

Essay Exam #2

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## Lecture Exam #2

**What are roles and statuses and how do they relate to each other? What is meant by role strain and conflict? What do the experiments discussed in the lecture and the videos we watched tell us about individuals' behavior in groups (be sure to be specific and discuss all 3 experiments)?**

Social statuses are the various positions in society that each individual takes on. On average each individual can have around three-thousand different statuses. All of the statuses or an individual make up the status set for that individual. Statuses often define how individuals interact with each other and how priorities are formed. Social roles are behaviors or patterns of behaviors that are attached to a particular status. While being a parent is a social status, caring for a child is a social role. Some statuses in life are given to the individual, these are ascribed statuses. Ascribed statuses are normally things that are unchanging that the individual has no control over. Gender, race, ethnicity and age are some examples of ascribed statuses. Statuses that a person works for, or in some way has to achieve, are achieved statuses. Being a parent, rich, well educated, a high school drop-out or a terrorist are achieved statuses. They are a reflection of the life efforts of the individual. Status symbols may be used to indicate certain statuses that an individual holds. Status symbols can be as obvious and intentional as driving an expensive car or wearing expensive clothing, or symbols can be more subdued and more of a requirement of functionality of a status, such as a psychology major reading a cognitive science textbook. It is also possible for an individual to display symbols of a previous status, such as a former military officer choosing to wear certain branch insignia (or award pins) outside the context of a formal uniform.

It is possible for an individual to successfully operate multiple statuses at the same time in complete harmony with each other, but there are situations in which an individual will encounter status difficulty. Those situations, role strain and role conflict, are situations in which

the roles of some statuses will interfere with each other. In a role strain situation there may be interference between two statuses or a situation where multiple statuses will both require the same resources. A role strain situation can be dealt with without having to completely dismiss one role for another, allowing a compromise between statuses. An example may be a business owner who also carries the status of mother. If the mother's child becomes ill and needs her attention, it might be possible to delay rushing to the child immediately, and instead taking a few minutes to assign tasks to her employees and perhaps assign someone to supervise in her absence, and then going to take care of her child. Both the mother and business owner have role responsibilities, but it is possible for there to be a compromise to allow both roles to be maintained. In a role conflict situation two or more statuses are in conflict and a situation occurs which will most likely require removing one of the statuses to handle the roles of the other status/statuses. An example of this could be a person who holds of status of smoker and the status of flutist. If breathing or lung difficulties developed as a result of the role requirements of a smoker (smoking nicotine laced stick of tar), it could force a cession of the flute playing activities of the flutist. Alternatively, it could be possible for the flutist to give up the smoker status to retain the flutist status. In either situation, it would likely reveal which status is the master status. The master status is the status which is the most important to the individual.

Individuals who operate within a group will often drop their personal statuses, at least temporarily while engaging in group behavior. From the experiments stated in the lecture it is possible to determine that in a lot of situations people will conform to what is perceived as the wishes of the group and will do as the group does. Human nature gravitates toward following the in-group and normally the in-group follows an authority, thus humans will generally follow the wishes of authority. The three experiments explored three separate facets of these statements.

In the Asche experiment conformity was tested. The experiment utilized five decoy research participants and one actual research subject. The experiment was disguised as a visual-spatial exercise in which participants had to identify which of three options of lines were the same as an example line that was given. The decoy participants of the study (of which four went before the actual subject in the study) all selected an incorrect answer. Asche was testing to determine if the subject would believe their own visual senses, or if the participant would select the same wrong as answer as the group. In a lot of situations, over one third of the trials, the subject went with the group instead of following what they were fairly certain was the correct answer. The experiment showed that a fair amount of judgments are based on conforming to the opinion of the group, even if the individual does not hold the same belief.

Another experiment conducted by Stanley Milgram tested how well a participant responded to authority. The experiment set up the subject as a “teacher” and an actor was designated as the “student”. The experiment asked the “teacher” to administer word pairs to the “student”. If the student did not give a correct response, the teacher was to administer a shock, and increase the voltage of the shock for every subsequent error. The actor was told to give incorrect responses to the word pairs. During the experiment, there was a pre-arrange set of four responses for if the participant expressed an interest to terminate the experiment. Only after all four had been exhausted, or 240 volts was reached, would the experiment be terminated. For many participants the authority of the man in the lab coat was sufficient to get them to continue to 240 volts. None of the actors in the experiment were actually shocked, but the participants believed that they were actually being shocked, which caused great distress for the participants. Despite the distress and concerns for the safety of the “student”, the participants continued to obey the instructions of the experimenter. This experiment was used to partially explain how so

many Germans were able to be influenced into experimenting on Jews and eventually killing many of them. Milgram's experiment also provided powerful evidence for the level of obedience that human subjects will give to someone they view as being in a position of authority. After the conclusion of the experiment, future experiments of this nature were greatly limited as the experiment design was evaluated for its ethical implications, due to the distress of the participants.

