

CRIME & PUNISHMENT AS INDEPENDENT VARIABLES WEEK 14 PRECIS (Pao)

Hagan, John. 1994. "Destiny and Drift: Subcultural Preferences, Status Attainments, and the Risks and Rewards of Youth." *American Sociological Review* 56:567-82.

Hagan (1994) combines "the concept of drift, drawn from social control theory, and a life course conceptualization to elaborate a paradigmatic model to study cultural stratification" (p. 567). His effort is to bridge the two subfields of adolescent deviance and adult stratification. It is apparent that Hagan believes that adolescent deviance affects adult outcomes. Hagan's theory starts with the assumption of Matza's (1964) drifters. As defined by Matza, drifters are "those who have been granted the potentiality for freedom through the loosening of social controls but who lack the position, capacity, or inclination to become agents in their behalf" (Matza 1964 pp.28-29 within Hagan 1994 pp.568-569). Subcultural preferences affect pathways into adulthood for both directed as well as drifting adolescents. However, he also points out that preferences or rather "tastes" and "styles" of youths are already formed before they are adolescents (To me, this seems to suggest that destiny has already occurred in predetermining drift patterns in subcultural preferences). Such preferences, depending on their "separateness from high culture (including education) and from adults (especially parents)" (p. 570), have negative effects on adult outcomes; this seems to only hold true for males from working class backgrounds, while non-working class males seem to escape such negative outcome.

The data used is of a two wave sample from a Canadian Suburb. In sum, the author finds support for his destiny and drift hypotheses. He also finds some support for labeling theory in terms of police contact. Also, while Party Subcultures had a positive effect on males, it did not have such an effect on females.

Questions

1. Why are non-working class males able to escape a negative life outcome trajectory despite subcultural participation?
2. Such categories of Party Subculture and Subculture of Delinquency are ideal types. However, in the "real" world such terms can often become quite blurry. In general (base this off your own youth experience-I'm assuming that most of you had deviant subcultures within your schools-or what you know from research), aren't most adolescent subcultures, in their rebellious nature, of both types?
3. Why is this an extension of control theory rather than a differential association theory (or any other from the course)? Are there parts of the theory that take DA theory for granted?
4. Why is there an emphasis on males when the data also contains females? Even though such significant difference between working class and non-working class males did not exist between

the female groups, is there anything of substantive/theoretical importance to discuss its insignificance?

Uggen, Christopher and Jeff Manza. 2002. "Democratic Contraction? The Political Consequences of Felon Disenfranchisement in the United States." *American Sociological Review* 67:777-803.

Uggen and Manza (2002) posit that because felons are disproportionately represented by the poor and racial minorities (1 in 7 African American males are disenfranchised), more votes are taken away from Democrats rather than from Republicans as a result of felony disenfranchisement. They point out that the U.S. is unique because while other democratic states may take away voting privileges from felons, the U.S. also denies ex-felons the right to vote.

In presenting their case, Uggen and Manza discuss democratic theory and history. From the 1920's to the 1970's, the criminal justice system aimed at rehabilitation. This changed beginning in the 1960's with more conservative presidents and extended on into the late 90's with the war on drugs (in effect, the prisoners have grown over 600 percent in the past three decades). Disenfranchisement laws of ex-felons are different from state to state and are not steady over time. Some states and some periods of time tend to be more liberal. In their test, they try to estimate "who votes (a), their vote choice (b), and the electoral vote (c)" as well as a "policy feedback" loop (p. 782-783). Using CPS data, they estimate who actually votes if they would have had the option, and using NES data, they estimate whom a person would vote for. Matching on demographic characteristics of the disenfranchised with those in the CPS and NES data, they are able to further estimate how this might have affected election outcomes. They find that in seven elections lost by Democrats, felon voting may have overturned the outcome had they been allowed to vote. Their analysis using YDS data also suggests that arrestees (comparable to felons in their test) would have voted for more liberal candidates (Clinton and Ventura).

Questions

1. Are there any theories from the course (i.e. social control, rational choice, differential association, labeling, etc.) that would be relevant in helping to explain voting disenfranchisement of felons and ex-felons (given the context of election outcomes presented in this case)?
2. Are there theories from your own subfield and/or discipline that would assist in explaining this phenomenon? How does this article tie in with the previous article (above) on stratification?
3. How does this (or rather how can it) affect social policy? Is it likely to affect social policy? In all seriousness, how is this article likely to be received by Republicans and other conservatives?

