NOTE

1. Actually, this is a purely moral reprobation and can hardly be judicially implemented. We do not consider any reestablishment of sumptuary laws desirable or even possible.

10 *Social Structure and Anomie*
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Until recently, and all the more so before then, one could speak of a marked tendency in psychological and sociological theory to attribute the faulty operation of social structures to failures of social control over man's imperious biological drives. The imagery of the relations between man and society implied by this doctrine is as clear as it is questionable. In the beginning, there are man's biological impulses which seek full expression. And then, there is the social order, essentially an apparatus for the management of impulses, for the social processing of tensions, for the "renunciation of instinctual gratifications," in the words of Freud. Nonconformity with the demands of a social structure is thus assumed to be anchored in original nature.[1] It is the biologically rooted impulses which from time to time break through social control. And by implication, conformity is the result of an utilitarian calculus or of unreasoned conditioning.

With the more recent advancement of social science, this set of conceptions has undergone basic modification. For one thing, it no longer appears so obvious that man is set against society in an unceasing war between biological impulse and social restraint. The image of man as an untamed bundle of impulses begins to look more like a caricature than a portrait. For another, sociological perspectives have increasingly entered into the analysis of behavior deviating from prescribed patterns of conduct. For whatever the role of biological impulses, there still remains the further question of why it is that the frequency of deviant behavior varies within different social structures and how it happens that the deviations have different shapes and patterns in different social structures. Today, as then, we have still much to learn about the processes through which social structures generate the circumstances in which infringement of social codes constitutes a

"normal" (that is to say, an expectable) response.[2] This chapter is an essay seeking clarification of the problem.

The framework set out in this essay is designed to provide one systematic approach to the analysis of social and cultural sources of deviant behavior. Our primary aim is to discover how some *social structures exert a definite pressure upon certain persons in the society to engage in nonconforming rather than conforming conduct.* If we can locate groups peculiarly subject to such pressures, we should expect to find fairly high rates of deviant behavior in these groups, not because the human beings comprising them are compounded of distinctive biological tendencies but because they are responding normally to the social situation in which they find themselves. Our perspective is sociological. We look at variations in the *rates* of deviant behavior, not at its incidence.[3] Should our quest be at all successful, some forms of deviant behavior will be found to be as psychologically normal as conforming behavior, and the equation of deviation and psychological abnormality will be put in question.

PATTERNS OF CULTURAL GOALS AND INSTITUTIONAL NORMS

Among the several elements of social and cultural structures, two are of immediate importance. These are analytically separable although they merge in concrete situations. The first consists of culturally defined goals, purposes and interests, held out as legitimate objectives for all or for diversely located members of the society. The goals are more or less integrated—the degree is a question of empirical fact—and roughly ordered in some hierarchy of value. Involving various degrees of sentiment and significance, the prevailing goals comprise a frame of aspirational reference. They are the things "worth striving for." They are a basic, though not the exclusive, component of what Linton has called "designs for group living." And though some, not all, of these cultural goals are directly related to the biological drives of man, they are not determined by them.

A second element of the cultural structure defines, regulates and controls the acceptable modes of reaching out for these goals. Every social group invariably couples its cultural objectives with regulations, rooted in the mores or institutions, of allowable procedures for moving toward these objectives. These regulatory norms are not necessarily identical with technical or efficiency norms. Many procedures which from the standpoint of particular individuals would be most efficient in securing desired values—the exercise of force, fraud,

power—are ruled out of the institutional area of permitted conduct. At times, the disallowed procedures include some which would be efficient for the group itself—e.g., historic taboos on vivisection, on medical experimentation, on the sociological analysis of "sacred" norms—since the criterion of acceptability is not technical efficiency but value-laden sentiments (supported by most members of the group or by those able to promote these sentiments through the composite use of power and propaganda). In all instances, the choice of expedients for striving toward cultural goals is limited by institutionalized norms.

Sociologists often speak of these controls as being "in the mores" or as operating through social institutions. Such elliptical statements are true enough, but they obscure the fact that culturally standardized practices are not all of a piece. They are subject to a wide gamut of control. They may represent definitely prescribed or preferential or permissive or proscribed patterns of behavior. In assessing the operation of social controls, these variations—roughly indicated by the terms *prescription, preference, permission* and *proscription*—must of course be taken into account.

To say, moreover, that cultural goals and institutionalized norms operate jointly to shape prevailing practices is not to say that they bear a constant relation to one another. The cultural emphasis placed upon certain goals varies independently of the degree of emphasis upon institutionalized means. There may develop a very heavy, at times a virtually exclusive, stress upon the value of particular goals, involving comparatively little concern with the institutionally prescribed means of striving toward these goals. The limiting case of this type is reached when the range of alternative procedures is governed only by technical rather than by institutional norms. Any and all procedures which promise attainment of the all-important goal would be permitted in this hypothetical polar case. This constitutes one type of malintegrated culture. A second polar type is found in groups where activities originally conceived as instrumental are transmuted into self-contained practices, lacking further objectives. The original purposes are forgotten and close adherence to institutionally prescribed conduct becomes a matter of ritual.[4] Sheer conformity becomes a central value. For a time, social stability is ensured—at the expense of flexibility. Since the range of alternative behaviors permitted by the culture is severely limited, there is little basis for adapting to new conditions. There develops a tradition-bound, 'sacred' society marked by neophobia. Between these extreme types are societies which maintain a rough balance between emphases upon cultural goals and institutionalized practices, and these constitute the integrated and relatively stable, though changing, societies.

An effective equilibrium between these two phases of the social structure is maintained so long as satisfactions accrue to individuals conforming to both cultural constraints, *viz.*, satisfactions from the achievement of goals and satisfactions emerging directly from the institutionally canalized modes of striving to attain them. It is reckoned in terms of the product and in terms of the process, in terms of the outcome and in terms of the activities. Thus continuing satisfactions must derive from sheer participation in a competitive order as well as from eclipsing one's competitors if the order itself is to be sustained. If concern shifts exclusively to the outcome of competition, then those who perennially suffer defeat may, understandably enough, work for a change in the rules of the game. The sacrifices occasionally—not, as Freud assumed, invariably—entailed by conformity to institutional norms must be compensated by socialized rewards. The distribution of statuses through competition must be so organized that positive incentives for adherence to status obligations are provided *for every position* within the distributive order. Otherwise, as will soon become plain, aberrant behavior ensues. It is, indeed, my central hypothesis that aberrant behavior may be regarded sociologically as a symptom of dissociation between culturally prescribed aspirations and socially structured avenues for realizing these aspirations.

Of the types of societies that result from independent variation of cultural goals and institutionalized means, we shall be primarily concerned with the first—a society in which there is an exceptionally strong emphasis upon specific goals without a corresponding emphasis upon institutional procedures. If it is not to be misunderstood, this statement must be elaborated. No society lacks norms governing conduct. But societies do differ in the degree to which the folkways, mores and institutional controls are effectively integrated with the goals which stand high in the hierarchy of cultural values. The culture may be such as to lead individuals to center their emotional convictions upon the complex of culturally acclaimed ends, with far less emotional support for prescribed methods of reaching out for these ends. With such differential emphases upon goals and institutional procedures, the latter may be so vitiated by the stress on goals as to have the behavior of many individuals limited only by considerations of technical expediency. In this context, the sole significant question becomes: Which of the available procedures is most efficient in netting the culturally approved value?[5] The technically most effective procedure, whether culturally legitimate or not, becomes typically preferred to institutionally prescribed conduct. As this process of attenuation continues, the society becomes unstable and there develops what Durkheim called "anomie" (or normlessness).[6]

The working of this process eventuating in anomie can be easily glimpsed in a series of familiar and instructive, though perhaps trivial, episodes. Thus, in competitive athletics, when the aim of victory is shorn of its institutional trappings and success becomes construed as "winning the game" rather than "winning under the rules of the game," a premium is implicitly set upon the use of illegitimate but technically efficient means. The star of the opposing football team is surreptitiously slugged; the wrestler incapacitates his opponent through ingenious but illicit techniques; university alumni covertly subsidize "students" whose talents are confined to the athletic field. The emphasis on the goal has so attenuated the satisfactions deriving from sheer participation in the competitive activity that only a successful outcome provides gratification. Through the same process, tension generated by the desire to win in a poker game is relieved by successfully dealing one's self four aces or, when the cult of success has truly flowered, by sagaciously shuffling the cards in a game of solitaire. The faint twinge of uneasiness in the last instance and the surreptitious nature of public delicts indicate clearly that the institutional rules of the game are *known* to those who evade them. But cultural (or idiosyncratic) exaggeration of the success-goal leads men to withdraw emotional support from the rules.[7]

This process is of course not restricted to the realm of competitive sport, which has simply provided us with microcosmic images of the social macrocosm. The process whereby exaltation of the end generates a literal *demoralization, i.e.*, a de-institutionalization, of the means occurs in many[8] groups where the two components of the social structure are not highly integrated.

Contemporary American culture appears to approximate the polar type in which great emphasis upon certain success-goals occurs without equivalent emphasis upon institutional means. It would of course be fanciful to assert that accumulated wealth stands alone as a symbol of success just as it would be fanciful to deny that Americans assign it a place high in their scale of values. In some large measure, money has been consecrated as a value in itself, over and above its expenditure for articles of consumption or its use for the enhancement of power. "Money" is peculiarly well adapted to become a symbol of prestige. As Simmel emphasized, money is highly abstract and impersonal. However acquired, fraudulently or institutionally, it can be used to purchase the same goods and services. The anonymity of an urban society, in conjunction with these peculiarities of money, permits wealth, the sources of which may be unknown to the community in which the plutocrat lives or, if known, to become purified in the course of time, to serve as a symbol of high status. Moreover, in the American Dream there is no final stopping point. The measure of

"monetary success" is conveniently indefinite and relative. At each income level, as H. F. Clark found, Americans want just about twenty-five per cent more (but of course this "just a bit more" continues to operate once it is obtained). In this flux of shifting standards, there is no stable resting point, or rather, it is the point which manages always to be "just ahead." An observer of a community in which annual salaries in six figures are not uncommon, reports the anguished words of one victim of the American Dream: "In this town, I'm snubbed socially because I only get a thousand a week. That hurts."[9]

To say that the goal of monetary success is entrenched in American culture is only to say that Americans are bombarded on every side by precepts which affirm the right or, often, the duty of retaining the goal even in the face of repeated frustration. Prestigeful representatives of the society reinforce the cultural emphasis. The family, the school and the workplace—the major agencies shaping the personality structure and goal formation of Americans—join to provide the intensive disciplining required if an individual is to retain intact a goal that remains elusively beyond reach, if he is to be motivated by the promise of a gratification which is not redeemed. As we shall presently see, parents serve as a transmission belt for the values and goals of the groups of which they are a part—above all, of their social class or of the class with which they identify themselves. And the schools are of course the official agency for the passing on of the prevailing values, with a large proportion of the textbooks used in city schools implying or stating explicitly "that education leads to intelligence and consequently to job and money success."[10] Central to this process of disciplining people to maintain their unfulfilled aspirations are the cultural prototypes of success, the living documents testifying that the American Dream can be realized if one but has the requisite abilities. Consider in this connection the following excerpts from the business journal, *Nation's Business,* drawn from large amount of comparable materials found in mass communications setting forth the values of business class culture.

The Document (Nation's Business, Vol. 27, No. 8, p. 7)	*Its Sociological Implications*
'You have to be born to those jobs, buddy, or else have a good pull.'	Here is a heretical opinion, possibly born of continued frustration, which rejects the worth of retaining an apparently unrealizable goal and, moreover, questions the legitimacy of a social structure which provides differential access to this goal.

That's an old sedative to ambition.	The counter-attack, explicitly asserting the cultural value of retaining one's aspirations intact, of not losing "ambition."
Before listening to its seduction, ask these men:	A clear statement of the function to be served by the ensuing list of "successes." These men are living testimony that the social structure is such as to permit these aspirations to be achieved, *if one is worthy*. And correlatively, failure to reach these goals testifies only to one's own personal shortcomings. Aggression provoked by failure should therefore be directed inward and not outward, against oneself and not against a social structure which provides free and equal access to opportunity.
Elmer R. Jones, president of Wells-Fargo and Co., who began life as a poor boy and left school at the fifth grade to take his first job.	Success prototype I: *All* may properly have the *same* lofty ambitions, for however lowly the starting-point, true talent can reach the very heights. Aspirations must be retained intact.
Frank C. Ball, the Mason fruit jar king of America, who rode from Buffalo to Muncie, Indiana, in a boxcar along with his brother George's horse, to start a little business in Muncie that became the biggest of its kind.	Success prototype II: Whatever the present results of one's strivings, the future is large with promise; for the common man may yet become a king. Gratifications may seem forever deferred, but they will finally be realized as one's enterprise becomes "the biggest of its kind."
J. L. Bevan, president of the Illinois Central Railroad, who at twelve was a messenger boy in the freight office at New Orleans.	Success prototype III: If the secular trends of our economy seem to give little scope to small business, than one may rise within the giant bureaucracies of private enterprise. If one can no longer be a king in a realm of his own creation, he may at least become a president in one of the economic democracies. No matter what one's present station, messenger boy or clerk, one's gaze should be fixed at the top.

From divers sources there flows a continuing pressure to retain high ambition. The exhortational literature is immense, and one can choose only at the risk of seeming invidious. Consider only these: the Reverend Russell H. Conwell, with his *Acres of Diamonds* address heard and read by hundreds of thousands and his subsequent book, *The New Day*, or *Fresh Opportunities: A Book for Young Men;* Elbert Hubbard, who delivered the famous *Message to Garcia* at Chautauqua forums throughout the land; Orison Swett Marden, who, in a stream of books, first set forth *The Secret of Achievment*, praised by college presidents, than explained the process of *Pushing to the Front*, eulogized by President McKinley and finally, these democratic testimonials notwithstanding, mapped the road to make *Every Man a King*. The symbolism of a commoner rising to the estate of economic royalty is woven deep in the texture of the American culture pattern, finding what is perhaps its ultimate expression in the words of one who knew whereof he spoke, Andrew Carnegie: "Be a king in your dreams. Say to yourself, 'My place is at the top.'"[11]

Coupled with this positive emphasis upon the obligation to maintain lofty goals is a correlative emphasis upon the penalizing of those who draw in their ambitions. American are admonished "Not to be a quitter" for in the dictionary of American culture, as in the lexicon of youth, "there is no such word as 'fail.'" The cultural manifesto is clear: one must not quit, must not cease striving, must not lessen his goals, for "not failure, but low aim, is crime."

Thus the culture enjoins the acceptance of three cultural axioms: First, all should strive for the same lofty goals since these are open to all; second, present seeming failure is but a way-station to ultimate success; and third, genuine failure consists only in the lessening or withdrawal of ambition.

In rough psychological paraphrase, these axioms represent, first, a symbolic secondary reinforcement of incentive; second, curbing the threatened extinction of a response through an associated stimulus; third, increasing the motive-strength to evoke continued responses despite the continued absence of reward.

In sociological paraphrase, these axioms represent, first, the deflection of criticism of the social structure onto one's self among those so situated in the society that they do not have full and equal access to opportunity; second, the preservation of a structure of social power by having individuals in the lower social strata identify themselves, not with their compeers, but with those at the top (whom they will ultimately join); and third, providing pressures for conformity with the cultural dictates of unslackened ambition by the threat of less than full membership in the society for those who fail to conform.

It is in these terms and through these processes that contemporary American culture continues to be characterized by a heavy emphasis on wealth as a basic symbol of success, without a corresponding emphasis upon the legitimate avenues on which to march toward this goal. How do individuals living in this cultural context respond? And how do our observations bear upon the doctrine that deviant behavior typically derives from biological impulses breaking through the restraints imposed by culture? What, in short, are the consequences for the behavior of people variously situated in a social structure of a culture in which the emphasis on dominant success-goals has become increasingly separated from an equivalent emphasis on institutionalized procedures for seeking these goals?

TYPES OF INDIVIDUAL ADAPTATION

Turning from these culture patterns, we now examine types of adaptation by individuals within the culture-bearing society. Though our focus is still the cultural and social genesis of varying rates and types of deviant behavior, our perspective shifts from the plane of patterns of cultural values to the plane of types of adaptation to these values among those occupying different positions in the social structure.

We here consider five types of adaptation, as these are schematically set out in the following table, where (+) signifies "acceptance," (-) signifies "rejection," and (±) signifies "rejection of prevailing values and substitution of new values."

Examination of how the social structure operates to exert pressure upon individuals for one or another of these alternative modes of behavior must be prefaced by the observation that people may shift from one alternative to another as they engage in different spheres of social activities. These categories refer to role behavior in specific types of situations, not to personality. They are types of more or less enduring response, not types of personality organization. To consider these types of adaptation in several spheres of conduct would introduce a complexity unmanageable within the confines of this chapter. For this reason, we shall be primarily concerned with economic activity in the broad sense of "the production, exchange, distribution and consumption of goods and services" in our competitive society, where wealth has taken on a highly symbolic cast.

I. CONFORMITY

To the extent that a society is stable, adaptation type I—conformity to

A TYPOLOGY OF MODES OF INDIVIDUAL ADAPTATION[a]

MODES OF ADAPTATION	CULTURE GOALS	INSTITUTIONALIZED MEANS
I. Conformity	+	+
II. Innovation	+	-
III. Ritualism	-	+
IV. Retreatism	-	-
V. Rebellion[b]	±	±

both cultural goals and institutionalized means—is the most common and widely diffused. Were this not so, the stability and continuity of the society could not be maintained. The mesh of expectancies constituting every social order is sustained by the modal behavior of its members representing conformity to the established, though perhaps secularly changing, culture patterns. It is in fact, only because behavior is typically oriented toward the basic values of the society that we may speak of a human aggregate as comprising a society. Unless there is a deposit of values shared by interacting individuals, there exist social relations, if the disorderly interactions may be so called, but no society. It is thus that, at mid-century, one may refer to a Society of Nations primarily as a figure of speech or as an imagined objective, but not as a sociological reality.

Since our primary interest centers on the sources of *deviant* behavior, and since we have briefly examined the mechanisms making for conformity as the modal response in American society, little more need be said regarding this type of adaptation, at this point.

II. INNOVATION

Great cultural emphasis upon the success-goal invites this mode of adaptation through the use of institutionally proscribed but often effective means of attaining at least the simulacrum of success—wealth and power. This response occurs when the individual has assimilated the cultural emphasis upon the goal without equally internalizing the institutional norms governing ways and means for its attainment.

From the standpoint of psychology, great emotional investment in an objective may be expected to produce a readiness to take risks, and this attitude may be adopted by people in all social strata. From the standpoint of sociology, the question arises, which features of our social structure predispose toward this type of adaptation, thus producing greater frequencies of deviant behavior in one social stratum than in another?

