

Medical Social Control

ECED7002

Session 3c

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Three Forms of Social Control

- Informal Control
- Medical Control
- Legal Control

Medical Control

- 1851 Samuel A Cartwright
 - New disease – New Orleans Medical and Surgical Journal
 - Drapetomania
 - A disease where slaves run away from their masters (Armstrong, 2003)
- One of the earliest modern examples of ‘medicalisation’
 - Where personal and social problems are redefined as psychiatric or medical problems

Medical Control

- Medicalisation is one aspect of the medical social control
 - 'The ways in which medicine functions (wittingly or unwittingly) to secure adherence to social norms – specifically, by using medical means to minimise, eliminate, or normalise deviant behaviour' (Conrad & Schneider, 1980: 242)

Medical Control

- In Western cultural the high status of physicians supports the medical terminology and discourses
 - Doctors – ‘cloak of competence’
 - Sets them apart from most of the other learned professions
 - Medicine acts powerfully as a normalising discourse
- Medical practitioners – as well as a growing legion of non-physicians who have adopted medical discourses and terminology - speak authoritatively about such things as:
 - Disease
 - Illness
 - Pathology
 - Syndromes
 - Health
 - Wellness
 - pathogens

Changes in Framing of Difference

- Virtue is knowledge, while vice is ignorance
- E.g.
 - Crime as vice - Grecian
 - Crime as sin – Middle ages
 - Crime as illness – 20th century

Medical Control Foucault

- Earliest society up to the 1600s
 - Deviants as ignorant
 - lacking ethics and virtue or sinful
- From 1600s to mid-1800s
 - Deviants as bad
 - routed in 'bad genes'
 - the biological explanation
 - or because persons simple chose to act in non-conforming ways
 - the utilitarian explain – eugenics
- From mid-1800s to today
 - Deviants tend to viewed as sick
 - in need of treatment or rehabilitation rather than punishment
 - Medical social model

Medical and Social Control

Irving Zola (1972: 487)

- Medicine is becoming a major institution of social control, nudging aside, if not incorporating, the more traditional institutions of religion and law. It is becoming the new repository of truth, the place where absolute and often final judgements are made by supposedly morally neutral and objective experts. And these judgment are made, not in the name of virtue or legitimacy, but in the name of health. Moreover, this is not occurring through the political power physicians hold or can influence, but is largely an insidious and often undramatic phenomenon accomplished by 'medicalising' much of daily living by making medicine and the labels 'healthy and 'ill' relevant to an every increasing part of human existence.

Medical Control

- Insurance policies
 - Minimise losses due to accidents, illness and death
 - Health policy initiatives included in
 - Civil, criminal and administrative law
 - Health of the citizenry are overseen by
 - Psychiatry and public health

Medical Control Psychiatry

- Operates at the individual level
 - Prosocial adjustment in persons who are suffering from any number of recognised mental illnesses
 - Documented in Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)
 - This now includes not only medical but also social behaviour
 - See Word document

Medical Control Psychiatry

- Currently psychiatry is pushing for new categories of mental illness
 - That pertains to groups such as families, peer groups, work groups, or even terrorist organisation
 - These will be call relational disorders
 - Would view otherwise healthy individuals as 'unhealthy' within the context of certain relationships or group settings

Medical Control Public Health

- Art and the science of preventing disease, prolonging life, and promoting health (Weisheit & Klofas, 1998: 198)
 - Use of 'surveillance of populations or segments of populations that are considered to be risk, data are gathered for purposes of ascertaining which antecedent factors are associated with unwanted health or behavioural outcomes.
 - E.g. reduce smoking, battles against infectious or non-infectious diseases such as typhoid, heart disease, cancer and arteriosclerosis
 - Removal or reduction of environmental hazards such as asbestos or lead paint
 - Needle exchange programs to combat the transmission of HIV
 - Condom distribution in schools to reduce both unwanted teenage pregnancies and the spread of venereal disease

Medicalisation, De-medicalisation and Re-medicalisation

- Medicalisation
 - refers to the process by which a growing number of social and personal issues are converted into medical problems

Medicalisation, De-medicalisation and Re-medicalisation

- De-medicalisation
 - Meaning that medical understandings and treatments of the condition no longer apply or take precedent
 - E.g. homosexuality – since 1989 homosexuality has been listed as a type of ‘sexual deviation’ with identifiable etiology and symptomology
 - In reality homosexuality was considered an illness
 - Changing social mores concerning the acceptability of homosexuality – as a concomitant to the sort of political activism embodied in the gay rights movement in the 1960s
 - In 1974 the American Psychiatric Association voted to remove homosexuality as a mental illness but retained the category known as ‘egodystonic homosexuality’ or ‘sexual orientation disturbance’
 - Those uncomfortable with their sexuality.
 - The de-medicalisation of homosexuality linked with issues of control
 - Laws and policies had to respond.

