

Objectives

after completing this lesson, YOU will be able to



- » Discuss why some occupations hold **greater opportunity for criminal gain** than others;
- » Understand how *occupational subcultures* facilitate white-collar crime; and
- » Discuss the *role of gender* in white-collar crime.

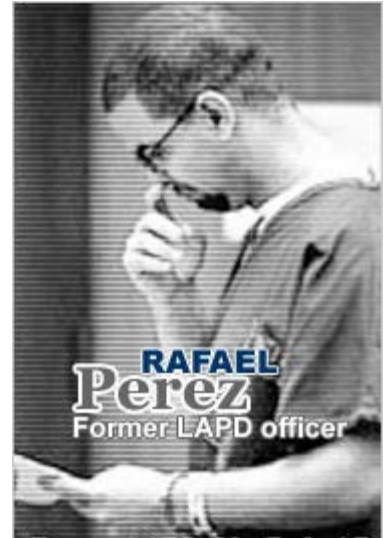
Many occupations offer opportunities for law violation,

but some seem to hold far greater possibilities for criminal gain than others.

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Bribery, *for example*, seems to depend on the economic value of services that a particular job holder can offer in exchange for illicit payments. **Police corruption** appears to be the greatest among officers in the narcotics and vice areas because organized criminals are willing to pay large sums to protect their investments and have the officers look the other way. Politicians, inspectors, and purchasing agents are in similar positions.

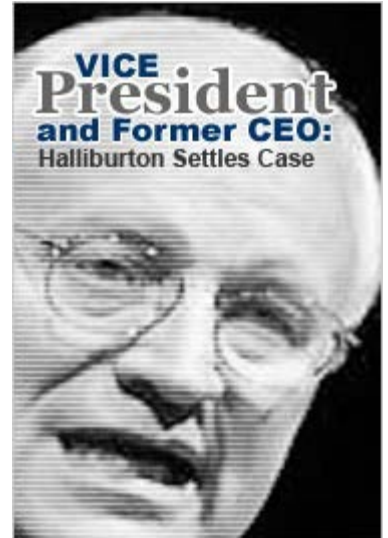
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Research is still undeveloped in this area, so few generalizations are possible.

Still, a structural irony exists: As government regulation increases, the opportunities for corruption also increase. As the cost of running for elected office increases, the potential for corruption increases as well.



As trust increases among employees, there is a corresponding increase in the opportunity to embezzle. ***Opportunities for employee pilferage are also unevenly distributed.***



A study conducted by John Clark and Richard Hollinger found that *employees with access to and knowledge about vulnerable targets for theft were the most likely to report having engaged in such behavior.*



The "*size of the prize*" is also an issue. One study showed that television assemblers tended to take small items.

» By comparison, employees in the financial industry have the opportunity to steal much more.

Financial arrangements that determine how one is paid also **affect criminal opportunities**.

{ Professionals who work on a fee-for-service basis — such as many doctors, for example — have numerous opportunities to overcharge and to provide unnecessary services. Salaried workers do not have such opportunities.

Many white-collar crimes are **facilitated by knowledge and techniques** that are spread through occupational subcultures.



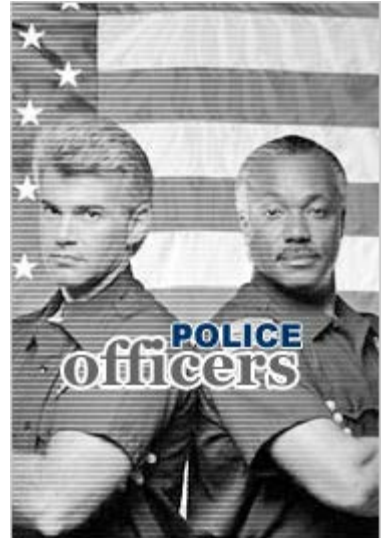
As we will see later in the course, professionals such as doctors, lawyers, and accountants can learn about opportunities for white-collar crime in much the same way as they learn, and are socialized into, their occupational roles.

Patterns of police corruption in major cities also suggest **the diffusion of criminal techniques through occupational subcultures of officers**. We will examine this later in the course as well.





Many professional and occupational subcultures do not directly condone criminal behavior, but can make criminal opportunities more attractive through self-protection and solidarity. These, in turn, reduce the chances of receiving significant punishments for transgressions.



Occupational subcultures thus serve a dual role in regard to misconduct and crime. They can serve

» As a *communicative network* for the transmission of ideas, neutralizations, techniques, and motivations for committing crime; and

» To *protect* those within them from outside scrutiny and the corresponding visibility of their offenses.

One of the strongest determinants of crime is **gender**. But, although men are much more likely to commit violent crime than women, this appears to be less so when it comes to white-collar crime.

» Arrest statistics show *a significantly higher proportion of women arrested for white-collar crimes* (most notably embezzlement and fraud) than common crimes. Moreover, such numbers have also increased significantly over the past 30 years.



These *statistics*, however, are *misleading*.

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Rather than showing greater gender equity in white-collar criminality, many of those who are counted among violators hold rather low-level positions — or no "positions" at all (for example, bank tellers and welfare cheats).

Women are still **underrepresented in the highest corporate and management positions**, and thus do not have the same opportunities for white-collar crime as men.

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One study, conducted by **Kathy Daly**, shows that **there are great differences between male and female offenders**. The women in her sample tended to be younger, less educated, in lower-level positions, and with lower incomes. They also reaped less from their crimes, and were more likely to commit their crimes alone rather than as part of a group.

» Although some women in the sample could hardly be considered "white-collar" (welfare frauds, for example), the study shows significant differences between the sexes in the commission of white-collar crime. *For example*, 98% of antitrust violators were male, in contrast to only 55% charged with embezzlement (although, again, the women generally had lower-level positions, such as bank tellers).

As she concludes, the crimes of the women in her sample were *"generally less sophisticated than men's, of shorter duration, and less likely to be carried out with others."*

Assignment

"select OUTLINE from the TOOLS menu.
In the OUTLINE, click on the appropriate ASSIGNMENT in this week's lesson"



Search the Web for *an interesting case of occupational crime.*

» Write four to five paragraphs discussing how what you have read relates to the theories and concepts from the class.

Forum *discussion*



"to post your reply, select OUTLINE from the TOOLS menu and enter the FORUMS area"



If women had similar access to powerful positions, *do you think they would be **more, less, or equally likely to commit white-collar crimes?***

Why?

Summary

a brief overview of what you learned



» **Many occupations offer opportunities for law violation**, but some seem to hold far greater possibilities for criminal gain than others. One study found that employees with access to and knowledge about vulnerable targets for theft were the most likely to report having engaged in such behavior. In addition, employees with access to larger amounts tend to steal much more than those with access to smaller amounts.

» Many professional and occupational subcultures (such as the police, for example) do not directly condone criminal behavior, but can make **criminal opportunities more attractive through self-protection and solidarity**. These, in turn, reduce the chances of receiving significant punishments for transgressions.

» Although **a higher proportion of women are arrested for white-collar crimes** than for common crimes, these statistics can be misleading. Compared to men arrested for white-collar crimes, these women tend to be less educated, hold lower-level positions, reap less from their crimes, and work alone rather than as part of a group.