A recent USA Today featured a short article on weird laws from around the world. While all are truly “weird,” some appear to actually have a rational reason for their existence while others do not. For example, in Rome, it is illegal to eat or drink near landmarks, and in Greece, it is illegal to wear stiletto heels. While both these laws appear to be rather random, when explored, they make perfect sense. The laws are designed to preserve the ancient landmarks found in both places. It is fairly obvious that eating and drinking in historic places could lead to sticky walls or ruined artifacts, but stiletto heels may be just as dangerous. It turns out that the pressure from a thin stiletto heel is roughly equal to the pressure of an elephant walking in the same spot. Thailand and Canada both have laws that dictate how people treat or use their currency. In Thailand, it is illegal to step on the nation’s currency. All currency in Thailand carries a picture of the king, and because the king is so revered, it is a great offense to treat the currency and thus the king disrespectfully. In Canada, it is illegal to use more than 25 pennies in a single transaction. Why? We’re not quite sure, except there appears to be a strong feeling that the penny is worthless—the government has phased out the coin. Not to be outdone, the United States has its fair share of weird laws, too. In Washington State it is illegal to harass Bigfoot, Sasquatch, or any other undiscovered subspecies. In North Dakota, it is illegal to serve beer and pretzels at the same time at a bar or restaurant. And in Missouri, you can’t ride in a car with an uncaged bear.


Introduction

It is fun to sit and ponder the weird laws that exist around the world, but there are two larger points to be made in a chapter on global perspectives on deviance and social control. First, there is no greater example of the relativist nature of deviance than examining the laws of a country or region. While it is unlikely anyone is getting into a car
with an uncaged bear anytime soon, it is much more likely that beer and pretzels will be served at the same time, that stiletto heels will be worn, and that someone might mistreat the currency of a country. While some might engage in these acts knowing their behavior will be defined as deviant, it is our bet that a good number will have no clue that their actions are defined as deviant, at least by the laws in that country. Second, the responses to these forms of deviance are also relative. While it is true that the law says you cannot eat or drink near historic landmarks in Rome, it is rarely enforced, and while the authors have not had the pleasure of drinking a beer in North Dakota, we bet we could find at least one restaurant that would serve us a pretzel, too. None of us are willing to test the uncaged-bear law. As you will see in this chapter, there is much to be studied about global deviance and social control.

Most of this book is dedicated to how we think about, understand, describe, and explain deviance. In other words, most of this book is dedicated to a sociological and theoretical understanding of deviance. For this reason, this chapter is outside the norm (or, as some might say, deviant) in this book. We have chosen to include it because we believe that an analysis of global perspectives on deviance and social control helps us appreciate an examination of deviance by including perspectives we do not often experience. It also allows us the opportunity to apply those theories we have been discussing in the rest of the book. For this reason, you will see the structure of this chapter mirrors the structure of the book: First, we examine researching deviance globally, then we look at empirical tests of theories of deviance globally, and finally, we discuss social control in a global context.

◊ Researching Deviance Globally

For the undergraduate student of deviant behavior and especially those interested in deviance across the globe, research should always start with the work of others. There are a number of journals that purport to publish studies of crime and criminal justice outside the United States or internationally. Others focus on particular forms of deviance and make an effort to include research with an international or interdisciplinary focus. Thumbing through those journals, one will find some research outside the United States and some truly international research—that is, research that transcends borders. Alternatively, a great deal of research will be conducted by Americans and focus on American citizens. On its website, the journal *Deviant Behavior* (n.d.) purports to be

the only journal that specifically and exclusively addresses social deviance. International and interdisciplinary in scope; it publishes refereed theoretical, descriptive, methodological, and applied papers. All aspects of deviant behavior are discussed, including: crime, juvenile delinquency, alcohol abuse and narcotic addiction, sexual deviance, societal reaction to handicap and disfigurement, mental illness, and socially inappropriate behavior. (para. 1)

While the journal is open to research from around the world and perhaps even actively strives to be international and interdisciplinary, a great many of the articles are written by U.S. researchers focused on American citizens. The next section discusses issues surrounding doing research outside of the United States.

◊ Trials and Tribulations Involved in Researching Deviance Across the Globe

Laws and official reporting and recording practices vary significantly across countries (Newman, 2008), thus making comparisons of deviance rates using official statistics problematic. That is, while official statistics may be very useful, they measure as much what officials do as how deviant individuals behave and the correlates of that behavior. This
leaves many thinking that self-report measures may provide more valid information regarding deviance in other countries. While this may be true, there are definite problems collecting data regarding deviance in other countries and cultures, and many things must be considered in advance.

As with any scientific research, the research protocol must be approved by an institutional review board (IRB). As discussed in Chapter 3, while most IRBs support research, they have to make sure that certain procedures are followed, and this may become even more complex and problematic when one is proposing to do research outside the United States. First, the IRB will want evidence that the researcher has permission to do research in a foreign country. Some countries legally prohibit research. Indeed, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (n.d.) website provides “a listing of over 1,000 laws, regulations, and guidelines on human subjects’ protections in over 100 countries and from several international organizations” (para. 1). IRBs will want documentation from public citizens, schools, or local officials showing that they understand the nature of the research and that they agree to allow the research to take place.

Second and most generally, an IRB will want to make sure that culturally appropriate procedures are in place to protect participants in the research activity. Although the researcher may (or indeed may not) know a great deal about the culture and local customs outside the United States, it is very likely that some IRB members will not be aware of the norms, customs, and beliefs that may offend research participants or their leaders, and the IRB will probably need to be educated in these regards before it can approve research. It would behoove a researcher, even one with a vast knowledge of a particular culture, to have an endorsement from another expert that the research will not cause offense or concern in the society in question.

A third issue is language. If the research involves in-depth interviews, the researcher or research team must know the language well enough to conduct the interviews. Usually, in-depth interviews do not follow a specific script, and the researcher will begin with only a set of key questions that he or she expects will change as more is learned about the specific issues being studied. This could become a slippery slope in studies of deviance because the research may go down a path that was not approved by an IRB and lead to problems. There is not much an IRB can do about this, but the researcher(s) would be required to let the IRB know if any adverse events occur.

When conducting survey research in a foreign country that speaks a language other than English, it is likely that the survey will need to be translated. Once again, IRB members will not likely speak the other language, and so they may want to have the survey translated, then back-translated, so that they know that what is being included in the translated document is consistent with the original. While this may be time-consuming and potentially expensive, it would appear to be the right thing to do and would ultimately make the results of the research more valid.

A fourth issue has to do with protected groups. There are several protected populations where special consideration must be given to the respondents’ ability to provide consent to participate in research. For example, prisoners may feel compelled to do research if a guard is supplying the survey or even in the room when the researcher is asking for consent. Children are also an issue as they are not legally eligible to give consent. In the United States, the legal age of consent is 18, but it may be older or younger in other countries. This raises an interesting question. It may seem self-evident that if the legal age of consent in a country is older than 18, the local law should be followed. However, if the local law is younger than 18, do we follow local custom or U.S. regulations? Another issue that arises when studying children is parental consent. In the United States, parental consent is usually required to conduct research on children. But what if parental consent is culturally inappropriate in a particular society—for example, one in which tribal elders or other family members are responsible for the children? In any case, the person who needs to provide the consent, be it a parent or other person, must be provided with a request that is written in the language of the resident at such a level that he or she will understand the protocol (what is being asked of the child). This request should inform the consent giver that he or she does not have to allow the child to participate and/or can stop the research at any point without penalty. If a waiver of active parental permission is granted, a letter informing
the parents of the research, written at a literacy level that would be understood by the parents, may be required and should be prepared and sent to them by the most expeditious method possible.

Finally, how the data will be kept anonymous or confidential must be specified. If and how the data will be handled by different individuals or agencies must be laid out. How the data might be transferred physically or electronically and how the information will be protected must be demonstrated. In some cases, it will be important to describe how the data will be analyzed and presented to the public so that concerns about disclosing individual information are minimized.

These are many issues to consider, and they may not seem all that relevant to undergraduate students. However, just because undergraduates may not be conducting their own actual research outside the United States, it does not follow that such issues should not be considered and discussed. Understanding the practical and ethical issues surrounding such research will help us to understand the limitations of other studies we come across, making us both more appreciative and skeptical of what we are reading or hearing about in class or in social media. The next section provides a quick look into a few alternatives available to study deviance in other countries.

### DEVIANCE IN POPULAR CULTURE

Because many of us have not had the opportunity to travel around the world—or the misfortune to be held in a foreign prison—much of what we think we know about deviance and social control in a global context comes from popular culture. Here we have selected a few films that portray foreign cultures, deviance, crime, and prisons. What messages do you think these films share with their mainstream audiences? How do they shape perceptions of deviance and social control in countries around the world?

*Brokedown Palace* (1999)—Claire Danes and Kate Beckinsale play American high school friends vacationing in Thailand who, whether they intended to do so or were simply vulnerable victims, are caught smuggling drugs and sentenced to 33 years in a Thai prison. The film shows their adjustment to life in a prison in a foreign land and their attempts to find a way out.

*Return to Paradise* (1998)—Three friends meet on vacation in Malaysia, indulging in alcohol, drugs, and the beach. After two return to their lives in the United States, one is caught with a large amount of their shared hashish. In an interesting plot twist and moral question, if the others will return and accept responsibility and ownership of the drugs, they will all do shorter sentences in the Third World prison. Otherwise, the friend who was caught will be sentenced to death because the large amount has branded him a trafficker and earned him a death sentence.

*City of God* (2002)—A vivid film and story focusing on the City of God housing project, plagued by crushing poverty, violence, and gangs in the slums of Rio de Janeiro. The focus is on two boys growing up surrounded by and immersed in deviance, drugs, and weapons.

*Trainspotting* (1996)—Something of a cult favorite film about a group of heroin addicts in the Edinburgh drug scene, famous for its “Choose life” monologue. The film displays all kinds of deviant behavior, mixing humor with horrifying scenes. The plot details the main character’s efforts to kick his habit.

*Hunger* (2008)—A film based on the true story of a 1981 hunger strike in which 10 Irish Republican Army prisoners died. The film focuses on inhumane prison conditions and highlights three different stories: the daily life of a prison guard, the IRA prisoners’ refusal to bathe or wear prison clothes, and the hunger strike. The film pays special attention to Bobby Sands, who was the first prisoner to die.
More Reasonable Strategies for Undergraduates to Study Deviance Outside the United States

Most students will not have the resources to directly study (e.g., go to the foreign country and conduct surveys or interviews) deviance outside the United States. There are several existing large-scale data sets for studying deviance across countries. Sometimes the focus is on the criminal justice system or reactions to deviance. For example, Interpol and the United Nations provide data on what crimes are known to the police across a large number of countries and also about how these crimes are handled—for example, the number or rates of arrests, prosecutions, and convictions. Alternatively, a number of data sets exist that use surveys to collect self-reported measures of crime, delinquency, or victimization across countries. While these titles highlight a criminological emphasis, note that these generic terms include numerous offenses that may or may not come to the attention of the police, and softer forms of deviant behavior that even if they came to the attention of authorities might provoke little or no reaction.

For example, the International Self-Reported Delinquency Study of 1992 (Junger-Tas, Marshall, & Ribeaud, 2003) focused on self-reported misbehavior and victimization among youth aged 12 to 15 in 13 countries. A follow-up of this project resulted in the Second International Self-Reported Delinquency Study (Enzmann & Podana, 2010), now expanded to 31 countries. Self-report items ranged from relatively minor forms of deviance (e.g., “Steal something from a shop or department store”) to quite serious ones (e.g., “Intentionally beat someone up, or hurt him with a stick or knife, so bad that they had to see a doctor”) (Enzmann & Podana, 2010, p. 183). Vazsonyi, Pickering, Junger, and Hessing (2001) developed the normative deviance scale, which was designed to measure noncriminal forms of lifetime deviance. They collected data from several countries, including the United States, Switzerland, Hungary, and New Zealand.

The following list highlights just a few data sets that are available through the International Consortium of Political and Social Research (see Chapter 3), which your university may be affiliated with. These data sets focus on deviance and social control internationally—or at least outside the United States.

- International Crime Victimization Survey, 1989–2000 (the 2000 wave covering 47 industrialized and developing countries)
- Citizenship, Democracy, and Drug-Related Violence, 2011 (Mexico)
- Center for Research on Social Reality [Spain] Survey, December 1993: Attitudes and Behavior Regarding Alcohol, Tobacco, and Drugs
- Euro-Barometer 32: The Single European Market, Drugs, Alcohol, and Cancer, November 1989

In the following section, we describe how several theories developed in the United States have been tested in other countries.

Empirical Tests of Theories of Deviance Globally

Studying deviance around the world is nothing new. Indeed, much anthropological work might be seen as the study of customs, attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs that modern Western society might find deviant. However, the sociological
research focusing on the theories described in this book, most all carried out in the United States or in other developed Western societies, has only recently been empirically investigated outside the United States. This investigative extension might very likely stem from the seemingly audacious claim by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) that their general theory of crime could explain not only crime but other analogous behaviors (i.e., deviance) across all cultures and historical times; this claim led others to test Gottfredson and Hirschi’s theory and other theories of deviance as well. In this chapter, we examine empirical evidence as it relates to a variety of theories of deviance and social control.

Empirical Tests of Gottfredson and Hirschi’s General Theory of Deviance: Self-Control and Deviance in Other Countries

As discussed in Chapter 7, Gottfredson and Hirschi’s (1990) general theory of crime, which focuses on the relationship between low self-control and crime and analogous behaviors (i.e., deviance), has been well researched, especially in the United States. Indeed, in the meta-analysis conducted by Pratt and Cullen (2000) they concluded that “with these caveats stated, the meta-analysis reported here furnishes fairly impressive empirical support for Gottfredson and Hirschi’s theory” (p. 951). Interestingly, the meta-analysis, which was conducted nearly 10 years after Gottfredson and Hirschi first published their book, did not include empirical tests conducted outside the United States, presumably because they were not available to be included. Subsequent to the publication of the meta-analysis, there have been a number of important empirical tests of the relationship between self-control and deviant behavior outside the United States.

Cretacci and his colleagues published several studies examining self-control theory based on convenience samples collected in China (Cretacci, Fei Ding, & Rivera, 2010; Cretacci & Cretacci, 2012). In their most direct test of the theory, which focused on the relationship between self-control and deviance, they collected data from students \( n = 148 \) in the law and social work departments at a Beijing university (Cretacci et al., 2010). Interestingly, the survey was administered in English. At least one of the authors, however, had interacted enough with the respondents to be confident that they could complete the relatively simple survey the researchers had designed. Deviance was measured with a 14-item scale asking about various forms of deviance. The study found support for Hirschi’s (1969 and 2004) social control construct, which was significantly associated with lower levels of deviance.

Lu, Yu, Ren, and Marshall (2013) provide a more recent analysis using the Second International Self-Report Delinquency Study. The data came from a probability sample of seventh-, eighth-, and ninth-grade students from nine schools in five urban areas in the city of Hanzhou, China (the capital city of the Zhejiang Province). In this study, the self-report instrument was translated and pretested with exchange students at an American university. Two dependent variables measuring deviance were (1) minor “risky behaviors” (e.g., drinking and smoking); and (2) “delinquency” (e.g., fighting, carrying a weapon, vandalism). Self-control was measured with a shorter adaptation of Grasmick’s scale, including the dimensions of “impulsivity, risk-seeking, self-centeredness, and temper” (Lu et al., 2013, p. 39). Social control measures included family and school bonding, school commitment, and beliefs. As in most studies conducted in the United States, the results supported the general theory of crime, showing self-control to be a significant and relatively robust predictor of both forms of deviance after controlling for a number of theoretically relevant variables (e.g., measures social control) and standard control variables (e.g., age and sex). Some support was also found for social control theory, especially as family bonding and beliefs appeared significant in at least two models. Given that this was a much more rigorous examination of the relationship between self-control and deviance, we conclude that Gottfredson and Hirschi’s theory of deviance is indeed generalizable to China.

Self-control has been tested in other countries as well, by researchers such as Vazsonyi and his colleagues. One especially interesting study (Vazsonyi et al., 2001) involved a test of self-control theory among youths in America \( n = 2,213 \), Switzerland \( n = 889 \), Hungary \( n = 4,018 \), and the Netherlands \( n = 1,315 \). Deviance was measured with a 55-item normative deviance scale, with subscales including vandalism, alcohol and drug use, school misconduct, general deviance, theft, and assault. Self-control was measured with Grasmick’s 24-item scale. The researchers
found consistent support across countries for the general theory of crime in that self-control explained between 10% and 16% of the variation in the deviant behavior subscales and over 20% of the variation in the full measure of deviance. In another study using the same measures, Vazsonyi, Wittekind, Belliston, and Van Loh (2004) tested the theory among Japanese youth \((n = 334)\), finding comparable outcomes to a U.S. sample of youth. In yet another study using similar measures but with the addition of family process measures related to social control (closeness, support, and monitoring), Vazsonyi and Klanjsek (2008) examined the relationship between self-control, social control, and deviance with more than 3,000 Swiss. They found at least some support for both Hirschi’s social control theory and Hirschi’s general theory of crime.