Western, Bruce. 2002. "The Impact of Incarceration on Wage Mobility and

Inequality.” *American Sociological Review* 67:477-98.

Western (2002) argues that life events or transitions can be affected by incarceration and earnings mobility is affected by stable employment, which is highly problematic for disadvantaged minority (especially African American) men. In the 80's and 90's, incarceration became a common life event for young black men. During this period in time, wages for low skilled jobs (often occupied by minorities) were declining or were stagnant; possible explanations – it could be that incarceration reduces wages but it could also be that reduced wages lead to higher probabilities of crime (bonds of employment). Both seem to be at work, but the author focuses the first because he uses a life course analysis. Even if wages are not reduced (from prior to incarceration), the time lost in employment is still important because the ex-felon would be making more money had the incarceration never taken place. Furthermore, stigma and limited education also affects job opportunities for ex-felons and minority men.

Despite the many weaknesses already pointed out by the author, the NLSY data was used to test for economic mobility after incarceration. Not surprisingly, the author finds that incarceration has a negative affect on income (limited to “legitimate” means of income only). Where wage mobility is present, increases for ex-offenders are less in comparison to their non-offender counterparts. There is a relatively small incarceration effect for blacks but the author suggest that stigma of the group (of non-college educated) may play a part in wage mobility overall.

Questions

1. This seems to be an extension of Wacquant's (2000) work from last week. Does Western advance Wacquant's argument (parallels of ghetto and prison)?
2. Because of the many weaknesses in using the NLSY data (many mentioned by the author), would it be worth it to replicate this study?

Pager, Devah. 2003. “The Mark of a Criminal Record.” *American Journal of Sociology*108: 937-975.

Pager (2003) also considers stratification in looking at crime. However, Pager specifically attempts to “test the degree to which a criminal record affects subsequent employment opportunities” (p. 938). In the direct causation model (from incarceration to employment outcomes) but also discusses an alternate explanation. It could be that preexisting traits, which may have gotten them incarcerated, also prevent them from attaining valuable employment after incarceration. In the spurious effects model, such traits are merely coincidental and are of less significance. In conducting her test, a criminal record is perceived as a “negative credential,” which is a legitimate way to stigmatize and differentiate individuals considered for employment. Race, considering group stigmas and in comparing whites to blacks, is also of key importance in her test.

Comparisons (tests) were made by matching pairs (two blacks and two whites) based on specific characteristics (physical appearance and general style of self-representation). They were assigned matched educational attainment and work experience, while randomly assigned criminal records. The black pair had to do additional test because they were called back for interviews less often. Prospective jobs were selected from *Jobnet* and the Sunday classified section of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Using whites as a base test for testing the effect of a criminal record, Pager finds that individuals with criminal records are half as likely to get callbacks. Comparing the black and white pairs, it is clear that blacks are less favored in employment. In fact, blacks without criminal records were less likely to get a callback in comparison to whites with criminal records. Experiences between racial pairs were significantly different that suggest racial stigmas were at play (blacks being questioned about criminal history up front while whites not questioned up front).

Questions

1. This is kind of off subject but anyways...how the heck did she get approval by IRB to do use an audit methodology? Doesn't this violate IRB b/c what employer (in their right mind) would consent to be a part of a study like this?
2. Does this advance Wacquant's argument (parallels of ghetto and prison)?
3. How might the test have been affected had the testers been female? Would this have mattered?

Overall Thoughts & Questions

1. Because I study race and ethnicity, I can't help but think that works such as this should be doing more "borrowing" from critical race scholars (of this week's readings, I think Pager is most successful in "bridging" subfields). I realize it becomes difficult to bridge two or more subfields (or disciplines) in the space of a journal article (versus a book), but should we-as aspiring scholars of the future-be attempting to make such "bridges?" Should we save such big (broad) ideas for our dissertations?
2. Political ideology seems to become apparent in pieces that suggest (or even address) public policy. Can a social scientist truly be objective in conducting such research? Do we (as social scientist) have to be objective to maintain legitimacy?