On the top economic levels, the pressure toward innovation not infrequently erases the distinction between business-like strivings this side of the mores and sharp practices beyond the mores. As Veblen observed, "It is not easy in any given case—indeed it is at times impossible until the courts have spoken—to say whether it is an instance of praiseworthy salesmanship or a penitentiary offense." The history of the great American fortunes is threaded with strains toward institutionally dubious innovation as is attested by many tributes to the Robber Barons. The reluctant admiration often expressed privately, and not seldom publicly, of these "shrewd, smart and successful" men is a product of a cultural structure in which the sacrosanct goal virtually consecrates the means. This is no new phenomenon. Without assuming that Charles Dickens was a wholly accurate observer of the American scene and with full knowledge that he was anything but impartial, we cite his perceptive remarks on the American

> love of "smart" dealing; which gilds over many a swindle and gross breach of trust; many a defalcation, public and private; and enables many a knave to hold his head up with the best, who well deserves a halter. . . . The merits of a broken speculation, or a bankruptcy, or of a successful scoundrel; are not gauged by its or his observance of the golden rule, "Do as you would be done by," but are considered with reference to their smartness. . . . The following dialogue I have held a hundred times: "Is it not a very disgraceful circumstance that such a man as So-and-so should be acquiring a large property by the most infamous and odious means, and notwithstanding all the crimes of which he has been guilty, should be tolerated and abetted by your Citizens? He is a public nuisance, is he not?" "Yes, sir." "A convicted liar?" "Yes, sir." "He has been kicked and cuffed, and caned?" "Yes, sir." "And he is utterly dishonorable, debased, and profligate?" "Yes, sir." "In the name of wonder, then, what is his merit?" "Well, sir, he is a smart man."

In this caricature of conflicting cultural values, Dickens was of course only one of many wits who mercilessly probed the consequences of the heavy emphasis on financial success. Native wits continued where alien wits left off. Artemus Ward satirized the commonplaces of American life until they seemed strangely incongruous. The "crackerbox philosophers," Bill Arp and Petroleum Volcano [later Vesuvius] Nasby, put wit in the service of iconoclasm, breaking the images of public figures with unconcealed pleasure. Josh Billings and his alter ego, Uncle Esek, made plain what many could not freely acknowledge, when he observed that satisfaction is relative since "most of the happiness in this world konsists in possessing what others kant git." All were engaged in exhibiting the social functions of tendentious wit, as this was later to be analyzed by Freud, in his monograph on *Wit and Its Relation to the Unconscious*, using it as "a weapon of attack upon what is great, dignified and mighty, [upon] that which is shielded by internal hindrances or external circumstance against direct disparagement. . . ." But perhaps most in point here was the deployment of wit by Ambrose Bierce in a form which made it evident that *wit* had not cut away from its etymological origins and still meant the power by which one knows, learns, or thinks. In his characteristically ironical and deep-seeing essay on "crime and its correctives," Bierce begins with the observation that "Sociologists have long been debating the theory that the impulse to commit crime is a disease, and the ayes appear to have it—the disease." After this prelude, he describes the ways in which the successful rogue achieves social legitimacy, and proceeds to anatomize the discrepancies between cultural values and social relations.

> The good American is, as a rule, pretty hard on roguery, but he atones for his austerity by an amiable toleration of rogues. His only requirement is that he must personally know the rogues. We all "denounce" thieves loudly enough if we have not the honor of their acquaintance. If we have, why, that is different—unless they have the actual odor of the slum or the prison about them. We may know them guilty, but we meet them, shake hands with them, drink with them and, if they happen to be wealthy, or otherwise great, invite them to our houses, and deem it an honor to frequent theirs. We do not "approve their methods"—let that be understood; and thereby they are sufficiently punished. The notion that a knave cares a pin what is thought of his ways by one who is civil and friendly to himself appears to have been invented by a humorist. On the vaudeville stage of Mars it would probably have made his fortune.
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> [And again:] If social recognition were denied to rogues they would be fewer by many. Some would only the more diligently cover their tracks along the devious paths of unrighteousness, but others would do so much violence to their consciences as to renounce the disadvantages of rascality for those of an honest life. An unworthy person dreads nothing so much as the withholding of an honest hand, the slow, inevitable stroke of an ignoring eye.
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> We have rich rogues because we have "respectable" persons who are not ashamed to take them by the hand, to be seen with them, to say that they know them. In such it is treachery to censure them; to cry out when robbed by them is to turn state's evidence.

> One may smile upon a rascal (most of us do many times a day) if one does not know him to be a rascal, and has not said he is; but knowing him to be, or having said he is, to smile upon him is to be a hypocrite—just a plain hypocrite or a sycophantic hypocrite, according to the station in life of the rascal smiled upon. There are more plain hypocrites than sycophantic ones for there are more rascals of no consequence than rich and distinguished ones, though they get fewer smiles each. The American people will be plundered as long as the American character is what it is; as long as it is tolerant of successful knaves; as long as American ingenuity draws an imaginary distinction between a man's public character and his private—his commercial and his personal. In brief, the American people will be plundered as long as they deserve to be plundered. No human law can stop, none ought to stop it, for that would abrogate a higher and more salutary law: "As ye sow, ye shall reap."[14]

Living in the age in which the American robber barons flourished, Bierce could not easily fail to observe what became later known as "white-collar crime." Nevertheless, he was aware that not all of these large and dramatic departures from institutional norms in the top economic strata are known, and possibly fewer deviations among the lesser middle classes come to light. Sutherland has repeatedly documented the prevalence of "white-collar criminality" among business men. He notes, further, that many of these crimes were not prosecuted because they were not detected or, if detected, because of " the status of the business man, the trend away from punishment, and the relatively unorganized resentment of the public against white-collar criminals."[15] A study of some 1,700 prevalently middle-class individuals found that "off the record crimes" were common among wholly "respectable" members of society. Ninety-nine per cent of those questioned confessed to having committed one or more of 49 offenses under the penal law of the State of New York, each of these offenses being sufficiently serious to draw a maximum sentence of not less than one year. The mean number of offenses in adult years—this excludes all offenses committed before the age of sixteen—was 18 for men and 11 for women. Fully 64% of the men and 29% of the women acknowledged their guilt on one or more counts of felony which, under the laws of New York is ground for depriving them of all rights of citizenship. One keynote of these findings is expressed by a minister, referring to false statements he made about a commodity he sold, "I tried truth first, but it's not always successful." On the basis of these results, the authors modestly conclude that "the number of acts legally constituting crimes are far in excess of those officially reported. Unlawful behavior, far from being an abnormal social or psychological manifestation, is in truth a very common phenomenon."[16]

But whatever the differential rates of deviant behavior in the several social strata, and we know from many sources that the official crime statistics uniformly showing higher rates in the lower strata are far from complete or reliable, it appears from our analysis that the greatest presures toward deviation are exerted upon the lower strata. Cases in point permit us to detect the sociological mechanisms involved in producing these pressures. Several researches have shown that specialized areas of vice and crime constitute a "normal" response to a situation where the cultural emphasis upon pecuniary success has been absorbed, but where there is little access to conventional and legitimate means for becoming successful. The occupational opportunities of people in these areas are largely confined to manual labor and the lesser white-collar jobs. Given the American stigmatization of manual labor *which has been found to hold rather uniformly in all social classes,*[17] and the absence of realistic opportunities for advancement beyond this level, the result is a marked tendency toward deviant behavior. The status of unskilled labor and the consequent low income cannot readily compete *in terms of established standards of worth* with the promises of power and high income from organized vice, rackets and crime.[18]

For our purposes, these situations exhibit two salient features. First, incentives for success are provided by the established values of the culture *and* second, the avenues available for moving toward this goal are largely limited by the class structure to those of deviant behavior. It is the *combination* of the cultural emphasis and the social structure which produces intense pressure for deviation. Recourse to legitimate channels for "getting in the money" is limited by a class structure which is not fully open at each level to men of good capacity.[19] Despite our persisting open-class-ideology,[20] advance toward the success-goal is relatively rare and notably difficult for those armed with little formal education and few economic resources. The dominant pressure leads toward the gradual attenuation of legitmate, but by and large ineffectual, strivings and the increasing use of illegitimate, but more or less effective, expedients.

Of those located in the lower reaches of the social structure, the culture makes incompatible demands. On the one hand, they are asked to orient their conduct toward the prospect of large wealth—"Every man a king," said Marden and Carnegie and Long—and on the other, they are largely denied effective opportunities to do so institutionally. The consequence of this structural inconsistency is a high rate of deviant behavior. The equilibrium between culturally designated ends and means becomes highly unstable with progressive emphasis on attaining the prestige-laden ends by any means whatsoever.

Within this context, Al Capone represents the triumph of amoral intelligence over morally prescribed "failure," when the channels of vertical mobility are closed or narrowed *in a society which places a high premium on economic affluence and social ascent for* all *its members.*[21]

This last qualification is of central importance. It implies that other aspects of the social structure, besides the extreme emphasis on pecuniary success, must be considered if we are to understand the social sources of deviant behavior. A high frequency of deviant behavior is not generated merely by lack of opportunity or by this exaggerated pecuniary emphasis. A comparatively rigidified class structure, a caste order, may limit opportunities far beyond the point which obtains in American society today. It is when a system of cultural values extols, virtually above all else, certain *common* success-goals *for the population at large* while the social structure rigorously restricts or completely closes access to approved modes of reaching these goals *for a considerable part of the same population,* that deviant behavior ensues on a large scale. Otherwise said, our egalitarian ideology denies by implication the existence of non-competing individuals and groups in the pursuit of pecuniary success. Instead, the same body of success-symbols is held to apply for all. Goals are held to transcend class lines, not to be bounded by them, yet the actual social organization is such that there exist class differentials in accessibility of the goals. In this setting, a cardinal American virtue, "ambition," promotes a cardinal American vice, "deviant behavior."

This theoretical analysis may help explain the varying correlations between crime and poverty.[22] "Poverty" is not an isolated variable which operates in precisely the same fashion wherever found; it is only one in a complex of identifiably interdependent social and cultural variables. Poverty as such and consequent limitation of opportunity are not enough to produce a conspicuously high rate of criminal behavior. Even the notorious "poverty in the midst of plenty" will not necessarily lead to this result. But when poverty and associated disadvantages in competing for the culture values approved for *all* members of the society are linked with a cultural emphasis on pecuniary success as a dominant goal, high rates of criminal behavior are the normal outcome. Thus, crude (and not necessarily reliable) crime statistics suggest that poverty is less highly correlated with crime in southeastern Europe than in the United States. The economic life-chances of the poor in these European areas would seem to be even less promising than in this country, so that neither poverty nor its association with limited opportunity is sufficient to account for the varying correlations. However, when we consider the full configuration—poverty, limited opportunity and the assignment of cultural goals—there appears some basis for explaining the higher correlation between poverty and crime in our society than in others where rigidified class structure is coupled with *differential class symbols of success.*

The victims of this contradiction between the cultural emphasis on pecuniary ambition and the social bars to full opportunity are not always aware of the structural sources of their thwarted aspirations. To be sure, they are often aware of a discrepancy between individual worth and social rewards. But they do not necessarily see how this comes about. Those who do find its source in the social structure may become alienated from that structure and become ready candidates for Adaptation V (rebellion). But others, and this appears to include the great majority, may attribute their difficulties to more mystical and less sociological sources. For as the distinguished classicist and sociologist-in-spite-of himself, Gilbert Murray, has remarked in this general connection, "The best seed-ground for superstition is a society in which the fortunes of men seem to bear practically no relation to their merits and efforts. A stable and well-governed society does tend, speaking roughly, to ensure that the Virtuous and Industrious Apprentice shall succeed in life, while the Wicked and Idle Apprentice fails. And in such a society people tend to lay stress on the reasonable or visible chains of causation. But in [a society suffering from anomie]..., the ordinary virtues of diligence, honesty, and kindliness seem to be of little avail."[23] And in such a society people tend to put stress on mysticism: the workings of Fortune, Chance, Luck.

In point of fact, both the eminently "successful" and the eminently "unsuccessful" in our society not infrequently attribute the outcome to "luck." Thus, the prosperous man of business, Julius Rosenwald, declared that 95% of the great fortunes were "due to luck."[24] And a leading business journal, in an editorial explaining the social benefits of great individual wealth, finds it necessary to supplement wisdom with luck as the factors accounting for great fortunes: "When one man through wise investments—aided, we'll grant, by good luck in many cases—accumulates a few millions, he doesn't thereby take something from the rest of us."[25] In much the same fashion, the worker often explains economic status in terms of chance. "The worker sees all about him experienced and skilled men with no work to do. If he is in work, he feels lucky. If he is out of work, he is the victim of hard luck. *He can see little relation between worth and consequences.*"[26]

But these references to the workings of chance and luck serve distinctive functions according to whether they are made by those who have reached or those who have not reached the culturally empha-

sized goals. For the successful, it is in psychological terms, a disarming expression of modesty. It is far removed from any semblance of conceit to say, in effect, that one was lucky rather than altogether deserving of one's good fortune. In sociological terms, the doctrine of luck as expounded by the successful serves the dual function of explaining the frequent discrepancy between merit and reward while keeping immune from criticism a social structure which allows this discrepancy to become frequent. For if success is primarily a matter of luck, if it is just in the blind nature of things, if it bloweth where it listeth and thou canst not tell whence it cometh or whither it goeth, then surely it is beyond control and will occur in the same measure *whatever the social structure.*

For the unsuccessful and particularly for those among the unsuccessful who find little reward for their merit and their effort, the doctrine of luck serves the psychological function of enabling them to preserve their self-esteem in the face of failure. It may also entail the dysfunction of curbing motivation for sustained endeavor.[27] Sociologically, as implied by Bakke,[28] the doctrine may reflect a failure to comprehend the workings of the social and economic system, and may be dysfunctional inasmuch as it eliminates the rationale of working for structural changes making for greater equities in opportunity and reward.

This orientation toward chance and risk-taking, accentuated by the strain of frustrated aspirations, may help explain the marked interest in gambling—an institutionally proscribed or at best permitted rather than preferred or prescribed mode of activity—within certain social strata.[29]

Among those who do not apply the doctrine of luck to the gulf between merit, effort and reward there may develop an individuated and cynical attitude toward the social structure, best exemplified in the cultural cliché that "it's not what you know, but who you know, that counts."

In societies such as our own, then, the great cultural emphasis on pecuniary success for all and a social structure which unduly limits practical recourse to approved means for many set up a tension toward innovative practices which depart from institutional norms. But this form of adaptation presupposes that individuals have been imperfectly socialized so that they abandon institutional means while retaining the success-aspiration. Among those who have fully internalized the institutional values, however, a comparable situation is more likely to lead to an alternative response in which the goal is abandoned but conformity to the mores persists. This type of response calls for further examination.

III. RITUALISM

The ritualistic type of adaptation can be readily identified. It involves the abandoning or scaling down of the lofty cultural goals of great pecuniary success and rapid social mobility to the point where one's aspirations can be satisfied. But though one rejects the cultural obligation to attempt "to get ahead in the world," though one draws in one's horizons, one continues to abide almost compulsively by institutional norms.

It is something of a terminological quibble to ask whether this represents genuinely deviant behavior. Since the adaptation is, in effect, an internal decision and since the overt behavior is institutionally permitted, though not culturally preferred, it is not generally considered to represent a social problem. Intimates of individuals making this adaptation may pass judgment in terms of prevailing cultural emphases and may "feel sorry for them," they may, in the individual case, feel that "old Jonesy is certainly in a rut." Whether this is described as deviant behavior or no, it clearly represents a departure from the cultural model in which men are obliged to strive actively, preferably through institutionalized procedures, to move onward and upward in the social hierarchy.

We should expect this type of adaptation to be fairly frequent in a society which makes one's social status largely dependent upon one's achievements. For, as has so often been observed,[30] this ceaseless competitive struggle produces acute status anxiety. One device for allaying these anxieties is to lower one's level of aspiration—permanently. Fear produces inaction, or more accurately, routinized action.[31]

The syndrome of the social ritualist is both familiar and instructive. His implicit life-philosophy finds expression in a series of cultural clichés: "I'm not sticking *my* neck out," "I'm playing safe," "I'm satisfied with what I've got," "Don't aim high and you won't be disappointed." The theme threaded through these attitudes is that high ambitions invite frustration and danger whereas lower aspirations produce satisfaction and security. It is a response to a situation which appears threatening and excites distrust. It is the attitude implicit among workers who carefully regulate their output to a constant quota in an industrial organization where they have occasion to fear that they will "be noticed" by managerial personnel and "something will happen" if their output rises and falls.[32] It is the perspective of the frightened employee, the zealously conformist bureaucrat in the teller's cage of the private banking enterprise or in the front office of the public works enterprise.[33] It is, in short, the mode of adaptation of individually seeking a *private* escape from the dangers and frustrations

which seem to them inherent in the competition for major cultural goals by abandoning these goals and clinging all the more closely to the safe routines and the institutional norms.

If we should expect *lower-class* Americans to exhibit Adaptation II—"innovation"—to the frustrations enjoined by the prevailing emphasis on large cultural goals and the fact of small social opportunities, we should expect *lower-middle class* Americans to be heavily represented among those making Adaptation III, "ritualism." For it is in the lower middle class that parents typically exert continuous pressure upon children to abide by the moral mandates of the society, and where the social climb upward is less likely to meet with success than among the upper middle class. The strong disciplining for conformity with mores reduces the likelihood of Adaptation II and promotes the likelihood of Adaptation III. The severe training leads many to carry a heavy burden of anxiety. The socialization patterns of the lower middle class thus promote the very character structure most predisposed toward ritulism,[34] and it is in this stratum, accordingly, that the adaptive pattern III should most often occur.[35]

But we should note again, as at the outset of this chapter, that we are here examining *modes of adaptation* to contradictions in the cultural and social structure: we are not focusing on character or personality types. Individuals caught up in these contradictions can and do move from one type of adaptation to another. Thus it may be conjectured that some ritualists, conforming meticulously to the institutional rules, are so steeped in the regulations that they become bureaucratic virtuosos, that they over-conform precisely because they are subject to guilt engendered by previous nonconformity with the rules (*i.e.*, Adaptation II). And the occasional passage from ritualistic adaptation to dramatic kinds of illicit adaptation is well-documented in clinical case-histories and often set forth in insightful fiction. Defiant outbreaks not infrequently follow upon prolonged periods of over-compliance.[36] But though the psychodynamic mechanisms of this type of adaptation have been fairly well identified and linked with patterns of discipline and socialization in the family, much sociological research is still required to explain why these patterns are presumably more frequent in certain social strata and groups than in others. Our own discussion has merely set out one analytical framework for sociological research focused on this problem.

IV. RETREATISM

Just as Adaptation I (conformity) remains the most frequent, Adaptation IV (the rejection of cultural goals and institutional means) is probably the least common. People who adapt (or maladapt) in this fashion are, strictly speaking, *in* the society but not *of* it. Sociologically, these constitute the true aliens. Not sharing the common frame of values, they can be included as members of the *society* (in distinction from the *population*) only in a fictional sense.

In this category fall some of the adaptive activities of psychotics, autists, pariahs, outcasts, vagrants, vagabonds, tramps, chronic drunkards and drug addicts.[37] They have relinquished culturally prescribed goals and their behavior does not accord with institutional norms. This is not to say that in some cases the source of their mode of adaptation is not the very social structure which they have in effect repudiated nor that their very existence within an area does not constitute a problem for members of the society.

