Social Problems Essay, Research Paper

America has seen a great amount of social change during the past few decades. From they way we eat to the way we treat our criminals to the safety of our children at school, things have definitely changed. The rash of recent school shootings is a sure sign of the breakdown in parenting and a lack of family values being taught to our children. The highly processed foods that we are eating have led to a nation, which is severely overweight and ill. The Criminal Justice system in this country is a joke; it has been shown to be biased against minorities and the poor. A guilty rich man is known as a free man, while a poor murderer is destined for years on death row.

In the Kip Kinkel article we are given a view of Kip?s life as told by his friends and classmates. A symbolic interactionist would say that this violence is caused by a break down in the child?s social structures, organizations, and culture. The main social structure to decline is that of the family. Twenty to thirty years ago the family was much stronger. There were less single parent homes and the divorce rate was lower. Since these changes have taken place, families have demised and some children have become unruly.

A Structural functionalist would say that the fast food we eat serves two purposes. The first purpose, which is the manifest function, is food which is served almost as fast as it is ordered. This would be a good function of fast food, since it has been labeled fast food. The second function, or latent function of fast food, is the battle of the bulge, which many American?s are fighting due to their dependency on fast, over processed food. The food industry is interrelated with corporate America and also with poor Americans. Corporate America generally gives its workers thirty minutes to an hour to eat lunch. To get out get a bite to eat and get back to work in this time; one needs to go to a fast food restaurant. In these same restaurants you will find workers who are paid very little and who do not have many benefits if any, since only the managers are full time employees.

The criminal justice system is a hot bed for conflict theorist. Conflict theory is based on the idea that all society has inequality, and theses inequalities lead to societal strain. Minorities and the poor are disproportionately imprisoned in this country. The rich are able to afford competent defense attorneys, while the poor are given low paid public defenders. These defenders are usually friends of the judges and wish for the cases to be rushed through the system. The inequalities in education, housing, and wages have led some to resort to crime. We all aspire to obtain the ?American Dream.? But due to the class system the rich are getting very rich, while the poor are wallowing in an even worse state.

It does not feel good knowing that the legal lynching of minorities and foreigners still take place today. By acquitting police of murder because they were afraid of a man and his wallet, we send a message to the country saying it is okay to kill a Black man as long as you feel unsafe. While, on the other end of the spectrum a Black man defending himself from a police officer is sent to death row for his murder. Being a Black man in this country I think a bout the social changes which affect me on a day to day basis. I am a conflict theorist to the core. Without equality we will continue to live in a broken nation. The country?s dependency on fast food also needs to change and it needs to do so just as fast as they produce the food. Many Americans have put on extra pounds because of eating fast foods and processed foods.

The social fabric of our nation has undergone a radical change. Some changes such, as the Internet and communication tools are good. While, the changes I have discussed in this paper are definitely not good.