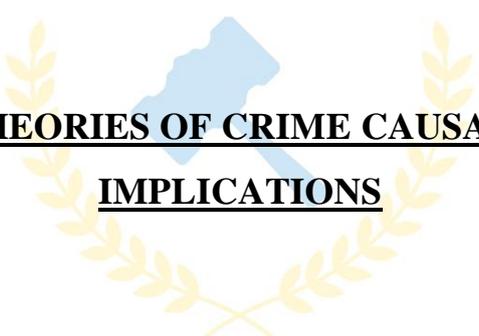


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IMPLICATIONS****INTRODUCTION**

There are different theories which put forward an explanation about crimes in terms of social environment which takes into consideration- family, school, workplace, community etc.

These theories are different from one another. Their focus is as distinguished as the features of social environment causes crimes. They bring forward the reason for why social environment causes crimes. Some of these theories explain individual differences in crimes while other explain group differences in crime¹.

DIFFERENT SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES

Strain theory- The most important and foremost question that is the basis of all of these, theories is 'why do people engage in crime'?

According to the strain theory, the answer is in the world itself i.e., strain or stress, people become upset and thus they engage in crime. They find crime as a solution to get rid of or to

¹ Available at- <https://www.encyclopedia.com/law/legal-and-political-magazines/crime-causation-sociological-theories> [Last accessed on July 20, 2021].

reduce the stress they are bearing. Like for example- In an order to overcome their financial crisis they may steal, similarly in an order to overcome their harassment they may get into violence. Also, a feeling of revenge can also lead them to take wrong decisions against those who have wronged them, also they may get into crime of illicit drug use to make themselves feel better.

The recent version of strain theory is of Robert Agnew's which is known as general strain theory. It is drawn from previous version of strain theory developed by Robert Merton, Albert Cohen, Lloyd Ohlin and Richard Cloward, David Greenberg and Delbert Elliot and associates. Agnew's theory puts forward other types of strains which have not been covered in the previous versions and provides for discussion of conditions under which strain can lead to the crime.

Two major traits that lead to strain with respect to strain theory according to Agnew-

1. Others take things which hold value for you or other present you with negative stimuli.
2. Others prevent you from achieving your goals.

According to Agnew and others failure must be the focus which may lead to accomplishment of three related goals i.e., - money, status/respect and for adolescents- freedom from adults.

MONEY

Money is and has been the greatest power of all time. Without it one cannot survive for long. Both the rich and the poor work hard to get it. But many people are prevented from earning money through legal channels such as work. This is also a crucial reason that people do suffer strain and finally get themselves engaged into illegal activities to get money. There are studies too that prove this point when criminals are asked the reason behind their acts, one simple answer comes out and that is 'they cannot earn money through right ways or legal ways'. Basically, crime increases as the dissatisfaction among the people increases with regards to money and it is found in majority in lower class people.

As money holds such importance in this world, similarly status and respect are also in this list of importance for survival. Status and respect according to many is basically, getting treated with just and in fair manner. Theorists such as James Messerschmidt argue that the desire of having a masculine status is especially relevant to crime. Many people argue over what does it really take to be a man but if common emphasis is considered the key points that come out

are- independence, toughness, dominance, heterosexuality, competitiveness. So herein also, men who are young members of minority groups and are from lower class, experience dissatisfaction to have a feeling to be treated as men. Thus, as a result of it these people may hold a position of criminal and may indulge into violence in response to a minor disrespect from others. They may get into robbing and might assault others.

FREEDOM FROM ADULTS

In adolescent an urge starts developing as they grow; this urge is for autonomy from adults. They start to realize as their body grows that they need freedom, they no longer require permission from others to get a thing done. Even adults sometimes too encourage this autonomy but when the time comes, the adolescents are denied of it. This dissatisfaction from getting autonomy when required sometimes leads to delinquency. This delinquency can be either for getting autonomy, asserting autonomy or against those who deny it. Also, it has been proven by the studies that many negative events too may lead to crime like- divorce of parents, parents beating their children, negative relations with parents or negative relations with teachers etc.

Social learning theory- According to this theory people engage into crime due to their association with others. They tend to have beliefs that they are favourable for crime. As a result, they tend to see crime as a desirable act which is justified in itself.

Ronald Akers has given a theory on this which draws from Edwin Sutherlands theory of differential association.

Social learning theory puts forward the explanation that juveniles tend to learn from their parents and under the peer pressure. Association with delinquent friends makes it quite simple to understand that why one gets into delinquency. Also, not only direct contact but watching certain kinds of shows, movies or even certain media coverage which shows crime or violence plays an important role too in this delinquency.

The idea behind this social learning theory is based on a very practical concept i.e., reinforcement basically support. Like for example if a kid is aggressive and he tends to act in an aggressive manner no matter where he is therefore to prevent his rebellious and aggressive nature his parents buy him a chocolate or candy. So, after that same child is in a similar situation but his parents are not there after him who could buy him something of his desire to prevent him from carrying on any aggressive act, he may in such situation act violently and such

scenarios may increase his level of violence as he surpassed that situation and starts to believe his anger is right and justified and thus goes forward with it.

Also, while imitating others behaviour when people get reinforcement or support from others for doing so, it strengthens their beliefs in what they are doing and if that act is a criminal one then it strengthens their beliefs on violence and crime and this belief keeps on developing as crime activity by that person increases.

