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CHAPTER TWO

Positivist Theories

Multiple Choice Questions

1. The theories of positivist sociologists attempt to explain the _____ of deviance.
a) negative features
b) symbolism
c) causes
d) meanings

Answer: C; Page Reference: 18–19; Bloom's Category: Understanding

2. Joe is a sociologist who is undertaking a study of drug use. He is interested in how broken families and poor neighborhoods lead to more problems of drug addiction. Joe is following a _____ theory of deviant behavior.
a) positivist
b) constructionist
c) scientific
d) historical

Answer: A; Page Reference: 18; Bloom's Category: Application

3. Which of the following is NOT a primarily positivist theory of deviance?
a) differential association
b) anomie-strain theory
c) control theory
d) phenomenological theory

Answer: D; Page Reference: 18–30; Bloom's Category: Analysis

4. The essence of several types of anomie-strain theory is that the experience of
a) personal, psychological strain leads to deviant behavior.
b) socially induced strain pressures individuals to commit deviant acts.
c) significant social and political conflict leads to deviant acts.
d) cultural change leads to social strain and outbreaks of deviant behavior.

Answer: B; Page Reference: 18–19; Bloom's Category: Understanding

5. According to Robert Merton's goal-means gap theory, the psychoanalytic approach to deviant behavior is wrong because that theory incorrectly assumes that
a) society discourages the individual from engaging in deviant behavior.
b) society encourages the individual to engage in deviant behavior.
c) society has no impact on human biological impulses.
d) individuals freely choose to partake in deviant behavior.

Answer: A; Page Reference: 18–19; Bloom's Category: Understanding

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6. Merton's version of anomie-strain theory is based on the premise that
a) the breakdown of social norms, or anomie, inhibits deviance.
b) society encourages the individual to engage in deviance.
c) deviant behavior is the expression of the individual's primitive psychological desires.
d) society cannot restrain the individual from using power to prevent deviance.

Answer: B; Page Reference: 18–19; Bloom's Category: Understanding

7. According to Merton, the only cultural value of importance in American society is
a) family relationships.
b) hard work.
c) material success.
d) religious faith.

Answer: C; Page Reference: 19; Bloom's Category: Analysis

8. According to Merton's anomie-strain theory, which of the following statements is true?
a) All Americans have about the same chance of reaching high success goals.
b) Both the cultural goals of success and the legitimate means of achieving high success goals are freely available to all Americans.
c) Relatively few Americans believe that success is an important part of life.
d) The legitimate means of achieving high success goals are not freely available to all classes of people.

Answer: D; Page Reference: 18–20; Bloom's Category: Analysis

9. According to Merton, when persons hold high success aspirations and are not given the opportunity to realize them, they might
a) resort to illegitimate means of achieving their aspirations.
b) reset their goals to an even higher level.
c) feel irrepressible psychological pressures and become violent.
d) become more religious.

Answer: A; Page Reference: 19; Bloom's Category: Understanding

10. All of Jane's friends have jewelry and new clothes, but she has no money to buy them. She therefore resorts to shoplifting to get what she wants. According to Merton's theory, her behavior is an example of
a) conformity.
b) innovation.
c) ritualism.
d) retreatism.

Answer: B; Page Reference: 18; Bloom's Category: Application

11. Peter, disillusioned with the way things are going, decides to live in a hippie commune away from the rest of society. According to Merton's theory, his behavior is an example of
a) conformity.

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b) innovation.
c) ritualism.
d) retreatism.

Answer: D; Page Reference: 19–20; Bloom's Category: Application

12. Joe, a steel worker in Cleveland, Ohio, has no aspirations of being rich and successful. Nevertheless, he works hard and takes pride in his job. According to Merton's theory, this is an example of
a) conformity.
b) innovation.
c) ritualism.
d) retreatism.

Answer: C; Page Reference: 19–20; Bloom's Category: Application

13. Albert Cohen's theory is similar to Merton's approach, but Cohen replaced the word "success" with the word "_____."
a) wealth
b) innovation
c) anomie
d) status

Answer: D; Page Reference: 21; Bloom's Category: Remembering

14. Cohen's theory utilizes which group to illustrate status frustration?
a) upper-class boys.
b) middle-class boys.
c) lower-class boys.
d) lower-class girls.

Answer: C; Page Reference: 20; Bloom's Category: Understanding

15. According to Cohen's theory, the place in American society where lower-class boys experience the greatest status frustration is
a) home.
b) school.
c) neighborhood.
d) the job.

Answer: B; Page Reference: 20; Bloom's Category: Understanding

16. According to Albert Cohen, when lower-class boys experience status frustration, they set up their own competitive system in the form of
a) violent gangs.
b) religious groups.
c) delinquent subcultures.
d) boys clubs.

Answer: C; Page Reference: 21; Bloom's Category: Understanding

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17. Cohen's theory of status frustration most closely resembles Merton's goal-means gap because they both
a) use similar styles of research.
b) argue that deviant actions are the product of individual choice.
c) assert that lower-class people are more likely to engage in deviant actions.
d) assume that social class has little to do with deviant behavior.

Answer: C; Page Reference: 20–21; Bloom's Category: Understanding

18. Cloward and Ohlin attempt to extend Merton's central idea that the lower classes are denied legitimate opportunity by introducing the concept of
a) status frustration.
b) the means-goal gap.
c) differential illegitimate opportunity.
d) differential legitimate opportunity.