From the standpoint of its sources in the social structure, this mode of adaptation is most likely to occur when *both* the culture goals and the institutional practices have been thoroughly assimilated by the individual and imbued with affect and high value, but accessible institutional avenues are not productive of success. There results a twofold conflict: the interiorized moral obligation for adopting institutional means conflicts with pressures to resort to illicit means (which may attain the goal) and the individual is shut off from means which are both legitimate and effective. The competitive order is maintained but the frustrated and handicapped individual who cannot cope with this order drops out. Defeatism, quietism and resignation are manifested in escape mechanisms which ultimately lead him to "escape" from the requirements of the society. It is thus an expedient which arises from continued failure to near the goal by legitimate measures and from an inability to use the illegitimate route because of internalized prohibition, *this process occurring while the supreme value of the success-goal has not yet been renounced.* The conflict is resolved by abandoning *both* precipitating elements, the goals and the means. The escape is complete, the conflict is eliminated and the individual is asocialized.

In public and ceremonial life, this type of deviant behavior is most heartily condemned by conventional representatives of the society. In contrast to the conformist, who keeps the wheels of society running, this deviant is a non-productive liability; in contrast to the innovator who is at least "smart" and actively striving, he sees no value in the success-goal which the culture prizes so highly; in contrast to the ritualist who conforms at least to the mores, he pays scant attention to the institutional practices.

Nor does the society lightly accept these repudiations of its values. To do so would be to put these values into question. Those who have abandoned the quest for success are relentlessly pursued to their haunts by a society insistent upon having all its members orient themselves to success-striving. Thus, in the heart of Chicago's Hobohemia are the book stalls filled with wares designed to revitalize dead aspirations.

> The Gold Coast Book Store is in the basement of an old residence, built back from the street, and now sandwiched between two business blocks. The space in front is filled with stalls, and striking placards and posters.
>
> These posters advertise such books as will arrest the attention of the down-and-out. One reads: "...Men in thousands pass this spot daily, but the majority of them are not financially successful. They are never more than two jumps ahead of the rent men. Instead of that, they should be more bold and daring," "Getting Ahead of the Game," before old age withers them and casts them on the junk heap of human wrecks. If you want to escape the evil fate—the fate of the vast majority of men—come in and get a copy of *The Law of Financial Success*. It will put some new ideas in your head, and put you on the highroad to success. 35 cents.
>
> There are always men loitering before its stalls. But they seldom buy. Success comes high, even at thirty-five cents, to the hobo.[38]

But if this deviant is condemned in real life, he may become a source of gratification in fantasy-life. Thus Kardiner has advanced the speculation that such figures in contemporary folklore and popular culture bolster "morale and self-esteem by the spectacle of man rejecting current ideals and expressing contempt for them." The prototype in the films is of course Charlie Chaplin's bum.

> He is Mr. Nobody and is very much aware of his own significance. He is always the butt of a crazy and bewildering world in which he has no place and from which he constantly runs away into a contented do-nothingness. *He is free from conflict because he has abandoned the quest for security and prestige, and is resigned to the lack of any claim to virtue or distinction.* [A precise characterological portrait of Adaptation IV.] He always becomes involved in the world by accident. There he encounters evil and aggression against the weak and helpless which he has no power to combat. Yet always, in spite of himself, he becomes the champion of the wronged and oppressed, not by virtue of his great organizing ability but by virtue of homely and insolent trickiness by which he seeks out the weakness of the wrongdoer. He always remains humble, poor, and lonely, but is contemptuous of the incomprehensible world and its values. He therefore represents the character of our time who is *perplexed by the dilemma either of being crushed in the struggle to achieve the socially approved goals of success and power* (he achieve it only once—in *The Gold Rush*) *or of succumbing to a hopeless resignation and flight from them.* Charlie's bum is a great comfort in that he gloats in his ability to outwit the pernicious forces aligned against him if he chooses to do so and affords every man the satisfaction of feeling that the ultimate flight from social goals to loneliness is an act of *choice* and not a symptom of his defeat. Mickey Mouse is a continuation of the Chaplin saga.[39]

This fourth mode of adaptation, then, is that of the socially disinherited who if they have none of the rewards held out by society also have few of the frustrations attendant upon continuing to seek these rewards. It is, moreover, a privatized rather than a collective mode of adaptation. Although people exhibiting this deviant behavior may gravitate toward centers where they come into contact with other deviants and although they may come to share in the subculture of these deviant groups, their adaptations are largely private and isolated rather than unified under the aegis of a new cultural code. The type of collective adaptation remains to be considered.

V. REBELLION

This adaptation leads men outside the environing social structure to envisage and seek to bring into being a new, that is to say, a greatly modified social structure. It presupposes alienation from reigning goals and standards. These come to be regarded as purely arbitary. And the arbitrary is precisely that which can neither exact allegiance nor possess legitimacy, for it might as well be otherwise. In our society, organized movements for rebellion apparently aim to introduce a social structure in which the cultural standards of success would be sharply modified and provision would be made for a closer correspondence between merit, effort and reward.

But before examining "rebellion" as a mode of adaptation, we must distinguish it from a superficially similar but essentially different type, *ressentiment*. Introduced in a special technical sense, by Nietzsche, the concept of *ressentiment* was taken up and developed sociologically by Max Scheler.[40] This complex sentiment has three interlocking elements. First, diffuse feelings of hate, envy and hostility; second, a sense of being powerless to express these feelings actively against the person or social stratum evoking them; and third, a continual re-experiencing of this impotent hostility.[41] The essential point distinguishing *ressentiment* from rebellion is that the former does not involve a genuine change in values. *Ressentiment* involves a sour-

grapes pattern which asserts merely that desired but unattainable objectives do not actually embody the prized values—after all, the fox in the fable does not say that he abandons all taste for sweet grapes; he says only that these particular grapes are not sweet. Rebellion, on the other hand, involves a genuine transvaluation, where the direct or vicarious experience of frustration leads to full denunciation of previously prized values—the rebellious fox simply renounces the prevailing taste for sweet grapes. In *ressentiment*, one condemns what one secretly craves; in rebellion, one condemns the craving itself. But though the two are distinct, organized rebellion may draw upon a vast reservoir of the resentful and discontented as institutional dislocations become acute.

When the institutional system is regarded as the barrier to the satisfaction of legitimized goals, the stage is set for rebellion as an adaptive response. To pass into organized political action, allegiance must not only be withdrawn from the prevailing social structure but must be transferred to new groups possessed of a new myth.[42] The dual function of the myth is to locate the source of large-scale frustrations in the social structure and to portray an alternative structure which would not, presumably, give rise to frustration of the deserving. It is a charter for action. In this context, the functions of the counter-myth of the conservatives—briefly sketched in an earlier section of this chapter—become further clarified: whatever the source of mass frustration, it is not to be found in the basic structure of the society. The conservative myth may thus assert that these frustrations are in the nature of things and would occur in *any* social system: "Periodic mass unemployment and business depressions can't be legislated out of existence; it's just like a person who feels good one day and bad the next."[43] Or, if not the doctrine of inevitability, then the doctrine of gradual and slight adjustment: "A few changes here and there, and we'll have things running as ship-shape as they can possibly be." Or, the doctrine which deflects hostility from the social structure onto the individual who is a "failure" since "every man really gets what's coming to him in this country."

The myths of rebellion and of conservatism both work toward a "monopoly of the imagination" seeking to define the situation in such terms as to move the frustrate toward or away from Adaptation V. It is above all the renegade who, though himself successful, renounces the prevailing values that becomes the target of greatest hostility among those in rebellion. For he not only puts the values in question, as does the outgroup, but he signifies that the unity of the group is broken.[44] Yet, as has so often been noted, it is typically members of a rising class

rather than the most depressed strata who organize the resentful and the rebellious into a revolutionary group.

THE STRAIN TOWARD ANOMIE

The social structure we have examined produces a strain toward anomie and deviant behavior. The pressure of such a social order is upon outdoing one's competitors. So long as the sentiments supporting this competitive system are distributed throughout the entire range of activities and are not confined to the final result of "success," the choice of means will remain largely within the ambit of institutional control. When, however, the cultural emphasis shifts from the satisfactions deriving from competition itself to almost exclusive concern with the outcome, the resultant stress makes for the breakdown of the regulatory structure. With this attenuation of institutional controls, there occurs an approximation to the situation erroneously held by the utilitarian philosophers to be typical of society, a situation in which calculations of personal advantage and fear of punishment are the only regulating agencies.

This strain toward anomie does not operate evenly throughout the society. Some effort has been made in the present analysis to suggest the strata most vulnerable to the pressures for deviant behavior and to set forth some of the mechanisms operating to produce those pressures. For purposes of simplifying the problem, monetary success was taken as the major cultural goal, although there are, of course, alternative goals in the repository of common values. The realms of intellectual and artistic achievement, for example, provide alternative career patterns which may not entail large pecuniary rewards. To the extent that the cultural structure attaches prestige to these alternatives and the social structure permits access to them, the system is somewhat stabilized. Potential deviants may still conform in terms of these auxiliary sets of values.

But the central tendencies toward anomie remain, and it is to these that the analytical scheme here set forth calls particular attention.

THE ROLE OF THE FAMILY

A final word should be said drawing together the implications scattered throughout the foregoing discussion concerning the role played by the family in these patterns of deviant behavior.

It is the family, of course, which is a major transmission belt for the diffusion of cultural standards to the oncoming generation. But what has until lately been overlooked is that the family largely transmits that portion of the culture accessible to the social stratum and groups in which the parents find themselves. It is, therefore, a mechanism for disciplining the child in terms of the cultural goals and mores characteristic of this narrow range of groups. Nor is the socialization confined to direct training the disciplining. The process is, at least in part, inadvertent. Quite apart from direct admonitions, rewards and punishments, the child is exposed to social prototypes in the witnessed daily behavior and casual conversations of parents. Not infrequently, *children detect and incorporate cultural uniformities even when these remain implicit and have not been reduced to rules.*

Language patterns provide the most impressive evidence, readily observable in clinical fashion, that children, in the process of socialization, detect uniformities which have not been explicitly formulated for them by elders or contemporaries and which are not formulated by the children themselves. Persistent errors of language among children are most instructive. Thus, the child will spontaneously use such words as "mouses" or "moneys," *even though he has never heard such terms or been taught "the rule for forming plurals."* Or he will create such words as "falled," "runned," "singed," "hitted," though he has not been taught, at the age of three, "rules" of conjugation. Or, he will refer to a choice morsel as "gooder" than another less favored, or perhaps through a logical extension, he may describe it as "goodest" of all. Obviously, he has detected the implicit paradigms for the expression of plurality, for the conjugation of verbs, and the inflection of adjectives. The very nature of his error and misapplication of the paradigm testifies to this.[45]

It may be tentatively inferred, therefore, that he is also busily engaged in *detecting and acting upon the implicit paradigms of cultural evaluation, and categorization of people and things, and the formation of estimable goals* as well as assimilating the explicit cultural orientation set forth in an endless stream of commands, explanations and exhortations by parents. It would appear that in addition to the important researches of the depth psychologies on the socialization process, there is need for supplementary types of direct observation of culture diffusion within the family. It may well be that the child retains the implicit paradigm of cultural values detected in the day-by-day behavior of his parents even when this conflicts with their explicit advice and exhortations.

The projection of parental ambitions onto the child is also centrally relevant to the subject in hand. As is well known, many parents con-

fronted with personal "failure" or limited "success" may mute their original goal-emphasis and may defer further efforts to reach the goal, attempting to reach it vicariously through their children. "The influence may come through the mother or the father. Often it is the case of a parent who hopes that the child will attain heights that he or she failed to attain."[46] In a recent research on the social organization of public housing developments, we have found among both Negroes and Whites on lower occupational levels, a substantial proportion having aspirations for a professional career for their children.[47] Should this finding be confirmed by further research it will have large bearing upon the problem in hand. For if compensatory projection of parental ambition onto children is widespread, then it is precisely those parents least able to provide free access to opportunity for their children—the "failures" and "frustrates"—who exert great pressure upon their children for high achievement. And this syndrome of lofty aspirations and limited realistic opportunities, as we have seen, is precisely the pattern which invites deviant behavior. This clearly points to the need for investigation focused upon occupational goal-formation in the several social strata if the inadvertent role of family disciplining in deviant behavior is to be understood from the perspectives of our analytical scheme.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

It should be apparent that the foregoing discussion is not pitched on a moralistic plane. Whatever the sentiments of the reader concerning the moral desirability of coordinating the goals-and-means phases of the social structure, it is clear that imperfect coordination of the two leads to anomie. In so far as one of the most general functions of social structure is to provide a basis for predictability and regularity of social behavior, it becomes increasingly limited in effectiveness as these elements of the social structure become dissociated. At the extreme, predictability is minimized and what may be properly called anomie or cultural chaos supervenes.

This essay on the structural sources of deviant behavior remains but a prelude. It has not included a detailed treatment of the structural elements which predispose toward one rather than another of the alternative responses open to individuals living in an ill-balanced social structure; it has largely neglected but not denied the relevance of the social-psychological processes determining the specific incidence of these responses; it has only briefly considered the social functions fulfilled by deviant behavior; it has not put the explanatory power of the

analytical scheme to full empirical test by determining group variations in deviant and conformist behavior; it has only touched upon rebellious behavior which seeks to refashion the social framework.

It is suggested that these and related problems may be advantageously analyzed by use of this scheme.

NOTES

1. See, for example, S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Dicontents (passim,* and esp. at 63); Ernest Jones, *Social Aspects of Psychoanalysis* (London, 1924), 28. If the Freudian notion is a variety of the "original sin" doctrine, then the interpretation advanced in this paper is a doctrine of "socially derived sin."
2. "Normal" in the sense of the psychologically expectable, if not culturally approved, response to determinate social conditions. This statement does not, of course, deny the role of biological and personality differences in fixing the *incidence* of deviant behavior. It is simply that *this* is not the problem considered here. It is in this same sense, I take it, that James S. Plant speaks of the "normal reaction of normal people to abnormal conditions." See his *Personality and the Cultural Pattern* (New York, 1937), 248.
3. The position taken here has been perceptively described by Edward Sapir. "...problems of social science differ from problems of individual behavior in degree of specificity, not in kind. Every statement about behavior which throws the emphasis, explicitly or implicitly, on the actual, integral experiences of defined personalities or types of personalities is a datum of psychology or psychiatry rather than of social science. Every statement about behavior which aims, not to be accurate about the behavior of an actual individual or individuals or about the expected behavior of a physically and psychologically defined type of individual, but which abstracts from such behavior in order to bring out in clear relief certain expectancies with regard to those aspects of individual behavior which various people share, as an interpersonal or 'social' pattern, is a datum, however crudely expressed, of social science." I have here chosen the second perspective; although I shall have occasion to speak of attitudes, values and function, it will be from the standpoint of how the social structure promotes or inhibits their appearance in specified types of situations. See Sapir. "Why cultural anthropology needs the psychiatrist," *Psychiatry,* 1938, 1, 7–12.
4. This ritualism may be associated with a mythology which rationalizes these practices so that they appear to retain their status as means, but the dominant pressure is toward strict ritualistic conformity,

irrespective of the mythology. Ritualism is thus most complete when such rationalizations are not even called forth.

5. In this connection, one sees the relevance of Elton Mayo's paraphrase of the title of Tawney's well-known book. "Actually the problem is *not that of the sickness of an acquisitive society; it is that of the acquisitiveness of a sick society.*" *Human Problems of an Industrialized Civilization,* 153. Mayo deals with the process through which wealth comes to be the basic symbol of social achievement and sees this as arising from a state of anomie. My major concern here is with the social consequences of a heavy emphasis upon monetary success as a goal in a society which has not adapted its structure to the implications of this emphasis. A complete analysis would require the simultaneous examination of both processes.
6. Durkheim's resurrection of the term "anomie" which, so far as I know, first appears in approximately the same sense in the late sixteenth century, might well become the object of an investigation by a student interested in the historical filiation of ideas. Like the term "climate of opinion" brought into academic and political popularity by A. N. Whitehead three centuries after it was coined by Joseph Glanvill, the word "anomie" (or anomy or anomia) has lately come into frequent use, once it was re-introduced by Durkheim. Why the resonance in contemporary society? For a magnificent model of the type of research required by questions of this order, see Leo Spitzer, *Milieu and Ambiance:* an essay in historical semantics," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research,* 1942, 3, 1–42, 169–218.
7. It appears unlikely that cultural norms, once interiorized, are wholly eliminated. Whatever residuum persists will induce personality tensions and conflict, with some measure of ambivalence. A manifest rejection of the once-incorporated institutional norms will be coupled with some latent retention of their emotional correlates. Guilt feelings, a sense of sin, pangs of conscience are diverse terms referring to this unrelieved tension. Symbolic adherence to the nominally repudiated values or rationalizations for the rejection of these values constitute a more subtle expression of these tensions.
8. "Many," not all, unintegrated groups, for the reason mentioned earlier. In groups where the primary emphasis shifts to institutional means, the outcome is normally a type of ritualism rather than anomie.
9. Leo C. Rosten, *Hollywood* (New York), 1940, 40.
10. Malcolm S. MacLean, *Scholars, Workers and Gentlemen* (Harvard University Press, 1938), 29.
11. *Cf.* A. W. Griswold, *The American Cult of Success* (Yale University doctoral dissertation, 1933); R. O. Carlson, *"Personality Schools": A Sociological Analysis* (Columbia University Master's Essay, 1948).
12. There is no lack of typologies of alternative modes of response to frustrating conditions. Freud, in his *Civilization and Its Discontents* (p.

30 ff.) supplies one; derivative typologies, often differing in basic details, will be found in Karen Horney, *Neurotic Personality of Our Time* (New York, 1937); S. Rosenzweig, "The experimental measurement of types of reaction to frustration," in H. A. Murray *et al.*, *Explorations in Personality* (New York, 1938). 585–99; and in the work of John Dollard, Harold Lasswell, Abram Kardiner, Erich Fromm. But particularly in the strictly Freudian typology, the perspective is that of types of individual responses, quite apart from the place of the individual within the social structure. Despite her consistent concern with "culture," for example, Horney does not explore differences in the impact of this culture upon farmer, worker and businessman, upon lower-, middle-, and upper-class individuals, upon members of various ethnic and racial groups, *etc.* As a result, the role of "inconsistencies in culture" is *not* located in its differential impact upon diversely situated groups. Culture becomes a kind of blanket covering all members of the society equally, apart from their idiosyncratic differences of life-history. It is a primary assumption of our typology that these responses occur with different frequency within various sub-groups in our society precisely because members of these groups or strata are differentially subject to cultural stimulation and social restraints. This sociological orientation will be found in the writings of Dollard and, less systematically, in the work of Fromm, Kardiner and Lasswell. On the general point, see note 3 of this chapter.

13. This fifth alternative is on a plane clearly different from that of the others. It represents a transitional response seeking to *institutionalize* new goals and new procedures to be shared by other members of the society. It thus refers to efforts to *change* the existing cultural and social structure rather than to accommodate efforts *within* this structure.

