

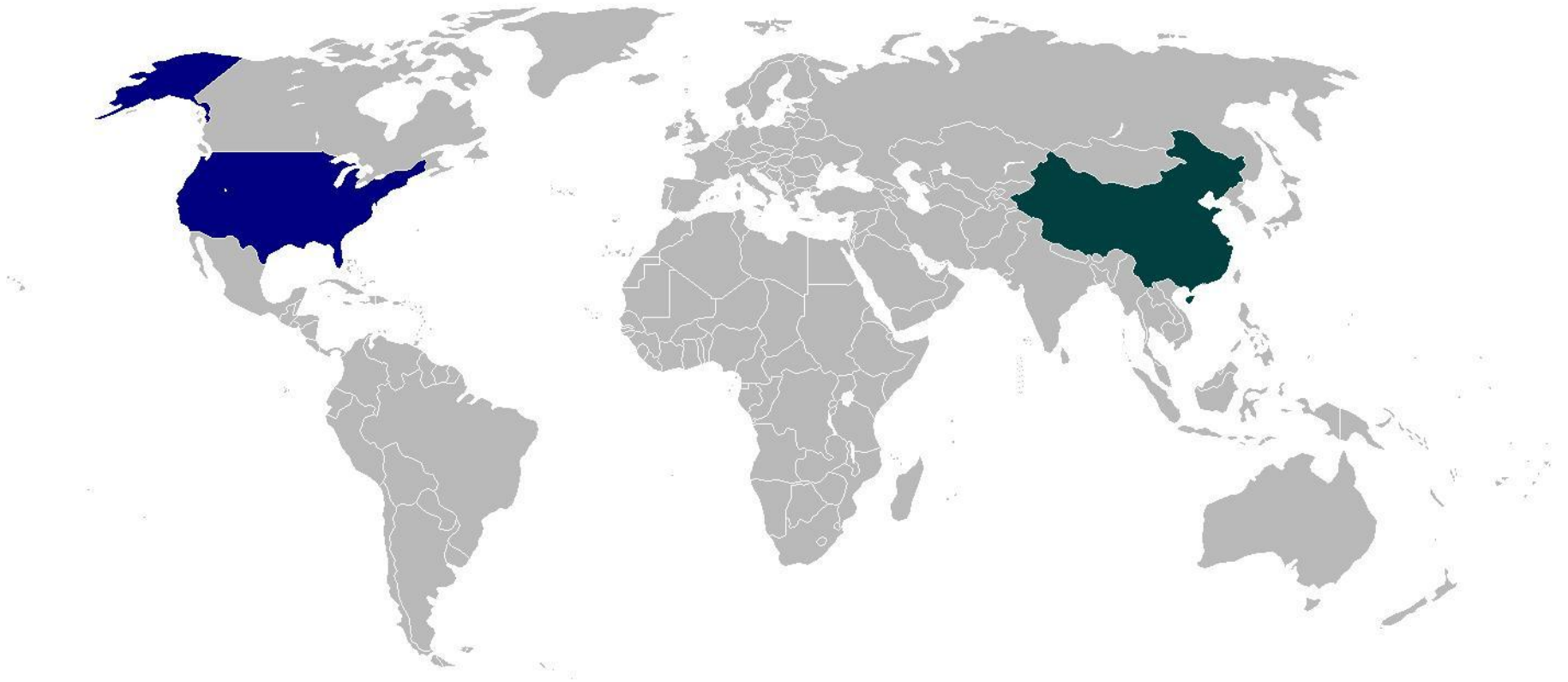


## Deviance, Conformity and Social Control

China



# Why focus on People's Republic of China?



# Why focus on People's Republic of China?

1. It represents an interesting case for studying issues of deviance, conformity, and social control.

1.

Many behaviors that constituted deviance in China from 1966 to 1976, the period known as the Cultural Revolution, are no longer judged that way.

## 2.

During the Cultural Revolution, any person

- ✓ who held a position of authority
- ✓ worked to earn a profit
- ✓ showed the slightest leaning toward foreign ways
- ✓ expressed academic interests

was subject to interrogation, arrest, and punishment.

# 3.

China has transformed itself to become a global center of manufacturing for everything from electronics to socks and toys.

# Deviance

any behavior or physical appearance that is socially challenged and or condemned because it departs from the **norms** and expectations of a group

- **Norms:** rules and expectations for the way people are supposed to behave, feel, and appear in a particular social situation
  - Folkways are customary ways of handling the routine matters of everyday life
  - Moeres are norms that people define as essential to the well-being of their group.
    - People who violate moeres are usually punished severely.
    - Unlike folkways, moeres are considered unchangeable and are regarded as “the only way” and “the truth.”



