

Theory of deviance

Sociology



The paper " Theory Of Deviance" is a good example of an assignment on sociology.

Labeling theory of deviance is also known as social reaction theory. A sociologist, Howard Becker developed it. The theory was introduced in 1963. According to labeling theory, the deviance is a label that is assigned to the individual's behavior by the society. This theory states that not even a single person is deviant unless the society specifies him/her because each society has its own specifications. The acts that are considered deviant by the current society may be accepted or even be liked by the societies originating in the future. Similarly, in some parts of the world some behaviors are considered deviant, but in other parts, they are accepted happily. According to Durkheim (1951), some people cannot understand the norms of the society and remain unclear of the expected behaviors from the people. They become confused and a condition of stress and strain is created in the lives that lead them to be deviant. These deviant people become the minority of society and are negatively labeled by the majority. (Clarke, 2002)

If a general deviation occurs through a person for the first time, he/she is usually labeled. The same person when commits the same act, he/she is labeled as a primary deviant and the institution will bring him/her to punishment. This is a common observation that the punishment, instead of stopping the individual from the deviant act will lead him/her towards the crime and he/she will again commit the primary deviance. The institution takes a harsher step towards the deviant and eventually, the whole society starts hating the person. After this, the person cannot tolerate the disgrace and accepts his/her role not only as a deviant but also as a criminal and practically starts committing the big crimes.

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Stigma is of great importance to the labeling theory. It is the stigma that converts the behavior of a deviant person into the primary deviance, then secondary deviance and ultimately the crime. (Ruggiero, 2003)