CHAPTER 6: DEVIANCE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

Interactive Map  Violent Crime by State, United States

Annotation: A map on Violent Crime by State can be found at the Henslin Companion Website. To easily access this site simply click http://wps.ablongman.com/ab_henslin_sociology_6/0,5241,209875-,00.html. Click on Interactive Map in the left hand column and pick the map addressing violent crime in the United States. This website shows a map of the U.S. on which states are color-coded to indicate the rate of violent crime (average, higher than average, or lower than average). By clicking on a state, students bring up a window showing the violent crime rate in that state. Two questions are posed regarding which states are safer and why some states are safer than others.

Learning Objective: To better understand the complex relationship between crime and the social response to crime.

Faculty Note: Imprisonment is the preferred response to violent crime in the U.S., yet the success of imprisonment in deterring prospective offenders is unclear. The exercise below engages students in the debate over the utility of imprisonment.

Activity: Ask students to create a data table in which they list the 50 U.S. states in order of their rates of violent crime (taken from the Interactive Map "Violent Crime in the United States." Then have them go to the Bureau of Justice Statistics Bulletin, "Prisoners in 1998" http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/p98.pdf. Have students add to their data table the imprisonment rate of each state, taken from Table #5 of the BJS bulletin. Ask them to examine their data table to determine whether there is an apparent relationship between violent crime and imprisonment rates. Ask them to discuss (or write a short paper) about the relationship between violent crime and imprisonment, including a consideration of which variable is cause (the independent variable) and which is effect (the dependent variable).


World Wide Web Activity  Gun Violence and Gun Control

Content Select Activity  Gun Control

Annotation: Gun ownership for any reason, including collecting, hunting, and self-protection is considered by many to be “deviant”. On one side of the argument, various groups are demanding the curtailment, and even complete elimination of gun ownership by private citizens. On the other side of the argument, there is a very large and very vocal group of citizens that consider gun ownership one of their most sacred Constitutional rights. This exercise describes the differences in both camps, their methods, and goals. To maximize the results of this exercise, students are directed to several web sites that promote gun control as well as those that consider gun ownership a fundamental right guaranteed by the second amendment of the Constitution. Students are also directed to a Content Select Activity to maximize the academic value of the exercise.

The U.S. has much higher rates of violent crime than other countries where the level of civilian gun ownership is lower. The correlation between gun ownership and violence may not be causal, however. There are a number of web links students can access that will provide additional information and points of view on this highly debated topic. These web links can be identified through the use of search engines. These web links will provide organizations with firm positions on gun control and to sites that offer more information on gun violence.

Learning Objective: To specify the empirical assumptions and values underlying both sides in the gun-control debate.
Faculty Note: Among the most vocal gun control groups are The Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence found at http://www.bradycenter.org/ and Handgun Control found at http://www.handguncontrol.org/. Among the organizations that support gun owners’ rights, the National Rifle Association is the most well known. The NRA’s home page is located at http://www.nra.org/. Another pro-gun organization, Gun Owners of America has a site located at http://www.gunowners.org/. This exercise provides students the opportunity to analyze the heated debate over gun control in the U.S. from both the views of the respective organizations as well as a more academic view. It also extends the analysis of reactions to deviance by adding crime prevention strategies as a proactive response to lethal violence. In the Content Select Activity, students are to check the following database boxes to maximize the results of their search for articles on gun control: General Interest, Criminal Justice, Psychology, Political Science, and Sociology. This will yield over 200 articles for the students to peruse.

Students can also be asked to consider other issues that are polarized as much as gun ownership, such as the pro-life, pro-choice debate.

Activity: After browsing several web sites and articles have students write a brief paper analyzing what they perceive to be the central issues in the gun ownership debate including why it is such an emotional and powerful topic for each side. Remind them to describe the empirical assumptions and values underlying the policy positions of these two organizations in relation to gun control legislation. Is there a middle ground either group would consider? Why are responsible gun owners considered as deviants by some people?


Web Link American Correctional Association

Annotation: The ACA homepage offers links to information about the history of the organization, current programs, and publications.

Learning Objective: To increase awareness of the changes in punishment practices that will be possible through expected changes in technology.

Faculty Note: The exercise below extends the consideration of imprisonment as a response to crime. It focuses on the effect of changes in technology on the future of punishment and social control.

Activity: Have students browse the homepage of the American Correctional Association and choose other web sites using a search engine that address the corrections practice, past, present, and future. Ask students to discuss the impact that technologies might have on the ways in which offenders are punished and managed within correctional programs on the foreseeable future. Have them analyze the impact of these technologies on their potential for advancing the four purposes of punishment described in the text.

Additional Resources: "Corrections.com" http://www.corrections.com/technetwork/index.html contains much information about technological advances in corrections, as well as links to discussion groups analyzing these advances. The American Society of Criminology http://www.asc41.com/ also provides information of the cause of crime and treatment of offenders.

