

Description of the social disorganization theory criminology essay



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Criminology and other social sciences, examine numerous facets when attempting to explain what factors cause individuals to deviate from social norms. Social disorganization theory, . Sociologists have established social structure theories in their efforts to connect behavior patterns to social-economic control and other social ecological factors (“ Social disorganization theory,”). The social disorganization theory expanded from social structure theories; which states that neighborhoods with decaying social structures are more likely to have higher crime rates (“ The social costs,”).

Description of the Social Disorganization Theory

Social Disorganization Theory was created by two sociologists, Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay who were connected to the University of Chicago. Due to the social problems afflicting Chicago, Shaw and McKay examined the predominant rates crime and delinquency (Wong). Creators Shaw and McKay theorized that disorganized communities plagued by poverty lacked strong social strength (Wong). In the early 1940s, Shaw and McKay conducted a study using an ecological concept of dominance, in order to explain the high percentage of criminal behavior that afflicted Chicago neighborhoods (“ Social disorganization theory,”). Robert Park and Ernest Burgess’s Concentric Zone Model was used in Shaw and McKay’s work (Wong). They identified five concentric zones illustrating social problems in Chicago. Shaw and McKay used this information to examine the juvenile delinquency rate in detail and to clarify why it was isolated to urban areas (Wong). Shaw and McKay believed that social disorganization was linked to immigrant groups relocating to more desirable neighborhoods. Shaw and McKay discovered that high delinquency rates persisted in certain Chicago neighborhoods for long

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periods of time in spite of changes in the ethnic and cultural composition of these neighborhoods (" Social disorganization theory,"). They discovered that neighborhoods ecological played a part in determining crime rates. Their research also revealed that high rates of crime occurred in communities that had a declining populations and property decay (" Social disorganization theory,").

Discussion of the Social disorganization Theory

Social disorganization occurs when neighborhoods members fail to achieve united values or to solve mutual problems (" Social disorganization and,"). Shaw and McKay connected social disorganization to poor unstable areas with ethnic diversity(" Social disorganization and,"). Shaw and McKay's studies connecting delinquency rates to physical characteristics established crucial evidences about the neighborhoods relates to crime and delinquency (" Social disorganization and,"). Their work is still used as a guide today as a way of addressing crime in neighborhoods.

A recent version of social disorganization theory states that strong social interactions prevent crime and delinquency (" Social disorganization and,"). When members of neighborhoods are familiar with each other, the adults are more willing to get involved when children misbehave and watch for outsiders, in other words protect each other and their neighborhood (" Social disorganization and,"). According to social disorganization theory, neighborhood characteristics such as poverty and ethnic diversity causes higher crime rates because they inhibit neighborhood members' from working together (" Social disorganization and,").

Judy Van Wyk, Department of Sociology and Anthropology, at the University of Rhode Island uses the social disorganization theory to reason that intimate violence is connected to disadvantage neighborhoods because residents lack social bonds with their neighbors (Benson, Fox, DeMaris & Van Wyk, 2003). It is believed that residents of disadvantaged neighborhoods are unwilling to get involved or call the police in domestic disputes because they have weak ties to their neighbors. Women who live in disadvantaged neighborhoods are more likely to be socially isolated and are at greater risk of domestic violence (Benson, Fox, DeMaris & Van Wyk, 2003). The National Surveys of Families and Households (NSFH) sample was designed to be representative of the general population of U. S. households and employed a multi-stage area probability sample. Data was gathered by conducting face-to-face interviews with 13, 007 randomly selected adult respondents. The study finds that when the racial or socioeconomic configurations of neighborhoods reach certain values, neighborhoods are bound to change character (Benson, Fox, DeMaris & Van Wyk, 2003). They go from being acceptable places to live for most people to being unattractive for everyone except for those who have no other choice. Change occurs mainly because whites or people of high socioeconomic status move out if they observe that too many blacks or poor persons are moving into the neighborhood (Benson, Fox, DeMaris & Van Wyk, 2003). This migration decreases property values and generates an opportunity for those who were previously prevented from living in an area by high housing costs. Therefore, these neighborhoods become overrun with racial minorities and socioeconomically disadvantaged persons (Benson, Fox, DeMaris & Van Wyk, 2003). These changes lead to social disorganization which causes an increase in crime rates.

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Social disorganization can be demonstrated by the presence of people taking drugs on the streets, dealing drug, fighting in public, crime, prostitution, or other criminal and noncriminal activities that created a sense of danger and that is seen by neighborhood as signs of the collapse in social control (Gracia & Herrero, 2007). Social disorganization shows the members that their neighborhoods are dangerous places. Therefore, rendering them too scared to take an active role in boosting social order in their neighborhood; this causes them to pull away from communal life. Using data from a national representative sample of 14, 994 Spaniards 18 years old and older, data was gathered through face-to-face interviews after choosing individuals by quotas of sex and age (Gracia & Herrero, 2007). Results revealed that contributors seeing low or moderate neighborhood social disorganization exhibited a positive attitude toward reporting domestic violence against women as compared with contributors seeing high neighborhood social disorganization (Gracia & Herrero, 2007). The outcomes support the theory that perceived neighborhood social disorganization is adversely related with residents' attitudes toward reporting domestic violence against women, undoubtedly as a result of a weakened sense of trust and joint effectiveness.

Conclusion

As suggested above, social disorganization theory continues to dominate in clarifying the impact of neighborhood characteristics such as, poverty, ethnic diversity, and residential stability, on crime rates. Regarding the future, social disorganization theory will still be applied to various forms of crime and will continue to be the motivation behind criminologists and social scientists in their exploration of criminal behavior.

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