcerated populations in the United States and Ohio. In groups of two or three, students should complete Appendix A. After completion, discuss what students found in the larger class. Then, you could start the mapping activity.

**Optional Extension Activity 1:** Students can complete the questionnaire found in Appendix B guided by the following:

Students can visit the following websites to explore incarceration rates in the United States. They will use information gathered from the sites to record data and complete questions.

<https://www.bjs.gov/>

<https://www.sentencingproject.org/criminal-justice-facts/>

**Optional Extension Activity 2:** Students can complete the discussion points in Appendix C.

## References

Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved from <https://www.bjs.gov/>

The Eastern State Penitentiary. Retrieved from <https://www.easternstate.org/explore/exhibits/prisons-today>

The Ohio Department of Corrections. Retrieved from <https://www.drc.ohio.gov/monthly-fact-sheets>

The Sentencing Project. Retrieved from <https://www.sentencingproject.org/criminal-justice-facts/>

Vera Institute of Justice. Ohio Incarceration Trends. <http://trends.vera.org/rates/ohio>

National Geographic Society. (n.D.). National Geography Standards Index. Retrieved from <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/standards/national-geography-standards/>

## Suggested Sociology Resources for Instructors

See Appendix E

Theories of Deviance <https://openstax.org/books/introduction-sociology-2e/pages/7-2-theoretical-perspectives-on-deviance#89661>

The three major sociological paradigms offer different explanations for the motivation behind deviance and crime. Functionalists point out that deviance is a social necessity since it reinforces norms by reminding people of the consequences of violating them. Violating norms can open society's eyes to injustice in the system. Conflict theorists argue that crime stems from a system of inequality that keeps those with power at the top and those without power at the bottom. Symbolic interactionists focus attention on the socially constructed nature of the labels related to deviance. Crime and deviance are learned from the environment and enforced or discouraged by those around us.

Crime and the Law <https://openstax.org/books/introduction-sociology-2e/pages/7-3-crime-and-the-law>

Crime is established by legal codes and upheld by the criminal justice system. In the United States, there are three branches of the justice system: police, courts, and corrections. Although crime rates increased throughout most of the twentieth century, they are now dropping.

## Appendix A: Questionnaire about Prison Population

### Ask students complete a preliminary questionnaire about prison population

- a. What do you think is the total population of prisoners in the United States in 2018?
- b. What do you think was the total population of prisoners in Ohio in 2019 (the date can be interchanged)?
- c. Based on the total population that you guessed, how many of the prisoners are men?
- d. Based on the total population that you guessed, how many of the prisoners are women?
- e. Based on the total population that you guessed, how many of the prisoners are White?
- f. Based on the total population that you guessed, how many of the prisoners are African American?
- g. Based on the total population that you guessed, how many of the prisoners are between the ages under the age of 25?
- h. Based on the total population that you guessed, how many of the prisoners are between the ages of 26-45?
- i. Based on the total population that you guessed, how many of the prisoners are between the ages of 46-64?
- j. Based on the total population that you guessed, how many of the prisoners are over 65 and older?

## Appendix B: Prison Populations

### Giant Ohio Map Activity

Group Member Names: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** In your groups, use your phones and laptops to help you decide on the best answers to each question. If you can't find the answer, make an educated guess We'll follow with in-class discussion.

1. In what region (North- above I70 or South- below I70?) do you think the most Ohio prisons are located?
2. Do you expect prison populations to be equally divided (gender and race)
3. In XXXX year (or region), what was the total prison population in the United States? In Ohio?
4. In XXXX year, what was the total prison population of men in prisons in the United States? In Ohio (mark on the map. Each marker could represent a certain amount, like 50)?
5. In XXXX year (or region), what was the total prison population of women in prisons in the United States? In Ohio (mark on the map. Each marker could represent a certain amount, like 50)?
6. In XXXX year (or region), what was the total prison population of African Americans in prison in the United States? In Ohio (mark on the map. Each marker could represent a certain amount, like 100)?
7. In XXXX year (or region), what was the total prison population of individuals under the age 50 in prison in the United States? In Ohio (mark on the map. Each marker could represent a certain amount, like 50)?
8. In what cities (locations) do you think has the highest prison population? Mark on the map (mark on the map. Each marker could represent a certain amount, like 50).
9. In what cities (location)do you think has the highest number of women incarcerated (mark on the map. Each marker could represent a certain amount, like 50)?
10. In what cities (locations) do you think has the fewest number of blacks incarcerated (mark on the map. Each marker could represent a certain amount, like 50)?

### **Appendix C: Optional Additional Activity (homework following the map activity in class)**

Explain what society can do to create a social environment in which all people are created equally regardless of social class, race and gender. Address all three social strata (social class, race and gender) in your answer.