Özbay and Köksoy (2009) provided tests of self-control theory in the developing country of Turkey. They focused on predicted general violence and political violence among college students \((n = 974)\) using a modified version of Grasmick’s scale. Özbay and Köksoy (2009) found that low self-control was associated with a significantly greater likelihood of both forms of violence after controlling for a host of theoretically relevant variables (e.g., strain and criminal friends) and standard control variables (e.g., age and gender). In another article, Özbay (2008) examines the generalizability of self-control across gender. Using the same data set, the researcher finds that not only is self-control generalizable across males and females; the empirical evidence suggests that the theory is more generalizable than other theories, including bonding and strain theories.

We will conclude this section with a discussion of what is clearly the largest global test of Gottfredson and Hirschi’s general theory. In “Self-Control in a Global Perspective,” Rebellon, Straus, and Medeiros (2008) tested several aspects of the general theory within and across fully 32 nations spanning “all six humanly habitable continents” (p. 331) and including Western, non-Western, developed, and developing countries. The data came from the International Dating Violence Consortium, which collected it from college students in universities across the 32 countries. Straus and Medeiros developed a six-item scale to measure the six dimensions of self-control described by Gottfredson and Hirschi. These items included the following:

- **Self-Centered:** I don’t think about how what I do will affect other people.
- **Risk-Taking:** I often do things that other people think are dangerous.
- **Temper:** There is nothing I can do to control my feelings when my partner hassles me.
- **Preference for Physical:** I often get hurt by the things that I do.
- **Impulsivity:** I have trouble following the rules at work or in school.
- **Long-Term Consequences:** I have goals in life that I try to reach.

For each question, respondents were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with the statement on a four-point scale \((1 = \text{“strongly disagree”} \rightarrow 4 = \text{“strongly agree”})\).

Criminal behavior included both property crime (stolen property worth more than $50 U.S. and stolen money from anyone, including family) and violent crime (physical attack of someone with intention of seriously harming them and hit or threatened to hit a nonfamily member). Each of the four items were conditioned in terms of age, so respondents were asked once if the event happened before they were 15 years old and then asked again if it had occurred after they were 15. Two scales were then created with four items each, measuring property and violent crime, respectively.

Given Gottfredson and Hirschi’s emphasis on child rearing and emotional involvement of parents in children’s lives in the development of self-control, the researchers also included an eight-item “parental neglect scale” that included items measuring direct control (e.g., parents making sure the respondent went to school) and social support (e.g., parent provided comfort). These measures allowed a pretty solid test of the general theory in that parental efforts could be correlated with self-control, which in turn could be related to criminal behavior.
The findings and results of the study are fairly clear and supportive of Gottfredson and Hirschi’s theory. First, parental neglect was a significant predictor of self-control in all 32 countries, explaining between 15% and 39% of the variation in self-control. Second, self-control was significantly related to violent crime in all 32 countries, and self-control was significantly related to property crime in 28 of the 32 countries.

While the researchers found considerable support for Gottfredson and Hirschi’s general theory of crime across both Western and non-Western nations, they do point out a few caveats. First, the measure of criminal peers was also found to be a relatively robust predictor of crime across nations. Second, even though self-control was largely associated with violence and property crime across countries, there was considerable variation in its predictive ability—that is, the effect of self-control was not constant across cultures, as predicted by the theory.

This study and the others described above, taken together, suggest that self-control is a relatively strong correlate of crime and deviance across more than 32 nations. Although empirical evidence is not perfectly consistent across countries, overall, there appears to be general support across various forms of deviance.

Testing Differential Association and Social Learning Theories Outside of the United States

Like social and self-control theories, tests of differential association and social learning theories have mostly been conducted in the United States. However, some recent efforts have moved beyond the confines of this country. Not far from the United States is the French- and English-speaking country to the north, Canada. There, Gallupe and Bouchard (2013) examined social learning theory and substance use through an investigation of party-going among adolescents in a large Canadian city. A total of 829 students were surveyed, and 411 of them reported on their behavior at a total of 775 parties. Three hundred sixty-one students reported on multiple parties, which allowed the researchers to investigate changes in party characteristics and how that affected substance use. The key social learning variable was reinforcement, and this was measured by the number of close friends who drank alcohol or used marijuana at the party and the amount of alcohol and marijuana these friends used. In both the cross-sectional and semilongitudinal analyses (change), reinforcement variables were found to be relatively strong predictors of both alcohol and marijuana use, thus showing support for differential association and social learning theories.

Moving across the ocean, we find that differential association and social learning theories have also been tested in Europe. By the year 2000, there had been only a few ethnographic and interview-based studies of youth deviance conducted in France and no systematic self-report studies, so Hartjen and Priyadarsini (2003) initiated a study to test theories in rural France, focusing heavily on differential association and social learning theory. They argued that France is a particularly interesting country to utilize self-reported methods because France appears to have an extremely benevolent and tolerant approach to misbehaving youth. Very few are ever incarcerated and, if so, not for very long. Every effort is made by officials from police to judges to divert misbehaving juveniles from official processing or punitive action. (Hartjen & Priyadarsini, 2003, p. 389)

With official counts of criminal sanctions being so low, self-report research is likely to detect much more deviant behavior and should be a better indicator of misbehavior. Hartjen and Priyadarsini surveyed male and female junior high and high school students ranging in age from 13 to 18 from three schools. All three schools were located in a single, ethnographically homogeneous, rural town in France. The survey they used was based on the National Youth Survey, which was translated into French. They included two measures of delinquency—a total delinquency scale based on 50 items and a “petty delinquency” scale that included minor misbehaviors. Measures based on differential association and social learning theories included
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attitudes towards deviance [measured as negative attitudes towards deviance or prosocial attitudes], peer involvement [measured as positive peer involvement], exposure to delinquent peers, and an index of exposure to delinquent peers [created by combining peer involvement with exposure to delinquent peers]. (p. 393)

Positive peer involvement and prosocial attitudes were negatively related to both total and petty deviant behaviors among both males and females in the sample, whereas exposure to delinquent peers was positively related to both measures of deviant behavior among both groups. Interestingly, there were no differences in the effects of the differential association and social learning variables across gender, suggesting that the theory is generalizable and not unique to male or female respondents.

In one of the more impressive and truly international inquiries, Antonaccio, Botchkovar, and Tittle (2011) have tested several theories, including social learning theory, in three key cities in three European countries that have “exhibited widely publicized actions to preserve their unique national cultural patterns” (p. 1203). The cities were Athens, Greece; Nizhni Novgorod, Russia; and Lvov, Ukraine. In an effort to maintain causal order in a cross-sectional study, the researchers asked questions about the likelihood of committing violent and property crimes in the future and about past experiences reinforcing violent behavior and property crime (via social learning theory). They argue that using projected offending has been found to be as valid as using self-reports of prior deviant behaviors and comes as close to maintaining the causal ordering of the model as one can get with a cross-sectional design.

Under the supervision of the research team, trained local interviewers conducted face-to-face interviews with individuals from randomly selected households in Athens (n = 400), Lvov (n = 500), and Nizhni Novgorod (n = 500). In analyses of the data set as a whole (merging data from the three cities), they found that reinforcement was significantly associated with projections of both violent behavior and property crimes after controlling for a number of other variables. Indeed, reinforcement was the strongest predictor across models. Similarly, when the analyses were disaggregated by city (analyzed separately), the social learning measure of reinforcement was positively related to both property and violent crime projections. Again, in virtually all of the models, reinforcement was the strongest predictor.

Differential association and social learning theories have also been tested in Asian countries. Kim and her colleagues (Kim, Kwak, & Yun, 2010; Kim, Akers, & Yun, 2013), for example, have provided at least two tests of social learning theory in South Korea, both focused on substance use. In the first study, they analyzed data from the Korea Youth Panel Survey, which was a longitudinal study of two cohorts (second-graders and junior high students) beginning in 2003 (Kim et al., 2013). They used the first two waves of data collected in 2003 and 2004. There was only minor attrition from the study (<10%), resulting in 3,188 student respondents. Substance use, the dependent variable, was measured with self-reported items indicating how often they had drunk alcohol or smoked cigarettes in the past year. Three concepts emerged that were most clearly derived from social learning theory: (1) a differential peer association measure based on six items indicating how many of their close friends engaged in delinquent activities, (2) differential association intensity indicated by a single item indicating how important one's reputation with deviant peers was, and (3) peer substance use measured with two items indicating how many close friends used tobacco and how many used alcohol. Interestingly, in a multivariate model, substance use was unrelated to substance use by peers and peer delinquency, but it was positively related to deviant peer intensity, increasing the odds of using substances by 21%. In this carefully collected data from a nationally represented sample of young South Koreans, we find only modest support for social learning theory. In fact, controls for parental attachment and supervision, usually associated with social control or bond theory, were more powerful predictors of substance abuse.

The second study (Kim et al., 2013) was more ambitious theoretically and empirically. In this study, Kim and colleagues attempted to test Akers's full social structure and social learning (SSSL) model to predict alcohol use. The data came from a self-report study of high school students in Busan, South Korea, a large metropolitan area in the southeast tip of the Korean Peninsula. Data were collected from just over 1,000 high school students. The data analyses clearly show support for the standard social learning theory. Kim and colleagues (2013) found that alcohol use increases when students
1. have a greater proportion of peers who use alcohol,
2. have fathers who use alcohol,
3. have definitions favorable to alcohol use, or
4. have a greater chance of imitating use of alcohol by behavioral models (p. 908).

Furthermore, they found that, consistent with Akers’s SSSL theory, the effects of several of the structural-level variables, significant when only they were in the model, were mediated by the social learning variables. Specifically, the effects of population size, residential mobility, type of school, and religiosity were explained by social learning variables. Even the strong gender effect, which remains significant in the final model, is largely explained by the social learning variables. Given the more rigorous measurement of the key constructs and analyses conducted in the previous study, we believe the evidence lends considerable support for Akers’s SSSL theory.

A Global Perspective on Social Disorganization Theory

Social disorganization theory is clearly an American-born theory, rooted in the Chicago School of Sociology. Indeed, stemming from the original theoretical and empirical work by Shaw and McKay (1942/1969) in the early 1900s, work in this tradition continues to the present day (e.g., Sampson, 2012). Of course, the theory has been tested in other major U.S. cities, such as New York, Chicago, and St. Louis, among others. The theory was originally developed to explain neighborhood variation in delinquency and crime across relatively small macrounits, but there is clearly reason to believe that the same general structural characteristics (i.e., economic deprivation, population instability, and racial/ethnic heterogeneity) may operate at other levels to explain various forms of crime and deviance. For example, social disorganization theory has also been applied to schools, cities, and states within the United States. There is also reason to believe that social disorganization is a general macrolevel theory of crime that can be applied to other countries and across nations that vary in levels of informal social control.

Recently, several efforts to test the theory at the neighborhood level in other countries have been published, and it appears that social disorganization has the potential to explain levels of deviant behavior outside the United States. In the next section, we describe studies that focus on neighborhood-level analyses across cities outside the United States.

Tests of Social Disorganization in Cities Outside the United States

Breetzke (2010) argues that South Africa provides an excellent setting to test social disorganization theory. He states that the recent political history of South Africa is inherently intertwined with social disorganization and community fragmentation. While a few examples may exist elsewhere, no other country in the world has endured such a direct and sustained attack on the social fabric of its society through state laws and policies aimed at enforcing and accentuating spatio-social segmentation. (p. 447)

To test social disorganization theory in this context, Breetzke collected data in the city of Tshwane, one of the six largest metropolitan areas in South Africa. The level of analysis was the census-defined suburb, with the number of households in each suburb ranging from 150 to 300.

Three years of violent crime data (2001–2003), including “murder, attempted murder, sexual offenses, assault with the intent to cause grievous bodily harm and common assault,” were culled from the Crime and Information Analysis Centre (Breetzke, 2010, p. 448). Address-based data were geocoded and aggregated to the suburb level.
These were matched with other 2001 census measures, including ethnic heterogeneity, socioeconomic deprivation, family disruption, and residential mobility (Breetzke, 2010, p. 448). Several of these variables were quite different in nature from those found in the United States or had potentially different meanings from our understanding in the West. For example, in addition to unemployment (a common measure used in tests of social disorganization theory in the United States), the measure of socioeconomic disadvantage included "type of dwelling, source of water, toilet facilities, refuse or rubbish removal, and energy or fuel for lighting, heating and cooking" (Breetzke, 2010, p. 448). These items are largely irrelevant in industrialized developed nations and were specifically designed by the United Nations Development Programme to assess socioeconomic development in South Africa. Interestingly, given the heterogeneous nature of the country, there was plenty of room to measure various forms of racial and ethnic heterogeneity (as the country has four official racial groups and nine distinct ethnic groups) and linguistic heterogeneity (as the country has eleven official languages). The authors chose to focus simply on the percentage black, given the history of apartheid that segregated "Black African, Colored, Asian, or Indian" individuals who were viewed as non-whites (Breetzke, 2010, p. 448).

Results were mixed. On the one hand, consistent with social disorganization theory, both measures of socioeconomic deprivation (unemployment and the deprivation index) were statistically and positively related to rates of violent crime. Similarly, residential mobility (the percentage of the population that had moved in the past five years) was positively related to the rate of violent crime. However, the percentage of the suburb characterized as black or nonwhite actually trended in a negative direction and was not statistically significant. This was also the case for the percentage of female-headed households. The race finding is particularly interesting given the history of South Africa and its policy of total segregation. One would think with this shift in policy that desegregated communities would have higher violent crime rates. There may be something statistically odd going on here, but not enough information was provided on the distribution of this variable to comment further. However, given the heterogeneous nature of the country, more work should look at finer measures of racial/ethnic and linguistic heterogeneity.

The fact that the percentage of households headed by women was unrelated to violent crime might be explained by the measurement of the variable. Black South Africans often work far from home and are gone for long periods of time, even though their household census designation is in the home. Thus, because two of the empirical inconsistencies with social disorganization theory may have to do with poor measurement and statistical anomalies, we suggest that the bulk of the evidence supports the predictive ability of social disorganization, at least across suburbs of Tshwane, South Africa.

Moving to Asia, L. Zhang, Messner, and Liu (2007) studied household burglary victimization across neighborhoods in Tianjin, China. The results were interesting and, while somewhat different from what researchers have found in the West, in some ways still supportive of social disorganization theory. First, inconsistent with social disorganization theory, poverty was unrelated to burglary, and residential stability was positively associated with burglary. The former may have something to do with the lack of attractive targets in impoverished neighborhoods canceling out the safer but wealthier neighborhoods. The latter seems somewhat intractable given the various possibilities. Alternatively, collective efficacy was, as expected, negatively associated with burglary, as was the presence of formal agents of social control (the visibility of the police). The perceived effectiveness of neighborhood mediation groups was not a significant predictor of burglary, but this may reflect the amount of mediation going on. That is, if there are many problems, there may be more information to base judgment on (though mediation may appear less effective because there are many problems), but when there are few disputes, there is little to base judgment on. Given these concerns, perceptions of mediation groups may not be the best indicator of the semipublic control the researchers wanted to measure. These findings are supportive of newer versions of social disorganization theory that focus on collective efficacy (social cohesion and informal social control) and social control from the public sector (i.e., the police).

As mentioned, social disorganization theory has mostly been tested in the United States and mostly in urban areas. While a few empirical tests of social disorganization theory in rural areas of the United States have been conducted and have supported the theory (Osgood & Chambers, 2000), not much has been done outside the country.
However, Jobes, Barclay, and Weinand (2004) provided one such test in New South Wales, Australia. They obtained crime data from the New South Wales Bureau of Crime Statistics and census data from the Australian Bureau of Statistics for 123 local geographic areas. These are the smallest “municipal” units defined by the census and include, on average, fewer than 50,000 residents. Crime data included rates of assault, breaking and entering, malicious damage to property, and motor vehicle theft. The researchers collected 19 different measures from the census that fell under five dimensions of social disorganization theory: (1) low socioeconomic status (e.g., unemployment, poverty); (2) residential instability (e.g., living at a different address, living in own home); (3) ethnic heterogeneity (e.g., proportion indigenous); (4) family disruptions (e.g., divorce, sole parent); and (5) population size and density.

