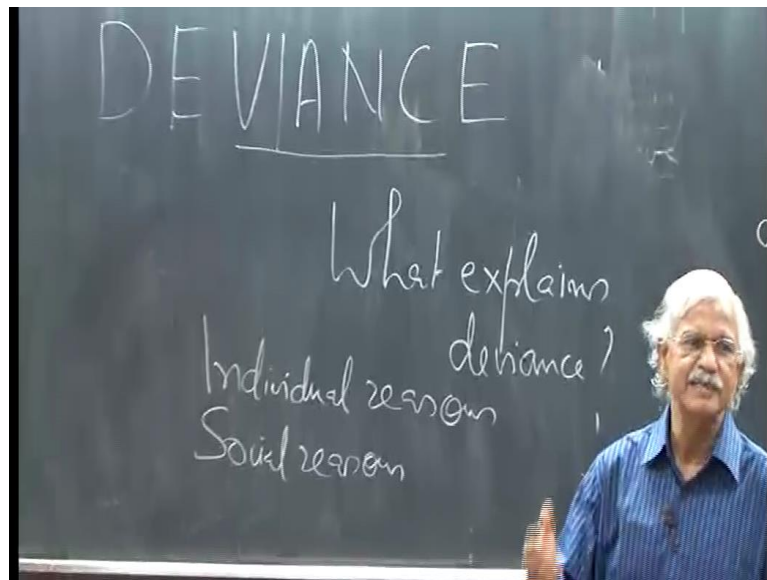


**Introductory Sociology**  
**Prof. A. K. Sharma**  
**Department of Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur**

**Lecture - 29**  
**Deviance-III: Theories of deviance**

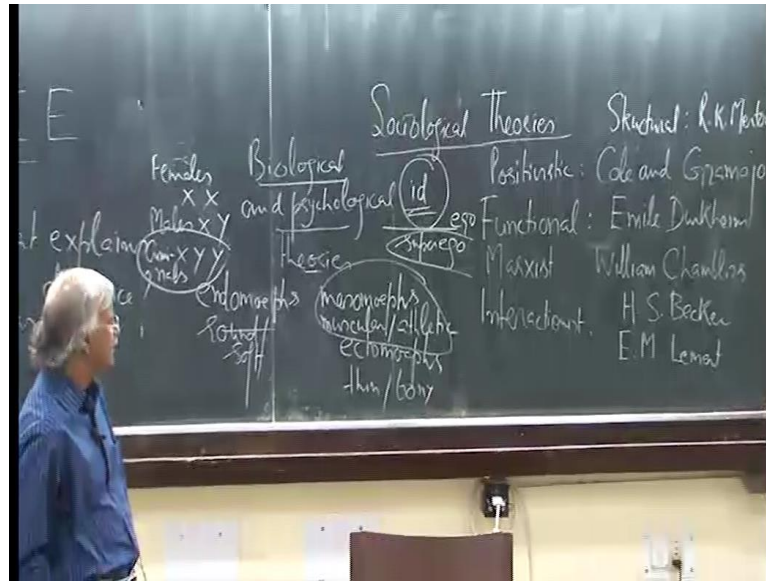
Now friends, in this lecture, I would look at some of the theories of deviance. In the previous lecture, I was only giving examples of deviance and some kind of classification of deviance. Why deviant activities? This issue, why deviant activities, has been of great interest to many people for a long time. Theory means, what explains something.

(Refer Slide Time: 00:52)



What explains deviance at the individual level? Why does one person engage in a deviant activity? Why does one person not follow the norms? And second, if there are social reasons, what are those social reasons because of which people become part of deviance. There are many theories, and since I want to finish the discussion today itself, so, I will discuss them only in brief. I will only give the ideas, how different experts have looked at the explanation of deviance.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:43)



Biological theories. First attempt to explain deviance was made by biologists, or those who believed that certain physical or biological characteristics of humans made them more prone to commit deviant activities. In one such effort, somebody divided people biologically into three groups. This is only example. There are many other explanations. Endomorphs, mesomorphs and ectomorphs; somebody made this kind of classification. It was suggested that, there are some people, who are round and soft by physical constitution. There are some who are muscular and athletic type. There are some who are thin and bony type. Among them, these mesomorphs, or muscular, athletic type, are found to be proportionately more represented among the deviants. And for them, deviance meant generally, those people, who are found in jails, convicted for various types of crimes. So, when we look at the whole spectrum of crime, or whole spectrum of deviance, including victimless crime, white collar crime, it is not convincing that, this biological explanation can be true. Some people said that, in those people who are found to be indulging in criminal activities, there is some kind of imbalance of chromosomes; you know that, chromosomes which we get from our parents, determine whole of our mental, physical, psychological characteristics.