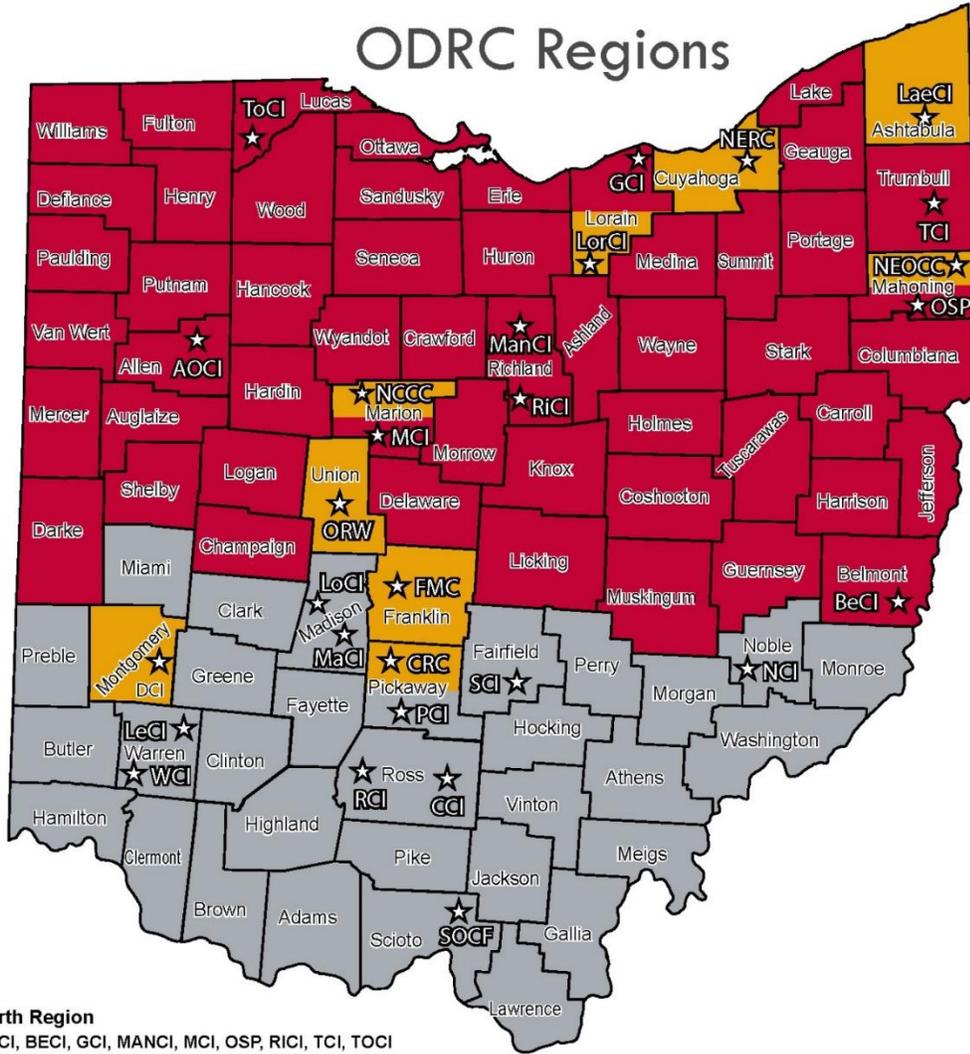
You can also refer to appendix F- Theories of Deviance and Crime and the Law.

Analyze the data given on Prisoners in Ohio for a block of years (i.e. 2010, 2015, 2020 thinking 5-10 year intervals) by comparing and contrasting the gender, race, and age populations between 5 year span. Identify the trends that you witness and complete the following:

- a. Create one statement regarding gender that seems to be accurate in relation to the data and based on your statement regarding gender, which theory(ies) best explains this phenomena?
- b. Create one statement regarding race that seems to be accurate in relation to the data and based on your statement regarding race, which theory(ies) best explains this phenomena?

**Appendix D: Ohio Regional Map of Prison Locations**  
**Giant Map Activity: Prison Populations**

**Ohio** | Department of  
 Rehabilitation & Correction



**North Region**  
 AOCI, BECI, GCI, MANCI, MCI, OSP, RICI, TCI, TOCI  
 Dave Bobby, Regional Director

**South Region**  
 CCI, LECl, LOCl, MACl, NCl, PCl, RCl, SCl, SOCF, WCl  
 Ed Banks, Regional Director

**Specialty Region**  
 CRC, DCI, LAECI, LORCI, NCCC, NEOCC, NERC, ORW, FMC  
 Charles Bradley, Regional Director

Office of Prisons Administrative Assistants	
<b>Brian Niceswanger</b> *All prisons north of I-70	AOCI, BECI, GCI, LAECI, LORCI, MANCI, MCI, NCCC, NERC, NEOCC, ORW, OSP, RICI, TCI & TOCI
<b>Cassy Wilkins</b> *All prisons south of I-70	CCI, CRC, DCI, FMC, LECl, LOCl, MACl, NCl, PCl, RCl, SCl, SOCF & WCl

Regions (6/14/2019)

## Appendix E- Theories of Deviance



### Deviance Theories

Since its inception as a discipline, sociology has studied the causes of deviant behavior, examining why some persons conform to social rules and expectations and why others do not. Typically, sociological theories of deviance reason that aspects of individuals' social relationships and the social areas in which they live and work assist in explaining the commission of deviant acts. This emphasis on social experiences, and how they contribute to deviant behavior, contrasts with the focus on the internal states of individuals taken by disciplines such as psychology and psychiatry.

