

Deviance

Sociology



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The relativity of deviance The type of defiance that exists in any society is mainly determined by social reactions and cultural meaning. These patterns of defiance also constantly evolve and change with time. For example, in a particular setting, for a certain group, drinking alcohol is a perfect norm and the same act is forbidden in a different time and place. Smoking could also be perceived as a sign of maturity and sophistication in certain societies, but viewed as a sign of irresponsibility and immaturity in others. With regards to this, people in mainstream media and government have for years worried over, designed rituals and made laws around situations that they perceive to threaten or disturb the peace or communal fabric (Curra, 3).

Drugs are a great example of the relativity of defiance. It is interesting how drugs especially alcohol and tobacco are portrayed in schools and the perception that students in general get. As a result of continued stereotype, students view and classify alcohol and tobacco as illegal controlled substances, but in reality, these are legal consumer products. The reason the government allows adults but not students to purchase and consume these products, as they like, is because deviance is relative. Otherwise, why would the government avail dangerous substances to the public?

Drug related crimes are also punished differently just as marijuana laws have continued to evolve depending on societal standing. According to Curra (2011, 3), children raised in the suburbs are subjected to harsher punishment compared to their counterparts from Chicago Housing Projects. Relativity of deviance, therefore, continues to favor those of a higher social class in sentencing laws and in society. It was not until 2010 that 'crack' cocaine users received punishment that was at par with users of pure powder cocaine (Curra, 3). Before that, 'crack' cocaine was punished a

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hundred times more harshly.

Work cited:

Curra, John. The relativity of deviance. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Pine Forge Press, an Imprint of Sage Publications, 2011. Print.