Answer: C; Page Reference: 21–22; Bloom's Category: Understanding

19. According to Cloward and Ohlin, lower-class boys experience different opportunities in the form of three subcultures, which are
a) criminal, conflict, and rebellious.
b) criminal, retreatist, and innovative.
c) conflict, rebellious, and innovative.
d) criminal, conflict, and retreatist.

Answer: D; Page Reference: 22; Bloom's Category: Remembering

20. Cloward and Ohlin used the concept of differential illegitimate opportunity to mean that some members of the lower class have
a) a greater chance to become middle class through use of illegitimate and legitimate opportunities.
b) more opportunities to pursue legitimate and conforming activities.
c) more positivist cultural values than others.
d) fewer opportunities to pursue illegitimate opportunities.

Answer: D; Page Reference: 22; Bloom's Category: Understanding

21. Recent developments in anomie-strain theory have located new sources of strain that might push individuals toward deviance. Which of the following is NOT one of those newly identified strains?
a) American culture's "anything goes" mentality in the pursuit of success
b) removal of positively valued stimuli such as the death of a friend
c) the discrepancy between success aspirations and the opportunities for realizing those aspirations
d) presentation of negative stimuli, such as the experience of child abuse or criminal victimization

Answer: C; Page Reference: 23; Bloom's Category: Analysis

22. Many sociologists have criticized Merton's version of anomie-strain theory for assuming that lower-class people

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a) are entirely dishonest.
b) have the same level of success aspirations as other social classes.
c) have higher levels of success aspirations than others.
d) are poor because they have deviant values.

Answer: B; Page Reference: 23–24; Bloom's Category: Understanding

23. One contribution that anomie-strain theory has made to the body of sociological research on deviance is that
a) society, not the individual, causes much deviance.
b) the individual, not society, causes much deviance.
c) sociology can actually discover very little about deviant behavior.
d) almost all deviant behavior is committed by the lower classes.

Answer: A; Page Reference: 23–24; Bloom's Category: Understanding

24. According to Sutherland's differential association theory, a person may become deviant or delinquent when there is a(n)
a) economic strain produced by a lack of economic opportunity.
b) political movement that calls for attacks on social inequality.
c) excess of deviant contacts favorable to violation of the law.
d) absence of deviant contacts calling for obeying the law.

Answer: C; Page Reference: 24–25; Bloom's Category: Understanding

25. Which of the following concepts constitutes the core of Sutherland's differential association theory?
a) numerous associations with criminals
b) an excess of criminal over anticriminal contacts
c) a strong criminal personality
d) an excess of criminal over anticriminal personality traits

Answer: B; Page Reference: 24–25; Bloom's Category: Understanding

26. Hank is a sociologist investigating the causes of crime. He is interested in how some areas of the city have traditions of crime that persist over generations, and how individuals easily move into groups following those traditions. What theory of deviance is guiding Hank's research?
a) labeling theory
b) control theory
c) differential association theory
d) strain theory

Answer: C; Page Reference: 24–25; Bloom's Category: Application

27. Daniel Glaser felt that Sutherland's theory was too _____ and proposed that a process of identification with criminals also had to take place.
a) liberal
b) mechanistic
c) voluntary
d) sociological

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Answer: B; Page Reference: 25; Bloom's Category: Understanding

28. According to Glaser, before a person pursues criminal behavior, he or she must first _____ real or imaginary persons whose criminal behavior seems acceptable.
a) strongly reject
b) rebel against
c) identify with
d) fall deeply in love with

Answer: C; Page Reference: 25; Bloom's Category: Understanding

29. Burgess and Akers argued that before one becomes criminal, a process of _____ must occur where he or she is rewarded for continuing deviant behavior.
a) differential reinforcement
b) differential revulsion
c) differential learning
d) differential rejection

Answer: A; Page Reference: 25–26; Bloom's Category: Remembering

30. Burgess and Akers find Sutherland's differential association theory inadequate because Sutherland
a) ignored the individual's choice-making ability.
b) placed too much emphasis on the rewards, not the consequences, of deviant behavior.
c) could not empirically test his theory.
d) did not specify what is involved in the process of learning to become a criminal.

Answer: D; Page Reference: 25–26; Bloom's Category: Remembering

31. Which of the following statements is an accurate criticism of Burgess-Akers's social learning theory?
a) It fails to explain why a person fails to continue to commit deviant acts.
b) It cannot explain why a person initially commits a deviant act.
c) It explains only why a person initially commits a deviant rather than a conforming act.
d) It fails to explain why a person continues to commit deviant acts.

Answer: B; Page Reference: 25–26; Bloom's Category: Analysis

32. According to control theories of deviance, the central question is
a) what causes deviance.
b) what causes conformity.
c) what causes criminality.
d) what is the definition of deviance.

Answer: B; Page Reference: 27; Bloom's Category: Analysis

33. Most control theorists seem to
a) imply that too much social control will force criminals to commit more crimes.

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b) accept the Freudian assumption that our inborn animal impulses, if unchecked, will turn into deviant behavior.
c) accept the notion that one has to learn some skill and ideology in order to commit deviance.
d) assume that social control often indirectly or unexpectedly causes deviant behavior.