Sociological theories are important in understanding the roots of social problems such as crime, violence, and mental illness and in explaining how these problems may be remedied. By specifying the causes of deviance, the theories reveal how aspects of the social environment influence the behavior of individuals and groups. Further, the theories suggest how changes in these influences may yield changes in levels of deviant behaviors. If a theory specifies that a particular set of factors cause deviant behavior, then it also implies that eliminating or altering those factors in the environment will change levels of deviance. By developing policies or measures that are informed by sociological theories, government agencies or programs focused on problems like crime or violence are more likely to yield meaningful reductions in criminal or violent behavior.

Despite their importance, deviance theories disagree about the precise causes of deviant acts. Some look to the structure of society and groups or geographic areas within society, explaining deviance in terms of broad social conditions in which deviance is most likely to flourish. Others explain deviant behavior using the characteristics of individuals, focusing on those characteristics that are most highly associated with learning deviant acts. Other theories view deviance as a social status conferred by one group or person on others, a status that is imposed by persons or groups in power in order to protect their positions of power. These theories explain deviance in terms of differentials in power between individuals or groups.

This chapter reviews the major sociological theories of deviance. It offers an overview of each major theory, summarizing its explanation of deviant behavior. Before reviewing the theories, however, it may prove useful to describe two different dimensions of theory that will structure our discussion. The first of these, the level of explanation, refers to the scope of the theory and whether it focuses on the behavior and characteristics of individuals or on the characteristics of social aggregates such as neighborhoods, cities, or other social areas. Micro-level theories stress the individual, typically explaining deviant acts in terms of personal characteristics of individuals or the immediate social context in which deviant acts occur. In contrast, macro-level theories focus on social aggregates or groups, looking to the structural characteristics of areas in explaining the origins of deviance, particularly rates of deviance among those groups.

These two dimensions offer a four-fold scheme for classifying types of deviance theories. The first, macro-level origin theories, focus on the causes of norm violations associated with broad structural conditions in the society. These theories typically examine the influences of such structural characteristics of populations or communities like the concentration of poverty, levels of community integration, or the density and age distribution of the population on areal rates of deviance. The theories have clear implications for public

policies to reduce levels of deviance. Most often, the theories highlight the need for altering structural characteristics of society, such as levels of poverty, that foster deviant behavior.

The second, micro-level origin theories focus on the characteristics of the deviant and his or her immediate social environment. These theories typically examine the relationship between a person's involvement in deviance and such characteristics as the influence of peers and significant others, persons' emotional stakes in conformity, their beliefs about the propriety of deviance and conformity, and their perceptions of the threat of punishments for deviant acts. In terms of their implications for public policy, micro-level origin theories emphasize the importance of assisting individuals in resisting negative peer influences while also increasing their attachment to conforming lifestyles and activities.

Finally, macro-level reaction theories emphasize broad structural conditions in society that are associated with the designation of entire groups or segments of the society as deviant. These theories tend to stress the importance of structural characteristics of populations, groups, or geographic areas, such as degrees of economic inequality or concentration of political power within communities or the larger society. According to macro-level reaction theories, powerful groups impose the status of deviant as a mechanism for controlling those groups that represent the greatest political, economic, or social threat to their position of power. The theories also imply that society can only achieve reduced levels of deviance by reducing the levels of economic and political inequality in society.

### **Macro-level Origins of Deviance**

Theories of the macro-level origins of deviance look to the broad, structural characteristics of society, and groups within society, to explain deviant behavior. Typically, these theories examine one of three aspects of social structure. The first is the pervasiveness and consequences of poverty in modern American society. Robert Merton's (1938) writing on American social structure and Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin's (1960) subsequent work on urban gangs laid the theoretical foundation for this perspective. Reasoning that pervasive materialism in American culture creates unattainable aspirations for many segments of the population, Merton (1964) and others argue that there exists an environmental state of "strain" among the poor. The limited availability of legitimate opportunities for attaining material wealth forces the poor to adapt through deviance, either by achieving wealth through illegitimate means or by rejecting materialistic aspirations and withdrawing from society altogether.

According to this reasoning, deviance is a byproduct of poverty and a mechanism through which the poor may attain wealth, albeit illegitimately. Thus, "strain" theories of deviance interpret behaviors such as illegal drug selling, prostitution, and armed robbery as innovative adaptations to blocked opportunities for legitimate economic or occupational success. Similarly, the theories interpret violent crimes in terms of the frustrations of poverty, as acts of aggression triggered by those frustrations (Blau and Blau 1982). Much of the current research in this tradition is examining the exact mechanisms by which poverty and economic inequality influence rates of deviant behavior.