Control Theory- Control theorists unlike other theorists earlier talked about have different question to ask and that is “why do people conform”? These theorists take crime for granted. Their argument is that all the people have certain desires which can be fulfilled by engaging into some sort of crime. So, like for example – one can steal rather than legally earn money through hard work and determination as stealing is easy. As crime is an easy way to get yourself satisfied by fulfilling your desires the question that arises that why don't people get into crime?

According to these theorists' people don't usually engage into crime because of the number of restrictions put on to them which acts as a barrier to their criminal acts. As other theorists argue about what factors lead people to engage into crime.

The self-control and direct control play a major part in this control theory. If one has direct control i.e., his family, friends look forward on to him and keeps a check on him and the person starts to develop self-control along with the direct control then it becomes quite easy for him to make a decision considering the repercussions of crime and putting them on a bigger picture and weighing those repercussions against what benefits the crime will get him and ultimately he chooses not to engage into the crime. So, this feeling of loosing so many things if one engages into crime keeps the person away from any sort of crime provided direct control and self-control play a major part.

Policy Implications with regards to the sociological theories

Strain theory policy implications²- As lower-class people are more vulnerable to crime if strain theory goes along thus, policy implication is too in accordance with that only.

Economic opportunities for lower-class people must be enhanced, training programmes must be provided to the juvenile who are at the risk of joining the gangs.

² Available at- www.academia.edu/4444328/Strain_Theory_and_Juvenile_Gangs [Last accessed on July 21, 2021].

A policy which was first implemented was- Boston mid-city project in 1950's. The focus of the project was to eliminate delinquency in central Boston. The project involved a detached worker to work with a gang to ease delinquency. That detached worker acted as a role model for the juveniles in the gang and attempted to empathize with them and inculcate a belief or rather rejuvenate the belief in them of how members could use the conventional means to obtain the goals of conventional society. The accomplishment was seen to be evident as the juveniles started to engage in community activities. But the project was unsuccessful as the agencies which were engaged in it were into conflicts later on.

The US Job Corps is one of the most effective initiatives addressing the restricted possibilities provided to lower-income kids. Sargent Shriver created Job Corps to provide at-risk children with job development and prepare them for future success (Progam Design,2013). Job Corps provides GED and vocational training to help enrolled young people become more employable. The Job Corps has been successful in giving chances to lower-income kids who might otherwise be at danger of becoming involved in gangs.

Social learning theory policy implications³- Deviant and criminal behaviour is acquired and perpetuated through linkages with family and peer networks, according to social learning theory. If this is the root of such behaviour, then it follows that these behaviours may be changed "to the degree that one is able to influence those same processes or the environmental circumstances that impact them". From this standpoint, policymakers should concentrate on creating and implementing preventative and rehabilitative programmes that employ social learning factors to influence positive behaviour change. Mentoring, behavioural modification, delinquency prevention, peer counselling, and gang interventions are examples of programmes guided by social learning concepts. Some of these programmes are based on the concept that giving pleasant experiences and role models for young people exposes them to traditional norms and values, which may reduce future delinquent or criminal behaviour.

Control theory policy implication⁴- As previously stated, social control theory says that the parent's involvement is critical in the bonding of children to their families. This connection is

³ Available at-
http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/professionals/oyap/roots/volume5/chapter08_social_learning.aspx#: [Last Accessed on July 22, 2021].

⁴ Available at:
[http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/professionals/oyap/roots/volume5/chapter12_social_control.aspx#:](http://www.children.gov.on.ca/htdocs/English/professionals/oyap/roots/volume5/chapter12_social_control.aspx#) [Last accessed on July 22, 2021].

thought to be crucial in reducing a child's proclivity for delinquent behaviour. Given the substantial link between parental attachment and reduced levels of delinquency revealed in studies, offering help to parents in the form of parenting skills training might be an useful step toward reducing adolescent criminality by strengthening parent-child ties. Schools, in addition to the family, play an important part in the socialisation of children and may also serve as a deterrent to crime. The school may offer young people help that they may not be getting elsewhere. In light of this, Sprott et al. (2005) suggested that, because school bonds have been found to play such an important role in reducing violent offending, "zero tolerance" policies, which only serve to further exclude and isolate young people who have acted violently and sever their ties to the school, are counterproductive. Young people who are considered at risk or delinquent, on the other hand, should receive more help from the school, not less. Policies that promote school cohesiveness and bind young people to their schools, according to the authors, should be prioritised.

CONCLUSION

The best hypothesis to explain the phenomena of adolescent gang crime is the Strain Theory. Some juveniles attempt to attain societal goals by illegal methods as a result of stress and pressure caused by their failure to achieve them through traditional means. Although Social Learning Theory falls short in explaining adolescent gang crimes, Strain Theory is able to completely explain the phenomena. The most effective method to prevent the creation of juvenile gangs is to redistribute opportunities within society so that they do not disproportionately benefit the middle and upper classes. Unfortunately, such a societal transformation is improbable. Programs like the Job Corps have benefited lower-income kids by providing them with chances they otherwise would not have had and providing them with the legal tools to fulfil society's aims. Other initiatives have had mixed results in reducing juvenile criminality. As far as control theory is concerned, it is quite different from other two theories as it puts forward entirely different question i.e., why one cannot indulge into crime. At the same time, it provides for the reasons for the same and how one can prevent from indulging into crime by having self-control and guidance and support from his family, friends etc. Thus, control theory is in its itself a complete theory which puts forward a clear understanding about reasons of crime and how they can be prevented.



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