21A.218
Identity and Difference
Class #4
Class #5

A. Transition to Functional Functional Theories of Deviance (Durkheim, Merton, and Erikson)

1. Premises

      a. Retains notion, like structural theories, that deviance is social in origin - not individual or
             physical
      b. Abandons notions, shared by pathological and structural that deviance indicates something
             wrong (with either individual or society)
      c. Abandons notion that deviance has negative consequences

2. Argument

      a. Maintains that deviance is inevitable, normal in any healthy society, and functional, i.e.
             produces positive consequences for society

      b. Deviance is inevitable because society consists (among other things) of shared goals and values; the norms define the boundaries of membership in the community; what is not shared - beyond the boundary - is regarded as deviant; only where there are no norms (no society) could there be no deviance - no outside of the particular norms of that society; only where all people were all the same might we imagine no variation in behavior or norms, one standard and therefore no outside the social norms of society.

      c. Deviance is normal, not a tragic flaw, becasue it exists in all societies and logically (see b above) will continue to exist; therefore, according to the logic of functional theory, if it exists, it must be functional, produce some positive consequence for the whole system/society; this is the typical logic of functional analysis regarded as its particular flaw.

3. Terms

      a. manifest functions: intended or purposive practices
      b. latent functions: beneficial consequences that are unintended and often unrecognizezd

4. Functions of Deviance: positive contributions for society

a. Reinforces beliefs and common morality, social solidarity

b. Shows the limits of acceptable behavior, helps to tgeach about the boundaries; having a little thus

prevent more (deterrence)

c. Operates as a safety valve, alleviates strain and discontent in portions (persons and groups) within

society, creates an outlet

d. Allows for positive innovation

5. Some insights about functional perspective from Erikson, *Wayward Puritans*

a. Volume of deviance/crime -

constant,

dependent on logistical distribution of social control

dramatic shifts indicate social "problem"

b. Deployment

over time, space

permanent, transient

Constructivist, Labeling and Conflict Theories of Deviance

(Lemert, Becker, Scheff, post WWII American sociologists)

1. Addresses questions not highlighted in functional perspective

to whom are deviant roles assigned

who does the assigning of the roles

looks at social organization of social control - defining and responding to deviance

2. Deviance is a social role, societal reaction major determinant of entry into the role

3. New distinction: rule breaking and deviance

everyone breaks rules/ violates norms sometimes

no one breaks rules/violates norms all the time

most rule breaking is *normalized* - explained away, rationalized, denied as having real significance for the person's public identity

(See readings on the self - what is a person, self, with an identity?)

this rule breaking is called *primary deviance* (Lemert 1951); universal, transitory

4. Sometimes rule breaking is no longer normalized or rationalized; person's public identity
      is transformed, labeled deviant, not normal

      usually through public ceremony (informal or formal);
      retrospective interpretation;
      recreation of biography;
      selective attention (focus on rule violations, fail to notice conformity)

5. Conditions that facilitate likelihood that rule breaking will be labeled deviant:

      visibility of action
      resources at disposal of individual
      goodness of fit between characteristics of actor and label
      common interests between rule breaker and agents of social control (both responders and audience)
      frequency and duration
      heterogeneity and equality/inequality in community

6. Labeling leads to increased deviance (*secondary deviance)*
      change direction of causality; here social control causes deviance; heretofore deviance led
      to social control/response

      Definition of deviance now transformed: deviance is the result of the application by others of rules and sanctions to a rule breaker/offender; deviant behavior is behavior so
      labeled.

7. Labeling leads to increased deviance as a result of:

      segregation/incarceration within subculture/institutions
      changes in objective circumstances, changes in status, opportunities, identity
          (Again, see readings on the "self.")
      self-labeling, accept the role assigned and perform accordingly
      subject to increased social control, observation, regulation

8. Labeling is often result of negotiations, sometimes with professionals; deviance is thus the result
      of negotiation about the definition of situations (a construction of reality) hence the
      title social constructivist perspective); that negotiation is structured differently in different
      professions and organizations (e.g. psychiatrists, lawyers, teachers).

9. Variables that affect negotiation of reality/definition of the situation:

explicitness of the agenda
shared awareness that negotiation is going on
organization of turn taking and responding
directness or constraints on the time, format, and style of information presentation