Usually, women, or females carry x x chromosome, x x chromosomes; males carry x and y. In studies of criminals, in the West, it was found that, many criminals were found with an extra y chromosome; criminals. And, on that basis, some biologists hypothesize that, criminality, or criminal attitude is governed by biological properties; that, if there is an

extra y chromosome, it leads to criminal tendency. Similarly, some people said that, those people who have high blood pressure, or who have high sugar level in their blood, diabetic patients, they are more likely to be aggressive and indulging in deviant behavior. Some physical anthropologists and biologists suggested that, people with certain features of the skull, nose, eyes, color, hair, indulge in criminal behavior more. Now today, there is no taker of biological theory. In Russian society, there would also some experiments on the basis of which they tried to identify, exactly which part of the brain is responsible for criminal behavior. And, once that was established, they tried to remove that part of the brain through surgical operation, to make a person normal. These things happened actually. It was called lobotomy. Lobotomy was practiced to control the criminality of criminal people in Russia. In Russia, they could do this. In India, we cannot; we are a democratic country. But, this is what it is meant by biological or physiological explanation of deviant or criminal behavior.

The psychologists have a different rule; psychologists say, again, there are so many, not one; so many psychological theories. Some psychological, socio-psychological theories will attribute deviant tendency to bad experiences of early childhood; broken homes, conflicts between parents, or divorce between parents. And, Freudian type of psychoanalysts, they will say that, when id is more over powering, and superego, means, at the unconscious level, influencing behavior of norms of society; that is superego. And ego, is in, in between; our taking conscious decisions. Id is a pleasure seeking tendency in us. All, in all of us, there is a pleasure seeking tendency. To explain it further, I have to go down deep into Freudian theory of Oedipus complex, or (( )) complex; I will not do this; I will focus more on sociology. But Freudian psychologists tried to explain deviant behavior in terms of depressed superego, or id being over powering, or impulse control, kind of; in simple language, impulse control. There are some people who are weak in impulse control. There are some people...All of us carry the similar tendencies of pleasure seeking, but we behave normally, because, we are able to control our desire for pleasures, and we can control our impulses; intuitive behavior; we can control our intuitive behavior and we remain normal.

But there, there may be some people, whose superego, or the influencing the structure of the norms of society is not so developed, that their ego is more influenced by id and they commit a deviant act. Such are psychological theories. In sociological theories, last time,

I had said something about Merton, according to whom, the real causes of deviance lie within the social structure. And, that means, deviance can never be fully removed. The reason is that, sometimes, social structure put so much of emphasis on certain goals and at the same time, does not provide equal opportunities for all members; members of all social classes to attain those goals. On the one hand, there is too much of stress on attaining certain goals. R K Merton was more concerned with the goal of success, in materialistic society of the West; but you can generalize this theory to other goals also, including the goal of transcendence, liberation, or moksha, or nirvana. If there is too much stress on these goals, but the members of all social classes do not have the same opportunity to attain those goals, then, there will be some problem. Then, people will develop new methods to attain the goals, and that will need to anomy, or crisis, or deviance in society.

So, making a distinction between norms and values, Merton said that, there are some people who conform to values as well as norms; they are conformists; usually, upper middle class, or upper class people. Upper class people stress success, and are also able to attain success by following institutionalized means; through education, credentials, investment, proving themselves. They have opportunity to prove themselves. So, they can prove themselves. But there will be many others, usually from the lower classes, who have also internal, internalized, or interiorized the same value system, but they lack the means, the opportunity, to attain these values, through institutionalized means. So, they have to find some other means; through some other behaviors; through some other means; sometimes, not approved by the norms of society, they will try to attain the same success. And, R K Merton said that, they are like innovators; for attaining the same goals, they are using some other means. It is a different matter that, those means are not approved by society.

