Social Crime: Collars, Politics, and Organizations

Lecture Outline

- White-Collar Crime
  - History, Definition, Types, Nature, Costs
- Political Crime
  - Types, “high places”
- Organized
  - Variation, Economics, Explanation

White-Collar Crime: Defining

- Sutherland’s Definition:
  - “a crime committed by a person of respectability and high social status in the course of his [or her] occupation”
- Definitional issues
  - Harmful vs. criminal
  - Other collar colors
  - Individual vs. corporate (WCC)
- Alternate terminologies
  - Occupational crime – individuals for personal gain
  - Corporate crime – by corporations
  - Organizational crime – small businesses, etc.

White-Collar Crime: Nature

- Double Standards of Justice
  - Powerful vs. Powerless
  - Discovery, prosecution, punishment
  - Resources, locations, variability in handling cases
- Perils of White-Collar Crime
  - Pollution & Products
    - Fraud, falsify, kickbacks
    - Serious, dangerous, and expensive

White-Collar Crime: Early

- Sociology & Upheavals (1800s)
  - Shift in attention (early 1900s)
    - Early focus on “dangerous classes”
    - Focus on street crime
    - Rise of industrial corporations & “robber barons”
    - Muckrakers – Tarbell, Sinclair, & Steffens
    - Ross – “criminaloids”
  - Edwin Sutherland (1940s)
    - 70 largest corp.’s violated law avg. 14 times each
    - “deliberate, repeated, extensive, and harmful”

WCC: Occupational Crime

- Occupational Crime
  - Employee theft
    - Est. @ $19.5B/year
  - Pilfering – goods/stuff
    - ¾ of all employees
  - Informal norms
  - Embezzlement – cash/funds
    - “Nonshareable” financial problems
  - Collective embezzlements – S&Ls, land flips,
  - Professional Fraud
    - 13 kinds! (p.322)
  - Health care @ $100B/yr
WCC: Offenders and Victims

- Power: Crime vs. Social Harm
  - Index crimes culturally more serious
  - Index criminals as lazy, immoral, rebellious
- Offenders: Gender & Elite Crime
  - Almost all by men (b/c elites esp. male)
  - Change female status/access > behavior > stats
  - But less serious/costly crimes
- Victims: Hidden Crime, Hidden Victims
- Welfare for the Wealthy
  - Tax breaks (corps get 1/3; 8% of total revenues)
  - Industry support and incentives
  - Hide assets & avoid CGT (Foundations, institutes, grants)

WCC: Explaining & Reducing

- Similarities w/ street crime
  - Not usually (opp & motive)
  - Neutralization (not thrill)
- Differences
  - Self-control not apply (?)
  - Not bio or psych
  - Not social disorg, learning, or associative
- Problems
  - Proving
  - Punishing
  - Discovering (media)
  - Explaining

WCC: Corporate Crime

- Financial crime
  - Fraud, cheating, corruption
  - Price-fixing & restraint of trade
  - False advertising
- Corporate Violence
  - Cause injury, sickness, or death
  - Unsafe workplaces (workers)
    - estimates vary (p327)
    - Asbestos
  - Unsafe products (consumers)
    - 4,500 deaths/year - esp autos, drugs, food
    - Pinto - $137M to fix, $49M to settle > 500 deaths
    - Pollution

WCC: Shifts in Enforcement

- Recognition/Understanding > Social Problem
- Progress in Enforcement
  - Prosecution of White-Collar Offenders
  - Controlling White-Collar Crime
- Corporate Accountability
  - Higher now w/ occupy movement, economy, etc.

WCC: Costs & Consequences

- Financial Costs
  - Direct costs: theft, price distortions/fixing
  - Legal costs: investigation, prosecution, punishment
  - Collectively higher: S&L = $1.4T; > 4000 years of street theft
- Dangers
  - 5x deaths from job-related injuries and illnesses than all index offenses combined
  - White-Collar Crime and Intent

Crime/Deviance & High Places

- Corporate Deviance
  - Price gauging, Dual packaging
- Corporate Dumping
  - Exporting hazardous goods
- Environmental Racism
  - Vs. NIMBY
- Governmental Crime
Political Crime: BY Government

- Crime by Government
  - Political Repression
  - Genocide, torture, infiltration/disruption
  - Human Rights Violations
  - Unethical or Illegal Experimentation
    - US Pub Health Service – Tuskegee syphilis experiment
    - Military/CIA – Radiation & LSD
    - Social workers – North Carolina & social infertility
    - Invasion/War (crime? Or social control? … or both?)
  - Political Corruption
    - Personal gain
    - Power & influence

Political Crime: Against Govt

- Crime against Government
  - Mass Political Violence
    - Rebellion, riots, terrorism, assassination
  - Civil Disobedience
  - Espionage and Treason
  - Explaining & Reducing
    - Social patterning
    - Targets predictable
    - Reducing
    - Less attention than the rest

Organized Crime: Economics

- Common rackets
  - Drugs, gambling, prostitution, porn, “loans”
- Predatory techniques & tactics
  - Corruption, intimidation, violence
- Not just illicit goods/services
  - Computer crime, land fraud, money laundering
- Conspiratorial activities
  - Coordinate planning development, execution

Organized Crime: Similarities

- Hierarchical structure (leader, ranks)
- Organizational continuity (beyond people)
- Restricted membership
  - Racial/ethnic/background
  - Formal acceptance
  - Lifetime/lifelong commitment
- Criminality, violence, & power
- Legitimate business involvement
  - Esp. to launder money, fence goods
- Use of specialists (intermittent or regular)

Organized Crime: Variation

- Ethnicity
  - Media focus = Italian (esp. Sicilian)
  - Many Latino/a & Asian
    - Salvadorian, Columbian cartels, Jamaican posses
    - Vietnamese, Chinese triads, Japanese yakuza
- Status
  - Italian mafia vs. Bloods/Crips
- Honor
  - Tight, dense, close, dependent bonds
  - Defend/react to others violently

Organized Crime

- Criminal Organizations
- History of Organized Crime Study
  - Alien Conspiracy Model/Myth
- Controlling (Explaining & Reducing)
  - Different types/orgs > diff explanation/reaction