



Second Edition

# THE SOCIOLOGY OF DEVIANCE

Differences, Tradition, and Stigma

Robert J. Franzese, Ph.D.

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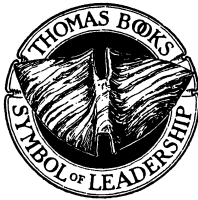
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*By*

ROBERT J. FRANZESE, PH.D.



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I dedicate this book to those professors who instilled in me a love of sociology, and by doing so are responsible for a 40-year career in sociology and higher education. These individuals believed in me and gave me “the shot in the arm” that launched me through three degrees, and provided me with an understanding of and respect for the sociological enterprise and imagination. They are Dr. Kenneth Root, who I took for three undergraduate courses, and who was the first to “turn me on” to sociology in “Introduction to Sociology.” I’ll never forget the day I was walking across the campus of the University of Nebraska–Omaha and encountered Dr. Root who informed me the Sociology Department was going to ask me to attend graduate school. This lifted me about 10 feet off the ground, and inspired me to think more seriously about a graduate education. The late Dr. Wayne Wheeler took the baton from there, and during my senior year was my mentor in two courses in independent study. Dr. Wheeler had an uncanny knowledge of sociology and shared many of my same interests in the discipline, including social stratification and social change. In April of my senior year, he too encouraged me to enroll in graduate school (I had yet to make that decision) eventually becoming my thesis advisor, and one semester I was his graduate teaching assistant. “Wayne,” as I would grow to call him, was a powerful influence on my career and along with Dr. Root is deserving of my fondest memories, respect, and gratitude. Other professors deserving mention here are Philip Vogt, whom I consider the finest professor I had during my undergraduate years, and Pete Kuchel who taught me a great deal about criminology and juvenile delinquency. Professor Vogt was a masterful and inspiring teacher of social problems, and minority and ethnic group relations. “Pete” as his students called him, possessed an amazing sense of humor, while offering a practical and experienced-based approach to the study of criminology and criminal justice.

RJF



## PREFACE

*The Sociology of Deviance: Differences, Tradition, and Stigma*, Second Edition, remains essentially the same in overall organization and chapter layout and titles. New to the book is updated data and facts from empirical research and government and agency reports. Some information in most chapters was retained from the first edition if it was deemed still relevant and interesting. The definition of deviance has been modified to be more in line with standard understandings of the term which frequently describe deviance as violations of social norms. The word “differences” remains part of the definition and implies differences in attitudes, lifestyles, values, and choices that exist among individuals and groups in society. The concept of deviance is no longer treated as a label in itself, also placing the definition of the term more in alignment with its standard usage. The title of the book is the same as the first edition. “Tradition” still implies the book covers areas that have long been addressed in deviance texts such as addictions, crime, and sexual behaviors, to name a few. “Stigma” is in honor of Erving Goffman, a giant in the discipline of sociology who has much to offer to the study of deviance. “Differences” was explained above. In addition, every attempt has been made to respond to comments from colleagues and students concerning text content and writing style. Chapters still include “In Recognition” or comments that honor scholars whose research and professional interests are related to the chapters under study. Case studies are once again included in the chapters, generally in the beginning with some inserted into other parts of the chapters. Revising books offers challenges that involve decisions of what is to be added, changed, maintained, and deleted from previous editions. Such was the case with this effort. As alluded to earlier, the scope of this edition remains similar to the first edition with modifications found in every chapter.

RJF





## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With one exception, the acknowledgments are the same as those in the 2009 publication since without their contributions, the first edition would have been more difficult to complete. Several individuals were instrumental in producing the final product. One of my colleagues, Dr. Lorraine Latimore, provided significant insights and materials into updating empirical studies of many theories addressed in this book, in particular strain and social control theories, as was the case for Carolyn Vinyard, a graduate teaching assistant who also played a major role in identifying major and recent empirical tests of deviance and crime theories, especially social learning theories. Meredith Denney, an undergraduate teaching assistant at the time and now a blooming and promising graduate student, undertook the tedious duty of researching and then copying journal articles that are used throughout the book. As always, Meredith went above and beyond the call of duty and located additional materials that are cited in the text. Another colleague, Dr. Susan Sharp, introduced me to *Feminist Criminology*, a journal she helped to establish, and by doing so expanded the horizons and coverage of feminist theories addressed in the book. Last are Virginia Franzese, my daughter, and Rick Fry, artist extraordinaire who painstakingly and with great patience helped immensely with computer-related typing and graph/chart issues in the first edition. Teri Barlow is the exception alluded to above. Teri produced all figures for the second edition. Corey Helms and Dr. Craig St. John are deserving of mention. Corey was an outstanding undergraduate student who undertook the difficult task of indexing. As the Chair of the Department of Sociology, Dr. St. John provided me with resources essential to completing the book. The contributions of the above individuals are deeply appreciated and bigger than what I have stated in this brief paragraph. A special thanks goes to my wife Patty who encouraged and supported me throughout the writing of this book, not to mention throughout my entire professional career.



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# **THE SOCIOLOGY OF DEVIANCE**



## **Section 1**

# **BACKGROUND**





## Chapter 1

### THE NATURE OF DEVIANCE

#### CASE STUDY: THE HUTTERITES

Occasionally, societies experience the settlement of successful communal organizations, or subcultures. Over the years, the United States has seen the emergence of numerous communes, and to this day, few exist. However, several communal organizations have survived and even flourished. One such group is known as the Hutterites, one of three Anabaptist religious communes with origins in central Europe who immigrated to North America in search of religious freedoms during the nineteenth century. Most of the 30,000 Hutterites in North America reside in Canada, and some communes dot the plains of the north central states, such as North and South Dakota.