World Wide Web Activity How Does U.S. Society Fight Hate Crimes?

Annotation: Hate crimes are a growing concern for law enforcement officials and potential victims, especially minorities. The web sites listed discuss efforts to pass hate-crime legislation and asks students questions about hate crimes, perpetrators of hate crimes, and society's efforts to deal with hate crimes.
Learning Objective: To understand the complex issues related to using the law as an instrument of social control against hate crimes.

Faculty Note: The application of the criminal law to hate speech raises important questions in democratic society. The First Amendment right of free speech restricts government's intervention into the expressive behavior of citizens. The exercise below immerses students into this complex legal issue, and urges them to think critically about the use of law as an instrument of social control.

Activity: The following web sites address hate crimes. Others can be accessed by simply using a convenient search engine. The National Organization for Women address hate crimes in an article found at http://www.now.org/press/inTheNews/20020312.html. The FBI’s section of the Uniform Crime Report that addresses hate crimes is found at http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/hatecm.htm. The Anti-Defamation league addresses hate crime laws at http://www.adl.org/99hatecrime/intro.asp and provides additional information on their home page found at http://www.adl.org/adl.asp. Have students review these sites and others. It is suggested parts of the articles and statistics contained in these sites be printed out for easy reference. Then have students explain why using the law to control hate is so difficult. Also address how and why the government is restrained from controlling hate speech in the United States.

Additional Resources: Have students use a search engine of their choice and type in “Hate Speech and the Internet,” “Internet Hate Groups,” “Internet Resources on Hate Speech,” and other topics. By combining a specific victim of hate crimes, such as gays, women, African Americans, and others with the words “hate crimes” will focus the search. Also, refer to the Content Select Activities for the Companion Website for academic articles on hate crimes found in refereed professional journals.

Video Activity (Premium Resource CD Rom) The Bleeding Fetish

Annotation: Several young adults who cut themselves talk about this behavior and the characteristics of people who are more likely to engage in this behavior are reported. Students are asked three questions about this behavior and deviance more generally.

Learning Objective: To develop appreciation for the stresses on young people who try especially hard to conform to conventional standards of achievement, and the forms of deviant behavior that such people may choose as a strategy for relieving those stresses.

Faculty Note: The "deviant" is stereotypically a low-achieving person, but the sociological concept of deviance includes violation of norms in both extremes from the mean. Some young people feel so pressured to achieve high goals, that they have difficulty managing the pressure in healthy ways. The exercise below invites students to develop a more sympathetic understanding of the pressures experienced by high achievers, and the sometimes destructive behaviors that they use to deal with the pressures. This video clip is a part of the "Premium Resources CD Rom" provided to instructors upon request.

Activity: Ask students to view the video clip "The Bleeding Fetish." Ask them if they know anyone like the people in the video-someone who feels so pressured to do well in school, in competitive athletics, or in a job that they engage in self-destructive behavior. (Caution: Be sure to conduct this discussion anonymously, and urge students to avoid revealing the identity of the people they are describing). Ask students to describe the very high performance norms that these people have accepted for themselves. Ask them whether they can suggest strategies for moving such people away from norms that are nearly impossible to meet to more realistic standards as a strategy to extinguish the destructive behavior. Ask students to connect this analysis to Robert Merton's Strain Theory.

Additional Resources: Eating disorders are another, probably more common, destructive adjustment to psychological stress among young people. See the web site of Eating Disorders Awareness and Prevention, Inc. http://www.nationaleatingdisorders.org for authoritative information on these behaviors.
The Video Professor  

**The Green Mile**

**Annotation:** This 1999 movie stars Tom Hanks as a corrections officer in charge of death row and Michael Clarke Duncan as a condemned prisoner. Both have special talents and special needs. The movie offers a stirring and somewhat realistic account of the relationships that can develop between guards and prisoners. It also addresses the trauma men experience on death row, both the condemned and those who must provide their custody and control.

**Learning Objective:** To illustrate how deviant behavior can be a part of an occupation approved by society and the effect these occupations can have on individuals who accept the duties of the position.

**Faculty Note:** Although lethal injection is the most popular method of execution used in states that have capital punishment, some states still use the electric chair. The mechanics of the process of death by electrocution are not much different today than they were in the 30’s when the plot of this film is set. *The Green Mile* is available for rental in movie houses and may be available in the university library or public library.

**Activity:** Ask students to examine how working on death row affected the officers. Can the behavior of the boisterous and favor-seeking officer depicted in the film be attributed to Sutherland’s Theory of Differential Association? How does this film illustrate the sociological imagination? Students can address these questions as a part of a short writing assignment or in a class discussion.

**Additional Resources:** Direct students to *Angel on Death Row* at [http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/angel](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/angel) and *Pro Death Penalty* at [http://www.prodeathpenalty.com](http://www.prodeathpenalty.com) for additional information. They can also surf the web for additional sites by typing in “death penalty” in the key word box of any search engine.

