DEVIANCE, LABELLING THEORY AND THE CONCEPT OF SCALE[1]

Douglas Raybeck
Hamilton College

Abstract: While sociologists of various theoretical persuasions have tended to construct theories of deviance which neglect empirical, cross-cultural data, anthropologists have tended to focus on social norms and have (with rare exceptions) neglected the whole topic.

Anthropologists' antidote to sociology's focus on complex societies may lie in the concept of societal scale, and its relationship to the perception, conceptualization, creation and treatment of deviance. The currently fashionable labelling theory is tested according to these principles. Its core concepts such as the "creation" of deviance by labelling, and secondary deviance, have been constructed solely on the basis of data from complex societies. In small-scale societies, where there is much interdependence and strong interrelationships, there is reluctance to label offenders, rather than specific actions, as deviants. There are few occurrences of secondary deviance, whereby the individuals accept and play the deviant role with which they have been labelled. In general terms, deviance is "soft" rather than "hard" in the sense that it does not threaten the social order. In rare cases of hard deviance, the labelling process occurs.

Small units in complex societies (e.g., island fishermen) often exhibit patterns of interdependency and attitudes towards deviance which recall those present in hunter-gatherer bands or the villages of swidden cultivators. The paper's argument is sustained by numerous ethnographic illustrations, which include the author's own observations during his fieldwork in Kelantan.

Résumé: Pendant que les sociologues de convictions théoriques diverses semblent avoir conceptualisé des théories de la déviance négligeant les donnés empiriques et transculturelles, les anthropologues semblent s'être concentrés sur les normes sociales et, pour la plupart, ont ignoré le sujet. Si la sociologie mise l'accent sur des sociétés complexes, les anthropologues, pour leur part, semblent concentrer leurs efforts sur le concept d'une échelle de société et son rapport à la perception, la conceptualisation, la création et le traitement de la déviance. La théorie contemporaine – et à la mode – d'étiquet-

Anthropologica XXXIII (1991) 17-38

tage est verifiée vis-à-vis de ces principes. Ces concepts de base, tel que la «création» de la déviance par cause d'étiquettage et la déviance secondaire ont été bâtis en n'utilisant que des donnés provenant de sociétés complexes. Dans des sociétés à petite échelle, où il existe une interdépendance et des rapports en corrélation on hésité à étiqueter comme déviants les individus mais, plutôt, on considère les actes comme déviants. Il est rare que des individus acceptent et assument le rôle de déviant après avoir été étiqueté de cette manière. Généralement, la déviance est «souple» et non pas «dure» car elle ne crée aucune menace contre l'ordre social. Dans de rares cas de déviance dite «dure», le processus d'étiquettage devient réalité. Souvent, dans des sociétés complexes, les petits groupuscles (tel que les pêcheurs des îles) démontrent des comportements d'interdépendance et des attitudes vis-à-vis de la déviance qui ressemblent à ceux présents dans des tribus pratiquant la chasse et la ceuillette ainsi que dans des villages de petits cultivateurs. Cette étude est appuyée par plusieurs illustrations ethnographiques, y inclus les observations de l'auteur lors de ses recherches au Kelantan.

The phenomenon of deviance has continued to interest sociologists and anthropologists partly because it illuminates areas of social and cultural importance. Many earlier sociological treatments of deviance tended to view it as an absolute, symptomatic of problems in the social organism (cf. Edgerton 1976; Clinard 1974:11-14). Other notable interpretations of deviance argued that it was an integral part of society and functioned to increase the solidarity of the social order (Durkheim 1938; Erikson 1966).

Sociology's dominance in the field of deviance studies has meant that the theories concerning deviance have been derived largely from the study of complex societies, and such studies of deviance have emphasized formal, structured sanctions imposed by constituted authority, rather than informal sanctions imposed by members of societies acting as individuals. Even labelling theory, which examines both the manner in which judgments of deviance are made by society's members and the effect of the label "deviant" on an individual, reveals a bias deriving from complex societies, as I hope to demonstrate in this paper.

Although anthropologists have done little to advance theories of deviance, they did adopt a relativistic approach to deviance congruent with their comparative perspective (cf. Malinowski 1964). Edgerton (1976) accounts for the paucity of anthropological studies dealing with deviance, arguing that anthropologists' searches for patterns and regularities have inhibited an active concern with those individuals and groups whose behaviour departs from the normative and is not easily integrated into social and cultural generalizations. Similarly, Wallace (1970) argues that early attempts to study

culture and personality were characterized by attempts to replicate uniformity rather than to seek principles for the organization of diversity. The result was a series of studies in which there was a "near-perfect correspondence" between culture and the individual (Wallace 1970:22). Clearly such approaches left little room for a concern with those individuals who departed from the cultural ideals. Recently, it has become increasingly apparent that anthropology, given its increased sophistication and concern with the dynamics of life in small-scale social units, can make valuable contributions to the study of deviance.

Anthropology's antidote to sociology's focus on complex societies may lie in the concept of societal scale and the effect of such scale on deviance. The term "small-scale social unit" refers to an enduring social group which is sufficiently small for the great majority of members to know one another personally. Such units are found at all sociocultural levels from the most complex societies to the simplest, but in simple societies the great majority of members reside in such units, while in complex societies a higher percentage of people live in larger aggregates such as cities and large towns.

I will argue that, in contrast to the situation in large-scale social units, people in small-scale social units are reluctant to label other members of face-to-face social groups as deviant. Focussing attention on the reactions of people in small-scale social units to those individuals whose behaviour departs from customary and normative guidelines can reveal both principles and processes that underlie both informal and formal responses to deviance in complex societies.