Across dimensions of crime, the social disorganization variables explained a good deal of the variation—between 20% and 45% across models. This is similar to analyses conducted in rural areas in the United States, suggesting that not only is the theory generalizable; its ability to explain variation is about the same across these two countries. Dimensions of social disorganization particularly predictive of the various crimes included measures of ethnic heterogeneity, residential instability, and family disruption.

Another study in Australia, though not directly testing social disorganization theory per se, does offer some insight on the predictors of indigenous violence among the Australian Aboriginals. Using the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Survey (NATSIS), Snowball and Weatherburn (2008) examined a number of theoretical explanations to assess violence among Aboriginals. This is a large survey, not specifically designed to test any one theory, but several items pertained to social disorganization. Given what was available and based on social disorganization theory, the authors expected that “violent victimisation would be higher amongst Indigenous Australians who:

- Are not socially involved in their communities
- Are sole parents
- Have high rates of geographic mobility (as measured by the number of times they moved house)
- Are member or have relatives who are member of the stolen generation” (p. 222)

With the exception of the first expectation, the results were largely supportive of social disorganization theory. In contrast to the researchers’ expectations, Aboriginals who were involved in their communities were actually more likely to be victimized than those who were more socially isolated. This may have to do with the different environmental and social settings those in the community find themselves in. Alternatively, the odds of a sole parent being victimized were 39% higher than those with a partner, and the odds of members of the stolen generation (or having relatives who were members) being victimized were 71% higher than others. Finally, each additional geographic move increased the odds of being victimized by 33%. Although this is an individual-level examination of a macrolevel theory, the data seem to support social disorganization theory. Taken in total, we find significant support for social disorganization theory outside the United States and across several countries.

Cross-National Tests of Institutional Anomie Theory

In trying to understand the high rates of crime in the United States, Messner and Rosenfeld (2007a) argued that societies that value economic institutions (e.g., capitalism and the accumulation of wealth) over noneconomic institutions (e.g., education and the family) will have higher rates of crime. Several studies have examined their theory by analyzing subnational macrosocial units within the United States, including counties (Maume & Lee, 2003) and states (Chamlin & Cochran, 1995). Some support for the theory has been found.

A few studies have begun to investigate the merits of the theory using cross-national tests, which would seem to be the most appropriate test of the theory as it was originally developed to explain the high rates of crime in the...
United States relative to other nations. Messner and Rosenfield (2007b) provided the first empirical test of their theory by linking it with the concept of decommodification—the movement away from pure market economies to ones that provide political institutions (such as the welfare state) to protect individuals from the harsh realities of pure capitalism. They argue that “a greater degree of decommodification indicates a lower level of economic dominance in this particular institutional interrelationship” (p. 1397). They created a measure of decommodification that reflects “the ease of access to welfare benefits, their income-replacement value, and the expansiveness of coverage across different statuses and circumstances” (pp. 1398–1399) across 45 nations. These nations varied widely, ranging from developed nations such as the United States and Japan to developing nations such as El Salvador and Sri Lanka. Messner and Rosenfield found support for their hypothesis that countries that have moved away from a pure market economy have lower homicide rates.

Savolainen (2000) extends this work by suggesting that a more “critical test of the institutional anomie theory should estimate the moderating effect of the institutional context on the relationship between economic inequality and serious crime, preferably at the cross-national level of analysis” (p. 1026). That is, other institutions should affect the strength of the relationship between economic inequality and crime. He found not only a direct effect of decommodification on homicide rates but also an interaction effect with measures of income inequality. Savolainen (2000) concludes that “nations that protect their citizens from the vicissitudes of market forces appear to be immune to the homicidal effects of economic inequality” (p. 1021).

Cochran and Bjerregaard (2012) provide the most recent cross-national test of institutional anomie theory with a new complex measure of structural anomie based on measures of economic freedom, wealth, and income inequality. Controlling for measures of other social institutions, such as the family (divorce rates), the polity (lack of voter turnout), and educational spending, they found that their measure of structural anomie was a robust predictor of both the homicide rate and rates of theft. Taken together, this emerging line of research suggests relatively strong support for institutional anomie theory in a cross-national setting.

**Critical Collective Framing Theory and the Genocide in Darfur**

While much of the sociological research to date has focused on what leads up to genocide (Gurr & Harff, 1994; Horowitz, 2001), the problem of defining genocide (Chirot & Edwards, 2003), typologies of genocide (Chirot & McCauley, 2006), and the disputed scales of genocide (Hagan, Schoenfeld, Palloni, Cook, & Massey, 2006), Hagan and Rymond-Richmond (2008) examined the genocide in Darfur from the perspective of critical collective framing theory. Their focus was on “the dehumanizing racial motivations and intentions that explain how a government mobilizes and collaborates in the ideological dehumanization and criminal victimization of a racial group” (p. 876). They found that, indeed, there was an emergence of collective racial motivation and intent with respect to the killings in Darfur that was indicated through the use of racial epithets preceding and during attacks.

This dehumanization process placed black African groups in Darfur outside a bounded universe of moral obligation and left them vulnerable to targeted genocidal victimization. Treatment of groups as dehumanized and contemptible makes them vulnerable to displacement and destruction. We found compelling evidence that collective processes of racial motivation and intent influenced the severity of victimization across settlements, above and beyond this influence at the individual level, and that this collective frame mediated the concentration of attacks on densely settled areas and particular African groups. (Hagan & Rymond-Richmond, 2008, p. 895)

In other words, by framing a group as subhuman (deviant), it makes this group vulnerable to violence in general and, in the case of Darfur, genocide in particular.
Social Control in a Global Context

Discussing social control in a global context is a daunting task. Just as there are many, many types of deviant acts depending on the cultural context, there are many different and varied reactions to human behaviors and statuses. Rather than attempt to give a comprehensive overview of the extreme differences in both informal and formal social control across the globe—a herculean, if not impossible, task—in this section, we offer a few examples of how perceived deviance is responded to in different cultural settings. We chose these few examples to illustrate that the systems in America are culturally specific and are not necessarily the best or only way to react to deviance. Our hope is that your curiosity will be sparked by these differences and you will pause to question and research social control as you continue your education.

When we think about social control, what often comes to mind is the reaction to an act—it might be a criminal act, a social faux pas, or the violation of a society’s unwritten rules that trigger a reaction from the community. If you think back to what you learned about labeling theory (Chapter 8), however, you will recall that sometimes people are punished, oppressed, and sanctioned purely because of who they are. The following examples take two master statuses—that of being a woman and that of identifying as gay or as a gay rights activist—and show how simply existing within those statuses can lead to deadly consequences in some parts of the world.

Social Control of Girls and Women

The book *Half the Sky*, written by husband and wife journalist team Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn (2009), vividly documents the oppression and control of women and girls across the globe. The authors focus their book on three particular kinds of abuse: “sex trafficking and forced prostitution; gender-based violence, including honor killings and mass rape; and maternal mortality, which still needlessly claims one woman a minute” (p. xxi).

Kristof and WuDunn tell stories of young girls in Cambodia, Nepal, Thailand, and Malaysia who were kidnapped, raped, and sold into brothels where they were regularly drugged, beaten, and forced to live as prostitutes and/or modern-day slaves. Girls who were brave enough and risked their lives to escape found no help from local police, who sent them back to the brothels (p. 7).

The authors go on to report on many different kinds of punishments and threats that women endure in other nations. Women perceived to be “loose” or “bad” in Pakistan had their faces destroyed by acid or had their noses cut off as a form of punishment (p. 75). Girls in Iraq were killed by family and religious leaders if it was believed they lost their virginity before marriage (p. 82). In Darfur, militia members gang-raped and mutilated women from African tribes, and the Sudanese government responded by punishing women who reported the rapes or sought medical attention (p. 83). In the Congo, rape was used as a terror tactic to control civilian populations; Congolese militia members raped women with sticks or knives and were known to fire their guns into women’s and girls’ vaginas (p. 84). A teenage soldier in Congo explained that rape was routine, saying if he and his fellow soldiers saw girls, it was their right to rape and violate them (p. 86).

As terrifying as it may be, some girls living in restrictive and punitive cultures take great risks to fight for better lives. Malala Yousafzai, a Pakistani schoolgirl, received widespread attention—both positive and negative—when she began...
speaking out against Taliban oppression when she was only 11 years old. She began her individual form of resistance by writing her thoughts and experiences in a blog, using a pseudonym to protect her identity; gradually, she became a more public figure and made media appearances advocating for education for girls. When she was just 14 years old, Malala was targeted and shot in the head and neck by a Taliban gunman while on the school bus home. In part because of her public persona and status as a martyr, she was fortunate enough to get specialized medical care and recover from her wounds.

In October 2014, Malala was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize; at 17 years old, she was the youngest person to ever receive the prize. She had won the European Union's highest human rights honor, the Sakharov Prize, the year before at the age of 16. Her bravery has been lauded by the international press, and she has inspired other young girls to fight against oppression and for education and opportunities. “I Am Malala” became the slogan for a campaign to demand global access to education for children. Malala herself continues to face threats from the Taliban; the goals she risks her life for may seem quite simple to those who grew up in the United States and accept such circumstances as their birthright. In Malala's words, “I hope that a day will come when the people of Pakistan will be free, they will have their rights, there will be peace, and every girl and every boy will be going to school” (quoted in Williams, 2013).

**Social Control of Homosexuality**

Although the United States continues grappling with evolving norms and attitudes around the issues of homophobia, the bullying of gay teens, and the legality and/or morality of gay marriage, simply being gay is not a crime, and threats and cruelty are not formally sanctioned. The same cannot be said in other countries. Homosexuality is illegal in most African countries, and homosexual acts are punishable by 14 years to life in prison in Uganda (T. Walsh, 2011). The Anti-Homosexuality Bill proposed in Uganda in 2009 included harsh sanctions for anyone engaging in gay sex or protecting the privacy of those who do. The bill featured the following provisions:

- Gays and lesbians convicted of having gay sex would be sentenced, at minimum, to life in prison.
- People who test positive for HIV may be executed.
- Homosexuals who have sex with a minor, or engage in homosexual sex more than once, may also receive the death penalty.
- The bill forbids the “promotion of homosexuality,” which in effect bans organizations working in HIV and AIDS prevention.
- Anyone who knew of homosexual activity taking place but did not report it would risk up to three years in prison. (Ahmed, 2009, n.p.)

The Anti-Homosexuality Bill prompted an international reaction; European nations threatened to cut aid to Uganda if such laws were passed, and the bill was shelved. While the bill was not passed into law, harsh and deadly informal sanctions are still a real threat to gays and gay rights activists in Uganda. A Ugandan tabloid published a front-page story targeting the “top 100 homosexuals,” complete with photographs and addresses of those on the list. David Kato, a gay rights activist, told reporters that he feared for his life after his name was published on the list; he was right to be afraid—within the year, Kato was bludgeoned to death in his home (Walsh, 2011).

**Social Control of Crime: Extremes in Prison Conditions Internationally**

Scandinavia has long been considered the gold standard in terms of creating and maintaining humane prisons that work to rehabilitate offenders and keep crime and incarceration rates low. Indeed, Scandinavian prisons were
designed to be constructive and productive, built on the belief that a prison should not be a place of suffering, fear, and deprivation but instead should be one of redemption, learning, training, and cure, until ultimately, with the commitment to normalization, it replicated the conditions of the outside world rather than shutting it out (Pratt & Eriksson, 2011, p. 20).

Prisons in the United States vary markedly in their quality, and few compare favorably with prisons in Norway or Sweden. Yet there are basic minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners, with codified rules and written documentation that are part of “a culture of audit and control” (Birkbeck, 2011, p. 318). When documented standards are not met in the United States, litigation is a possibility, and the courts may step in to order changes. Many countries in Latin America and the developing world do not have this type of quality control, and prisons are often overcrowded, unsanitary, and unsafe. Here we offer comparison of prisons in Norway and prisons in Latin America to show these two extremes.

**Norway: The Best Prisons in the World?**

The goal of many Scandinavian prisons is to make life for prisoners as normal as possible. Loss of liberty is the primary punishment. Arne Nilsen, the governor or head of Bastøy Prison, located on an island of the same name, explained how his philosophy that a prison should be “an arena of developing responsibility” was put into practice.

In closed prisons we keep them locked up for some years and then let them back out, not having had any real responsibility for working or cooking. In the law, being sent to prison is nothing to do with putting you in a terrible prison to make you suffer. The punishment is that you lose your freedom. If we treat people like animals when they are in prison they are likely to behave like animals. Here we pay attention to you as human beings. (quoted in James, 2013a)

The Norwegian penal system has no death penalty or life sentences; the maximum sentence that can be handed down in Norway is just 21 years. This maximum sentence can be extended only if the inmate is deemed to be an imminent threat to society (Sutter, 2012). With this sentencing structure, Norwegian society is forced to confront the fact that most prisoners, however heinous their crimes, will one day be released back into society (Hernu, 2011). In fact, more than 89% of Norway’s sentences are for less than one year of confinement, as compared with U.S. federal prisons where only 2% of sentences are for one year or less (Sutter, 2012). The Norwegian Correctional Service “works with other government agencies to secure a home, a job and access to a supportive social network for each inmate before release; Norway’s social safety net also provides health care, education and a pension to all citizens” (Benko, 2015).

Two examples—one of a closed prison and one of a more open and transitional prison—help to show Norway’s commitment to rehabilitating and reintegrating all of its offenders, even those who have committed very serious crimes. Inmates may still suffer the pains of imprisonment (as discussed in Chapter 11), but they can gain skills, maintain contact with their families, and practice responsible and conforming living even while incarcerated.

Halden is Norway’s most secure prison and its second largest, holding about 250 men. While Halden does have a 20-foot cement wall around the perimeter, security is not its defining feature. A reporter describes approaching Halden: “There were no coils of razor wire in sight, no lethal electric fences, no towers manned by snipers—nothing violent, threatening or dangerous. And yet no prisoner has ever tried to escape” (Benko, 2015). Life inside is meant to mimic a small village. Prison cells in Halden are similar to dorm rooms and have windows, adjoining bathrooms, and flat-screen televisions. Prisoners do their own laundry, purchase their own groceries, and cook their own meals, sharing waffles together on Sunday mornings as is common in most Norwegian homes (Benko, 2015). There is a two-bedroom house on the prison grounds where prisoners can host their families overnight. There are jogging trails, sports fields, and a recording studio (Adams, 2010).
Bastøy Prison in Norway looks virtually nothing like an American prison. While it might be compared to Alcatraz due to its location on a 1-square-mile island, Bastøy operates under a much different philosophy. Bastøy offers prisoners trust and responsibility, giving them the chance to become educated, learn new skills, work at varying jobs around the island, grocery shop and cook meals, live semi-independently in small houses around the island, and generally prepare themselves for their full transition back into the community upon their release. Prisoners farm and grow much of their own food, and families can share weekly visits in private rooms. Prisoners, including those convicted of serious violent crimes such as murder and rape, can apply for transfer to Bastøy from more traditional, close-custody prisons when they have five years left on their sentence and can show “determination to live a crime-free life on release” (James, 2013a). Most prisoners that come to Bastøy have served time in higher security prisons—such as Halden—in Norway; they recognize the privileges and relative freedom that Bastøy offers and view finishing their sentences there as a valued opportunity.

Bastøy, which holds approximately 120 male prisoners without the use of concrete walls, razor wire fences, or bars, is one of the cheapest prisons in Norway to run (James, 2013b). Inmates work 9 hours a day, earning approximately $10 per day. Guards work alongside them on a daily basis yet carry no weapons. At night, only a handful of corrections officers stay on the island with their charges. Correctional officers in Norway are highly trained in comparison to much of the rest of the world; it takes at least two years of practical and theoretical training to be a prison guard in Norway. Prisoner officer training in the United Kingdom, in comparison, lasts only six weeks.

The methods used in the Scandinavian prisons, especially those in Norway, appear to be working. The reoffending average across Europe is approximately 70% to 75%. In Denmark, Sweden, and Finland, the average is 30%. In Norway, it is 20%. The reoffending rate for those released from Bastøy Prison is just 16% and is the lowest in Europe (James, 2013a).

**Prisons in Latin America**

Prisons in Latin America tend to be characterized by mass overcrowding, filthy conditions, and the presence of powerful prison gangs. Supervision can be difficult as there are higher numbers of inmates per staff member, and there is very little technology to help with surveillance in Latin American prisons as compared with the United States (Birkbeck, 2011, p. 312). In such conditions, violence and chaos can rule the institutions. To show a sampling of violent death in Latin American prisons, The Economist reported in an article titled “A Journey Into Hell” (2012) that a jail fire in Honduras killed more than 350 inmates in 2012; during the same month, 44 inmates were murdered in a Mexican jail; and in Chile, 81 prisoners serving sentences of less than five years were killed in a fire started during a prison fight.

