

Week 4:

a. Finish Age, Life Course, & Economic Theories

b. Differential Association & Learning

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last time

- **Meaning and use of theory**
 - Evaluating "empirical evidence"
- **Individual-level theories**
 - Moffitt's 2-group (biology & psychology)
 - Rational choice/deterrence (econ)
- **Now: Individual-level sociological theory**
 - Differential association & learning

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intro to DA

- **Background on Edwin Sutherland**
 - U of M professor, 1926-29
 - Professional thief "Chic Conwell"
- **Assumptions**
 - Cultural Relativism
 - Change and Flexibility in Human Behavior
 - Delinquency is Learned
 - Delinquency is Group Behavior

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conceptual tools

- **Normative Conflict**
 - Culture conflict and law
 - Is an aspect of your culture criminalized or seen as deviant someplace? (whaling)
- **Culture and subculture**
 - **Culture** - knowledge, beliefs, norms, practices and "shared understandings"
 - **Subculture** - group with norms, values, and beliefs *distinct from* dominant culture
- **Differential Association Process (9)**
- **Differential Social Organization (rates)**

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the DA process (9)

1. Criminal behavior is learned
2. .. in interaction with others in a process of communication
3. .. within intimate personal groups.
4. The learning includes a) techniques and b) motives, drives, rationalizations & attitudes. [examples?]
5. The specific direction is learned from definitions of the legal code as favorable & unfavorable.
6. One becomes criminal because of an excess of definitions favorable to law violation over definitions unfavorable.
7. Differential associations vary in frequency, duration, priority & intensity
8. This learning process involves the same mechanisms as any other learning
9. Criminal behavior is not explained by general needs (\$) and values, since non-criminal behavior expresses the same needs & values.

[10. Differential Social Organization explains rates]

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Simplified Diagram of Differential Association Theory

Traditions favorable to law violation

→

Intimate contact with delinquent associates

→

Excess of definitions favorable to law violation

→

Learning techniques and rationalizations

→

Delinquent behavior

Traditions unfavorable to law violation

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extensions and policy

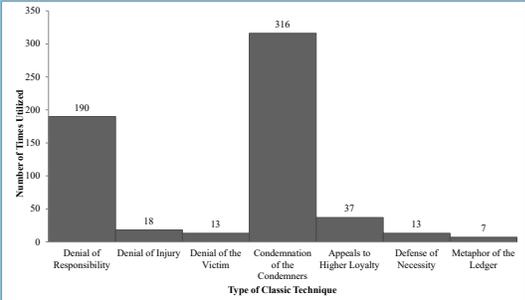


- **Extensions – how does learning occur?**
 - **Symbolic Interactionism: Matusueda**
 - **Social Learning (Bandura 1961; Skinner in Psych)**
 - **Burgess & Akers (1966); DA as operant conditioning, plus imitation and social modeling; [e.g., smoking]**
 - **Base of cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)**
 - **Delinquency first learned thru imitation or modeling. Then differential reinforcement in groups. Definitions are cues (discriminative stimuli) for crime that begin as reinforcers**
 - **Sykes & Matza (1957) Techniques of Neutralization**
 - **Neutralization (before) and rationalization (after)**
 - **Why and how do we do things we know are wrong and still protect our self-concept as good person? Cheat, steal, kill...**
 - **Deny responsibility, injury, victim, condemn condemners, appeal to higher loyalty...**

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Techniques of Neutralization & Genocide (Bryant et al. 2017)



Type of Classic Technique	Number of Times Used
Denial of Responsibility	190
Denial of Injury	18
Denial of the Victim	13
Condemnation of the Condemners	316
Appeals to Higher Loyalty	37
Defense of Necessity	13
Metaphor of the Ledger	7

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mask-wearing breakout

- **Is COVID a good deterrent? If so, why don't more people wear masks?**
- **Might learning theory explain mask-wearing? Use the concepts of differential association and learning theory to explain deviance (e.g., neutralizations, rationalization, (sub)cultural norms).**

