



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

EC SO4001: Understanding Society: Module Overview 2023

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives



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Overview of the perspectives

- As a group, discuss what you've learned from the module:
 - What have you liked?
 - What have you disliked?
 - Is there anything you'd like clarifying?



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Sociology

Key terms

Trawsnewid Addysg; Trawsnewid Bywydau
Transforming Education; Transforming Lives

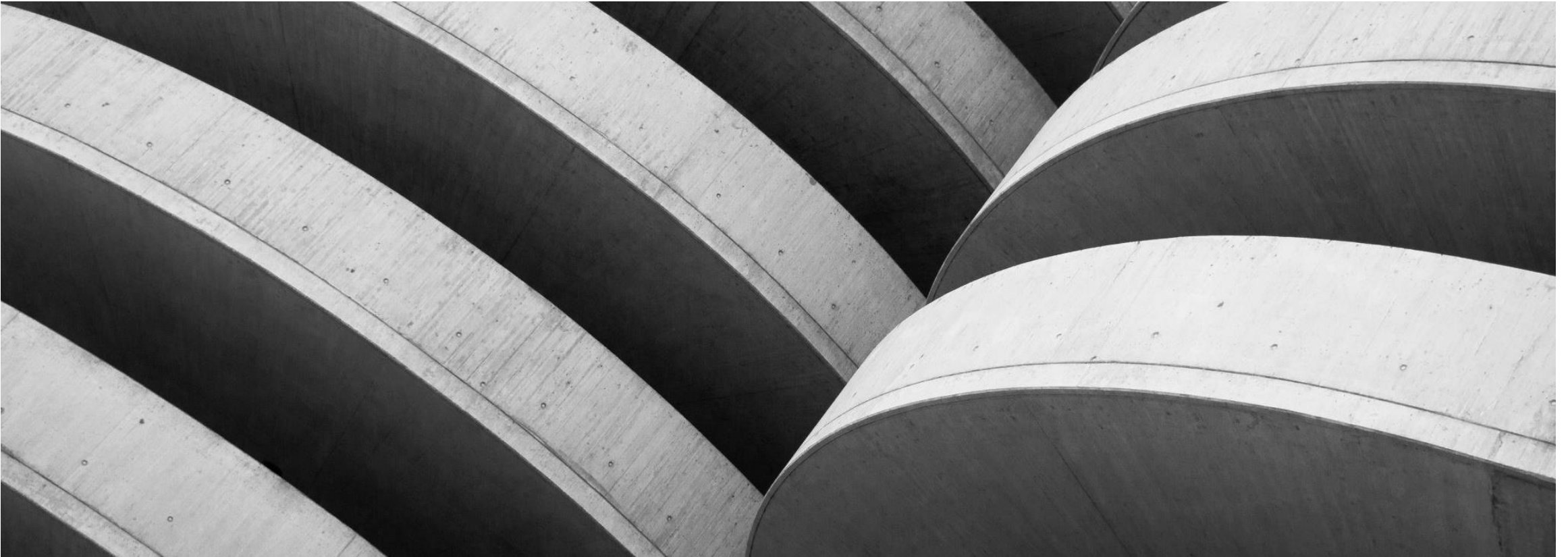


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Can you remember what these mean?

