Sociology 143: Building Just Institutions and Creating Moral Communities

Paper #2 Assignment

Your second short paper (5-7 pages, double-spaced, standard formatting, font, 1" margins, etc) is due by **10 pm on Tuesday November 12th** in the course Dropbox. Please save in .doc or .docx format only.

Follow the ASA style guide for citations and references. Using any outside work—including class material—requires the use of proper citation methods and full references.

The Problem

For your second short paper, you will need to do a "problem oriented policing" simulation module found here: http://www.popcenter.org/learning/prostitution/intro/ (TECHNICAL NOTE: In the past, I've had issues using Chrome, so if it seems buggy, try another browser.) Although this simulation is intended for training police officers, you should have no problem getting through it. The "problem oriented policing" approach is certainly an interesting and important development (for further reading, see here: http://www.popcenter.org/about/?p=whatiscpop), but the details of the approach are not of central importance for our purposes.

The simulation should take about an hour or so. It involves two key components—**research/analysis** and a **plan**. In the first half of the simulation, you are allotted a budget to figure out what is going on in a neighborhood that has seen an uptick in crime and citizen complaints related to a growing street-level prostitution problem in the area. There are a few of things to keep in mind during this part.

First, your budget is limited. It costs some number of units to interview people, get access to some report, etc. (NB: each unit= 1% of your allotted budget, so a cost of 5 = 5% of your budget). You can't talk to everyone or see every report. Second, not all of the informants or reports are helpful. It is best to be deliberate in how you spend this research budget. Finally, once you are done with your research/analysis, you will need to pass a little mini-quiz to move onto the second half of the simulation, so pay attention. You may want to jot some notes down during this part (the simulation provides a space to do this, but it is not necessary to fill out their forms/questions).

In the second half of the simulation, it will be your job to use a *new budget* to plan the response to the problem. The response options that are available to you are tied directly to the information that you unlocked in the first half of the simulation (in other words, you will only be able to act based on what you 'know' in the simulation). These response options vary in cost, and your budget is limited, so think through the options. Once you develop a plan, you will submit it to the fictitious city's mayor, generating a response from the simulation—a memo from the fictitious mayor, a "year later" table of relevant statistics, and a comparison to the ideal plan. Make sure you read through all of these.

For your paper, I want you to view your experience in the simulation through the lens of this class. Provide a brief synopsis of what you did during the **research/analysis** stage, your **plan** of action, and the results provided by the simulation—and then analyze your own performance. (**NOTE:** This simulation isn't perfect, but, for the sake of this exercise, please just take the simulation's responses to your plan— which are based on extensive research—at face value.) I don't care how well or how poorly you do on the simulation. I am not asking you to try to analyze the simulation through one or more of the course readings. There is no right answer here.

The goal of this assignment is for you to engage in critical and thoughtful self-reflection. This does not mean that I want to hear about your feelings. Rather, I want you to **critically examine your own assumptions** at each stage in the simulation process and think through what the simulation results reveal about how you thought about the problem. What worked? What didn't? And why? What did you miss and why? What might you do differently if you did it a second time? Reflect on what assumptions you made about the problem, about how to fix it, what good(s) was/were at stake, and what kind(s) of justice was at stake in the problem. What, if anything, does the "morally messy" world offered in the simulation tell us about the challenges of "doing justice"?