Lurigancho, Peru’s largest prison, is considered to be one of the world’s most dangerous. The inmates essentially run the institution while corrupt and outnumbered guards regularly accept bribes from both inmates and visitors alike. Inmates with resources can purchase food, drugs, nice clothing, conjugal visits, and influence over their fellow inmates. Those without resources are left to try to eke out a miserable existence within the prison’s walls.
In Venezuela, penal confinement is prescribed for all felony convictions, and there is no possibility of sentencing to probation. While there are more avenues for parole and early release from prison (Birkbeck, 2011) than in the United States, inmates’ time served in prison may turn into a *de facto* death penalty: Venezuela had more than 500 prison deaths in 2012 (Sanchez, 2013). Prisons in Latin America do have the potential benefit of more permissive visiting policies. In Mexico and Bolivia, for example, families and children may actually live in the prisons with their incarcerated parent(s) for an extended period of time. Visits are much less regimented and allow for significant mingling with members of the outside community, helping to ease the social isolation often experienced by prisoners. With the philosophy of internment—where detaining the offenders is the primary goal—what happens inside the facility is irrelevant; inmates must rely on self-government, for better or worse. There is little public scrutiny unless inmates escape or are killed in dramatic circumstances.

**Social Control of Mental Illness**

Communities both define and react to mental illness in very different ways. In many countries, there is not much of a safety net for those with mental illness. In China, for example, there is no national mental health law, and insurance rarely covers psychiatric care. Even when families and individuals are motivated to seek professional help, there are few educated psychiatrists to care for the population. The *New York Times* focused attention on a tragic case that illustrates the immensity of the problem:

A Lancet study estimated that roughly 173 million Chinese suffer from a mental disorder. Despite government efforts to expand insurance coverage, a senior Health Ministry official said last June that in recent years, only 45,000 people had been covered for free outpatient treatment and only 7,000 for free inpatient care because they were either dangerous to society or too impoverished to pay.

The dearth of care is most evident when it comes to individuals who commit violent crimes. For example, after Liu Yalin killed and dismembered an elderly couple cutting firewood in a Guangdong Province forest, he was judged to be schizophrenic and released to his brother. Unable to afford treatment, the brother flew Mr. Liu to the island province of Hainan, in the South China Sea, and abandoned him, a Chinese nongovernment organization, Shenzhen Hengping, said in a recent report.

Last year, the tragedy was multiplied when—left without care or supervision—Mr. Liu killed and dismembered an 8-year-old Hainan girl. (LaFraniere, 2010, n.p.)

In poor countries, the government returns severely mentally ill people to their families, and the families are generally at a loss as to how to care for them. With few resources, information, or help available in their communities, families must sometimes resort to locking up and shackling relatives who pose a threat to themselves and others.

In Kenya, mentally ill family members are tied up daily by their relatives in order to keep them from running away or harming themselves. Family members are consumed with the task of caring for their mentally ill loved ones. They may find themselves entirely alone in their efforts, shunned by the community because of the unpleasant noise and stench. While one fourth of patients visiting Kenyan hospitals or clinics complain of mental health problems, the Kenyan government spends less than 1% of its health budget on mental health (McKenzie & Formanek, 2011).

**Social Control and Reintegration: Restorative Justice**

Howard Zehr, one of the early proponents of restorative justice, explains the basic principles of the concept as follows: Crime is a violation of people and of interpersonal relationships, violations create obligations, and the central obligation is to put right the wrongs (Zehr, 2002, p. 19). While he uses an American lens to discuss these principles, Zehr suggests that there are deep roots for the concept in many different cultures, expressed in different languages.
He writes, “Many cultures have a word that represents this notion of the centrality of relationships: for the Maori, it is communicated by whakapapa; for the Navajo, hozho; for many Africans, the Bantu word Ubuntu” (Zehr, 2002, pp. 19–20).

After spending a decade studying restorative justice, primarily in South Australia, Kathleen Daly found that there is little empirical evidence as to what actually happens in youth justice conferences and how participants feel about the process and outcomes. Daly argues that there is a complex definition and meaning of restorative justice.

Restorative justice is not easily defined because it encompasses a variety of practices at different stages of the criminal process, including diversion from court prosecution, actions taken in parallel with court decisions, and meetings between victims and offenders at any stage of the criminal process (for example, arrest, pre-sentencing, and prison release). For virtually all legal contexts involving individual criminal matters, restorative justice processes have only been applied to those offenders who have admitted to an offence; as such, it deals with the penalty phase of the criminal process for admitted offenders, not the fact-finding phase. Restorative justice is used not only in adult and juvenile criminal matters, but also in a range of civil matters, including family welfare and child protection, and disputes in schools and workplace settings. (Daly, 2002, p. 57)

New Zealand’s youth justice system, which emphasizes diversion, family involvement, and restorative justice principles, has been a model for other jurisdictions worldwide. From approximately 1990 to 2010, New Zealand dealt with most youth offenders—nearly 80% of apprehensions—through diversion rather than prosecution (Lynch, 2012). With the use of restorative justice, “the victim of the offence may be part of the process, giving him or her tangible power in the resolution of the offence. True participation by victims (and by the community) can reduce the public appetite for punitiveness” (Lynch, 2012, p. 512). Similarly, Bazemore (1998) advocates for a variation of restorative justice featuring a system of earned redemption that would allow offenders to earn trust back from the community by making amends to those they harmed.

In Africa, using the “ubuntu” principle, the goals of justice-making include the restoration of victims, the reintegration of the offender back into the community, and the restoration of relationships and social harmony undermined by the conflict. All stakeholders should have equal access and participation in the conflict resolution process (Elechi, Morris, & Schauer, 2010, p. 73); this process has the power to reinforce the values of the community. Elechi et al. (2010) argue that the African Indigenous Justice System is “an opportunity for the resocialization of community members and the relearning of important African values and principles of restraint, respect, and responsibility” (p. 74). Furthermore, when communities rely on themselves to solve problems, both individual and collective accountability may be improved as a result (p. 83).

Different cultures and individuals may embrace a wide variety of restorative justice principles and techniques, but what sets these efforts apart from the criminal justice system in the United States is the focus on the reparation of harm and the restoration of the offender, rather than on retribution for the harm caused.

Explaining Deviance in the Streets and Deviance in the Suites: Human Trafficking: Crossing Boundaries and Borders

We have chosen to discuss human trafficking because it is a deviance that is both big business and found on the streets. While some human trafficking occurs across state or regional lines, a great proportion of it is transnational and global.

Human trafficking is a crime that “recognizes no race, gender, or national boundary” (S. X. Zhang, 2010, p. 15), although it is generally visited on the least powerful: children, women, and people of color. According to the Trafficking Victims Protection Act, human trafficking is “the act of recruiting, harboring, transporting, providing, or obtaining a person for compelled labor or commercial sex acts through the use of force, fraud, or coercion”
While most envision that human trafficking means transporting a victim from one country to another, the official definition does not require the victim to be transported.

Human trafficking can include but does not require movement. People may be considered trafficking victims regardless of whether they were born into a state of servitude, were transported to the exploitative situation, previously consented to work for a trafficker, or participated in a crime as a direct result of being trafficked. At the heart of this phenomenon is the traffickers’ goal of exploiting and enslaving their victims and the myriad coercive and deceptive practices they use to do so. (U.S. Department of State, 2013, p. 29)

Children and adults who are victims of human trafficking are coerced into being soldiers, sold for hard labor or sex, or forced into domestic labor, prostitution, or marriage. Others find themselves working in mines, plantations, or sweatshops (United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Global Trafficking [UN.GIFT], 2008). Many initially go with their captors willingly because of promises of a better job or an escape from a hard life, only to be turned into slaves once they arrive at their new destination. These experiences are illustrated by the stories of three trafficking victims below.

**Ximena:** “When you’re a kid, it’s easy to be deceived. Each Sunday when I walked down from the town, where my mum had a business, they would urge me to go with them, telling me that I would have a really good time, that it was better to go with them than to keep on working. On my 12th birthday, they came back for me. My mum was away at work, so I took the chance and escaped with them. . . . Five months later I regretted being there, but there was no chance of leaving. Besides, they told my mum that I was dead, that they had already killed me.” (UN.GIFT, 2008, p. 2)

**Luana:** “A friend of mine told me that a Spanish group was hiring Brazilian girls to work as dancers on the island of Lanzarote. My friend Marcela and I thought it was a good opportunity to earn money. We didn’t want to continue working as maids. For a short while we only danced. But later they told us there had been too many expenses. And we would have to make some extra money.” (UN.GIFT, 2008, p. 5)

**Marcela:** “We were trapped by criminals and forced into prostitution in order to pay debts for the trip. We had up to 15 clients per night. The use of condoms was the client’s decision, not ours. The criminals kept our passports and had an armed man in front of the ‘disco’ to make sure we never escaped. But a woman helped us. We went to the police and told everything.” (UN.GIFT, 2008, p. 5)

According to the United Nations Global Initiative to Fight Human Trafficking (2008), human trafficking is a billion-dollar industry. The UN acknowledges, however, that our understanding of human trafficking is negligible; there is no broad agreement on how to count individuals that have been trafficked, and therefore, the estimates from various organizations often contradict each other. One organization estimates that at least 2.5 million people are victims of human trafficking, with an estimated 130,000 in sub-Saharan countries; 200,000 in countries with economies in transition; 230,000 in the Middle East or North Africa; 250,000 in Latin America and the Caribbean; 270,000 in industrialized countries; and more than 1.4 million in Asia and the Pacific (International Labour Organization, 2005). A second estimate suggests that at least 800,000 people are smuggled across national borders every year, with millions more trafficked in their own countries (U.S. Department of State, 2007). And the nongovernmental organization Free the Slaves estimates that there are between 21 and 30 million people in slavery globally (Free the Slaves, 2013).

The elusive nature of human trafficking is illustrated in the small number of human trafficking incidents that are investigated and confirmed in the United States, in comparison with the estimated number of human trafficking cases that are believed to exist. The U.S. Department of Justice reports that in the United States, just over 2,500 cases were investigated by federally funded human trafficking task forces between 2008 and 2010 (Banks & Kyckelhahn, 2011). And there were very few cases in which law enforcement could confirm the victim’s characteristics (see Table 13.1).
### Table 13.1 Victim Characteristics in Cases Confirmed to Be Human Trafficking by High Data Quality Task Forces, by Type of Trafficking

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Victim Characteristic</th>
<th>Total&lt;sup&gt;a&lt;/sup&gt;</th>
<th>Sex Trafficking</th>
<th>Labor Trafficking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>432</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17 or younger</td>
<td>257</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13–24</td>
<td>159</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25–34</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 or older</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Race/Hispanic origin</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>106</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African American&lt;sup&gt;b&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino origin</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian&lt;sup&gt;b, c&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other&lt;sup&gt;b, d&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Citizenship</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S. Citizen/U.S. National</td>
<td>346</td>
<td>345</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent U.S. resident&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undocumented alien&lt;sup&gt;f&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Qualified alien&lt;sup&gt;e&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temporary worker</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of victims identified</td>
<td>527</td>
<td>460</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Note:** Analysis restricted to cases opened and observed between January 2008 and June 2010 in high data quality task forces.

- a. Includes cases of unknown trafficking type.
- b. Excludes persons of Hispanic or Latino origin.
- c. Asian may include Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islanders or persons of East Asian or Southeast Asian descent.
- d. Includes persons of two or more races.
- e. Permanent residents and qualified aliens are legal residents in the U.S., but do not have citizenship.
- f. Undocumented aliens reside in the U.S. illegally.
Ideas in Action: What Can Be Done About Human Trafficking?

While the challenges to eradicate human trafficking are significant, at least many are known and can be addressed. The United Nations suggests that some of these challenges include the following:

- Lack of knowledge: there are still huge gaps in knowledge even about the extent of human trafficking and modern-day slavery.
- Lack of a national legal framework, policy, and capacity to respond: while human trafficking is acknowledged as a crime, there is little systematic legal response or public policy to address it.
- Limited protection of and assistance to victims: social service and law enforcement agencies need training in order to better identify and respond to victims of human trafficking.
- Limited international cooperation: as probably the best example of deviance or crime that crosses national borders, there is surprisingly less cooperation than one would hope between countries in identifying and stopping human trafficking. (UN.GIFT, 2008, p. 1)

Another challenge that has been identified involves the definition of human trafficking. Human trafficking laws in many countries require that the person accused of human trafficking be proven to have “bought or sold” another human being. But the reality is that most human trafficking victims are never bought or sold in the traditional sense. Because no transaction occurs and no money changes hands, the vast majority of human trafficking victims are not acknowledged or protected by such laws. Broadening language in countries that rely on the provision of buying and selling individuals would mean that more offenders would be prosecuted and more victims acknowledged (U.S. Department of State, 2013).

Finally, S. X. Zhang (2010) makes five suggestions for public policies to address human trafficking:

1. Law enforcement should focus on disruption tactics that make the business of human trafficking harder to sustain.
2. Increase the financial cost to the business of human trafficking; a legal outcome should be asset forfeiture for anyone found guilty of human trafficking.
3. Law enforcement agencies, medical providers, and social services providers need to be systematically educated on how to recognize trafficking victims.
4. Engage in a campaign that increases public awareness of the existence of human trafficking and that reaches victims of trafficking and makes them aware of who they can contact for help.
5. Effect an increase in political will measured by resource allocation that will secure and offer long-term solutions to human trafficking.

Now You . . . Think About Global Deviance

It is often easy to pass judgment on other countries for their beliefs and practices, and in most instances when we are passing judgment, we are implicitly or explicitly defining those practices as deviant. It is your turn to explore and critique these differences.
Chapter 13  ▶  Global Perspectives on Deviance and Social Control

Conclusion

We hope you have enjoyed this exploration into the many, many forms of deviance and the varied ways that societies first define deviance and then react to such acts or characteristics. While we understand that we may be considered deviant ourselves due to our years focusing on the topic, we find all of this material so fascinating that we have devoted our careers to studying it, researching our favorite theories and subtopics, and writing this textbook to share with you. Whether you choose to join us in a career related to deviance, crime, delinquency, or mental health or whether you can simply now check this off your list of required classes, we hope that after reading this book, you will bring a lingering curiosity and a more complex understanding of the causes of and reactions to deviant behavior into all of your future endeavors.

EXERCISES AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. You are part of a research team that will be studying human trafficking links between China, Mexico, and the United States. Explain the research challenges and issues you will need to be aware of as you plan your study.

2. Choose a country whose prison system has not been discussed in this chapter. Research its forms of social control. Compare and contrast these forms of social control with the U.S. prison system.

KEY TERMS

Decommodification  Human trafficking
We started our book with a look at the social construction of extreme body modification as deviance. We end our book with an examination of the moral panic constructed around the British media’s focus on forced marriage. This panic constructs forced marriage as a problem that threatens Britain’s social order. Anitha and Gill argue that forced marriage should be examined as another form of violence against women, not necessarily a threat to the British establishment.

**A Moral Panic?**

The Problematization of Forced Marriage in British Newspapers

Sundari Anitha and Aisha K. Gill

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**Introduction**

The specific forms of violence experienced by minority ethnic women had long been neglected both in the academic literature and in policy debates in the United Kingdom that have focused on violence perpetrated by partners and ex-partners. However, over the last decade increasing attention has been directed to the different manifestations of violence against women (VAW). This includes violence perpetrated by (primarily though not exclusively) male relatives from the wider kin group rather than just the immediate family such as so-called honor-based violence, dowry violence, and forced marriage (FM). Understanding the forms of violence experienced by minority ethnic women requires an approach that takes account of the continuities between different forms of gender-based violence while also addressing the specificity of particular forms of violence such as FM.

The UK government (HM Government, 2008) defines FM as

a marriage in which one or both spouses do not (or in the case of some adults with learning or physical disabilities, cannot) consent to the marriage and duress is involved. Duress can include physical, psychological, financial, sexual and emotional pressure. (p. 10)

However, it is important to recognize that consent and coercion are not binaries; the social context within which consent is constructed is crucial to understanding coercive constraints. Consent and coercion can be better conceptualized as two ends of a continuum between which lie degrees of gendered socio-cultural expectations, control, persuasion, pressure, threat, and force (Anitha & Gill, 2009).