The Hutterites are an agricultural-based society which partially explains their success and durability. With total focus and in-depth attention of each commune on farming as the major economic mode of production, the communes are well-known for their successful harvests and acquisition of adequate financial resources and security. Notwithstanding, one of the most important values of the Hutterites is communal ownership of wealth as opposed to individual hoarding of wealth, power, and income. In this respect, the Hutterites have been referred to as the “Christian Communists of Canada.”

The Hutterites adhere to rigid understanding of the Bible, meaning they interpret it literally. From this derives all of the values and practices so deeply followed by the group, including traditional sex roles and corporal punishment for misbehaving children. In respect to traditional sex roles, the Hutterites maintain sex role segregation relative to work, family structure, and power in the communes. Men undertake physical labor associated with farming and other outside-type chores, while women cook, sew, shop, and take on the primary responsibilities of child-rearing. In addition, Hutterite male and female dress reflects their strong preoccupation with avoiding sins of the

flesh, since women wear long dresses that reveal no skin, and they wear head coverings. Male dress is also conservative and like that of women does not vary from man-to-man. All of this spills over to male leadership in each commune, where elected male elders make the major business and religious decisions. Women in essence are in the background and are not allowed an equal status with men.

Although there is evidence of change, most Hutterite communes stress education up to but ending with high school. Mastery of the three “r’s,” reading, writing, and arithmetic is the focus of Hutterite education, along with Hutterite religious and cultural education. Some modern communes allow gifted individuals to matriculate to college, but this is rare. Experiencing the outside world does occur with Hutterites especially when they go into neighboring towns on business, but to encourage the young to attend college is seen by most Hutterites as a threat to their traditions and lifestyles. Attending colleges or universities would expose young Hutterites to the very issue of greatest concern for their salvation: sins of the flesh. What is more, Hutterite youth might be more likely to leave the life once they found more about the outside world, its opportunities, and many diversions.

Hutterite life appears simple and uncomplicated. Dress style is the same for men and for women, and homes do not allow pictures on the walls, even pictures of flowers or mountains, because once again this is considered worldly and antithetical to Hutterite interpretation of the Bible. So day by day, year after year, Hutterite life and culture remain essentially unchanged, centered around religious dogma, farming, and a quiet, peaceful existence.

### **Deviance Defined**

Consider this for a moment: a way of life in twenty-first century America that embraces sex role inequality, and communal as opposed to individual acquisition of wealth. Add to this a very strict adherence to the bible and living miles away from the modern social world with no televisions, radios, DVD players or iPods. The questions for you may be “what do I make of this” and “would I trade places with the Hutterites” (or would they switch lifestyles with us?).

Our first impression may be that the Hutterites are weird or strange, or just not with it. We may even question their mental health. However, we are reminded that they have chosen to live a much secluded way of life, one reminiscent of the nineteenth century. This type of example is the essence of the study of deviance since sociologists interested in this field often find themselves studying people and lifestyles much different than what most of us have experienced, or ever will experience. The study of deviance includes the

study of differences or what may not be ordinary or common in society. In this book, the definition of deviance presented is atypical of those found in other similar texts. The definition offered here is “deviance involves the violation of social norms and encompasses the differences in behaviors, values, attitudes, lifestyles, and life choices among individuals and groups.” For example, the religious-based communal organization the Hutterites possesses a different lifestyle than members of 1960s communes that practiced free love and the use of illicit drugs. Both organizations are uncommon in contemporary American society and embrace behaviors that are in contrast to important societal norms and values. And historically the Hutterites have practiced traditional gender roles, a value that has long parted ways with many Americans. The majority of communes that engaged in free love and embraced “do your own thing” withered away several decades ago and even then were often perceived as being in violation of strongly held American beliefs and values.

### ***Multiple Definitions of Deviance***

Listed below are definitions of deviance that have been offered over the years. These are presented here for the purpose of contrast, with each other and with the definition to be employed in this text. The definitions are those that were developed by major scholars in the study of deviance.

**Ronald Akers:** We consider here only behavior which deviates in a disapproved direction. More specifically, attention is directed primarily to instances of disapproved behavior considered serious enough to warrant major societal efforts to control them, using strong negative sanctions or treatment-corrective techniques. (1977: 11)

**Howard S. Becker:** The deviant is one to whom the label has successfully been applied; deviant behavior is behavior that people so label. (1963: 9)

**Kai T. Erickson:** Deviance is not a property inherent in certain forms of behavior. It is properly conferred upon these forms by the audiences which directly or indirectly witness them. (1962: 308)

**Robert K. Merton:** . . . deviant behavior refers to conduct that departs significantly from the norms set for people in their social statuses. (1966: 805)

**John Kitsuse:** Forms of behavior per se do not differentiate deviants from non-deviants; it is the responses of the conventional and conforming members of the society who identify and interpret behavior as deviant which sociologically transforms persons into deviants. (1962: 253)

**John A. Humphrey:** In short, the process of defining behaviors as deviant or not, and the public response to the act and the actor established a boundary between acceptable and unacceptable behavior in a given society. Norms and values have been established; social organization and culture have been defined. (2006: 6).