



SOCO 101 – Principles of Sociology
San Diego Miramar College
Rethinking Deviance and Justice
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Subject: Rethinking Deviance and Justice

In order to understand deviance, crime, and justice, I believe it is essential to describe those terms using the three theoretical paradigms in Sociology: Conflict theory, Functionalism, and Symbolic Interactionism. Functionalism offers two theories to explain crime and deviance, Social Disorganization and Anomie Theory; Social disorganization is a weakened of social institutions such as the family, school, and religion that in turn weakens the strength of social bonds and norms and the effectiveness of socialization, whereas Anomie Theory make emphasis on economic success, especially when the poor who do not achieve the American dream feel especially frustrated and leading them to crime, or deviant behaviors. The interactionist perspective (Symbolic interaction theory) explains that crime results from the social interaction of individuals with other people, particularly their friends and family, symbolic interaction theory explains it using labeling theory: it assumes that labeling someone as a criminal or deviant, which arrest and imprisonment certainly do, makes the person more likely to continue to offend. This result occurs, argues the theory, because the labeling process gives someone a negative self-image, reduces the potential for employment, and makes it difficult to have friendships with law-abiding individuals. Lastly, Conflict theory's major focus is on the use and misuse of the criminal law and criminal justice system to deal with crime, starting with Group Conflict theory: assumes that criminal law is shaped by the conflict among the various social groups in society that exist because of differences in race and ethnicity, social class, religion, and other factors. Radical theory: makes the same general assumptions as group conflict theory about the use of criminal law and criminal justice, but with one key difference: It highlights the importance of (economic) social class more than the importance of religion, ethnicity, and other social group characteristics.

The cases where instances of crime, deviance, and justice showed in this course can now be seen using these three sociological "lenses", for example, Angela Davis explains how the U.S. prison system functions as a profit-driven (usually also involving racism) institutions that all together form the "prison industrial complex" and how it now serves as the major source of various business that profit from it, inciting a higher number of prisoners, indirectly causing injustice against several of this prisoners for the mere sake of generating more profit; more prisoners, more services, more profit. This is a clear example of conflict theory; this difference creates an automatic conflict of interest between the two groups. The bourgeoisie is interested in



maintaining its position at the top of society, while the proletariat's interest lies in rising up from the bottom and overthrowing the bourgeoisie to create an egalitarian society. Therefore, revolution is inevitable because of structural contradictions arising from the very nature of capitalism. The role that mass media employs here is via the reinforcement of such narratives via indirect allusion to the correctness of such narratives, a movie showing black people as the enemy in the narrative, while the hero being a white man, just to say an example.

My two questions are:

1. How does deviance differs from crime?
2. How can we implement collective measures against this profit-driven society?

Answers to colleagues:

Hi Jennifer,

Yes, absolutely, society can definitely separate morality from legality in a fair consistent way, but in order to do so, not only does a prolonged amount of time has to pass, but also a reorientation of morals via education, social policy, and preeminently, social upheaval via protests and demonstrations. An example is woman rights, especially the right to vote, acquired in 1919 with the 19th amendment. Before that, it was morally wrong and illegal for women to vote in the United States, however, achieving this milestone required a lengthy and difficult struggle—victory took decades of agitation and protest. Beginning in the mid-19th century, several generations of woman suffrage supporters lectured, wrote, marched, lobbied, and practiced civil disobedience to achieve what many Americans considered a radical change of the Constitution.

Hi Shadi,

Who's "they"? Because nowadays, the moral question of ICE depends on who you really ask. If you ask conservatives, known colloquially politically as "the right" about this moral question of ICE patrols, their support will be quite evident, whereas if you ask social democrats, known colloquially politically as "the left", their resentment towards this moral question and issue will also be evident. Other thing that is evident is how you, me, and everyone else observing this issue in our thousand-dollar phone or thousand-dollar laptop feeds the ads and publicity that this issue generates via social media. We don't realize that they are not only deploying ICE, but profiting off out of our digital attention to the issue, while indirectly causing us to waste our times, and preeminently, making us think that our like, our comment, our post matter, when in reality, they don't even grasp the issue.



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