Varieties of Control Theory

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The society helps in shaping people to either become better people or worse people through its norms and values. If society becomes strict and upholds its standards, better people are bound to be born in that community. For many years, laws have been set down to help live in peaceful surrounding and are enforced by the judicial system and police. People who break the law are identified as criminals, and in most instances, they are punished for acting as examples to others. Society views crime as a relative concept that is very specific and might vary from one culture to another. For an action to be said to be a crime, it means a law had already been passed against that action. To fully explain why crime is perpetrated and explain some of the factors that push people to engage in crime, sociologists came up with theories that tell more of what pushes a person to engage in crime.

Social control theory became famous in the 1960s because sociologists had different explanations about crime. Travis Hirschi used the concepts of social control to construct the theory. The theory asserts that social ties such as school and family services to reduce deviant behaviors. Crimes will, therefore, happen if the social bonds in the society are broken or they have not been properly established (Hirschi, 2017). Conflict theory explains the society is always in conflict; conflict is, therefore, a natural instinct from a human being. Conflict is unavoidable; for example wars, injustices and violence are brought by the natural disparity. For example the gap between the rich and poor brings conflict in the society; the society is made up of different social classes who are always competing for food, education and political power.

The crime, in this case, is juvenile delinquency; it is defined as the unlawful behaviors by the minors. A minor is a person who has not reached the statutory age of the majority. According to social control theory, people who have not been bonded by society have no goals and meaning; these people have not committed and cannot be controlled. The theory explains juvenile delinquent in terms of the absence of control from the society; when social bonds such as school and family have failed to control young people it means that juvenile delinquency will be inevitable. Society control can either be involved or through attachments. Involvement can be found in schools, churches or at home; activities such as sports, traveling and movies can engage a juvenile such that they will avoid crime because they are busy. Attachments can be explained in terms of having friends, families or even school environment. A juvenile who comes from a family that cares more likely to conform to the laws. Each family has values that are instilled to young people; such values will prevent them from committing a crime. If the juvenile has no parents or is brought up by broken families it means that they will not have values. Such juveniles are more likely to engage in different crimes. Juvenile delinquency is directly related to the controls that are found in society.

Conflict theory, on the other hand, deals with the power struggle between different groups in society. The theory looks at the dominant group and how it imposes legal labels to a minor group in the society. Conflict theory will look at juvenile delinquency in terms of group conflict. The theory assumes that being a criminal is human behavior; juveniles, especially from low economic status. Such juveniles feel that there are strict laws that have been imposed by the dominant majority. They view laws as having been established by the majority of adults; the juveniles views the police as trying to protect the values that have been imposed by adults. Juvenile gangs will, therefore, try to do some of the things that are not permitted by the adult. Most juveniles having an intergenerational conflict with the adults; they fell that the legal process prevents them from doing something. Juvenile delinquency is more in low-class places; most of the young people feel that they should have the same wealth as the rich; that conflict will make them commit several crimes. Conflict theory, therefore, holds that the juvenile will commit a crime so long as there is conflict in the society.

Hirschi argued that there existed various ways by which theories could be tested to prove that indeed they do work. Without tests, all that these theories are essays offering a reasonable explanation of crime. Survey research according to Hirschi was one of the appropriate ways to test these criminology theories (Cullen, 2006; Part IV). To examine the utility of his theories, Hirschi used the survey technique where respondents, who were juveniles in high school were offered a questionnaire that included both trials of theoretical concepts and self-assessment scale of delinquency. By doing this it becomes easy to understand which theory is majorly being used to push them to perpetrate crime.

A questionnaire is not an efficient approach when it comes to collecting data as the chances of getting untruthful answers is high. In a questionnaire, you have to rely on your respondent's answers to collect your data and there is nothing that proves that the answers given are true and accurate. Thus, another method has to be employed in the utility of these theories are to be tested.

From the above discussion, it's accurate to conclude that there exist various factors that pushed people to undertake various crimes. The society plays a large role in shaping our young generation as from society is where many young people learn new things. Thus, if the crime rate is to be reduced, society should be the first place we all look at.

Reference

Cullen, F. T., Agnew, R., & Wilcox, P. (2006). Criminological theory: Past to present: Essential Readings. New York: Oxford University Press.

Hirschi, T. (2017). Causes of delinquency. Routledge.