

Lecture 7:

rational choice and
deterrence

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reading Lundman-
pessimism

- "Prevention projects don't work and they waste money, violate the rights of juveniles and their families, inspire bizarre suggestions and programs, and fail to affect the known correlates of urban delinquency" **[ouch]**
- Need a theory, or set of related ideas about causes of delinquency, to prevent or control it

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reasons for optimism

- Preventing Crime: What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising (www.soc.umn.edu/~uggen/4141)
 - Perry preschool (1962)
 - Nurse home visits (1990s)
- Promising
 - family counseling
 - esp. multi-systemic therapy (MST) for serious and chronic offenders
 - other "blueprint" programs

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rational choice



I. Background

- "classical school" of Beccaria & Bentham
- Enlightenment era, social contract

II. Assumptions

- Individuals have free will and are rational
- Crime is natural and not learned (we would if we dared)
- Society is held together by a social contract
- General (normative) consensus -- shared morality

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III. conceptual tools

- **Specific Deterrence**- experience of being caught and punished makes one less likely to try it again
- **General Deterrence** - others learn of threat
- **Example:** (P = probability of success, not busted)
 - What kind of rewards? Costs?
 - Rewards: Money, thrills, status
 - Costs: Fines, punishment, family, friends, stigma

$$Y = P * (\text{Reward}\$) - ((1-P) * (\text{Costs}\$))$$

$$Y = .8(\$500) - .2(\$1000) = \$400 - \$200 = + 200$$

So? Do you do it?

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iv. critique

1. Magnitude of deterrent effect
2. Decisions are moral, normative, not just rational
 - rational planning is exception, not rule
3. Impossible to control delinquency through deterrence
 - 100,000 officers
4. Many "rewards" not affected by deterrence
 - e.g. masculinity
5. Weaker version of social learning (DA)
 - (unfair) RC not deterministic

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V. policy

- Q: Is the CJS based on choice theory? The JJS?
- Specific suggestions
 - Decriminalize status offenses
 - Lower age of accountability
 - Abolish the juvenile court
 - Give determinate sentences
 - Grade the punishments

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prevention and control

- Q: Lundman's 3 stages?
 - *Predelinquent*
 - *Area projects, DARE, Individual Treatment, Scared Straight*
 - *Preadjudication*
 - *Diverslon*
 - *Postadjudication*
 - *Probation, Community Treatment, Boot Camps, Institutionalization, some Scared Straight*

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program evaluation

- **SCARED STRAIGHT: RAHWAY (p. 187)**
 - Any participants?
 - Describe the "treatment"
 - Design and evaluation
 - Recidivism: 41% treatment, 11% control
- Replications: no effect or worse in well-designed study
 - **MICHIGAN REFORMATORY VISITATION 1960S**
 - *43% of treatment & 17% of controls violated probation*
 - **JUVENILE OFFENDERS LEARN TRUTH-JOLT (MI 1978-9)**
 - *31% of treatment & 29% controls had new charges filed (n.s.)*
 - **INSIDERS Crime Prevention Program (VA '78-84)**
 - *after 6 mos, no diff: 41% treatment; 39% controls to court*
 - *at 9 mos, 43% treatment; 67% controls (but 50% missing)*
 - *at 12 mos, 47% treatment; 68% controls (55% missing)*

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next

- **Social Psychological Theories:**
Differential Association

Rec: THEORY: B&B Chapter 11

POLICY: LUNDMAN 8: COMMUNITY TREATMENT Pp 205-234

APPLICATION: CROSS 13: THE RICHARD NIXON LIBRARY Pp 167-178 and **BURN AMERICAN FLAGS** Pp 179-191

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