**Test Question:** Does the use of lethal injection make capital punishment more acceptable to the public than electrocution or hanging? Why or why not?

*Suggested answers may include:* Yes, lethal injection is more acceptable because it doesn’t deform the body and is less traumatic to the witnesses. No, capital punishment is morally wrong by any means. The state does not have the right to take a life.

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The Video Professor  

**Donnie Brasco**

**Annotation:** *Donnie Brasco* is a 1997 film starring Johnny Depp as FBI agent Joseph D. Pistone and Al Pacino as mob wiseguy Lefty Ruggiero. Pistone, using the alias Donnie Brasco, was one of the most successful law enforcement officers to infiltrate organized crime. Ruggiero served as Pistone’s gatekeeper to introduce him to the underworld and to vouch for him. The film provides a very detailed and graphic account of life in the mob.

**Learning Objective:** To illustrate the counterculture that exists in organized crime and to make comparisons how the material and non-material culture of a deviant group differs from that of middle class America.

**Faculty Note:** Hollywood needs to accentuate real life experiences to turn them into a box office hit film. There are other less violent and less traumatic issues in *Donnie Brasco* that should be addressed. These include the strain on Pistone’s family, the role strain he suffered, the “rewards” and “pulls” a life of crime would provide compared to the salary and benefits of being a law abiding citizen and honest law enforcement officer. Perhaps this latter point is best illustrated by the $500 reward and plaque Pistone received from the FBI at the end of the film for his efforts and the notation in the credits that he and his family will live in the Witness Protection Program the rest of their lives.

**Activity:** Assign the movie as an “extra credit assignment” or ask for volunteers. Students who watch the movie should compile a list of the elements of the mob’s material culture that are apparent in the film and a list of the non-material culture including the values, norms, beliefs, and mores held by members of the mob. Address the issues of role strain, family dysfunction, uncertainty, and confusion that were experienced by Pistone during the time he worked as an FBI mole within the mob. As the instructor, provide the students with a summary of the film, either written or as a part of the class lecture, to begin the discussion.
**Additional Resources:** There are several web sites dedicated to the movie and the accompanying book by Pistone, *Donnie Brasco: My Undercover Life in the Mafia*. One of the best web sites to describe the movie, its plot, and background is located at [http://www.sonypictures.com/movies/donniebrasco/](http://www.sonypictures.com/movies/donniebrasco/). Amazon has a web site dedicated to the book at [http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0451192575/103-9943557-9030267?vi=glance](http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/tg/detail/-/0451192575/103-9943557-9030267?vi=glance). Each of these sites provides reviews that summarize and critique both the movie and the book.

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### Video (Interactive Video for Introductory Sociology)  
**Internet Crime and School Violence**

**Annotation:** The two video clips listed above are clips #17 and 18 respectively on the Allyn and Bacon *Interactive Video for Introductory Sociology*. Each clip provides a brief, but effective, insight into the problems of internet crime and school violence.

**Learning Objective:** To demonstrate how what appears to be a harmless tool, the computer, can be transformed into an instrument of deception and crime. To illustrate the difficulties that face all students, administrators, and law enforcement personnel in controlling school violence.

**Faculty Note:** Although school violence appears to be at an all-time high, actual data collected on the problem shows that the late 20th century was not the most violent period in the public school systems. In addition to the problem of computers being used to lure children into becoming victims of morals offenses, there are other computer crimes occurring daily.

**Activity:** After showing the two video clips, instruct the students to answer the following questions individually, and then lead a class discussion on the answers.

1. What type of crime is involved in internet stalking? What other types of crime can be committed on-line?
2. What are the implications of computer crime for law enforcement?
3. What are some sociological explanations for school violence? What social forces have contributed to the incidence of school shootings?
4. How do you think student homicides may be prevented?


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### World Wide Web Activity  
**Support for Individuals With Alternative Lifestyles and Interests**

**Annotation:** Sociologically, deviance refers to a violation of norms or a perceived violation of norms. It does not necessarily convey judgment regarding one’s moral character or legal standing. There are organizations that defend the rights of others to be different. This exercise addresses these groups.

**Learning Objective:** To more fully understand deviance from the sociological perspective that defines it as a violation of norms and not necessarily immoral or illegal.

**Faculty Note:** This exercise is not designed to encourage students to engage in behavior that will harm them, nor to rationalize behavior that may be offensive to their personal lifestyles and value systems. It is designed to simply provide an additional perspective on behavior that many would consider as deviant and to further explore the sociological imagination.

**Activity:** Have the students work in small groups to first list deviant behavior that is known to be practiced throughout society and then use the internet to find advocacy groups that support that behavior. For example, [http://www.center4civilrights.org/](http://www.center4civilrights.org/) is a site that supports gay and lesbian rights and Marijuana Policy Project located at [http://www.mpp.org/](http://www.mpp.org/) supports the use of marijuana for medical reasons.