The third experiment was conducted at Stanford University in 1971 by Dr. Philip Zimbardo. The experiment was set up in the basement of Jordan Hall, the psychology classroom building, at Stanford University. The experiment utilized twenty-four undergraduate students as guards and prisoners. The individuals were chosen at random for their roles, but it was found that they soon adapted to those roles completely. In the beginning the guards were encouraged to create a distance with the prisoners, to call them by number and not by name. It was the intention to create power relationships by denying the prisoners privacy and instilling fear. The students assigned to the prisoner role soon adopted fear to the guards and the guards took on a role of authority and even more sadistic behaviors. The experiment was originally designed to run for two weeks, but was only able to run about 6 days because of some participants quitting and guards humiliating and abusing the prisoners. This experiment shows how an identity or status can lead to the association with a particular group and encourage the behaviors of that role. Both prisoners and guards internalized their status and became disconnected from their previous status.

The participation in a group, being influenced by authority or a combination of each can drastically change the behavior of the individual and cause the individual to react in ways that otherwise they may have not acted.

**What is bureaucracy -- why does it exist and what are its major characteristics? What are some of the problems (or dysfunctions) of bureaucracy?**

Bureaucracy is the ultimate hierarchical organizational structure, which in conjunction with an accountability system could be an effective organization system for a large group. Bureaucracy exists because large group dynamics require the uniformity and structure that it provides for survival. The bureaucratic system provides a method for the standard application of rules and for the specialization of individual talents. The major characteristics of a bureaucracy are the presence of a hierarchy of many levels, a division of labor and objective rules. The levels of the hierarchy allow for an aspiration to climb to a higher level in the organization and provide a structure for both reporting and supervision. The division of labor in a bureaucracy results in individuals who learn their roles very well and eventually becomes experts in their particular job function, as well as intricacies of their portion of the hierarchy. Objective rules in an organization provide for a certain amount of fairness. While it may seem cold and impersonal for these objective rules to exist, it is imperative for the function of the bureaucracy. Finally, a bureaucracy practices merit selection, a process by which vacancies in the group are filled from the lower levels, utilizing the most talented and best performing individuals. This is an equitable method of promoting individuals in the organization. A bureaucracy provides a social structure for the interaction of employees and their supervisors and establishes a clear chain of authority.

The dysfunctions of a bureaucracy are numerous. The most obvious to a new comer to a bureaucratic organization is trained incapacity. A bureaucracy does not support the changing of procedures from the lowest levels of the hierarchy and often it is difficult for procedures to change without majorly upsetting the functions of the organization. Changes must be gradual, and not interfere with established ideas of how things should function. If an employee encounters inefficiency in their area of the hierarchy, they will very likely not be able to make any changes

and presenting it to their superiors will likely be seen as an offense to the superior's authority, or simply be ignored if the original policy or procedure was created by that particular superior.

Another problem that can occur is a runaround. This results in individuals who must interact with the group running into problems of overspecialization among members of the organization. Each individual has a specific set of tasks which they specialize in. If an outsider encounters a member of the organization and needs to have some function performed, but has not selected the individual who is responsible for that task can only be referred to the correct person by the incorrect individual, assuming that the individual member of the organization has knowledge of the area of the organization to which the outsider needs to seek. Along the same general vein of bureaucratic frustration is the concept of red tape. Red tape is merely a formal procedure that may or may not have a purpose, but fulfills some requirement of the procedures of the organization, even if the purpose for such paperwork or its source procedure has been long forgotten. This is another example of the lack of flexibility provided by the bureaucratic model, part of the rigidity of the model. Being rigid discourages creativity and any type of individual thought within the organization. In general, any change requires ascending at least a few levels in the hierarchy to be considered and potentially approved. This means that bureaucracies are slow to respond to change, even to major changes in their environment. A present example of this is with the IANA (Internet Assigned Numbers Authority) needing to change to a new numbering system (called Internet Protocol version 6), away from a stable standard for the past 30 years (Internet Protocol version 4). The problem spans multiple organizations across multiple nations, but there is still an established bureaucratic hierarchy that prevents this much needed change. The problem being faced is that there is a conflict with mathematics for the number of assignable addresses that are available, compared to those that are needed in the old system. IANA must