Answer: B; Page Reference: 27; Bloom's Category: Understanding

34. Which of the following is NOT a kind of social control that can prevent deviance?
a) bonds to society
b) reintegrative shaming
c) differential association
d) legal punishment

Answer: C; Page Reference: 27-28; Bloom's Category: Analysis

35. According to Hirschi's theory of social control, if elements of bonding to society are weak, the individual might
a) have strong self-control.
b) have a good self-concept.
c) develop a strong goal orientation.
d) slide into deviance.

Answer: D; Page Reference: 27; Bloom's Category: Understanding

36. According to Hirschi, which of the following is NOT a way for individuals to bond themselves to society?
a) a commitment to conformity
b) an experience of a gap between goals and means
c) a belief in moral validity of the rules
d) involvement in conventional activities

Answer: B; Page Reference: 27; Bloom's Category: Understanding

37. An expression of disapproval designed to invoke remorse in the wrongdoer is called
a) labeling.
b) denouncing.
c) bonding.
d) shaming.

Answer: D; Page Reference: 29; Bloom's Category: Analysis

38. If a society makes a deviant feel guilty while showing understanding and forgiveness, it practices _____ shaming.
a) bureaucratic
b) disintegrative
c) reintegrative
d) degrading

Answer: C; Page Reference: 29; Bloom's Category: Remembering

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39. According to the deterrence doctrine, all of the following would help reduce the rate of crime, EXCEPT for making punishment
a) more certain.
b) more swift.
c) more general.
d) more severe.

Answer: C; Page Reference: 29–30; Bloom's Category: Analysis

40. The deterrence doctrine assumes that human beings, when anticipating deviant behavior, are
a) basically rational.
b) basically irrational.
c) nasty and evil.
d) motivated to fight crime.

Answer: A; Page Reference: 29; Bloom's Category: Understanding

41. According to critics, reintegrative shaming may work only with
a) hardened criminals.
b) embarrassed criminals.
c) first-time offenders.
d) sexual offenders.

Answer: C; Page Reference: 30; Bloom's Category: Understanding

42. Sociologists criticizing control theory point out that control can become a possible cause of deviance. They therefore conclude that most versions of this theory are too
a) underdeveloped.
b) oriented to adult deviance.
c) simplistic.
d) focused on society's unattainable goals.

Answer: C; Page Reference: 30-31; Bloom's Category: Understanding

43. _____ study the underlying causes of deviance through social and environmental factors.
a) Positivists
b) Constructionists
c) Marxists
d) Historians

Answer: A; Page Reference: 18–30; Bloom's Category: Analysis

44. Under Merton's Anomie-Strain Theory, the breakdown of social norms is a result of _____.
a) Lack of legitimate opportunities to succeed
b) Lack of societal expectations of ambition
c) Lack of societally approved goals
d) An overwhelming amount of social norms to follow

Answer: A; Page Reference: 18; Bloom's Category: Understanding

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45. Merton's theory was inspired by the sociologist _____, the first to use the term "anomie" as a sociological concept.
a) Karl Marx
b) Robert Merton
c) Emile Durkheim
d) Sigmund Freud

Answer: C; Page Reference: 18; Bloom's Category: Understanding

46. Merton's Anomie-Strain Theory observes that failure to move up and achieve success is the fault of _____ in American culture.
a) the community
b) the educational system
c) the family unit
d) the individual

Answer: D; Page Reference: 19; Bloom's Category: Understanding

47. Which of the following is NOT an example of Merton's legitimate means to achieving success?
a) Insider trading
b) Networking
c) An education
d) A good job

Answer: A; Page Reference: 19; Bloom's Category: Application

48. What factor combinations are said by Robert Agnew to contribute to frustration, fear, and anger?
a) Removal of positively valued stimuli and presentation of negative stimuli
b) Removal of negatively valued stimuli and presentation of positive stimuli
c) Removal of both positive and negatively valued stimuli
d) Presentation of both positive and negatively valued stimuli

Answer: A; Page Reference: 23; Bloom's Category: Application

49. _____ holds that if an individual associates with people who hold deviant ideas more than with those who embrace conventional ideas, the individual is likely to become deviant.
a) Control theory
b) Differential Association
c) Anomie-Strain
d) All Positivist theories

Answer: B; Page Reference: 24; Bloom's Category: Analysis

50. Which of the following is the best example of Burgess and Akers's Differential Reinforcement theory?
a) Ann is fined for shoplifting one day. To get back at the store, she starts to shoplift more and more expensive items.

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b) Having been fired from a job for drinking during his shift, Derek begins to drink more heavily during the week.
c) Having been rewarded with good grades for studying hard in the past, Trae continues to study hard today.
d) Having been given poor grades for not studying enough in the past, Pam loses motivation to study entirely.

Answer: C; Page Reference: 25; Bloom's Category: Application

True/False Questions

1. In general, positivist theories focus on the meanings of deviance, while constructionist theories point to the causes of deviance.
True
False

Answer: False; Page Reference: 6–8; Bloom's Category: Understanding

2. According to Merton, the access to the institutionalized means of achieving high success goals is not equally distributed in American society.
True
False

Answer: True; Page Reference: 18; Bloom's Category: Understanding

3. One of Merton's great contributions to the study of deviance was to locate the cause of deviance in the individual, not society.
True
False

Answer: False; Page Reference: 18–19; Bloom's Category: Understanding

4. Merton's theory indicates that individual acts of deviance have a social origin.
True
False

Answer: True; Page Reference: 19; Bloom's Category: Understanding

5. Merton's theory assumes the premise that lower-income people have a higher propensity to commit deviant acts compared to higher-income people.
True
False

Answer: True; Page Reference: 19; Bloom's Category: Understanding

6. Merton's ritualists and retreatists have one thing in common, which is the absence of high success goals in their lives.
True
False

Answer: True; Page Reference: 20; Bloom's Category: Understanding

7. According to Cohen, the major frustration lower-class people experience is with their lack of status, not material success.

