CHAPTER TWO Criminology: Functionalist and Subcultural Theory

Following this Slide Show you should:

- Be aware of the influence of Emile Durkheim and his concept of anomie in explaining crime.
- Be familiar with Robert Merton's development of anomie in his 'anomic paradigm'.
- Recognise the link of Hirschi's bonds of attachment with anomie theory.
- Be aware of the link between family and crime and how it might fit in with anomie.
- Be critically aware of the strengths and weaknesses of anomie theory as an explanation of crime.

As we know, crime has always drawn attention to the public. We fear crime, violence, social disorder, sexual assault and so on. Even contemporary terrorism is an agenda.

In fact, crime involves in two levels of problematic issue.

- (What causes crime)

low IQ 、 homelessness 、 unemployment 、 family disorganization 、 bad friends 、 genetic problem

 \square (What can be done about it)

more policing < imprisonment < flogging < improved social amenities < full employment

Functionalist Theory and Crime

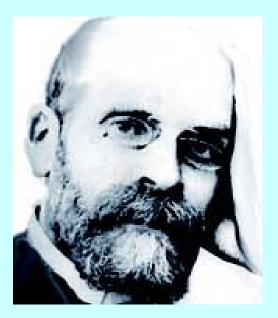


Emile Durkheim (1858-1917, pictured left) was the first sociologist to study crime and significantly influenced the functionalist theory that would follow.

Durkheim saw crime as a particular problem of modernity (the transformation into an industrialised society).

He felt an understanding of crime and deviance was essential in order to understand how society functioned.

Durkheim and Anomie



Emile Durkheim developed the term anomie to explain why some people became dysfunctional and turned to crime.

Anomie means being insufficiently integrated into society's norms and values.

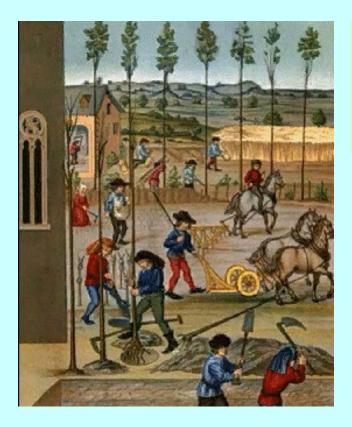
Anomie causes society to become less integrated and more individualistic.

Anomie causes individuals to look out for themselves rather than the community.

What is Anomie? – YouTube

(2:44)

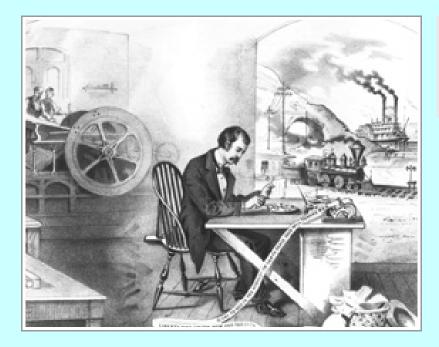
Crime as an Industrial Problem



Crime and deviance associated with decline of mechanical solidarity Durkheim saw prevalent in preindustrial societies.

In such societies crime was not absent altogether but the uniformity of roles, status and values of the close-knit community promoted conformity.

Crime Linked to Social Change



In times of social change individuals may become unsure of prevailing norms and rules.

They are consequently more at risk of breaking them.

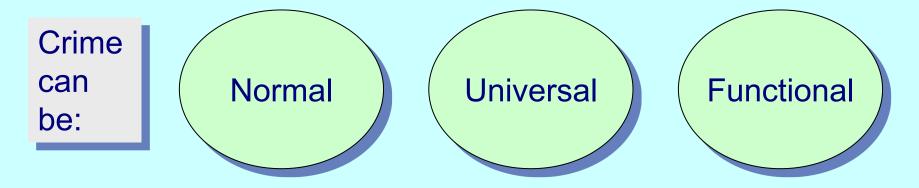
There is a weaker collective conscience of shared values to guide actions.

Durkheim saw Anomie expressed not just through crime, but also by suicide, marital breakdown, and industrial disputes.

Crime and Deviance Can Be Both Positive and Negative

Durkheim saw high levels of crime and deviance as very negative for society causing uncertainty and disruption.

However, a certain amount of crime could be viewed positively, helping to promote change and reinforce values.



Sociology, Who is Emile Durkheim– YouTube

(7:47)

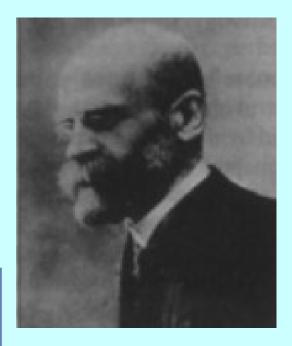
Beneficial Social Change from Crime and Deviance



Critique of Durkheim

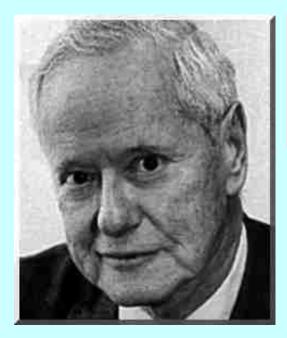
Durkheim's work is important for offering a social dimension to crime.