answer to another authority, ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), but also has subordinates (seven of them), including ARIN (American Registry of Internet Numbers). Under the authority of IANA's subordinates exists a hierarchy of network administrators and regional regulatory organizations. Most of those organizations have their own independent bureaucracies which impede a needed change in infrastructure. One of the organizations is AT&T, a major network provider. The individuals at the bottom of those organizational hierarchies are the individuals who must also answer to the demands of the changing network environment. Due to economic pressures and other factors, the bureaucracies involved are preventing their respective organizations from transitioning to the new numbering system. The end result of this inflexibility is that at the end of 2011, if no one moves to the new system, there will be a depletion of the available addresses in the old system, resulting in a halting of address assignments which will in turn stall network growth. This is an example of how the lack of actual influence of individuals at low levels of a bureaucracy and the generally rigid nature of their procedures can be harmful to the organization or to the organization's community in general.

One of the dysfunctions of the bureaucracy that undermines its designed function is nepotism. Nepotism places people higher in the organization due to personal considerations, such as family or familiarity, instead of through merit or performance. This is an unfair practice to the organization as it can cause the more deserving and more talented employees to resign if they determine that it has occurred, or simply because the most talented individuals are not in positions where they can best help the organization. It is also unfair to the individual who is the best candidate for the position as it denies them the opportunity to grow in the organization and to have an influence on the organization.



Finally, a built-in flaw of the bureaucracy is the “Peter” principle. In this principle the individual will rise in the organization rapidly until they reach a position where they are not able to perform as well as they did in lower branches of the organization. This can result in an organization of incompetence. The individual will rise in the organization when they perform well, but as soon as their performance drops, they stall at the position they hold in the organization. If the individual is not well suited to the position they will not be promoted, but because of fear of how it reflects on their performance the promoting superior will not demote the stagnant individual or terminate their employment. Just like nepotism, this is a disservice to both the individual and to the organization, because it is a situation where the wrong person is in the wrong position. The individual will be in a position where they are not performing well and where they are likely unhappy until acted upon by an outside force. The organization does not get to benefit from the individual in the lower areas of the hierarchy where they were more valuable.

Bureaucracies are good for handling large groups and organizing large numbers of members (employees), but due to inflexibilities and the personal egos of members, there are some drawbacks to their use. Red tape and “run around” are frustrating, but it would seem that they are only minor problems to a system which allows for tasks to be handled by an expert. The most problematic of the dysfunctions are nepotism and the “Peter” principle. Those dysfunctions occur due to preferential treatment and defending of personal ego, and behavior that is generally inconsistent with doing that which is best for the group.

**What is deviance? What are the major theories for why deviance occurs which were discussed in the lecture? Be specific and discuss all the major theories of the functionalists, symbolic interactionists and conflict theorists from the lecture.**

Deviance is a deviation from the norms of a society. While all violations of the norms of a society may be seen as deviance, there are degrees of deviance. Normally the title of “deviant” is reserved for those that significantly deviate from the established norms. Deviance is not static, nor is it transferable from one society to another. Due to the variation in what a society values, as well as a particular society’s dynamic norms, it can be difficult to isolate exactly what qualifies as deviance from one situation to another. What is acceptable in one culture may not be acceptable in another culture. For example, while in some African nations it is perfectly acceptable to be physically in contact with a person and stare at them, that particular behavior would be deviant in North America. In a single society the norms can change over time as well. If a woman were to wear a hoop dress in the present time in the middle of a large city in the United States, it may be viewed as deviating from the norms, whereas in the 1800s, such a dress would not only be acceptable, it would be expected. On the more serious side of deviant behavior, it was once illegal in some towns to work on a Sunday (or other holy day). Violations of this norm of society could result in punishments as severe as being on public display in stocks in the town center. In other parts of the world during the same time, it was worthy of punishment as severe as the removal of a digit, usually a finger.

Some societies respect the concept of a moral holiday or a place where certain norms are not expected to be adhered to. An example of this would be the annual Mardi Gras celebration in New Orleans. During that particular time and in that specific place, norms are forgotten and as such a behavior would have to be more severe to be considered deviant, although it could be stated that there is simply an alternative set of norms in place for that event.

