



# DEVIANCE

CSTU5170 - Sociology  
for Social Practice:  
Inequality and Social  
Change

# KARAKIA | MANAWA MAI

Manawa mai te mauri  
nuku

Manawa mai te mauri  
rangi

Ko te mauri kai au

He mauri tipua

Ka pakaru mai te po

Tau mai te mauri

Haumi e, hui e, taiki e

Embrace the life force of  
the earth, embrace the  
life force of the sky

The life force I have  
fathered is powerful,  
and shatters all darkness

Come great life force,

Join it, gather it, it is  
done



**E Tū Tāngata - Stand Together | Winner of APRA NZ Best  
Children's Song 2022**

E Tū Tāngata

PERFECT ▶ AS I AM

I LIFT YOU UP

# AGENDA

Super-quick recap last week

Any class announcements?

Getting ready for the next assessment (learning advisors, library support?)

Everyone's favourite segment

Concept of the week!

Deviance

Deviance and Crime – sociological explanations

Homework

An hourglass with white sand is positioned in the center, with sand flowing from the top bulb to the bottom. To the right, a calendar is visible, showing dates from 19 to 31. The entire image has a dark, semi-transparent overlay.

# RECAP FROM LAST WEEK





CONCEPT(S) OF THE WEEK |

# STIGMA (another important concept)



Social stigma is severe social disapproval of a person because of a particular feature (biological or social) that indicates their deviance from social norms



Erving Goffman presented the fundamentals of stigma and stigma theory, including his interpretation of “stigma” as a means of spoiling identity.



By this, he referred to the stigmatized feature as a mark of recognition of the individual's adherence to social norms and facets of self.

What could be some examples?

Difference in ability? Types of medical diagnosis, all or just some?  
Criminal record (all or just some)?



Without a society one cannot have stigma. To have stigma, one must have a stigmatizer and someone who is stigmatized. As such, this is a dynamic and social relationship.

The background is a dark, textured surface with several glowing white lines that curve and converge towards the bottom, creating a sense of depth and movement. A single, solid purple vertical line is positioned on the right side of the frame.

**DEVIANCE**



# WHY ARE SOME THINGS MORE DEVIANT THAN OTHERS



**Hello.  
I'm Norm.**



**REMEMBER NORMS?**

Norms are the (usually) unwritten rules that govern behavior.

Social norms

- (coffee is ok)

Religious norms

Cultural norms

Whanau and family norms

Group norms

Sub-group norms

Friendship norms



## DEFINING TERMS: DEVIANCE

Norms are a feature of all social situations.

**Deviance arises where norms are violated.**

This means that deviance can exist and operate in many different spaces.

Not all deviance is viewed or responded to in the same way.

Some deviance is met with mild social reaction and some with severe social reactions/sanctions/punishments



# DEVIANCE IN HISTORY



# IN GROUPS.

Think about your own experience of deviance

Have you, or anyone you know, gone against some type of norm?

- Who defined the norm?
- What were the consequences of breaking this norm?
- What kind of norm was it? Family, social group, gender,

A pair of black-rimmed glasses is resting on an open book. A red ribbon bookmark is visible on the left page. The background is blurred, showing more books and a wooden surface. The text "WHY STUDY DEVIANCE?" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font, with a vertical white line to its right.

# WHY STUDY DEVIANCE?





## WHY STUDY DEVIANCE?

Because it highlights the taken for granted

Deviance from accepted **social norms** is inevitable

Studying deviance helps us understand how society is shaped.

How social structures and social institutions are formed (for example a social institution like the justice system as a response to deviance)

Deviance shapes societies (i.e. it has social influence). It does this by both challenging social stability and social cohesion **and** reinforcing social stability and social cohesion (e.g. law abiding vs. criminal).



## WHY STUDY DEVIANCE?

Studying deviance means that we have to ask:

How do societies create a moral code?

How do societies construct the rules that say “yes” to this, and “no” to that.

What gets labelled as deviant? And why?

Who gets labelled deviant? And why?

How does society respond to deviance?

How is deviance controlled or policed?

This means we need to look at both deviance and social control and how deviance becomes deviant



## WHY STUDY DEVIANCE?

How is society kept in Control?

What forms of control exist?

What are the punishments/rewards used to maintain control?

Why do we conform?

How are we socialised to follow the rules?

Who gets to make the rules?

Who benefits?

