

Lecture 12:

**Labels, drift, gang intro
begin review**

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labeling lessons

- **"Radical nonintervention" "works" as well or as poorly as "treatment" in national evaluation**
- **Diversion can be extended to (nonviolent?) non-status offenders**
- **Diversion is "treatment without trial:" "alternative encapsulation" and net-widening.**

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gangs

- **Start as we did in defining "juvenile delinquency."**
 - **What are we talking about?**
 - **What is the police perspective? The sociologist's perspective? The gang member's perspective?**
- **Your definitions vs. "classic" definitions**

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produce a gang definition

- Include diverse distinctive gang behavior (but exclude the U of M football team)
- Start with a list of characteristics that you think all gangs share
 - Behaviors and activities
 - Attitudes and beliefs
 - Leadership
 - Patterns of social interaction
 - Legal and/or illegal activities
 - Demographics: age, sex, urban residence, income, etc.
- Then formalize your definition, write it on a sheet of paper, and hand it in with the names of all group members

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classic definitions - thrasher

- *F. Thrasher* (1927): A gang is an interstitial group, originally formed spontaneously, and then integrated through conflict. It is characterized by the following types of behavior: meeting face to face, milling, movement through space as a unit, conflict, and planning. The result of this collective behavior is the development of tradition, unreflective internal structure, *esprit de corps*, solidarity, morale, group awareness, and attachment to local territory.
- Elements
 - form in "cracks" of social fabric
 - face-to-face interaction
 - conflict gives common enemies: "men are closest to their brothers when they join in stoning others"
- Critique: too inclusive, fits football teams

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classic definitions - miller

- *W. Miller* (1982): A youth gang is a self-formed association of peers, bound together by mutual interests, with identifiable leadership, well-developed lines of authority, and other organizational features, who act in concert to achieve a specific purpose which generally includes the conduct of illegal activity and control over a particular territory, facility, or type of enterprise.
- Elements
 - some level of organization
 - identifiable leaders
 - territory
 - recurrent associations
 - specific purpose
 - illegal activity

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Esbensen's definition (2000)

- *Finn Esbensen* – Youth Gang has:
 - More than 2 members
 - Limited age range (12-24)
 - Identity (name, colors, symbols)
 - Some permanence or association with geographic area
 - Illegal activity

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scale?

- 1998 National Youth Gang Survey
 - 28,700 gangs
 - 780,200 gang members (false precision?)
 - Increasing migration, for family reasons or (sometimes) expansion
- Thornberry et al: gang members responsible for large proportion (2/3 in some studies) of serious violent juvenile offenses
- Blumstein: gangs/guns/crack and youth homicide trends

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next

- Review for exam!
- Gangs

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