- Positivist
- Interpretivist
- Micro
- Meso
- Macro
- Social constructionism

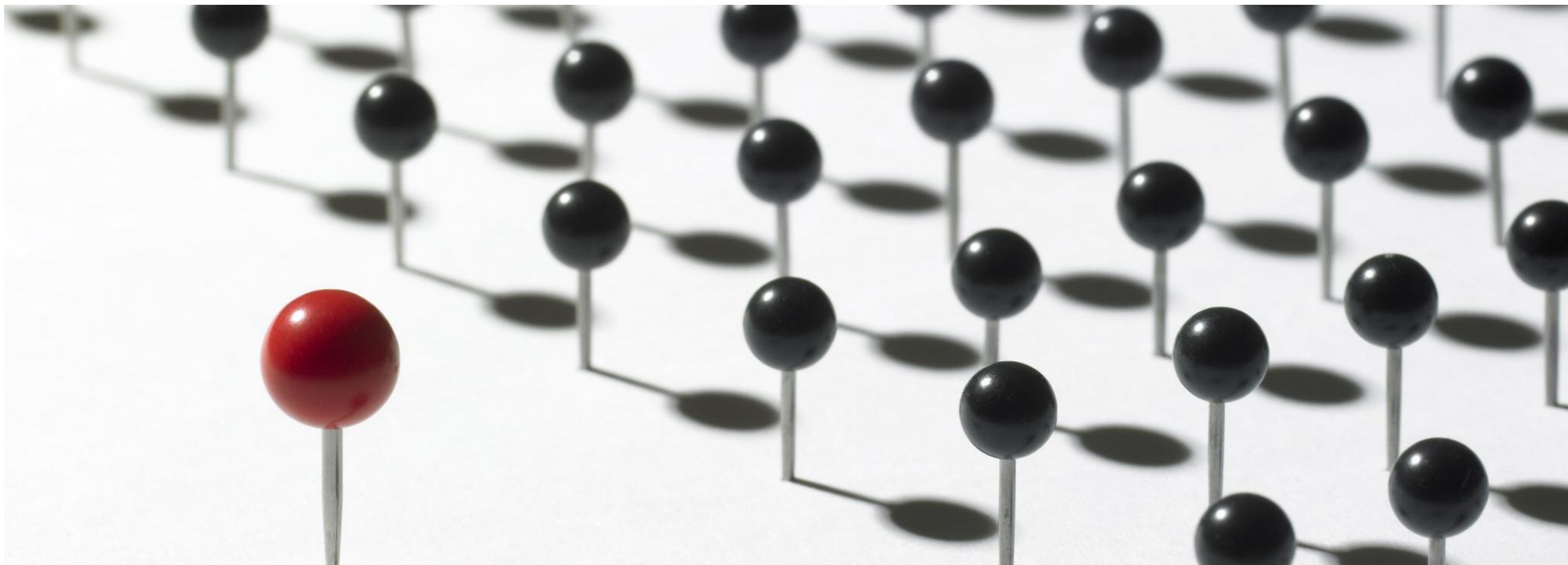
Structural Functionalism



Key concepts we looked at:

- Value consensus
- Society searching for equilibrium
- Social facts
- Anomie
- The Organic Analogy
- Functional Prerequisites
- Socialisation
- Latent and manifest functions

Conflict Theory



Key concepts we looked at:

- Capitalism
- Bourgeoisie (the ruling class) and the proletariat (the subject class)
- Social stratification
- False consciousness
- Class consciousness
- Class conflict
- Communism
- Hegemony
- The 'Power Elite'
- Economic capital, social capital and cultural capital

Symbolic Interactionism



Key concepts we looked at:

- The looking glass self
- Childhood and the self
- The generalized other
- Symbols
- Role-taking
- The "I" and the "me"
- Mead's 3 principles
- Dramaturgical Theory (the frontstage and the backstage)

Feminism



Key concepts we looked at:

- The waves of feminism
- Branches of feminism
 - Liberal
 - Marxist
 - Radical
 - Socialist
 - Cultural
 - Postmodern
 - Black
 - Intersectional