Who is marginalised?

What kinds of Power are operating?



## WHY STUDY DEVIANCE?

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Because as social  
practitioners we need to  
ask are we agents of  
control or agents of  
change?

YOU ARE AN  
**AGENT**  
— OF —  
**CHANGE**

# “DEVIANT” SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

Civil rights movement – 1960s

Anti- war against vietnam 1970s

Women’s liberation movement – 1960s

ANTI-NUCLEAR CAMPAIGN (1940s)-NZ 1980s

Green (environmental) movement 1970s to present

Homosexual law reform (1980s) - The Homosexual Law Reform Act 1986

Land protest/protection (on going) –e.g. 1975 land march, **Ihūmātao 2016**



# DEFINING TERMS: THE DEVIANT

For sociology the creation of “the deviant” is recognised as a social process.

This can be a process that effects the individual or a particular group

The deviant is not born; instead deviant (as a social category) means that someone (or some group) has been labelled as an “outsider” by those with sufficient power to make this negative judgement stick?

Who has this power?

# THE DEVIANT



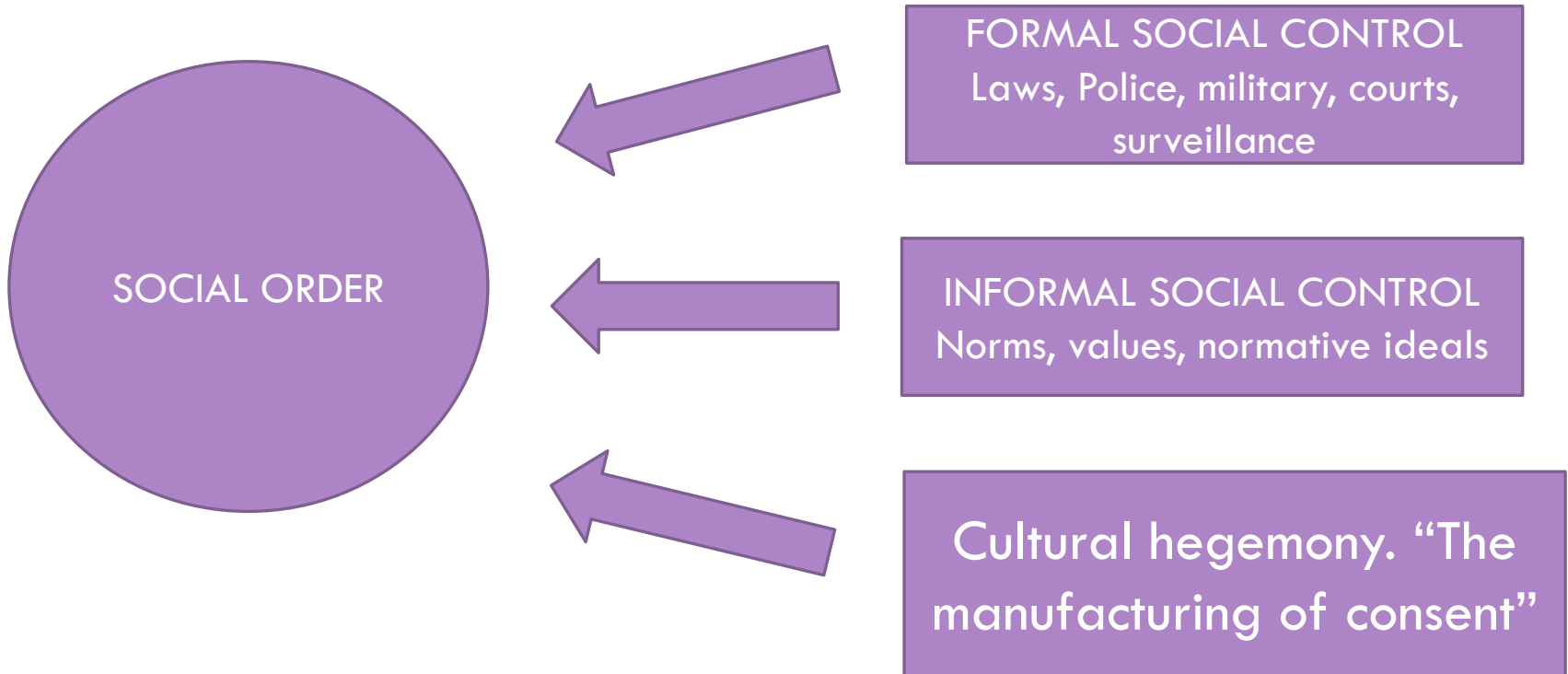
Receiving the label of deviant changes lives as it alters self image and affects relations with others.