Unlike with “mainstream” forms of domestic violence, there is no official data on the prevalence of FM across European Union Member States (Rude-Antoine, 2005); there is a similar gap in our knowledge about the extent of FM in Canada, the United States, and Australia. However, FM has garnered significant media attention in recent years in a number of European states, though the American, Australian, and Canadian media have only recently begun to give prominence to stories concerning FM. Meanwhile, media debates in Europe have informed policy initiatives to address this problem; countries including Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, and the
United Kingdom have recently created a specific offense associated with forcing someone into marriage rather than strengthen the existing criminal code that is applicable in the case of "mainstream" forms of VAW (Bredal, 2005; Rude-Antoine, 2005; Tzortzis, 2004).

This recent upsurge of interest contrasts starkly with the fact that FM and early marriage have been the subject of campaigning by women's groups for several decades in these and other parts of the world. In Afghanistan, sub-Saharan Africa, Iraq, and rural China, where bride-price traditions lead many poverty-stricken families to “marry off” their daughters at a young age, women's groups have supported policies and campaigns discouraging early marriage; they have also called for a minimum age for marriage to be established or, where such provisions already exist, for more stringent enforcement of existing laws and policies (Hague & Thiara, 2009). Algeria, Bangladesh, Jordan, Iraq, Malaysia, Morocco, and Turkey are among the countries that have raised the minimum age for marriage to combat FM. In most of these countries, the minimum age is now 18.

This article examines the representation of FM in British newspapers to illuminate (a) how this form of VAW is constructed by the media and (b) what sort of policy solutions these constructions both suggest and exclude.

The Problematization of FM

Foucault's (1985) concept of problematization directs attention to the ways in which a problem comes to be framed and the implications of this framing for how the “development of a given into a question . . . transform[s] a group of obstacles and difficulties into problems to which the diverse solutions will attempt to produce a response” (Foucault, 2000, p. 118). By using this concept to “unpack” the construction of FM in British media discourses, the article aims (a) to examine the underlying and often implicit assumptions behind the construction of FM as a "problem" and (b) to understand how this problematization of FM influences policy responses to it.

Analyses of media representations of crime and criminal justice policy have drawn attention to the framing processes whereby journalists use notions of selectivity and salience to organize their material in news reports (Entman, 1993; Reese, 2001). Framing determines not only how media content is shaped but also how it is contextualized in terms of the points of reference and latent structures of meaning that underlie the construction of particular media accounts. This simultaneously reflects and influences public perception of the issues at stake (McQuail, 2005).

Research indicates that print and television media have accorded disproportionate and increasing attention to crime over the past four decades, focusing especially on individual criminal incidents and their victims, rather than on patterns of crime or possible causal factors (Beckett & Sasson, 2000; Reiner, Livingstone, & Allen, 2003). Benedict (1992) and Shoemaker and Reese (1996) have identified the core socio-political and practical factors that affect the framing of news stories about crimes against women; these include conceptions of “what sells,” journalistic traditions, racism, sexism, class prejudices, sources' biases, and organizational pressures and constraints. Mirroring press coverage of crime in general, reporting on VAW has increased since the 1980s; however, media representations of VAW and its victims continue to reflect dominant societal attitudes toward women and, thus, serve to perpetuate gender inequalities (Berns, 2004; Meyers, 1997). Media accounts of domestic violence typically exclude the concept of male accountability and focus on victims, who are (a) celebrated for having the courage to leave abusive relationships, (b) accused of instigating their abuse, or (c) held responsible for not escaping their predicament (Berns, 2004). Berns (2004) warns that although some of these frames have helped to foster support for victims through the development of legislation and the funding of shelters, they have not helped to “develop public understanding of the social context of violence and may impede social change that could prevent violence” (p. 3).

The crucial role of the media as an agent of moral indignation has been explored through the sociological concept of moral panic, which was developed in the 1970s by Young (1971), Cohen (1972), Cohen and Young (1973), and Hall (1978) to explain the processes involved in creating concern about a social problem that is disproportionate to the reality of the problem; this, in turn, serves to create a discursive space aimed at encouraging a shift in legal and social codes. The concern generated in a moral panic revolves around
the identification of a specific threat that has the potential to destroy important social values, norms, and regulations. The identification of such a threat often catalyzes “a demand for greater social regulation or control and a demand for a return to ‘traditional’ values” (Thompson, 1998, pp. 8–9). Thompson (1998) notes that “in complex modern societies [a moral panic] seldom develops as a straightforward upsurge of indignation . . . there is a ‘politics of social problems’ or to put it another way, they are ‘socially constructed’” (p. 12); hence, moral panic reflects, and often reinforces, prevailing power relations.

In Cohen’s (1972) early conceptualization, the collective action that a moral panic triggers is marked by “mass hysteria, delusion and panics” (p. 11) that serve to focus public anxieties and fears on a specific category of deviants identified as “folk devils” (Cohen, 1972). Thus, the key ingredient in the emergence of a moral panic is the creation or intensification of hostility toward a particular group, category, or cast of characters. The “discovery” of the group seen as threatening or harmful to the sanctity of society as a whole is accompanied by a simultaneous oppositional repositioning of the rest of society as defenders of the society’s moral values. Thus, Rohloff (2008) points to the importance of changes in relative power ratios between groups not only as key to understanding the broader context within which moral panics develop, but also as potential triggers of moral panic.

Moral panic has traditionally been attributed to media and public formulations of the actions and practices of marginalized groups. Seldom have the actions of dominant groups come under similar media scrutiny, demonstrating the centrality of unequal power relations in moral panic. The concept of moral panic therefore has not been associated with media coverage or academic study of VAW. The absence of the concept of moral panic in the study of VAW was evident when a search for the term moral panic yielded one article each in the journals Violence Against Women, Journal of Interpersonal Violence, and Trauma, Violence and Abuse. A similar search yielded over 100 articles in British Journal of Criminology and 21 articles in Criminology. One exception to this trend was when public anxiety was invoked and fueled by parts of the American media through sustained newspaper reports about “sexting” in 2008–2009, which has since been characterized as moral panic (Cumming, 2009; Lumby & Funnell, 2011). The key concerns that informed these debates were the regulation of teenage sexuality and the preservation of idealized constructs of childhood, rather than any possible concern about the gendered nature of sexual coercion in young people’s intimate relationships. In other words, this moral panic did not view the issue as centered on the prevalence of VAW. Cohen’s (2002, 2011) recent reflections on whether there can ever be a “good” moral panic (i.e., a folk devil that deserves such a reputation) is ideally suited to analyzing reporting on VAW should the issue ever become the focus of a sustained media outrage.

It is important to examine the media’s representation of particular crimes, and the groups they affect, because such representations shape the construction of these crimes as problems requiring a policy response (Franklin, 1999; Rochefort & Cobb, 1994). However, it is difficult to assess the precise impact of media representations of crime on broader attitudes because many people choose which newspaper to read on the basis of existing views, not vice versa. Although concerns about the impact of media framings on individuals’ attitudes to social issues are long-standing, this remains a complex subject and no definitive conclusions have been reached (Barker & Petley, 2001; Gauntlett, 1998). However, the link between media representations and policy making is more amenable to empirical scrutiny.

We do not deny that FM constitutes a form of VAW or that it deserves both media attention and public policy initiatives for its prevention and eradication. Indeed, the authors have long been part of campaigns and worked with organizations seeking to address such forms of violence affecting minority ethnic women in the United Kingdom. In this article, our focus is on the nature of media representations of FM in the United Kingdom and the ways in which this representation of FM opens discursive spaces for particular types of policy debates that suggest specific, often ill-advised, “solutions” to FM over other potentially more effective ones. These issues are illuminated through (a) quantitative analysis of news reporting on FM over a 10-year period, (b) qualitative mapping of dominant themes and concepts in newspaper articles on FM, and (c) textual analysis of a
sub-sample of articles. The following four sections explore the key findings and the methods used to gather and analyze the data.

**Data and Method**

Four national newspapers were analyzed to explore how news reporting on FM developed between 2001 and 2010 and how the problem of FM was articulated during this time. Both conservative and liberal editorial perspectives were examined: the *Daily Telegraph* (including the *Sunday Telegraph*) is a right-of-center broadsheet, the *Guardian* (and the *Observer*) is a left-of-center broadsheet, the *Daily Mail* (including the *Mail on Sunday*) is a right-of-center middle-brow newspaper, and the *Sun* (and the *News of the World*) is a right-wing tabloid. The selection of a 10-year time period and a wide range of editorial perspectives allowed for quantitative analysis of the extent of reporting on FM and qualitative analysis of a large set of textual data. This provided a representative overview of media reporting on FM in Britain during the first decade of the 21st century.

LexisNexis (an electronic database of legal documents and archive of publications in periodicals, including all major journals, magazines, and newspapers) was used as a search tool to identify all the relevant news reports from the period. All stories generated by the terms *forced marriage*, *forced marriages*, and *forced + marriage* were examined. These searches also identified news reports that used the term *forced into an arranged marriage*; these were included in the data set. The search generated a total of 367 relevant articles. As LexisNexis does not provide any contextual information (e.g., regarding the placement of articles in editions) or accompanying pictures, these factors did not form part of the analysis. However, online comments posted by readers in response to some of the longer articles published on the newspapers’ websites afforded some preliminary observations about the reception of these articles, including whether the underlying framing devices were visible to readers. A detailed study that tests these observations about the reception of media discourses on FM would be a useful contribution to existing debates on media effects.
General Trends in Newspaper Reporting on FM

General trends in news reports on FM were mapped by collating the number of articles published on FM in the four newspapers over the 10-year period. This demonstrated the development of the media's interest in FM and illuminated variations over time. Meanwhile, the comparison of the coverage offered by different media outlets afforded an opportunity to examine whether there was significant diversity or homogeneity between papers with regard to the extent of their coverage of FM and whether this changed over time.

The number of articles about FM published per quarter between January 2001 and December 2010 indicates an overall shift from lower levels of reporting in the early years of the decade to a sustained increase since 2006 (see Figure 1). There are three clear peaks in newspaper reporting on FM: mid-2001 to mid-2002, 2006 to mid-2007, and in 2008. The first of these periods was marked by increased coverage/mentions of FM in the context of debates on Britishness and cultural difference following the publication of the Cantle Report (2001–2002) on the urban disturbances in Burnley, Oldham, and Bradford in the summer of 2001. The increased coverage in 2006 can be attributed to the Labour government's consultation on whether the act of forcing someone to marry should be made a criminal offense and the subsequent decision against criminalization. Following this consultation, media coverage remained high as the government went on to announce initiatives to record cases of FM and the increase in the number of cases in the United Kingdom; there is no media consensus on the issue, but newspaper reports suggest that there are between 3,000 and 10,000 cases per year (Taylor, 2008; Slack, 2008). One report even suggests that there could be as many as 17,500 cases per year (Lyons, 2008). However, it is only recently that statistics on FM have begun to be collated by the police and other statutory agencies. A widespread perception that this is a growing problem has been created through newspaper headlines such as “Tenfold rise in forced marriages in four years” (Daily Mail Reporter, 2009a).

Given the historic lack of documentation, both recent initiatives to record cases of FM and the increase in the number of women reporting such crimes may have been (mis)represented by the media as indicating that FM is a growing problem.

The four newspapers’ coverage of FM follows similar trends, with similar peaks and troughs. However, every quarter shows some reporting on FM and, during the last 5 years, a relatively consistent level of reporting. The Guardian has the most consistently high coverage, while the Sun moves from very low levels of reporting in the early 2000s to higher rates in the later years of the decade.

In addition to the increasing levels of reporting over the last 10 years, FM has frequently been reported as a growing problem. Research commissioned by policymakers (Kazimirski, Keogh, Smith, & Gowland, 2009; Khanum, 2008) offers wide-ranging estimates of the number of cases in the United Kingdom; there is no media consensus on the issue, but newspaper reports suggest that there are between 3,000 and 10,000 cases per year (Taylor, 2008; Slack, 2008). One report even suggests that there could be as many as 17,500 cases per year (Lyons, 2008). However, it is only recently that statistics on FM have begun to be collated by the police and other statutory agencies. A widespread perception that this is a growing problem has been created through newspaper headlines such as “Tenfold rise in forced marriages in four years” (Daily Mail Reporter, 2009a).

Given the historic lack of documentation, both recent initiatives to record cases of FM and the increase in the number of women reporting such crimes may have been (mis)represented by the media as indicating that FM is a growing problem.

The recent “newsworthiness” of FM is surprising given that the media have historically been less inclined to report on FM than on mainstream forms of domestic violence, just as they were more likely to report on sensational homicides rather than those arising from domestic violence (Peelo, Francis, Soothill, Pearson, & Ackerley, 2004). Abdela (2008) has noted the disproportionate headline coverage in British newspapers of street stabbings involving young people, while stories about women killed by current or past intimates tend to receive little coverage. Knife crime involving adolescents is often represented as a social problem through discursive strategies such as the “tallying up” of the number of deaths that year as each new murder is reported. Meanwhile, domestic homicides are generally represented as unrelated crimes, and so no such toll is recorded. Thus, the media tends to represent VAW as a
private rather than social harm (Berns, 2004; Meyers, 1997). In this context, it is curious that FM has come to occupy center stage in media discourses on VAW in the United Kingdom.

**Representing FM**

The two authors coded the full text of each article to identify two core themes or concepts for each article. Coding a year’s worth of articles for each of the four newspapers yielded the initial set of codes; additional ones were created during the subsequent analysis of all the articles. At the end of the process, the researchers met to discuss discrepancies in their coding to reach consensus on how each article should be coded. This process yielded 24 themes and concepts (see Figure 2a and 2b). These can be grouped into seven broad categories: (a) articles about the judicial disposition or policing of a specific case; (b) articles on individual victims and/or perpetrators that centered on the characteristics of victims and/or perpetrators, a theme found in many previous analyses of newspaper reporting on domestic violence (Wosniak & McCloskey, 2010); (c) reports that outlined policy and legislative developments; (d) reports on practical measures, including service provision, aimed at addressing FM and helping victims; (e) articles seeking to estimate the scale of the problem in the United Kingdom; (f) articles on prevention (a small, but defined subset); and (g) articles on the context, nature, and causes of FM. The last category included articles that discussed FM within the broader context of VAW or wide-ranging debates on community cohesion, multiculturalism, speaking English at home, immigration, Muslims-Islam, and minority communities and their culture and traditions, including arranged and transnational marriage.

The seven categories were not mutually exclusive. Indeed, some categories tended to overlap. For example, some articles reporting on particular cases of FM contained a brief factual outline of recent policy developments; others comprised longer features based on interviews with victims/survivors. During the coding process, the researchers decided to utilize two codes for each article to take account of such overlaps.

The overwhelming majority of articles fell under the final category on the context, nature, and causes of FM. Although articles in this category often offered the least detailed discussions of FM, examined collectively they illuminated the most common way of framing the issue. The contexts and causes that garnered most media attention were those that coupled FM with the following themes: Muslims and Islam, the problem of multiculturalism and/or the need for community cohesion, immigration issues, and issues concerning cultural traditions. Although FM was discussed as a form of VAW, it was more likely to be in the context of so-called honor-based crimes than as part of broader discussions about VAW or domestic violence.

Meanwhile, service provision for victims was rarely discussed. An article in the *Mail on Sunday* (2002) about FM and the lack of refuge spaces was a rare exception. Not one article found in the study detailed men’s experience of FM or discussed FM in the context of disability or sexual orientation. Prevention and preventive education received little attention across all papers, with comparatively more coverage in the *Telegraph*. All the newspapers paid comparable attention to victims and perpetrators, policy issues, and particular cases of FM.

A detailed qualitative reading of a sample of 16 articles per year, drawn from across the four publications, enabled a closer examination of prominent themes in the construction of the “problem” of FM and especially the representation of victims and perpetrators. This also allowed for an in-depth analysis of how these constructions open up certain discursive spaces for policy debates and practical developments while foreclosing others.