He links anomie to a deregulated, more individualistic, industrial society.



But he cannot explain why some people are more deviant than others.

Robert Merton's Strain Theory



Robert Merton (1910-2003, pictured left) regarded the concept of 'anomie' as used by Durkheim as too vague, so he developed its meaning.

As a functionalist, he recognised the importance of shared goals and values of society – in the USA particularly the 'American Dream'.

But he recognised that not everyone has the same opportunity to share these goals and values. He altered anomie to mean a society where there is a disjunction between goals and the means of achieving them.

ROBERT MERTON 101 Sociology Series #7 – YouTube

(7:08)

Strain Theory and the Anomic Paradigm

Merton developed 'strain theory' to reflect the strain between goals and means with a five-fold 'anomic paradigm':

Responses	Means	Goals
Conformists	+	+
Innovators	-	+
Ritualists	+	-
Retreatists	-	-
Rebels	+/-	+/-

Merton (Continued)



Merton's theory is 'structural': he locates the cause of crime in American society – support for the "American Dream".

Being blocked from success leads to deviance, as 'innovators' they adopt illegitimate means to achieve the goals they cannot achieve legitimately.

Strain Theory – YouTube



Critique of Merton

He can explain different patterns of deviance: for example, one person may steal (innovator) while another may take drugs (retreatist). His work became a direct inspiration to subcultural theory.

Laurie Taylor described it as the "fruit machine theory of crime".

However, as a functionalist he cannot explain where the rules come from in first place.



Travis Hirschi



Another key sociologist to be influenced by Emile Durkheim and the concept of anomie is Travis Hirschi.

> To answer this, he argues, we need to understand what forces maintain conformity for most people in society.

He asks the question: why don't more people commit crime than they do?

Rather than the factors that drive a minority into deviant behaviour.

Functionalist Theories of Crime & Deviance - Hirschi | A Level Sociology – YouTube (5:15)

Hirschi's 'Bonds of Attachment'

He identified four bonds of attachment that help bind society together:

Attachment: the extent to which we care about other people's opinions and desires. Commitment: the personal investment we put into our lives; in other words, what we have to lose if we turn to crime and get caught.

Involvement: how integrated are we so that we neither have the time nor inclination to behave in a deviant/criminal way.

Belief: how committed are individuals to upholding society's rules and laws?

Subcultural Theory

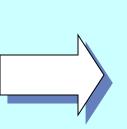


Subcultural theory assumes that those who deviate hold different values to mainstream society.

It is centred around the idea of crime and deviance is a reaction by a group who reject the majority view and/or feel excluded.

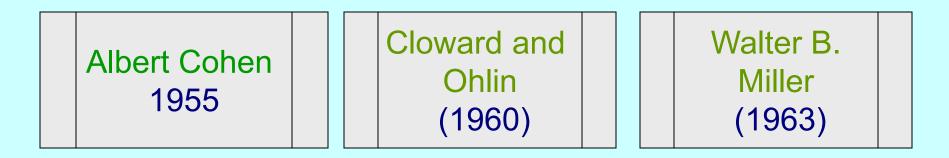
American Subcultural Theory

Robert Merton was accused of not being able to explain nonmaterial crime.

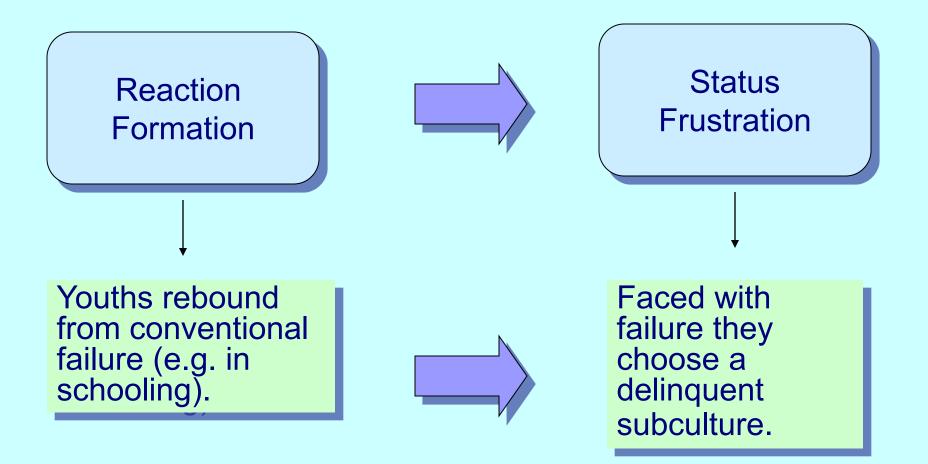


So subcultural theory developed to explain such crime in terms of subcultures.

The main proponents were:



Albert Cohen (1955)



Cloward and Ohlin (1960)

Like Robert Merton they explain workingclass crime in terms of goals and means.





But they disagree with Merton that delinquents share the same values/goals as the rest of society.