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True
False

Answer: True; Page Reference: 19; Bloom's Category: Understanding

8. By introducing their concept of differential illegitimate opportunity, Cloward and Ohlin totally reject Merton's version of anomie-strain theory.
True
False

Answer: False; Page Reference: 22; Bloom's Category: Understanding

9. Cloward and Ohlin called members of the retreatist subculture "double failures" because they fail to gain success in other deviant subcultures and the larger society.
True
False

Answer: True; Page Reference: 22; Bloom's Category: Understanding

10. There is no reliable evidence to support anomie-strain theory's claim that people of the lower classes are more likely than those of other classes to engage in deviant behavior.
True
False

Answer: False; Page Reference: 23; Bloom's Category: Understanding

11. Sutherland developed his theory of differential association in order to explain criminality as an individual, but not a group phenomenon.
True
False

Answer: False; Page Reference: 24; Bloom's Category: Understanding

12. One essential part of differential association theory is the assertion that the process of learning to become a criminal is the same as the process of learning to become a normal person.
True
False

Answer: True; Page Reference: 25; Bloom's Category: Understanding

13. Glaser tried to extend Sutherland's theory by arguing that the individual must first identify with criminals before being influenced by them.
True
False

Answer: True; Page Reference: 25; Bloom's Category: Understanding

14. Burgess and Akers argued that differential association can occur without reinforcement or social learning.
True
False

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Answer: False; Page Reference: 25–26; Bloom's Category: Understanding

15. One criticism of differential association theory is that it is hard to define precisely what differential association is in real-life situations.
True
False

Answer: True; Page Reference: 26; Bloom's Category: Understanding

16. The concept of differential reinforcement is best at explaining why a person continues to commit a deviant act, not why he or she does so in the first place.
True
False

Answer: True; Page Reference: 26–27; Bloom's Category: Understanding

17. Like Merton and Sutherland, control theorists seek the cause of deviance directly by asking, "What causes deviance?"
True
False

Answer: False; Page Reference: 27; Bloom's Category: Understanding

18. Attachment to conventional people and institutions and commitment to conformity are two ways individuals bond to conventional society.
True
False

Answer: True; Page Reference: 27; Bloom's Category: Understanding

19. According to the deterrence doctrine, certainty and swiftness of punishment are two ways crime can be reduced.
True
False

Answer: True; Page Reference: 29; Bloom's Category: Understanding

20. Reintegrative shaming is another form of negative stigmatizing.
True
False

Answer: False; Page Reference: 29; Bloom's Category: Understanding

21. Research has shown that strong social controls can almost totally prevent deviant behavior from occurring.
True
False

Answer: False; Page Reference: 30; Bloom's Category: Understanding

22. Social control can actually cause deviant behavior as well as prevent it.
True
False

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Answer: True; Page Reference: 30; Bloom's Category: Understanding

23. In Merton's view, modern, industrialized U.S. society heavily emphasizes the cultural value of community.
True
False

Answer: False; Page Reference: 19; Bloom's Category: Understanding

24. According to Messner and Rosenfeld, lack of opportunity is the primary and overwhelming factor that contributes to people resorting to illegal means of achieving success.
True
False

Answer: False; Page Reference: 23; Bloom's Category: Understanding

25. Sutherland's Social Learning Theory purports that deviant behavior is learned via cultural values of success.
True
False

Answer: False; Page Reference: 24; Bloom's Category: Understanding

Fill-In Questions

1. If persons lower their aspirations or abandon high success goals but continue to work hard, they are involved in what Merton called _____.

Answer: ritualism; Page Reference: 20; Bloom's Category: Understanding

2. The kind of deviant subculture Ohlin and Cloward studied that provides the best illegitimate opportunity for achieving success goals is the _____ subculture.

Answer: criminal; Page Reference: 21; Bloom's Category: Understanding

3. The theory of _____ association says that if a person associates with criminal patterns more than with anticriminal patterns, that person is likely to become criminal.

Answer: differential; Page Reference: 24; Bloom's Category: Understanding

4. According to control theory, the absence of _____ causes deviance.

Answer: social controls; Page Reference: 27; Bloom's Category: Understanding

5. If a wrongdoer is punished in such a way as to be stigmatized, rejected, or ostracized, the individual experiences _____ shaming.

Answer: disintegrative; Page Reference: 29; Bloom's Category: Understanding

Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast strain and control theories. What does each say about the causes of deviance? Which one seems more sensible?

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Page Reference: 18–31; Bloom's Category: Analysis, Understanding

2. According to Merton, how might an individual deal with the strain created by a failure to achieve the cultural goal of success through legitimate means? What are some ways one can adapt to this strain?

Page Reference: 18–20; Bloom's Category: Understanding, Application

3. Using Merton's theory, explain the hippie counter-culture movement of the 1960s.

Page Reference: 19–20; Bloom's Category: Application, Understanding

4. How does social learning theory explain deviant behavior? What social forces does this theory locate that would pressure someone toward deviance?

