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Introductory to Sociology

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Creative Take Home Exam #2

There are many factors involved in violence as we have seen. Evaluate, analyze, and weigh the importance of 6 or 7 of the following factors associated with violence. You may find it useful to apply these facts to the violence associated with specific revolutions and/or wars (You must include #3, #9 and #10. In addition, you must incorporate Gilligan's thesis within one or more of the following categories.)

The biology of violence

Biological evolution (natural selection), aggression and violence

Defensive Aggression

Defensive aggression and imagination

Basic need for a framework or orientation

Conformist aggression

Instrumental aggression

Repressed sexuality and aggression (W. Reich)

Evidence supporting Buddhist psychology (role of personalization and self)

Role of class-stratification

The social system and violence (eg. Economic institutions producing carcinogens that "violently" kill people. "Your odds of dying of cancer are roughly twenty-five times higher than your chances of getting murdered." (D. Jensen 2006:263)

Evidence from race relations research

Maria Gimbutas' archaeological research and warfare (role of male dominance)?

Pinker, on the fight or flight emotions, testosterone, disruptions or inhibiting systems in the brain, etc.

Reproductive success and competition for women

Population pressure, scarce resources, and warfare

Sociopathy 18. Culture and violence ` 19. Other factors

Requirements:

Paper must be a maximum of five (5) pages ONLY. Papers must be typed in 12 font, double-spaced.

A minimum of 8 references (which are not the assigned readings or handouts) are required in order to provide essential evidence and support your argument. Please include these on a separate bibliography page. Three (3) citations must be from books or encyclopedias. Newspaper articles are also strongly recommended.

Your paper must be edited and proofread for grammar and coherence. Keep in mind that the instructor is not a mind reader. Make your arguments as comprehensive and explicit as possible. Subtitle each category as 1.)

defensive aggression, 2).... The more arguments you make the better, therefore, the format required is a brief summary statement or argument followed by a numerical listing of "facts" (i.e. 1...2...3...4...5...)
The paper is due on Thursday, December 17, 2009 in class.

Dr. James Gilligan, in an insightful study of violence among men, theorizes a cycle of poverty, shame, violence and punishment that is continually perpetuated in modern American society, aided in no small part by our penal system. His book *Violence: Our Deadly Epidemic and its Causes* delves into the nature and origins of violence, hinging the crux of his theory upon the notion that "The different forms of violence, whether toward individuals or entire populations, are motivated (caused) by feelings of shame" (Gilligan, James. *Violence: Our Deadly Epidemic and its Causes*, 111). Under the umbrella of shame are huddled some devastating psychological companions: humiliation, absence of self-love, and ultimately, numbness. It is precisely this numbness, this death of self, that can lay a foundation for "acting out" (the expression of thought by actions rather than words), from which violence may be unleashed. James discusses many different forms of violence in our society such as Biological violence, defensive aggression, instrumental aggression, structural violence, class stratification how it pertains to violence, and how structural violence is the true cause to all violence (especially in the United States).

"Biological influences in aggression and violence have been clearly established in studies of humans and other animals." ("Violence In America An Encyclopedia.") Biological variables that are described to be traits of biological violence are genetic predispositions, hormones, physiological under arousal (autonomic-nervous-system functioning), brain function (and dysfunction), and neurotransmitters. Understanding the interaction between social and biological factors is critical to understanding violence in humans.

Franz Joseph Gall, a Viennese physician "proposed links between behaviors and mental characteristics (including "destructiveness") with size and shape of bumps in the skull overlaying certain functional regions." ("Violence In America An Encyclopedia.") Though the theory wasn't debunked it became a theory with little reliability and validity. The work of Joseph Gall encouraged other physicians to study brain functioning and violence, such as an American physician, John Bell. John Bell considered aggression and violence as an explanation to Charles Darwins theory of evolution, by survival of the fittest was dedicated to those who were violent, as such making us evolve into violent beings. John Bell's explanation for violence on a basis of evolution became the primary explanation for sociologists in the 1990s.

By the end of the twentieth century, there were several theories or explanatory models attempting to integrate the findings from research into biological bases of aggression and violence. "Human violence itself, however, is a heterogeneous phenomenon, and there is no single theory that can explain all forms of violence in all individuals. Most researchers of the biological underpinnings of violence consider that there may be different etiologies, or causes, for varying forms of violent behavior.

“Aggression is a critical part of existence as it is the driving force to humans. The source of aggression within humans has many theories, and factual data for support.” (Baron, Robert A. *Human aggression*) Aggression is hostile behavior that may hurt, or upset other people. Such behavior may take the form of physical attack against people or their possessions, or verbal abuse. There are many types of aggressive behaviors. Aggression portrays two distinct types of aggression, hostile and instrumental. Hostile aggression is aggression driven by anger and performed as an end in its self. Instrumental aggression is aggression that is a means to some other ends.

