Key points about crime trends

- People most fear “random crime”
  - Patternless: It can happen to anyone
  - Increasing: Crime is getting worse
  - Pointless: Criminal motives make no sense
- But none of these claims are true
  - Crime is not random: it is stratified by gender, race, class and age
  - Official crime is currently declining
  - Criminals have reasons for committing crimes

Violent crime rates, 1973-2002 (NCVS)

Property crime rates, 1973-2005 (NCVS)

Homicide rates for 20th Century

Homicide victimization by gender & race, 2002 (UCR)
Homicide victimization by age, 2002 (UCR)

![Graph showing homicide victimization by age in 2002.](image)

Homicides by gender & race of victim & offender, 2002

![Pie charts showing the distribution of homicides by gender and race.](image)

Labeling theory

- Labeling theory: theory which states that deviance is the consequence of the application of rules and sanctions to an offender; a deviant is an individual to whom the identity “deviant” has been successfully applied.
- Two types of deviance:
  - Primary deviance: routine instances of norm violation that may or may not result in labeling.
  - Secondary deviance: deviance following and resulting from the label.
- Reasons why label may lead to deviance:
  1. Cut off from participation in conventional groups.
  2. Treatment may produce increasing deviance.
  3. Labeled person may believe the label.

Deviance by sociology 134 students

![Bar chart showing deviance by sociology students.](image)

The Saints and the Roughnecks

- Participant observation study by William Chambliss.
- Shows role of class in labeling.
- Saints:
  - Eight white, upper-middle class boys.
  - Constantly occupied with inactivity, drinking, theft & vandalism.
  - Never arrested.
- Roughnecks:
  - Six white, lower class boys.
  - Engaged in fighting, drinking and theft; less delinquent overall.
  - Constantly in trouble with police & community.
The Saints and the Roughnecks

- Why were the Saints and Roughnecks treated differently?
  - Visibility: Saints owned their own cars and were able to leave town
  - Demeanor: Saints were apologetic and penitent; Roughnecks hostile and disdainful
  - Bias: Community is biased against type of delinquency committed by Roughnecks
- The delinquent label reinforced the Roughneck’s delinquency
- Predictions about boys’ futures were correct