PhD Comprehensive Exam – Theory
August 2019

Answer both questions below. **Do not use the same theories to answer both questions.**

Q1. Durkheim’s ideas have been integrated in many sociological and criminological theories. Specifically, his most fundamental arguments have been applied to social disorganization theory, control theory, critical theory, institutional anomie theory, and strain theory.

   a) **Briefly summarize Durkheim’s most relevant arguments for the explanation of crime.**

   b) Explain how Durkheim’s arguments have been applied to two of the theories listed above. **Cite relevant authors and empirical research.** In what ways do the conceptualizations of the selected theories differ from Durkheim’s original formulation?

Q2. Criminological theories have varying perspectives on the explanation of crime and violence. Some theoretical formulations may regard violence as a ‘currency’ (or a ‘language’) that is used in specific situations or circumstances, whereas other theories presume that engaging in violent behavior requires distinctive individual predispositions. **Drawing on the relevant theoretical and empirical literature,** provide an example of a theory that falls into each category (two theories in total).

   a) **Briefly discuss the key ideas and authors associated with each selected theory.** Explain how the theory over- or under-emphasizes differences between offenders and non-offenders.

   b) **Drawing on relevant theories and/or empirical studies,** discuss the limitations of the criminal/non-criminal dichotomy.