Defensive aggression is the act of protecting oneself in a circumstance that draws out a call for defense. Defensive aggression can take on many different classifications and meanings, but primarily it tends to have a understanding that one uses defensive aggression when provoked. A person who beeps their horn in the car to protect themselves from a car close to making a collision is a form of defensive aggression, punching back after being hit by another person, yelling back at another person who is verbally attacking, etc. This type of aggression relates to James Gilligan's thesis in a sense where those in the American prisons were in all some form performing a combination of “instrumental and defensive aggression” even if it was indirectly. To be violent was an essential tool to survival in prison, and in this case being defensive was essential to surviving against other attacks from other inmates. Gilligan proposed that in order to survive one must be instrumental, and defensive; as when one attacks “you must fight back” and to not be attacked one must demonstrate instrumental violence and attack others to show dominance.

The two cardinal characteristics of instrumental aggression are goal-directed and planning. The instrumental aggressor acts to obtain a readily apparent goal such as power, money, sexual gratification, or some other objective beyond inflicting injury on the victim. Examples of this would be shooting a police officer in the course of a bank robbery, stabbing a homeowner during a burglary, and strangling a rape victim (rape is almost always instrumental aggression in which the objective is some form of pleasure, whether it be dominance, or sexual pleasure). Instrumental aggression is initiated as a means to an end rather than as an act of retaliation or self-defense.

James makes connections from poverty to violence, and discusses how class stratification has always had this effect. Structural violence also has a meaning towards the psychology of others that would inflict these causes for one to shame them self to resort to such violence; where James talks about reasoning behind this. Emotions are also discussed from the results of class stratification such as “embarrassment, humility, and shame”. Concluding later in discussion how class and social segregation and social phenomenon is the cause of structural violence and not biological phenomenon.

“Structural violence is the causing of harm by inflexibility and rigidity of the rules of the structure in dealing with difference.” (Structural Violence) James discusses that when he talks about “structural violence” he is talking about “the increased rates of death and disability suffered by those who occupy the bottom rungs of society, as contrasted with the relatively lower death rates experienced by those who are above them.” (Gilligan,

James. *Violence our deadly epidemic and its causes*) In the United States structural violence is are largest form of violence. When discussing structural violence there are major differences from “behavioral violence” in that non-natural deaths and injuries that are caused by specific behavior actions of individuals against individuals, such as the deaths that are attributed to homicide, suicide, soldiers in warfare, capital punishment, etc. The major differences that can be seen between structural and behavioral violence is that the effects of behavioral violence such as executions, and wars happen only one at a time. Where as structural violence happens continuously and acts independent from individual acts. It is common though in our society to see structural violence go unnoticed as it seems to have other natural or violent causes. Examples of this type of violence can be seen for instance with “black babies” within the inner city of Boston; where the babies die before their first birthdays at three times the rate or white babies. This type of phenomenon though goes highly unnoticed for statistics show that this is the cause of lower socioeconomic class position, racial discrimination, social rejection, and unemployment; where blacks suffer a much higher deprivation of poverty than whites. What this generates is low income, unequal access to health care, and the pathogenic (stresses caused by lower socioeconomic class position.)

Unemployment is also a major contributing factor to the causes of structural violence. H.A. Bulhan who was a psychiatrist, formulated statistics showing the effects on unemployment and mortality rates in the United States. He refers to “Brenner's finding that a one percent increase in unemployment in the United States (based on 1970 census data) was regularly followed by an increased mortality of 37,000 deaths per year (both natural such as heart attacks, and “violent”) including almost two thousand more suicides and homicides than otherwise occur.” (Gilligan, James. *Violence our deadly epidemic and its causes*) Elaborating on this, for every one percent rise in unemployment increases the mortality rate by two percent, homicides and imprisonments by six percent, and the infant mortality rate by five percent. Unemployment is the main cause of poverty in the world. Where poverty kills about 232 million people in a fifteen year span, where that can be compared to the amount of people that died during the World War II Nazi genocide of the Jews.

Class stratification is one of the main proponents to the structural violence on this country ultimately leading to behavioral violence. Where as the higher class projects shaming and humiliation as a cause of violence. A psychoanalyst named Edith Jacobson observed that “people may feel ashamed of low financial or social or racial status.” (Gilligan, James. *Violence our deadly epidemic and its causes*) This ultimately causing people of the lower class to feel ashamed and inferior to the higher class.

James discusses about how shame is the feeling that leads ultimately for the lack of “dignity”. After people are treated like nothing and suffer humiliation, people ask themselves “how does a man become more than nothing, or become visible?” the answer to this is “violence”.

The main concepts of what James argues is the only way to do away with structural violence which ultimately inflicts behavioral violence; is to do away with “shaming” of

the lower class, as it is a deprivation of dignity, and visibility to society. "It is the gap or disparity between wealth and income to those at the top and those at the bottom of the social hierarchy that is a much more powerful cause of feelings of inferiority and shame than is absolute poverty." (Gilligan, James. *Violence our deadly epidemic and its causes*) Where the political elite are the ones who don't suffer from the shaming as there is no class looking down on them. This resulting in the mass epidemic of violence in the United States and almost every other country and society in the world.

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