Although once considered a leading theory of deviance, strain theory has come under criticism for its narrow focus on poverty as the primary cause of deviant behavior. Recent efforts have sought to revise and extend the basic principles of the theory by expanding and reformulating ideas about strain. Robert Agnew (1992) has made the most notable revisions to the theory. His reformulation emphasizes social psychological, rather than structural, sources of strain. Agnew also broadens the concept of strain, arguing that poverty may be a source of strain, but it is not the only source. Three sources of strain are important: failure to achieve positively

valued goals, removal of positively valued stimuli, and confrontation with negative stimuli. The first type of strain, failure to achieve positively valued goals, may be the result of a failure to live up to one's expectations or aspirations. Strain may also result if an individual feels that he or she is not being treated in a fair or just manner. The removal of a positively valued stimulus, such as the death of a family member or the loss of a boyfriend or girlfriend, can also result in strain. Finally, strain can also be produced by the presentation of negative stimuli, such as unpleasant school experiences. Thus, although this reformulation of strain theory retains the notion that deviance is often the result of strain, the concept of strain is broadened to include multiple sources of strain.

The second set of macro-level origin theories examine the role of culture in deviant behavior. Although not ignoring structural forces such as poverty in shaping deviance, this class of theories reasons that there may exist cultures within the larger culture that endorse or reinforce deviant values; deviant subcultures that produce higher rates of deviance among those segments of the population sharing subcultural values.

Subcultural explanations have their origin in two distinct sociological traditions. The first is writing on the properties of delinquent gangs that identifies a distinct lower-class culture of gang members that encourages aggression, thrill seeking, and antisocial behavior (e.g., Miller 1958). The second is writing on cultural conflict that recognizes that within complex societies there will occur contradictions between the conduct norms of different groups. Thorsten Sellin (1938) suggests that in heterogeneous societies several different subcultures may emerge, each with its own set of conduct norms. According to Sellin, the laws and norms applied to the entire society do not necessarily reflect cultural consensus but rather the values and beliefs of the dominant social groups.

Subcultural theories emerging from these two traditions argue that deviance is the product of a cohesive set of values and norms that favors deviant behavior and is endorsed by a segment of the general population. Perhaps most prominent among the theories is Marvin Wolfgang and Franco Ferracuti's (1967) writing on subcultures of criminal violence. Wolfgang and Ferracuti reason that there may exist a distinct set of beliefs and expectations within the society; a subculture that promotes and encourages violent interactions. According to Wolfgang and Ferracuti, this violent subculture is pervasive among blacks in the United States and may explain extremely high rates of criminal homicide among young black males.

Although Wolfgang and Ferracuti offer little material specifying the subculture's precise causes, or empirical evidence demonstrating the pervasiveness of subcultural beliefs, other writers have extended the theory by exploring the relationship between beliefs favoring violence and such factors as the structure of poverty in the United States (Curtis 1975; Messner 1983), the history of racial oppression of blacks (Silberman 1980), and ties to the rural South and a southern subculture of violence (Gastil 1971; Erlanger 1974). Even these writers, however, offer little empirical evidence of violent subcultures within U.S. society.

A third class of theories about the macro-level origins of deviance began with the work of sociologists at the University of Chicago in the 1920s. Unlike strain and subcultural theories, these stress the importance of the social integration of neighborhoods and communities—the degree to which neighborhoods are stable and are characterized by a homogenous set of beliefs and values—as a force influencing rates of deviant behavior. As levels of integration increase, rates of deviance decrease. Based in the early work of sociologists such as Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay, the theories point to the structure of social controls in neighborhoods, arguing that neighborhoods lacking in social controls are “disorganized,” that is, areas in which there is a virtual vacuum of social norms. It is in this normative vacuum that deviance flourishes. Therefore, these theories view deviance as a property of areas or locations rather than specific groups of people.

Early writers in the “disorganization” tradition identified industrialization and urbanization as the causes of disorganized communities and neighborhoods. Witnessing immense growth in eastern cities such as Chicago, these writers argued that industrial and urban expansion create zones of disorganization within cities. Property owners move from the residential pockets on the edge of business and industrial areas and allow buildings to deteriorate in anticipation of the expansion of business and industry. This process of natural succession and change in cities disrupts traditional mechanisms of social control in neighborhoods. As property owners leave transitional areas, more mobile and diverse groups enter. But the added mobility and diversity of these groups translate into fewer primary relationships—families and extended kinship and friendship networks. And as the number of primary relationships decline, so will informal social controls in neighborhoods. Hence, rates of deviance will rise.

