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| Interactionist Theories of Crime and Deviance |
| Labelling, like. |
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A guide to the symbols

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| --- | --- |
| This symbol | Means you will be doing this sort of activity |
| MC900304333[1] | A ‘think – pair –share’ type activity |
| [John Greenaway jones](https://twitter.com/roryandiz) | A tweet – limited words activity |
| MC900293480[1] | A peer-teaching/explaining activity |
|  | A jigsaw/marketplace-type activity |
| MC900359715[1] | An online/internet-based activity |
|  | An activity using drawing or posters |
| MC900196546[1] | An unavoidable listening to me opportunity (used sparingly, promise). |

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| This symbol | Means you will be doing this sort of activity |
| MC900187587[1] | Some thinking – it’s good for you ! |
| MC900056352[1] | A choice from a range of things |
| MC900060322[1] | Stuff to do at home or in your frees |
| southpark-1205EekAPenis2-cartman_1207668702 | Giving a presentation |
| MC900071185[1] | Peer-assessment and review |
| MC900056929[1] | Finding stuff out |
| [See full size image](http://i375.photobucket.com/albums/oo193/chaosnonstop/Chaos.j) | This seemed like a good idea at the time... |

Cicourel: the negotiation of justice

Who gets labelled ?

**The social construction of crime**

Strengths

**Evaluation of labelling theory**

Weaknesses

**The effects of labelling**

Primary and Secondary Deviance

Labelling and criminal justice policy

Deviance Amplification

Activity 1: Introducing Labelling\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

MC900304333[1] Task One: Party Party

It is 7.00pm on Saturday night. You have opted for a fairly dull night in watching some awful celebrity dancing phone-in show, Dale Winton insulting-your-intelligence with a lottery show ‘quiz’, and then some rehashed Casualty plot-line involving a motorway pile-up, a chemical leak in a weapons factory and four kids stuck down a pothole with the water level rising. However, at 7.45 you get a text from an old friend inviting you to a party at their house.

You are a bit unsure whether to go as you’ve not seen your old friend for some time, but given the competition on offer on TV it’s a no-brainer and you decide to go. At 9.30 you arrive at the party. Your old friend gives you a big hug and a kiss. To your surprise your friend has undergone gender re-assignment.

The other party guests are:

* A vicar
* A glamour model
* A successful barrister
* A reality TV celebrity
* An ex-prisoner
* A heroin user
* A schizophrenic
* A members of a religious cult
* A person claiming to have recently been abducted by aliens
* A person with cancer

1. What would your reaction be to your old friend ?

2. Your old friend introduces you to all the guests listed above. In each case explain what

your perceptions of that guest would be.

3. To what extent do your responses support the idea that labelling takes place in society ?

Activity 2: The social construction of crime**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

MC900304333[1] Task One: The nature of deviant acts

Read page 81 in the IPC, down to the bit that says ‘Who gets labelled’. Deconstruct the following sentences to explain what they mean.

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| **Sentence in interactionist-speak** | **English translation** |
| No act is inherently deviant in itself. It is society’s reaction to the act that makes it deviant. |  |
| Social groups create deviance by creating the rules whose infraction (breaking) constitutes deviance, and by applying those rules to particular people and labelling them as outsiders. |  |

 Task Two: the negotiation of justice

This is a draw the concept activity. Do a ‘writing on the reading’ on the section on who gets labelled and the negotiation of justice on pages 81-82 of the IPC. In the space below construct your own artistic representation of the negotiation of justice in the space below.

Activity 3: The effects of labeling**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

[John Greenaway jones](https://twitter.com/roryandiz) Task One: The labeling process

This is a limited words activity. Your task is to read pages 82-83 in the IPC and then to explain the effects of labeling on an individual using the concepts below. One sentence per concept only.

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| Concept | Your sentence |
| Primary deviance |  |
| Secondary deviance |  |
| Master status |  |
| Self-concept |  |
| Self-fulfilling prophecy |  |
| Deviant career |  |
| Deviant subculture |  |

MC900060322[1] Task Two: Jock Young ‘The Drugtakers’

Briefly explain how Jock Young’s study of hippy marijuana users illustrates the concepts of secondary deviance and deviant career:

Activity 4: Deviance amplification and the role of the media**\_\_\_**

MC900187587[1] Task One: The deviancy amplification spiral

Read the following excerpt from an article from Wikipedia on deviancy amplification.

