

Emile Durkheim

Boundary Maintenance

Crimes serve a positive function of uniting society is their condemnation of criminals. This serves to reinforce the collective conscience and reaffirm society's commitment to its norms and values

Erosion of social norms

Excessive criminal and deviant activity can act as a sign that society's norms and values are no longer functional. High rates of criminality suggest that society is not functioning correctly – they are a warning sign

Part of Functionalist view of Crime and Deviance – focused on impact on society of crime

Adaptation and Change

Deviant behaviour acts as a way of challenging social norms. As the behaviour becomes accepted by more and more people then it becomes part of the norms and values of society leading to gradual evolution of society

'Safety valve'

Some crimes act as a way of releasing the frustrations of society and averting greater damage to social order. Polsky and Davis suggested that pornography and prostitution served as a release of tension that reduced other crimes

Evaluations: Durkheim failed to explain the reasons for individual crime although many of his ideas on impacts of crime still have contemporary relevance



Theories of Crime and

Robert Merton

Non - deviant adaptations to strain

Conformity –

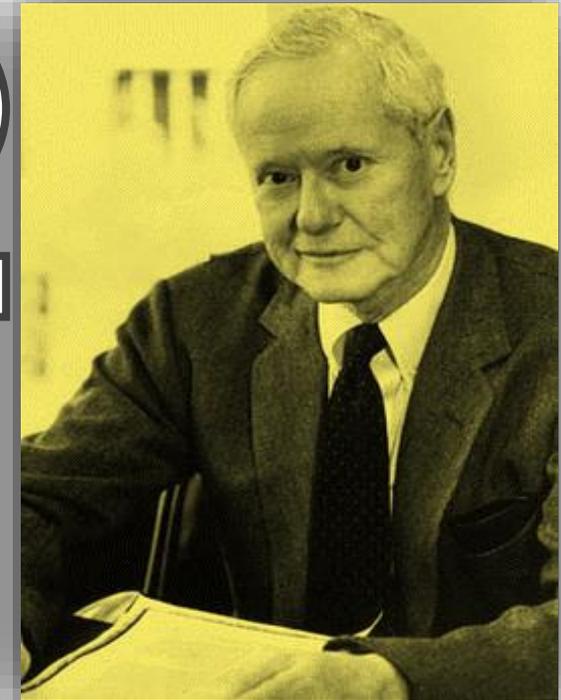
Accepting socially approved goals and legitimate means of achieving them

Ritualism –

Rejecting socially approved goals but conforming to legitimate means of achieving them

Strain is caused by society's unequal opportunity structure that promotes the American Dream but focuses less on how to achieve it... so people adapt

Part of Functionalist view of Crime and Deviance – focused on how individuals react to unequal structure of society



Deviant adaptations to strain

Innovation –

Accepts social goals but uses illegitimate means to achieve them – i.e. crime

Retreatism –

Rejects both the socially approved goals and legitimate means of achieving them

Rebellion –

adopts alternative goals and means to achieve those new goals

Evaluations of Merton

- Do all individuals believe in the American dream?
- Influenced subcultural theorists such as Cohen
- Focuses on individual causes of crime

Theories of Crime and Deviance

Synoptic
Link to
Education

Albert Cohen

Drawing on Merton's Strain Theory, Cohen suggested that blocked opportunities to succeed lead **young working-class males** to form delinquent subcultures



Unable to achieve status in education – working-class boys suffer from **STATUS FRUSTRATION**

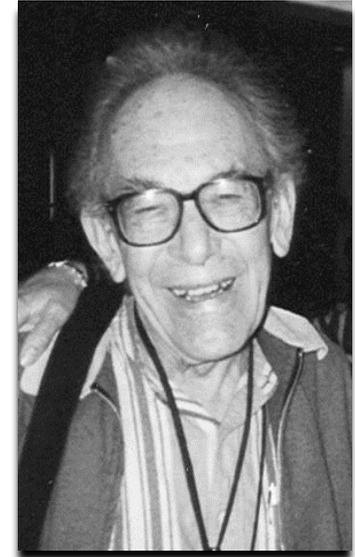
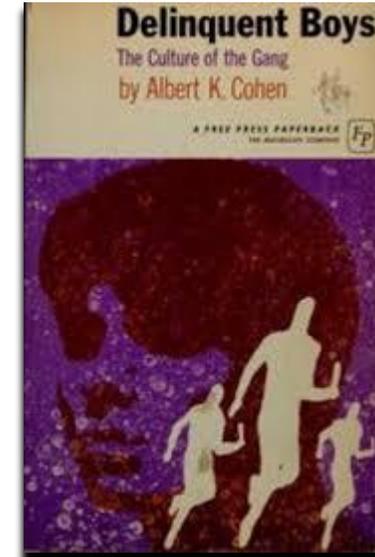
Look to obtain status by forming subcultural groups with similar peers and construct an **ALTERNATE STATUS HIERARCHY**



This involves subverting the norms and values of society to give status to criminal and deviant activities – usually non-utilitarian

This brings them into conflict with authorities and further harms their opportunities for status through legitimate means

Subcultural Theories of Crime
– part of functionalist approach



Evaluations of Cohen

- Explain non-utilitarian crime
- Recognises the influence of peers on criminal behaviour
- Does not account for crimes committed by individuals or utilitarian crimes

Theories of Crime and Deviance

Cloward and Ohlin drew upon Merton's ideas of strain, but focused on the opportunities to commit crime based on locality that young working-class found themselves in

Denied status through legitimate means working-class males would deviate into one of 3 forms of subculture

Criminal

Based in areas where there was an existing criminal network, males would be apprenticed into crime as an alternative to legitimate career

Conflict

In the absence of an existing criminal network, frustrations would be channelled into clashes with other groups based upon 'turf', or other factors such as ethnicity

Retreatist

Rejected by other groups, young males would opt out of society and turn to deviant behaviours such as drugs and petty crime to alleviate frustrations

Subcultural Theories of Crime
- part of functionalist approach



Evaluations of Cloward and Ohlin:

- Some subcultures contain elements of more than one category - e.g. criminal and conflict in instance of drug dealing
- Matza suggested criminality was a phase that young males drifted in and out of - rather than a career in deviance

Cloward and Ohlin

Theories of Crime and Deviance

Synoptic Link to Education and Theory and Methods

Althusser, a structural Marxist suggested that the ruling class look to control the behaviour of the working class to stop them from revolting against inequality

Marxist theories of social control

They used 2 distinct state apparatuses to control the masses



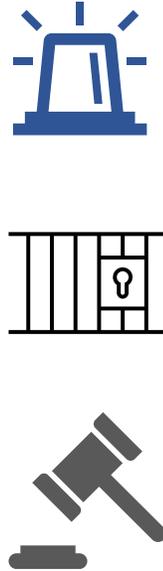
Louis Althusser

Ideological State Apparatus
Controlling the thoughts and ideas of the masses to make them compliant to ruling class ideology. This was achieved through social institutions such as family, media, education and religion – giving people false belief that society was fair and equal and that they were not being exploited

Repressive State Apparatus
Control through physical force – if the ISA failed to control the masses through ideology, the RSA was used to crush any uprisings – this included the police, the armed forces and the legal system. The better the ISA performed its function – the less the RSA would have to do

Evaluations of Althusser

- Assumption that people were unaware of their exploitation and were cultural dopes
- Influential in development of other theoretical opinions
- Government is by consent of the people



Theories of Crime and Deviance