Scale and the Continuum of Deviance

The differences between life in small-scale social units and in large-scale social units reflect, and to some extent, define the contrastive natures of these two units. In comparison to large-scale social units, small-scale social units tend to exhibit more consistent and better integrated social and cultural values. There is generally greater interdependence of members among small-scale social units, while the members of large-scale social units are often relatively independent of one another. Partly as a consequence of this oppositeness, members of small-scale social units tend to have access to much more social information on co-residents than do members of large-scale social units. Finally, there is, generally, less inequality among members of small-scale social units than there is among people in large-scale social units.

Differences very similar to those described above between small-scale social units and large-scale social units have also been used to typify simple and complex societies. Steward (1973) and others have emphasized that,

compared to complex societies, simple societies are characterized by a shared, comparatively well integrated set of values, by a high degree of interdependence and by relatively little status differentiation. These qualities clarify the nature of social life and promote consistent patterns of behaviour (Ball 1970; Clifford 1978; Douglas 1970; Pfohl 1981). Furthermore, while complex societies contain lower levels of social integration, such as the family and village, in comparison to simple societies, they represent a higher level of sociocultural integration characterized by greater heterogeneity, stronger forms of central control, formal procedures, hierarchically arranged statuses and a reliance upon mass media for information and for reinforcement of those elements which are shared (cf. Pfohl 1981; Steward 1973).

Clearly, complex societies with their large-scale social units contain processes and phenomena not found at lower levels of sociocultural integration, but the concept of sociocultural integration also contains an additional assumption that social elements present at lower levels can also be found at higher ones (Steward 1973:43ff.). Thus, judgments of deviance in small-scale social units in complex societies should reflect principles and processes similar to those that characterize the treatment of deviance in simple societies.

Relatively few researchers have compared the phenomenon of deviance in simple societies with deviance in complex societies despite good arguments that much could be learned from doing so (cf. Clifford 1978). Those authors who have done so consistently emphasize the significance of informal controls in simple societies versus formal ones in complex, state-organized societies. Informal controls are found to be a superior means of avoiding and containing deviance for a variety of reasons (cf. Ball 1970; Clifford 1978:71; Douglas 1970; Pfohl 1981).

One of the major reasons that simple societies can rely effectively on informal sanctions is that the great majority of social units in simple societies tend to be small-scale and characterized by a number of cross-cutting interpersonal networks that promote a great deal of face-to-face interaction. In such social units members possess a great deal of information about co-residents including their positions in the social order, their personality characteristics and their past histories. Thus, judgments both of deviance and of the appropriateness of sanctions can be influenced by this rich informational and social context.

I would expect labelling to be far less common in simple versus complex societies for two basic reasons: labelling seldom accomplishes social benefits in the former of the sort that can be argued for the latter; and it usually involves social costs that are higher for simple societies than for complex ones.

Arguably one of the functions of labelling individuals, whether positively (hero) or negatively (thief), is to increase the predictability of social life by adding information to the social context, (e.g., one should not leave a "thief" alone with one's best silver). However, the social units in simple societies tend to be small-scale and characterized by a number of cross-cutting interpersonal networks that promote a great deal of face-to-face interaction. In such social units there is a great deal of information about co-residents including their positions in the social order, their personality characteristics and their past histories. In such circumstances, the elements of social life are highly predictable and labelling individuals does little to enrich the social context. In addition, the multi-dimensional social familiarity co-residents have with one another would inhibit the employment of labels, a process that encourages simplified and one-dimensional stereotypes.

Authorities agree that labelling individuals as deviant tends to exclude them from full social participation. However, the cost of such exclusion is greater for simple societies than for complex ones. In small-scale social units each participant often makes a contribution to the social order. Further, because individuals are often linked to a significant number of co-residents through kinship and other interpersonal ties, attempts at labelling which result in social exclusion not only lose the contributions of the individual, they also risk social fragmentation and increased social conflict (cf. Edgerton 1976:109).

The preceding arguments suggest that the size and scale of the social unit strongly affects the likelihood of a group's employing labels. However, co-residents, who may be loath to label one another, may readily employ labels for outsiders who share neither their social context nor their interpersonal network. Indeed, when social boundaries are crossed, it is not unusual to find outsiders labelled as less than human (cf. Scott 1976:612). Inside a society, labels can be employed to emphasize sub-cultural or ethnic distinctiveness, and their use for outsiders may actually reinforce cultural identity and integrity.

Deviance as a Continuum

Deviance in small-scale social units, whether in simple or complex societies, is judged on a continuum. Responses to deviant acts are not strictly conditioned by formal rules and culturally prescribed standards for behaviour, but are, instead, a reflection of complex social judgments which take into account the nature of the offender as well as the nature of the offence. More specifically, compared to the judgments of deviance in large-scale social units, judgments of deviance in small-scale social units seldom employ labels, are more contextualized, depend less on formal precedent

and frequently treat the nature of the offender as being as important, or even more important, than the nature of the offence.

There are a number of elements that are perceived by members of both types of social units as relevant to the assessment of deviance. As in large-scale social units, the members of small-scale social units will be concerned with the circumstances under which the act was committed. Such circumstances will include whether or not the actor was provoked by others, and whether or not the actor can be regarded as competent and conscious of the consequences of such behaviour. Similarly, the degree to which an act is visible may influence the judgment of deviance. Private acts which depart from the normative are more easily tolerated in both small- and large-scale social units than are public acts. Also, in the case of public acts judged to be deviant, it matters whether or not the act represents an intentional defiance of norms and/or authority. Should an act be judged as an intentional, rather than inadvertent, challenge to existing norms and structures, it is usually more severely sanctioned than the latter.

