

Explaining Deviance: Conflict Perspective

Conflict Perspective

- Conflict theorists believe that competition and social inequality lead to deviance.
 - Social life is a struggle between the ruling classes (status quo) who possess power and the lower classes who do not.



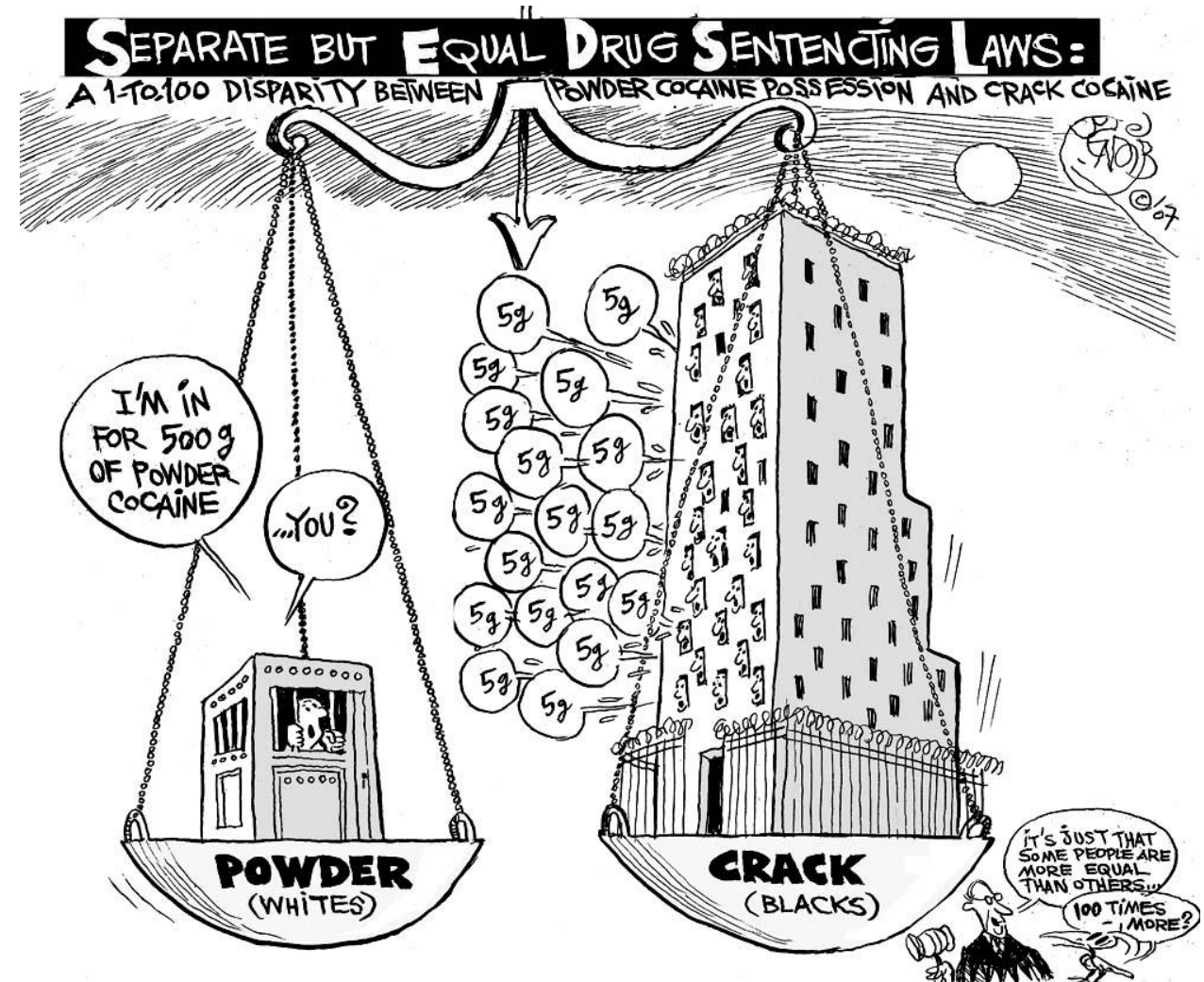
- People with power commit deviant acts to maintain their position
- People without power commit deviant acts to obtain economic rewards or to improve their low self-esteem and stop feeling powerless



- The ruling classes label behavior deviant if they believe it threatens their power
- Lower classes have limited opportunities which often forces them to commit acts defined as deviant
- To maintain power, the ruling classes establish ideologies that explain deviance as a problem found among the lower classes
 - Ideology – a belief system



- Thus, most law enforcement efforts are directed toward the types of crimes committed by the lower classes
- As a result, the lower classes have higher arrest and conviction rates
- People without power do not necessarily commit more crimes, but the crimes they commit are more likely to be detected and punished.



Debtors' Prisons: Life Inside America's For-Profit Justice System

- Watch: <https://youtu.be/Rlghbrn5yfl>

Respond to the following question in 2 paragraphs

- How can you use the conflict perspective to explain the deviance shown in the video?