

Free case study on sociology: theories application paper

[Psychology](#), [Behaviorism](#)



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Introduction

Brief Description of case chosen

A May 17th, 2013 CBS News Report gave a lengthy account of a mother who was arrested and charged for aggravated manslaughter on a child under 18 years old. Miami Dade police further verified the events of the alleged incident by saying that the mother, Catalina Bruno, confessed to leaving her 11 month old son locked in her car on a very hot day. The Mother had a previous child neglect charge, but proving aggravated manslaughter seemed difficult to the police arresting and charging the accused (CBS, Miami, 2013).

Overview of perspectives

Conflict theory

Classical Conflict theory as posited by Marx (1967) and Engels (1970) emphasized the economic emergence of conflict occurring between employees and employers. The contention according to the classical school of thought centers on dissatisfaction over inadequate wages and working conditions manipulating power to remain within the confines of the ruling class. In this perspective the class being ruled has very little or no opportunities to execute power concerning their living conditions within the social structure. Hence, social justice is obscure (Hutchison, 2011).

However, contemporary sociology advances that conflict in society goes beyond economic relationships. For example, Weber (1958) embraces a multidimensional perspective encompassing power relationships occurring between genders; pertaining to cultural orientation; religious values and misplaced social identities due to inadequate development of the social self(Hutchison, 2011).

Social constructionist perspective

The social constructionist perspective advances assumptions pertaining to understanding human behavior as a consequences of, their social interaction with others and society. It is social construction of the self-identity. Symbolic interactionists contend that this is the social dilemma of humans living within a society. Perceptions of the world and their world subsequently designed from this paradigm forced upon them from birth. To behave in any other way is considered anti-social (Hutchison, 2011).

People are considered social beings. They develop meanings about

themselves and everything around them based on what others in their environment communicate in speaking and doing. For example, parents socialize children into their cultural beliefs and practices, through modeling behavior. This becomes their view of society and the world. Ultimately, these children become products of that environment within and without of the home. It can be concluded that the social self was constructed from interactions with parents first. As the child move out of the home into, the world of school, church and other social settings more meanings are derived and constructed about society (Hutchison, 2011).

Social behavioral perspective

This perspective explains human behavior from the basis of three underlying conditioning theories. They are classical conditioning as posited by Pavlov (1936); operant conditioning and cognitive social learning which is termed education, but still conditioning in its true sense when relating the concept to social behavior. Social behavior is really learning how to function within a society as a socially acceptable human being. These three conditioning methods are often adapted as mechanisms enforcing compliance with norms (Hutchison, 2011).

Application of perspective to case study

Strengths and limitations

The conflict perspective can explain the legal aspect of this case study. Catalina Bruno became in conflict with social order, which initiated a power relationship between herself and the officer representing the law who took her into custody after which she was charged with committing a crime.

Herein lays the strength of this theory whereby a power relationship did not embody any capitalistic intervention related to worker/ employee. In such a case the conflict theory would not have been applicable. However, its contemporary version can be adapted in understanding how everyone can become non-complaint with social norms as well as laws designed for maintain social order. This non-compliance to legal interventions creates conflict unrelated to wages or job functions.

Further, the social constructionist perspective offers a clear understanding of how Catalina Bruno's conflict was constructed. Perhaps, in the evolution of creating meanings of her world she did not grasp the consequences of locking a child in a hot car for an extended period of time. While social constructionist theory relates that people understand their world based on interactions with meaning and their environment; maybe this particular incident did not form a part of her social experience enough to practice the safety rule.

Importantly, the general public did cast their opinions of the accused and considered her being neglectful because, there was immense public awareness regarding this issue. However, it was not impacting enough for Catalina Bruno to understand the meaning of this information that was being communicated. Here lays, the weakness of social constructionist perspective because it does not specify whether the understanding is appropriate or not. At this point the social behavior perspective can offer profound insights into reasons for this behavior. It could have been that leaving the child in a locked car was a conditioned behavior. It was not the first time she did it, but on this occasion there were severe consequences. It would appear that the

cognitive social learning pattern was inadequate in enforcing a particular behavior.

Conclusion

Benefits of theoretical perspective to social work practice

Theoretical perspectives guide social work practice. Precisely, if social work practice is to remain a scientific discipline theory must form the foundation for interventions because this offers evidence to ways in which social workers respond to social problems. These are strategies and techniques, which have been successfully applied to social work practice centuries ago. When applied they avoid the trial and error scope of practice within the science.

References

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Hutchison, E. (2011). Dimensions of Human Behavior: Person and Environment (Fourth edition). New York. Sage Publications.