Then, there are some others, people belonging to lower middle class, mostly the clerks types, lower division clerk types, they have already come to certain level and they know that, future progress is not possible; they also know that, a small mistake by them can take them to the ocean of poverty; they can lose employment; if they are found guilty of something, they can lose employment, and, they will become poor; they cannot maintain their present status. So, these people become more concerned about the norms of society and they are not worried about the values; they are called ritualists. Ritualists means,

they follow the rituals; they follow the procedures; you cannot find fault of not following the right procedure for them. But they, they stick to procedure so much, that ultimately, the values are lost. Conformists, innovators and the ritualists.

Then, there are some retreatists. Maybe, at one time, they conformed to all norms of society, values; they were normal human beings. For some reason, some accident in life or something, they have withdrawn from both norms and values of society; retreatists. They have retreated from the values, as well as the norms of society. Alcoholics, many types of sanyasins; one can say Hare Krishnas; those who have withdrawn from society, they become retreatists. And, there are others who are rebellions. Usually, the rebellions come from the rising classes. So, by developing this kind of classification, R K Merton was able to show that, there is a connection between social structure and deviance. If you belong to a upper classes, you are here; if you belong to lower classes, you may be here; if you belong to lower middle class, you become a ritualist, so that your present status is not lost, and you know tha, you cannot rise further. This is independent of the classes, and quite often, rising classes behave in this manner; they are rebellions. They are working for establishing new values and new norms in society. So, communists. In a capitalist society, communists can be like that.

And, rising classes means that, in any social structure with certain amount of mobility, there are some people who are coming from lower class background to middle or upper class background; these kinds of people are found to be represented more in the category of rebellions. Rarely you find that, people from the upper, upper class become rebellious; and rarely you find that, people from lower, lower classes become rebellious. Only classes from which, class, people who come from lower classes and have, have come to middle class, and are aspiring to become an upper class, they, those kinds of people are found more in the category of rebellions. This is R K Merton. There are positivists also, active in study of crime. Positivists do not begin with any theory. They will develop indicators, measurements of the phenomena they want to study, collect data, analyze them statistically, and try to explain the findings of statistical analysis. In one such attempt, not yet included in sociology text, but I find this quite interesting; as interesting as Emile Dukheim's Study of Suicide.

In 2009, in a famous journal of population, it is Population and Development Review; it comes to our library. Population and Development Review. Like Emile Dukheim had

studied the rate of suicide, these two persons, Cole and (( )), they study rates of homicide. What explains homicide? So, they collected the data on homicide rates, from all the countries for which these data were available. Market economy, socialistic economy, Middle East, Asia, sub Saharan Africa, Latin America, Caribbean, and hypothesize that, homicide rates might depend on region, area, region; might depend on age structure; whether age structure is young or old; degree of organization; whether people are living in rural areas or cities; cities are supposed to be more prone to crime; income inequality and poverty; degree of inequality with respect to wealth; whether more people are relatively equal, or there is very high degree of inequality; whether there is poverty; level of poverty is high or low; density of population. It was hypothesized that perhaps, density of population also has to do something with crime. When the size of population, or density of population is low, crime is less; and when density of population is very high, as in metropolitan cities, then crime will be more. Also, ethno-linguistics and religious heterogeneity, the degree to which you find people belonging to different linguistics, ethnic and religious category juxtaposed, living in the same society, at the same time, that can also explain homicide; killing. Homicide means killing. So, killing may be related to this, or to education.

Cole and (( )) also made a difference between male education and female education. And, governance; whether governance is good or bad; whether it is, a country is governed well; whether it is transparent, or whether it is a soft state, or weak, or governance is very poor. So, they collected; further developed indicators of each of them; then, they collected data from various sources for each, and applied the standard technique of regression analysis, a standard technique in statistics, regression analysis. And, what they found interestingly is that, the most significant association of homicide rate, deviance, is with female education. This was a new finding. No sociologist has ever talked about a connection between female education and crime. Crime, in this context, means homicide; murder. It was startling; why should female education, when female education, not male education; female. In some of the sociological studies of this type, they use the indicator of literacy, or educational achievement for the entire population.

Cole and (( )) used two indicators of education, one for males; another for females. And, they found that, homicide rate is significantly associated with female education. So, now, they start thinking. Now, they start theorizing, why should rise in female education lead

to higher rate of homicides. So, it is not country; it is not age distribution; it is not inequality; it is not religious pluralism; it is not the inequality with respect to wealth, etc, etc. It is more the female education. Female education goes up, and deviance increases[laughs]. So, they pondered on this issues, why should...Now, whether, whether we are...These are explanations. So, we may be convinced by this explanation, we may not be convinced. Their hypothesis is that, when women...There are four reasons why women's education is associated with crime, murders. One that, when women are educated, a larger proportion of them leave home for work, and as a consequence, family suffers; especially, the young children suffer. In a nuclear family, young children suffer. To quote "strongest effects of the shift away from nuclear family based activities appear among children. The greater the ratio of women in the labour force to households, the greater the rates of child homicide, a result also found by some other persons" unquote. So, higher female education, more participation of women in economic activities, nuclear family suffers; children suffer, and homicide among children, violence against children, violence by children, that increases.

