**Criminological Theories**

**Assignment 3**

After reviewing your study guide, answer the questions and email them to your Criminal Justice teacher via email:

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**3rd Paradigm - Social/Environmental**

Social/Environmental Outline

55. Social Structure Theories:

56. The Chicago School Theories-

Social Disorganization Theory and

Strain or Anomie Theory (also called Strain Theory)

Cultural Deviance Theory

57. Social Process Theories

Learning Theory (Social Learning Theory)

Control Theory (Social Control Theory) Restraint Theories

Labeling Theory (Social Reaction Theory)

Differential Association

Containment Restraint Theory

Neutralization Restraint Theory

58. Social Conflict Theories

- Marxism versus Capitalism

Social Structure Theories

59. The Chicago School was established by a group of scholars who were associated with the Sociology Department at the University of Chicago in the 1920s and 1930’s. These sociologists, collectively known as the Chicago School, gathered empirical evidence from slums of the city that showed a correlation between the conditions of poverty and high rates of crime.

60. The Sociological or Social Structure Theories views on causes of crime are quite different. However, they build on certain fundamental assumptions. They are:

- Social groups, social institutions, the arrangement of society, and social roles all provide the proper focus for criminal logical study.

* - Group dynamics, group organization, and subgroup relationships formed the causal nexus out of which crime develops. (nexus: connection, link; also, causal link; 2. A connected group or series; 3. Center, focus

- The structure of society and the relative degree of social organization or social disorganization are important factors contributing to prevalence of criminal behavior.

These Sociological or Social Structure Theories include:

61. 1) Social Disorganization, by Park and Burgess 1920’s; Shaw and McKay 1940’s

62. The social disorganization theory states that crime is largely a product of unfavorable conditions in certain communities.

63. Social disorganization theory is the theory that deviant behavior is more likely in communities where social institutions such as the family, schools, and the criminal justice system fail to exert control over the population.

- Based on work of Park and Burgess 1920’s

- Later based on work of Shaw and McKay 1940’s

64. Neighborhoods progress through invasion, dominance, succession.

65. Shaw and McKay discovered certain zones that exhibited high rates of crime. These zones were characterized by disorganization or a breakdown of the traditional institutions of social control such as family, school systems, and local businesses.

66. In contrast, in the city’s organized communities, residents had developed certain agreements about fundamental values and norms. They found a residence in high crime neighborhoods had to a large degree abandoned these fundamental values and norms.

67. Also, a lack of social controls had led to increased levels of antisocial or criminal behavior.

68. According to social disorganization theory, ecological factors that lead to crime in these neighborhoods are perpetuated by continued elevated levels of high school dropouts, unemployment, deteriorating infrastructures, and single parent families.

69. In Concentric Zone 2, regardless of who lives there, the residents experience the most crime as the residents of this zone are in a state of transition.

70. Zone 2 = Transitional Zone

A screenshot of a cell phone

Description automatically generated

71. 2) Strain/Anomie Theory (also called Strain Theory)

72. The Strain Theory is the assumption that crime is the result of frustration felt by individuals who cannot reach their financial and personal goals through legitimate means.

73. Anomie is a condition in which the individual suffers from the breakdown or absence of social norms. According to this theory, this condition occurs when a person is disconnected from the norms or rejects them as inconsistent with his or her personal goals.

74. Strain/Anomie Theory (Merton)

75. Durkheim: Anomie – feelings of normlessness

-Developed by Merton into Strain Theory

- Most law-abiding people are conformists

- Most criminals are innovators

- Most terrorists are classified as rebellion

76. Agnew’s General Strain Theory

* micro level strain – focuses on individuals
* Multiple sources of stress:
  + Failure to achieve positively valued goals
  + Disjunction of expectations and achievements (when comparing self to others, finds self-lacking)
  + Loss of positive stimuli (divorce, move to new neighborhood, loss of boy/girlfriend)
  + Presence of negative stimuli (child abuse, crime victimization, punishment)

78. 3) Cultural Deviance Theory

79. Cultural deviancy is a branch of social structure theories based on the assumption that members of certain subcultures reject the values of the dominant culture through deviant behavior patterns.

