

Labelling and Reaction

Criminal Justice

How the reaction to an act can shape what the person does next.

Becker and Lemert: deviance as a status conferred, not only an act.

1 Primary deviance

An act occurs. Many people offend once and are never processed for it.

2 Social reaction

Others respond. Who gets noticed is patterned rather than random.

3 Labelling

A status is applied and begins to override other identities.

4 Exclusion

Work, housing and relationships narrow around the label.

5 Secondary deviance

Offending organised around the new status, not the original act.

Educational reference. Evidence for labelling effects is strongest for formal justice contact during adolescence.