Second hypothesis is that, when women become more competitive in the job market because of education, so, wages of males decline. There is more unemployment among male, and wages among men decline. Since women are working more in those occupations where wages are relatively low, so, those males who are working in low wage occupations suffer more. Means, when female education rises, those males who are working in less prestigious, low income occupations, they become unemployed; their wages suffer; their wages decrease further. Already, their wages are low and these wages decrease further. I am quoting "increased female employment lowers wages as a result of the increased supply of labour; low wages and crime are known to be related; and because women tend to have less labour market experience than men, or because they are discriminated against, they tend to enter the job market lower down on the earnings distribution, putting downward wage pressure on males in lower skilled jobs, who are more likely to be on the margin of crime; and these low wages earners, who suffer because of female education, they take to crime".

The third hypothesis is that, rise in female education increases age of marriage. And what Emile Dukheim said, Cole and (( )) are saying the same thing, that since unmarried persons are more prone to commit homicides, or crimes of all types, they are less

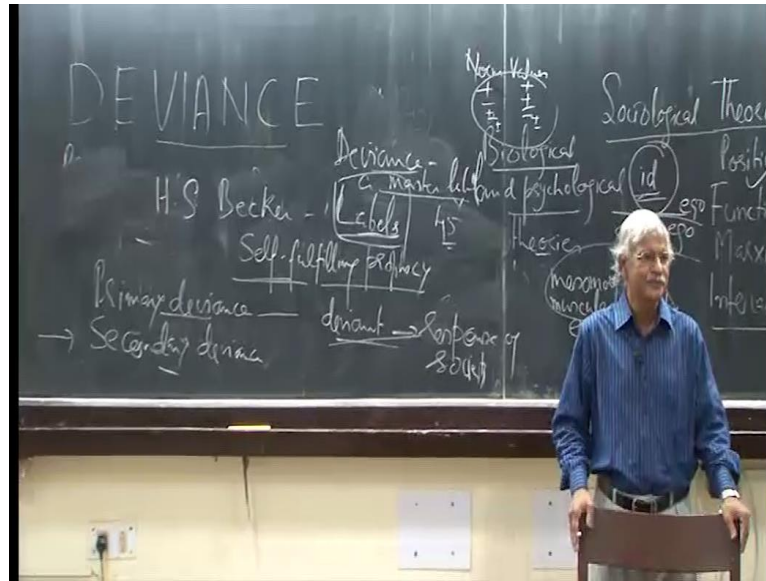
integrated; unmarried persons are less integrated with the larger society. So, when female education goes up, age of marriage goes up; proportion of unmarried males, unmarried females increases, and since marital status is closely associated with crime or deviance, so, rise in female education will lead to more crime and more deviance. And fourth and last hypothesis; these are hypotheses. What is fact? The fact part of this research is that, homicide rate is significantly associated with female education; and the direction is positive. Higher is the female education, more is the crime. And, these hypotheses are attempts to explain, or theorize about the crime rate. They may be wrong. The fourth hypothesis is that, some men tend to be intimidated by highly educated women. In such cases, an increase in the general level of female education might increase the general level of male insecurity in society, which might tend to increase male violence.

There are some other hypotheses also, but since my purpose here is only to illustrate what it means to say positivistic research, this is how positivist sociologists proceed. They will develop indicators of deviance and crime, take up a specific case of crime, for which data are more easily available, more accurate data are available and use statistical methods and explain the finding. Emile Durkheim, I have already discussed that, certain amount of deviance, say 5 percent, is always good. It helps in redefining, or clarifying the norms of society. It identifies some basic problems with the system, so that, corrective actions can be taken. And, it can also lead to better adaptation; sometimes, today's deviance is the tomorrow's value. So, sometimes, deviance leads the process of social change.