However, procedures of small-scale social units will often take into account factors that large-scale social units will omit and/or they will acknowledge relevant factors in a fashion that would not generally be found in large-scale social units. For instance, the nature of an act is certainly an important element in assessing deviance but, unlike the situation in large-scale social units, assessments of the nature of the act in small-scale social units will include not only specific descriptive details of the event, but also acknowledgment of who was offended, injured or disadvantaged by the act, the social standing of this person and the relationship between the offended party and the offender. Robert Scott (1976:608) has argued that the adoption of sanctions depends greatly on the social ties between the offender and offended as defined by the structural rules of their society. These concerns reflect the importance of interdependence and social identity in small-scale social units.

In an even greater departure from the procedures adopted by most large-scale social units, the members of small-scale social units will openly discuss and weigh the social standing of the offender before assessing the degree to which an actor may have manifested deviant behaviour. Such discussions often include topics such as the actor's prior offences, the value of the actor to the social unit, the extent of the actor's support network including family, wider relatives and friends and a review of the possible social consequences of employing sanctions against the actor, paying particular attention to possibilities for social fragmentation.

In large-scale social units, deviance is treated through formal mechanisms that often specify penalties, or at least a range of penalties, for particular offences. In small-scale social units, people not only engage in finer

discriminations concerning deviance, they also respond to deviance with greater variability, attempting to promote conformity through a range of initially informal and later formal sanctions. These sanctions can range from gossip through the application of social pressure by relatives and friends, to threats of embarrassment or harm. Formal labelling, as I will demonstrate, is resorted to only reluctantly as are the final sanctions of expulsion or death.

The reactions of a society's members to deviant acts are often predicated on the degree to which these acts may interfere with the members' pursuits of their own interests. Whether or not actors are labelled as deviants, if their behaviour departs from cultural norms and/or values in a fashion which hinders others' attempts to realize their ends, these others will be concerned with altering the discrepant behaviour toward closer conformity with cultural ideals. However, the degree of their concern and the forms it takes can vary considerably.

People are quite capable of discriminating between those who simply fail to manifest desired normative behaviour (the overweight, the discourteous, the stingy, etc.) and those whose behaviour actively threatens the social order and the interests of others (the violent, the thieves, the revolutionaries, etc.). Recognizing that such judgments of deviance span a continuum, it may still be useful to employ a simple dichotomy distinguishing between *soft deviance*, behaviour which in the view of culture participants departs from social and cultural norms but does not actively threaten the social order, and *hard deviance*, behaviour which in the opinion of culture participants not only departs from the normative but which also jeopardizes the social order.

Ethnographic Examples

As various authorities have noted, there are very few ethnographic descriptions of deviance in non-Western societies (Edgerton 1976) and cross-cultural studies of deviance are equally rare (Tittle 1977). Thus an extensive and representative sample of societies in which deviance is well described has not been practicable. Instead, societies have been chosen according to a simple criterion: the existence of good ethnographic descriptions of both deviance and societal reactions to it. What follows is a selective review of ethnographic literature bearing upon deviance, the sanctions it elicits and the relevance of this material for labelling theory. Given the selective nature of this sample, these examples must necessarily be taken as suggestive and illustrative rather than as conclusive and definitive.

The material is arranged in order of increasing levels of sociocultural integration with the expectation that processes encountered in small-scale so-

cial units in simpler societies may also be found in similarly sized social units in increasingly complex societies. This approach will hopefully reveal both continuities and discontinuities in the treatment of deviance with particular attention focussed on the labelling process as it exists at different levels of sociocultural integration.

Hunters and Gatherers

Colin Turnbull's description of the Pygmy BaMbuti (1962, 1976), a hunting and gathering society dwelling in the Ituri tropical rain forest of northeastern Zaire, provides one of the more useful ethnographic accounts of band-level deviance and related social reactions. Turnbull notes that not only is BaMbuti society acephalous, but that authority is evenly distributed among both male and female members of the band, and attempts by an individual to acquire authority are resisted and often ridiculed (Turnbull 1976:182ff.). As several authorities would expect of such small interdependent units (Clifford 1978; Edgerton 1976; McHugh 1970), social membership in, and continued acceptance by, the group is important to each individual and exerts a strong pressure for conformity. Indeed, Turnbull (1962:114) has asserted that "the two attitudes which disturb the pygmy most are contempt and ridicule."

BaMbuti reactions to deviant behaviour range from arguments among litigants to the expectation of supernatural sanctions (Turnbull 1962:110), but most offences are dealt with quickly, informally, and do not seem to result in labelling: "There are few instances where anything resembling a general opinion was expressed, and even fewer where any positive action was taken" (Turnbull 1976:190). Turnbull describes instances of theft, a technical violation of the incest taboo, and other offences (1976:109-125), and in each instance the malefactor was dealt with in a disciplinary fashion that did not involve prolonged exclusion from social participation. After its discovery, the technical incest violation, an example of "soft" deviance, resulted in the culprit fleeing the camp for a day, following which he returned to the group, was reaccepted without comment and went on to become one of the most respected members of the band (ibid.:114). The most serious instance of deviance that Turnbull describes involves an individual who set up his net in front of his fellows' nets during a communal hunt (ibid.:94-108). This act threatened to deprive others of food, an example of "hard" deviance, and the culprit was publicly denounced, ridiculed, and his meat and that of his relatives was taken in reparation. However, even though he was publicly labelled an "animal," the use of the label was not prolonged and he was quietly reaccepted into the social network in a matter of hours. Thus, as Pfohl (1981) would expect, the band level BaMbuti consistently evidence a

concern with the reconciliation and reintegration of offenders into the group; they quickly return to the role of full social participants.

