What about the 1950s?

What was different about the 1950s?
- Divorce rate, high during Depression & WWII, dropped
- Age of marriage fell to 100-year low
- Birth rate soared (Baby Boom)

What led to the 1950s family experiment?
- Women were forced out of jobs after WWII
- Economic growth and government programs allowed for prosperity with one wage earner
- Ideal of dad-works, mom-stays-home family established
- New ideal was supported by experts and media

Why did 1950s experiment end?

✓ 1950s conditions allowed both preferred family form and preferred family lifestyle
  • Form: dad works, mom stays at home
  • Lifestyle: requires purchasing latest consumer goods

✓ By 1970s many families changed form to maintain lifestyle, e.g., two wage earners, postponing marriage

✓ During 1970s and 1980s, economic changes resulted in fewer families able to afford preferred form at all

Signs that marriage will persist

- Percentage of women who never marry is lower now than at turn of 20th Century
- Higher divorce rates may indicate higher expectations for marriage
- Most divorced people re-marry; “serial monogamy” is common pattern
- Many gays and lesbians want to marry

Social control: various means by which a society encourages conformity to its rules and expectations.
Defining deviance

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
Two questions from NCVS

36a. I'm going to read some examples that will give you an idea of the kinds of crimes this study covers. As I go through them, tell me if any of these happened to you in the last 6 months, that is since ____ ____, 19__. Was something belonging to YOU stolen, such as—
(a) Things that you carry, like luggage, a wallet, purse, briefcase, book—
(b) Clothing, jewelry, or calculator—
(c) Bicycle or sports equipment
(d) Things in your home—like a TV, stereo, or tools
(e) Things outside your home such as a garden hose or lawn furniture—
(f) Things belonging to children in the household—
(g) Things from a vehicle, such as a package, groceries, camera or cassette tapes—
   OR
(h) Did anyone ATTEMPT to steal anything belonging to you?

41a. (Other than any incidents already mentioned,) has anyone attacked or threatened you in any of these ways (Exclude telephone threats)—
(a) With any weapon, for instance, a gun or knife—
(b) With anything like a baseball bat, frying pan, scissors, or stick—
(c) By something thrown, such as a rock or bottle—
(d) Include any grabbing, punching, or choking,
(e) Any rape, attempted rape or other type of sexual attack—
(f) Any face to face threats—
   OR
(g) Any attack or threat or use of force by anyone at all? Please mention it even if you are not certain it was a crime.
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)

Victimization per 1,000 population


47.7 52.3 42.0 51.2 22.8

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Property crime rates, 1973-2003 (NCVS)

Victimization per 1,000 households

- 1973: 553.6
- 1975: 519.9
- 1977: 496.1
- 1979: 348.9
- 1981: 159.0
- 1983: 100.0
- 1985: 200.0
- 1987: 300.0
- 1989: 400.0
- 1991: 500.0
- 1993: 600.0
- 1995: 519.9
- 1997: 438.9
- 1999: 348.9
- 2001: 163.2
- 2003: 159.0