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d.a. policy

- **“Community Treatment”**
 - harness power of the group – “guided group interaction” **still used in MN**
 - (old) attempts to evaluate experimentally
- **Provo Experiment (Empey ‘59-66)**
 - Daily GGI + Work
 - Number of Arrests in 1st year:
 - Provo **.55** versus .7 for probation group
 - Provo **1.1** versus 1.7 for institution group
- **Silverlake replication**
 - Percent rearrested
 - Silverlake **40%** versus 44% for institution
- **Change peers? Close facilities?**

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taking stock: Akers & Jensen on Social Learning & DA

- **50 years of “strong to moderate relations” between social learning & delinquency, drug use, and crime**
 - Differential reinforcement: balance of anticipated or actual rewards & punishments following behavior
 - Imitation: esp. for initial acquisition
 - Support in family and peers
 - Best at explaining alcohol & drug use (r-sq of .3-.7)
 - Expansion to “macro-level” (social structure) and global today
- **Learning core of cognitive-behavioral therapy**
- **Associations and multi-systemic therapy**

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Matsueda’s symbolic interactionist model

FIG. 4.—A substantive model of parental appraisals, reflected appraisals, and delinquency.

[Now: rational choice *plus* social learning (“updating”)]

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Moving to Opportunity (big treatment)

- **Clampet-Lundquist, Edin, Kling, & Duncan. 2011. "Moving At-Risk Youth Out of High-Risk Neighborhoods: Why Girls Fare Better Than Boys." *American Journal of Sociology***
- **Control and Lo-poverty Treatment**
 - Chicago & Baltimore (move to Black MC nbhds)
 - Change since '94? Big effects on moms and girls (health, mental health, delinquency)
 - Boys: No effect on mental health; more substance use, behavior problems, property arrests
- **Girls who moved had lower delinquency, but no effects or negative effects for boys**
 - Routines; Norms; Nbhd navigation strategies (avoid trouble); Peer interactions; loss of "social fathers"
 - Cultural capital/culture conflict fed stereotypes & monitoring; lost protection & exposed to violence

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Critique of DA/learning

- **Tautology? (true by definition)**
- **Differential receptivity (drug film)**
- **Origins of definitions**
- **Untestable (really hard to test)**
- **Doesn't specify learning process**
- **Too deterministic**

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lessons

- **Groups and peers as correlates or causes of delinquency**
 - Still debated
 - Gangs
 - Peers and desistance (Warr)
- **Community treatment as effective as institutionalization (which isn't great) for non-violent delinquents**

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Week 5 Preview
social control and self control

- **A. Cognitive Behavioral Approaches, Learning, and Control**
 - Heller, Sara B., Anuj K. Shah, Jonathan Guryan, Jens Ludwig, Sendhil Mullainathan, Harold A. Pollack. 2017. "[Thinking, Fast and Slow? Some Field Experiments to Reduce Crime and Dropout in Chicago.](#)" *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 132: 1-54.
 - Rios, Chapter 2. "The Flatlands of Oakland and the Youth Control Complex." Pp. 24-42.
- **B. Social Psychological Theories: Social Control & Self Control**
 - Hirschi, Travis. 1969. *Causes of Delinquency*. Berkeley: University of California Press. [Chapter 2](#). Pp. 16-34.
 - (required for Honors), Moffitt, Terrie E., Avshalom Caspi et al. 2011. "[A Gradient of Childhood Self-control Predicts Health, Wealth, and Public Safety.](#)" *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 108:2693-98.

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Heller et al. (2017)
Thinking Fast & Slow/BAM

- **RCT to change "decision making"**
 - Black/Latino low-income 7th-10th grade boys
 - 27 1-hr weekly sessions (30 sec "the fist")
- **Reduce arrests 28-35% (violent 45%)**
 - Reduce JTDC readmits by 21%; grad rate+
 - <\$2k/person; "fight only when need to"
- **Why? "give back 10 minutes" of life**
 - *Not* self-control, EQ, skills, social capital
 - "Automaticity" hypothesis - reexamine automatic assumptions on street
- **Soc skeptical of CBT; critique?**

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