14. The observations by Dickens are from his *American Notes* (in the edition, for example, published in Boston: Books, Inc., 1940), 218. A sociological analysis which would be the formal, albeit inevitably lesser, counterpart of Freud's psychological analysis of the functions of tendentious wit and of tendentious wits is long overdue. The doctoral dissertation by Jeannette Tandy, though not sociological in character, affords one point of departure: *Crackerbox Philosophers: American Humor and Satire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925). In Chapter V of *Intellectual America* (New York: Macmillan, 1941), appropriately entitled "The Intelligentsia," Oscar Cargill has some compact observations on the role of the nineteenth century masters of American wit, but this naturally has only a small place in this large book on the "march of American ideas." The essay by Bierce from which I have quoted at such length will be found in *The Collected Works of Ambrose Bierce* (New York and Washington: The Neale Publishing Company, 1912), volume XI, 187–198. For what it is worth, I must differ with the harsh and far from justified judgment of Cargill on Bierce. It seems to be less a judgment than the expression of a prejudice which, in Bierce's own understanding of "prejudice," is only "a vagrant opinion without visible means of support."

15. E. H. Sutherland, "White collar criminality," *op. cit.*; "Crime and business," *Annals, American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 1941, 217, 112–118; "Is 'white collar crime' crime?", *American Sociological Review*, 1945, 10, 132–139; Marshall B. Clinard, *The Black Market: A Study of White Collar Crime* (New York: Rinehart & Co., 1952); Donald R. Cressey, *Other People's Money: A Study in the Social Psychology of Embezzlement* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1953).

16. James S. Wallerstein and Clement J. Wyle, "Our law-abiding law-breakers," *Probation*, April, 1947.

17. National Opinion Research Center, *National Opinion on Occupations*, April, 1947. This research on the ranking and evaluation of ninety occupations by a nation-wide sample presents a series of important empirical data. Of great significance is their finding that, despite a slight tendency for people to rank their own and related occupations higher than do other groups, there is substantial agreement in ranking of occupations among all occupational strata. More researches of this kind are needed to map the cultural topography of contemporary societies. (See the comparative study of prestige accorded major occupations in six industrialized countries: Alex Inkeles and Peter H. Rossi, "National comparisons of occupational prestige," *American Journal of Sociology*, 1956, 61, 329–339.)

18. See Joseph D. Lohman, "The participant observer in community studies," *American Sociological Review*, 1937, 2, 890–98 and William F. Whyte, *Street Corner Society* (Chicago, 1943). Note Whyte's conclusions: "It is difficult for the Cornerville man to get onto the ladder [of success], even on the bottom rung. . . . He is an Italian, and the Italians are looked upon by upper-class people as among the least desirable of the immigrant peoples. . . the society holds out attractive rewards in terms of money and material possessions to the 'successful' man. For most Cornerville people these rewards are available only through advancement in the world of rackets and politics." (273–74)

19. Numerous studies have found that the educational pyramid operates to keep a large proportion of unquestionably able but economically disadvantaged youth from obtaining higher formal education. This fact about our class structure has been noted with dismay, for example, by Vannevar Bush in his governmental report, *Science: The Endless Frontier*. Also, see W. L. Warner, R. J. Havighurst and M. B. Loeb, *Who Shall Be Educated?* (New York, 1944).

20. The shifting historical role of this ideology is a profitable subject for exploration.

21. The role of the Negro in this connection raises almost as many theoretical as practical questions. It has been reported that large segments of the Negro population have assimilated the dominant caste's values of pecuniary success and social advancement, but have "realistically adjusted" themselves to the "fact" that social ascent is presently confined almost entirely to movement within the caste. See Dollard, *Caste and Class in a Southern Town*, 66 ff.; Donald Young, *American Minority Peoples*, 581; Robert A. Warner, *New Haven Negroes* (New Haven, 1940), 234. See also the subsequent discussion in this chapter.
22. This analytical scheme may serve to resolve some of the apparent inconsistencies in the relation between crime and economic status mentioned by P.A. Sorokin. For example, he notes that "not everywhere nor always do the poor show a greater proportion of crime . . . many poorer countries have had less crime than the richer countries . . . . The economic improvement in the second half of the nineteenth century, and the beginning of the twentieth, has not been followed by a decrease in crime." See his *Contemporary Sociological Theories* (New York, 1928), 560–61. The crucial point is, however, that low economic status plays a different dynamic role in different social and cultural structures, as is set out in the text. One should not, therefore, expect a linear correlation between crime and poverty.
23. Gilbert Murray, *Five Stages of Greek Religion* (New York, 1925), 164–5. Professor Murray's chapter on "The Failure of Nerve," from which I have taken this excerpt, must surely be ranked among the most civilized and perceptive sociological analyses in our time.
24. See the quotation from an interview cited in Gustavus Meyers, *History of the Great American Fortunes* (New York, 1937), 706.
25. *Nation's Business*, Vol. 27, No. 9, pp. 8–9.
26. E.W. Bakke, *The Unemployable Man* (New York, 1934), p. 14 (I have supplied the emphasis). Bakke hints at the structural sources making for a belief in luck among workers. "There is a measure of hopelessness in the situation when a man knows that *most of his good or ill fortune is out of his own control and depends on luck*." (Emphasis supplied.) In so far as he is forced to accommodate himself to occasionally unpredictable decisions of management, the worker is subject to job insecurities and anxieties: another "seed-ground" for belief in destiny, fate, chance. It would be instructive to learn if such beliefs become lessened where workers' organizations reduce the probability that their occupational fate will be out of their own hands.
27. At its extreme, it may invite resignation and routinized activity (Adaptation III) or a fatalistic passivism (Adaptation IV), of which more presently.
28. Bakke, *op. cit.*, 14, where he suggests that "the worker knows less about the processes which cause him to succeed or have no chance to succeed than business or professional people. There are more points, therefore, at which events appear to have their incidence in good or ill luck."
29. *Cf.* R.A. Warner, *New Haven Negroes* and Harold F. Gosnell, *Negro Politicians* (Chicago, 1935), 123–5, both of whom comment in this general connection on the great interests in 'playing the numbers" among less-advantaged Negroes.
30. See, for example, H. S. Sullivan, "Modern conceptions of psychiatry," *Psychiatry*, 1940, 3, 111–12; Margaret Mead, *And Keep Your Powder Dry* (New York, 1942), Chapter VII; Merton, Fiske and Curtis, *Mass Persuasion*, 59–60.
31. P. Janet, "The fear of action," *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 1921, 16, 150–60, and the extraordinary discussion by F. L. Wells, "Social maladjustments: adaptive regression," *op. cit.*, which bears closely on the type of adaptation examined here.
32. F. J. Roethlisberger and W. J. Dickson, *Management and the Worker*, Chapter 18 and 531 ff.; and on the more general theme, the typically perspicacious remarks of Gilbert Murray, *op. cit.*, 138–39.
33. See the three following chapters [in Merton's *Social Theory and Social Structure*].
34. See, for example, Allison Davis and John Dollard, *Children of Bondage* (Washington, 1940), Chapter 12 ("Child Training and Class"), which, though it deals with the lower- and lower-middle class patterns of socialization among Negroes in the Far South, appears applicable, with slight modification, to the white population as well. On this, see further M. C. Erickson, "Child-rearing and social status," *American Journal of Sociology*, 1946, 53, 190–92; Allison Davis and R. J. Havighurst, "Social class and color differences in child-rearing," *American Sociological Review*, 1946, 11, 698–710: "*. . . the pivotal meaning of social class* to students of human development is that it defines and systematizes different learning environments for children of different classes." "Generalizing from the evidence presented in the tables, we would say that middle-class children [the authors do not distinguish between lower-middle and upper-middle strata] are subjected earlier and more consistently to the influences which make a child an orderly, conscientious, responsible, and tame person. In the course of this training middle-class children probably suffer more frustration of their impulses."
35. This hypothesis still awaits empirical test. Beginnings in this direction have been made with the "level of aspiration" experiments which explore the determinants of goal-formation and modification in specific, experimentally devised activities. There is, however, a major obstacle, not yet surmounted, in drawing inferences from the laboratory situation, with its relatively slight ego-involvement with the casual task—pencil-and-paper mazes, ring-throwing, arithmetical

problems, *etc.*—which will be applicable to the strong emotional investment with success-goals in the routines of everyday life. Nor have these experiments, with their *ad hoc* group formations, been able to reproduce the acute social pressures obtaining in daily life. (What laboratory experiment reproduces, for example, the querulous nagging of a modern Xantippe: "The trouble with you is, you've got no ambition; a real man would go out and do things"? Among studies with a definite though limited relevance, see especially R. Gould, "Some sociological determinants of goal strivings," *Journal of Social Psychology*, 1941, 13, 461–73; L. Festinger, "Wish, expectation and group standards as factors influencing level of aspiration," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 1942, 37, 184–200. For a resume of researches, see Kurt Lewin *et al.*, "Level of Aspiration," in J. McV. Hunt, ed., *Personality and the Behavior Disorders* (New York, 1944), I, Chap. 10.

The conception of "success" as a ratio between aspiration and achievement pursued systematically in the level-of-aspiration experiments has, of course, a long history. Gilbert Murray (*op. cit.*, 138–9) notes the prevalence of this conception among the thinkers of fourth century Greece. And in *Sartor Resartus*, Carlyle observes that "happiness" (gratification) can be represented by a fraction in which the numerator represents achievement and the denominator, aspiration. Much the same notion is examined by William James (*The Principles of Psychology* [New York, 1902], I, 310). See also F. L. Wells, *op. cit.*, 879, and P. A. Sorokin, *Social and Cultural Dynamics* (New York, 1937), III, 161–164. The critical question is whether this familiar insight can be subjected to rigorous experimentation in which the contrived laboratory situation adequately reproduces the salient aspects of the real-life situation or whether disciplined observation of routines of behavior in everyday life will prove the more productive method of inquiry.

36. In her novel, *The Bitter Box* (New York, 1946), Eleanor Clark has portrayed this process with great sensitivity. The discussion by Erich Fromm, *Escape from Freedom* (New York, 1941), 185–206, may be cited, without implying acceptance of his concept of "spontaneity" and "man's inherent tendency toward self-development." For an example of a sound sociological formulation: "As long as we assume . . . that the anal character, as it is typical of the European lower middle class, is caused by certain early experiences in connection with defecation, we have hardly any data that lead us to understand why a specific class should have an anal social character. However, if we understand it as one form of relatedness to others, rooted in the character structure and resulting from the experiences with the outside world, we have a key for understanding why the whole mode of life of the lower middle class, its narrowness, isolation, and hostility, made for the development of this kind of character structure." (293–4) For an example of a formulation stemming from a kind of latter-day benevolent anarchism here judged as dubious: ". . . there are also certain psychological qualities inherent in man that need to be satisfied . . . . The most important seems to be the tendency to grow, to develop and realize potentialities which man has developed in the course of history—as, for instance, the faculty of creative and critical thinking . . . . It also seems that this general tendency to grow—which is the psychological equivalent of the identical biological tendency —results in such specific tendencies as the desire for freedom and the hatred against oppression, since freedom is the fundamental condition for any growth." (287–88).

37. Obviously, this is an elliptical statement. These individuals may retain some orientation to the values of their own groupings within the larger society or, occasionally, to the values of the conventional society itself. They may, in other words, shift to other modes of adaptation. But Adaptation IV can be easily detected. Nels Anderson's account of the behavior and attitudes of the bum, for example, can readily be recast in terms of our analytical scheme. See *The Hobo* (Chicago, 1923), 93–98, *et passim*.

38. H.W. Zorbaugh, *The Gold Coast and the Slum* (Chicago, 1929), 108.

39. Abram Kardiner, *The Psychological Frontiers of Society* (New York, 1945), 369—70. (Emphases supplied.)

40. Max Scheler, *L'homme du ressentiment* (Paris, n. d.). This essay first appeared in 1912; revised and completed, it was included in Scheler's *Abhandlungen und Aufsätze*, appearing thereafter in his *Vom Umsturz der Werte* (1919). The last text was used for the French translation. It has had considerable influence in varied intellectual circles. For an excellent and well-balanced discussion of Scheler's essay, indicating some of its limitations and biasses, the respects in which it prefigured Nazi conceptions, its anti-democratic orientation and, withal , its occasionally brilliant insights, see V. J. McGill, "Scheler's theory of sympathy and love," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 1942, 2, 273–91. For another critical account which properly criticizes Scheler's view that social structure plays only a secondary role in *ressentiment*, see Svehd Ranulf, *Moral Indignation and Middle-Class Psychology: A Sociological Study* (Copenhagen, 1938), 199–204.

41. Scheler, *op. cit.*, 55–56. No English word fully reproduces the complex of elements implied by the word *ressentiment;* its nearest approximation in German would appear to be *Groll.*

42. George S. Pettee, *The Process of Revolution* (New York, 1938), 8–24; see particularly his account of "monopoly of the imagination."

43. R. S. and H. M. Lynd, *Middletown in Transition* (New York, 1937), 408, for a series of cultural clichés exemplifying the conservative myth.

44. See the acute observations by Georg Simmel, *Soziologie* (Leipzig, 1908), 276–77.

45. W. Stern, *Psychology of Early Childhood* (New York, 1924), 166, notes the *fact* of such errors (*e.g.*, "drinked" for "drank"), but does not draw the inferences regarding the detection of implicit paradigms.
46. H.A. Murray *et al.*, *Explorations in Personality*, 307.
47. From a study of the social organization of planned communities by R. K. Merton, Patricia S. West and M. Jahoda, *Patterns of Social Life.*

11 *Illegitimate Means, Anomie, and Deviant Behavior*
RICHARD A. CLOWARD

This paper[1] represents an attempt to consolidate two major sociological traditions of thought about the problem of deviant behavior. The first, exemplified by the work of Emile Durkheim and Robert K. Merton, may be called the anomie tradition.[2] The second, illustrated principally by the studies of Clifford R. Shaw, Henry D. McKay, and Edwin H. Sutherland, may be called the "cultural transmission" and "differential association" tradition.[3] Despite some reciprocal borrowing of ideas, these intellectual traditions developed more or less independently. By seeking to consolidate them, a more adequate theory of deviant behavior may be constructed.

DIFFERENTIALS IN AVAILABILITY OF LEGITIMATE MEANS: THE THEORY OF ANOMIE

The theory of anomie has undergone two major phases of development. Durkheim first used the concept to explain deviant behavior. He focused on the way in which various social conditions lead to "overweening ambition," and how, in turn, unlimited aspirations ultimately produce a breakdown in regulatory norms. Robert K. Merton has systematized and extended the theory, directing attention to patterns of disjunction between culturally prescribed goals and socially organized access to them by *legitimate* means. In this paper, a third phase is outlined. An additional variable is incorporated in the developing scheme of anomie, namely, the concept of *differentials in access to success-goals by illegitimate means.*[4]

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The Maximizer: clarifying Merton's theories of anomie and strain

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Abstract

Robert Merton's (1957) theories of anomie and strain are among the most widely examined theories of criminality. Messner and Rosenfeld's (1994) theory of institutional anomie built on Merton's conception of anomie, delineating how specific institutions lead to conditions of anomie and criminality. Cloward and Ohlin's (1961) theory of differential opportunity built upon Merton's strain theory, underscoring the fact that those involved in illegitimate means of opportunity require a set of learned skills as do those involved in legitimate means. In this tradition, the present paper further expands Merton's theories of anomie and strain, suggesting that Merton's categories of conformist and innovator are not mutually exclusive. In fact, some individuals combine both legitimate and illegitimate means of opportunity in pursuit of the American Dream. The Maximizer, the authors suggest, merges elements of both the conformist and the innovator (i.e. legitimate and illegitimate means). The present paper explores the justification for merging legitimate and illegitimate means of opportunity in pursuit of the American Dream.

Key Words

American Dream • anomie • Maximizer • Merton • strain

Introduction

This paper builds on, but attempts to add to, anomie and strain theories as the latter have been conceived by Robert Merton (1938), Steven Messner

and Richard Rosenfeld (1994), and Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin (1961). We provide an additional mode of adaptation to anomie and strain—*maximization*—which refers to the simultaneous utilization of legitimate or institutionalized means and illegitimate means in pursuit of the so-called American Dream.

The *Maximizer*, an extension of Merton's typology and the focus of the present paper, is the inductive product of research which has explored perceived stringency in punishment compared to actual punishment as delineated in the United States Sentencing Commission Guideline Manual. The original research presented respondents with a set of vignettes and queried what the appropriate punishment should be for each criminal act described. These data were then compared to actual punishments as prescribed in the Guideline Manual.

In doing this research, we noted an anomaly in prescribed sentencing as compared to Guideline dictates for a vignette in which a contractor built a bridge—illegally breaking code in pursuit of profit—while simultaneously operating a legitimate business. The outcome of the illegal behavior perpetrated by the contractor was the collapse of the bridge and the death of five motorists. Consistently respondents indicated 'the contractor should have a fine imposed', 'the contractor should have their license revoked', 'perhaps it was the workers' fault and not that of the contractor', and other similar reactions. The researchers were struck by respondents' tendency to justify the illegal activities of the contractor; acts that led to the death of five human beings. This led us to suspect that one reason for this rationalization was that people perceived the contractor as working toward the socially inculcated goal of the American Dream (legitimate means of opportunity), a goal so overweening that it was taken to justify the illegal actions of cutting corners in construction and breaking code (illegitimate means of opportunity). Moreover, the common finding of justification for such actions suggested that varied people in US society are perceived as willing to, or actually engaged in, such combined legal and illegal activities. Thus, we developed the concept of the *Maximizer*, someone who simultaneously uses and incorporates legitimate and illegitimate means of opportunity in the pursuit of profit and/or monetary gain (the American Dream).

In introducing this concept, the present paper also suggests that Merton's categories of conformist and innovator are not mutually exclusive. Rather, the pursuit of the American Dream leads social actors to combine both legitimate and illegitimate means in an effort to 'succeed' within corporate culture. While Merton's theories of anomie and strain have been well supported over the decades, Merton did not explicitly consider utilization of both legitimate and illegitimate means of opportunity in pursuit of the American Dream. On the contrary, though, we suggest that it is possible to utilize both legitimate and illegitimate means in pursuit of goals, as vaguely suggested yet not delineated by Cloward and Ohlin (1961) in their theory of differential opportunity. The goal of the present paper is to advance Merton's ideas regarding anomie and strain by exploring an additional adaptation—*maximization*—which refers to implementing both legitimate and illegitimate means of opportunity in pursuit of the socially inculcated American Dream.

Literature review

Merton's anomie and strain theories sought to explain why certain cultures, groups, and individuals were more prone to engage in antisocial and/or illegal behaviors. Merton asserted that members of society receive messages of what is *normal*—including acceptable behaviors—from societal institutions. Normal, according to Merton (1957: 132), is that which is the 'psychologically expectable, if not culturally approved, response to determinate social conditions'. Most people, most of the time, abide by society's rules of behavior, thereby remaining 'normal'. Yet pressures from social institutions, and specifically from expectations associated with the American Dream, can lead some 'to engage in nonconforming rather than conforming conduct'. These pressures should explain not only higher deviance by individuals who experience them, but also higher group deviance by members of the classes that most experience such pressures (Merton, 1957: 132).