The examples which I gave regarding sati, female infanticide, etc, or untouchability, unseeability, too much of ritualistic type of practices among Brahmins; Swami Dayanand was a deviant, that way. Swami Dayanand, the founder of Arya Samaj was a deviant; because he was a fundamentalist. He rejected brahmanical ritualistic theories and asked people to go back to vedas and have a different interpretation of Hindu religion. He was against social evils. He was also against casteism. Now, Marxists and interactionists. Interactionists have a very interesting explanation to provide. Interactionists focus on two things, some of which we have already discussed, while talking about what sociology is.



(Refer Slide Time: 31:25)



H S Becker gives more importance to labels; that sometimes, certain labels are attached to certain people, or groups. It may be individuals; it may be groups. And, through self fulfilling prophecy, which says, interactionist theory says that, in our real behavior in society, most of the time, we are trying to actualize our self images; that, all of us have a certain image of ours; this image of ours has been developed on the basis of our reading of other's reaction towards us. If you think that you are a miser person, or if you think you are a very compassionate person, or if you think you are bright, or you are dull, or you are productive, or you are careless, how do you know that? You have known these things on the basis of your reading of other's reactions towards others. These reactions include, what they tell you, their gestures, your readings, you are watching t v, so many things. Your social representations, your understanding of social representations and ultimately, your, you at, you develop an image of yourself, self full and in action, you are trying to behave in accordance; you start conforming to your own image.

So, those people who have a good label, good label, if my image of myself is that I am a good teacher; suppose at some stage in life, say at the age of 45, for some reason, reasons maybe random, or whatever; it is not important, why these reasons; at the age of 45, suppose I start thinking that I am a good teacher, what the interactionist theory says, what H S Becker says, that once a label, I know, I know that I am a good teacher; then, from the age of 45, my performance in teaching will improve; this is what it says. So, the, the moment society attaches certain labels...Now, the case of criminal tribes. If you

tell some people that, he belong to criminal tribe and by tradition, by temperament, by genes, by biological reasons, by cultural reasons, you belong to a criminal tribe; you can get satisfaction of your life only by involving in drugs, in liquor, in prostitution, in thefts and dacoity, then ultimately, a person, or a group of persons, will start behaving like that. Nobody is inherently dacoit, or saint, or leader, or follower. This theory says that, society attaches. So, so, our DIG sahib of Kanpur and the newspaper editor, when they attach a label of criminality to a list of seven or eight tribes of Kanpur, they do not know what they are doing; they are, they are actually not trying to control; maybe they think they are trying to control the crime, but they are sowing the seed of crime in Indian society; because, certain groups in society are criminalized, and people will practice discrimination and prejudices against them. Then, on any slight pretext, the police, the administration, the educationist will behave in a manner, that the members of the tribe are forced to go back to criminal activities. So, labels, labels.

H S Becker gives more importance to labels. All of us have different labels, but unfortunately, the label of criminality or deviance becomes the master label. We have so many labels. We are males, females, old, young, children, South Indian, North Indians; but unfortunately, the label of being deviant becomes the master label; deviance, a master label. So, if you say that, somebody is a drunkard, this becomes a master label. And, everybody will try to behave towards them in a manner, as though these people are unadulterated, unpolluted case of being drunkard; as though they have no other interest; as though they are not males or females; as though they are not brahmins or kshatriyas or dalits; as though they are not educated or uneducated, South Indian or North Indian, Indian or American citizen; they are only deviants; they are drunkards. So, drunk, being drunkard becomes the master label. And, once a deviant label becomes the master label for some people, they start acting in accordance with that label; self fulfilling prophecy. Echoing the similar ideas, E M (( )) makes a distinction between primary deviance and secondary deviance.

Primary deviance means, when the act of deviance as such, is committed first time; but if you closely observe, then no act in itself gets you classified as normals or deviants. The same acts which the deviant people have performed, other people have also performed sometime or the other; there is no difference. Primary, primary deviance... While I was talking about interactionist theory, I gave the example of some students taking liquor in

the hostel, this is primary deviance. Everybody takes liquor; most students takes liquor, sometime or the other. So, taking liquor as such does not make one deviant; but when for this act of deviance, one student, or a group of students get classified as deviant; they are, their deviance is noticed by some powerful agency, say wardens. In textbooks of sociology, examples of conflicts or violence in different wards of cities are given. If there is a feud, a conflict, a fight between youths in the low class, slum type of area, then the police will immediately say, they are deviant. The police can arrest them and take legal action against them. If youths are found fighting in an upper class locality, then the same police will have a softer attitude towards them, and they will say, [foreign language]; they will not take any action. Act is same; two or more youths are fighting; same; in one context, in the context of slums, or lower class colonies, that becomes a deviant act, in the eyes of police department; and in the case of upper class localities, it is a youthful activity [foreign language]. But once a powerful agency, which has the right to identify the case of deviance, calls some people deviant, then the response of the society is such, response of society is such that, people have no option, other than becoming a deviant.