Because options in personal and working life may be severely restricted those labelled are often secretive and careful in managing information about their negative status.

Once labelled deviants may be subject to many forms of **social control**; moral condemnation, ridicule, blame, shame, violent assault, banishment, imprisonment, fines, stigma, therapy, medication or even death.



# SOCIAL CONTROL





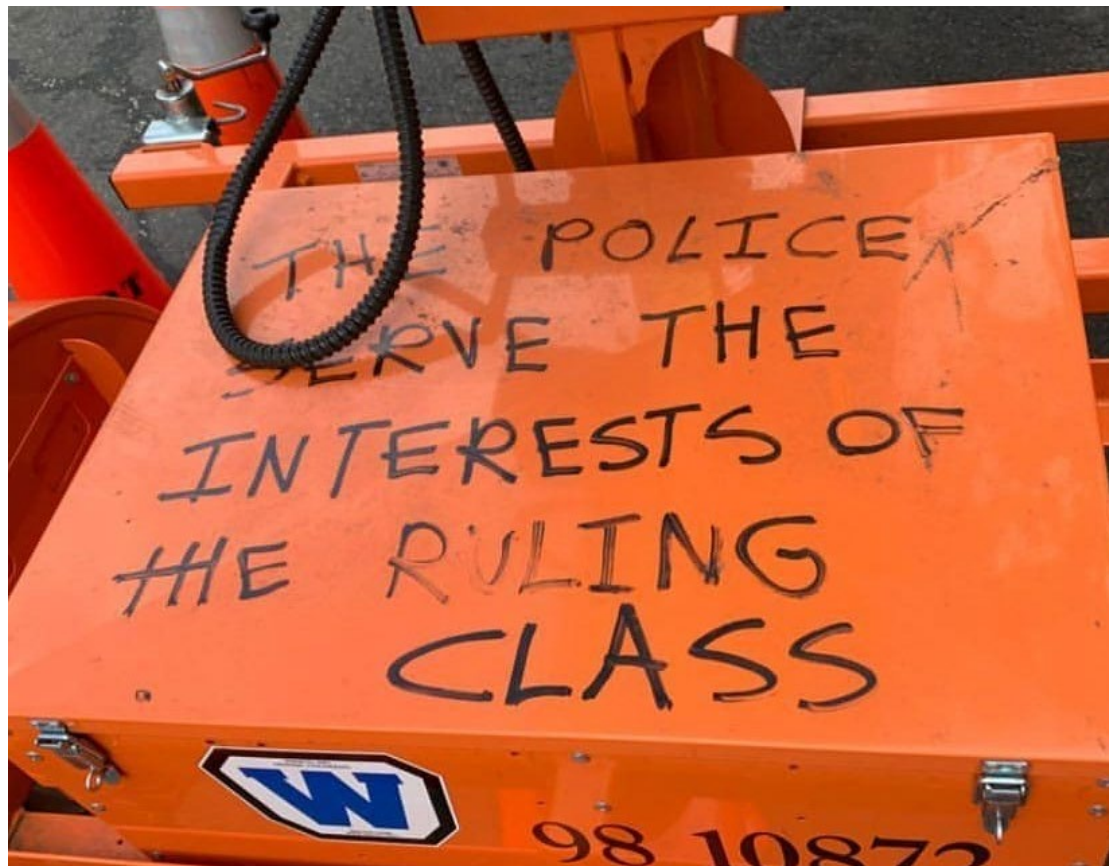
## MAINTAINING CONTROL

Social control can be maintained by the use of force (e.g. police and military)

The state (or government) has the monopoly on the use of force

i.e. Police and military

This is domination (or control) by force.