Page Reference: 24–27; Bloom's Category: Understanding, Analysis

5. Discuss the essential premise of control theory that we are all deviant by nature. Do we have animalistic impulses that need control? Why or why not?

Page Reference: 27; Bloom's Category: Understanding, Application

6. Evaluate the overall contribution of positivist theories of deviance. What ideas seem to make sense? Why?

Page Reference: 18–31; Bloom's Category: Understanding, Application

7. What are the strengths and weaknesses in the positivist theory in explaining deviance?

Page Reference: 19; Bloom's Category: Understanding, Application

8. Using Merton's model, what are the preconditions for rebellion?

Page Reference: 18–20; Bloom's Category: Understanding, Application

9. Explain Cohen's five typologies of response to the goal-means gap and illustrate each with an example.

Page Reference: 20; Bloom's Category: Understanding, Application

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CHAPTER 2
POSITIVIST THEORIES

CHAPTER CONTENTS

A. Introduction

Positivist theorists try to explain the horrific killing sprees such as the Sandy Hook Elementary Shooting and the movie theater mass shooting in Aurora, Colorado of 2012, committed by young, white adult males.

B. Anomie-Strain Theory

Anomie-strain theory focuses on how anomie, or a breakdown of social norms, and/or strain generated in people by anomie or other social conditions causes them to engage in deviant behavior.

1. Merton: The Goal-Means Gap

Merton focused on the goals-means gap. This theory shifts attention away from views such as Freud's psychoanalytic theory that propose that society discourages the individual from engaging in deviant activities to a view that society encourages the individual to engage in deviant behavior.

Durkheim and Merton had different views of anomie. For Durkheim, anomie was the absence of norms, and this lack of normative control led to deviance. Merton felt the opposite occurred: Deviance occurs if society encourages it by pressuring individuals to commit it.

Merton analyzed American society's cultural emphasis on the goal of success that is freely available to all people, regardless of class, and the fact that the legitimate means of achieving success are not freely available to all classes. He pointed out that the lower classes have less opportunity; therefore, many lower-class people are trapped and resort to illegitimate means of achieving success. By encouraging high aspirations and denying avenues for success, society pressures persons to commit deviance. He pointed out that people could respond to these socially created pressures in a number of ways.

(a) Conformity, the most popular mode of response, involves accepting both goals and means.

(b) Innovation, which may be more prevalent among the lower class, is the use of illegitimate means to achieve high success goals.

(c) Ritualism involves those who abandon high success goals but compulsively pursue the means of work.

(d) Retreatism is withdrawal from the goals and means of society.

(e) Rebellion is the rejection of prevailing social expectations and overthrowing the system.

2. Cohen: Status Frustration

Cohen proposed a theory of status frustration, which emphasizes the difficulty of lower-class youth in achieving status in legitimate ways. They can experience frustration because they do less well in school, are socialized differently, and cannot achieve respect in the middle-class norms of the school. They then set up a delinquent subculture in their neighborhoods, which is in direct opposition to

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respectable middle-class criteria. Unlike Merton, Cohen emphasizes nonutilitarian types of deviance and how groups, not individuals, solve problems of frustration through the social-psychological mechanism of status replacement in the gang. But Cohen agrees with Merton's emphasis on the role strain and the assumption that lower-class people are more likely than others to engage in deviant activities.

3. Cloward and Ohlin: Differential Illegitimate Opportunity

Cloward and Ohlin extended Merton's theory by focusing on differential illegitimate opportunity. They said that members of the lower classes, when experiencing strain, face problems of access to illegitimate opportunities. They argued that three types of illegitimate opportunity give rise to three distinctive subcultures: (a) the criminal subculture, where youth achieve goals by stealing, robbing, and fencing; (b) a conflict subculture, where violent gangs give high status to good fighters; and (c) the retreatist subculture, where the use of drugs is featured. Thus, Cloward and Ohlin agreed with Merton, but they emphasized group rather than individual adjustments to the problems of strain.

4. Recent Developments

New directions in strain-anomie theory include (a) a reinterpretation of Merton's ideas that places more emphasis on the overwhelming American cultural focus on success by any means; (b) showing how pursuit of economic success leads to self-interest and neglect of social interest or a lack of concern for others; (c) exploring other sources of strain such as the removal of positively valued stimuli through, for example, the death of a friend; and (d) the presence of negative stimuli such as child neglect, which cause frustration and anger and stimulate deviant behaviors.

5. Evaluating Anomie-Strain Theory

Many sociologists have criticized anomie-strain theory: (a) there is no real evidence that the lower classes are more likely than others to engage in deviance; and (b) not all people hold the same level of success aspirations, and there is no proven value consensus. However, the theory is valuable for identifying society as the cause of deviant behavior through discrepancies between aspirations and opportunities. Any person, regardless of class, tends to engage in deviance if he or she experiences a significant gap between aspirations and opportunities.

C. Social Learning Theory

According to social learning behavior, created by Edwin Sutherland, deviant behavior is learned through one's interaction with others.

1. Sutherland: Differential Association

Sutherland believed that when one has an excess of criminal over anticriminal contacts and is more influenced by them, then differential association exists and individual criminality can occur. Differential association is the cause of deviance.

