

Lecture Notes:① **Formation of social norms**

- a **norm** is a way of thinking, feeling, or behaving, generally considered right or proper within a (sub)culture; it is a rule, value or standard shared by members of a social group and anchored in that group membership; it implies how group members should or ought to think, perceive, feel, or behave in a given circumstance
 - **subjective validity** is one's individual confidence that some idea, judgement, or action is correct or proper
 - belonging to a group of like-minded others and sharing their views establishes a **group norm**
- two main motivations for accepting social influence are **reducing uncertainty** (increasing subjective validity) and **avoiding social rejection** and maintaining group membership

□ **Deviance:** the active violation of socially constructed standards

- being deviant is not the same as acting deviant
 - **primary deviance:** isolated or occasional norm violation
 - **secondary deviance:** enacting deviant scripts by someone who has internalized deviant label
- why are people deviant?

③ **techniques of neutralization:** rationalizations by deviants so as to minimize or justify their actions

- neutralization enables **delinquent drift:**
 - 1 denial of responsibility: accident, absent-mindedness, etc, are responsible
 - 2 the act did not victimize anyone: no one was hurt so there was no harm done
 - 3 some one was victimized: the victim deserved what he got
 - 4 condemning those who condemn you: police, judges, newspaper editors — they all have some racket going
 - 5 an appeal to higher loyalties: the delinquent act was done to help a relative/friend

④ Theories of deviance (four micro social psychological theories and three macro social structural theories)

- A **labeling theory:** “deviance is not a quality of the act a person commits but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules or sanctions to an ‘offender’ (Becker, 1963).” We internalize the labels others give us and make them part of our identities.
- B **differential association theory** (Sutherland & Cressey, 1974): individuals learn to engage in deviant behavior by communicating and interacting with those already disposed to do so
- C **containment and control theories** (Reckless, 1961 & Hirschi, 1969): deviance is caused by the absence of social control or other internal and external constraints on behavior — this also explains why deviance is relatively limited in a society
- D **social reinforcement:** humans seek pleasure and avoid pain (back to Pavlov, Skinner, & Watson)
- classical conditioning: stimulus → response
 - operant conditioning: stimulus → response → reinforcer
- I **opportunity structure theory** (Merton): US society places enormous emphasis on material success and on certain accepted means of achieving this goal: working, saving, and investing; however, all do not have same access to these opportunities and so engage in a **mode of adaption** that can include types of deviant behavior
- *innovation:* making money creatively by moving outside the bounds of the law
 - *retreatism:* adopting alternative lifestyle (street person, substance abuse, suicide) not valuing mainstream reality
 - *rebellion:* inventing new goals and new means of achieving them, often radically counter to the dominant society
 - *ritualism:* though abandoning the ends (wealth) as hopeless, they embrace the means (work) as intrinsic goods

⑤ societies control their members through four major **techniques of social control:**

- 1 socialization (internalizing norms)
- 2 sanctioning (+/- reinforcement)
- 3 power of inaction or non-decision
- 4 power to define the area or language of debate

Key Ideas:

Norms, (primary vs. secondary) deviance, techniques of neutralization, delinquent drift, labeling, reinforcement, opportunity structure, social control.