

CRIM316 - Week 6: Hirschi's Control Theory



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Terms in this set (11)

Social context of Hirschi	<div>1960s US</div> <div>Vietnam war protests</div> <div>Full swing of civil rights movement</div> <div>Assassination of John F. Kennedy</div> <div>Stonewall riots</div> <div>Second wave feminism</div> <div>Disability rights protests</div> <div>Woodstock hippies</div> <div>Cold war</div> <div>Space race</div> <div>Counter culture - going against institutions</div> <div>Relevance of control theory - with society going 'out of control'</div>
Elements of Travis Hirschi	<div>- Wrote Causes of Delinquency (1969)</div> <div>- Breaks away from existing themes</div> <div>- Asks why do most people not break the law, how are they in control?</div> <div>- Differences between law breakers and individuals</div> <div>- Questioned criminology of women - why do few women engage in crime compared to men (gender crime ratio)</div>

Hirschi's Control Theory outline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Why do people break the law when they know the outcome? - There is a difference between law breakers and law abiding individuals - Used self report surveys of 16,000 anonymous highschool students from California.
Missing qualities of law breakers	<p>A hope for the future</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - law breakers have no hope for employment or any goals - law breakers have nothing, nothing to lose, going to prison can't take away anything if there is nothing to take
Hirschi's surveys on criminal behaviour	<p>Results lead to the discovery of an absence of a control mechanism in law breakers.</p> <p>Thoughts on committing crime</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Law breakers are unable to control psychologically and socially. - Young men lack a control mechanism compared to young women.

Absent elements in law breakers

Attachment

- Most law breakers lack attachment to society - missing attachments in life, family, and bonds.

Commitment

- Lack of commitment - law breakers do not have an ambition to legitimately become better themselves. There is no investment in society.

Involvement

- Being involved means being busy and there is no time to be engaging in criminal behaviour. Being involved means means significant attachment.

The absence of these elements mean that an individual is likely to be out of control and spend more time in prison.

For law abiders, high aspirations lead to a high stake in conformity.

Differences in previous theories

Hirschi is the opposite of Merton

- Hirschi states that a lack of conformity leads to crime. Merton states that conforming to the American Dream can result in crime through illegitimate pathways.

- Hirschi states that It is different from culture. Status doesn't matter if you have a stake in conformity. Status and culture comes from Cohen.

Hirschi's ideal types

The 3 elements interact to give two types:

- Non-delinquents
 - law abiding
 - strongly attached, committed, and involved
 - Strong belief in society's norms
 - Have too much to lose in engaging in crime
- Delinquents
 - Law breakers
 - Lack of a control mechanism
 - Little to none attachment, commitment, and involvement
 - Little or no belief in norms
 - have nothing to lose in engaging in crime

Hirschi's data and cross
checking with crime statistics

- Results and conclusions contradicted previous theories
- Found that social class, ethnicity, and deprived backgrounds related very slightly to crime.
- Disagreed that crime is a product of the working class
- Found that Cohen's gangs were not relevant.
- Found the opposite to Cohen
- Found unproblematic school experiences
- Found that schooling did not play a role.
- Found that parental supervision as the most important factor in producing criminality.
- High levels of supervision results in low levels of criminality and vice versa.
- Families with high supervision
- strict families with large involvement
- "Normal parenting" - big factor in determining criminality
- Family attachment
- High level = likely to avoid crime
- Found that attachment is greater than social class.
- Varies cross-culture

Hirschi did not dismiss schooling but found less significant results - did not find same results as Cohen.

Attachment to families, involvement, and commitment is essential.

Critiques of Hirschi's Control Theory

Residing in an area of delinquency

- Sutherland suggests that criminal behaviour is learned through the socialisation of delinquent peers (differential association)
- Hirschi has no answer to this with the attachment and value of deviant organisations

Opposite to Merton's findings

- Hirschi states that the belief in the dream leads to conformity, therefore it is less likely to commit crimes with the goals of the dream in mind.

Dismisses impact of intersectional experiences

- Parenting and supervision may not be more important than systemic issues.
- In intersectional experiences - negative marginalisation is magnified
- Dismissing social class and role with intersectional experiences - we know they play a big role today

What happens when the controls are off?

- Parental support and supervision can disappear such as leaving home to uni.
- Hirschi has no response or acknowledgement, only focused on teenagers in high school.

Strong empirical basis, but can't explain the gulf between primary deviance of self-report studies where social class and ethnicity have such a weak correlation and secondary deviance, as measured by the official crime statistics, where they are so strong

- Class and role is strong with secondary deviance but it is weak with primary deviance
- Hirschi does not address this in control theory

Implications of Hirschi

- 'Normal parents' definition has changed
 - No longer holds for contemporary social life
- Helps us to understand gender ratio problem
- Socialisation of young boys vs young girls
 - Men commit more crimes generally
 - In NZ, there is an increase of serious crimes done by women.
 - Brakes on controls are applied much more on women than men.
 - Daughters as more supervised than sons which stems from a culture of overprotecting and 'boys will be boys'
 - As a result this gives them a stronger attachment and connection.
 - Parents generally give a higher level of supervision to daughters compared to sons.
 - double deviance - women offenders may receive severe punishments

Raising children

- Take up child's time with extracurricular activities.
- Increase involvement and commitment.
- In NZ, there has been many examples where bootcamps don't work.
 - Keep students busy outside of school with homework