## MAINTAINING CONTROL IDEOLOGY AND CULTURAL HEGEMONY

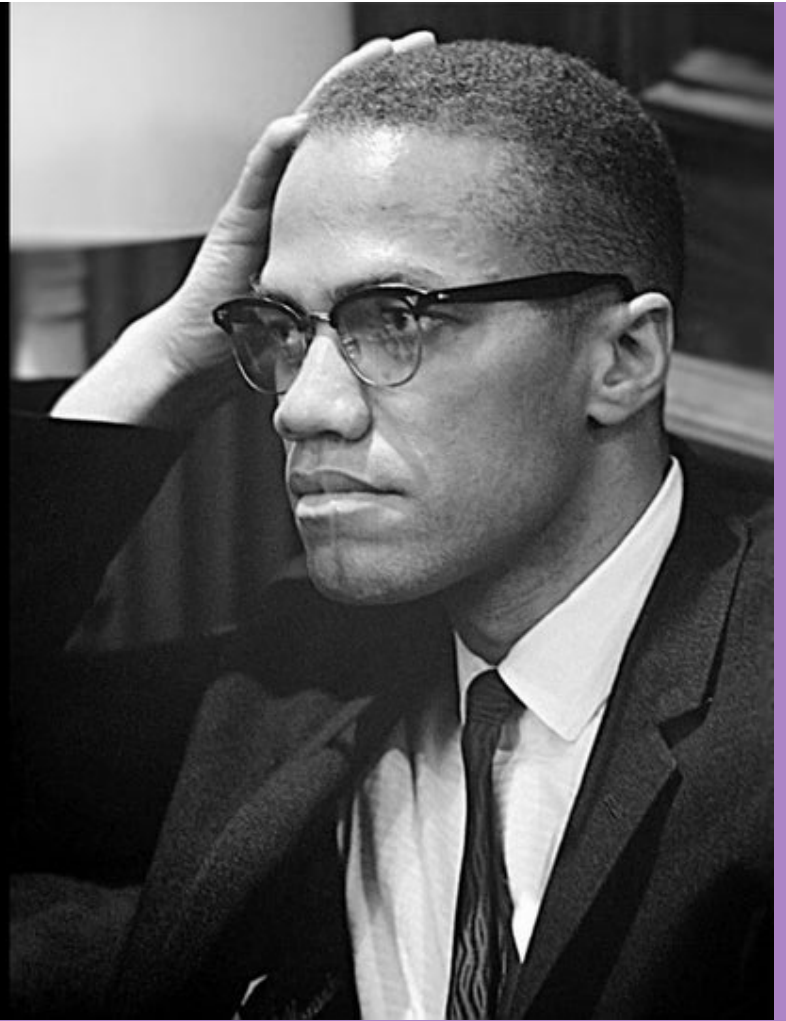
Force is not needed if the dominant ideology is accepted by society.

Gramsci identified cultural hegemony as the process (or set of processes) that created ideological acceptance.

Following Marx, Gramsci saw the organisation of society as one that served the interests of the ruling class.

**If you're not careful, the newspapers will have you hating the people who are being oppressed, and loving the people who are doing the oppressing.**

**Malcolm X**



**IDEOLOGY AND  
CULTURAL HEGEMONY**

Rather than needing to be coerced (through force) into an acceptance of the status quo, hegemony results in  
**DOMINATION BY CONSENT**





## FROM DEVIANCE TO CRIMINALITY

From deviance to  
criminality

Laws generally are  
created and embody the  
norms of a given society.

Laws are codified norms.

“certain behaviours are  
deemed so unacceptable  
that they are described in  
legal codes and a process  
involving police, security  
organisations, the judicial  
system and corrective or  
custodial institutions that  
seek to identify and punish  
offenders”



# MAIN SOCIOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO DEVIANCE

Conflict/Critical Theories

Structural functionalism

Symbolic interactionalism

# CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

Marxists argue that the law expresses and reflects the interest of the ruling classes

Crime is seen as largely as the product of capitalism, with criminality and anti-social behaviour indicative of the contradictions and problems inherent within capitalism

A struggle over material resources and economic wellbeing

Thus stigmatization and criminalization are to a substantial degree group (or class) conflict carried out in alternative form.

Crime is seen and enforced as a working class problem.

Early Marxist approaches had stressed the capitalist nature of society and stated that criminality/offending reflected inequality



# CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE

This was further developed to look at the actual features of crime (i.e. who committed it, and who the victims are).


- This highlighted that crime often had a significant impact on working class, women, and ethnic minorities
- Crime was often inter-class with both offenders and victims being from the same class.

Left idealism. Crime is a rebellion against inequality

Left realism. Crime is an issue. Crime may be connected to relative deprivation. More linked to marginalisation and lack of other means. Crime most effects the working class.







