The Social Organization of Sex/Defining and Measuring Deviance

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http://www.iastate.edu/~soc.134
Sexual satisfaction by type of union


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Measuring homosexuality

- Kinsey emphasized continuum of sexuality
  - Lifetime male-male sexual contact (37%)
  - 10% had only homosexual experience during any three-year period between 16-55
  - 4% reported sex only with men since adolescence

- NHSLS studied three aspects of homosexuality
  - Desire: same-sex sexual attraction
  - Behavior: having same-sex sex
  - Identification

The 2002 National Study of Family Growth found higher rates of identification: 3 times for women and 1.5 times for men.

Interrelations of components of homosexuality

Women (8.6%)

Desire 59%

13% 15%

Behavior

Identity 0%

Men (10.1%)

Desire 44%

24%

Behavior

Identity 2%

6% 0%

0% 1%

1%

Social control: various means by which a society encourages conformity to its rules and expectations
Deviance: behavior, belief or condition that violates social norms
• By defining what is normal, society defines what is deviant

Origin of term is in statistics—“deviation” is the difference between the value of a given case and the group average

Sociologists began using “deviance” in 1950s to encompass four major topics—crime and delinquency, mental illness, drug use/addiction, sexual misbehavior

Different approaches to studying deviance:
• Why do people commit deviant acts? (causation approach)
• Why are some people labeled as deviant and what are effects of label? (labeling theory)
• Why do rules and punishments benefit some groups more than others? (conflict theory)
• Why are some forms of deviance considered problems and others are not? (social problems approach)
Crime statistics

Two major sources of crime statistics

- Uniform crime reports (FBI): based on reports from police departments on reported crimes
- National Crime Victimization Survey: household survey of crime victimization

Limitations of crime statistics

- Some crimes aren’t measured at all (one goal of moral entrepreneurs is to have their targeted form of deviance measured)
- The two major sources miss some crime
- Reported crime rate includes just eight index crimes