Merton's central hypotheses regarding deviance and criminality assert that criminality is a function of an overemphasis on the goals associated with the American Dream (e.g. wealth), as well as a disjuncture between the goals valued by society and the means available to people to achieve them (Merton, 1957: 162). Thus, the primary mechanism through which deviance and criminality is fostered has its origin in *goals–means discrepancies* (whether because of an overemphasis on cultural goals or goal blockage). However, Merton did not explicitly consider utilization of both *legitimate* and *illegitimate means* of opportunity in pursuit of the American Dream.

Anomie and strain theories posit that criminality is due to an array of social causes. One explanation is that criminality results from personal states of egoism and selfishness caused by a lack of integration into, and regulation by, society, as in *anomie theory* and *microanomie theory* (Durkheim, 1893, 1897; Konty, 2005). Another is that it results from pressures to achieve at any cost imposed by the American Dream and the relative importance of the economy in our lives, as in *anomie theory* and *institutional anomie theory* (Merton, 1957; Messner and Rosenfeld, 1994). Some relevant theories deal with frustration that arises from increased wants and desires in the context of globalization and neoliberalism, as in *global anomie* and *dysnomie theory* (Passas, 2000). Others focus on discrepancies in cultural goals and the legitimate means to achieve them, as in *strain theory* (Merton, 1957) and on goal blockage, the loss of valued items, negative emotion, and noxious stimuli, as in *general strain theory* (Agnew, 1992, 1999, 2002; Agnew et al., 2002; Baron, 2004; Brezina, 1996; Brezina et al., 2001; Capowich et al., 2001; Eitle, 2002; Gibson et al., 2001; Jang et al., 2003; Mazerolle et al., 2000; Simons et al., 2003; Wright et al., 2001).

Finally, some criminologists have emphasized a shared sense of relative deprivation, as in *macrolevel general strain theory* (Pratt and Godsey, 2003), as well as unlimited desires for wealth in the context of limited means, leading to a problem of adjustment, as in *differential opportunity theory* (Cloward and Ohlin, 1961).

All of these theories, to one degree or another, blame crime on the overpowering influence of the economy on our lives. The theories most relevant for economic sources of anomie and strain, as analyzed here, include Merton's separate but related anomie and strain theories, Messner and Rosenfeld's institutional anomie theory, and Cloward and Ohlin's theory of differential opportunity. Each is reviewed below. We first review Merton's anomie and Messner and Rosenfeld's institutional anomie theories, and then move on to Merton's strain and Cloward and Ohlin's differential opportunity theories. We believe this is the most logical order in which to discuss these theories, given that Messner and Rosenfeld (1994) adapted Merton's theory of anomie, and Cloward and Ohlin adapted Merton's theory of strain.

Anomie and strain perspectives

Before offering a brief review it is important to note that, although most criminological attention has been placed on Robert Merton's theory of strain, his seminal work—*Social Structure and Anomie*—contains within it two related but independent lines of theoretical argument (Bernard, 1987; Featherstone and Deflem, 2003; Messner, 1988). Bernard (1987: 267) refers to one as a 'cultural argument' (dealing with the value of monetary success and the importance of using legitimate means in pursuit of this goal), and the other as a 'structural argument' (dealing with the distribution of legitimate opportunities in society). The former explains criminality as a function of pressures placed on individuals living in a capitalistic American society, the latter as a function of differential opportunities.

Similarly, Messner (1988: 31) asserts that Merton's work relates to both a 'cultural structure' (pertaining to the normative values governing behaviors that are common to society, and which can be broken down into culturally defined goals and culturally defined means to achieve those goals), as well as to the 'social structure' (pertaining to a set of social relationships). Thus, Messner attributes to Merton a theory of social organization (relevant to the components of social systems) and a theory of deviant motivation (relevant to sources of pressure on individuals to violate social norms). Messner lays out the two theories this way: the first attributes criminality to a 'disjuncture within the cultural structure itself ... [due to] an exaggerated emphasis on goals in comparison with the emphasis on means'; the second attributes criminality to 'disjuncture between social structural arrangements and cultural prescriptions [when the] cultural structure extols the common success goals, while the social structure restricts access to the normative means' (Messner, 1988: 37).

Additionally, Featherstone and Deflem (2003: 472) point out that Merton's work developed two separate but related theories. These include

a theory of anomie (positing that there exists in American society a disjuncture in emphasis on culture goals and the means to achieve them), as well as a strain theory (positing that goal blockage leads to pursuing illegitimate means). According to these authors, criminality emerges due to anomie caused by an overemphasis on the goals associated with the American Dream, and due to strain caused by blocked opportunities for those seeking the American Dream.

Anomie and institutional anomie

Beginning with Merton's first theory—anomie theory—one of Merton's main points is that the so-called '*American Dream*' is both criminogenic and the overriding institutionalized goal in our country. Stated simply, the American Dream means 'making it', 'winning the game', or achieving independence and wealth. When these goals are so emphasized that they get far more attention that the institutionalized means to achieve them, the result is anomie and criminality. When discussing a hypothetical poorly integrated culture, Merton explained that it is possible for culturally prescribed goals to overcome and completely dominate consideration of culturally prescribed means. In his words, 'there may develop a very heavy, at times virtually exclusive, stress upon the value of particular goals, involving comparatively little concern with the institutionally prescribed means of striving toward these goals' (Merton, 1957: 132). According to Merton, American institutions of the 1950s placed greater emphasis on culture goals than upon institutional or legitimate means to achieve them. This resulted in an overwhelming focus on the cultural goals of American institutions with relatively little emphasis on the institutionalized means. When emphasis on institutionalized means relax and goals are overemphasized, criminality is permissible.

As Merton asserted, 'an extreme cultural emphasis on the goal of success attenuates conformity to institutionally prescribed methods of moving toward this goal' (Merton, 1957: 169). Thus, the American Dream itself may be viewed as criminogenic.

Essentially, Merton was asserting that our focus on the American Dream is too strong because 'emphasis on the goal has so attenuated the satisfactions deriving from sheer participation in the competitive activity that only a successful outcome provides gratification' (Merton, 1957: 135). In other words, 'winning' or 'making it' according to the rules becomes secondary to 'winning' or 'making it' by *any means necessary*.

Merton's analysis meant that he recognized crime as to be expected, given the prevalence of messages related to pursuing wealth in the US. Relatedly, Bernard (1987: 266) called this a 'uniform cultural value on monetary success'. In Merton's words again:

> In some large measure, money has been consecrated as a value in itself, over and above its expenditure for articles of consumption or its use for the enhancement of powers. Money is particularly well adapted to become a

> symbol of prestige ... However acquired, fraudulently or institutionally, it can be used to purchase the same goods and services.
>
> (Merton, 1957: 136)

Perhaps this is one reason why even the rich seek more. According to Merton:

> in the American Dream there is no final stopping point. The measure of 'monetary success' is conveniently indefinite and relative. At each income level ... Americans want just about twenty-five percent more (but of course this 'just a bit more' continues to operate once it is obtained).
>
> (Merton, 1957: 136)

Passas underscores the never-ending pressure inherent in the motives of capitalism toward consumerism and an insatiable drive for *more*:

> Regardless of whether people strive for more; due to natural drives or because of cultural encouragement, the point is that market economies cannot perform without lofty aspirations, consumerism, emphasis on material/monetary goals, and competition. All this leads to the pursuit of constantly moving targets and systematic sources of frustration.
>
> (2000: 19)

Such frustration is one form of what Merton (1957: 139) referred to as *strain*. Hence, Merton's conclusion that the American Dream is criminogenic.

An important part of the mantra of the American Dream is the ethos that success and monetary achievement result from 'personal' strengths, that is, from hard work and determination of people with strong wills. Thus, failure in the United States is generally perceived as a 'personal' failure rather than a systemic flaw (Merton, 1957: 138). Assuming all failures are personal/moral failures rather than system failures, the threat or fear of defeat may serve to motivate people to succeed, to attain the American Dream, by any and all means necessary. According to Merton, 'The moral mandate to achieve success ... exerts pressure to succeed, by fair means if possible and by foul means if necessary' (Merton, 1957: 169). This is precisely what the Maximizer tries to accomplish.

Thus, Merton understood that quitting is the only option that is not acceptable in America:

> Americans are admonished not to be a quitter or in the dictionary of American culture, as in the lexicon of youth, 'there is no such word as fail'. The cultural manifesto is clear; one must not quit, must not cease striving, must not lessen his goals, for not failure but low aim is crime.
>
> (1957: 139)

Merton also stated that the American Dream emphasizes 'penalizing ... those who draw in their ambitions' (Merton, 1957: 138), as does the ritualist.

Nearly 40 years later, Steven Messner and Richard Rosenfeld (1994) put forth their institutional anomie theory which expanded on Merton's theory

of anomie. Institutional anomie theory also attributes high crime rates in the US to our allegiance to the American Dream. For Messner and Rosenfeld, this 'dream' is defined as the 'broad cultural ethos that entails a commitment to *the goal of material success*, to be pursued by everyone in society, under conditions of open, individual competition' (Messner and Rosenfeld, 1994: 6, emphasis added).

Similar to the claims of Merton, these authors asserted that the American Dream 'encourages an exaggerated emphasis on monetary achievement while devaluing alternative criteria of success, it promotes a preoccupation with the realization of goals while de-emphasizing the importance of the ways in which these goals are pursued' (Messner and Rosenfeld, 1994: 10). The American Dream thus creates pressure to achieve, but minimizes the pressure to play by the rules. Under these circumstances, people become more likely to use the 'most technically efficient means necessary in reaching their goals. The result is a higher rate of predatory crime' (Bernburg, 2002: 732).

Messner and Rosenfeld asserted that the needs and health of the economy in modern America take precedence over other important social institutions like the family, schools, and even places of worship. This is due to the fact that the 'primary task for noneconomic institutions such as the family and schools is to inculcate beliefs, values, and commitments other than those of the marketplace' (Vold et al., 1998: 176). Thus, we should not expect these types of institutions to control antisocial and criminal behaviors when they are weakened. Instead, 'when other institutions such as polity, religion, education, and the family are unable to regulate human impulses generated by the economy, criminality and deviance are more likely' (Robinson, 2004: 227; citing Chamlin and Cochran, 1995).

According to Messner and Rosenfeld (1994), the economy takes precedence in capitalism when: (1) non-economic institutions are devalued; (2) norms and values of non-economic institutions give way to norms and values of economic institutions; and (3) non-economic institutions make accommodations to economic institutions (also see Chamlin and Cochran, 1995; Maume and Lee, 2003; Piquero and Piquero, 1998; Savolainen, 2000). Criminal behavior is most likely when 'the value-orientation of the market economy, that is, the pursuit of self-interest, attraction to monetary rewards, and competition, become exaggerated relative to the value-orientations of institutions such as the family, education, and the polity' (Bernburg, 2002: 732). There are at least two reasons criminality results from this arrangement: 'The emphasis on the American Dream leads to both intense cultural pressures for monetary success and an increase in anomie [and the] dominance of the economy in the social structure ... weakens the regulatory efficacy of noneconomic institutions' (Maume and Lee, 2003: 1140).

The phenomenon of cultural pressures pushing toward monetary success is explained by Savolainen, who writes:

> An institutional balance of power in which the economy dominates other institutions is assumed to be the most conducive to high rates of serious

> crime because such an arrangement is the least capable of restraining criminal motivations stimulated by the logic of egalitarian market capitalism. At the level of culture, institutional imbalance of this description generates value orientations that emphasize efficiency norms at the expense of moral considerations ... the 'mood' of the society becomes more predatory. At the level of social structure, weak noneconomic institutions are less capable of providing stakes in conformity in the form of meaningful social roles.
>
> (2000: 1022)

Thus, the theory 'sees crime rates as a function of the American Dream's cultural emphasis on economic success in combination with an institutional structure dominated by the economy' (Pratt and Godsey, 2003: 615).

Strain and differential opportunity

Robert Merton's second theoretical idea—strain theory—holds that a disjuncture between *goals* and *means* is responsible for criminality. According to Merton (1957: 132), 'culturally defined goals, purposes and interests' are comprised of 'a frame of aspirational reference. They are the things "worth striving for".' These goals are institutional in that they arise from, and are reinforced by, social institutions including informal sources of culture goals such as families and schools (Merton, 1957: 137). The 'acceptable modes of reaching out for these goals' are the institutionalized or legitimate means. They are 'regulations, rooted in the mores or institutions, of allowable procedures for moving toward [cultural objectives]' (Merton, 1957: 132). Certain means are required, some are allowed, others are preferred, while illegitimate means are prohibited. Merton's terms for these, respectively, are *prescriptions*, *permissions*, *preferences*, and *proscriptions* (Merton, 1957: 132).

Living in a 'culture-bearing society' (especially under the pressures produced by the American Dream) causes great difficulty for individuals including strain (Merton, 1957: 139). Merton developed five modes of adaptation to cultural strain: Conformity, Innovation, Ritualism, Retreatism, and Rebellion. These adaptations to strain are depicted in Table 1. Each of the five categories refers to 'role behavior in specific types of situations, not to personality ... types of more or less enduring response, not types of personality organization' (Merton, 1957: 140).

Conformity, 'the most common and widely diffused' adaptation refers to acceptance of both cultural goals, and institutional means to achieve them (Merton, 1957: 141). *Innovation* describes 'the individual [who] has assimilated the cultural emphasis upon the goal without equally internalizing the institutional norms governing ways and means for its attainment' (Merton, 1957: 141). Merton (1957: 144–145) thus asserted that not only do the poor accept the American Dream but also that 'the avenues available for moving toward this goal are largely limited by the class structure to those of deviant behavior'. *Ritualism* 'involves the abandoning or scaling down of the lofty cultural goals of great pecuniary success and rapid social mobility to the

Table 1 Merton's modes of adaptation to anomic strain

Modes of adaptation	*Cultural goals*	*Institutional means*
Conformity	Accept	Accept
Innovation	Accept	Reject
Ritualism	Reject	Accept
Retreatism	Reject	Reject
Rebellion	Reject/Replace	Reject/Replace

point where one's aspirations can be satisfied'. *Retreatism*, the least common adaptation according to Merton, involves a rejection of both the goals of the culture, and the institutionalized means to achieve them; the Marxist construct of the lumpen proletariat would fit under the aegis of this adaptation. Merton's final adaptation to strain, *Rebellion*, also involves rejection of both the culture goals and institutionalized means. But those who pursue rebellion develop their own substitute goals and means that often conflict with those endorsed by societal institutions such as the family and schools.

Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin (1961: 85) concurred with Merton's central thesis concerning strain. They discussed how people's desires for wealth are virtually unlimited. As they asserted, 'There is every reason to think that persons variously located in the social hierarchy have rather different chances of reaching common success-goals despite the prevailing ideology of equal opportunity.' The variants of success in pursuit of the American Dream lead to feelings of strain in individuals, or what Cloward and Ohlin called 'a major problem of adjustment'. Strain not only can lead to criminality among individuals, but can also lead to shared feelings of oppression and thus a subculture:

> The disparity between what lower-class youth are led to want and what is actually available to them is the source of a major problem of adjustment. Adolescents who form delinquent subcultures ... have internalized an emphasis upon conventional goals. Faced with limitations on legitimate avenues of access to these goals, and unable to revise their aspirations downward, they experience intense frustrations; the exploration of nonconformist alternatives may be the result.

Some barriers to success discussed by Cloward and Ohlin include educational, cultural, and economic obstacles that lead to incorporation of illegitimate means of opportunity.

Cloward and Ohlin were among the first to explicitly state that both legitimate and illegitimate opportunities can vary among people and places. Other anomie and strain theories were incomplete, Cloward and Ohlin (1961: 145) argued, because they ignored 'the *relative availability* of illegal alternatives to various potential criminals'. Just as there is a differential distribution of legitimate means, there also is a differential distribution of illegitimate means.

In sum, Cloward and Ohlin delineated the reality that an *Innovator* needs to learn the skills of, and have opportunities for, illegitimate behavior, just as the *Conformist* needs to learn the skills requisite in, and have opportunities for, the socially acceptable pursuit of the American Dream. It seems logical that, for many individuals, groups, types of occupational roles, and subcultures, opportunities will exist for simultaneously engaging in legitimate and illegitimate behaviors, or both Conformity and Innovation, and that in some circumstances, regularly engaging in conforming and innovative behaviors is actually expected of people.

A gap in the literature

Although Merton's theories posit modes of adaptation as ideal types rather than types of personality—meaning that the modes of adaptation are not mutually exclusive since individuals can behave in ways consistent with more than one mode of adaptation—to date no anomie or strain theory has explicitly recognized the possibility that individuals simultaneously and regularly hold norms consistent with more than one mode of adaptation.

In this paper, we present a new mode of adaptation—Maximization—referring to simultaneously and regularly accepting the norms of Conformity and Innovation (i.e. law-abiding and law-breaking behaviors). We assert that the American Dream contains within it situations that encourage and even sometimes mandate violating the criminal law as a component or codicil of legitimate activity in pursuit of the American Dream.

It is clear from the work of Cloward and Ohlin (1961: 150) that 'each individual occupies a position in both legitimate and illegitimate opportunity structures'. This means, of course, that it is possible to simultaneously implement legitimate and illegitimate means in pursuit of goals. Yet, neither Merton nor Cloward and Ohlin explicitly explored this adaptation to strain, nor has any anomie or strain theorist since.

Our assertion, to be developed in the remainder of this paper, is that some individuals, groups, occupational roles, and subcultures regularly accept (and engage in) both legitimate and illegitimate means of opportunity in pursuit of the American Dream. These people abide by the law and the rules of the game as well as break them, often simultaneously, in order to achieve the consecrated value of money, to overcome goals–means discrepancies, and/or to win the game.

We are not saying that Maximization is a unique personality type, any more so than Conformity or Innovation (or other modes of adaptation). As noted earlier, Merton explained that a mode of adaptation also refers to 'role behavior in specific types of situations, not to personality ... types of more or less enduring response, not types of personality organization' (Merton, 1957: 140). We assert that since people regularly and simultaneously pursue legitimate and illegitimate means of opportunity in pursuit of their goals, Merton's characterization of the Conformist and Innovator is incomplete.

Table 2 Merton's modes of adaptation to anomic strain, expanded to include non-institutionalized means

Modes of adaptation	*Cultural goals*	*Institutional means*	*Criminality*
Conformity	Accept	Accept	Reject
Innovation	Accept	Reject	Accept
Ritualism	Reject	Accept	Reject
Retreatism	Reject	Reject	Accept
Rebellion	Reject/Replace	Reject/Replace	Accept
Maximization	Accept	Accept	Accept

An expanded typology

When one explicitly considers illegitimate means in pursuit of the American Dream, a new adaptation to strain emerges. Our Table 2 depicts this new mode of adaptation. Table 2 illustrates that Merton's five modes of adaptation are left intact. Since we have already defined those modes of adaptation, we will only focus here on the one we have added: the Maximizer. Note that we have added a third column to Merton's typology. The new column represents acceptance or rejection of utilization of illegitimate means (i.e. criminality) in pursuit of one's goals.

