**SOC 3290 Deviance**

**Overheads Lecture 6: The Pathological Perspective 1:**

\* Introduction:

- Many previously immoral/sinful behaviors now

“medicalized” as diseases of body/mind

- Excludes other interpretations/explanations

- May act as a means of control

\* Transformed classical perspective’s focus on free choice into causation

\* Legitimized by rhetoric of science/ provided simple answers

**Theoretical Images:**

\* Popularized by Lombroso’s Criminal Man (1876):

- “Born criminals” are evolutionary throwbacks (“atavists”)

- identified by physical anomalies (e.g. receding forehead)

- compared prisoners/soldiers to back this up

- earlier writers had similar ideas (e.g. Hippocrates, Della Porter,

Lavater, Rush, Gall and Spurzheim).

\* Three essential components of pathological theorizing:

(1) Determinism (deviance is caused, not chosen)

(2) Positivism (faith in the scientific method)

(3) Organic image (society like a large organism)

**History of Pathological Theorizing: Cycles of Optimism + Failure**:

\* Pathological perspective runs in historical cycles:

(1) Optimism; (2) Failure; & (3) Renewed faith

\* We will detail this history in two parts:

(1) Theories related to “sick” bodies;

(2) Theories related to “sick” minds

**(1) From Body Types to Chromosomes:**

\* Lombroso’s ideas refuted by Goring (1913)

\* Hooton (1939) resurrected Lombroso in The American Criminal

Problems:

(1) Prisoners can’t be equated with deviants (not all caught)

(2) Control groups unrepresentative

(3) “Physical inferiorities” = value judgements

(4) Traits may be socially derived

(5) previous incarceration for other crimes

\* Sheldon: Body types predispose to types of deviance:

(1) Endomorphs (fat, round, crave luxury)

(2) Ectomorphs (frail, skinny, plagued by physical problems)

(3) Mesomorphs (robust, strong, assertive= more delinquent)

\* Methodological problems: -vague definitions & measurements;

- social influences in classification

\* Charles Goring: Focus on Heredity. Compared criminality of:

- brothers

- fathers and sons

- distinguished (1) living together/apart

(2) visible vs. invisible crimes

- correlation in levels of criminality high: mental ability?

- problems: (1) inadequate controls

(2) visible/invisible distinction

(3) No evidence intelligence inherited

\* Sensationalistic studies of family genealogy:

- Dugdales’ The Jukes

- Goddard’s study of Kalliak family

- suggestion that deviance runs in families

- Refuted: (1) studies of “respectable families” comparable

(2) biased sources

(3) subjective IQ measures

\* IQ studies: - Goddard: 70% of prisoners have IQ (rated below age 13)

- Murchison: not if most other do too

- IQ scores fluctuate with education, linguistic and

socioeconomic background

\* Genetic studies: Identical vs. Fraternal twins (NOT 100%)

Adoption studies (small differences)

XYY males: research very limited

Generally many methodological problems

**Psychological Pathology: The Abnormal Mind:**

\* Deviance considered the result of a sick mind

\* Three variations: (1) Psychoanalytic theory

(2) Psychometric assessments

(3) Focus on psychopathy

\* Psychoanalytic theory:

- Deviance caused by unconscious forces/repressed sexuality

- Id: made up of libido and thanatos (“death instinct”)

- lack of balance between id, superego and ego= deviance

- problematic stages of personality development (oral, anal,

and phallic)

\* Problems:

- unconscious motives can be found for anything

- circular reasoning

- unquestioned acceptance of modern male heterosexuality

- exaggeration of importance of early childhood experience

\* Psychometric assessments:

- assume certain personality traits associated with deviance

- little evidence backs this up

- MMPI and CPI scales after the fact/ not predictive

- Eyesenck: genetic personality deficiency: neurobiological assumptions problematic

- Yochelson & Samenow: circular reasoning

\* Psychopathy Research: The search for people devoid of conscience

- List of symptoms vague/ some even “normal”

- Disease not distinguished from behaviors

- Circular reasoning

- Biological measurements: (1) problem of subject selection

(2) behavior itself may cause

**Identifying Pathological Deviance:**

\* Search for causes/cures based in faith in:

(1) science/scientific method

(2) ability to predict/control

\* Ultimate goal: rational mastery over nature/deviance

\* Yet many problems with research/methodology:

(1) Physiological studies: (2) Psychological studies:

- imprecise definitions - professional socialization

- poor sampling - contextual variation in diagnosis

- inadequate control groups - class/cultural stereotyping

- definitional ambiguity

- circular reasoning

\* Why has this perspective remained respectable?

**Historical considerations**:

\* Pathological theorizing/positivism linked to capitalism:

- efficient control of labor = profit maximization

- “technology of inner discipline” most efficient

- material science promises technical control

- “treatment” and “rehabilitation” into useful laborers

\* Prisons:

- constant surveillance/control

- classify individuals into types

- facilitate causal theorizing/molding useful workers

- similar dynamics in other institutions

- common now/ radical in early 19th century

\* Instrumental nature of positivism:

(1) Gender-specific hierarchies:

-advocacy of contextless, emotionless objectivity (male)

-parallels distancing/projection in pornography (“virtual

reality of mastery”)

-sadism = bridge between classical/positivist thought

-pornography put into practice: powerful/positivist medicine making over the mind/body of alleged deviant

(2) Non-white/non-Eurocentric hierarchies:

- “neutrality” and emotional disengagement dismisses

other traditions/epistemologies (e.g. African tradition of

“ecstatic knowledge”).

- pathological characterizations of racial inferiority

- exclusive standard of truth denies other viewpoints

\* Next Class: (1) Pathological social control

(2) Assessment of the perspective