**Framing FM as a Cultural Problem**

This section examines the three main framing devices used to construct FM and the implications of these frames. The first frame concerns the portrayal of victims of FM. The second concerns perpetrators and their motives. The third revolves around the construction of FM with regard to assumptions about the contexts in which FM occurs and discussions about the causes of the problem and possible responses to it. Together, these frames convey broad messages about the nature of the “problem” and how it might be tackled.
Figure 2a  Themes and Concepts in Newspaper Articles on Forced Marriage

- VAW
- Domestic violence
- Honour-based violence
- Arranged marriage
- Immigration/immigrants
- Muslims/Islam
- Minority communities
- Culture/cultural traditions
- Community cohesion/multiculturalism
- Race/racism
- Visas/border control
- Criminalisation of FM

Legend:
- Total
- Guardian
- Telegraph
- Mail
- Sun
Figure 2b  Themes and Concepts in Newspaper Articles on Forced Marriage

- **FM Policy**
  - Total: 28
  - Guardian: 2
  - Telegraph: 6
  - Mail: 18
  - Sun: 2

- **FM Civil Law**
  - Total: 11
  - Guardian: 1
  - Telegraph: 3
  - Mail: 7
  - Sun: 0

- **Victims/survivors**
  - Total: 19
  - Guardian: 1
  - Telegraph: 5
  - Mail: 16
  - Sun: 15

- **Perpetrators**
  - Total: 29
  - Guardian: 1
  - Telegraph: 2
  - Mail: 12
  - Sun: 7

- **Judicial dispositions**
  - Total: 38
  - Guardian: 2
  - Telegraph: 9
  - Mail: 20
  - Sun: 7

- **Police/policing of FM**
  - Total: 37
  - Guardian: 6
  - Telegraph: 8
  - Mail: 15
  - Sun: 2

- **Prevention/education**
  - Total: 13
  - Guardian: 3
  - Telegraph: 7
  - Mail: 2
  - Sun: 1

- **FM campaigns**
  - Total: 8
  - Guardian: 1
  - Telegraph: 3
  - Mail: 5
  - Sun: 0

- **Extent of FM**
  - Total: 15
  - Guardian: 1
  - Telegraph: 3
  - Mail: 7
  - Sun: 4

- **Girls missing from school**
  - Total: 11
  - Guardian: 1
  - Telegraph: 4
  - Mail: 4
  - Sun: 2

- **Service provision**
  - Total: 14
  - Guardian: 1
  - Telegraph: 9
  - Mail: 2
  - Sun: 2

- **Health interventions**
  - Total: 0
  - Guardian: 0
  - Telegraph: 0
  - Mail: 0
  - Sun: 0

Legend:
- Total
- Guardian
- Telegraph
- Mail
- Sun

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Representing Victims

The first framing device, which centers on victims of FM, was most commonly found in news reports on individual cases and in longer articles, especially “survivor narratives”; these were most likely to be found in weekend editions or special supplements (e.g., the Daily Mail’s “Femail” or the Sun’s “Sun Woman”). Most described the victim’s experiences of FM (or the threat of FM), and then gave an account of how the victim escaped the threat/marriage, especially when this involved the police or the courts. Reports of this kind were primarily based on interviews with victims and, in some cases, on interviews with the agencies and professionals supporting the woman or working on her case; a number also discussed the relevant court proceedings.

Critically, the women at the center of these articles were portrayed as lacking in agency—as already and always victims of a deterministic culture (Narayan, 1997; Razack, 2004)—and/or as having made the journey from being victims of a deterministic culture to survivors who had distanced themselves from all aspects of their “former” culture. Women’s accounts of surviving coercive marriages or the threat of a FM were marshaled into narratives about how these women had reconfigured themselves through their struggles. These narratives were framed by the concept of otherness and often harnessed Orientalist tropes of the absolute cultural difference between victims’ former patriarchal communities and the liberated mainstream Western communities into which they had escaped. In a photograph of survivors of FM that accompanied a cover-story on the topic in the Observer (Seal & Wiseman, 2009), all the women were dressed in black clothes of European design, an image that emphasized the survivors’ distance from their original communities. In this article, one survivor, Sanghera, is quoted as saying, “My father didn’t leave his traditions behind at Heathrow” (Seal & Wiseman, 2009). The framing—and indeed, selection—of these narratives reinforces the commonplace view that migrants should abandon their cultural traditions, which are represented as the key cause of FM, to assimilate to Western cultural norms, which are unequivocally represented as privileging gender equality. In a celebratory account of a woman who survived FM, and then went on to marry her White boyfriend, the Daily Mail lauded the woman’s courage thus: “Today, she prides herself on being a thoroughly modern Englishwoman—and with her fashionably-streaked hair, elegantly-painted nails and designer wardrobe of must-have designs, she looks every inch the part” (Cable, 2006).

Survivors of FM speak out about their experiences to recover their voices, to make visible what has been rendered invisible, and to raise awareness about the problem (Ali, 2008; Sanghera, 2007, 2009). While recognizing the courage of these women, it is important to question why only some narratives are accorded space by the mainstream media. For example, Humayra Abedin, the doctor whose case occupied the front pages when she was rescued from a FM imposed by her parents in December 2008, was criticized for not denouncing her parents, whose actions she condemned but for whom she still professed love.

Constructing Perpetrators and Their Motives

The second framing device was primarily found in accounts of perpetrators’ motivations that focused on family conflict or “culture clash”; as a rule, articles that used this framing device constructed FM as an inevitable feature of traditional Asian culture, rather than as a form of VAW. Articles that used this frame frequently described perpetrators’ motives as stemming from the desire to help a relative or friend to immigrate to the United Kingdom on a spousal visa or to prevent the victim making an “unsuitable match.” However, the most commonly reported explanation of perpetrators’ motives revolved around cultural beliefs. For instance, in sentencing a woman to 3 years in prison for coercing her two daughters to marry their cousins in Pakistan, Judge Clement Goldstone, QC, stated that “those who choose to live in this country and who, like you, are British subjects, must not abandon our laws in the practice of those beliefs and that culture” (Narain, 2009).

These representations of FM are permeated with discursive strategies associated with moral panic. Perpetrators of FM were labeled deviants and the problem of FM seen as pervasive among such deviants—in this case, among all Muslims. In contrast, reports about
domestic violence in White communities generally do not construct the problem as particularly widespread or, indeed, particularly disrespectful (Berns, 2004). In discussing preventive education, an editorial in the Telegraph (Telegraph View, 2009) argued that “While domestic violence is certainly an appalling problem, the evidence suggests that it is not a widespread one.” Despite persistently high rates of domestic violence, the problem is usually cast as an aberration in White communities. Perhaps not surprisingly, the sole exception to such a representation is its reporting within working class communities, capturing the all too common “exoticization” of this issue in terms of both class and ethnicity (Yuval-Davis, 2006). Meanwhile, specific forms of domestic violence common in minority communities tend to be depicted as the norm in these “deviant” communities (Anthias, 2013). Thus, whereas “mainstream” forms of domestic violence are generally represented through discourses focused on the pathology of the individual perpetrator, the majority of the news stories analyzed in this study used a framing device centered on the cultural difference of perpetrators of FM and their very normality within the context of what was constructed as the social norm for their community.

Reporting on a study commissioned by the Home Office to document FM in Luton, Taylor (2008) criticized specific minority communities for perpetuating “a wall of silence” around FM, despite the fact that Black and minority ethnic women's groups have campaigned on FM, so-called honor-based violence, and VAW for many years. In contrast, the broad cultural norms and attitudes that foster tolerance toward gender-based violence are rarely evoked in reports on “mainstream” forms of domestic violence (Berns, 2004).

**Constructing FM as a Cultural Problem**

The third frame was particularly evident in news reports in which FM was coupled with the issues of immigration, minority communities (particularly Muslims), Britishness, the failure of multiculturalism, and/or the need for community cohesion. Such reporting peaked in the aftermath of the 2001 disturbances in Oldham, Burley, and Bradford with the publication of the Cantle report (2001–2002) about these events. Newspaper reports of this nature continue to appear on a regular basis, particularly in right-wing tabloids like the Sun and in the Daily Mail. Statements made by David Blunkett, the Labour Party's former Home Secretary in 2001–2002, on the need for immigrants to learn English to integrate into British society, and the former Labour Home, Justice and Foreign Secretary Jack Straw's criticism of the full-face veil in 2006 were widely reported in articles that invoked FM as a marker of cultural difference.

Similarly, FM is regularly invoked in discussions about the threat to “Britishness” posed by alternate marriage practices, including both arranged marriages and transnational marriages that enabled one party to immigrate to the United Kingdom (Doughty, 2004). The construction of an underlying moral problem and a folk devil that requires social control responses was evident in a headline from 2007: “End Arranged Marriages to Unite Britain” (Blunkett, 2007). Articles of this nature argued that stricter regulation of immigration was needed to curb FM: “If it is important to control the influx of migrants to preserve the stability of our society, it is even more important to ensure that those who come here learn to share with us a common sense of values” (Hastings, 2005).

There were three main types of news coverage about FM that used this frame. This included newspaper reporting that stigmatized immigrant communities in general, and Muslim immigrant men in particular, by constructing FM as a purely cultural problem and paying little regard to its connection with other forms of VAW. In the second type of article, the media blamed British multiculturalism, associating this with a fear of appearing racist in the face of cultural problems such as FM. Indeed, the persistence of FM was often perceived to be symptomatic of the failure of multiculturalism, a sign that attempts to “appease” Muslims/immigrants/minority communities are pervasive in policy and practice. Many articles that adopted this stance called for policy responses focused on cultural assimilation. The third type of coverage was far less common. In articles of this sort, FM was constructed as either a form of VAW or a specific (cultural) manifestation of a broader problem of VAW. Some articles that constructed FM in this manner were also critical of multiculturalism, arguing that it often results in a neglect of specific
manifestations of VAW within minority communities and, therefore, welcomed the current attention to this problem. This position was primarily articulated by women’s groups, including many who were critical of the culturalization of FM within media and policy debates as well as those who welcomed the recent media and policy focus on this issue.

The representation of FM was far from uniform across the different newspapers. For instance, an overwhelming majority of articles in the Daily Mail and the Sun fell under the first two categories discussed above, as did a significant proportion of the articles in the Telegraph. Articles in the Guardian were more likely both to offer critical commentaries on the issues involved and to represent FM as a (culturally) specific form of VAW, though the first two approaches did inform a significant minority of articles in the paper. On the whole, the majority of media reporting on FM characterized it as a cultural problem.

The media’s framing of FM contributes to the perception that culturally specific forms of violence are more abhorrent than “normal” domestic violence and, hence, that they are rightfully subject to a media-driven moral crusade. These forms of VAW are “endemic abuse[s] of the worst kind” according to Wayne Ives, former Head of the Forced Marriage Unit (Beckford, 2008). Singling out FM as a particularly barbaric form of VAW not only trivializes “mainstream” forms of domestic abuse but also locates FM in an othered, unchanging, pre-modern world (Fernandez, 2009). These representations are not unique to the British media. Winter, Thompson, and Jeffreys, writing about the formulation of the term harmful traditional practices by the United Nations (a victory of sorts for campaigners who sought recognition for the gendered harms that the United Nations had hitherto been silent on), criticized the assumption that the “metropolitan centres of the West contain no ‘traditions’ or ‘culture’ harmful to women, and that the violence which does exist there is idiosyncratic and individualized rather than culturally condoned” (2002, p. 72).

Framing FM and forms of VAW that primarily occur in minority communities as more dangerous than mainstream forms of domestic violence also informs debates about possible solutions to these problems. Women’s groups have been critical of successive governments’ focus on criminal justice responses to what these groups perceive to be a larger social problem; indeed, the lack of attention to developing effective prevention strategies has been described as the “weakest part of the UK responses to VAW” (Coy, Lovett, & Kelly, 2008, p. 6). However, in November 2009, when domestic violence education was proposed as one possible response to VAW, a number of British newspaper articles were highly critical of this approach. Articles in right-wing newspapers sought to minimize both the prevalence of domestic violence and the need for preventive education in mainstream communities while stressing that domestic violence in minority communities (particularly FM and so-called honor-based crimes) were the “real” problems. According to these articles, these specific forms of VAW required preventive initiatives designed to tackle minority communities’ problematic cultures. A 2009 article with the headline “Honour Based Violence Is Biggest Problem Facing Women” (Whitehead, 2009) cited David Green, the director of Civitas (an independent think tank), who argued that the strategy was “skirting around the edges” of the real problem:

One of the dangers of having lessons to teach everyone from a certain age that it is wrong to use violence against women is that it implies that men are all a potential menace but that is not the problem we face. If you asked what is the biggest problem that women as a whole or particular women have at present, I would say the biggest problem is faced by women from ethnic minorities who are subject to routine violence.

Since acts of VAW in majority communities are perceived to result from the pathology of individual perpetrators (Berns, 2004), government attempts to tackle domestic violence have centered on punishing offenders through criminal justice responses. Viewing cases of violence against minority ethnic women through the lens of “harmful cultural practices” (Narayan, 1997; Razack, 2004; Volpp, 2000) has resulted in responses centered on bringing about changes in specific communities through “modernizing” these communities’ sociocultural values, norms, and traditions—or, failing that, through using stricter immigration controls ostensibly
aimed at defending minority women’s rights. In responding to an article on FM in the online edition of the Daily Mail, one reader argued that, “If they choose to live by other laws/customs that are not deemed respectable in British society, then they should be on the first plane back to their home land” (Daily Mail Reporter, 2009b). Thus, the framing of “mainstream” forms of domestic violence as separate and distinct from FM constructs these problems and their potential solutions in specific ways, eliding discussion of the fact that VAW occurs in all sections of British society.

From a Cultural Problem to the Problematic Culture

The frames discussed above are also evident in policy debates on FM, shaping the range of policy solutions that are discussed. In 2006, Anne Cryer (then Labour MP for Keighley) presented a memorandum to the Home Affairs Select Committee on Immigration Control outlining the problems, including FM and domestic violence, that she routinely dealt with in the course of her constituency work with minority communities. The memorandum referred to the “question mark regarding immigration on the back of a marriage of convenience” (Cryer, 2006, p. 3.5b) and framed the problem in terms of the “ghettoisation” of particular communities due to their lack of integration into mainstream British society (2006, p. 3.5f). Cryer cited consanguineous marriage, FM, and some immigrants’ inability to speak English as “tragic problems [that] are facilitated by intercontinental marriages which, in turn, are facilitated by weak immigration control and spouse entry” (2006, p. 3.5h).

Critically, the broader problem of VAW is afforded no place in Cryer’s discussion or in the solutions centered on tighter immigration controls that she puts forward. Reporters and policymakers have long identified FM as an issue concerning minority ethnic British women being forced into transnational marriages with men seeking to enter the United Kingdom on spousal visas. Following moves by other European Union countries to use border control measures in the name of tackling FM (Bredal, 2011), in March 2007, Liam Byrne (then Labour Minister for Immigration) announced proposals to raise the age of entry for spouses born outside the European Economic Area from 18 to 21. The press release about this move argued that it was expected to result in 3,000 fewer people entering Britain each year, though the potential impact on efforts to prevent FM could not be estimated (Ford, 2007). Prior to raising the minimum age of entry for spouses, the Home Office commissioned independent research on the possible impact of this change. The study raised concerns that this (a) could be perceived as discriminatory; (b) might violate human rights principles; (c) would not eradicate FM, as this affects people of all ages; and (d) would penalize those who genuinely wished to marry (Hester et al., 2006). The Home Office chose to ignore these findings; indeed, it was only following an application under the Freedom of Information Act that the Home Office released the full report (Yeo, 2009). In the end, the Supreme Court overturned the decision to raise the minimum age.

The Labour Government’s decision to ignore the recommendations of the research it had commissioned, and also the advice of some women’s groups working on the issue, is closely connected to its framing of the problem of FM. Viewing FM as a signifier of cultural difference suggests that eradicating or minimizing cultural heterogeneity through immigration control measures, and community cohesion strategies aimed at settled minority communities, will offer effective solutions to FM. Writing about Norwegian family reunification law and FM policy, Myrdahl (2010) argues that romance-based marriage has become central to constructions of the national subject, rendering some Norwegian citizens simultaneously invisible as national subjects and hyper-visible as objects of national management, irrespective of concerns about the potential for abuse within a specific marriage. In Britain too, FM, arranged marriage, and consanguineous marriage are often “lumped together” as markers of cultural difference that are contrasted with the norm of romance-based marriage. This serves to reinforce the boundaries of the nation in what Berlant refers to as the “privatisation of citizenship” (cited in Gedalof, 2007, p. 91).

Since 9/11, the problematization of ethnic differences has increasingly come to be articulated through rhetoric centered on the cultural incompatibility of immigrant communities. The notion of a normative form of “Britishness” places the onus on immigrant
communities to adapt their cultural values and traditions to make them more like those of mainstream society (Gedalof, 2007). In these discourses, cultural incompatibility between minority and mainstream communities is attributed to the modes of cultural reproduction deployed by immigrant communities. Indeed, transnational marriages are often explicitly blamed for the persistence of immigrant cultures. Here, the problem of FM becomes uncoupled from issues of coercion and, through a focus on transnational marriages, comes to be posited as a “problem of continuous migration” (Migration Watch UK, 2009, p. 1). Bredal (2011) discusses a similar process behind the formulation of policies elsewhere in Europe whereby FM is constructed as a phenomenon that is “almost the same as” transnational arranged marriage or consanguineous marriage. These issues often supplant FM as the core theme in media reports and policy debates ostensibly about FM.