**Deviancy amplification spiral** (also simply called **deviance amplification**) is a [media hype](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_hype) phenomenon defined by [media critics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_critic) as a cycle of increasing numbers of reports on a category of antisocial behavior or some other "undesirable" event. In 1972, [Stanley Cohen](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stanley_Cohen_(sociologist)) wrote a book, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, whose thesis is that [moral panics](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moral_panic) usually include what he called a deviancy amplification spiral.

According to Jessica Grah the spiral starts with some "deviant" act. Usually the [deviance](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Deviancy) is [criminal](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crime) but it can also involve lawful acts considered morally repugnant by most of society. The mass media reports what they consider to be newsworthy, but the new focus on the issue uncovers hidden or borderline examples which themselves would not have been newsworthy except as they confirm the "pattern".

Reported cases of such "deviance" are often presented as just "the ones we know about" or "the tip of the [iceberg](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iceberg)," an assertion that is nearly impossible to disprove immediately. For a variety of reasons, what is not frightening and would help the public keep a rational perspective (such as statistics showing that the behavior or event is actually less common or harmful than generally believed) tends to be ignored by the press.

As a result, minor problems begin to look serious and rare events begin to seem common. Members of the public are motivated to keep informed on these events. The resulting publicity has potential to increase deviant behavior by glamorizing it or making it seem common or acceptable. In the next stage, public concern about crime typically forces the police and the law enforcement system to focus more resources on dealing with the specific deviancy than it warrants.

Judges and magistrates then come under public pressure to deal out harsher sentences and politicians pass new laws to increase their popularity by giving the impression that they are dealing with the perceived threat. All this tends to convince the public that their fear was justified while the media continue to profit by reporting police and other law enforcement activity, which further perpetuates the spiral.

The theory does not contend that moral panics always include the deviancy amplification spiral. In modern times, however, media involvement is usual in any moral panic, making the spiral fairly common.

 Task Two: Drawing the spiral

Use the above information to draw a flow chart which identifies each stage of the deviance amplification spiral. For extra spice, add a recent real life moral panic.

 Task Three: Deviance amplification in action

Watch the video ‘The Agony and The Ecstasy’, and answer the following questions

**Questions:**

1. What was the sequence of events in Brighton during the first of the clashes between

mods and rockers in the 1960s ?

2. How did the media coverage encourage violence ?

Classic pattern of a moral panic:

3. How could it be argued that the related cultures were media creations ?

4. Why *moral* ?

5. Why *panic* ?

6. Why does Sarah Thornton feel that youth cultures and the related music industry are

trying to provoke a moral panic ?

**The Case of Leah Betts**

7. How close does the news coverage of this case match the classic model of moral panic ?

8. Why did Leah Betts, and not other young people who died after taking ecstasy, receive

so much attention ?

9. Why is it difficult to easily distinguish between deviant and normal behaviour when looking

at this case ?

Activity 5: Labelling and criminal justice policy**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

 Task One: The ASBO

In pairs, use the following terms to explain how interactionists might criticize the use of ASBOs to deter anti-social behavior:

* Secondary deviance
* Master status
* Self-fulfilling prophecy
* Stigmatisation

If this critique is right, what type of crime policy should governments follow ?

Activity 6: Evaluation of Interactionist Explanations**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

MC900304333[1] Task One: Sorty Outy Time

Below are a series of statements which could be strengths or weaknesses of interactionist explanations. Your job is to decide which are which. But wait a minute…there’s a space next to each one. Your further task is to develop the point further…

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| **Evaluation point** | **Development** |
| 1. The theory helps to explain different rates of offending through the activities of the police and the law courts. |  |
| 2. If there is no such thing as an intrinsically deviant act, where does that leave actions such as rape and murder ? |  |
| 3. The extent to which the criminal justice system affects whether a labeled individual continues their deviant career is unclear. |  |
| 4. There is a tendency to fail to explain why deviant acts are committed in the first place. Important structural causes of crime are often neglected. |  |
| 5. There is a recognition that the nature and extent of deviance is socially constructed. |  |
| 6. The approach recognizes that the forces of the criminal justice system are important players in the phenomenon of crime. |  |
| 7. Little empirical support has been found for the process of labeling, especially the claim that factors such as ethnicity, class and gender are more important in influencing the criminal justice system’s view of the offender than factors such as previous record or the type of crime investigated. |  |
| 8. It draws our attention to the relative nature of deviance. |  |
| 9. It tends to treat deviants as the passive victims of the social control agencies. |  |

 Task Two: Putting it all together

Go back to page 4 of this study guide and have a go at annotating the overview diagram which covers interactionist theories. Try to do most of this from memory.