The Maximizer

Those involved in *Maximization*, like those involved in *Conformity*, accept culture goals and therefore are in pursuit of the American Dream. The difference is that those who utilize strategies of Conformity pursue legitimate or institutionalized means to achieve their goals of 'making it' or 'winning' the game, whereas those who utilize strategies of *Maximization* pursue legitimate or institutionalized means as well as illegitimate or non-institutionalized means in pursuit of culture goals. Thus, Maximization involves a combination of Conformity and Innovation. Maximization, we believe, refers to a role behavior that emerges in specific types of situations and that it is a form of enduring response to strain found in those specific types of situations.

An example of Maximization might better illustrate our intended meaning. A building contractor involved in legitimate business is, by definition, using legitimate or institutionalized means in pursuit of the American Dream. This is Conformity. Those contractors who also regularly accept norms that allow criminal behavior as part of the job and thus commit deviant acts and/or break the law to achieve even greater profit/wealth would be characterized as *Maximizers*. The Maximizer is one who utilizes both legitimate and illegitimate means in pursuit of the American Dream. He or she must have the knowledge, skills, and opportunities necessary to engage in a legal trade, as well the knowledge, skills, and opportunities necessary to successfully commit criminal behavior aimed at maximizing the American Dream.

In America, it appears that chief executive officers (CEOs) and chief financial officers (CFOs) of large and small businesses are often willing to commit deviant acts and/or break the law to achieve even greater wealth (Huffington, 2003; Reiman and Leighton, 2003). These too are Maximizers. In fact, it appears that to no small degree, in the business world, Maximization is *the* preferred strategy used to increase profits and wealth. Because of this, criminality within corporations appears quite normal within many corporate subcultures.

The Maximizer: contemporary examples

Research shows Maximization to be a mode of adaptation regularly used in the business world to adapt to strain in the workplace. For example, in his study of heavy electrical equipment antitrust cases, Geis (1996) illustrated how high-ranking business figures in two major corporations charged with antitrust violations justified their violations. To some, their crimes were justified by the altruistic purpose of economic improvement. Others rationalized their illegal behaviors as law-abiding since their behaviors led to reward. Still others acknowledged their actions as illegal but asserted they were not harmful and thus were acceptable. Some saw the behavior as so normal that it could not be seen as illegal.

Most important to the concept of Maximization is that many corporate executives asserted that their behaviors were *normal* in the context of big business. Geis suggested that, for some individuals, the illegal behaviors were just part of a way of life entered into like other parts of the job. For example, antitrust violations were not only acceptable but also an expected way of doing business, especially for those who were team players and who wanted to advance to higher positions within the corporation. Many illegal acts committed in this context can be seen as a form of Conformity, one that might not be generally appropriate for 'free society' but that is actually expected in the realm of big business. Consider again Merton's point that failure to succeed in America is perceived as a personal failure. This is strong motivation to succeed by any means, including illegal ones if necessary. Given that high-level corporate executives made it clear that price fixing was 'normal' and to be expected, and since quitting is not an option, it is not surprising that some executives engaged in these illegal activities.

Executives in the Geis study said that their illegal acts were an inevitable part of business, caused by the nature and extent of competition within and between businesses. Thus, some executives justified their acts with the belief that if they did not do it, someone else would. Here, executives were likely offering some after-the-fact excuses—or 'techniques of neutralization'—for their criminal behaviors (Sykes and Matza, 1958).

But our main interest here is not the excuses offered by offenders after they are apprehended and are likely trying to avoid serious consequences for their acts of wrongdoing. Rather, we assert that maximizing strategies correspond to many situation in US society (especially within the business

world) where groups and individuals are expected to pursue illegal acts in the context of legal acts in order to 'get ahead', to 'win the game'.

More recent cases of corporate crime support this notion. For example, studies of both defective products and the tobacco industry illustrate the concept of Maximization. Many of the most well-known cases deal with automobiles. Automobiles are typically found to be defective in one of two ways. First, there are design defects that are discovered by corporations and not fixed. Secondly, corporations routinely resist safety devices until forced to adopt them by public demand (Robinson, 2006). Examples of the latter include resisting putting in safety windshields and air bags.

The most well known case of a defective product involved a car that was known by its manufacturer to be defective—the Ford Pinto—but was not recalled for the purpose of saving the company money (Henry, 1982). This automobile was manufactured in the 1970s despite the findings of pre-crash tests showing that fuel lines regularly ruptured as a result of rear-end collisions. Ford learned that it would cost only $11 per car to fix the automobiles. Yet, in a cost–benefits analysis, Ford calculated that it would still save $87.5 million by not fixing the cars (Robinson, 2006). This was based on the assumption that hundreds of people would be killed and injured and thousands of cars burned, at minimal costs to the company. Unfortunately for Ford and the driving public, Ford underestimated the prevalence of the crashes and the size of the civil judgments against it. In actuality, it would have been cheaper to fix the cars before they rolled out onto the nation's streets (Becker et al., 2002).

Examination of the Ford Pinto case supports the construct of maximization. Ford Engineer Dennis Gioia says that engineers knew the

> hazard existed in the Pinto [and that] managers made a cost–benefit decision that the cost of fixing the problem outweighed the human cost of accidents it might cause. Bad moral choices were made because [I] was following schematized scripts prevalent in the decision environment of the company. In this case, ethical [and] moral considerations were not part of the preferred scripts ... so [they] did not influence the decision-making process to any great extent.
>
> (1996: 139)

In other words, Maximization took precedence over morality.

More recently, the 'Ford/Firestone fiasco' led to dozens of deaths as consumers died when their Ford Explorers rolled over after their Firestone tires exploded (Karr, 2001, 2002). Ford Explorers, like other SUVs with a high center of gravity, are prone to rollovers. Further, Firestone tires, when under-inflated, are prone to tread separation. Apparently, the combination leads to deadly results. CEOs of both Ford and Firestone denied any wrongdoing or fault, and each pointed the finger at the other. Firestone tires on Ford Explorers were replaced in more than 10 other countries almost two years earlier than in the United States, and the Ford Explorer was subsequently redesigned for 'a smoother ride' (Robinson, 2006).

Documents internal to the companies show that they were aware of the problems and kept them secret. This is typical in defective products cases, including other automobiles such as General Motors (GM) approved conversion vans, defective seat belts and seat belt buckles in some GM and Ford cars, faulty back-door latches in Chrysler minivans (that open when struck from the rear or side and cause passengers to be thrown out on to the street), and GM sidebag and sidesaddle gas tanks located on the side of trucks outside of the protective frame that easily rupture when struck from the side. In 1992, NHTSA asked GM to voluntarily recall pickup trucks with such gas tanks but GM refused. The Department of Transportation Secretary found in 1994 that GM had known about the defect since the 1970s. General Motors entered into a deal with the Department of Justice to avoid a recall and paid hundreds of millions in settlements to victims instead.

In at least some companies of the automobile industry, Maximization thus appears to be the norm. The companies make a legal product in pursuit of the American Dream (Conformity) while simultaneously and regularly cutting corners and failing to follow required safety regulations (Innovation) in order to save money and be more successful than the competition. The fact that people are injured and die as a result—including their own customers!—appears to be irrelevant. Clearly, some major American car companies accept and promote norms in favor of Conformity as well as Innovation, simultaneously. And they regularly use both in producing, advertising, and selling their products.

Another example of Maximization can be found in the tobacco industry. Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death in the United States, making cigarettes the most commonly recognized defective product in the United States. Simply stated, cigarettes—a delivery device for the addictive drug of nicotine—contain thousands of chemicals and more than 60 known and suspected carcinogens (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2006). Studies of tobacco activities and internal documents of tobacco companies show that major tobacco corporations purposely misled the public and Congress for more than 40 years with regard to the dangers of smoking cigarettes. Research has also documented: intentional marketing to children and adolescents through misleading product advertisements in magazines, movies, and popular hang-outs; making products increasingly addictive by adding nicotine and chemicals that heightened the effects of nicotine; attacking and attempting to discredit anti-smoking advocates and whistle-blowers; and lying under oath to Congress when asked about the addictiveness of their products. As if this were not bad enough, companies have also been shown to financially coerce other companies which make smoking-cessation products and to intentionally fund and produce faulty science through a 'Tobacco Institute' that clouds over significant issues (Glantz et al., 1998; Lovell, 2002; Mollenkamp et al., 1998; Orey, 1999; Wolfson, 2001). Civil juries in some states have found tobacco companies liable for reckless disregard for human life, outrageous conduct, negligence, misrepresentation of the facts, fraud, and even selling a defective product.

Probably more than any other industry, actions by executives at large tobacco companies best represent the concept of Maximization. The culture of big tobacco—referring to the beliefs, values, and norms that dictate its corporate practices and the behaviors of its employees—is criminogenic. Although the companies make a legal product in pursuit of the American Dream (Conformity), they simultaneously and regularly engage in reckless, negligent, and knowing behaviors that lead to the deaths of hundreds of thousands of Americans every year (Innovation). That 430,000 Americans die every year from tobacco-related illness, millions more are 'injured' by smoking, and that $75 billion is spent on direct-health care costs treating tobacco-related illnesses is irrelevant to the behaviors of the 'Maximizers' in the tobacco industry. Instead, like car companies, tobacco companies accept and promote norms in favor of Conformity and Innovation simultaneously. And they regularly use both in producing, advertising, and selling their products.

Some of the most recent research on corporate and white-collar crimes also finds evidence consistent with Maximization as a mode of adaptation to strain associated with the business world. For example, research on occupational fraud (Holtfreter, 2005), corporate accounting fraud (Pontell, 2004), environmental crimes (Wolf, 2006), so-called 'accidents' of the chemical industry (Pearce and Tombs, 1998), the manipulation of the natural environment which exacerbates natural disasters (Green, 2005), creating global hunger through monopolization of bio-technology (Walters, 2006), and even the awarding of post-war construction contracts in Afghanistan and Iraq (Hogan et al., 2006) finds that such acts are normal and expected parts of the business world. That some of these acts are not 'criminal' is irrelevant (Passas, 2005). Given the harms they cause and the intentional, reckless, negligent, and knowing character of the acts, they can easily be considered 'criminal' in the sense of involving actions that are fundamentally wrong (Robinson, 2005).

Conclusion

There are at least two reasons to expect that those who have money and power—those who have already made it—will continue to experience anomie and strain. First, as Merton, Messner and Rosenfeld, Cloward and Ohlin, and other anomie and strain theorists have pointed out, one can never have enough in the US. Someone always has more, giving us all something to strive for so that keeping up with the Joneses has escalated to keeping up with Warren Buffet and ultimately Bill Gates. Secondly, to some degree, deviance and criminality are widespread among powerful elites, especially corporate CEOs and CFOs (Reiman and Leighton, 2003; Robinson, 2005). This means wealthy individuals often debate whether to abide by the law (because it is the right thing to do for society) or to abide by the expectations imposed on them to abide by the rules of the game

which sometimes call for violating the law (because it is the right thing to do for the company). We assert that it is very likely that within the American corporation (legitimate means), deviance (illegitimate means) is no longer deviant but rather normal among corporate leaders (Clinard and Yeager, 2005; Friedrichs, 2008; Geis and Pontell, 2006; Mokhiber and Weissman, 1999; Rosoff et al., 2002; Simon, 2006; Simon and Hagan, 1999). That is, Maximization is widespread in the corporate world.

In the contemporary US, the reluctance to see white-collar and corporate offenders as criminals (Friedrichs, 2003) may be due to the fact that they are viewed as important men and women (mostly men) who are in pursuit of the American Dream—often at any and all costs. Rather than labeling such actors as criminals, we accept them as 'shrewd, smart, and successful men' harking back to the robber barons of times past (Merton,1957: 142).

Anomie and strain theories blame crime on the overpowering influence of the economy on our lives. In particular, Merton's theories of anomie and strain, Messner and Rosenfeld's theory of institutional anomie, and Cloward and Ohlin's theory of differential opportunity assert that criminality is a function of factors such as: goals–means discrepancies; the consecration of money itself as a value; internalizing the goals of the American Dream while failing to internalize legitimate means of opportunity; an overemphasis on the goal of the American Dream; an exaggerated emphasis on monetary gain and pursuit of self-interest; and impulses unregulated by non-economic institutions.

Merton created five modes of adaptation to such sources of anomie and strain, but failed to consider utilization of legitimate and illegitimate means of opportunity in pursuit of one's goals. Cloward and Ohlin suggested that, as means of legitimate opportunity vary, so too do means of illegitimate opportunity. Yet, in their work on subcultural responses to strain, they also did not consider utilization of legitimate and illegitimate means of opportunity in pursuit of one's goals.

Thus, in this paper, we expanded Merton's typology by adding explicit consideration of the utilization of illegitimate means simultaneously with legitimate or institutionalized means in pursuit of goals subsumed within the American Dream. The result is a new mode of adaptation to strain. We focused on the adaptation to strain implemented by the *Maximizer*, who merges both legitimate and illegitimate means in pursuit of the socially inculcated American Dream. Maximization is an adaptation whereby individuals simultaneously and regularly accept and utilize legitimate and illegitimate means of opportunity in pursuit of the American Dream. As argued here, we believe the manufacture of defective products, as well as the actions of big tobacco companies, represent the adaptation of Maximization. If so, pressures to achieve at any cost imposed by the American Dream are a significant reason why much corporate crime occurs in the United States.

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The Role of Self-Control in Crime Causation

Beyond Gottfredson and Hirschi's *General Theory of Crime*

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ABSTRACT

In this paper we present an alternative conception of self-control and its role in crime causation to the one advanced by Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) in their influential *General Theory of Crime*. Our conception is based on the theoretical framework outlined in the situational action theory of crime causation (e.g. Wikström 2006a). We propose that self-control is best analysed as a situational concept (a factor in the process of choice) rather than as an individual trait. We suggest that the core individual trait influencing an individual's ability to exercise self-control is executive capability. We maintain that there are also important environmental influences on an individual's ability to exercise self-control. We submit that the ability to exercise self-control is a relevant factor in crime causation only in situations where an individual considers (deliberates) whether or not to engage in an act of crime. We argue that for most people (in most circumstances) whether or not they engage in acts of crime is not a question of their ability to exercise self-control but rather a question of their morality. In short, this paper aims to clarify the concepts of 'executive capability', 'self-control' and 'crime', and to specify their relationships and role in the explanation of crime.

KEY WORDS

Crime / Crime Causation / Executive Capabilities / Morality / Self-Control / Situational Action Theory.

In this paper we present an alternative conception of self-control and its role in crime causation from the one Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) advance in their *General Theory of Crime*. Although their theory has many advocates, it has also inspired a considerable amount of debate. Various aspects of the theory have been criticized, including its definition of crime, its tautological description of self-control, its testability and explanatory power, its unidimensionality and factorization, its stability postulate, and its claim to be a general theory of crime (Akers 1991; Arneklev et al. 1999; Geis 2000; Grasmick et al. 1993; LaGrange and Silverman 1999; Marcus 2004; Piquero and Rosay 1998; Pratt and Cullen 2000; Turner and Piquero 2002).

Our alternative conception is based on the theoretical framework outlined in the situational action theory of crime causation (Wikström 2004, 2005, 2006a). We aim to advance the understanding of the role of self-control in crime causation by presenting a more in-depth analysis of the concept of self-control and its role in crime causation than any previously undertaken.

We argue that *self-control is best analysed as a situational concept rather than an individual trait*. We submit that an individual's ability to exercise self-control is an outcome of the *interaction* between his/her *executive capabilities* (an individual trait) and the *settings* in which he/she takes part (his/her environment). Critically, this implies that stability and change in an individual's ability to exercise self-control depend not only on the stability and change in his/her executive capabilities (an individual trait) but also on the stability and change in the environment(s) in which he/she operates.

We submit that *the ability to exercise self-control is relevant as a factor in crime causation only when an individual considers (deliberates) whether or not to engage in an act of crime*. Many people never consider committing acts of crime, whereas others commit some acts of crime out of habit (without deliberating). The ability to exercise self-control is irrelevant in both cases because the action choice involves no deliberation (see Wikström 2006a). This implies that for most people (in most circumstances) the ability to exercise self-control is not a relevant factor in whether or not they engage in acts of crime.

We will begin this paper by summarizing and then critiquing the main arguments of Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) theory of self-control in crime causation. We will suggest an alternative conception of self-control and its role in crime causation and posit this within the wider theoretical framework of the situational action theory of crime causation (e.g. Wikström 2006a). In the focal, and final, part of the paper, we will develop one important aspect of this theory: the specific relationships between executive capabilities (an individual trait), self-control (as a mechanism in the process of choice linking individuals to their environments) and crime involvement (action). The particular aim of this paper is to clarify the concepts of 'executive capability', 'self-control' and 'crime' and to specify their relationships and role in the explanation of crime.

Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory of self-control

One of the most influential criminological theories, at present, is Gottfredson and Hirschi's 1990 General Theory of Crime (or Self-Control Theory). Their theory hinges upon the notion that 'human conduct can be understood as the self-interested pursuit of pleasure or the avoidance of pain' (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 5) and that acts of crime are no different from any other acts in this respect. They define crime as 'acts of force or fraud undertaken in the pursuit of self-interest' (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 15). The theory applies not only to acts that are legally defined as crime, but also to what Gottfredson and Hirschi call 'analogous acts', such as accidents (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 42) or truancy from school or work.

The theory's fundamental claim is that low self-control is 'the primary individual characteristic causing criminal behavior' (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 111). Low self-control is seen as a trait, or a summary construct of individual traits including impulsivity, insensitivity, risk-taking and shortsightedness that have 'a considerable tendency ... to come together in the same people, ... persist through life' (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 90–1) and which are 'established *very early in life*' (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 255, our emphasis).

The theory explains individual differences in crime involvement as variation 'in the extent to which [individuals] are vulnerable to the temptations of the moment' (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 87). Individuals with low self-control are more vulnerable to temptations of the moment because they fail 'to consider the negative or painful consequences of [their] acts' (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 95) and therefore are more likely to engage in acts of crime. Hence, individuals differ in their *propensity* to engage in crime (and 'analogous acts') based on their level of self-control. Self-control is seen as a 'general explanatory concept that can be measured independently of the phenomena it is alleged to cause, and it is thus directly testable' (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 120).

The direct role of the *environment* in crime causation is reduced to providing opportunities for the expression of propensity. Gottfredson and Hirschi talk about 'the interaction of varying individual predispositions for delinquency and *logically possible* opportunities' (2003: 11, our emphasis) and give the following example of the role of opportunity: 'the 12-year-old who cannot steal a car may well steal a bicycle; the 30-year-old who cannot

be truant from school may well be truant from work and family obligation' (Gottfredson and Hirschi 2003: 10).

They do posit that the environment plays a key role in the causation of self-control (and therefore has an *indirect* role in crime causation)[1] since 'people naturally pursue their own interests and *unless socialized to the contrary* will use whatever means available to them for such purposes' (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 117, our emphasis). They consider low self-control primarily an outcome of ineffective socialization, in that 'the characteristics associated with low self-control tend to show themselves in the absence of nurturance, discipline, or training' (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 95). Gottfredson and Hirschi argue, therefore, that the family environment is the most important and that 'the major "cause" of low self-control ... appears to be ineffective child-rearing' (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 97); 'self-control differences seem primarily attributed to family socialization practises' (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 107). Gottfredson and Hirschi do not insist that other institutions (schools, in particular) cannot play a role but posit that 'it is difficult for subsequent institutions to make up for deficiencies' (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 107).