# WHITE COLLAR VS BLUE COLLAR CRIME

Burglary, a **blue-collar crime** generally committed by working-class males, has increased –

but so has fraud, typically a **white-collar crime**.

How are these seen by the public? The same or different?

Burglary vs embezzlement(think scam/fraud)  
(both include loss of assets and wealth).

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but have had to spend more as the costs of social control have increased, often dramatically.

Pay attention to an increase in talk from our politicians in the run up to this election.



**restore law  
and order.**

**GET OUR COUNTRY  
BACK ON TRACK**

Authoritative voice from the UK Police & Prison





## STRUCTURAL FUNCTIONALISM: ANOMIE:

Durkheim Studied rapid social change which led to anomie, a breakdown of social order.

Shifted the focus from the deviant to the social system.

Every society needs deviance.

It reinforces social solidarity and helps create a moral code of behaviour.

Deviance can be seen as “functional” – (i.e. increasing solidarity within certain groups, of those who are in/okay, and rejecting those who are out/not ok).

Boundary setting, Group solidarity, Tension reduction, Innovation





# SOCIAL STRAIN THEORY

Merton drew from Durkheim's idea of anomie.

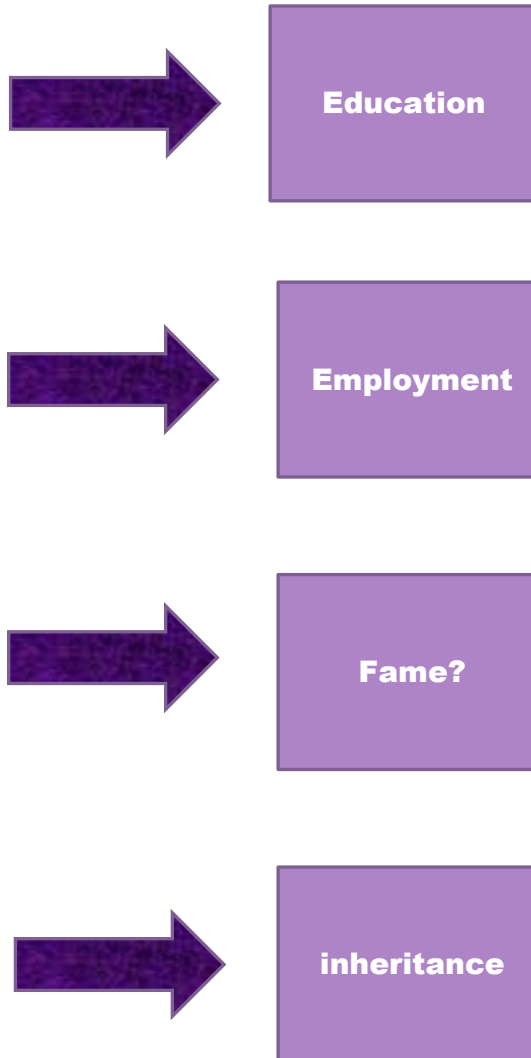
Defined Anomie as a structural contradiction between normative aspirations and the available goals and the means to obtain them

Society proposes ideas of the good life (the the "Kiwi" dream). A job, a house, money, etc.

Merton argued that because of structural inequality, the "dream", for many, was impossible.

This caused social strain

## **Socially approved means**



## **Socially approved goals**





# ADAPTATIONS TO SOCIAL STRAIN

	Accept Socially approved goals	Have access to socially approved means
Conformity	+	+
Innovation	+	-
Ritualism	-	+
Retreatism	-	-
Rebellion	=/-	+/-

People who have access to the means, but aren't really interested in the goals/aspiration. Appear to play by the rules, but are really just "going through the motions"

Adapt to strain by detaching from society. They reject both the goals and the means (e.g. through self exclusion, drug use?)

Rebels include heretics, revolutionaries, and political deviants. They seek a better path, replacing both the means and the goals

# Innovation

For Merton innovation was the adaptation used by the traditional criminal.



This was more likely in societies that encourage everyone to strive to be number one, while not having the available means for all

**Socially approved means**



Education



Employment



Fame?



inheritance

**Socially approved goals**

Wealth, Status,  
Respect.

**Innovation**





## SUBCULTURAL THEORIES (LINKED TO FUNCTIONALISM)

Albert Cohen.

Educational system focus.