Recent writing from this perspective focuses on the mechanisms by which specific places in urban areas become the spawning grounds for deviant acts (Bursik and Webb 1982; Bursik 1984; and others). For example, Rodney Stark (1987) argues that high levels of population density are associated with particularly low levels of supervision of children. With little supervision, children perform poorly in school and are much less likely to develop “stakes in conformity”—that is, emotional and psychological investments in academic achievement and other conforming behaviors. Without such stakes, children and adolescents are much more likely to turn to deviant alternatives. Thus, according to Stark, rates of deviance will be high in densely populated areas because social controls in the form of parental supervision are either weak or entirely absent.

Similarly, Robert Crutchfield (1989) argues that the structure of work opportunities in areas may have the same effect. Areas characterized primarily by secondary-sector work opportunities— low pay, few career opportunities, and high employee turnover—may tend to attract and retain persons with few stakes in conventional behavior— a “situation of company” in which deviance is likely to flourish.

Recent writing from the disorganization perspective has also taken the form of ethnographies; qualitative studies of urban areas and the deviance producing dynamics of communities. As Sullivan (1989, p. 9) states, ethnographies describe the community “as a locus of interaction, intermediate between the individual and the larger society, where the many constraints and opportunities of the total society are narrowed to a subset within which local individuals choose.” At the heart of Sullivan’s argument is the idea that social networks in neighborhoods are important in understanding whether individuals are capable of finding meaningful opportunities for work. For example, youth were less likely to turn to crime in those neighborhoods where they could take advantage of family and neighborhood connections to blue collar jobs. Because of the greater employment opportunities in these neighborhoods, even youth who become involved in crime were less likely to persist in highrisk criminal behaviors.

Similarly, Jay MacLeod (1995) attempts to explain how the aspirations of youth living in urban areas have been “leveled,” or reduced to the point where the youths have little hope for a better future. In an analysis of two urban gangs, MacLeod argues that the youths’ family and work experiences, along with their relationships with their peers, help explain why a predominantly white gang had lower aspirations and engaged in more delinquent and antisocial behavior than the other gang, predominantly comprised of African Americans. According to MacLeod, the parents of white youth were much less likely to discipline their children or to encourage them to achieve and do well in school. Also, white youth had more experience on the job market than the African American youth. This contributed to a more pessimistic outlook and a lowering of their future aspirations. Finally, MacLeod argues that the white youths’ immersion in a subculture, which emphasized rejecting the authority of the school, reinforced their negative attitudes to a much greater extent than the African American peer group.

In sum, theories of the macro-level origins of deviance argue that many of the causes of deviance may be found in the characteristics of groups within society, or in the characteristics of geographic areas and communities. They offer explanations of group and areal differences in deviance— for example, why some cities have relatively higher rates of crime than other cities or why blacks have higher rates of serious interpersonal violence than other ethnic groups. These theories make no attempt to explain the behavior of individuals or the occurrence of individual deviant acts. Indeed, they reason that deviance is best understood as a property of an area, community, or group, regardless of the individuals living in the area or community, or the individuals comprising the group.

The theories' implications for public policy focus on the characteristics of geographic areas and communities that lead to deviance. The impact of change on neighborhoods, for example, can be reduced if the boundaries of residential areas are preserved. By preserving such boundaries, communities are less likely to become transitional neighborhoods that foster deviance and crime. Also, by maintaining residential properties people become invested in their own community, which helps foster the mechanisms of informal social control that make deviance less likely. Strengthening schools and other stabilizing institutions in neighborhoods, such as churches and community centers, can also contribute to a reduction in deviance. Finally, establishing networks for jobs and job placement in disadvantaged areas may increase the opportunities of employment among youth. If they succeed in increasing employment, the networks should decrease the chances that youth will turn to careers in crime.

### **Micro-level Origins of Deviance**

Many explanations of deviance argue that its causes are rooted in the background or personal circumstances of the individual. Micro-level origin theories have developed over the past fifty years, identifying mechanisms by which ordinarily conforming individuals may become deviant. These theories assume the existence of a homogeneous, pervasive set of norms in society and proceed to explain why persons or entire groups of persons violate the norms. There exist two important traditions within this category of theories. The first tradition involves "social learning theories"—explanations that focus on the mechanisms through which people learn the techniques and attitudes favorable to committing deviant acts. The second tradition involves "social control theories"—explanations that emphasize factors in the social environment that regulate the behavior of individuals, thereby preventing the occurrence of deviant acts.

Edwin Sutherland's (1947) theory of differential association laid the foundation for learning theories. At the heart of this theory is the assumption that deviant behavior, like all other behaviors, is learned. Further, this learning occurs within intimate personal groups—networks of family members and close friends. Thus, according to these theories individuals learn deviance from persons closest to them. Sutherland specified a process of differential association, reasoning that persons become deviant in association with deviant others. Persons learn from others the techniques of committing deviant acts and attitudes favorable to the commission of those acts. Further, Sutherland reasoned that persons vary in their degree of association with deviant others; persons regularly exposed to close friends and family members who held beliefs favoring deviance and who committed deviant acts would be much more likely than others to develop those same beliefs and commit deviant acts.

