**SOC 3290 Deviance**

**Overheads Lecture 8: The Chicago School:**

\* The “Chicago school” produced 2 major perspectives on deviance:

(1) Social disorganization (1920's & 30's);

(2) Differential association (1930's & 40's)

**(1) The Social Disorganization Perspective:**

\* General idea: deviance = result of rapid social change/disorganization

**The Dynamics of Disorganization: Thomas and Znaniecki:**

\* Thomas and Znaniecki: social disorganization = “a decrease in influence of existing rules on individual members of group”

\* The Polish Peasant: research on immigrants found high rates of deviance due to rapid social change/ increase in normlessness

**The Ecology of Disorganization: Park and Burgess:**

\* Introduced ecological model:

- interdependence of organisms

- symbiosis

- life of one affects all

- microcosm/macrocosm organic metaphor for society

\* Fourfold process of disorganization/reorganization:

- invasion of symbiotic order by competing group

- conflict for dominance (deviance increases)

- accommodation of weaker to stronger

- assimilation of new order of symbiosis

\* Geographic analysis: concentric zones in urban areas:

- central business district (dynamic force/engine of change)

- transition zone (most disorganized/deviant)

- working class neighborhoods

- old city neighborhoods

- commuter zone (least disorganized/deviant)

\* Research: Shaw & MacKay: delinquency highest in transition zone

**Identifying Disorganizational Deviance**:

\* The Chicago School combined two research traditions:

(1) A focus on objective measurement of external factors and

conditions (e.g. statistical maps)

(2) An emphasis on the subjective side of social life (e.g. meaning)

\* This combination:

-is a strength of their approach (broad and deep)

-dissolved division over appropriate methodology

-produced productive research

**Social Control of Disorganizational Deviance:**

\* Despite distancing themselves from advocating specific strategies of social control, one emerged nonetheless

\* New focus on treating society not individuals (causes, not symptoms)

\* Chicago Area Project: an attempt to restore normative stability to disorganized communities by:

(1) coordinating community resources of fragmented/competing

groups

(2) sponsoring youth/activity programs

\* Assessment:

- CAP itself never systematically evaluated

- Similar projects succeeded in organizing close community ties

and activities, but failed to reduce delinquency

- Impact of socially structured inequality?

- Still a welcome first step away from earlier individualistic crime

control models

**Assessment of the Social Disorganization Perspective:**

\* Positive points:

-avoids individualistic biases/limitations of earlier views

-enables us to see deviants as people like ourselves

\* Weaknesses:

(1) Problems in operationalization

- failure to justify indicators (e.g. high % of working women) - indicators often confuse cause/effect in same thing

(2) Race, class and gender biases confusing different types of

organization as disorganization (e.g. black, female headed

families)

(3) Failure to address crimes by well-organized, “respectable” individuals (e.g. white collar crime).

(4) Failure to consider causal influences of structured differences

in power and social class (alternative explanations).

**(2) The Differential Association Perspective:**

\* The learning perspective argues that deviance a form of learned behavior in interaction with others

**Edwin Sutherland and Differential Association:**

\* Two core assumptions:

(1) Deviance occurs when people define situation as appropriate for violating norms/laws;

(2) Such definitions are acquired through one’s past history of experience, particularly one’s associations with others

\* Sutherland asserts that learning deviance involves learning to:

(1) Define certain situations as appropriate occasions for deviance;

(2) Master the techniques of successful deviant activity;

(3) Acquire motives, drives, attitudes and rationalizations

justifying violations of norms/laws

\* All of these are learned in communicative interaction with others in intimate personal groups

\* Critical point: when one acquires an excess of definitions favorable to deviance over definitions unfavorable to deviance (i.e. deviance becomes probable)

\* Probability further depends on frequency, duration, priority and intensity of such associations

**The Legacy of Differential Association:**

\* Normalizing our understanding of deviance

\* Deviance as learned is a widely accepted idea

\* Tests of theory:

(1) James Short (1957): linked exposure to delinquents & delinquent behavior;

(2) Reiss and Rhodes (1964): close friendships & delinquency

\* Criticisms of theory:

- too vague to be adequately tested;

- difficulty operationalizing concepts

- inapplicable to self-initiated deviance

- ignores psychological/physiological/economic factors

- overly deterministic/ignores choice

- no need for face to face contact

**Modifying the Image of Differential Association:**

\* Sutherland’s theory has been modified/extended in several ways:

(1) Daniel Glaser’s theory of differential identification (e.g. focus

on media vs. firsthand contact in deviant learning);

(2) Sykes & Matza: focus on learned rationalizations (“techniques of neutralization”) avoids overly deterministic imagery

(3) Jack Douglas: strategies of emotional self-deception/self-seduction

(4) Burgess & Akers: Differential reinforcement of behavior

**Social Control of Learned Deviance:**

\* Deviance may be controlled by either *preventative learning* or  *corrective learning*

\* Preventative learning (e.g. reducing TV violence)

\* Corrective Learning:

(1) Providing positive/anti-deviant role models (e.g. Big Brothers). (2) Surrounding deviant with others defining deviance in an

unfavorable way (e.g. AA).

(3) Behavior modification strategies (manipulating rewards and

punishments). Two types:

(i) Token economies (reward and punishment “points

system” for privileges in institutions)

(ii) Aversive conditioning (associating deviant stimuli with negative consequences such as shocks/sickness)

**Assessment of the Learning Perspective:**

\* Positives:

(1) Normalizes our image of deviance (humanistic appeal)

(2) Widespread acceptance (less so for Burgess and Akers)

\* Negatives:

(1) Tendency to be *overly deterministic* (“soft determinism”

preferable where deviance partly chosen/partly determined);

(2) Ignoring/underplaying the role of unconscious repressions in motivating deviant behavior;

(3) Inattentive to gendered/multi-cultural models of learning;

(4) No assessment of why certain behaviors seen as deviant/ little

emphasis on conflicting social interests and power