**Conclusion**

Analysis of the media reporting of FM reveals the three dimensions of “discursive construction” identified by Critcher (2009, p. 30) as central to the typology of a moral panic: a perceived threat to moral order, the potential for social control in the form of new legislation on FM as well as enhanced immigration controls, and the oppositional ethical reconceptualization of the mainstream majority as defenders of the rights of women from minority communities.

How useful is the concept of moral panic in understanding the problematization of FM within British newspaper reporting? In addition, how productive is this moral panic for tackling the very real problem of FM? Does it constitute a “good” moral panic as some women’s groups in the United Kingdom suggest? To apply the concept of moral panic, sociologists have adopted an apparently rational position that is actually representative of a broader affective attitude. It is one based on a voice that is grounded in “an attitude of knowing disbelief” (Garland, 2008, p. 21) toward the media and public construction of an issue as an urgent problem requiring a solution. The notion of a disproportionate and perhaps unhelpful overreaction to what, in some cases, might be a matter worthy of concern is central to the concept of moral panic. However, the difference between panic and concern is not always clear-cut; indeed, this has been the subject of many debates about whether a given case qualifies as a moral panic (Critcher, 2003). Cohen’s (2002, p. 2011) recent formulation of the notion of a “good moral panic” implicitly suggests the existence of a bad moral panic. As such, it offers opportunities to make explicit the affective positioning of those who attribute moral panic (i.e., sociologists) where this had previously been elided.

Another dimension of the moral panic debate concerns the consequences of such an attribution, particularly in terms of its usefulness in addressing the problem in question. As discussed above, the current moral panic about FM, as driven by British newspaper reporting, has significant consequences in terms of how the problem of FM is perceived and what policy responses to it are debated.

The prevailing construction of FM harnesses the protective role of the British state as a reformed patriarchy seeking to rescue minority ethnic women from their oppressive cultures. Through these discourses, the non-coercive marriage practices of Black and minority ethnic communities are also constructed as problematic in that they are perceived as (a) signifiers of minority ethnic women’s passivity, (b) impediments to community cohesion, and (c) part of a broader immigration “problem.” Thus, the key consequence of the media’s framing of FM has been the rationalization of tighter immigration control measures and policy developments that privilege cultural assimilation.

Scholars and women’s groups working with minority ethnic women in Britain are divided as to how best to understand and address the problem of FM. There are many women’s groups in the United Kingdom, including Karma Nirvana and Ashiana, who have contributed to the recent media debates on FM and have been supportive of the Coalition government’s policy initiatives on FM, including the recent criminalization of FM. From their perspective, any attention to this issue constitutes a “good” moral panic, as it helps save lives and acts as a corrective to the historic neglect by the media and the state of violence affecting minority ethnic women generally. Opponents to criminalization, however, tend to hold that the framing of FM in current news reporting does constitute a panic in that it is a disproportionate reaction...
when compared with the lack of attention given to other forms of VAW. Moreover, opponents of criminalization argue that it is a bad moral panic in that the solutions it fosters are, at best, ineffective and, at worst, centered on enhancing immigration controls rather than protecting women from violence. Despite their differences, advocates of both perspectives share a common identification of FM as an urgent problem that requires an immediate and effective policy response.

Where there is specificity in women's experience of violence, there is an urgent need to recognize, understand, and respond to that specificity. However, we argue that the recent media outrage about violence against minority ethnic women has not given rise to a better understanding of the ways in which intersections of gender, class, race, cultural norms, religious traditions, heteronormativity, migratory history, and state policies shape the nature and forms of violence that these women face. Nor have the recent media debates aided the development of context-specific solutions to the problem in the form of targeted service provision and preventive measures. The current problematization of FM by the British media mainly serves to restrict discursive spaces for policy debates and hinders attempts to respond to FM as part of broader coordinated responses to VAW.

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Chirot and Edwards examine the reasons for genocide, arguing that not all genocides stem from the same causes. Instead, they suggest that genocides have varying causes, from cold-blooded calculation to realistic fears to instincts for revenge to ideologies for purification. Understanding these causes helps us better figure out how to stop genocides in the future.

Making Sense of the Senseless

Understanding Genocide

Daniel Chirot and Jennifer Edwards

Skeletal bodies clutching barbed-wire fences, the expressionless faces of the recently tortured and starved—the pictures that emerged from Yugoslavia in the 1990s were frighteningly reminiscent of Nazi concentration camps. In 1994, the images of thousands of bloated bodies filling the rivers of Rwanda, of men and women pleading not to be abandoned, and of their hacked up corpses a day later conjured images of the Rape of Nanking (1937–38). There, the Japanese army systematically tortured, raped, and killed 300,000 Chinese in six weeks. In Rwanda, 800,000 were killed while the world watched on satellite television.

The inevitable comparisons of these recent atrocities to those of the past, most notably the Holocaust, are highly controversial. Classifying an event as a genocide can be used to legitimate the claims of survivors or as justification for reprisals against perpetrators. Therefore, several questions about genocide should be considered:

• How successful does an attempted “cleansing” of a group need to be to warrant classification as genocide?
• Does a certain number or percentage of a population need to be killed?
• Does the intent of the perpetrators make any difference?
• Should the term genocide be reserved for the murder and expulsion of religious or ethnic minority groups or can political dissidents or enemies in war be victims of genocide?

Although burdened with issues of morality and politics, these questions are critical to understanding why (and when) genocides occur. The usual, narrow definition delimits genocide as a rare event produced by religious or racial ideologues. As such, we often overlook important similarities between the infamous large-scale attempts at extermination and the lesser-known, less successful, and smaller-scale mass murders. When we expand our definition, however, we discover that there are several important distinctions in the types of motivation and justifications political leaders give when committing genocidal acts. These differences can help us to better understand and anticipate genocide.

Defining Genocide

Scholars vary widely in how they define and, thus, explain genocide—a term coined only in 1944 in response to the Holocaust. For some, genocide lies at the end of a continuum of violence. It may be a byproduct or the culmination of a violent civil war or even of a state’s attempt to control a recalcitrant population. It is a step beyond massacres, mass murder or the violence of war.

For others, genocide is a distinct and rare event unlike other episodes of mass violence. The United Nations originally defined it as an attempt to destroy “in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group.” If genocide is distinct from other types of violence, it requires its own unique explanation. This has led many to view genocide, like its name, as a peculiarly modern phenomenon. Zygmunt Bauman, for example, sees genocide as the product of large governmental bureaucracies combined with pseudo-scientific ideas and utopian visions of modern totalitarian states, such as Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia.

If genocide is defined too narrowly, as something that exists only on the scale of the Holocaust, Rwanda, or the killing of almost 1 million Armenians in 1915 by the Ottoman Empire, then it is rare and hard to explain. Defined too broadly, however, it can devolve into a purely political label to even cover what some call “cultural genocide,” which includes voluntary assimilation. To better understand them, genocidal acts should be defined more simply, in a way that sidesteps the political disputes raised by claims that certain groups have been subjected to genocide. We define genocide as politically motivated mass murder. Importantly, this definition encompasses variations in murder, from “first degree,” or intentional and premeditated killing, to negligent or reckless “manslaughter.”

Genocides are politically motivated mass murders perpetrated by elites or agents of the government that kill a substantial portion of a targeted population, combatants and non-combatants alike, regardless of their age or gender. Both mass murders that were planned ahead of time, as in the Holocaust, Rwanda, or Armenia, and those that were the byproduct of mass expulsions, such as the Cherokees’ eviction from the southeast to Oklahoma in 1838, are included. Genocidal events may be on a large scale, or on a smaller scale, when only one particular community is targeted and most of its population is killed.

Because the model cases have been interpreted as ethnic—the Holocaust, Rwanda, and Yugoslavia—that is how most people think of genocide, as the effort by one ethnic group to wipe out another. But genocides have also included the attempted destruction of peoples because of their religion, ideology, economic class, or merely because of the region in which they lived. Ethnicity and nationalism have been the major issues in 20th-century cases, but class and region played a major role in the mass political murders perpetrated by Stalin and the Khmer Rouge, and religion has been critical in
cases such as the slaughter of several thousand Muslims by Hindu activists in Gujarat, India, in 2002, and the killing of hundreds of thousands of Muslims and Hindus during the partitioning of Pakistan and India in 1947. The best way to begin making sense of such events is to distinguish types of genocide according to the motivations of the political elites who order and condone them. In the end, genocides are not, as so many would like to believe, the products of sick minds or diseased societies. With such distinctions, we can begin to predict the likelihood of genocide by studying the pronouncements of political elites, the circumstances in which they come to power and their ideological commitments.

The Varieties of Genocide

We identify four basic types of genocide based on the rationale and objectives of the perpetrators. Any particular case can fall into more than one type—perpetrators can have more than one motive—but these distinctions help us interpret past cases and weigh the likelihood of future ones.

Convenience

Sometimes it is simply expedient to kill all of an enemy population. Julius Caesar did not hesitate to exterminate recalcitrant tribes in Gaul, though he much preferred to have them cooperate. William the Conqueror wanted Anglo-Saxon peasants alive after his conquest of England to work for him and his lords, and he was willing to co-opt Anglo-Saxon lords if they submitted. But when Yorkshire continued to resist, he killed most of its population, burning villages and crops. This eliminated what could have become the focus of a more widespread uprising.

Strong resistance is not necessary to provoke genocidal killings or expulsions. The Cherokee in the southeastern United States worked hard to adapt themselves to white rule, but their lands were coveted, especially once gold was discovered there. In 1838–39 they were expelled to Oklahoma, despite a Supreme Court ruling that the seizure of their lands was illegal. Historical demographer Russell Thornton estimates that because of this forced ethnic cleansing, about 20 percent of the 16,000 expelled Cherokees died of hunger, privation, and disease on the “Trail of Tears,” and perhaps up to 50 percent died, if deaths from disease immediately after resettlement are counted. This was genocide purely for the sake of greed and convenience.

Killing large numbers of civilians as part of a calculated strategy in war may also be genocidal, even if the ultimate aim is only to force a surrender. While different than the deliberate extermination of a whole people, it still comes under the definition we are using—the mass killing of non-combatants. Some of Genghis Khan’s mass murders in the 13th century were similar to the American strategy of dropping nuclear weapons on Japan: surrender or face complete annihilation.

Revenge

Genocidal acts are rarely based entirely on simple, cold, unemotional calculations. Caesar claimed it was to preserve his “prestige” that he ordered the extermination of the Eburons, whose king he felt had betrayed a prior treaty. Genghis Khan was equally outraged by the treachery of the city of Herat when he ordered its several hundred thousand inhabitants slaughtered. Herat had previously surrendered, but then revolted against his rule. The fire bombings of civilian cities by the Americans and British during World War II (the most notorious case was Dresden, in 1945, where there were no obvious military or industrial targets) were meant to end the war, but also carried a strong element of vengeance.

The desire for revenge, however, can go much further and provoke genocidal slaughters that have no conceivable military purpose. In 1904 the Herero in the German colony of Southwest Africa (today’s Namibia) revolted and defeated a small German army. The infuriated Kaiser Wilhelm II sent a large force to this essentially worthless territory (before the event, the Germans were trying to get rid of it by selling it to the British) and explicitly ordered that the Herero be exterminated. They were shot, herded into the desert to starve, or put into concentration camps where they died. Of 80,000 Herero, at least 60,000 perished. Militarily, this was entirely unnecessary, but the commanding German general had ordered that not even women or children were to be spared.
The Rape of Nanking in 1937–38 was also a matter of revenge. Though the intent was to avenge the stiff resistance of the defending Chinese army, the victims were the civilians of Nanking. The Japanese army, obsessed with “honor,” felt humiliated by the “inferiors,” much as the Germans had in Southwest Africa. They salvaged their wounded pride by genocidal retribution, even though the Japanese warrior code demanded that non-combatants be treated better than enemy soldiers.

Despite the horror of these examples, from the viewpoint of the perpetrators, these mass murders were in some way retributive justice and, in that sense, “rational.” The Japanese and German military believed, as had Caesar, that to forego revenge would incite further acts of resistance and convince the world that their armies were weak.

**Fear**

The examples so far were genocidal acts carried out against weak enemies and inflicted on mostly helpless populations. There are, however, many genocidal episodes that result from fear—whether real or imagined. Fear can quickly escalate and provoke mass murder by a group, clan, tribe, or nation that feels it must save itself from destruction by another. Deadly ethnic riots, for example, are usually instigated by leaders who invoke such fears.

In Yugoslavia, political elites bent on creating strong, separate Croatian and Serbian states manipulated fear of other ethnic groups. There had been ethnic tensions before World War II, mass killings in a complex civil war, and growing economic competition and insecurity in the 1970s and 1980s. But when ethnic entrepreneurs stirred up memories of past killings and strategically linked them to contemporary murders, they set off the genocidal wars and ethnic cleansings of the 1990s. The historical memories behind the fears were largely fabricated, and as Anthony Oberschall has shown, before this critical turn the various ethnic groups had gotten along well. Unfortunately, the new waves of killings and counter-kilings reinforced these dubious historical memories and made them increasingly real.

Stalin’s war against the Kulaks (prosperous peasants), 8 million of whom died, was based on an explicit fear that a rural middle class would obstruct socialism. It hardly mattered that there was no distinct Kulak class, only some peasants who had done relatively well. Kulaks, just average peasants in good farming areas who were unhappy about giving up their produce for nothing, were starved, killed, or deported to camps where they died of privation and overwork.

Sometimes, of course, fears are grounded in reality. When the Ottoman Empire unleashed its genocide against the Armenians in 1915, it was desperately struggling to survive as an ally of Germany in World War I. Some Armenian nationalists were collaborating with the Empire’s enemy Russia and sought to establish an Armenian state in a large part of Anatolia. The Ottoman authorities believed that if they did not rid themselves of this menace they would themselves face destruction. They used mass expulsion and extermination as “defensive” tactics. When the Hutu regime in Rwanda committed genocide in 1994, it was in response to a serious (and ultimately successful) invasion of Rwanda by Tutsi refugees, aided by Uganda, who aimed to overthrow the existing power structure. In both cases, the genocides were preceded by years of mistrust, killings, and increasing fear.

Even realistic fears do not justify genocides that wipe out mostly innocent bystanders. But we have to take into account both how fear motivates political elites and also how those elites deliberately manipulate fear among their followers. Had Western leaders followed the political maneuvering and statements of leading political figures in Rwanda in 1993, they would not have been taken by surprise at what happened. Gérard Prunier, a French expert on Africa, claims that Western governments did know what was happening, but deliberately chose to downplay this information because they believed their electorates would be unwilling to bear the costs of intervention.

**Purification**

There is a special, more insidious fear that also motivates genocide: the fear of pollution. It is the most difficult to explain because it depends on deep cultural beliefs that portray a group as a moral danger that demands extermination. Notorious among ideologues of pollution in the 20th century are Hitler and Stalin, although they were not the first.
The Catholic-Protestant Wars in 16th century France killed some 750,000 people and gave us the term “massacre.” Though they were the result of a complex mixture of economic, political, and dynastic causes, there was a genuinely theological component to these wars. The urge to purify Catholicism of the stain of heresy was at the heart of the worst killing. Catholic mobs repeatedly felt it necessary not only to kill Protestants, but also to burn their possessions and mutilate their bodies in order to purify the land. The genital mutilation of men and cutting open of pregnant Protestant women was part of this ritual of purification.

The Bible contains many genocidal episodes, and whether these actually happened or not, the mere fact that they are found in a holy text indicates that God may demand such extreme purification. For example, the Lord commanded Joshua’s men to kill “both men and women, young and old, oxen, sheep, and asses, with the edge of the sword” after the fall of Jericho. Subsequently, one of the main causes given for Israel’s downfall was its failure to exterminate all of the Canaanites.

The major totalitarian ideologues of the 20th century had their own utopian views of the world that called for the cleansing of polluting elements. For Adolf Hitler, utopia would result from the triumph of a healthy, racially pure Aryan nation. All of civilization’s ills were ascribed to racial mixing and weakness. This is why Jews, the ultimate carriers of racial pollution, had to be exterminated, along with gypsies, homosexuals, the mentally retarded, and eventually, Slavs. As historian Christopher Browning has explained, the bitter scholarly disputes of the 1970s and 1980s about whether or not Hitler’s ideology, or structural conditions and political contingencies were responsible for the Holocaust is resolved by the fact that without Hitler’s vision of a racially pure utopia the Holocaust would have been inconceivable.