When working class individuals see the limited opportunities available (blocked) they develop “status frustration”.

This results in the creation of a delinquent subculture

Often values  
“working class” values.

e.g. Toughness,  
excitement and smartness.

Defined the possible subcultures as

- A criminal subculture
- A conflict subculture
- A retreatist or escapist subculture.



# LEARNING PERSPECTIVE

## Learning to be deviant

- Happens the same way we learn anything
- Sutherland (1978) “Learning the tricks of the trade”
- Such as how to crack a safe
- How to smoke Marijuana (Glaser, 1956).
  - Complete the sentence
  - Puff, puff-
  - Pass

This learning did not have to be face to face

“role models” or “Celebrities” or characters we meet in the media, books, movies, T.V., internet etc.

Critique: overly deterministic

We can say NO

...or can we?

# SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM

Symbolic interactionism is a sociological perspective and theoretical framework that focuses on how individuals and groups create and interpret symbols and meanings in their social interactions. Key ideas and concepts associated with symbolic interactionism include:

- 1.Symbols:** Symbols are words, gestures, objects, or any other meaningful elements that people use to represent and communicate with one another. These symbols carry shared meanings and are crucial for understanding social interactions.
- 2.Meaning:** Symbolic interactionism emphasizes that the meaning of symbols is not fixed; instead, it is constructed through social interactions. What a symbol represents can vary between individuals and groups, and meaning is often negotiated during communication.
- 3.Interaction:** The theory focuses on the importance of face-to-face and small-group interactions. It suggests that social life is built upon a series of interactions in which individuals engage with one another, interpreting symbols and adjusting their behavior based on the responses of others.





## SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONALISM:

Symbolic interactionalism:  
and deviance: The social reaction  
perspective

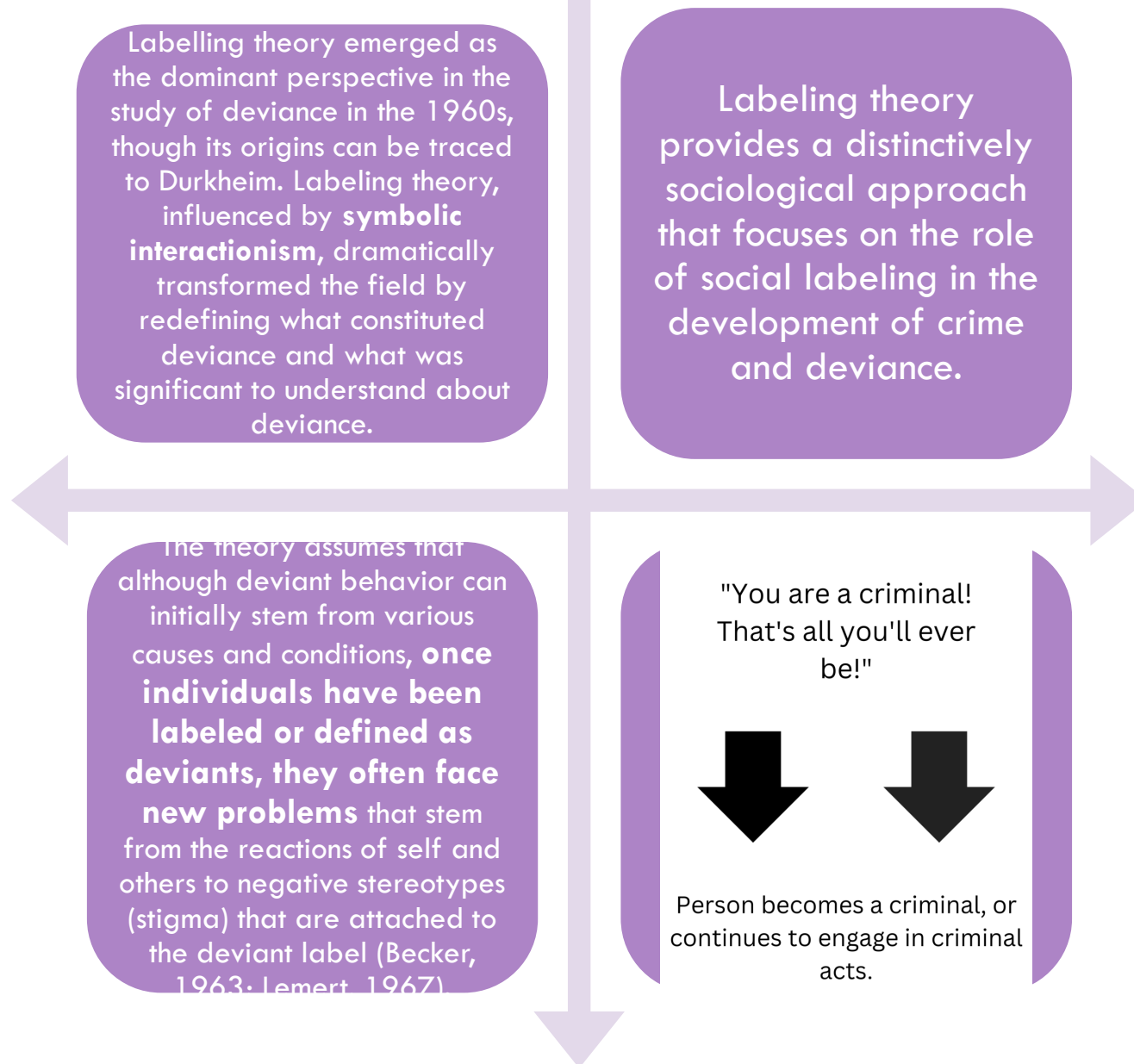
Takes the position that behaviours themselves are not weird, bad, sick or deviant but only become so when reacted negatively to others.

