

CHAPTER 7: DEVIANCE AND SOCIAL CONTROL

The Nature of Deviance

deviance - behavior that departs from societal or group norms

- negative - failure to meet accepted norms (obesity)
- positive - overconformity to norms (anorexia)

deviant - a person who breaks significant societal or group norms

social control - ways to encourage conformity to society's norms

- internal - lies within the individual (do something because it's right, don't do something because it's wrong)
- external - based on social sanctions (rewards and punishments designed to encourage desired behavior)

Functionalism and Deviance

functionalism - theoretical perspective that emphasizes stability and the way the different parts of society contribute to the whole

- negative effects of deviance:

1. erodes trust
2. can cause nonconforming behavior in others
3. expensive (law enforcement, prison system)

- positive effects of deviance:

1. clarifies norms by exercising social control to defend its values (negligent parents taken to court)
2. temporary safety valve (teen rebellion)
3. increased unity within a society or group (deviance reminds people of something they value)
4. promotes needed social change (Martin Luther King, Jr.)

anomie - social condition in which norms are weak, conflicting or absent -> societies become disorganized

strain theory - deviance more likely when a gap exists between cultural goals (money and prestige) and the ability to achieve them by legitimate means

(goal -> success and material possessions approved means-> education & hard work)

- four deviant responses to strain:

1. innovation - use of illegal means to achieve goal (robbery, drug dealing)
2. ritualism - goal rejected - person goes through the motions without believing in the process
3. retreatism - both means and goals are rejected
4. rebellion - new set of goals and means are substituted (militia group)

control theory - compliance with social norms requires strong bonds between individuals and society

- four basic components of social bonds:

1. attachment
2. commitment
3. involvement
4. belief

Symbolic Interactionism and Deviance

differential association theory - people learn deviance in proportion to number of deviant acts they're exposed to

- three characteristics:

1. ratio of deviant to nondeviant individuals
2. whether deviant behavior is practiced by significant others
3. age of exposure

labeling theory - society creates deviance by identifying particular members as deviant

- allows us to understand the relativity of deviance (example: unmarried pregnant teenage girls are more negatively sanctioned than the teenage biological fathers)

primary deviance - occasional breaking of norms that is not a part of a person's lifestyle or self-concept

secondary deviance - a person's life and identity are organized around breaking society's norms (career criminal)

stigma - an undesirable characteristic or label used by others to deny the deviant full social acceptance (example: stigma-> prison record - can be used to discredit the person's individual worth)

Conflict Theory and Deviance

-conflict theorists - look at deviance in terms of social inequality and power

- they believe that minorities receive unequal treatment in the criminal justice system
- when criminal offense in the same, African Americans/Latinos are more likely than whites to be convicted
- African Americans - 13% of U.S. population -> make up 43% of pop. on death row
- conflict theorists claim that minorities don't have money to buy good legal services, and crimes against whites tend to be punished more severely than crimes against minorities

victim discounting - process of reducing the seriousness of the crimes that injure people of lower status - if the victim is less valuable, the crime is less serious -> penalty is less severe

white-collar crime - job-related crimes committed by high-status people (examples: price fixing, insider trading, tax evasion, embezzlement)

- white-collar criminals are often treated more leniently than other criminals, less likely to be imprisoned
- those who do serve time often sent to minimum-security prisons with luxuries like tennis courts and private rooms ("Club Fed")

Crime and Punishment

crime - act committed in violation of the law

- crime increased sharply in the U.S. between the 1960s and 1990s
- violent crime rates are considerably higher in the U.S. than in most industrialized countries

- FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) - major source of U.S. crime statistics

- juvenile crime between 1993 and 1998:

1. juvenile murder arrest rate dropped by 1/2
2. juvenile arrests for weapons violations dropped by 1/3
3. juvenile rape arrests dropped by 1/4

- factors for decline:

1. less demand for crack cocaine
2. stiffer penalties for repeat offenders
3. juvenile police crackdown on illegal guns on the street

criminal justice system - made up of institutions and processes responsible for enforcing criminal statutes

deterrence - discouraging criminal acts by threatening punishment

- 3/4 of Americans believe the death penalty acts as a deterrent to murder
- 71% of Americans support death penalty for murder, 19% oppose it

retribution - punishment intended to make criminals pay compensation for their acts

incarceration - keeping criminals in prisons

rehabilitation - an attempt to resocialize criminals

recidivism - repetition of or return to criminal behavior

- 30%-60% of prisoners released are sent back in 2-5 years

- reasons: 1. basic nature of the offenders 2. influences of more hardened criminals
3. stigma of being an ex-convict

Alternatives to Prisons:

1. prison/probation combination
2. community-based programs for inmates (reintroduce criminals into society under supervision)
3. diversion strategy - offenders are referred to a community-based program instead of prison or probation

SOCIOLOGY
VIDEO QUESTIONS: “The Execution”

1. Who was Clifford Boggess' first victim? What reason did he give for the murder?

2. Who was his second victim?

3. What talents did Clifford possess as a young person?

4. How were Clifford and his siblings treated by their mother?

5. According to his cellmate, what changes had Clifford gone through since he came to death row?

6. How did Lisa Hazelwood react to Clifford's response to her letter?

7. To which religion did Clifford convert? Why?

8. What is the perspective of the reporter after meeting with Clifford for the last time?
What realizations does he come to at the end of the story?

9. Do you agree or disagree with the court's decision to execute Clifford Boggess?
Why?

10. Do you believe in capital punishment? Why or why not?