

Criminology Midterm

Folkways - everyday norms based on customs, traditions, and etiquette (manners)

- Violations that are generally not seen as serious but may cause one to be viewed as odd or even avoided

Mores - (morality) moral norms based on social values (fashion norms during a funeral)

- Violations seen as more of a threat to social order, and the offender is seen as “bad” and perhaps harmful to society and its institutions

Laws - strongest norms since they’re supported by formal code of sanctions (murder)

- Violations may lead to imprisonment or even death

Ethnocentrism - the practice of judging another culture by the standards of one’s own culture

Formal Social Control - anything connected to the state (police, military)

Informal Social Control - internalizing the norm of asking for things before you take them, for example. Friends and family are strong influences

- As we internalize norms, we respond critically to our own behaviour through shame or guilt

Crime - any intentional act or omission in violation of the criminal law or societal rules, committed without defence or justification and sanctioned by the state

- The state is not immune from committing crimes itself
- the definition of crime is a function of the beliefs, morality and direction of social authorities. Therefore, crime is a *social phenomenon*

Deviant behaviour - the violation of social norms

- Not all crimes are deviant, not all deviance is criminal

Three Viewpoints of Crime

Consensus - people agree on what is repugnant, the law is fair and impartial, people are treated fairly under the law

Conflict - laws are a tool used by the ruling class to maintain their privileged position by keeping “common people” under control

- Laws reflect the power structure of society. Law enforcement targets the proletariat and not the bourgeois

Interactionist - laws are constantly changing as a result of interactions between individuals and groups

- Moral entrepreneurs (MADD) try to get their values enacted in law, being labelled deviant may promote further deviance
- The focus is on the process of deviance and changing definitions

The Saints and Roughnecks - William Chambliss (1973)

- Saints managed to avoid being stopped by police, although their actions were criminal (role models, very liked)
 - Able to hide their delinquency
- Opposite of the saints, seen as headed towards trouble
 - Lower class, unable to hide their delinquency because they weren't able to remove themselves from the community
- Both groups committed equal amounts of delinquency

- The way the community responded to these two groups influenced their self-image and affirmed that particular identity (roughnecks more willing to do extreme deviant acts)
 - Relationship between class structure

State - an institution that claims the exclusive right to exercise force in a given territory through the use of the police and armed forces

Monarchy - transfers power from generation to generation within a single family

- Earlier monarchies were absolute, modern ones are generally constitutional

Democracy - generally representative rather than fully participatory

- Affluent industrial societies tend to be democracies

Authoritarianism - a political system that denies popular participation in government (ex. Venezuela)

Totalitarianism - a political system that extensively regulates people's lives (Ex. Nazi Germany)

Vagrancy Laws - William Chambliss

England 14th century:

- Crusades
- Black plague
- Church

Class Conflict

- The vagrancy laws constituted an abundance of cheap labour to England's ruling elite, during a period when serfdom was breaking down and the pool of labour was depleting
 - Loitering laws
 - Safe streets act
 - Used to control "problem" populations
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Criminology - the development of a body of general and verified principles and of other types of knowledge regarding this process of law, crime, and treatment

- Criminologists take a scientific approach to the study of crime
- We need to understand crime before we can reduce it

The discipline of criminology includes **six** major areas:

- **The definition of crime and criminals**
- **The origins and role of law**
- **The social distribution of crime**
- **The causation of crime**
- **Patterns of criminal behaviour**
- **Societal reactions to crime**

The Definition of Crime and Criminals

- Not all social harms are criminal, and not all criminal acts are harmful
 - We must specify which acts are defined as a crime and who should be defined as a criminal for criminological research purposes

The Origins and Role of the Law

- It is important to understand the social origins of our laws, as well as the role that law plays in society
 - Why are some acts defined as criminal, while others are dealt with under other types of legislation or are not sanctioned at all?

The Social Distribution of Crime

- To understand crime we must know such things as the characteristics of people who commit crimes; trends in the occurrence of crime over time; and differences among cities, provinces, and countries in the rates and types of crime

The Causation of Crime

- Why do some people commit crimes while others live more law-abiding lives?

Patterns of Criminal Behaviour

- Criminal acts are defined by the law in terms of categories such as homicide, theft, and sexual assault
 - Who are the offenders? Who are the victims? Under what social circumstances are offences most likely to occur? What are the consequences for crime victims? How can particular types of crime be prevented?

Societal Reactions to Crime

- In Canada, we normally process law violators through a criminal justice system that includes the police, the courts, and the corrections system
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Rules and Laws: The Regulations of Behaviour

Norms - established rules of behaviour or standards of conduct

- Most of the time, most of us conform to the norms our group prescribes
- We cannot even specify all the rules that govern a particular behaviour
 - Ex. when you try to learn a foreign language you suddenly become aware of the many rules, such as those governing verb tenses, that you aren't consciously aware of when you are using your first language
- Not only do these solutions avert potential chaos, but following the rules enhance our sense of belonging
- The concept of crime was developed relatively recently
- Prior to the 18th century offences were handled privately by the wronged individual and their family

Legal definition of crime - a crime is an act that violates the criminal law and is punishable with a jail term, a fine, and/or some other sanction

White-collar crimes - crime that is committed by middle- and upper-class people in the course of their legitimate business activities

- The crimes of the lower class are handled by policemen, prosecutors, and judges, with penal sanctions in the form of fines, and imprisonment and death
- The crimes of upper class either result in no official action at all, or results in suits for damages in civil courts, or are handled by inspectors, and by administrative boards or commissions with penal sanctions in the form of warnings, orders to cease and desist, occasionally the loss of a licence, and only in extreme cases by fines or prison sentences

Human Rights Violations as Crime

Human rights - minimum conditions required for a person to live a dignified life, among the rights set out by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are the right to life,

liberty, and security of the person; the right to be free of torture and other forms of cruel and degrading punishment; the right to equality before the law; and the right to the basic necessities of life

- If any action violated the basic rights of humans to obtain the necessities of life and to be treated with respect and dignity, criminologists should consider it a crime
- Advocates of this approach feel that the criminal law has been established by those in power so that acts committed by powerful people are not criminalized
- The law is biased against the poor

- We need a definition of crime that considers behaviours that are both actually and potentially liable to criminal law
- John Hagan proposed that deviance and crime be considered on a continuum ranging from the least serious to most serious acts
- Seriousness can be assessed on three dimensions:
 - *The degree of consensus that an act is wrong.* Most feel that mass murder is wrong, but there is much less agreement, but there is much less agreement overusing marijuana
 - *The severity of the society's response to the act.* Murder is punishable by death in some societies and by life imprisonment in others. On the other hand, possession of small amounts of marijuana may be ignored by the police, and many states have legalized or decriminalized marijuana
 - *The assessment of the degree of harm of the act.* Drug use, illegal gambling, and prostitution are often considered to be victimless crimes that harm only the offender, while serious crimes of violence are considered to be very harmful

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