Sutherland's ideas about learning processes have played a lasting role in micro-level deviance theories. Central to his perspective is the view that beliefs and values favoring deviance are a primary cause of deviant behavior. Robert Burgess and Ronald Akers (1966) and subsequently Akers (1985) extended Sutherland's ideas, integrating them with principles of operant conditioning. Reasoning that learning processes may best be

understood in terms of the concrete rewards and punishments given for behavior, Burgess and Akers argue that deviance is learned through associations with others and through a system of rewards and punishments, imposed by close friends and relatives, for participation in deviant acts. Subsequent empirical studies offer compelling support for elements of learning theory (Matsueda 1982; Akers et al. 1979; Matsueda and Heimer 1987).

Some examples may be useful at this point. According to the theory of differential association, juveniles develop beliefs favorable to the commission of delinquent acts and knowledge about the techniques of committing deviant acts from their closest friends, typically their peers. Thus, sufficient exposure to peers endorsing beliefs favoring deviance who also have knowledge about the commission of deviant acts will cause the otherwise conforming juvenile to commit deviant acts. Thus, if adolescent peer influences encourage smoking, drinking alcohol, and other forms of drug abuse— and exposure to these influences occurs frequently, over a long period of time, and involves relationships that are important to the conforming adolescent—then he or she is likely to develop beliefs and values favorable to committing these acts. Once those beliefs and values develop, he or she is likely to commit the acts.

The second class of micro-level origin theories, control theories, explores the causes of deviance from an altogether different perspective. Control theories take for granted the existence of a cohesive set of norms shared by most persons in the society and reason that most persons want to and will typically conform to these prevailing social norms. The emphasis in these theories, unlike learning theories, is on the factors that bond individuals to conforming lifestyles. The bonds act as social and psychological constraints on the individual, binding persons to normative conformity (Toby 1957; Hirschi 1969). People deviate from norms when these bonds to conventional lifestyles are weak, and hence, when they have little restraining influence over the individual. Among control theorists, Travis Hirschi (1969) has made the greatest contributions to our knowledge about bonding processes and deviant behavior. Writing on the causes of delinquency, he argued that four aspects of bonding are especially relevant to control theory: emotional attachments to conforming others, psychological commitments to conformity, involvements in conventional activities, and beliefs consistent with conformity to prevailing norms.

Among the most important of the bonding elements are emotional attachments individuals may have to conforming others and commitments to conformity—psychological investments or stakes people hold in a conforming lifestyle. Those having weak attachments—that is, people who are insensitive to the opinions of conforming others— and who have few stakes in conformity, in the form of commitments to occupation or career and education, are more likely than others to deviate (see, e.g., Paternoster et al. 1983; Thornberry and Christenson 1984; Liska and Reed 1985). In effect, these individuals are “free” from the constraints that ordinarily bond people to normative conformity. Conversely, individuals concerned about the opinions of conforming others and who have heavy psychological investments in work or school will see the potential consequences of deviant acts—rejection by friends or loss of a job—as threatening or costly, and consequently will refrain from those acts.

A related concern is the role of sanctions in preventing deviant acts. Control theorists like Hirschi reason that most people are utilitarian in their judgments about deviant acts, and thus evaluate carefully the risks associated with each act. Control theories typically maintain that the threat of sanctions actually prevents deviant acts when the risks outweigh the gains. Much of the most recent writing on sanctions and their effects has stressed the importance of perceptual processes in decisions to commit deviant acts (Gibbs 1975, 1977; Tittle 1980; Paternoster et al. 1982, 1987; Piliavin et al. 1986; Matsueda, Piliavin, and Gartner 1988). At the heart of this perspective is the reasoning that individuals perceiving the threat of sanctions as high are much

more likely to refrain from deviance than those perceiving the threat as low, regardless of the actual level of sanction threat.

Writing from the social control perspective attempts to build on and extend the basic assumptions and propositions of control theory. Michael Gottfredson, in conjunction with Hirschi, has developed a general theory of crime that identifies “low self-control,” as opposed to diminished social control, as the primary cause of deviant behavior (Hirschi and Gottfredson 1987; Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). Arguing that all people are inherently self-interested, pursuing enhancement of personal pleasure and avoiding pain, Gottfredson and Hirschi suggest that most crimes, and for that matter most deviant acts, are the result of choices to maximize pleasure, minimize pain, or both. Crimes occur when opportunities to maximize personal pleasure are high and when the certainty of painful consequences is low. Further, people who pursue short-term gratification with little consideration for the long-term consequences of their actions are most prone to criminal behavior. In terms of classical control theory, these are individuals who have weak bonds to conformity or who disregard or ignore the potentially painful consequences of their actions. They are “relatively unable or unwilling to delay gratification; they are indifferent to punishment and the interests of others” (Hirschi and Gottfredson 1987, pp. 959–960).