Although pygmies are loath to label members of their band, they readily label and disparage their Bantu village neighbours (Turnbull 1976:218-28). Indeed, the BaMbuti view these outsiders as a bad influence and lying to or stealing from them is seen as permissible, even laudable, behaviour. In line with my earlier suggestion, the insider-outsider distinction seems to provide the BaMbuti with a means of reaffirming their own cultural values and distinctiveness.

The !Kung Bushmen, a hunting and gathering society living in the Kalahari desert of South Africa, have been studied by several anthropologists who have commented upon patterns of deviance and related sanctions. Unlike the BaMbuti, the !Kung do have acknowledged leaders although these lack formal authority (Lee 1979:343-345). However, they do display a great concern with group acceptance:

> Their desire to avoid both hostility and rejection leads them to conform in high degree to the unspoken social laws.... most !Kung cannot bear the sense of rejection that even mild disapproval makes them feel. If they do deviate, they usually yield readily to expressed group opinion and reform their ways. (Marshall 1976:288)

Thomas (1959) has described the !Kung as extremely pacific in their interpersonal relations, but this description has been challenged by Lee who recorded 22 killings among the !Kung between 1920 and 1969, 15 of which were part of blood feuds (Lee 1979:370ff.). Such behaviour may reasonably be viewed as "hard" deviance and in four known cases the killers were executed in a fashion that suggested collective agreement among band members (ibid.). It is unclear from Lee's description whether the killers were labelled as negative "deviants" or positive executioners. Certainly, the dead—as victims of deviants—were excluded from future participation in the social order.

Shostak's (1983) well-written biography of Nisa, a !Kung woman, describes the existence of interpersonal conflicts in a band. These frictions result in arguments, insults and name-calling, but these seem to occur as individual acts and do not result in permanent labelling, by which a pejorative definition of an individual's persona is developed and shared by the group at large. Indeed, band leaders seem concerned to reduce the possibility of labelling where possible. After Nisa fought with a woman who had accused her (justly) of adultery, the elders intervened and said, "Talk of having affairs is bad talk. This has to stop now." It did (Shostak 1983:280-281).

However, the !Kung do engage in a minor variation of labelling through the assignment of nicknames to individuals. These nicknames may reflect

positive qualities or negative ones as in the case of "lazy Kwi" who was a poor hunter (Thomas 1959:167). Such nicknames can reduce the status of individuals but do not seem to alter the degree of their social participation. Thomas notes that adultery is strongly condemned, yet a woman who ran off with another man was readily accepted by her husband and the affair was never mentioned again (ibid.:85-86).

Hunting and gathering societies, as described, consist almost exclusively of small social units—bands, camps, etc.—within which values are widely shared, interpersonal networks are prominent and interdependence is high. The characteristic reactions to deviance take the nature of the principals into account, emphasize the reconciliation of the offender to the group and seldom employ labelling which is usually reserved for the most disruptive of actors whose continued participation threatens the well-being of the group. These patterns may be found in other hunting and gathering societies which are not described here (cf. Chance 1966:65ff.; Holmberg 1969:150ff.).

The Middle Range: Swidden-Based and Tribal Societies

Swidden-based societies are more complex than those of hunters and gatherers yet, as in the two following examples, they are usually acephalous. The Mehinaku, studied by Thomas Gregor, dwell in the tropical Xingu region of central Brazil. While there are no superordinate authorities, each village has a chief, an individual noted for his oratory and other cultural skills and for the degree to which he is adept at the Mehinaku social game. Both men and women are sensitive to the opinions of others, and disapprobation, both feared and real, exerts a significant influence on the behaviour of village members (Gregor 1977:220 ff.).

Gregor notes that the Mehinaku do label one another "as good men or as failures" (Gregor 1977:200), and that there are three classes of failures: the trash yard man, the freeloader and the witch. However, the first two of these are not serious failures (soft deviance) in the sense that they do not seem to be excluded from social participation, nor do they reflect a serious challenge to social interaction. The last class of failure is seen as actively threatening the social order (hard deviance) and the matter of labelling carries more serious consequences. While an individual may be a suspected witch and quietly accused by members of the village, little will happen unless his behaviour leads to a consensus and the shared application of the label, witch. If a person already suspected of practising witchcraft is publicly denounced by relatives of the deceased, this may lead to a more complex and organized collective punitive reaction including assassination (Gregor 1977:204-205). Gregor reports on four witch slayings over a 30-year period and notes that the victims are usually "socially estranged and lack the pro-

tection of male kin'' (ibid.:207). This material supports my earlier suggestion that labels are more easily applied to people who lack an extensive network of kin and friends.

Although the Mehinaku can engage in labelling offenders, Gregor indicates that for most offences they are very reluctant to do so. Extra-marital sex is common, though disapproved, and neither a husband nor a wife should make public accusations, or even be too curious about a spouse's behaviour (Gregor 1977:140). Theft, although strongly disapproved, is fairly common, but it does not result in the labelling of the offender. Gregor's reasons for the absence of labelling in such instances are congruent with those facts we have noted concerning the interdependence of small-scale social units: ''Because the thief has not been denounced by name, the social and economic bonds that unite him and the victim have not been severed. The Mehinaku community could not long endure gashes and wounds caused by frequent public denunciations'' (ibid.:125).

The Mehinaku also make a clear distinction between Mehinaku (insiders) and non-Xingu Indians who are not Mehinaku. The latter are still viewed as relative outsiders and the Mehinaku, through disparaging the outsiders' speech and behaviour, emphasize their own distinctiveness. Mehinaku, by threatening to label offenders as outsiders, also pressure their deviants to conform (Gregor 1977:308).