The main arguments of their theory thus appear to be that defective early childhood family socialization (i.e. 'the absence of nurturance, discipline, or training' to counteract the natural pursuit of self-interest) causes poor self-control (e.g. being impulsive, insensitive, risk-taking) and, in turn, poor self-control causes involvement in crime and 'analogous acts' because it makes an individual vulnerable to immediate temptations to undertake acts of force or fraud in the pursuit of self-interest.

An alternative conception of crime and self-control

We agree with Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990: 3–5, 15) that it is of utmost importance to have a clear conception of crime (what is to be explained) when developing a theory of its causes. We also agree that how one conceptualizes the phenomena of crime will have some bearing on what kind of explanations one develops. However, we dispute whether their *definition of crime* captures the essence of the phenomena of crime and therefore whether it is the most

[1] They acknowledge that 'individual differences may have an impact on the prospects for effective socialization (adequate control)' but also claim that 'effective socialization is ... always possible whatever the configuration of individual traits' (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 96). They appear to differentiate between inherent traits (which may make effective socialization more difficult) and those that 'appear later and seem to be largely products of ineffective or incomplete socialization' (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 96). They offer impulsivity and insensitivity as examples of later-appearing traits.

helpful starting point for developing a better understanding of the causes of crime (and, subsequently, developing more effective ways to prevent crime).

The concept of crime

Gottfredson and Hirschi argue that crimes are 'acts of force and fraud undertaken in the pursuit of self-interest'; we suggest that crimes are better analysed as 'acts of moral rule breakings defined in law', where crime is seen as a subset (defined in law) of the broader category of moral rule breakings. A moral rule is a rule that states what it is right or wrong to do (or not to do) in a particular circumstance. Laws are moral rules, and crimes (violations of the law) are acts of moral rule breaking. A theory of crime causation may therefore be viewed as a special case of a more general theory of moral rule breakings (Wikström 2006a). To explain acts of crime is fundamentally a question of explaining *moral action* (that is, action guided by rules about what it is right or wrong to do or not to do) and, particularly, why individuals come to *breach moral rules* defined in law.

We reason that what is to be explained when we refer to the phenomena of crime is a *class of actions*. It is problematic to include a suggested motivation (i.e. self-interest) for particular actions (crime) in the definition. Motivation, if anything, should be part of the *explanation* rather than part of the *definition* of acts of crime. Consequently, Gottfredson and Hirschi's definition of crime confuses elements of explanation (in the pursuit of self-interest) and definition (acts of force and fraud).

Even if one overlooks (or disputes) the problem of including motivation in a definition of a class of actions, the motivational part of their definition remains superfluous. Gottfredson and Hirschi apparently view *all* human actions as motivated by self-interest; hence, the fact that an action is taken in the pursuit of self-interest cannot help us distinguish between 'crime and analogous acts' and other acts. Thus the *defining* characteristic of crime in their theory is 'acts of force and fraud'.

It is doubtful whether *all* acts legally defined as crimes, in any meaningful sense, qualify as acts of force and fraud (e.g. the use of prohibited drugs, the illegal disposal of toxic waste or dangerous driving). We consider it awkward for a general theory of crime to define crime in a way that does not cover all acts defined as crimes in law (but we are not sure Gottfredson and Hirschi consider this a problem; see Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990: 175).

We argue that the *only* thing *all* acts of crime have in common is that they are 'acts that *breach* moral rules defined in law' (not that they are acts of force and fraud); this is the *defining* characteristic of acts of crime and what should be explained by a theory of crime causation. We have already argued that a theory of crime causation is a special case of a more inclusive

theory of moral rule breakings that includes not only acts legally defined as crimes but also 'analogous acts', (in our case) moral rule breakings not defined in law.

Theories of crime causation that focus on explaining *why people breach the law* (or moral rules more generally in the case of a broader theory of moral action) need not address the problem of 'the political nature of the definition crime' and 'cultural variations in what is defined as crime' in order to explain why people commit acts of crime, because it is the *rule breaking* rather than any particular behaviour that is the focus of explanation. To explain *why certain actions come to be defined as acts of crime by political bodies, and in certain cultural contexts or historical times, but not in others*, is a different problem (but an equally important problem in the broader understanding of the phenomenon of crime) from that of explaining *why people breach existing laws*, whatever those laws are (see, further, Wikström 2006a).

People may violate a law for very different reasons; for example, they may regard abiding by a particular law as morally wrong, or breach a particular law for reasons of pure greed. We thus agree with Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990: 5) that there are no motives or desires unique to the commission of acts of crime (and submit that this is because what defines crime is the rule breaking, not that it is any particular kind of behaviour). However, we maintain that individuals' crime involvement is fundamentally *a question of morality* (since crime is essentially moral action) rather than a question of self-interest (since pursuing self-interest is not a defining characteristic of crime or of 'crime and analogous behaviour').[2]

The concept of self-control

We agree with Gottfredson and Hirschi that 'self-control' (or, as we will argue, the ability to exercise self-control) is an important aspect in understanding individual differences in crime involvement. We disagree with their claim that (low) self-control is the main individual characteristic that causes crime, and dispute that self-control should even be considered as an individual trait (or summary concept of individual traits). This of course has considerable implications for the role of self-control in the explanation of crime, a topic we will deal with in the next section. In this section we will concentrate on the concept of self-control itself.

[2] Although not of immediate relevance for the argument we develop here, advances in evolutionary and developmental psychology and other disciplines suggest that humans are not purely self-centred, nor do their choices revolve entirely around maximizing pleasure and minimizing pain. Evolutionary and psychological theorists have made strong arguments that human nature is characterized by altruistic (social) as well as egoistic (self-interested) qualities, and that many human actions are expressions of habits rather than deliberate expressions of self-interest (see Axelrod 1984; Pinker 2002; Turiel 2002; Wright 1994).

Gottfredson and Hirschi do not provide a stringent definition of the concept of self-control (i.e. a clear conception of what self-control is), which is somewhat surprising since it is the key concept of their theory. They tell us (mostly behaviourally) what *characterizes* people with low self-control (e.g. being impulsive, risk-taking, physical and insensitive), what *differentiates* people with high and low self-control (i.e. vulnerability to temptations of the moment), and *why* people with low self-control tend to engage in acts of crime (i.e. because they fail to consider negative and painful consequences of their actions), but never what (low) self-control actually *is*. They posit only that self-control is a *trait* (or a summary concept of traits) that develops, and stabilizes, early in life.

Whereas Gottfredson and Hirschi view self-control as a trait, we suggest that self-control is best analysed as *a situational concept*. We define a *situation* as an individual's perception of action alternatives and process of choice that arise from his/her intersection with a particular setting (Wikström 2006a). We submit that self-control is *part of the process of choice*, not an individual trait. Self-control is something we *do* – 'exercises of self-control oppose something in support of something else' (Mele 2001: 64) – rather than something we *are*. Exercising, or failing to exercise, self-control is part of the process of choice when an individual responds to environmental stimuli; an individual will respond to different environmental stimuli with varying degrees of self-control, hence self-control is a situational concept, not an individual trait.

We agree with Gottfredson and Hirschi that individual characteristics (traits) play an important role in an individual's *ability* to exercise self-control, but we find it analytically helpful to distinguish between (i) individual traits that might influence an individual's *ability* to exercise self-control and (ii) the *exercising of* self-control (as part of the process of choice). We consider this distinction crucial to advancing our understanding of the role of self-control in crime causation.

We suggest the concept of *executive capability* to describe the individual trait(s) influencing an individual's ability to exercise self-control, and we reserve the concept of *self-control* to depict an individual's success at acting in accordance with his/her morality when faced with morally conflicting temptations or provocations. We submit that self-control comes into play in the process of choice only when the temptations and provocations an individual faces in a particular setting *conflict* with his/her moral rules (i.e. the rules guiding his/her choices about what it is right or wrong to do).[3] We argue that, when an individual acts in accordance with his/her morality when faced with conflicting temptations or provocations, he/she exercises

[3] We define a temptation as when an individual connects a desire (or commitment) with an opportunity to fulfil this desire (or commitment), and we define a provocation as when an individual connects a friction with perceived antagonistic intent (see Wikström 2006a).

self-control, whereas if an individual acts upon a temptation, or responds to a provocation contrary to his/her moral beliefs, he/she fails to exercise self-control. Thus *self-control* may be defined as 'the successful inhibition of perceived action alternatives, or interruption of a course of action, that conflict with an individual's morality' (Wikström 2006a).

We believe the concept of executive capability can capture more precisely much of the important individual differences Gottfredson and Hirschi aim to highlight through their concept of 'self-control' (e.g. differences in behavioural tendencies towards impulsivity, sensation-seeking, etc.) by drawing upon more specific and contemporary knowledge of human motivation, cognition and behaviour. The concept of executive capabilities has not been consistently or comprehensively researched in criminology because of its own inherent difficulties of definition and measurement. However, combining criminological knowledge with psychological and neurological findings can help reveal the important role that executive capabilities play in self-control and, subsequently, acts of crime.

We will return to the concept of executive capability and its role in individuals' ability to exercise self-control, but first we will consider the role of self-control in crime causation in a wider framework: Wikström's situational action theory of crime causation.

The situational action theory of crime causation

The situational action theory of crime causation (e.g. Wikström 2004, 2005, 2006a) was developed (and is still developing) to better address some central problems in criminological theory: (i) the problem of causes and correlates (poor understanding of causal mechanisms), (ii) the problem of integrating levels of explanation (poor understanding of how individual and environmental factors interact in causing action), and (iii) the problem of the concept of crime (unclear conception of what is to be explained by a theory of crime causation). The fundamental argument is that to advance criminological theory we need a developed theory of action through which we can address causal mechanisms and integrate levels of explanation. Without an adequate theory of action (which specifies the causal mechanisms that link individuals and environments to action) we lack the necessary foundation to fully understand the role of individual development and change (Wikström 2005) and the role of systemic factors (such as inequality and segregation) in the explanation of crime (Wikström and Sampson 2003).

The situational action theory of crime causation begins by defining crimes as *moral actions* (i.e. actions guided by what it is right or wrong to do), which hence have to be explained as such. The key questions posed by

the theory are: (i) what *moves* people to break moral rules (or commit acts of crime), and (ii) how do individual and environmental features *interact* in this process?

The theory arises from the notion that human actions (including acts of crime) are an outcome of how individuals (a) *perceive their action alternatives* and (b) *make their choices*. This is the fundamental *situational mechanism* that links (i) individual characteristics (genetic or acquired) and experiences and (ii) the behavioural contexts (settings) to (iii) individuals' actions (and acts of crime). An individual is moved to commit a particular action (e.g. an act of crime) if he/she sees it as a viable alternative *and* chooses to act upon it.

Individuals differ in how they perceive action alternatives and make choices, which is the main explanation for why individuals act differently in the same setting (e.g. why some commit an act of crime and others do not). The key individual characteristic influencing what action alternatives an individual perceives is his/her *moral categories* (expressed in the making of moral judgements or in the execution of moral habits); the key individual characteristic influencing an individual's process of choice is his/her *executive capabilities* (expressed in the ability to exercise self-control).

Individuals do not act in an environmental vacuum; they act in particular settings. A *setting* may be defined as 'the social and physical environment (objects, persons, events) that an individual, at a particular moment in time, can access with his/her senses'. An individual's morality is expressed in the making of moral judgements or in the execution of moral habits *in response to* the particularities of a setting. The key relevant features of a setting are its *opportunities* and *frictions*, and the moral context in which these opportunities and frictions occur. The *moral context* of a setting may be defined as 'its moral rules and their monitoring and sanctions'.

Motivation (readiness to act) is an outcome of the individual–environment interaction and thus is best conceptualized as a situational concept. Opportunities may cause *temptations* if they connect to an individual's desires or commitments, and frictions (e.g. obstacles and interferences) may cause *provocations* if they connect to an individual's perception of antagonistic intent. Temptations and provocations are fundamental motivational forces in human action.

Acting upon a temptation or provocation may constitute a moral rule breaking (or a crime) depending on the *moral rules* (laws) that apply to the setting (moral context). Settings vary not only in the moral rules (laws) that apply to them, but also in their *monitoring* and *sanctioning* of particular moral rule breakings (law violations). Monitoring and sanctioning may be referred to as the *deterrent qualities* of the setting; if the individual perceives monitoring to be effective and sanctions to be severe, this may create *deterrence*, i.e. fear of

consequences, which may be a factor in any deliberation over whether or not to act upon a motivation and breach a moral rule or law (Wikström 2006b).

When facing a particular setting, an individual will recognize certain action alternatives (but not others) as a consequence of his/her moral engagement with the moral context of the setting (based upon the particular motivations the individual–setting interaction generates). This may be referred to as an individual's *moral perceptions*, 'the identification of action alternatives and their moral qualities in response to particular motivations in a particular setting' (Wikström 2006a).

An individual's moral perceptions of a particular setting depend on (i) the *correspondence* between the individual's morality (moral beliefs and moral habits) and the moral rules of the setting, and (ii) the *strength* of an individual's moral beliefs and moral habits. The strength of a *moral belief* can be characterized as 'the intensity of the moral emotions: the potency of the feelings of guilt and shame if violating a moral rule (or, at the other extreme, the potency of feelings of virtue and satisfaction if abiding by a rule)'. The strength of a *moral habit* can be characterized as 'the intervention (force) needed to break the habit' (that is, the external 'force' necessary to change a habitual response into a deliberate one).

Moral beliefs or moral habits that are strong and correspond to the moral rules of a setting will promote the perception of action alternatives consistent with the moral rules of the setting. Moral beliefs and moral habits that are weak or conflict with the moral rules of a setting will 'permit' the perception of action alternatives that constitute moral rule breakings (law breaking).

Moral perceptions precede *moral choices* (i.e. intentions to abide by or breach a moral rule). On the basis of moral perceptions, an individual will form an intention (make a moral choice) either (i) *out of habit* (moral habit) or (ii) *after some deliberation* (moral judgement). When an individual acts out of habit, he/she sees only one causally effective alternative for action and 'automatically' (without deliberation) chooses this alternative. When an individual deliberates, he/she considers the moral implications of competing action alternatives (makes a moral judgement) and, on this basis, makes a 'rational choice' about which action (if any) to pursue. We submit that it is *only* when an individual deliberates over action alternatives that he/she makes a 'rational choice', meaning he/she chooses what he/she considers the best action alternative amongst those he/she perceives.

Whether the moral choice is made out of moral habit or involves a moral judgement will depend on the familiarity of the setting and the circumstances (habits are essentially created by repeated responses to familiar circumstances). Familiar settings and circumstances will tend to favour (automatic) choices based upon moral habit whereas unfamiliar settings or circumstances will tend to favour (deliberate) choices based on moral

judgement. Because habits have only automated intent (involve only one causally effective alternative), *free will*, *rational choice*, *self-control* and *deterrence* will be part of the process of choice only if an individual *deliberates* over his/her action alternatives (makes a moral judgement) (see, generally, Wikström 2006a, and, specifically on the role of deterrence, Wikström 2006b). Crucially, when making moral judgements, individuals will vary in their ability to exercise self-control (as a result of their executive capabilities).

Implications for the role of self-control in crime causation

Exercising (or failing to effectively exercise) self-control implies that an individual deliberates over action alternatives. We submit that the role of self-control in the process of choice is different depending on (i) whether or not *deliberation* is part of the process of choice and, if deliberation is part of the process of choice, (ii) whether or not (or to what degree) an individual's morality (moral beliefs and moral habits) *corresponds* with the moral rules (laws) that regulate conduct in the setting in which he/she is taking part. Self-control comes into play in the process of choice only when an individual's morality conflicts with acting upon a motivation (see Figure 3; Figures 1 and 2 illustrate cases in which self-control is *not* part of the process of choice).

Why the ability to exercise self-control is not a relevant factor in abiding by or breaching the law out of habit

If an individual acts out of habit (without deliberating), self-control will not be part of the process of choice (and an individual's ability to exercise self-control will be irrelevant to his/her choice of action). An individual who acts out of habit sees just one causally effective action alternative and therefore no conflicting alternatives, so he/she has no 'reason' to control his/her action choice. An individual may either *abide by* or *breach* a particular moral rule (law) out of habit. By acting out of habit, he/she allows the *setting* to 'decide' what action he/she will take; hence the environment controls the action, not the individual. Therefore, *the ability to exercise self-control is not a relevant factor when abiding by or breaching the law out of habit.*

Why the ability to exercise self-control is not a relevant factor in acts of crime that the perpetrator does not consider morally wrong

If there is no conflict between an individual's moral beliefs and breaching a moral rule (law) by acting upon a temptation or provocation, self-control

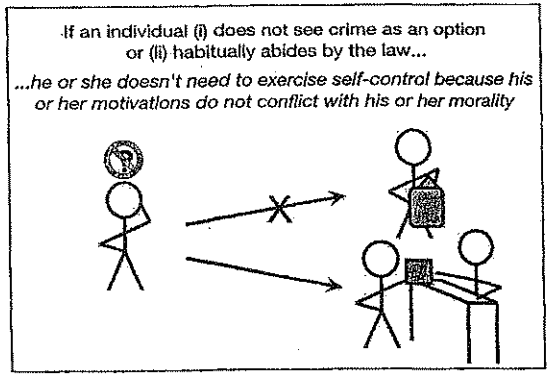

Figure 1 The role of self-control in the process of choice when the individual does not consider committing an act of crime.

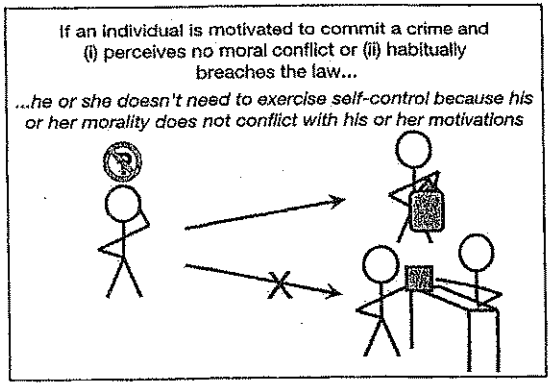

Figure 2 The role of self-control in the process of choice when the individual does not consider it morally wrong to commit an act of crime.

is not part of the process of choice (and an individual's ability to exercise self-control is irrelevant to the action choice). Because the individual does not consider the act morally wrong, there is nothing to 'control'. *Thus the ability to exercise self-control is not a relevant factor in crimes where the perpetrator does not regard the act as morally wrong.* In this case, only *deterrence* (fear of consequences) may act as a potential inhibitor preventing the individual from acting upon his/her motivation.