80. A subculture is a group exhibiting certain values and behavior patterns that distinguish it from the dominant culture.

81. Combining, to a certain extent, social disorganization and strain theory is cultural deviance theory asserts that people adapt to the values of the subculture to which they belong.

82. A subculture, a subdivision that exist with and the dominant culture, has its own standards of behavior, or norms. By definition, a disorganized neighborhood is isolated from society at large, and the strain of this isolation encourages the formation of subcultures in the slum. Example?

83. According to cultural deviance theory, members of low-income subcultures or more likely to conform to the value systems to celebrate behavior such as violence, that directly confronts the value system of society at large and therefore that draws criminal sanctions.

84. Miller’s focal concerns

“1. Trouble - getting into and staying out of   
2. Toughness - masculinity, endurance, strength   
3. Smartness - street sense   
4. Excitement - constant search for thrills   
5. Fate - things that happen to you is beyond your control, nothing can be done   
6. Autonomy - resentment of authority and rules”

<http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/jhamlin/3315/miller.html>

85. Cloward and Ohlin’s Delinquent subcultures

Conflict – results from social and cultural conflict in a community

Retreatist – the “double failures” – cannot be successful in either the conflict or criminal subcultures

Criminal – presence of adult criminals as role models

**Social Process Theories**

86. The Social Process Theories belong to a school of criminology that considers criminal behavior to be the predictable results of a person’s interaction with his or her environment. According to these theories, everybody has the potential for wrongdoing. Those who act on this potential are conditioned to do so by family or peer groups, or institutions such as the media.

87. Most **social process** theories highlight the role of **social learning.**

88. Some criminologists find class theories of crime overly narrow. Their surveys show that any one has the potential to act out criminal behavior, regardless of the class, race, or gender.

91. Social Process Theory has three main branches:

1) Learning Theory-Edwin Sutherland in 1940’s (also Social Learning Theory also Differential Association)

2) Control Theory – Travis Hirshi (also called Social Control Theory)

3) Labeling Theory – Howard Becker – 1963

92. There are two other Social Process Theories we will examine

4) Containment

5) Neutralization Techniques (also Techniques of Neutralization or Neutralization Techniques)

**93. 1) Learning Theory- Edwin Sutherland in 1940’s** (also Social Learning Theory also Differential Association)

94. **Learning theory** is the hypothesis that delinquents and criminals **must be taught both the practical and emotional skills necessary to participate in illegal activity.**

95. Learning theory contends that criminal activity is a learned behavior. In other words, the criminal is taught both the practical methods of crime, such as how to pick a lock, and the psychological aspects of crime, how to deal with the guilt of wrongdoing.

**96. Sutherland’s theory of differential association** held that individuals are exposed to the values of family and peers such as a school friends or coworkers. If the dominant values one is exposed to favor of criminal behavior, then that person is more likely to mimic such behavior.

**Differential Association**

97. Criminal behavior is learned through interaction with others -These interactions depend on the frequency, priority, intensity, and duration of the interactions

98. One learns criminal behavior just like he/she learns any other behavior - Communications occur within intimate personal groups

99. The theory of differential association explains crime as a natural consequence of the interaction with criminal lifestyles.

100. Differential association provides much of the basis for much research in modern criminology.

101. In a recent survey, a high percentage of boys involved in aggressive delinquent behavior reported having friends who sold drugs or carried a knife or a gun.

102. According to the U.S. Dept. of Justice, nearly 50% of the inmates in state prisons have relatives who have also been incarcerated.

103. More recently, learning theory has been expanded to include the growing influence of the media. Psychologist at the University of Michigan released data and 2003 showing that exposure to high levels of televised violence erodes a natural aversion to violence and increases aggressive behavior among young children. This also applies to video games.

104. The main social learning theory has been widely applied to the work of Burgess and Akers. They suggest that although values and behavior patterns are learned in association with others, the primary mechanism to which such learning occurs is operant conditioning. Reinforcement is the key to understanding any social learning as it takes place.