Robert Sampson and John Laub (1993) have also expanded on the basic propositions of control theory. In their research, Sampson and Laub focus on stability and change in the antisocial behavior of individuals as they grow from juveniles to adults. Sampson and Laub argue that family, school, and peer relationships influence the likelihood of deviant behavior among juveniles. In particular, Sampson and Laub argue that the structure of the family (e.g., residential mobility, family size) affects family context or process (e.g., parental supervision, discipline), which, in turn, makes deviance among children more or less likely. Many adolescent delinquents grow up to become adult criminals because their juvenile delinquency makes the formation of adult social bonds to work and family less likely. Despite this continuity in antisocial behavior from adolescence to adulthood, however, Sampson and Laub argue that many juvenile delinquents do not commit deviant acts as adults because they develop adult social bonds, such as attachment to a spouse or commitment to a job.

In sum, micro-level origin theories look to those aspects of the individual’s social environment that influence her or his likelihood of deviance. Learning theories stress the importance of deviant peers and other significant individuals, and their impact on attitudes and behaviors favorable to the commission of deviant acts. These theories assume that the social environment acts as an agent of change, transforming otherwise conforming individuals into deviants through peer influences. People exposed to deviant others frequently and sufficiently, like persons exposed to a contagious disease who become ill, will become deviant themselves. Control theories avoid this “contagion” model, viewing the social environment as a composite of controls and restraints cementing the individual to a conforming lifestyle. Deviance occurs when elements of the bond— aspects of social control—are weak or broken, thereby freeing the individual to violate social norms. Sanctions and the threat of sanctions are particularly important to control theories, a central part of the calculus that rational actors use in choosing to commit or refrain from committing deviant acts.

The policy implications of micro-level origin theories are obvious. If, as learning theories argue, deviance is learned through association with deviant peers, then the way to eliminate deviance is to assist youths in resisting deviant peer influences and helping them to develop attitudes that disapprove of deviant behavior. Control theories, on the other hand, suggest that deviance can be reduced with programs that help families develop stronger bonds between parents and children. Control theory also implies that programs that help youths develop stronger commitments to conventional lines of activity and to evaluate the costs and benefits of deviant acts will also result in a reduction of problematic behavior.

## **Micro-level Reactions to Deviance**

Unlike micro-level origin theories, micro-level reaction theories make no assumptions about the existence of a homogeneous, pervasive set of norms in society. These theories take an altogether different approach to explaining deviant behavior, viewing deviance as a matter of definition; a social status imposed by individuals or groups on others. Most argue that there exists no single pervasive set of norms in society and that deviant behavior may best be understood in terms of norms and their enforcement. These theories typically stress the importance of labeling processes—the mechanisms by which acts become defined or labeled as “deviant”—and the consequences of labeling for the person so labeled. Many of these theories are concerned with the development of deviant lifestyles or careers; long-term commitments to deviant action.

One of the most important writers in this tradition is Howard Becker (1963). Becker argues that deviance is not a property inherent in any particular form of behavior but rather a property conferred on those behaviors by audiences witnessing them. Becker (1963, p. 9) notes that “. . . deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an ‘offender.’ The deviant is one to whom that label has been successfully applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label.” Thus, Becker and others in this tradition orient the study of deviance on rules and sanctions, and the application of labels. Their primary concern is the social construction of deviance— that is, how some behaviors and classes of people come to be defined as “deviant” by others observing and judging the behavior.

Perhaps the most significant developments in this tradition have contributed to knowledge about the causes of mental illness. Proponents of microlevel reaction theories argue that the label “mental illness” can be so stigmatizing to those labeled, especially when mental-health professionals impose the label, that they experience difficulty returning to nondeviant social roles. As a result, the labeling process may actually exacerbate mental disorders. Former mental patients may find themselves victims of discrimination at work, in personal relationships, or in other social spheres (Scheff 1966). This discrimination, and the widespread belief that others devalue and discriminate against mental patients, may lead to self-devaluation and fear of social rejection by others (Link 1982, 1987). In some instances, this devaluation and fear may be associated with demoralization of the patient, loss of employment and personal income, and the persistence of mental disorders following treatment (Link 1987).

Hence, micro-level reaction theories reason that deviant behavior is rooted in the process by which persons define and label the behavior of others as deviant. The theories offer explanations of individual differences in deviance, stressing the importance of audience reactions to initial deviant acts. However, these theories make no attempt to explain the origins of the initial acts (Scheff 1966). Rather, they are concerned primarily with the development and persistence of deviant careers.

Micro-level reaction theories have very different implications for public policy than macro- and micro-level origins theories. Micro-level reaction theories argue that unwarranted labeling can lead to deviant careers. In effect, the reaction to deviance can cause deviant behavior to escalate. Thus, in order to reduce deviance, agencies of social control must adopt policies of nonintervention. Rather than being formally sanctioned and labeled as deviant, nonintervention policies must encourage diversion and deinstitutionalization. Formal sanctioning must be highly selective, focusing only on the most serious and threatening deviant acts.