The Semai, a swidden-based people noted for their nonviolence, live in the tropical interior of the Malay peninsula. Although traditional Semai settlements lacked formal leaders, they currently have headmen, an office imposed by external authorities (Dentan 1968:67). Generally, while elders have significant influence, authority seems well diffused throughout the settlement. The Semai are extremely sensitive to the opinions of others (Dentan 1968:69), and greatly fear endangering their membership in and acceptance by the community (Robarchek 1979:105).

The Semai appear to be very reluctant to label offenders. Indeed, once an offence or conflict has been resolved through a formal traditional procedure, which consists of talking it out, no one is supposed to raise the matter again, let alone promote labelling (Robarchek 1979:111). The reasons for the avoidance of labelling involve a strong emphasis on reconciliation, interdependence and mutual aid (ibid.:113). Interestingly, socialization in nonviolent attitudes seems quite successful as Dentan was unable to document a single instance of murder, attempted murder or even maiming among the Semai (Dentan 1968:58). However, it is apparent that Semai make a sharp distinction between themselves and ''outsiders.'' During the Communist insurgency of the 1950s, the Semai proved quite capable of killing outsiders; Dentan describes the enthusiasm and ''blood drunkenness'' with which Semai slaughtered their enemies (ibid.:58-59).

Peasant Society

The following example illustrates this level of sociocultural integration and was chosen because it is in many respects typical of peasant or folk societies, and because there is good information available on the treatment of deviant behaviour and deviants in Kelantan society.

The Kelantanese are Islamic Malays with a bilateral social structure who practice intensive wet rice agriculture and live in the northeast of the Malay peninsula. The state of Kelantan and the nation of Malaysia have bureaucratic mechanisms for the control of deviance including Islamic religious courts, as well as police and courts that are part of a British-influenced legal system. However, the great majority of Kelantanese have little contact with the state and national mechanisms; instead, they are concerned with and influenced by the local controls that largely regulate social life in the rural villages in which they reside. Indeed, Kelantanese place considerable emphasis on the maintenance of village harmony and often seek to limit the involvement of external authorities in village affairs (Raybeck 1986).

The importance of village membership and integrity is reflected in a distinction which Kelantanese make between *orang sini*, "people of here," and *orang luar*, literally "outsiders." *Orang sini*, co-residents who are tied to one another through a network of bilateral kindreds and other less structured associations, treat one another with respect and are very reluctant to react negatively to one another, since all are viewed as valuable participants in village life and because villagers' past histories and their strengths and weaknesses are well-known to their fellows. Indeed, villagers seldom engage in dichotomous judgments of co-residents but instead tend to describe a fellow villager's failing or virtue as one aspect of a complex and multidimensional person. *Orang luar*, however, are frequently subject to simplistic stereotyping and labelling.

The emphasis on village integrity and the importance of village-level social life and values lead Kelantanese to take a relativistic position with regard to state definitions of deviance. The state regards certain acts as illegal and bureaucratically labels the actors as "criminals," yet villagers may take a very different view of these matters, especially if they involve indigenous cultural behaviour. Thus, the state prohibits smuggling, bull-fighting, cock-fighting and a variety of gambling activities, but Kelantanese villagers, far from viewing these pastimes as deviant, actually regard them as valued pursuits through which villagers may gain the respect of their fellows. These attitudes reflect and reinforce the pride that Kelantanese villagers take in their cultural distinctiveness.

If Kelantanese are rather cavalier about many behaviours that violate state and national laws, they are very concerned with behaviour that endan-

gers the solidarity and harmony of the village, and threats to village welfare, especially acts of violence, are viewed as strongly deviant (Raybeck 1986). The responses of villagers to an act that threatens village harmony are complex. The initial reaction is to curb the deviant behaviour by employing a variety of informal sanctions which range from gossip and social pressure through increasing social exclusion to expulsion from village society. Mitigating the concern with conformity to village norms is an intense interest in maintaining functional interpersonal networks within the village. Villagers are aware that publicly labelling someone a deviant tends to place that individual at the periphery of or outside village society and, because of the many cross-cutting kindred ties, this can have serious consequences for village solidarity. Thus, villagers usually promote conformity in a fashion that does not permanently damage the social persona of an offender.

While Kelantanese are usually reluctant to label co-villagers as deviant, they will do so in certain circumstances. If individuals engage in deviant behaviours that are serious (hard deviance) and visible, and if they persist in these behaviours despite attempts of villagers to make them conform, then they become increasingly marginal within village society and are likely to be labelled as members of a deviant category. However, unlike the labelling process that Becker (1963) describes by which the label essentially creates a social reality, Kelantanese labelling reflects a social reality that has gradually and increasingly become manifest. Once an individual is labelled as deviant, that person's participation in village social life is either terminated, as in threats to village harmony that result in expulsion, or diminished, as is more often the case. If a person labelled as a deviant remains a co-resident, other villagers seldom treat that individual in the dichotomous fashion suggested by Becker (1963), Matza (1969) and other labelling theorists. Instead, there is often recognition of, and expressed value for, other statuses the individual occupies, and continuing efforts are often made to reincorporate the individual into the mainstream of village life (Raybeck 1986).

While there is not space here to describe the manner in which other peasant societies react to deviance, the observations of several researchers are consonant with the material I have presented on the Kelantanese. In particular, elements such as the comparative importance of village versus state membership, the significance of an insider/outsider distinction and the reluctance of co-villagers to label one another can be found in Starrs' description of a Turkish village (1978), Collier's work on Zinacantan (1973), Foster's treatment of the people of Tzintzuntzan (1967) and, especially, Selby's excellent study of deviance among the Zapotec (1974).

Industrial Societies

Rather than review the extensive work done on deviance in large-scale society by sociologists, I will focus on two treatments of deviance in small-scale social units that exist within industrial states, since it is principally at this level that I anticipate finding concordance with labelling processes at lower levels of socio-cultural integration.