**105. 2) Control Theory – Travis Hirshi** (also called Social Control Theory or Social Bond Theory)

106. Control theory is a series of theories that assume that all individuals have the potential for criminal behavior, but are restrained by the damage that such actions would do to their relationships with family, friends and members of the community. Criminality occurs when these bonds are broken or nonexistent.

106A. This is one of the MOST important theories in criminality. It was developed on delinquent boys

107. Criminologist Travis Hirshi focused all reasons why individuals do not engage in criminal acts, rather than why they do. He found social bonds promote conformity to social norms. The stronger these bonds, the less likely that any individual will commit a crime.

108. Control theory holds that although we all have the potential to commit crimes, most of us are dissuaded from doing so because we care about the opinions are our family and peers.

109. Hirshi identified four components of that bond:

1) Emotional attachment to significant others

2) A commitment to appropriate lifestyles

3) Involvement or immersion in conventional values

4) A belief in the correctness of social obligations and rules of the larger society

110. Wilson and Kelling’s social control theory is described in terms of the “broken windows effect”. Neighborhoods in poor condition are filled with cues of lack of social control that further invite vandalism and other deviant behavior. If the cues are removed, according to Wilson and Kelling, so was the implied acceptance of crime within a community. This is known as the Broken Windows Theory.

**111. 3) Labeling Theory or Social Reaction Theory – Howard Becker – 1963**

112. The Labeling Theory is the hypothesis that society creates crime and criminals by labeling certain behavior and certain people as deviant. The stigma that results from this social process excludes a person from the community, thereby increasing the chances that she or he will adopt the label as his or her identity and engage in a pattern of criminal behavior

113. James Caston decided to name his first two sons after gang members Jessie and Frank James. Today both brothers are serving life sentences in a state prison for murder. “We never had a chance”, said Jesse James Caston when asked about the influence of his name.

114. This is a great example of the third social process theory. Labeling theory focuses on perceptions of criminal behavior rather than behavior itself. Labeling theorists study how being labeled a criminal, whore or a junkie or a thief, affects that persons’ future behavior.

115.

Primary deviance - Commits a criminal act but doesn’t get caught

Secondary deviance - Commits a criminal act, gets caught, and master status changes

Middle class measuring rods - Lower class youth cannot measure up to teacher’s standards

115A. The next two theories along with the previously discussed Social Control Theory focus primarily on why people do not break the law, and are known as Restraint Theories.

4) **Containment- Walter Reckless – (1899 -1988)**

116. Containment Theory - the aspects of the social bond and aspects of the personality of the individual that act to prevent individuals from committing crimes and engage in deviance.

117. Containment Theory assumes that all of us are subject to inducements to crime. Some of us resist these pushes for criminal behavior, while others do not. The difference can be found and forces that contained or controlled behavior.

Reckless described two types of containment

1) Inner

2) Outer

118. Outer containment depends on social roles and the norms and expectations that apply to them. Thus, people who occupy significant roles in society find themselves insulated from deviant tendencies. The difference is not due solely to income, but also to the pressure one feels to conform.

119. Inner containment involves a number of factors, such as conscience, positive self-image, a tolerance for frustration, and aspirations that are in line with reality. Reckless believed inner containment is more powerful than outer containment, as inner containment functions even in secret.

120. **5) Neutralization Techniques – Gresham Sykes and David Matza (also Techniques of Neutralization or Neutralization Techniques)**

121. The neutralization approach centers on rationalizations that allow offenders to shift feelings of guilt and responsibility for their behavior.

121A. This is also known as Drift theory, stating that no one is criminal 24/7

122. Their study primarily concerned juveniles for whom neutralization techniques provided only temporary relief from guilt. That relief, however, lasted long enough to avoid the twinges of conscience while a crime was being committed.

123. Neutralization techniques include the following:

1) Denial of responsibility (I’m a product of my background)

2) Denial of injury and (no one was really hurt)

3) Denial of victim (they deserved it)

4) Condemnation of the condemners (the cops are corrupt)

5) Appeal to higher loyalties (I did it for my friends)

124. Neutralization techniques are only needed when the delinquent has been socialized into middle class values or where conscience is well developed. Even so, neutralization techniques do not in themselves explain crime.

