

FINAL CRIMINOLOGY EXAM NOTES

CHAPTER 8: Sociological Perspectives 168 - 192

Social Structure: consistent and stable patterns of social interaction

August Comte: Founder of the *positivist school of philosophy and sociology*

- Sociology starts with the idea that all behaviour is shaped by the social structure and/or social dynamics
- Society promotes conformity, however pressures within the social structure can lead some people **not** to conform, and instead to engage in deviant behaviour
- 2 types of norms in society: **prescriptive:** telling us what we should do and **proscriptive:** telling us what we should not do

Emile Durkheim: A founding father of sociology

- Said that even in a society of saints there would be deviance
- Behaviour is a product of social environment, not intrinsic traits.
- Durkheim believed that people are self serving and want to reap as many benefits as possible from society
- Thomas Hobbes agrees ^
- **Functionalist** paradigm of society, there is a general consensus surrounding the underlying moral framework called the **collective conscience**
- Theories of social order can be classified in terms of 2 *paradigms*:
- **Consensus:** collective conscience defines behaviour that does not conform to it as deviant
- **Conflict:** society is an assortment of groups competing for power and resources. Society's most powerful define what is deviant, in a way that satisfies their own interests.
- **Symbolic Interactionism:** traced to work of **Gabriel Tarde**. Focused on social process which criminal behaviour is learned. Notably imitation and interaction.
- ^3 major ways of thinking about criminal and deviant behaviour: as the product of social *structure*, the product of social *conflict* and as the product of social *processes*

Social Structural Theories

The Human Ecological School:

- **Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess** started the basis for the *ecological school of criminology*
- **Ecological school of criminology:** A sub discipline of criminology that studies how elements of physical and social environment interact to create a criminal environment
- **Concentric circle theory:** An early human ecological theory, according to which cities develop from the inner city to the suburbs in a predictable series of concentric rings, each of which encompasses a particular set of social and environmental characteristics
- City divided into 5 zones, based on social elements

Shaw and Mckays Social Disorganization Theory: A sociological theory that sees deviance and crime as consequences of a breakdown of social control in environments characterized by social and economic instability

- **1. The playing with matches:** *children*, usually between the ages of 4 and 9, who start a fire accidentally while playing with matches carelessly around
 - **2. The crying for help:** tend to be a little older and set fires to reduce anxiety or stress. These youths have difficulty expressing their pain so they act it out
 - **3. The delinquent:** aged 14-18, set fire to property in retaliation for some criticism. Mostly males, characterized by anger, antisocial personalities, and a lack of regard for social rules and norms
 - **4. The severely disturbed:** youths who have some personality disturbance. They are pyromaniacs
- Surveys have said that girls set fires because of self injury
 - If one commits Arson as a young age it is probable that they will have problems later in life
 - **Mark Olshaker Homicidal Trial:** arson, animal cruelty, bedwetting: warning for criminal act
 - **Arson for profit:** most common form of arson among adults. (eg. setting fire to a building to claim the insurance money)
 - Another common form is revenge
 - Some psychologists state that adult fire setters commonly suffer from personality disorders, so should be viewed as a mental health problem - not a criminal act
 - Pyromaniacs often set fires in an attempt to cover up or destroy evidence of another crime

Explaining Arson:

- Virtually all theories assert that the underlying motive is either:
 - **Instrumental** (calculated to benefit the offender)
 - Or **expressive** (committed spontaneously out of anger, jealousy, frustration) the origin of the act is usually external, something about the situation or environment triggers the urge
- Organized crime groups and political terrorists are known to use arson (eg. The Provisional Irish Republican Army is probably the terrorist group)
- Can be explained by environmental and ecological theories
- The older the house, the greater likelihood of arson
- Based on motivation, opportunity, and guardianship

CHAPTER 11: Organized Crime, Corporate Crime, Cyber Crime

Organized Crime: illegal activity conducted by individuals or groups, typically involving extortion, fraud, theft, smuggling, or the sale of illicit products.

Howard Abadinsky: Attributes of Organized Crime

- **Non ideological:** no political affiliation, goals are not directly motivated by political concern
- **Hierarchical:** feature a chain of command, have three or more positions of authority within the group
- **Defined by limited or exclusive membership:** sometimes based on ethnic, racial, or kinship ties, or criminal history
- **Profitious:** these groups constitute an ongoing criminal conspiracy designed to persist over time
- **Organized through specialization or division of labour:** members have specific areas of responsibility and defined roles

Kelly, Leber, Keenan, Delamatre: 3 Developmental Pathways That Lead to Crime

- **1. Authority Conflict Pathway** - where stubborn behaviour progresses to authority avoidance (staying out late, running away from home)
 - **2. Covert Pathway** - develops when young people become secretive then progress to overt behaviour such as property damage, which may escalate to more serious acts.
 - **3. Overt Pathway** - begins with minor aggression and progresses to more serious violence (assault and sexual assault)
- Hiring more police and lengthening sentences has not been helpful. Instead, strategies are:

Opportunity Reduction: strategies designed to prevent crime by minimizing the opportunities for criminal activity to occur

The 3 Forms:

1. Primary Prevention: intervene to correct conditions that could encourage crime

- Focuses on environmental conditions (eg. maintaining streets, fixing broken windows)
- Risky because leads to fear and vigilantism

2. Secondary Prevention: identifying potential offenders and intervene before crime is committed

- Targets people, places, situations, times, etc)
- Problematic because causes *crime displacement*; moving offenders to another location

3. Tertiary Prevention: Intervene to prevent those who have committed crimes from re-offending

- Reduces victimization by repeat offenders and includes restorative justice

Social Development Approach: A primary prevention strategy in which community based public education programs are used to inform people of the risks to their safety to encourage them to take appropriate steps to avoid becoming victims of crime

Politics and Criminal Law:

- Increasing criminal laws has been proven to only artificially inflate crime statistics
- Many members of the criminal justice system are aware that it is ineffective, however they only maintain social order, not create the laws.
- Governments with political agendas make laws, often driven by public attitudes.
- Crime has decreased, but still seems present because of media coverage
- This instills fear and causes people to support more police officers, laws, and prisons, even though studies have shown this does not affect crime rate
- Similarly, prisons do not help however we are building more and sentences are longer.
- White collar criminals suffer less severe consequences even though they are more costly to society
- Public misconceptions prevent the adoption of new ideas