## **Macro-level Reactions to Deviance**

The final class of theories looks to the structure of economic and political power in society as a cause of deviant behavior. Macro-level reaction theories— either Marxist or other conflict theories— view deviance as a status imposed by dominant social classes to control and regulate populations that threaten political and economic hegemony. Like micro-level reaction theories, these theories view deviance as a social construction and accord greatest importance to the mechanisms by which society defines and controls entire classes of behavior and people as deviant in order to mediate the threat. However, these theories reason that the institutional control of deviants has integral ties to economic and political order in society.

Marxist theories stress the importance of the economic structure of society and begin with the assumption that the dominant norms in capitalist societies reflect the interests of the powerful economic class; the owners of business. But contemporary Marxist writers (Quinney 1970, 1974, 1980; Spitzer 1975; Young 1983) also argue that modern capitalist societies are characterized by large “problem populations” —people who have become displaced from the workforce and alienated from the society. Generally, the problem populations include racial and ethnic minorities, the chronically unemployed, and the extremely impoverished. They are a burden to the society and particularly to the capitalist class because they create a form of social expense that must be carefully controlled if the economic order is to be preserved.

Marxist theories reason that economic elites use institutions such as the legal, mental-health, and welfare systems to control and manage society’s problem populations. In effect, these institutions define and process society’s problem populations as deviant in order to ensure effective management and control. In societies or communities characterized by rigid economic stratification, elites are likely to impose formal social control in order to preserve the prevailing economic order.

Conflict theories stress the importance of the political structure of society and focus on the degree of threat to the hegemony of political elites, arguing that elites employ formal social controls to regulate threats to political and social order (Turk 1976; Chambliss 1978; Chambliss and Mankoff 1976). According to these theories, threat varies in relation to the size of the problem population, with large problem populations substantially more threatening to political elites than small populations. Thus, elites in societies and communities in which those problem populations are large and perceived as especially threatening are more likely to process members of the problem populations as deviants than in areas where such problems are small.

In addition to studying the connections between community social structure and the differential processing of racial and ethnic minorities, researchers have also begun to examine how court officials’ perceptions of offenders can influence disparities in punishments. Bridges and Steen (1998), for example, show how court officials’ perceptions of white and minority youths differ, and how these different perceptions contribute to different recommendations for sentencing. Probation officers often attribute the offenses of minority youths to internal characteristics of the youths (i.e., aspects of their personality), while attributing the offenses of white youths to external characteristics (i.e., aspects of their environments). As a result of these differential attributions, minority youths are perceived as more threatening, more at risk for re-offending than whites and more likely to receive severe recommendations for sentences.

Thus, macro-level reaction theories view deviance as a by-product of inequality in modern society, a social status imposed by powerful groups on those who are less powerful. Unlike micro-level reaction theories, these theories focus on the forms of inequality in society and how entire groups within the society are managed and controlled as deviants by apparatuses of the state. Like those theories, however, macro-level reaction theories make little or no attempt to explain the origins of deviant acts, claiming instead that the

status of “deviant” is, in large part, a social construction designed primarily to protect the interests of the most powerful social groups. The primary concern of these theories is explicating the linkages between inequality in society and inequality in the labeling and processing of deviants.

Since macro-level reaction theories view deviance as a status imposed by powerful groups on those with less power, the most immediate policy implication of these theories is that imbalances in power and inequality must be reduced in order to reduce levels of deviance and levels of inequality in the sanctioning of deviance. More effective monitoring of government agencies that are used to control problem populations, such as the criminal justice system, can also help to reduce the disproportionate processing of less powerful groups, such as racial minorities, as deviant.

### **New Theoretical Directions**

The problem of contradictory evidence suggests a related but different direction for deviance theory. Theories may vary significantly in the conditions— termed scope conditions—under which they apply (Walker and Cohen 1985; Tittle 1975; Tittle and Curran 1988). Under some scope conditions, theories may find extensive empirical support, and under others virtually none. For instance, macro-level origin theories concerned with the frustrating effects of poverty on deviance may have greater applicability to people living in densely populated urban areas than those living in rural areas. The frustration of urban poverty may be much more extreme than in rural areas, even though the actual levels of poverty may be the same. As a result, the frustrations of urban poverty may be more likely to cause deviant adaptations in the form of violent crime, drug abuse, and vice than those of rural poverty. In this instance, “urbanness” may constitute a condition that activates strain theories linking poverty to deviance. Obviously, the same theories simply may not apply in rural areas or under other conditions.

These two directions have clear and very different implications for the development of deviance theory. Theoretical integration offers overarching models of deviant behavior that cut across classical theories, combining different levels of explanation and causal focuses. If fundamental differences between theories can be reconciled, integration is promising. The specification of scope conditions offers greater clarification of existing theories, identifying those conditions under which each theory most effectively applies. Although this direction promises no general theories of deviance, it offers the hope of more meaningful and useful explanations of deviant behavior.

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