In one of the major genocides of recent times, 500,000 to 1 million suspected Communists were killed in Indonesia in 1965–1966. In East Java, where some of the worst episodes occurred, this was the culmination of a long class war in the countryside. Not only were whole families massacred, but torture and mutilation, much of it of a sexual nature, were also common. The military wanted to be rid of Communists for political reasons, but the killings also arose from the murderous frenzy stirred by fear of religious pollution. Muslim activists carried out most of the killing, destroying infidels to restore the natural order.

Similarly, the Cambodian Communists’ destruction of one-quarter of their population was committed in pursuit of a classless, racially pure Khmer utopia. Non-Khmers, especially Vietnamese, were the first to be killed; those influenced by Western or Vietnamese ways followed. Here also the killers sought to wipe out a polluting influence they feared.

**Looking Ahead**

Mass political murder follows its own “logic,” and we can only understand it if we follow the logic. Genocides are not specifically modern, but when they are controlled by modern states they tend to be more thorough and bloodier than pre-modern genocides. There will be more genocides in the future unless we learn to recognize their symptoms and are prepared to intervene.

Understanding the different sources of genocide gives us one tool. Sociology contributes by distinguishing among the causes that lead to genocidal acts. Today, public opinion can restrain genocides of convenience, such as the deaths of the Cherokees; such acts are no longer acceptable. We can foresee how the demands of war in a place like Chechnya might lead to genocidal acts by the Russians trying to keep control of that strategic province. But seemingly irrational fears can still lead to genocidal policies. Leaders who deliberately stoke a sense of fear and a thirst for revenge greatly increase the likelihood that their followers will extract terrible retributions. When it comes to the ideologies of purification, however, all we can do is to recognize these and warn the world. The religious absolutists, the ethnic and nationalist chauvinists, and the utopian ideologues, who are all prepared to eliminate whole classes of people to create a perfect world are all unlikely to change their opinions because of their genocidal implications—Osama Bin Laden is only the most recent example of these. Understanding the distinctions among the various motivations for genocide—however disturbing—is an important first step toward preventing them.
**Recommended Resources**


Browning, Christopher R. *The Path to Genocide*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992. These essays by Browning, a leading Holocaust historian, lay out a balanced and thorough explanation of how the mass murders in World War II Germany came about.


Horowitz, Donald L. *The Deadly Ethnic Riot*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. A political scientist shows under what conditions ethnic tensions have led to murderous violence throughout the world.


Oberschall’s field work in the former Yugoslavia is a superb study of how this multiethnic society fell apart.


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**READING 37**

Rudrappa explores the business of transnational surrogacy in India. She examines how the garment industry, in which workers are paid barely subsistence wages, is directly tied to the surrogacy market in which female garment workers and former garment workers extract more value from their bodies by carrying babies for prospective parents in such countries as the United States.

*India’s Reproductive Assembly Line*

Sharmila Rudrappa

“If you asked me two years ago whether I’d have a baby and give it away for money, I wouldn’t just laugh at you, I would be so insulted I might hit you in the face,” said Indirani, a 30-year-old garment worker and gestational surrogate mother. “Yet here I am today. I carried those twin babies for nine months and gave them up.” Living in the southern Indian city of Bangalore, married at 18, and with two young children of her own, she had delivered twins a month earlier for a Tamil couple in the United States.

I met Indirani when she was still pregnant and living in a dormitory run by Creative Options Trust for Women, Bangalore’s only surrogacy agency at the time. COTW works with infertility specialists who rely on

the Trust to recruit, house, care for, and monitor surrogate mothers for their clients. Straight and gay couples arrive from all over India and throughout the world to avail themselves of Bangalore’s expertise in building biological families. Indirani and other mothers introduced me to 70 other surrogates they had gotten to know through their line of work. Some of them, including Indirani herself, double as recruiting agents, bringing new laborers into Bangalore’s reproductive assembly line.

India is emerging as a key site for transnational surrogacy, with industry profits projected to reach $6 billion in the next few years, according to the Indian Council for Medical Research. In 2007, the Oprah show featured Dr. Nayna Patel in the central Indian town of Anand, Gujarat, who was harnessing the bodies of rural Gujarati women to produce babies for American couples. Subsequent newspaper articles and TV shows, as well as blogs by users of surrogacy, popularized the nation as a surrogacy destination for couples from the United States, England, Israel, Australia and to a lesser extent Italy, Germany, and Japan.

The cities of Anand, Mumbai, Delhi, Hyderabad, and Bangalore have become central hubs for surrogacy due to the availability of good medical services, inexpensive pharmaceuticals, and, most importantly, cheap and compliant labor. The cost of surrogacy in India is about $35,000–40,000 per baby, compared to the United States, where it can run as high as $80,000, which makes it particularly appealing to prospective parents. It is working class women who make India’s reproductive industry viable. In Bangalore, the garment production assembly line is the main conduit to the reproduction assembly line, as women move from garment factories, to selling their eggs, to surrogacy.

Indirani’s life typifies that of other women in Bangalore’s garment factories. Paid low wages, she works intermittently in one of the city’s many garment factories. She quit when she became pregnant, and joined the line again when her two children attended school, taking time away when she was sick, or to care for sick family members. Bangalore’s reproduction industry affords women like her the possibility of extracting greater value from their bodies once they have been deemed unproductive workers in garment factories. Because of its life affirming character, Indirani and others see surrogacy, however exploitative, as a more meaningful and creative option than factory work.

**Disposable Workers**

The popular understanding is that women who have large debt burdens and are destitute opt to become surrogate mothers. But while they are in debt, the 70 mothers I met were not among the poorest in Bangalore. Many were part of dual or multiple income households, and tended to be garment workers who earn more than the average working woman in the city.

Former surrogate mothers, who also work as recruiting agents, have extensive networks among women in prime reproductive age in their own extended families, and among neighbors and friends who work as maids, cooks, street sweepers, or construction workers. Because cuts in food, education, and medical subsidies due to state divestment, along with volatile markets and global financial crises, lead to unsteady factory work and low wages, their greatest recruiting success is among garment workers.

Like garment workers in sweatshops across the world, women in Bangalore are underpaid and overworked. In order to meet short production cycles set by global market demands, they work at an inhumanely fast pace, with few or no breaks. They frequently suffer from headaches, chest pain, ear and eye pain, urinary tract infections, and other health problems. Sexual harassment and abuse are rampant on the production line. The supervisors, almost all men, castigate women in sexually derogatory terms when they do not meet production quotas, and often grope the women as they instruct them on how to work better. “Sometimes,” says Indirani, “I wouldn’t take a lunch break when pieces piled up. I didn’t want to be shamed in front of everyone. I would go to any length to avoid calling the supervisor’s attention to me.”

Indirani earned $100 to $110 monthly, depending upon her attendance, punctuality, and overtime hours. Frequently, she and her co-workers were unable to meet the inordinately high production targets and were required by supervisors to stay past regular working hours to meet their quotas. “Playing” catch-up, however, did not necessarily result in overtime pay. Indirani’s husband became suspicious if her paycheck did not
reflect her overtime hours. He wondered whether she was really at the factory, or whether she was cavorting with another man. Indirani, like many of the women I interviewed, reported that she felt debased at work and at home.

Prior research on Bangalore's female garment workers suggests that they work an average of 16 hours a day in the factory and at home doing laundry, cooking, taking care of children, and commuting to work. Working in the factory all day, and then returning home to complete household tasks was absolutely exhausting. Indirani friend Suhasini, who was also a surrogate mother, avoided garment work altogether. Her mother, sister, and other women family members had worked the line, and she knew it was not what she wanted for her life. “But I need money,” she told me. “For us,” she says, “surrogacy is a boon.” She describes Mr. Shetty, who started COTW, as “a god to us.” When I met her again in December 2011, Suhasini was receiving hormonal injections so that she could be a surrogate mother for a second time.

For much of her working life Indirani has been intermittently employed in one of Bangalore’s many garment factories. She quit when pregnant, and joined the line again when her two children attended school. She also stopped factory work when she was sick, or had to care for sick family members. From the perspective of the garment factories, when Indirani is healthy she is a valuable worker for the firm. But during her pregnancies and illnesses, or when she has to attend to her family’s needs, she loses her value as a worker, and the company replaces her. She is, as anthropologist Melissa Wright calls it, a “disposable worker.” Upon recovering her health, or managing family chores efficiently, Indirani cycles back into the garment factory again, this time miraculously having regained her value for the production process. Over her working life, Indirani has shifted from being valuable, to becoming an undesirable worker who must seek other forms of employment to help support her family.

**Making Babies**

Indirani and her auto-rickshaw worker husband have struggled for much of their married life to make ends meet, and to support their small children. Indirani’s husband did not earn much money. He rented his vehicle from an acquaintance, and the daily rental and gasoline costs cut significantly into the household income. So Indirani and he decided to borrow money from her cousin to purchase an auto-rickshaw of their own. Their troubles worsened when they were unable to pay back the loan, and the cousin would often arrive at their door, demanding his money and screaming expletives at them. He would come to the factory on payday and take Indirani’s entire paycheck. She said, “I’d work hard, facing all sorts of abuse. And at the end of it I wouldn’t even see any money. I felt so bad I contemplated suicide.” When a friend at work suggested that she sell her eggs to an agency called COTW for approximately $500, Indirani jumped at what she perceived as a wonderful opportunity. After “donating” her eggs, Indirani decided to try surrogacy; she became pregnant with twins on her first attempt.

When I asked Indirani whether the hormonal injections to prepare her for ova extraction, and subsequently for embryo implantation, were painful or scary, she avoided answering directly. “Aiyto akka,” she said. “When you’re poor you can’t afford the luxury of thinking about discomfort.” When I told her about the potential long-term effects of hyperovulation, she shrugged. Her first priority was getting out of poverty; any negative health threats posed by ova extraction or surrogacy were secondary.

Indirani did not find surrogacy to be debasing work. She earned more money as a reproduction worker than she did as a garment worker, and found the process much more enjoyable. She was exhausted physically and emotionally working as a tailor in the factory and then cleaning, cooking, and taking care of her family. Upon getting pregnant, however, Indirani lived in the COTW dormitory. At first she missed her family, often wondering what her children were doing. Was her mother-in-law taking care of them? “I was in a different place surrounded by strangers,” she recalled. But soon she began to like the dormitory. She didn’t have to wake up by 5 am to prepare meals for the family, pack lunches for everyone, drop the children off at the bus stop so they could get to school, and then hop onto the bus herself to get to the garment factory. Instead, she slept in, and was served breakfast. She had no household obligations and
no one made demands on her time and emotions. Surrogacy afforded her the luxury of being served by others. She did not remember a time in her life when she felt so liberated from all responsibilities.

**Surveillance and Sisterhood**

As she got to know the other women in the COTW dormitory, Indirani began to feel as though she was on vacation. For Indirani and many of the surrogate mothers I interviewed, it was easier to talk with the friends they made in COTW than with childhood friends and relatives; they felt they had more in common with one another. Through the surrogacy process, many women told me, they lost a baby but gained sisters for life.

Indirani’s husband brought the children over to visit on some weekday evenings, and her daughter stayed overnight with her on weekends. Her older sister Prabha, also a garment worker who was similarly strapped for cash, joined her at COTW two months after Indirani arrived, becoming a gestational surrogate for a straight, white couple. Like most surrogates, she had no idea where they were from, or where her contract baby would live.

Noting the closed circuit cameras that monitored the mothers’ every move in the dormitory, I asked how they felt about them. Indirani said they didn’t bother her; in fact, most of the mothers did not register the cameras’ presence. While this initially surprised me, I soon realized that they were accustomed to surveillance in their everyday lives. Living under the gaze of relatives and inquisitive neighbors, and housed in one- or two-room homes where it was common for six to eight households to share a bathroom, notions of privacy were quite foreign. Surveillance at the dormitory was benign in comparison to the surveillance and punishment meted out for supposed infractions on the garment shop floor, where long conversations with teammates, taking a few minutes of rest, or going on breaks were all curtailed. In comparison, surveillance at COTW, designed to check on whether the women were having sex with their men-folk who visited the facilities, seemed relatively banal.

The surrogate mothers delivered their babies through caesarian surgeries between the 36th and 37th week of gestation in order to conform to the scheduling needs of potential parents. Indirani was initially fearful of going under the knife, but she saw many mothers survive caesarians and was no longer anxious. In the end, she found the caesarian method of delivering the twins she had carried easier than the vaginal births of her own two children.

The $4000 Indirani earned was far less than the $7000 the surrogacy agency charged for the children. While she was legally entitled to a larger amount because she carried twins, Indirani made no more money than those mothers pregnant with singletons. Her take-home pay actually ended up being less than $4000 after she paid the recruiting agent $200 and bought small, obligatory gifts for the COTW staff who cared for her during her pregnancy. Indirani had the option of staying on in the dormitory for up to two months after delivering her twins, but like all the mothers I interviewed, she chose not to do so because COTW charged for post-natal care, and for food and board. She could not afford to lose her hard-earned money on what she perceived as a luxury, so she returned home within days of delivery to all the household work that waited. Within a week of returning home, her remaining earnings went directly to her cousin, the moneylender. Still, knowing her debts were paid off gave her peace of mind.

Indirani claimed she does not feel any attachment to the twins she carried. “They were under contract. I couldn't bring myself to feel anything for them,” she told me. “They were never mine to begin with, and I entered into this knowing they were someone else's babies.” It is hard enough for her to take care of her own two children, she said. “Why do you think I'm going through all this now? What would I do with two more? They are burdens I cannot afford.” On the other hand, some mothers professed deep attachments to the babies they had given up. Roopa, a divorced mother who gave birth to a baby girl three years ago, always celebrated her contract baby’s birthday. “June 21st akka,” she said, “I cook a special meal. My daughter doesn’t know why we have a feast, but it’s my way of remembering my second child. I still cry for that little girl I gave away. I think about her often. I could never do this again.”
Life Out of Waste

Regardless of how they felt about the babies they had given up, the women almost all said they derived far more meaning from surrogacy than they did working under the stern labor regimes of the garment factory. In our conversations, time and again, women described the many ways they are deemed worthless in the garment factory. Their labor powers exhausted, their sexual discipline suspect, their personal character under question, they are converted to waste on the shop floor—until they are eventually discarded. On the other hand, Bangalore’s reproduction industry, they said, gave them the opportunity to be highly productive and creative workers once more.

Indirani contrasted the labor processes in producing garments and producing a baby: the latter was a better option, she said. “Garments? You wear your shirt a few months and you throw it away. But I make you a baby? You keep that for life. I have made something so much bigger than anything I could ever make in the factory.” Indirani observed that while the people who wore the garments she’d worked on would most probably never think about her, she was etched forever in the minds of the intended parents who took the twins she bore.

Indirani and the other mothers I met did not necessarily see selling eggs or surrogacy as benign processes. Nor did they misread their exploitation. However, given their employment options and their relative dispossession, they believed that Bangalore’s reproduction industry afforded them greater control over their emotional, financial, and sexual lives. In comparison to garment work, surrogacy was easy.

Surrogacy was also more meaningful for the women than other forms of paid employment. Because babies are life-affirming in ways garments are obviously not, surrogacy allowed women to assert their moral worth. In garment work their sexual morality was constantly in question at the factory and at home. At the dormitory, in contrast, they were in a women-only space, abstaining from sex, and leading pure, virtuous lives.

Through surrogacy, Indirani said, she had built a nuclear family unit and fulfilled one infertile woman’s desire to be a mother. In the process, she had attempted to secure the future of her own family and her own happiness. As a garment worker Indirani felt she was being slowly destroyed, but as a surrogate mother she said she was creating a new world. She was ready to go through surrogacy once again to earn money for her children’s private schooling. The last time we met in December 2011, Indirani asked me, “If anyone you know wants a surrogate mother, will you think of me? I want to do this again.”

Recommended Resources

Haimowitz, Rebecca and Vaishali Sinha. Made in India (2010). This is a feature length documentary film on surrogacy in India, which explains the organization of the industry through the journey of one American couple to an Indian surrogate.


Teman, Elly. Birthing a Mother: The Surrogate Body and the Pregnant Self. (University of California Press, 2010). The book documents the relationships between straight women and their surrogates in Israel, where assisted reproductive technologies are subsidized for heterosexual couples.

Wright, Melissa. Disposable Women and Other Myths of Global Capitalism. (Routledge, 2006). An anthropological description of how women in the global south are seen as bad workers, and yet their work is crucial to multinational companies’ profits.

The open-access Study Site, available at study.sagepub.com/inderbitzindeviance2e, provides useful study materials including SAGE journal articles and multimedia resources.