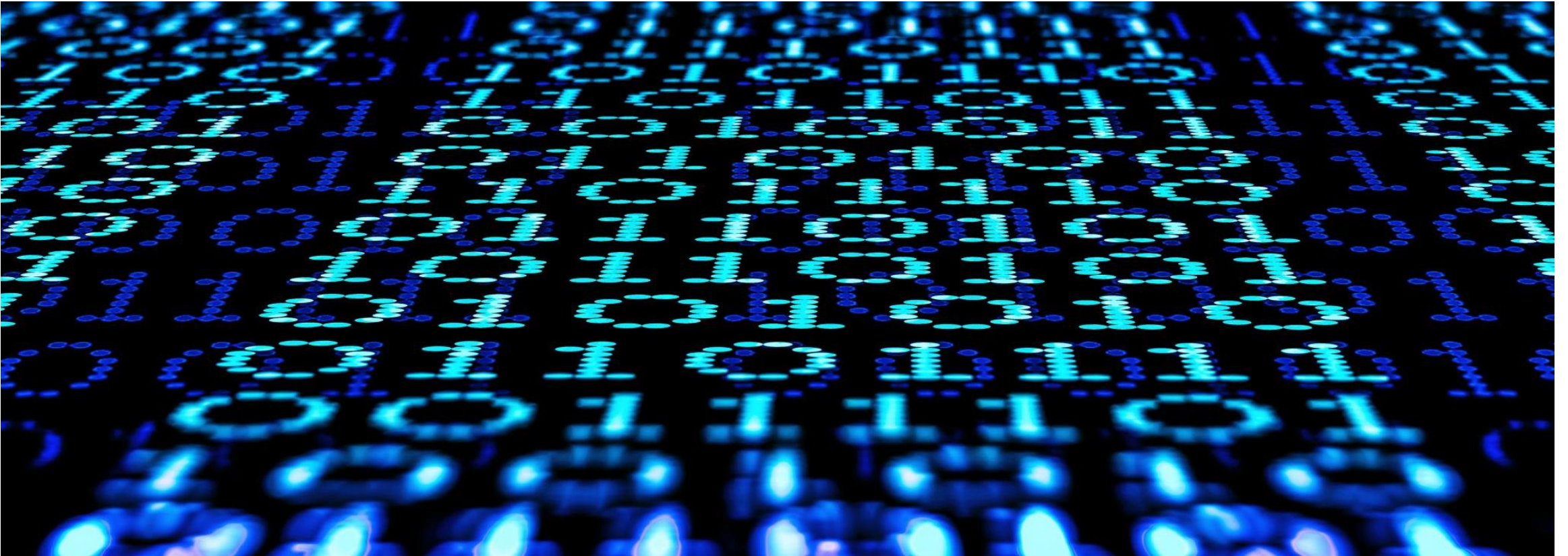
Postmodernism



Key concepts we looked at:

- End of 'metanarratives'
- Power/Knowledge
- Deconstruction
- Hyperreality
- McDonaldization
- Late modernity / liquid modernity

New Theories



New sociological theories we looked at:

- Critical Race studies
- Critical Whiteness studies
- Queer Theory
- (Critical) Disability Studies

Understanding Crime

- We'll use the sociological perspectives to understand poverty

Types of Crimes

- Corporate crime: crime committed by white-collar workers in a business environment
- Hate crimes: attacks based on a person's race, religion, or other characteristics
- Nonviolent crimes: crimes that involve the destruction or theft of property, but do not use force or the threat of force
- Street crime: crime committed by average people against other people or organizations, usually in public spaces
- Victimless crime: activities against the law, but that do not result in injury to any individual other than the person who engages in them
- Violent crimes: crimes based on the use of force or the threat of force



Deviance and social control

- **DEVIANCE**

- Deviance is a violation of established:
 - Contextual norms
 - Cultural norms
 - Social norms



- **SOCIAL CONTROL**

- The regulation and enforcement of norms
- The goal of social control is to maintain social order, an arrangement of practices and behaviors on which society's members base their daily lives

Social Control

- Societies enforce rules using sanctions:
 - Positive sanctions are rewards given for conforming to norms
 - Negative sanctions are punishments for violating norms

	Informal	Formal
Positive	An expression of thanks	A promotion at work
Negative	An angry comment	A parking fine

Functionalist Views of Deviance

Deviance is a key component of a functioning society



It brings social change by challenging people's present views



When deviance is punished, it reaffirms currently held social norms, which also contributes to society