**Norm:** We expect an adult man to be taller than an 8-year old girl.



**Norm:** We expect full brothers to be the same race.



**Norm:** We expect families to be a certain size.





**Norm:** We expect boys not to wear princess outfits.

What makes something deviant is the presence of a social audience that regards a behavior or appearance as deviant and takes some kind of action

- ✓ to discourage it
- ✓ to show disapproval
- ✓ to put those labeled deviant on the defensive

People might show their disapproval by staring, laughing, or making jokes.



People might put the brothers on the defensive by asking, “how is that possible?” or declaring “you can’t be brothers.”



A social audience may question the stability of parents who have so many children.







People may ostracize the mother for allowing her son to dress in a princess outfit.

# Sociological Perspective

Deviance is not inherent in any act, appearance, or behavior



Breastfeeding is not in itself deviant behavior, as it a natural activity.

Depending on the society, some people take deep offense to women breastfeeding in public.

*Jaime's*  
*is a breast feeding*



*friendly*  
*Restaurant!*

## Key idea:

Sociological contribution to deviance: emphasis is placed on the **context** in which some behavior or appearance is defined as deviant.

**Why focus on the **context** in which deviant behavior occurs?**

## Reason 1:

Something considered deviant at one time and place may not be considered deviant at another time and place.

At one time it was not deviant to smoke while holding children.







*William H. Briggs, Millers Falls, Vermont  
Office of the State Superintendent*

At one time corporal punishment was considered good parenting.

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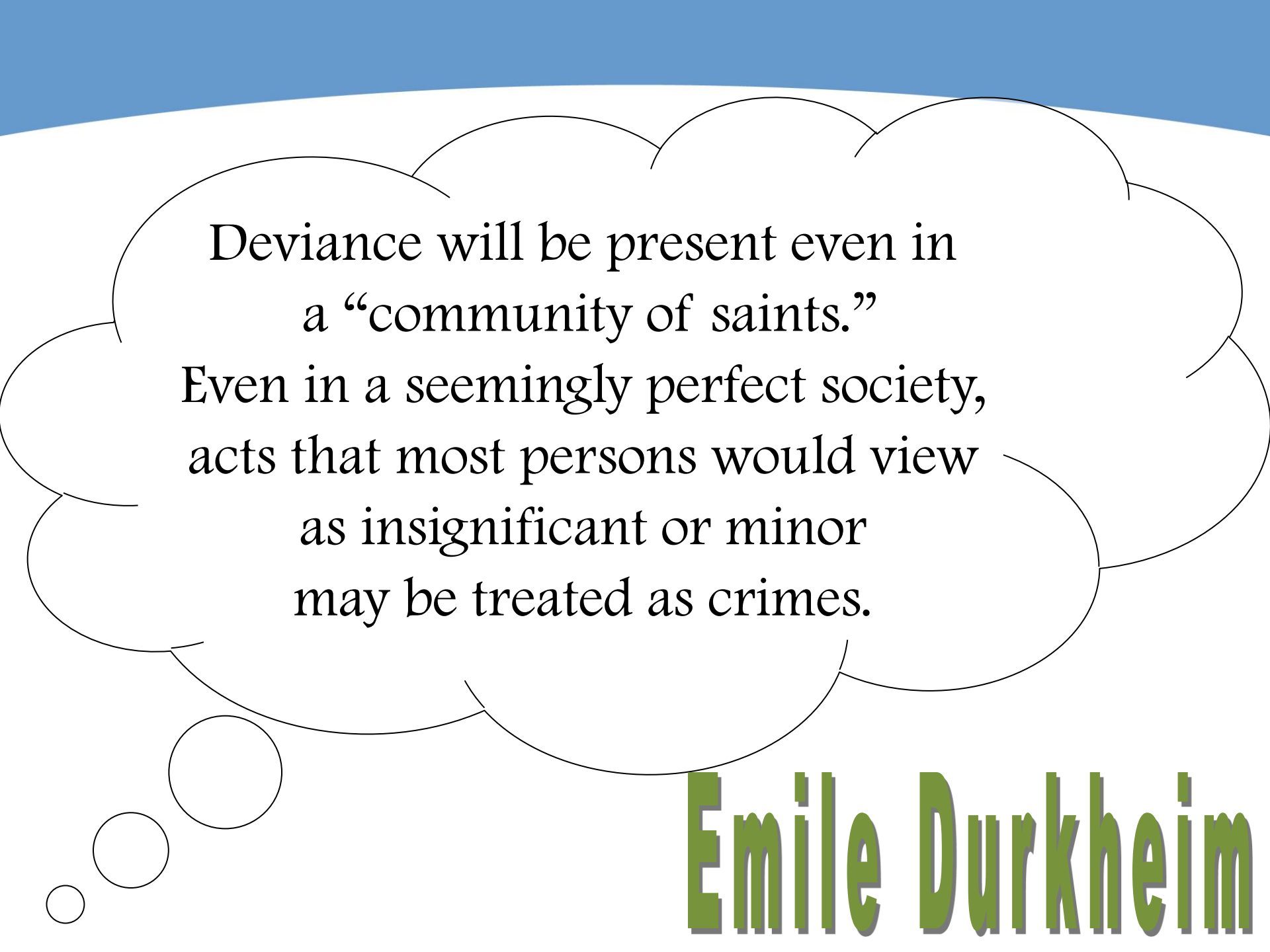
Meeting the Board of Education.  
Copyright 1900, A. & W. Elder

