

# Criminal theory

Law



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Criminal Theory Question There has been an unprecedented increase in the rates of incarceration in the US. Incarceration has been coupled with disparities between the blacks and the whites involved in non-violent drug offenses. The war on drugs has been the main contributor to this trend whereby about 66% of all people imprisoned for drug offenses are the people of color. In addition, it has led to an increase of the minority prison population hence resulted in overcrowding. According to critical race theorists, the privatization of prisons will lead to more non-violent drug offense arrests (Olzak & Suzanne 401). This is because the main aim of private prisons is to make profits at the expense of the incarceration of young, black, non-violent, drug offenders. Since the prisons mainly target the blacks, privatization may increase the already existing racial disparities.

#### Question 2

Bouffard and Rice identify commitment, attachment, involvement and belief as the four components of bonding (139). Commitment is the investment of energy, time, and self in a particular activity. Since one spends more time and energy in the activity, they do not find time to engage in deviance. Therefore, commitment acts as an outer constraint hence limits one from engaging in criminal activity. Bouffard and Rice define attachment as the level of norms and values held by someone in a society (140). Strong attachments to the society operate as inner constraints thus help prevent involvement in criminal activity. Involvement, on the other hand, refers to the engrossment in conventional activities (141). When someone gets involved in conventional activities, they do not find time to engage in unwanted behavior. As a result, involvement acts as an outer constraint thus prevents people from engaging in criminal activities. Finally, belief is the

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trust in a society's legitimate value system. Believing in a particular value system prevents someone from engaging in criminal behavior.

#### Question 3

The Hurricane is a movie about Rubin Carter's, Hurricane's, wrongful conviction. It is not clear who committed the crime due to the lack of evidence, but the police arrested and fixed Carter because they needed somebody to blame (Carter & Klonsky 3). Therefore, one could argue that the police fixed Carter because he was black and not because he committed the crime. In addition, The Hurricane's verdict was changed after Carter had served nineteen years in prison. This illustrates that he was a victim of racial prejudice, and reveals some of the ways through which the society's legal system can fail in ensuring the right of justice for its members. False conviction based on race could still happen to the people of color in 2012 because of the continued practice of racial prejudice.

#### Question 4

Merton's strain theory states that every society has its set goals and values along with acceptable ways of meeting them. The discrepancies between goals and means make an individual experience aspiration strain. People respond to the discrepancies using various forms of adaptations that include: innovation, retreatism and rebellion. Ideally, rebellion refers to the rejection of the goals of a society as well as the established ways of achieving them. This is done with an intention to create a new society that has different values, goals and new ways of achieving them. Retreatism, on the other hand, refers to the rejection of goals, values and the acceptable ways of achieving them. For example, Brezina argues that one may retreat into countercultural lifestyle, drug abuse, vagrancy and alcoholism (2). Finally, <https://assignbuster.com/criminal-theory/>

Brezina defines innovation as the acceptance of the goals of a society but rejection of the established ways of attaining them (3). One form of innovation is crime whereby, for example, a person who misuses money pursues material success but uses an illegitimate way to achieve it.

#### Question 5

The documentary, *The House I live in*, offers an insight of those involved in drugs and the human rights implications of the war on drugs. KirkPatrick argues that the documentary investigates the tragic errors that have emanated from framing drug abuse as a law enforcement issue (16). The drug war has been instrumental for the establishment of the biggest prison-industrial system in the US (21). This has contributed to the incarceration of more than two million people, and damage to the lives of many families and people; especially the black Americans. The drug war is an act of racism because it has been used by those in positions of power to criminalize the people of color. As a result, the drug war benefits those in power since they use it to achieve certain political objectives.

#### Works Cited

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