The focus therefore becomes one not only about deviance but also about social control.

This perspective looks at the socio-historic context of deviance and the response to it. Changes in ideas about who and what is deviant, and changes in ideas about what to do about this deviance.

It focuses attention on who does the labelling and the effects of this labelling on individuals (and groups)

# LABELLING THEORY: DERIVED FROM SYMBOLIC INTERACTIONISM



**HELLO**  
I AM

what you  
label me

## **LABELING THEORY**

Labels can result in stigma

Labels may limit future opportunities

Labels may amplify non-conformity and push people to engage in secondary deviance (the drug user who becomes a drug dealer)

A deviant label can act as a Master status, overshadowing other elements of their identity (e.g. schizophrenia or sex offender, may be the lens through which some people view people with these labels)



## LABELING THEORY

Labels of deviance change over time

“Moral entrepreneurs” and collective action have power to outlaw certain behaviours.

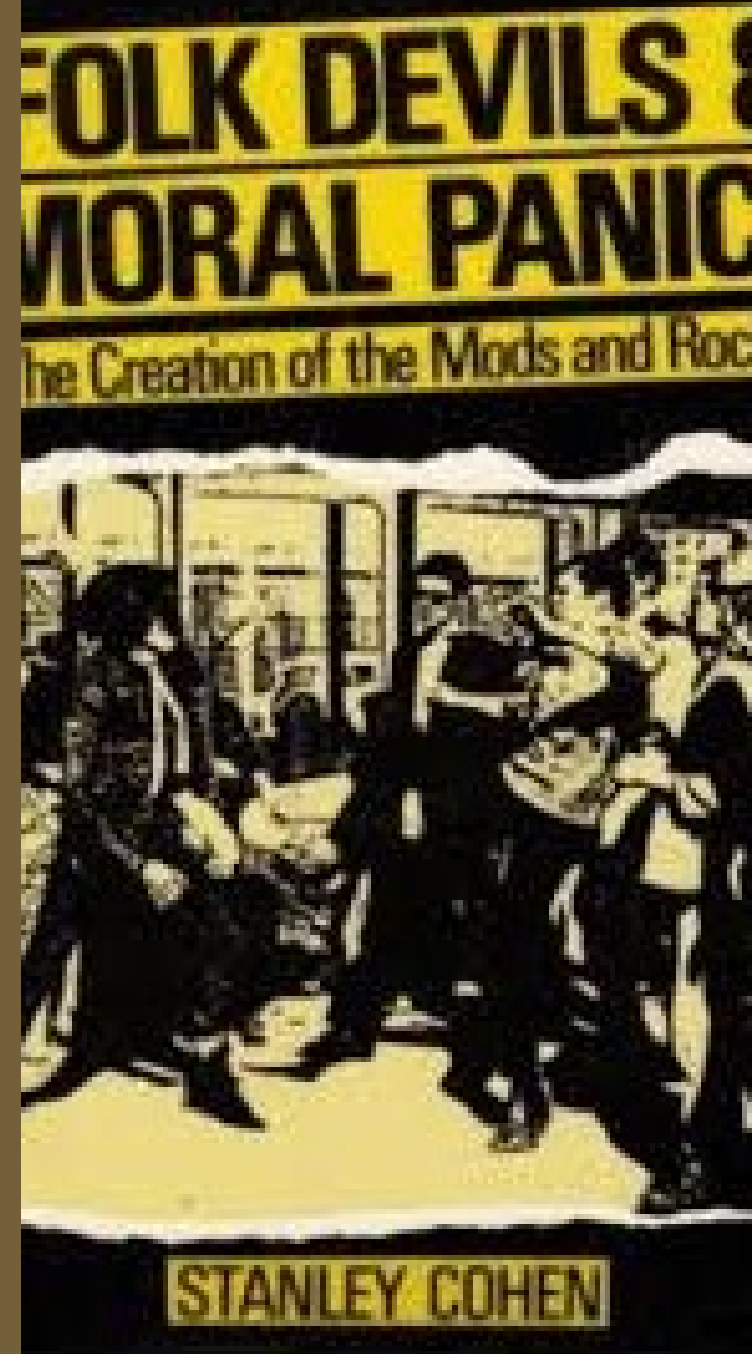
Who is targeted and who gets the label of deviant applied to them?