2. Glaser: Differential Identification

Glaser's differential identification theory extends Sutherland's ideas by incorporating the individual's role-taking and choice-making abilities. He argues that an individual must identify with criminals, and thus experience differential identification, before engaging in criminal behavior.

3. Burgess and Akers: Differential Reinforcement

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Burgess and Akers emphasized differential reinforcement or social learning, which is an application of learning or behaviorist theory and helps explain the learning process leading to criminality. Differential reinforcement theory says people will continue to engage in criminal behavior if they are rewarded for doing so and have been exposed to deviant ideas more than to antideviant ideas. This idea contributes to Sutherland's theory by providing a more comprehensive description of how differential association works.

4. Evaluating Social Learning Theory

a. Social learning theory seems more applicable to criminals and delinquents who commit crime in groups rather than alone, but it does not precisely define what is differential in real-life situations.

b. It also cannot account scientifically for group criminality because sociologists cannot decide whether a criminal tradition or high crime rates come first.

c. Differential reinforcement theory cannot explain why an individual deviant act occurs in the first place, before the experience of reward or punishment, but it does help explain why someone continues in deviant acts.

D. Control Theory

This theory explores why people conform, not why they deviate, and accepts the Freudian idea that deviance can naturally occur from our inborn animal impulses if social controls are absent.

1. Hirshi, Gottfredson, and Tittle: Social Bond, Self-Control, and Control Balance

Hirshi argues that a strong bond to society ensures conformity, while weak bonds lead to deviant acts. Bonds are created by attachment to conventional people, commitment to conformity, involvement in conventional activities, and a belief in the moral validity of social rules. If these elements are weak, an individual is likely to slide into deviance. Most important is weak social control, where improper socialization leads to impulsive and insensitive behavior. Also, the restraining effect of the social bond may not be as strong as believed; if socialization is weak, social bonds might not contain deviance.

Charles Tittle recently emphasized the lack of control balance that causes deviance. Persons with a lack of control balance have either a "control surplus," or more control over others; or a "control deficit," where others have more control. This lack of balance can lead to the exploitation of others, theft, and other types of deviance.

2. Sykes and Matza: Neutralization and Drift

Sykes and Matza present the five techniques of neutralization: (a) denial of responsibility; (b) denial of the victim; (c) denial of injury; (d) condemnation of the condemners; and (e) appeal to a higher authority. Matza then expanded this into the theory of drift, which meant youth were people were dedicated to a life of crime, rather they could move in and out of the life easily.

3. Braithwaite: Reintegrative Shaming

Braithwaite proposed shaming as a form of social control. Shaming is an expression of disapproval designed to invoke remorse in the wrongdoer. Disintegrative shaming occurs when the deviant is stigmatized and rejected by conventional society. Reintegrative shaming is more positive; makes wrongdoers

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feel guilty while showing understanding, forgiveness, and respect; and works well in communitarian societies. Disintegrative shaming seems to encourage further deviance, while reintegrative shaming discourages deviance. Some experts say Americans should follow Japan and use reintegrative shaming to reduce crime.

4. The Deterrence Doctrine.

The deterrence doctrine emphasizes the role of formal social control in deterring deviance. It assumes that humans are rational and will continue to commit crime unless the cost, through legal punishment, is severe. Punishment deters crime, while the lack of punishment encourages it. Severity, certainty, and swiftness all can influence the rate of crime. General deterrence is intended to deter the public from committing crimes, while specific punishment is meant to deter criminals from committing more crime.

5. Evaluating Control Theory

Control theory as a whole has enjoyed a good deal of empirical support, but the data have focused mostly on adolescents' delinquent behavior. The adult world is more complex: The web of controls is more varied, and sometimes conformity can also lead to the learning of deviance. Shaming theory might apply only to first-time offenders, works only in a communitarian society with strong social controls, and fails to deter deviance in Russia and other societies marked by weak social relationships. Deterrence theory has support only from research using tautological reasoning: Severe punishment might cause more crime, and punishment alone does not always deter crime. Control theorists fail to see that social control itself can cause deviance.

KEY CONCEPTS

Anomie: Normlessness.
Deterrence doctrine: Focuses on formal social control.
Differential association: Deviance is learned through associations.
Differential identification: Associating with deviants is harmless unless the individual identifies with them.
Differential illegitimate opportunity: Some members of the lower classes have less opportunity than others.
Differential reinforcement: Individuals will choose deviance over conventionality if they find deviance more satisfying then conventionality.
Drift: Most youth are not dedicated to a life of crime, but rather could move in and out easily.
Neutralization: Youth adopt rationalizations that neutralize the general effects of the stigma associated with violating these norms, without arguing the norms are wrong.
Reintegrative shaming: Shows understanding to those labeled deviant.
Social control: An agent meant to curb deviance.
Social learning: Deviance is learned through interaction.
Social strain: Lack of access to power causes deviance.
Status frustration: Emphasizes the difficulty of lower-class youth in achieving status in legitimate ways.

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LECTURES AND DEMONSTRATIONS

1. The Nature of Sociological Theories

Develop illustrations of deviant behavior to help students understand how sociologists use theories to help explain why individuals violate norms. Explain how some theories explain the etiology of deviance while others attempt to interpret the meaning of deviant behavior. Show how a variety of specific examples of deviant behavior can be brought together under a theory or generalization that can, in turn, help sociologists or social workers to better understand and change that behavior. Explain why sociological theories of deviance are still under development.