## Reason 2:

Under the right circumstances, almost any behavior can qualify as deviant.

# Right circumstances can include:

- ✓ economic crisis
- ✓ health crisis
- ✓ national security crisis
- ✓ other social crisis



Deviance will be present even in  
a “community of saints.”

Even in a seemingly perfect society,  
acts that most persons would view  
as insignificant or minor  
may be treated as crimes.

**Emile Durkheim**



## **Cultural Revolution (1966-1976)**

A struggle for power within the Chinese Communist Party that resulted in dramatic social, political, and economic chaos.

Specifically the Cultural Revolution was an attempt by Mao Zedong to eliminate anyone in the Communist Party and masses who opposed him.

## **Socially Challenged Behaviors During the Cultural Revolution (that are not challenged today in China)**

- Withdrawing money from a bank
- Making a profit
- Occupying a position of authority
- Having an academic interest
- Wearing glasses
- Speaking a foreign language
- Owning a camera or radio
- Traveling abroad
- Being a scientist, teacher, athlete, performer, artist, business owner
- Having relatives who live outside of China

Mao Zedong, the chairman of the Communist Party, encouraged youth of the country who belonged to the Red Guards and others to reject the “old ideas, old culture, old customs, old habits” of the exploiting classes.

For images of the Cultural Revolution see [www.morningsun.org/smash/index.html#](http://www.morningsun.org/smash/index.html#)



The right circumstance for the Cultural Revolution was

## **“The Great Leap Forward”**

a plan to transform China from a country of poverty to a land of agricultural abundance in five short years.

For 5-minute video footage of the Great Leap Forward enter search terms “China Great Leap Forward Mao Zedong” in Google search engine.

## Reason 3:

Some people break rules and escape detection (secret deviants). Others are treated as deviant even though they have broken no rules (falsely accused).

# Conformists and Deviants

- For every rule a social group creates, four categories of people exist:
  - Conformists – people who have not violated the rules of a group and treated accordingly
  - Pure deviants – people who have broken the rules and are caught punished, and labeled as outsiders
  - Secret deviants – people who have broken the rules but whose violation goes unnoticed or if it is noticed, prompts those who notice it to look the other way, rather than report the violation
  - Falsely accused

	<b>Noticed &amp; Punished</b>	<b>Not Noticed</b>
<b>Rule is Broken</b>	Deviant	Secret Deviant
<b>No Rules Are Broken</b>	Falsely Accused	Conformist



Example: Cheating

	<b>Noticed &amp; Punished</b>	<b>Not Noticed</b>
<b>Rule is Broken</b>	Cheaters who are caught.	Successful cheaters
<b>No Rules Are Broken</b>	Falsely accused of cheating	Honest students

# The Status of Deviant



**Primary deviants:** those people whose rule breaking is viewed as understandable, incidental, or insignificant in light of some socially approved status they hold.



18 year old throws a rock thru a window

**Secondary deviants:** those whose rule breaking is treated as something so significant that it cannot be overlooked or explained away



45 year old man throws a rock thru a window

Secondary deviants assume a **master status of deviant**.

“An identification that “proves to be more important” than most other statuses that person holds, such that he or she is identified first and foremost as a deviant.”

- Howard Becker