**125. Social Conflict Theories - Karl Marx (1818-1883).**

126. Social conflict theories are a school of criminology that views criminal behavior as the result of class conflict. Certain behavior is labeled illegal not because it is inherently criminal but because the ruling class has an economic or social interest in restricting such behavior in order to protect the status quo.

127. The Social Reality of Crime is the theory that criminal laws are designed by those in power (the rich) to help them keep power at the expense of those who do not have power (the poor).

128. A more recent movement in criminology focuses not biology or sociology, but on power.

129. Those who identify power, seen as the ability of one person or group of persons to control the economic and social positions of other people or groups, as the key component in explaining crime entered the mainstream of American criminal justice during the 1960s.

130. These theorists saw social ills such as poverty, racism, sexism, and destruction of the environment is the true crimes, perpetrated by the powerful or ruling class. Burglary, robbery, and even violent crimes were considered justifiable reactions by the powerless against laws that were meant to repress, not to protect them.

131. Supporters of these ideas aligned themselves with Marxists, radical, conflict, and feminist schools of criminology. Collectively, they have constructed the social conflict theories of crime causation.

132. The beginning of social conflict theory can be found in the political philosophy of a German name Karl Marx (1818-1883).

133. Marx believed the capitalist economic systems necessarily produce income inequality and lead to the exploitation of the working classes. Therefore, social conflict theories are often associated with criticism of our capitalist economic system.

133A. Many believe Marx was a communist, which is in fact, not true. He was a socialist. Marx believed that the capitalist society would fail and socialism would take its place. Feminist theories developed out of these conflict theories as well, seeing as women were subjected to male power historically through paternalism.

134. Capitalism is seen as leading to high levels of violence and crime because of the disparity of income that results.

135. The poor commit property crimes for reasons of need and because, as members of a capitalist society, they desire the same financial rewards as everybody else.

136. They commit violent crimes because of the frustration and rage they feel when these rewards seemed unattainable.

137. Laws instead of reflecting the values of society as a whole, reflect only the values of the segment of society that has achieved power and is willing to use the criminal justice system as a tool to keep that power.

138. Thus, the harsh punishment for lower class crimes such as burglary can be seen as a means of protecting the privileges of the haves from the aspiration of the have nots.

139. It is important to note that, according to social conflict theories, power is not synonymous with wealth. Women and members of minority groups can be wealthy and yet still be disassociated from the benefits of power in our society.

140. Richard Quinney this encompasses these issues in his theory known as the social reality of crime. Quinney sees violations of the law not is inherently criminal acts, but rather as political ones, as revolutionary acts against the power of the state.

141. Multifactor theories - combination of different theories

142. Nathaniel Abraham

143. Interesting story of 11 year old male who was the youngest child transferred to the adult criminal court in Michigan for murder

144. His case is a good one to use as an example of Social Bond Theory

**145. 4th Paradigm – Neo-classical**

146. An updated version of classical criminology (neoclassical), which is known as rational choice theory, found renewed acceptance.

147. Rational choice theory holds that criminality is largely the result of conscious choices that people make. According to the theory, offenders choose to violate the law when they believe the benefits of doing so outweigh the costs.

148. Rational choice theory is represented by a somewhat narrower perspective called routine activities theory.

149. The routine activities theory (Cohen and Felson) argues that lifestyles significantly affect both the amount of crime and type of crime found in any society, and that they noted the risk of criminal victimization varies dramatically among the circumstances and locations in which people place themselves and their property.

150. Central to the routine activities approach is the claim that crime is likely to occur when a motivated offender and a suitable target come together in the absence of a capable guardian.

151. Capable guardians are those who effectively discourage crime and prevent it from occurring.

After reviewing your study guide, answer the questions and forward them to my email address, [rschwill@bartlettschools.org](mailto:rschwill@bartlettschools.org) .

Why do those who believe in Social Structure Theories say crime occurs?

Why do those who believe in Social Process Theories say crime occurs?

Why do those who believe in Social Conflict say crime occurs?

In what Zone does most crime occur?

What theory was Karl Marx responsible for? Give me an example of a country today that practices his theory.