2. The Goals-Means Gap

Develop a set of practical illustrations of how social strain created by Merton's goals-means gap can promote deviant behavior. For example, find a newspaper account of a poor person who sold drugs to survive or buy luxury goods. Use the example to show the strengths and weaknesses of the theory.

3. Social Learning Theory and the Urban Youth Gang

Use the example of a youth gang to illustrate the mechanics of social learning theory and differential association. Show how gang members reward members with status, fellowship, and money and punish those who try to leave the gang. Also, use the concept of a gang to show some of the flaws of differential association theory. One especially gruesome example is New York City's Latin Kings gang, many of whose members have been arrested for the frequent killing of members who wanted to deviate from the gang's rules. Other examples are found in films such as *Colors* and *American Me* that emphasize the positive rewards of gang membership.

4. Human Drives, Anomie, and Social Control Theory

Find an account of Freud's primitive instinct theory to illustrate and criticize the central claim of social control theory. One good source is his book *Civilization and Its Discontents*. Show how this theory of deviance presupposes a set of biological drives that society, to survive, must control. Use the problems of rape or spouse abuse to illustrate the social control approach and how other sociological theories explain the same behavior. Then, compare Freud's idea to Durkheim's original notion of anomie as the absence of norms that can lead to deviance.

5. Deterrence Doctrine

Find statistics that show that the public policy decision that was based on a study that showed men who beat their intimate partners could be deterred more by arrest than less severe actions is not supported but is now part of many state laws. Additionally, find

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statistics that show the more severe the punishment, the higher the recidivism rate. These are contrary to the deterrence doctrine.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES AND RESEARCH PROJECTS

1. Common Sense Explanations and Theories of Deviance

Provide students with several newspaper accounts of deviant behavior and ask them to relate one or more of the theories in Chapter 2 to the deviant event. Help them see how conventional ideas like economic problems or the companionship of a gang can lead to the formation of a theory. Ask students to critically evaluate their theory's potential to help account for instances of deviant behavior.

2. Library Assignment

Have students go online and find an article from a journal on deviant behavior, such as *Deviant Behavior*, *Social Problems*, or *Crime and Delinquency*. Have them investigate how sociologists use one of the chapter's theories to investigate deviant behavior. Ask them to summarize the article and use of the theory.

3. Book Report on the Life of a Deviant

Have students read one of the many biographies or autobiographies of persons engaged in deviant behavior. Some examples are Donald Gaskins's *Final Truth: The Autobiography of a Serial Killer* and Nicholas Pileggi's *Wise Guy*. Hundreds of others are available. Ask students to explain part of the deviant's life through one or more of the theories presented in the chapter. Have the students critically evaluate the theory's power to explain the deviant's life.

4. Theory Construction

Provide students with four or five examples of the lives of persons who have undertaken similar types of deviance and ask them to construct generalizations that help explain the behavior. One source is the frequent accounts of teenagers who commit murder. Have students locate common features in the different accounts and relate them to the more general theories provided in the text. (Note: A similar activity is extensively described in Levy and Merenstein's article "Working with Stories," described in the "Additional Resources" section.)

5. Original Accounts of Theories

Provide students with one or more of the original formulations of strain, differential association, or control theory. Good sources of original documents are Traub and Little's *Theories of Deviance* (see the "Additional Resources" section) and Henry N. Pontell's *Social Deviance: Readings in Theory and Research*. Ask them to read and report on the original theory and relate it to the discussion in the text.

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6. Mass Shootings

Have students choose any of the recent high-profile, mass public shootings and analyze the positivist sociology response to its causes. Which theory do they believe gives the greater explanation?

FILM RECOMMENDATIONS

"A History of Punishment"
This movie reviews the history of punishment through the ages. It discusses systems of justice and how punishment fit into them. It provides excellent examples of deterrence theory in historical perspective. (1998, Films for the Humanities and Sciences)

"Colors"
This film offers an excellent example of differential association theory. It provides an account of several Los Angeles street gangs and how they give strong personal and financial rewards for their members. (1988, widely available)

"Crime and Human Nature"
This film presents the role of biological forces in crime and antisocial behavior. It raises the issue of early childhood deviance and demonstrates how weak social bonds seem to lead to adult criminality. It includes a good example of social control theory. (n.d., Films for the Humanities and Sciences)

"Deviance and Social Control"
This basic movie discusses the various ways society controls deviance. It provides good examples of social control theory. (2002, IM)

"Is Criminal Behavior Genetic?"
This DVD explores the theory that some people are born evil or criminal. It examines genetic and social factors that contribute to crime and reviews possible genetic markers for crime. Several criminals discuss why they committed crimes, and a critique of genetic arguments is given. (1996, Films for the Humanities and Sciences)

"Opposing Viewpoints Series: Is the Death Penalty Justified?"
This film explores whether the death penalty actually deters criminals or represents an ethical dilemma for modern society. Several experts are interviewed. It is a good study of the power of the ultimate type of deterrence. (2002, IM)

"Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills"
This long, powerful documentary traces the murder of three children by apparent members of a satanic cult and their subsequent trial. The filmmakers were able to interview the defendants, the defendants' families, and the victims' families and to cover much of the trial. The tape is a detailed, harrowing study of the impact of homicide on a

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small community and the complexities of proving guilt. It provides excellent illustrations of both positivist and humanist perspectives on deviance. (1996, HBO, widely available)

