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Kai Erikson Deviance and Societal Constructs

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Kai Erikson Deviance and Societal Constructs

Part 1

According to Erikson's hypothesis, there are times when a community overlooks misbehavior that would generally be restricted, condemned, or even penalized. As a result, Modern culture has re-defined deviant behaviors to exclude formerly condemned behaviors while simultaneously discreetly increasing the consistent range in areas where conduct was formerly deviant (Erikson, 1966). As a result of the rise of specific delinquent behavior in the United States, the social system is reframing these activities as non-deviant. As a result, aberrant actions become regular, and the degree of deviation remains consistent. In this perspective, Kai Erikson's assumptions about criminal conduct apply to contemporary American society.

The number of homicides and burglaries that transpire in the country has become socially acceptable. In essence, American society has become hardened to it. Americans now consider criminality to be routine since it occurs so frequently. An example is in comparison between the reaction of the citizens to the Saint Valentine's bloodbath and the typical responses to criminal happenings presently happening in the United States (Wadley, 2016). Four thugs murdered seven rivals in 1929. This heinous act stunned the country to the point where it deserves not one but two listings in the World book encyclopedia. Because of the indignation generated by this atrocity, prohibition was repealed, bringing an end to most of the gang bloodshed. As a result, in the 1920s, the social system was unwilling to tolerate such conduct, and their reaction aimed to prevent it (Wadley, 2016). The response to this deviation was to correct it. This fury over wrongdoing has vanished because murder and criminal conduct happens every day in the streets, yet society is not outraged over these acts. Many news agencies like the Washington Post and the New York Times report criminal activities occurring in different towns in the United States,

especially horrifying homicides. Nevertheless, there is no adequate outrage from American society.

Following a series of catastrophes, society has come to accept these crimes as routine and conceal the fact that there is a problem. When it comes to crime rates, the United States is a leader. The American citizenry sustains a degree of transgression that they can bear to acknowledge by qualifying horrific acts so that the magnitude of deviance may not exceed the line of normalcy. In essence, the lack of reaction has allowed violent transgressions to continue. In addition to that, in present-day America, the atrocities witnessed are increasingly being highlighted since 2016, when former president Trump was elected (Wadley, 2016). Kai Erikson's argument is presently weak based on recent development like the Black Lives Matter movement and the progression of hate crimes targeting members of the LGBTQ community, Muslims, and Hispanics. Based on what is happening in America today, society is changing. Whereas criminal conduct has been normalized for a long time, it is deviant, but that is a theory advanced by Kai that does not talk about the underlying cause of the problem. For a long time, America has dealt with issues, though some aspects of American society, like racism, have not been addressed successfully. Nonetheless, that does not mean that racism has been normalized, as suggested by Kai Erikson because society is fighting back.

Part 2

In the case of *Armed Robbers* by Decker and Wright, specific actions are deemed rational. For instance, when offenders do not choose but engage in criminality as a decision originating from a desperate financial position that cannot be adequately addressed via ordinary means, the crime is rational. They adopt a condition of encapsulation due to the strain of their present position, which weakens the psychological connection between transgression and the

possibility of punishment, where all that matters is dealing with the problem at hand by engaging in crime (Wright & Decker, 1997). The motivation based on financial difficulty is problematic to policymakers because it makes crime prevention a problematic endeavor. The perpetrators know that crime is ethically reprehensible. Despite this, the majority of them feel no remorse throughout their robberies. Those who have serious reservations often believe they have no option but to engage in criminal conduct, even if they have a sense of guilt. The result is similar in both circumstances, but the criminal act is rational. Also, within a rational choice explanation of crime, feelings play three crucial functions. First, a person's emotional condition is a fundamental background where rational behavior is based. In addition to that is the "sneaky thrill" of engaging in petty offenses for the thrill associated with such acts (Katz, 1988). Third, the predicted emotional consequences of criminal action may effectively diminish the chance of criminality.

The rational choice perspective of crime implies that criminals are rational in their thoughts and actions. Therefore, despite the penalties, the benefits of engaging in the criminal act outweigh the punishment. However, there are counter-arguments to the rational choice perspective. For instance, the theory insinuates that every person can make rational decisions, but that is not the case. Many individuals engage in criminal acts, not that they are forced by circumstances to do so, but they are mentally and psychologically disturbed.

An example is a mentally ill person who breaks the glass window in a hotel. In such a case, the individual has committed a crime by breaking another person's property, but this person is not mentally okay. Furthermore, the argument does not explain why juvenile criminals are exempt from the weight of accountability, but adult offenders are not. In addition to that, rational choice insinuates that criminals are deliberate agents who exercise care for their rational conduct

and desires. However, it is essential to point out that individuals are incapable of foretelling their conduct when deliberating. After all, contemplation may entail the relative value of the benefits. If it does, it can do so from the first-person perspective of acknowledging the socially constructed import of such values as reasons doing what one does, rather than attempting to explain and preventive perspective of rationality.

Too little emotional power leads to inadequate physically and psychologically stimulation, whereas excessively emotional power causes the individual to get so excited that their thoughts and bodily personality become confused. If a perpetrator becomes enraged readily, they will more likely harm somebody without hesitation than if they are calm. Negative feelings can obstruct reasoning, resulting in the application of limited rationality or a hasty decision to commit a crime.

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