Societies hold numerous theories for why deviance occurs. Some believe the factors to be biological, stemming from either an extra Y chromosome, or simply inherited traits from deviant parents. Another set of theories focuses on psychological causes, with there being a mental illness or other dysfunction causing the deviant behavior. Finally, there are the sociological causes, such as social group membership, which others believe contribute to deviant behavior. Each of the three majors “belief systems” of sociology have their own theories as to why deviance occurs, most centered on sociological causes for deviant behavior.

The functionalists, such as Durkheim, see deviance as being a reasonable part of the function and development of a society. Durkheim’s theory of deviance states that deviance is a component of what holds society together. This theory allows for the concepts that deviant behavior gives society a chance to test if a behavior is actually deviant and set standards for what is deviant, as well as a chance to air out old norms and decide if they still represent the values of the society. In some situations this results in social change, and in others it simply clarifies what the values of the society are. In this functionalist theory, the deviance creates an opportunity for the society to respond based on the morals, values and norms that are established, to greater fortify society. Some displays of deviance can bring about social change. An example of this is the group of African American men who refused to leave a segregated diner in Greensboro, North Carolina in 1960, which helped to reform the way African Americans are treated. Another functionalist by the name Robert Merton, who followed Durkheim’s work, believed that the deviant behavior was merely one of several possibilities for an individual to respond to the expectations of society. Merton believed that the basis of society is the combination of the goals for an individual and the means which are required to acquire those goals. Merton believes that those who do what is required to accomplish the goals which society has set for each individual

are conformists. The individuals who hold the same goals but accomplish it by means other than those allowed by society are “innovators”, in most views this rejection of the normal means is deviant behavior. Merton also believed that those who held on to the same means to accomplish the goals, but who rejected the goals, called ritualists, were just as deviant as the “innovators”. The final group Merton acknowledged as part of his matrix of behavior was the retreatists, those who reject the means and the goals. In a completely separate category Merton recognized a group called “rebels”, of which he believed very few actually exist. Merton’s rebels reject the goals and means of society and replace those values with their own goals and means of accomplishing those goals.

Symbolic interactionists have theories of deviance which involve varying social categorizations to define the causes of deviance. First, the labeling theory treats all behavior as equal, providing only the society’s reaction to it to determine if it is deviant or not. The labeling theory allows for a behavior to be seen as either different or deviant depending on the significance of the deviation, or rather the type of reaction the behavior receives. In labeling theory it is possible for a stigma to grow surrounding a behavior, which will follow the deviant individual for their entire life, a type of social sanction for the behavior that can greatly interfere with the individual’s ability to integrate into society. A modern example of a stigma would be placement of an individual’s name into a sex offender registry. The labeling theories also include the concept of the medicalization of deviant behavior. Medicalization of a behavior removes the stigma that the behavior takes on. This medicalization has been applied to things such as alcoholism, and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. Control theory is another theory embraced by symbolic interactionists, developed by Walter Reckless. In control theory there are several facets of social interaction which theorists believe can contribute to the deviant nature of

an individual. The first of these components is attachment. In general, the attachment component of control theory states that fewer attachments, or the weaker the attachments, the more inclined to deviant behavior the individual is likely to be. The next element of the control theory is commitment. Commitment defines the type of bond that the individual has to their own accomplishments. The level of commitment and the amount that individual values things that they have worked towards or things that are positive in their life. Next is the element of involvement. In general an individual is not willing to risk their own accomplishments. Involvement is the amount of interaction that an individual has with groups they belong to. For some this is involvement with religious groups, or other organizations which emphasize interests that the individual holds. If an individual is involved they are less likely to be involved in deviant behaviors. The final element is belief. The belief can be spiritual, or in other individuals or in some universal truth. This element can be important because some deviant individuals lack the ability to have faith in something. Control theory does not attempt to explain why individuals become deviant, but instead describes why some do not display significant deviant behaviors. Symbolic interactionists also subscribe to a theory of differential association. In differential association the groups of people with whom an individual associates will determine the behaviors of the individual. This theory is in compliance with commonly held beliefs regarding group-think and conforming to the ideas of a specific group. The theory provides that individuals who associate with groups of deviants are likely to display deviant behavior. This theory also accepts that it is possible for the individual to accept a deviant career and center their life on deviant behavior after associating with a deviant group. Common occurrences of this can be seen in organized crime and gang activity.