Cloward and Ohlin see lower working-class delinquents as sharing their own deviant subcultural values.

So they develop an illegitimate career structure.

Cloward and Ohlin (Continued)

Cloward and Ohlin identified 3 types of delinquent subculture:



Subcultural Theories of Crime & Deviance Cloward and Ohlin | A Level Sociology – YouTube (5:37)

27

Critique of Cloward and Ohlin

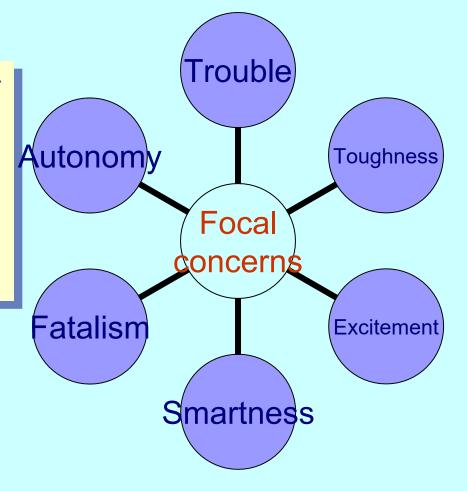
Not everyone gets sucked into Illegitimate career structure.

Fails to consider white-collar crime.

Women have more blocked opportunities than men.

Walter B. Miller (1962)

Miller saw the lower working-class socialised into deviant subcultural values he called 'focal concerns'.



Subcultural Theories of Crime & Deviance Walter Miller | A Level Sociology – YouTube

(6:38)

Critique of Walter B. Miller

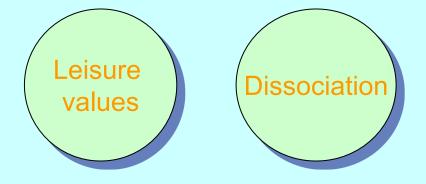
Ignores Females

Many middleclass also adopt 'focal concerns'

And not all lower workingclass adopt 'focal concerns'

Do Subcultures Explain Crime in Britain Today?

Howard Parker (1974) found evidence of 'focal concerns' in his study of working-class youth in Liverpool.



However, David Downes (1966) found limited evidence of subcultural values in his study of working-class youth in East London.

Instead he found them dissociated from mainstream values of long-term employment, instead focused on leisure and hedonism.

Subterranean Values

David Matza (1964) adopts an interactionist critique of subcultural theory.

Young people 'drift' into and out of deviance as part of the normal process of growing up. He argues that young people are less skilled in suppressing subterranean values and when these drive deviant behaviour they use techniques of neutralisation to justify them.



Carl Nightingale (1993)

Philip Bourgois (1995) Jock Young (2003)

Found in the sink estates of Britain, satellite dishes, designer prams, appetite for *Hello* magazine, etc.

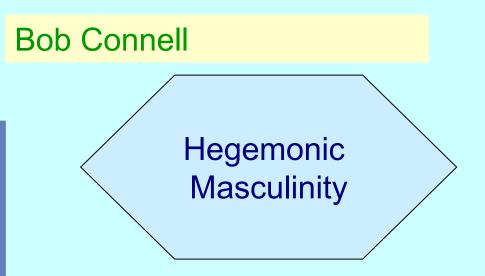
Observ black avidly o US cult designer r blac designer r

RMANI

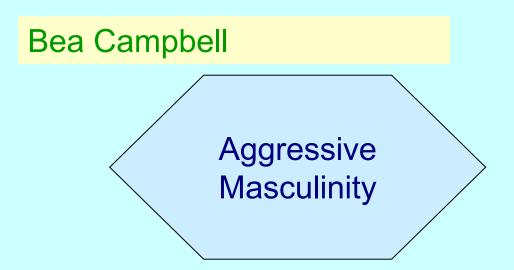
read

Masculinity

M. Collinson argues it is not subcultural but masculine values that often underpins deviant behaviour.



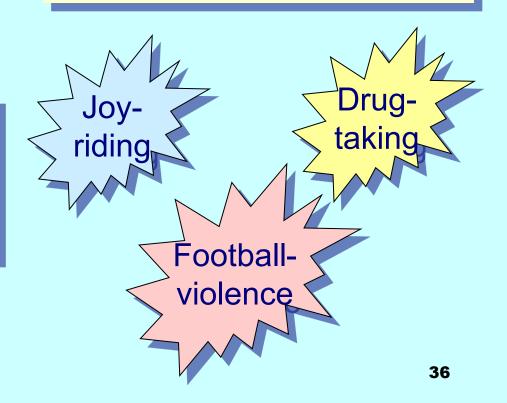




Postmodernism

J. Katz (1988) argues that crime is seductive and people engage with it because it is exciting. Postmodernists argues that subcultural theory falls down (as do most theories) for looking for a rational explanation of crime and deviance.

S. Lyng (1990) sees people driven by 'edgework' attracted by flirting with danger.



What is Postmodernism? (See links below for "What is Modernism?" and "What is Postmodernity?") – YouTube

(3:38)

Thank for your time and patience