Strain Theory

- Merton defined five ways people respond to this gap between having a socially accepted goal and having no socially accepted way to pursue it:
- Conformity: Those who conform pursue their goals through socially accepted means as much as they can
- Innovation: Those who innovate pursue goals they cannot reach through legitimate means by instead using criminal or deviant means
- Ritualism: People who ritualize lower their goals until they can reach them through socially acceptable ways. These members of society focus on conformity rather than attaining a distant dream
- Retreatism: Others withdraw and reject society's goals and means
- Rebellion: A handful of people rebel and look to overthrow a society's goals through socially unacceptable means.

Deviance: Conflict Theory View

- Deviance and crime are evidence of inequality in the system
- The bourgeois centralise their power and influence through government, laws, and other authority agencies in order to maintain and expand their positions of power in society

The Power Elite

- The power elite, a small group of wealthy and influential people at the top of society, hold the power and resources
- The rules of society are stacked in favor of a privileged few who manipulate them to stay on top
- While crime is often associated with the underprivileged, crimes committed by the wealthy and powerful remain an under-punished and costly problem within society



Deviance in Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionists focus attention on the socially constructed nature of the labels related to deviance.

Crime and deviance are learned from the environment and enforced or discouraged by those around us.

Labelling Theory

- What is considered deviant is determined by the reactions of others
- Primary deviance is a violation of norms that does not result in any long-term effects on the individual's self-image or interactions with others
- Secondary deviance occurs when a person's self-concept and behavior begin to change after his or her actions are labeled as deviant by members of society
- A master status is a label that describes the chief characteristic of an individual



Control Theory

- Control theory states that social control is directly affected by the strength of social bonds
- Deviance results from a feeling of disconnection from society.
- Individuals who believe they are a part of society are less likely to commit crimes against it.
- Travis Hirschi identified four types of social bonds that connect people to society:

Social Bond	Description
Attachment	Measures our connections to others
Commitment	The investments we make in the community
Involvement	Participation in socially legitimate activities
Belief	Agreement on common values in society

Feminist Theory and Deviance

- Feminist analysis focuses on the way gender inequality influences the opportunities to commit crime and the definition, detection, and prosecution of crime.
- In part the gender difference revolves around patriarchal attitudes toward women and the disregard for matters considered to be of a private or domestic nature
- Deviant women considered doubly deviant: they have broken the laws and gender norms about appropriate female behavior
- There's tendency to medicalize women's deviance, to see it as the product of physiological or psychiatric pathology

Sexual Assault and Domestic Abuse

- Sexual assault is an act of violence, not a sexual act
- Secondary victimization occurs when the women's own sexual history and her willingness to consent are questioned in the process of laying charges and reaching a conviction, which as feminists pointed out, increased victims' reluctance to press charges
- Partner violence was hidden in the household and largely regarded as a private, domestic matter in which police were reluctant to get involved
- Both remain under-reported crimes

Summary of Theoretical Viewpoints on Deviance

Functionalism

Strain Theory

Social Disorganization Theory

Cultural Deviance Theory

Conflict Theory

Unequal System

Power Elite

Symbolic Interactionism

Labeling Theory

Differential Association Theory

Control Theory

Associated Theorist

Robert Merton

University of Chicago researchers

Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay

Karl Marx

C. Wright Mills

Edwin Lemert / Howard Becker

Edwin Sutherland

Travis Hirschi

Deviance arises from:

A lack of ways to reach socially accepted goals by accepted methods

Weak social ties and a lack of social control; society has lost the ability to enforce norms with some groups

Conformity to the cultural norms of lower-class society

Inequalities in wealth and power that arise from the economic system

Ability of those in power to define deviance in ways that maintain the status quo

The reactions of others, particularly those in power who are able to determine labels

Learning and modeling deviant behavior seen in other people close to the individual

Feelings of disconnection from society