Conflict theorists have a unique perspective on the concept of deviance, much like their perspective on most other aspects of society. Conflict theorists have less formalized theories of deviance than the other branches. The conflict theory for deviant behavior centers on the activity of the bourgeoisie. The theory gives credit to the bourgeoisie for creating the laws and expecting the proletariat to follow them. At the same time the conflict theorists state that the bourgeoisie are usually not found to be deviant. The wealthy are seen as eccentric, and not deviant in abnormal social behavior. The wealthy and those with great popularity are allowed to violate social norms with very few sanctions, and in some cases the behavior becomes norm, or at least becomes acceptable. The criticism that the conflict theorists apply to matters of law is that laws are applied unfairly. In the conflict view, white collar crimes are caught much less often and are often dismissed as not harming anyone, even when there is evidence to the contrary, such as intentional attempts to cover up a defective product. The basic premise of the conflict theory of deviance is that the bourgeoisie escape deviance.

**What is crime? What are the types of crime according to the lecture, and which groups tend to be put in prison for crime? Explain the four main purposes of the criminal justice system, as well as the issue of recidivism.**

Crime is a deviance that is punishable by a legitimate/formal authority. The five types of crime identified in the lecture are white collar crime, violent crime, property crime, “victimless” crime and organized crime.

White collar crime, which is sometimes also called corporate crime, usually involves crimes regarding money such as embezzlement or other types of fraud. White collar crimes also include covering up product defects or in some way deceiving others for personal or organizational gain. Violent crimes are of a more personal nature, where the victim is physically harmed or intruded upon by the deviant. These crimes include rape, assault and murder. Property crimes are not committed against individuals, but instead it is committed against their property. These crimes include automobile theft, home burglary, trespassing and any other crimes that involve the theft or destruction of property. “Victimless” crimes are deviant acts that do not pose a direct, obvious harm to anyone who would be involved in a crime, outside of the person conducting the crime. The most typical example of this type of crime is prostitution. Less exciting, but more common occurrences of this type of crime would seatbelt infractions, failing to wear a motorcycle helmet and drug use. The victimless crime category does not seem to have a victim, but yet there are interested parties who may be harmed by the commission of such crimes. In situations involving health and safety, the victims tend to be the families of anyone injured during such a crime and the insurance companies who have financial responsibility for the persons committing the crime. Organized crime is a type of crime that relies on a group of criminals, usually having a hierarchy. In these organizations it is possible for an individual to

develop a deviant career. One of the largest examples of an organized crime organization would be the mafia. Some street gangs are also organized enough to qualify as criminal organizations.

Crime and incarceration statistics are compiled based on several different categorizations such as age, sex, race and social class. The majority of crimes are committed by people in the 18 to 29 years of age group. Males are also more likely to be convicted of crimes and imprisoned, which is not surprising given that it is believed that men are more likely to be biologically predisposed to such behavior, whether by having an extra Y chromosome in some men, or just by the levels of aggression that the additional testosterone creates. Racially, African Americans and other blacks are more likely to be in prison than their Caucasian counterparts. The racial discrepancy does not have any rational explanation, but it is suspected that the legitimate enforcement agencies spend more time focusing on citizens of that race. Finally, the lower class citizens, those of the working class primarily, have the highest rates of imprisonment. This opens up an interesting opportunity for conflict theorists, as it supports their position regarding deviant behavior and the wealthy. From the lecture it would seem that young working-class black males are the most likely to be put in prison.

The four main purposes of the criminal justice system are to provide retribution for the victims, deter future crimes, rehabilitate deviant offenders, and protect society from the deviant offenders. The retribution aspect of the criminal justice system is the one that carries the most weight with most of its supporters. The harsh environments of the prisons are designed to punish, and seek revenge for the deviant acts performed, on behalf of the victims. The deterrence aspect of the criminal justice system is to use current offenders as an example, showing that the society does not accept those types of deviant behaviors. In some ways the deterrence aspect also serves to reinforce the validity of the system itself. Rehabilitation is one of the less successful aspects of



the system. The attempt is made to rehabilitate prisoners and prepare them for their return to society, as productive, compliant citizens. Finally, the criminal justice system is charged with the protection of society. This is accomplished by segregating the offenders from the rest of society, theoretically until they have had a chance to be rehabilitated so that they can safely reintegrate. The aspect of protecting society is rather interesting, as it has multiple sides. It serves to physically keep the offender away from society, for the physical protection of society, but it also serves to contain what could be perceived as a moral threat to society. Recidivism is the repeating of deviant activities after negative consequences have been administered. In American prisons the rate for recidivism is quite high, with over 67% of deviant offenders committing another offense, and around 26% returning to prisons to serve an additional sentence. This indicates that the rehabilitation aspect of the criminal justice system is failing to meet the needs of the society.



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