Marida Hollos (1976) describes a small, Norwegian mountain farming community which since 1970 has been increasingly subject to modernization pressures. Prior to 1979, the community was well integrated and maintained a strong consensus about behavioural norms and cultural values, especially the importance of egalitarianism (Hollos 1976:242). Problems involving conflict or deviance were rare, and most were resolved through informal mechanisms of control, particularly gossip and other forms of social pressure. In 19 years, only 10 cases of disputes were reported to various external agencies, and the great majority of these involved an "outsider" as well as a local (Hollos 1976:247-248).

Hollos makes it apparent that locals were very concerned with maintaining in-group harmony, preserving the network of interpersonal cooperation and retaining an offender as a functioning member of the community:

> In case of breaking the norm, if indirect pressures and sanctioning resulted in a change of behaviour, no further punishment or ostracism followed. On the contrary, the conforming individual was quietly reinstated into all his former relationships as an equal and the breach was never mentioned. (Hollos 1976:246)

In such circumstances locals were reluctant to invoke formal mechanisms of control or to engage in labelling.

With increasing industrialization after 1970, the circumstances of the community changed. This gradually led to a schism between the more traditional farmers dwelling on the periphery of the community and the more centrally located modernists who engaged in a variety of occupations which promoted neither strong interpersonal cooperation nor dependence on kin ties (Hollos 1976:244). Not surprisingly, the modernists relied more frequently on external sanctions, even against other community members (ibid.:250), and they engaged in such labelling more readily. Hollos is quite clear about the reasons for these changes among the modernist members of the community: "Since economic or social interdependence is much less important, and people are now more mobile and able to get away from one another, the maintenance of peaceful relations and a united community is no longer necessary at all costs" (ibid.:254). Industrialization has not only led to diminished village agreement concerning social norms and cultural val-

ues, it has also reduced the effectiveness of internal village modes of social control.

Rock Island, a small fishing community of 314 people, is located off the Atlantic coast of an industrialized nation to which it is linked both economically and politically (Yngvesson 1976:355). There is a strong emphasis on the importance of community membership and on an ethic of maintaining equality within the community. Decisions concerning the community and disposition of community problems are made in a public forum by consensus within a formally elected Island Council, but there is "an absence of mechanisms through which private grievances can be formalized or ritualized" (Yngvesson 1976:359). Instead, instances of conflict or deviance are generally handled through informal means including a "cooling off" period during which the matter is not subject to a public forum but is discussed by concerned community members who will seek to resolve the issue and/or to eliminate the deviant behaviour (Yngvesson 1976:354). If they are successful, no public forum is involved, nor is labelling likely.

The islanders make a marked distinction between "insiders" and "outsiders" and, reflecting the importance of community membership, "cooling off" periods are employed for the former category:

> The long "cooling off" period . . . was found only in island cases in which two people defined as "insiders" were involved. When a non-islander or other person defined as an outsider committed a grievance, the response period was sought rapidly. This difference in response pattern is consistent with the hypothesis that people involved in ongoing relationships which they wish to maintain will try to heal a breach in the relationship rather than punish the offender. (Yngvesson 1976:354-355)

Islanders are sufficiently reluctant to label other insiders as deviants that they will consciously avoid the use of such labels even for serious offences. Yngvesson notes that theft was the worst offence an islander could commit but, if the offender was an islander, it was termed "borrowing" and "the act remained unlabelled" (Yngvesson 1976:358). However, should an insider remain refractory and persist in serious patterns of deviance, that individual may (given his or her particular history of offence) be excluded from the community and, ultimately, be treated as an "outsider" (ibid.:358).

Both Hollos' study of the Norwegian farming community and Yngvesson's description of the Atlantic islanders reveal similar treatments of deviance and a general reluctance to react to deviant persons or acts. Furthermore, these theses appear frequently in the earlier descriptions of the treatment of deviance in small-scale social units at lower levels of sociocultural integration. I will discuss the significance of this below.

Discussion

My review of treatments of deviance in small-scale social units from simple, stateless hunting and gathering societies through complex, state organized, industrial societies has revealed some significant continuities. As Pfohl (1981) characterizes simple societies, there is considerable social and cultural integration, a stressing of importance of group membership and an emphasis on reconciliation of the offender to the group rather than on punishment and exclusion. *However, these characteristics are also true of small-scale units in state societies.* Similarly, Pfohl has also argued that formal labelling rituals, found only in state societies, are necessary for the labelling of a deviant, and that implies that stateless societies lack labelling processes. However, it is apparent that informal means of labelling are employed, although reluctantly, in small-scale units in both stateless and in state societies.

Differences, both in the treatment of deviance and in labelling processes, between simple and complex societies reflect the fact that the latter contain both small- and large-scale social units whereas the former consist entirely, or in some cases mainly, of small-scale units only. Differences in the size and complexity of the social units promote a series of contrasting characteristics relevant to the treatment of deviance and labelling processes. The table below presents a somewhat simplified summary of the more important of these contrasts.

Table 1
Deviance and Social Scale

Small-Scale Social Units (Camp, band, village, etc.)	Large-Scale Social Units (City, state, nation, etc.)
well integrated and consistent values	poorly integrated and often conflicting values
relative equality among members	marked inequalities among members
interdependence of members	independence of members
information-rich social context	information-poor social context
labelling of deviants occurs gradually and is rare	labelling of deviants occurs abruptly and is common
tolerance of soft deviance	intolerance of soft deviance
secondary deviance uncommon	secondary deviance common

The well-integrated values characteristic of small-scale social units stabilize the definition of social life in the fashion Pfohl (1981:75) suggests. The pluralist values usually characteristic of large-scale units cannot easily accomplish this; indeed, conflicts between values can provide a source of deviance.