Actually, on the basis of primary deviance, you see, the different, difference between this theory and other theories would be that, to begin with, it says there is no difference between deviants and normals. All people have same attitudes, same desire to (( )), conform to norms of society, good and bad, all kinds of tendencies, behavior patterns; all of us indulge in all types of behavior. But once, once a person is labeled as deviant, when society behaves towards him or her in such a manner that, they are forced to accept deviant behavior as their norm, they become [foreign language] deviant; second, that is why this is called secondary deviance. Secondary deviance is the generation of society. Secondary deviance is not caused by any characteristic of deviant persons. It is caused by society. If you know that somebody has been in jail for 5, 6 years, you do not want to hire his services. If somebody has criminal record and criminal record means, somebody has been in jail for 5, 6 years; no one will give him a job in his house, or in his industry, or in his office; not even in an NGO, unless NGO is working to reform society. So, what will this person do, when there is no job, when society does not welcome him, when society discriminates against him? Then, for the sake of survival, this person may go and join a criminal gang. This joining of criminal gang, because the society reacts towards him in a certain manner, that is secondary deviance.

So, the onus of creating or fighting deviance, according to this perspective, this is very humanitarian, humanistic perspective and a micro-perspective. This is related to what Gandhiji used to say that, hate the sin, but not the sinner. Once we start hating sinners, you create more sins in society. So, we must hate sins, not the sinner. When you do not hate the sinners, then this link from sin to sin is broken, and everybody has the opportunity. You ask yourself, whether you have never deviated from the norm of society; I will not be able to tell myself that I am so good, that I have never deviated from norms of society. I have deviated from norms of society and maybe, if my deviations were known to wardens or others, I would not be here and I would not become a normal person. So, it is not primary deviance. In primary deviance, all the [laughs] students are all youthful persons, indulges sometime or other; [foreign language]; if you, if somebody, a powerful person, an agency notices it, labels your activities as deviant and society starts behaving towards you in a manner that forces you to accept the deviant part, then deviance takes place.

And Marxists, you can very well understand, Marxists will focus more on law. They will say that, laws are made to protect the interest of the capitalists class and the poor people are punished for breaking the laws. So, according to Marxists, most laws in capitalist society are the, the laws related to protection of property. And, laws are made for the benefit of the capitalist class and the offenders, who, the people who are punished for breaking the laws belonging to the lower classes. Many types of decisions not taken by the government, which could benefit, or which could result in the welfare of the lower classes, because the government does not want to annoy the capitalists. Enquiries will not be conducted, or courts can give benefits of doubts, when it comes to cases of the bourgeois, the upper class people. And when it comes to cases of poor people, so, then nobody shows any sympathies. So, the Marxist sociologist, who studied deviance, make a detailed study of two things; one, what are the laws and what is the relationship between laws and the interest of the capitalist class; and second, what is the composition of those who are punished for deviance, and what is exactly procedure that was followed to punish those people, class.

Marxist theory, as usual, is based on the idea of class antagonism, class contradictions, and the poor people, or the proletariats, or the working classes, being the victim of law; and the capitalists, or the bourgeois, developing the law. So, the Marxist will look at this,

this man, William Chamblies, in some books, where Marxists theory of deviance will be discussed, what I will say that, you take these ideas from the lecture and do some Google search, yahoo and Google search, you will find lots of references; Marxists theory, deviance, Emile Dukheim, deviance, (( )), deviance, William Chamblies and you find lot of material. Just try to understand how sociologists of different variety, or sociologists believing in different theories, different perspectives, different models, have tried to look at the issue of deviance. For some, it is some, some limited amount of deviance is good; for some, it is an indication of social change; for some, it is a matter of labeling; for some, it is a matter of society reacting towards certain people, labelled for deviance, in a manner, that they are forced to indulge in deviant behavior. There is no other option for them. And, there are biological theories and psychological theories. If you have time, depending on how much interest you take in this subject, you can try to understand.