Anomie

Durkheim’s term for the loss of direction felt in a society when social control of individual behavior has become ineffective.

Anomie theory of deviance

Robert Merton’s theory of deviance as an adaptation of socially prescribed goals or of the means governing their attainment, or both.
Conformity

Going along with one’s peers—individuals of our own status who have no special right to direct our behavior.

Control theory

A view of conformity and deviance that suggests that our connection to members of society leads us to systematically conform to society’s norms.

Crime

A violation of criminal law for which some governmental authority applies formal penalties.
Cultural transmission

A school of criminology that argues that criminal behavior is learned through social interactions.

Deviance

Behavior that violates the standards of conduct or expectations of a group or society.

Differential association

A theory of deviance proposed by Edwin Sutherland that holds that violation of rules results from exposure to attitudes favorable to criminal acts.
Differential justice

Differences in the way social control is exercised over different groups.

Formal social control

Social control carried out by authorized agents, such as police officers, judges, school administrators, and employers.

Index crimes

The eight types of crime reported annually by the FBI in the Uniform Crime Reports: murder, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.
Informal social control

Social control carried out casually by ordinary people through such means as laughter, smiles, and ridicule.

Labeling theory

An approach to deviance that attempts to explain why certain people are viewed as deviants while others engaged in the same behavior are not.

Law

Governmental social control.
Obedience

Compliance with higher authorities in a hierarchical structure.

Organized crime

The work of a group that regulates relations among various criminal enterprises, including prostitution, gambling, and the smuggling and sale of illegal drugs.

Professional criminal

A person who pursues crime as a day-to-day occupation, developing skilled techniques and enjoying a certain degree of status among other criminals.
Routine activities theory

The notion that criminal victimization increases when motivated offenders and vulnerable targets converge.

Sanction

A penalty or reward for conduct concerning a social norm.

Social constructionist perspective

An approach to deviance that emphasizes the role of culture in the creation of the deviant identity.
Social control

The techniques and strategies for preventing deviant human behavior in any society.

Social disorganization theory

An approach to deviance that attributes increase in crime and deviance to the absence or breakdown of communal relationships and social institutions.

Societal-reaction approach

Another name for labeling theory.
Stigma

A label used to devalue members of certain social groups.

Transnational crime

Crime that occurs across multiple national borders.

Victimization survey

A questionnaire or interview given to a sample of the population to determine whether people have been victims of crime.
**Victimless crime**

A term used by sociologists to describe the willing exchange among adults of widely desired, but illegal, goods and services.

**White-collar crime**

Illegal acts committed by affluent, “respectable” individuals in the course of business activities.