The relative equality among the members of small-scale social units reduces the likelihood that the labelling of deviants will be associated with inequalities of power as is often the case in large-scale social units (cf. Becker 1963; Kilbride 1979; Matza 1969). Inequalities and other sources of social differentiation also increase the probability of interpersonal misperceptions, conflicts and recourse to labelling individuals as deviants.

The interdependence that characterizes social relations among members of small-scale units inhibits the labelling of individuals as deviants as well as absolute, formal approaches to the treatment of deviance. A member is often a significant contributor to a small community and is usually linked to other constituents through a variety of interpersonal and kinship ties. To label such a member as deviant reduces or eliminates that person's social participation and risks creating divisions and conflicts within the social order. In contrast, the contributions of most members of large-scale social units are comparatively less significant and the relative independence of these individuals reflects the absence of cross-cutting social and kinship bonds. Here, labelling a person as a deviant or discarding someone through the use of formal sanctions costs the unit very little, either in terms of social contributions or in risk to social integrity. Indeed, it can be argued that the labelling of deviants in large-scale social units actually enhances social integration by singling out, as social misfits, some individuals who, through contrast, emphasize the fit of others with the social order.

In comparison to most members of large-scale social units, each member of a small-scale social unit generally has available a great deal of information on the personality, past history and current behaviour of other constituents. This situation tends to reduce the utility of labelling deviants since the label does not provide substantial new information and also makes this type of labelling less likely. Members of small-scale social units know one another in a multi-dimensional fashion that inhibits the use of comparatively simple, one-dimensional stereotypes. This has been the case at the lower levels of socio-cultural integration we have examined, and it is also true of complex societies in instances where individuals know one another well.

Storz studied the situations of women who were officially labelled "mentally ill" by medical institutions, and noted that the label did not affect their husbands' perceptions of these women, nor did the husbands accept the labels unless they had already made the determination themselves (Storz 1978:49). This finding contrasts markedly with Rosenhan's (1973) well-

known study of the influence of labels on the perceptions of medical personnel who knew little of the patients beyond their labels. In his investigation, Rosenhan had normal individuals enter mental hospitals complaining of mild symptoms that elicited a label, mentally ill. Thereafter, the individuals and their behaviour were evaluated in a fashion that supported the inaccurate label.

One of my major theses has been that, compared to large-scale social units, the labelling of deviants in small-scale social units seldom occurs and that, when it does happen, it is a very gradual process. In large-scale social units the absence of good interpersonal information and bonds of interdependence plus the presence of conflicting values and inequalities all promote the abrupt labelling of an offender as deviant. In particular, the absence of a rich social context increases the likelihood of clear dichotomies (normal versus deviant), as does a reliance on formal mechanisms of control. Thus rule breakers, through a process that Schur (1971) terms "role engulfment," may find that their entire persona is defined through their deviance. For contrasting reasons, members of small-scale social units are reluctant to lose a contributing constituent and will employ a range of informal mechanisms of control, reserving labelling for those instances where the mechanisms have proven ineffective and the offender actively threatens the social order. The process of labelling a deviant is gradual also because, in the absence of formal mechanisms, it requires a shared evaluation of the offender and his relationship to the unit. It takes both considerable time and communication to achieve that consensus (cf. Selby 1974).

I have distinguished between "soft" and "hard" deviance in the ethnographic description in order to emphasize an important characteristic of small-scale social units. The members of such units will tolerate a considerable range of less than ideal behaviour (soft deviance) so long as it does not actively threaten the integrity of the unit. For instance, it has been noted in my work and in that of other researchers that the mentally ill in small-scale social units are apt to be accepted as active participants in the social order if their behaviour does not threaten others (Edgerton 1976:61; Raybeck 1986), and they may not even be labelled (cf. Selby 1974:41-47). Labelling of an individual as a deviant and the attendant sanctions, such as expulsion and/or death, are generally invoked as a last resort to protect the unit from those who actively threaten its well-being (hard deviance). In contrast, large-scale social units which employ labelling more readily usually tolerate far less "soft" deviance and often blur or omit the distinction between those who actively threaten the well-being of others (thieves, murderers) and those who do not (vagrants, gamblers).

The characteristics of small-scale social units reduce the likelihood of secondary deviance deriving from the individual's acceptance of the label

and the social position it signifies. Even in some large-scale social units, individuals who have been labelled deviant can remain aware of the other components of their social persona through interacting with their interpersonal networks (cf. Kilbride 1979:247). In large-scale social units the label "deviant" can more easily define the relationship of the offender to other members, and, as a result, can encourage further (secondary) deviance.

Reviewing the preceding contrasts between small- and large-scale social units, it seems that this material can provide information concerning the "conditions under which official labelling works" (Davis 1980:199). The description of the labelling process in large-scale social units supports the contention of labelling theorists that labelling helps to create and reinforce deviance. Others create deviants by reducing the social participation of offenders and invoking labels which encourage offenders to think of themselves as deviants and to act in deviant fashions. Thus, the range of labels employed and the frequency of labelling should be proportional to the size and complexity of social units engaged in labelling.

In small-scale social units the labelling process is qualitatively different from the process characteristic of large-scale social units. Due to their multiple connections to, and extensive knowledge of offenders, members of such units invoke labels only after exhausting other means of dealing with them and, even then, they are often willing to unlabel and reincorporate them if circumstances permit. Here, labels, rather than creating a deviant identity, are reluctantly employed to recognize one that has gradually emerged.