"Rape: An Act of Hatred"
This taped version of a 1986 television program on rape powerfully presents aspects of the disturbing problem of sexual assault. Actress Veronica Hamel provides basic background content about the extent and impact of rape. Skits and statistics are used to explore aspects of and myths about rape. It emphasizes that while rape is an act of personal sickness, not sex, it is encouraged by American culture. Sex offenders are interviewed, and therapies for treating them are explored. The tape concludes with the message that American society can no longer tolerate rape and the belief system that condones it. It provides good examples of differential association and control theories. (1986, Films for the Humanities and Sciences)

"When Cops Go Bad"
This is an installment of the PBS show "Frontline" that investigates how drug money is corrupting the nation's police forces. The interviews with police who have low salaries offer good examples of strain theory. (n.d., PBS)

"One Minute Strain Theory"
This is a short, one-minute overview of anomie-strain theory that may help students better understand the concept. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fCuGJB1f8gQ)

"Pearl Arredondo: My story, from gangland daughter to star teacher"
Pearl Arredondo gives a Ted talk about being the daughter of a high-ranking gang member and ending up a teacher.
(https://www.ted.com/talks/pearl_arredondo_my_story_from_gangland_daughter_to_star_teacher)

"The 10 Deadliest Mass Shootings in the USA"
This is a description of the 10 deadliest mass shootings in the United States in recent history, with short descriptions of each, including who the shooters were and the circumstances surrounding it. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Th-IV8fdcMA)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Agnew, Robert. 1992. "Foundation for a general strain theory of crime and delinquency." *Criminology*, 30: 47–87. A revision of Merton's anomie-strain theory that takes into account many forms of strain that lead to deviance.

Akers, Ronald L. 1998. *Social Learning and Social Structure: A General Theory of Crime and Deviance.* Boston: Northeastern University Press. A clear presentation of his social learning theory as well as research data supporting the theory.

Braithwaite, John. 1989. *Crime, Shame and Reintegration*. New York: Cambridge University Press. A theory about how society deters crime through the imposition of a social control called "reintegrative shaming."

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Fukushima, Miyuki, Susan F. Sharp, and Emiko Kobayashi. 2009. “Bond to society, collectivism, and conformity: A comparative study of Japanese and American college students.” *Deviant Behavior*, 30: 434–466. Demonstrates how the strong bond to their collectivist society makes Japanese students less deviant than American students.

Goode, Erich (ed,). 2008. *Out of Control: Assessing the General Theory of Crime*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Leading criminology theorists contributed 15 essays assessing Hirschi and Gottfredson’s General Theory in a variety of substantive areas.

Hawdon, James, John Ryan, and Laura Agnich. 2010. “Crime as a source of solidarity: A research note testing Durkheim’s assertion.” *Deviant Behavior*, 31: 679–703. Solidarity significantly increased among Virginia Tech students following the horrendous school shootings.

Higgins, George E., and Rebecca J. Boyd. 2008. “Low self-control and deviance: Examining the moderation of social support from parents.” *Deviant Behavior*, 29: 388–410. Shows the finding that parental support can reduce the influence of weak self-control on deviant behavior.

Hirschi, Travis, and Michael R. Gottfredson (eds.). 1994. *The Generality of Deviance*. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction. A collection of articles about the editors’ theory of self-control, which essentially shows how a lack of self-control can result from ineffective child rearing and then cause deviance.

Johnson, Matthew C., and Glen A. Kercher. 2007. “ADHD, strain, and criminal behavior: A test of general strain theory.” *Deviant Behavior*, 28: 131–152. An empirical study of how college students with self-reported ADHD symptoms are more likely than other students to participate in criminal behavior when experiencing strain.

Langton, Lynn, Nicole L. Piquero, and Richard C. Hollinger. 2006. “An empirical test of the relationship between employee theft and low self-control.” *Deviant Behavior*, 27: 537–565. An exploratory study of how college students with low self-control are more likely than others to lie on their job applications and commit employee theft.

Levy, Donald P., and Beth Merenstein. “Working with Stories: An Active Learning Approach to Theories of Deviance.” *Teaching Sociology*, January 2005, pp. 66–73.

Love, Sharon R. 2006. “Illicit sexual behavior: A test of self-control theory.” *Deviant Behavior*, 27: 505–536. Offers data to show how low self-control seems to contribute to sexual deviance such as masturbation, using pornography, and cross-dressing.

Messner, Steven F., and Richard Rosenfeld. 2012. *Crime and the American Dream*, 5th ed. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth. Shows how the culture of the American Dream causes deviance by encouraging people to pursue success in any way possible.

Piquero, Alex (ed.). 2016. *The Handbook of Criminological Theory*. Chichester: Wiley. Top criminologists provide 25 essays on various criminological theories.

Stylianou, Stelios. 2002. “The relationship between elements and manifestations of low self-control in a general theory of crime: Two comments and a test.” *Deviant*

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Behavior, 23: 531–557. Discusses the tautological problem with low self-control theory and shows the proper way of testing the theory.
Tittle, Charles R. 1995. *Control Balance: Toward a General Theory of Deviance*. Boulder, CO: Westview. Presents a complicated theory of how the interaction among deviant motivation, opportunity, and constraint determines the probability of deviance.
Traub, Stuart H., and Craig B. Little (eds.). *Theories of Deviance*, 5th ed. (Itasca, IL: Peacock Publishers, 2000).

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