WE need to pay attention to other social considerations; including how gender, ethnicity, age or socioeconomic status may influence how and to whom labels are applied.

# MORAL PANIC

The sociological concept of "moral panic" refers to a phenomenon where a society becomes highly concerned or fearful about a particular issue or group, often driven by sensationalized media coverage, public discourse, or political agendas.

Moral panics typically involve the perception that there is a threat to the social order, values, or norms, and they often result in exaggerated, negative, and sometimes irrational reactions from the public, authorities, or institutions.







## MORAL PANIC

Moral panic happens when "a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests"

While the issues identified may be real, the claims "misplace the blame, exaggerate the seriousness, extent, typicality and/or inevitability of harm".

Moral panics are now studied in sociology and criminology, media studies, and cultural studies.

Historic examples include the witch trials (1560 and 1670 saw more than 40,000 deaths. More contemporary: belief in ritual abuse of women and children by Satanic cults, concerns over the effects of music lyrics.

Some moral panics can become embedded in standard political discourse, which include concepts such as the "Red Scare and

# KEY CHARACTERISTICS: OF MORAL PANIC

**Exaggeration:** Moral panics involve the exaggeration of a specific issue or group's significance and the potential harm they pose to society. The threat is often magnified beyond its actual scope.

**Simplification:** Complex issues are reduced to simplistic, binary terms, such as "good vs. evil" or "us vs. them," making it easier to mobilize public opinion.

**Disproportionate Reaction:** The societal response to the perceived threat is typically disproportionate to the actual harm posed. Laws, policies, or actions taken may be more severe than necessary.

**Media Amplification:** Mass media plays a significant role in disseminating information about the perceived threat, often sensationalizing it to attract attention and viewership.

**Social Control:** Moral panics can lead to increased efforts at social control and moral regulation, such as the passage of stricter laws or the stigmatization of certain groups.

**Short-Lived:** Moral panics tend to be relatively short-lived, with public attention and concern waning over time as new issues emerge.

# HOME WORK

## Communication Norms:

- Conducting an entire business meeting using only memes and GIFs.
- Wearing sunglasses indoors during a conversation and saying, "I'm just preparing for my future as a rock star."

Do something  
deviant

But don't get  
arrested

## Etiquette Norms:

- Starting your meal with dessert and declaring, "Life is too short to wait for cake."
- Sending thank-you GIFs instead of handwritten notes because emojis speak louder than words.

## Fashion Norms:

- Wearing socks with sandals and proudly strutting your "sock-sandals" fashion statement.
- Showing up to a formal event in a tuxedo T-shirt because you believe in "casual chic."

## Cultural Norms:

- Celebrating International Waffle Day with grand enthusiasm, even though it's not a recognized holiday in your country.
- Showing up at a traditional gender role-themed costume party dressed as a "Rebel Rouser" breaking all stereotypes.

## Social Norms:

- Declining a social event invitation with a dramatic excuse like, "I must wash my hair that night."
- Responding to small talk with outrageous stories about your pet goldfish's adventures.