Medicalisation, De-medicalisation and Re-medicalisation

- Re-medicalisation
 - Since the 1980s-1990s there has been a search for a 'gay gene' – or the assertion that someone is 'born gay'
 - Use of biology and genetics has acted as a two-edged sword
 - Potentially this could 're-medicalise' homosexuality

Bio-medicalisation and 'Selling Sickness'

- Since 1945
 - Advances in science, technology (esp IT), pharmaceuticals
 - Molecular biology, biotechnologies, genomisation, transplant medicine, cloning and increase in life expectancy
- Big business
 - Selling of drugs
 - Expand of cliental of those not just sick but avoiding sickness
 - Vitamins and alternative health
 - Quality of life
 - Patients who insist on medical intervention for a variety of everyday difficulties

It's Not My Fault I'm Ill

- Disease mongering
 - Media
 - E.g. male pattern baldness, erectile dysfunction, social anxiety disorder, emotional trauma, including addictions and phobias
 - We are becoming defined by our illness and thus 'become' controlled through the medicalisation of illness
- Also erosion of responsibility
 - It's not my fault I'm ill

Public Health and Public Safety

- Concept of citizenship
 - Human beings assessed and understood more in economic terms
 - Human beings as a resource
 - The state may use to pursue collective political and social goals
 - Conscription
 - Currently public health initiatives
 - Public Health Act (1848)
 - Including sanitation and waste/clean water

School and Business

- Currently this includes social institutions such as education and business mimicking the role of physicians
 - Schools have school physicians, nurses, school social workers, non-medical counsellors
 - Business have Human Resource (HR) management, employers act like doctors or psychiatrists,
 - Employees – drug or alcohol use, stress, nervousness, anxiety, difficulty I have getting along with co-workers/supervisors, tardiness, absences, reduced productivity, malingering etc

Public Safety as Surveillance

- Medical values are utilitarian
 - To maximise the good (health)
 - Minimise the bad (illness and pathology)
 - For the greatest number of people
 - Productivity and economic reasons
 - Linked to the criminal justice system
 - Preventative maintenance
 - Community-oriented and problem-oriented policing
- Treatment Model
 - Treat criminals for their own good
- Restorative Model
 - Make criminal restore society through meeting with victim and repaying/righting situation

Therapeutic State

- Therapeutic state refers to the ascendancy of the medical model of disease within welfare
 - Medical terms such as
 - Syndrome
 - Pathology
 - Sickness
 - Illness
 - Disease
 - Addiction
 - Therapy
 - Dominates social, legal, political, policy and information arenas of discourse

Therapeutic State

The Middle Class Lifestyle

- Benefits to the middle classes
 - The idea that bad things that happen in life, accidents, disease, sickness, death, broken hearts, unsatisfying marriages, uncertainty, being bullied, feeling sad, anxious, nervous, jittery, stressed out, or traumatised, can be reduced or eliminated through
 - Scientific, medical, social-scientific, behavioural science knowledge.

Medical Control

Disempowering of Society

- PTSD – post traumatic stress disorder
- Aberfan disaster of 1966 – took lives of 116 children and 28 adults.
 - No talk of psychological distress – children resumed their education
 - Today, such a response to a major disasters would be unthinkable. There would be an automatic assumption that every survivor in the area was deeply traumatised and inevitably scarred for life. Sending young pupils back to school so soon after a tragedy would be scorned as bad practice. The very attempt by the community to cope through self-help would be denounced as misguided since such victims could not be expected to deal with such problems on their own.

Medical Control Gender

- Riska (2003) – three phases
 - Gender neutrality pre-1970s
 - No consideration whether there are gender differences in health
 - Assumption that the male was 'normal' or 'standard'
 - Women as victims 1970s
 - Medicalisation of childbirth
 - Growth in plastic surgery
 - Pre-menstrual syndrome
 - Hysterectomies
 - What was 'normal' was made an illness
 - Revival of reductionism – 2000 onwards
 - Understanding of illness was based on an 'invisible male'
 - Swing back to seeing the invisible male as an endangered species hypothesis
 - Need to consider 'male problems'
 - Type A personality
 - The hard-working male breadwinner - medicalised the heterosexual masculinity
 - E.g. erectile dysfunction
 - Now this has moved to an explicitly biological standard

Social Control Medicalisation

- Linked to deviant behaviour
 - But the behaviour may not be the 'fault' of the deviant
 - Suggested that this becomes a 'medical condition'
 - Therefore they are not 'accountable' for actions

Social Control Medicalisation

- Medicalisation of Life
 - Dislocation of responsibility
 - Individuals are absolved of responsibility
 - But get labelled
 - Culture of victimisation
 - Bad acts are not under conscious control of individuals
 - When caught in deviant acts
 - They are 'victims' of socialisation, genes, hormones, addiction.
 - The 'abuse excuse'
 - Both imperil the ethics of personal responsibility

Social Control Medicalisation

- Medicalisation
 - Medicine is NOT morally neutral
 - ‘defining deviance as a medical phenomenon involves moral enterprise’.
 - Domination of expert control
 - Social behaviours fall under the mandate of medical control
 - individuals and groups are dis-empowered
 - From the group to the individual

Social Control Medicalisation

- Individualisation of social problems
 - Rationalisation of society
 - Move away from the group to the individual
 - If a problem is medicalised it tends to isolate and respond to the sick individuals rather than to acknowledge that most problems are complex and systemic
 - Personal behaviour that does not meet with the approval of society may indicate a problem in the social structure of society
 - rather than merely a case of individual pathology or deviance that is amenable to medical diagnosis and treatment

Social Control Medicalisation

- Depoliticisation of deviant behaviour
 - Reduce or eliminate ideas or actions that are deemed to be threatening or dangerous to the status quo
 - Label individuals as medically ill
 - Absolves governments and society from any need to change

Social Control Medicalisation

- Exclusion of Evil
 - Historically religion saw deviant acts as a form of sinfulness or evil
 - If people's actions are not caused by God or evil forces
 - Must originate with the persons or chemicals or the environment or society or a combination of the above
 - If crime and deviance are 'illnesses'
 - No one is responsible for their actions – even serial killers!

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