

How Social Control Theories Relate to John Gotti

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Crime, Social Bonds, and the Relevance of Control Theory

We live in a world where people commit murder, rape, engage in robbery with violence, assault, and kidnap. All these are crimes that call for public intervention through jailing and facing jury trials. Criminology, as a discipline, studies crime. Over the past decades, criminologists have been developing theories that can help explain and offer possible reasons why [people commit crimes](#).

For instance, an international criminal, John Gotti, started committing criminal offenses at a tender age. John Gotti became violent and harbored much hatred for the people who prospered. He joined the local syndicate and, later on, after dropping out of school, became a member of the Fulton-Rockway mob, where he was made the leader. He usually engaged in major crimes such as burglary. Some of the theories put forward to explain the gangster nature of John Gotti include social bond theory, containment theory, drift theory, social control theory, self-control, and neutralization. This paper focuses mainly on the social control theories and how they relate to John Gottfredson (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990).

Neutralization and drift theory by Dr. Gresham Sykes and Dr. David Matza tries to explain why people commit crimes over and over again. Neutralization theory explains that every juvenile has a sense of obligation or duty to obey the law. But immediately, the duty is strained, and the juvenile delinquents commit crimes again. They do so in order to achieve a certain goal. The majority of these juveniles share common beliefs, attitudes, and values with law-abiding citizens (Topalli, 2005). Juveniles develop new techniques or ways to neutralize their beliefs temporarily. On the other hand, Drift's theory suggests that new neutralization techniques are a way for delinquents to free themselves from societal bonds. In turn, they tend to lose self-control. In the context of John Gotti, having come from a humble family, he engages in crime and theft so as to meet his wants. Having been surrounded by criminals in the neighborhood, he loses his self-control and frees himself from societal bonds. He commits crimes severely, and it seems to have become part and parcel of him.

Attachment, Commitment, and the Conformity of

Individual Behaviour

Social control theory tries to explain why people disobey rules. The approach also describes how people's conduct usually conforms to societal expectations (Lemert, 1972). Social control theory agrees that every individual has the capacity to commit delinquency, and the current society plays a more prominent role in causing people to commit crimes; it gives people the opportunity. Control theories put stress on the developmental processes that occur during infancy when one develops internal constraints. Nevertheless, social approaches focus fundamentally on the external causatives and how they become productive. It is a belief that people who are law-abiding do so because of fundamental societal beliefs, morals, or religion, and more so to protect their reputation. In relation to John, he is nurtured from a socially corroded background. The only friends around are the gangsters who pose an unstoppable influence to engage in or commit crimes. This is what makes him socially fit.

The Social Bond theory was put forward by Travis Hirschi in 1969. It constitutes social bonding elements. They include involvement, attachment, commitment, and the societal value system of an individual. It is founded on the ideology that a person's belief system, morals, relationships, commitments, and values play an essential role in fostering a lawful and legitimate environment. This theory focuses on peers (Hirschi, 2002). Crime and deviance can happen due to insufficient constraints or a lapse in societal bonding. People who are governed by such beliefs have a high level of self-control in their actions. In my thinking capacity, social control and social bond theory are related to John Gotti. John is not well involved in school. He receives resentment from other children, which makes him a bully and creates a negative attitude, which later causes him to drop out of school. He is also not well involved in the family, which makes him break from family ties and become detached from the family. John migrated to an environment that had gangsters, which increased his chances of involvement, and he later became an international criminal. Despite the fact that John had married, he failed to be committed to his family, and he continued committing crimes. John Gotti commits crimes leading to death.

Self-control theory. Also termed a general theory. Gottfredson and Hirschi argue that lacking self-control is not only the causal factor for crime but also for weird behaviors. People with no self-control are very insensitive to others. It is simple for them to commit an offense. All they need is a background in criminal acts. Gottfredson and Hirschi state that low self-control is founded on parenting. Parents are responsible for their children's bad behavior. Children who do wrong should be corrected at a tender age before they get out of control. John lacked self-control, which made him susceptible to indulging in crimes (Gottfredson and Hirschi, 1990). He joins the gangster youths in the neighborhood. His family failed to correct his bad behavior at an early age. This causes him to experience social relationship problems and his incapacity to sustain his marriage.

Containment Theory, Peer Influence, and the Case of John Gotti

Finally, containment theory. This theory was put forward by Walter C. Reckless. The theory tries to explain deviance and delinquency in peer groups. Walter suggests that for every good behavior, there must be control measures to maintain it. And in the absence of the very control measures, causes deviation from the good by the people (Reckless, 1961). John's behavior was poorly nurtured, and this made him vulnerable to committing crimes because, after all, no one cared about his conduct.

To sum up, social bond theory, containment theory, drift theory, social control theory, self-control, and neutralization have some correlation with John Gotti.

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