In large-scale social units, those who deviate from accepted patterns of behaviour may, through the use of formal mechanisms, easily be labelled, marginalized or even discarded. However, in small-scale social units, the interdependence of members, their familiarity with each other and the multiple ties that bind them together mitigate against formal and mechanical assessments of deviant behaviour. Simply put, individual members of small-scale social units are functionally, social and often psychologically important to one another. Thus deviant behaviour is judged on a continuum that reflects both an evaluation of the act as hard or soft, and an appraisal of the actor's value to the social unit.

Since small-scale social units are not only characteristic of simple societies, but are also embedded in complex societies, the intricate dynamics, described above, that are involved in judging deviance should also obtain in small-scale social units in societies that rely primarily upon formal sanctions for treating deviance. Indeed, I expect the continued study of such complex low-level dynamics to improve our understanding of the principles and processes that underlie both informal and formal responses to deviance. This enhanced understanding should help the social sciences to deal better

with the disjunctions as well as with the continuities that characterize the treatment of deviance in both small- and large-scale social units.

Note

1. I wish to acknowledge the award of a Hamilton College Research Grant which supported the research for this paper, and to gratefully recognize the aid and support of Dawn Chase who assisted me in a review of the ethnographic literature.

References Cited

Ball, Donald W.
1970 The Problematics of Respectability. *In* Deviance and Respectability: The Social Construction of Moral Meanings, edited by J. Douglas. New York: Basic Books.

Becker, Howard
1963 Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance. New York: The Free Press.

Chance, Norman A.
1966 The Eskimo of Northern Alaska. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Clifford, W.
1978 Culture and Crime—In Global Perspective. International Journal of Criminology and Penology 6:61-80.

Clinard, Marshall B.
1974 Sociology of Deviant Behaviour. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Collier, Jane Fishburne
1973 Law and Social Change in Zinacantan. Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.

Davis, Nanette J.
1980 Sociological Constructions of Deviance: Perspectives and Issues in the Field. Dubuque, Iowa: William C. Brown Company.

Dentan, Robert K.
1968 The Semai: A Nonviolent People of Malaya. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Douglas, Jack D., ed.
1970 Deviance and Respectability: The Social Construction of Moral Meanings. New York: Basic Books.

Durkheim, Emile
1938 The Rules of the Sociological Method. New York: The Free Press.

Edgerton, Robert B.
1976 Deviance: A Cross-Cultural Perspective. Reading, Massachusetts: Cummings Publishing.

Erikson, Kai.
1966 Wayward Puritans: A Study in the Sociology of Deviance. New York: John Wiley and Sons.

Foster, George M.
1967 Tzintzuntzan: Mexican Peasants in a Changing World. Boston: Little, Brown.
Gregor, Thomas
1977 Mehinaku: The Drama of Daily Life in a Brazilian Indian Village. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Hollos, Marida
1976 Conflict and Social Change in a Norwegian Mountain Community. Anthropological Quarterly 49(4):239-257.
Holmberg, Allan R.
1969 Nomads of the Long Bow: The Siriono of Eastern Bolivia. Garden City, New York: The Natural History Press.
Kilbride, Philip L.
1979 Barmaiding as a Deviant Occupation Among the Baganda of Uganda. Ethos 7(3):232-254.
Lee, Richard, B.
1979 The !Kung San: Men, Women, and Work in a Foraging Society. New York: Cambridge University Press.
Malinowski, Bronislaw
1964 Crime and Custom in Savage Society. Patterson, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams.
Marshall, Lorna
1976 The !Kung of Nyae Nyae. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press.
Matza, David
1969 Becoming Deviant. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
McHugh, Peter.
1970 A Common-Sense Conception of Deviance. *In* Deviance and Respectability: The Social Construction of Moral Meanings, edited by J. Douglas, pp. 61-68. New York: Basic Books.
Pfohl, Steven
1981 Labelling Criminals. *In* Law and Deviance, edited by Laurence Ross, pp. 65-97. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
Raybeck, Douglas
1986 The Elastic Rule: Conformity and Deviance in Kelantan Village Life. *In* Cultural Identity in Northern Peninsular Malaysia, edited by S. Carstens, pp. 55-74. Ohio: Ohio University Press.
Robarchek, Clayton A.
1979 Conflict, Emotion and Abreaction: Resolution of Conflict Among the Semai Senoi. Ethos 7(2):104-123.
Rosenhan, D. L.
1973 On Being Sane in Insane Places. Science 179:250-258.
Schur, E.M.
1971 Labelling Deviant Behaviour: Its Sociological Implications. New York: Harper & Row.

Scott, Robert
1976 Deviance, Sanctions and Social Integration in Small Scale Societies. Social Forces 54(3):604-620.
Selby, Henry A.
1974 Zapotec Deviance. Austin: University of Texas Press.
Shostak, Marjorie
1983 Nisa: The Life and Worlds of a !Kung Woman. New York: Vintage Books.
Starr, June
1978 Dispute and Settlement in Rural Turkey. Leiden, Netherlands: E.J. Brill.
Steward, Julian H.
1973 The Theory of Culture Change. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
Storz, Moni Lai
1978 Effects of Official Labelling on Husbands' Perceptions of Their Wives: A Study of Mental Illness. Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology 14(1):46-50.
Thomas, Elizabeth Marshall
1959 The Harmless People. New York: Vintage Books.
Tittle Charles R.
1977 Introduction. Social Forces 56(2):315-319.
Turnbull, Colin M.
1962 The Forest People. New York: Simon and Schuster.
1976 Wayward Servants: The Two Worlds of the African Pygmy. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press.
Wallace, Anthony F.C.
1970 Culture and Personality. New York: Random House.
Yngvesson, Barbara
1976 Responses to Grievance Behaviour: Extended Cases in a Fishing Community. American Ethnologist 3:353-382.