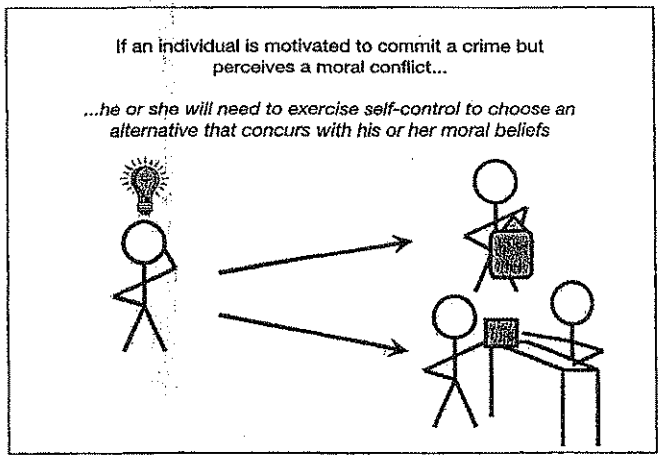

Figure 3 The role of self-control in the process of choice when the individual considers committing an act of crime.

The relationship between the ability to exercise self-control (executive capabilities) and *sensitivity to deterrence* is a particularly intriguing one. We hypothesize that (i) the ability to exercise self-control (controls that are internal in origin) and (ii) deterrence (controls that are external in origin) are the core potential inhibitors of a particular motivation. Whereas self-control may be viewed as an *individual-to-environment process* (executive capabilities acting upon an individual's process of choice during a moral judgement), deterrence may be viewed as an *environment-to-individual process* (deterrent cues in the setting acting upon an individual's process of choice during a moral judgement[4]). We theorize that these two processes may be related because an individual's sensitivity to deterrent cues (i.e. the strength of the deterrent cues necessary to influence a process of deliberate choice[5]) depends on his/her executive capabilities.

Executive capabilities allow individuals to perceive environmental cues based on their *relevance* to an action decision rather than on their salience, therefore individuals with executive deficits may be more susceptible to salient environmental cues such as temptations and provocations (motivators) and

[4] Deterrent cues may be relevant to habitual as well as to deliberate choices because they may serve as habit breakers if sufficiently strong.
[5] Or to break a process of habitual choice.

overlook more subtle deterrent cues (inhibitors). They may also misjudge the value of those deterrents and the impact they may have on the outcome of particular action choices, or fail to bear in mind information previously gleaned about deterrents and the predictable consequences of choosing particular alternatives for action. We thus suggest there is an interaction between an individual's ability to exercise self-control (executive capabilities) and the influence of deterrence: the weaker an individual's ability to exercise self-control, the stronger the deterrent cues must be to be a factor in the process of deliberate choice (Wikström 2006b).[6]

Why the ability to exercise self-control is not a relevant factor in law abidance when an individual does not see an act of crime as a viable alternative

If an individual's morality does not 'permit' him/her to see crime as an alternative, self-control will not enter into the process of choice (and an individual's ability to exercise self-control will be irrelevant to his/her choice of action). Again (but for different reasons), there is nothing to 'control'. The ability to exercise self-control may be a relevant factor for individuals' law abidance only when they are motivated to and consider committing acts of crime contrary to their morality. *Thus the ability to exercise self-control is not a relevant factor in an individual's law abidance when he/she does not see an act of crime as a viable alternative.*

Situational limitations of the role of self-control in crime causation

We submit that the primary reason for individuals' law abidance is strong moral beliefs (and moral habits) that correspond to the moral rules of the law, rather than their ability to exercise self-control (or respond to deterrence). We believe that most people, in most circumstances, abide by most laws because they do not see acts of crime as an alternative, not because they (because of exercising self-control or responding to deterrence) choose not to violate the law. We further submit that the role an individual's ability to exercise self-control plays in crime causation is limited to cases in which the individual deliberates over a conflict between his/her moral beliefs and his/her motivation to act in a way that breaches the law. Finally, we submit that there are many crimes in which the ability to exercise self-control is irrelevant because they are committed out of moral habit (which may, for example, be true of a majority of traffic violations, cases of illicit drug use and some types of violent crime).

[6] Or to break a process of habitual choice.

Although all this implies that *morality is the fundamental individual characteristic* in the explanation of crime and that an individual's ability to exercise self-control plays a far more limited role than Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory supposes, we do not suggest that an individual's ability to exercise self-control is insignificant. We suggest only that the role of self-control is restricted to particular circumstances.

The concept of executive capabilities and its role in exercising self-control

We have submitted that self-control is not an individual trait but rather part of the process of choice, and highlighted the importance of distinguishing between individual traits that influence an individual's *ability* to exercise self-control and the *exercising of* self-control itself. To say that individuals who exercise self-control 'have high self-control' and individuals who do not 'have low self-control' obscures this distinction. An individual will display different degrees of self-control in different situations. What one 'has' (trait) is a particular ability to exercise self-control. We suggest that individual differences in the ability to exercise self-control arise from individual differences in executive capability. *Executive capability* refers to the effectiveness of an individual's executive functions, the cognitive processes responsible for purposeful behaviour.

Like the definition of self-control, the definition of executive capabilities is problematic. The term 'executive functions' has been used in reference to any number of ('higher-order') cognitive functions associated with purposeful behaviour, including (but not limited to) selective attention, anticipation, goal formation, working memory, self-monitoring, inhibition, conceptualization of time, abstract reasoning and adaptive shifting (Baddeley and Della Sala 1996; Moffitt 1990b, 1993; Moffitt and Henry 1989; Smith and Jonides 1999; Stuss et al. 1994; Tranel et al. 1994). Few researchers have posited a defining characteristic and, at present, there exists no definitive set of 'executive functions', only inconclusive assertions that executive functions are also frontal lobe functions involved in complex, purposeful behaviours (Moffitt 1990b; Nigg and Huang-Pollock 2003; Smith and Jonides 1999).

We posit that *executive functions* are 'the set of cognitive faculties that allow an individual to create and use internal representations to guide his/her action decisions'. An *internal representation* is an organized informational framework constructed from an individual's *perceptions* (*external* sensory information from the environment combined with *internal* knowledge from the individual's past experiences). Individuals who differ in executive capabilities differ in how well they can construct these representations and apply

them to the process of choice. We derive this definition from the fact that one of the primary roles of the frontal lobes, the anatomical seat of executive functioning, is to develop and maintain internal representations (see Cohen and Servan-Schreiber 1992; Goldman-Rakic 1987).

Information in an internal representation is encoded as a pattern of neural activation that 'represents' the individual's perceptions: the elements of the setting to which he/she attends, the associations he/she draws between those elements and internal knowledge, and the implications for different actions. Elements of the setting that are more salient to the individual are allocated greater activation and will carry greater weight during the process of choice. The activation pattern may change as the information an individual is aware of and attending to changes, making internal representations flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances (see Zelazo et al. 2003). Representations are also cognitively efficient and make optimal use of limited activational resources. Finally, representations allow an individual to integrate past experiences with sensory information from the present environment to evaluate elements of a setting and consider how they may influence action outcomes. Thus, an individual's executive capabilities (e.g. his/her ability to develop, maintain and apply internal representations) are crucial for an individual's process of choice and, ultimately, his/her behaviour. We suggest this is because they play a determining role in his/her ability to exercise self-control.

We have defined self-control as 'the successful inhibition of perceived action alternatives, or interruption of a course of action, that conflict with an individual's morality'. To exercise self-control, an individual must (i) recognize a conflict between his/her motivations and his/her moral rules, (ii) inhibit responses while making a moral judgement (deliberating), and (iii) choose an action alternative that corresponds with his/her moral rules. An individual can do so by using internal representations to (i) activate information (internally) to motivate deliberation, superseding externally motivated responses (habits), (ii) reduce activation of information associated with conflicting alternatives (reducing motivation) and increase activation of information associated with other alternatives, and (iii) inform and motivate deliberate action decisions by contrasting information associated with different alternatives (e.g. their moral implications and potential to satisfy the individual's motivations).

This implies that, to exercise self-control, an individual must apply an internal representation to an action decision when elements of a situation have led to a conflict between his/her motivations for action and his/her moral rules. The representation then provides the information he/she needs to evaluate the moral significance, and implications, of different alternatives. Differences in individuals' ability to construct and apply these representations are therefore very likely responsible for differences in their ability to exercise self-control.

The underlying biology

We have suggested that patterns of neural activation can 'represent' an individual's perceptions, implying that the brain can activate neurons that code for specific information, evaluate significance and draw associations between elements of a setting and an individual's experiences. These are each functions of the brain's prefrontal cortex, the cortical region situated at the very front of the brain (Goldman-Rakic 1987; Ishikawa and Raine 2003; Moffitt 1990a). This brain region, which is far more developed in humans than in any other species, has two primary subdivisions that are particularly implicated in the creation and maintenance of internal representations: the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC) and the orbital frontal cortex (OFC). Conjointly, these regions are responsible for the organization and evaluation of information that guides action choices and the exhibition of self-control.

The DLPFC is responsible for allocating and maintaining a representation's neural activation. Its primary function is *working memory*, the virtual 'cognitive space' where representations are organized (Baddeley 1983; Ishikawa and Raine 2003). The DLPFC receives information about the external environment via its interconnections with sensory cortices, and associated emotional and prospective information via the orbital frontal cortex and adjacent emotional centres in the brain, and allocates activation based on relevance (Goleman 1995; Goldman-Rakic 1987; Nauta 1971; Price et al. 1990). When this information changes, the DLPFC adjusts the allocated activation. The term 'working memory' thus refers to the information an individual is 'working with' during a particular cognitive task (Ribaupierre and Bailleux 1994; Swanson 1999; Zelazo et al. 2003).

Working memory performance is determined by two criteria: capacity and processing efficiency. Individuals differ on both dimensions, which can affect the complexity and effectiveness of their representations. *Working memory capacity* is the amount of information the DLPFC can keep active at a given time and ranges from five to nine items in most adults (Baddeley and Hitch 1974, 2000; Demetriou et al. 2002; Gathercole 1999). Individuals with lower capacities may be more likely to overlook important considerations during the process of choice (Baumeister et al. 1994). *Processing efficiency* is a measure of how quickly and effectively an individual can incorporate information (internal or external) into a representation. Greater efficiency means more information can be processed in a limited amount of time, such as a moment of decision, which may influence the outcome (Demetriou et al. 2002; Just and Carpenter 1992). Consequently, the DLPFC is responsible for at least some (significant) individual differences in executive capabilities.

The orbital frontal cortex (OFC) controls emotions and expectations associated with the information in a representation. It adjusts perceptions of salience by activating internal markers to signify an element's emotional, or 'somatic,' significance. These 'somatic markers' are memory traces of an individual's somatic experience (e.g. his/her emotional state) of an outcome he/she associates with a particular element (Damasio et al. 1990). They are reactivated by the OFC when the same (or a similar) element is re-encountered and provide knowledge from experience about its implications (Bechara et al. 2000; Damasio et al. 1990). This information is available to working memory and can be incorporated into a burgeoning representation (Damasio et al. 1990). Thus the OFC can help qualify external information and provide internal information about the possible outcomes for actions in certain settings, a cognitive function that is critical for sensitivity to deterrents and some forms of moral reasoning.

The DLPFC and the OFC are jointly responsible for the cognitive (perceptual) elements of both forms of purposeful behaviour: habits and deliberation. The OFC regulates the associations between environmental elements and somatic expectations that drive habitual responses. Individuals who fail to activate or adapt these associations effectively may be unable to recognize when outcomes or moral implications change and adjust their expectations. The DLPFC provides the cognitive virtual scratchpad (working memory) that individuals can use to store and organize information while deliberating, allowing them internally (deliberately) to guide their process of choice, rather than relying upon external cues.

Executive capabilities and habitual response

Habits arise when an individual forms a strong association between one element of a setting and an action that (the individual has come to expect) will lead to a particular outcome. These associations are created and maintained by the orbital frontal cortex (OFC). Individuals with OFC deficits may have difficulty breaking habits (including habits that involve moral rule breakings or acts of crime) because they have problems revising the associations that trigger their habitual responses or suppressing those responses in favour of deliberation, for example in response to deterrent cues.

Somatic markers, triggered by elements of a setting, activate the expectations that motivate habitual responses. The OFC monitors and updates these associations. Failing to do so can impair an individual's ability to change his/her behaviour or bring to mind new implications for an action alternative (Bechara et al. 2000). The OFC also modulates emotional responses by inhibiting the emotional centres of the brain, and it is likely through interconnections with the OFC that the DLPFC can suppress habitual responses in favour of deliberation (Zelazo et al. 2003).

Executive capabilities and deliberation

Deliberation occurs when an individual perceives no causally effective alternative for action. With no automated response to hand, he/she must evaluate various alternatives. The dorsolateral prefrontal cortex (DLPFC) is responsible for the executive capabilities that allow an individual to gather and evaluate the perceptual information to inform this process of choice, for activating and collating an individual's internalized 'version of events'. Using a representation transfers control of the action from immediate environmental pressures (motivations to act out of habit) to the individual, who can decide which action alternative may be *best* to pursue (deliberate action choice).

Without an internal representation, an individual must rely upon immediate cues in the environment (opportunities and frictions) to guide the process of choice. Environmentally driven actions may therefore be more impulsive, less insightful, less sensitive to subtleties, and more physical than mental, and involve greater risk than actions that benefit from internal information, paralleling those actions that Gottfredson and Hirschi would say demonstrate low self-control. We would argue that in fact these actions demonstrate a lack of executive functioning, as a result either of executive deficits leading to an inability to exercise self-control (and guide the process of choice internally) or of a lack of executive engagement (e.g. habitual response).

Individual differences in executive capabilities

We have already posited some ways in which individuals can differ in their executive capabilities, such as working memory capacity, processing efficiency and the ability to draw associations between environmental elements and past experience. We have argued that such differences will affect the process of choice by influencing how individuals perceive and evaluate their settings and possible alternatives for action.

Executive deficits may arise from general (trait-based) or momentary (situational) sources. General deficits are personal and enduring. They include genetic effects (see Best et al. 2002; Carmelli et al. 2002; Coolidge and Wynn 2001; Thompson et al. 2001) and other biological causes such as injury or developmental deficits. The frontal lobes (and hence executive capabilities) undergo a prolonged maturation (into early adulthood) and external factors can have a significant impact upon their development and capabilities later in life (Case 1992).

Executive deficits can also be *momentary*. Certain circumstances may temporarily impair any individual's executive functioning. These include periods of intense emotion or prolonged stress and, most tellingly, intoxication

by alcohol or drugs (see McEwen 2000, on executive fatigue; see Goldstein and Volkow 2002; London et al. 2000; and White 2004, on some of the effects of drugs and alcohol).

The empirical link between executive deficits, 'antisocial behaviour' and crime involvement

A plethora of research links executive deficits and social dysfunction to what many studies dub 'antisocial behaviour' (or delinquency, deviance, offending, etc.), which is, essentially, moral rule breaking. The lack of a consistent definition and reliable means to test executive capabilities has limited the applicability of these findings, although generally studies linking executive dysfunction and moral rule breaking, particularly through aggressive or violent actions, report medium to large correlations (Morgan and Lilienfeld 2000; Teichner and Golden 2000; Toupin et al. 2000). Core methodological concerns include participant selection, comparability of experimental and control groups, definitions of 'antisocial behaviour' and executive functions, and the unreliability of many executive measures (Henry and Moffitt 1997; Hughes et al. 2000; Lilienfeld 1992; Toupin et al. 2000). These shortcomings may obscure or confuse research findings. For example, the failure of Pennington and Ozonoff's 1996 meta-analysis to find a significant relationship between what we term acts of moral rule breaking and executive capabilities may have resulted from their failure to address a number of potential confounds. Though often cited by sceptics of executive research, their conclusions are at odds with most of the literature, including subsequent meta-analyses (Morgan and Lilienfeld 2000; Toupin et al. 2000).

Many different types of executive dysfunction have been associated with moral rule breaking. These include, but are not limited to, problems with abstraction, inhibition, planning, attention, sequencing, emotional control, and cognitive and behavioural flexibility (Anderson et al. 1999; Buikhuisen 1988; Dunn and Hughes 2001; Yeudall et al. 1982). Moral rule breaking has also been associated with frontal lobe deficits, as imaged by EEG and PET scans, ranging from slower brain waves in conduct-disordered children to reduced prefrontal activation among convicted murderers (Brickman et al. 1984; Goleman 1995; Lewis et al. 1988; Price et al. 1990; Raine et al. 1997). Numerous studies employing executive batteries report that frequent moral rule breakers score more than half a standard deviation below controls, despite weak intercorrelations between most executive measures (Gorenstein 1982; Ishikawa and Raine 2003; Moffitt and Henry 1989; Morgan and Lilienfeld 2000; Seguin et al. 1999; Skoff and Libon 1987; Toupin et al. 2000; White et al. 1994).

The link between executive deficits and frequent moral rule breaking is evident early in the lifespan (Toupin et al. 2000; White et al. 1994) and is particularly strong in the case of violent moral rule breaking (Brickman et al. 1984; Dunn and Hughes 2001; Giancola and Zeichner 1994; Hughes and Dunn 2000; Hughes et al. 2000; Seguin et al. 1999; Teichner and Golden 2000). Violent moral rule breakers are more neuropsychologically similar to neurologically impaired controls than to non-violent moral rule breakers in EEG abnormalities, perseveration and deficits in working memory (Krynicki 1978; Spellacy 1977).

We have proposed that the relationship between executive capabilities and moral rule breaking occurs through the medium of representations and the mechanism of self-control. Clarifying these relationships may help resolve uncertainties and inconsistencies in previous empirical findings and indicate better ways to carry out future research on executive functions and self-control.

Conclusion

Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) General Theory of Crime (or Self-Control Theory) addresses many important topics in criminological theory (e.g. the concept of crime and the role of individual differences in crime causation) and has been a very influential and fruitful theory, stimulating debate and a vast amount of empirical research (see e.g. Pratt and Cullen 2000).

In this paper we have taken a critical look at the theory's concepts and assumptions in view of the situational action theory of crime causation (Wikström 2006a) and suggested an alternative conceptualization of 'crime' and 'self-control', and an alternative specification of the latter's role in crime causation.

We have particularly argued that crimes are acts of moral rule breaking and that self-control is a situational concept (an aspect of the process of choice) whose 'corresponding' individual trait is executive capabilities, which (together with momentary environmentally induced influences) determine an individual's ability to exercise self-control when experiencing a moral conflict in responding to particular motivations (Table 1).

We have posited that executive capabilities are the cognitive functions that allow an individual to create and use internal representations to guide his/her process of choice. We suggest that executive capabilities determine an individual's ability to exercise self-control because, by using representations, he/she can guide his/her process of choice using internal perceptions, rather than relying purely upon the external environment. Using internalized knowledge, an individual can evaluate the moral implications of his/her

alternatives for action, which will have a significant impact on his/her process of choice when faced with motivations to act that conflict with his/her morality. We have also described the two brain regions responsible for the ability to develop, maintain and apply these internal representations, and discussed how impairments may influence individual differences in the ability to exhibit self-control.

We have argued that an individual's general ability to exercise self-control (as determined by his/her executive capabilities) is not fully developed until early adulthood and that this development is influenced by environmental factors. This stands in contrast to Gottfredson and Hirschi's suggestion that individuals' relative levels of self-control stabilize before the age of 10 (a supposition we do not feel the literature supports) and brings into question their supposition that self-control is almost exclusively shaped by external factors (i.e. socialization) (Hirschi and Gottfredson 2001; Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). We have further argued that an individual's morality (moral beliefs and moral habits) is the most important individual characteristic influencing an individual's engagement in acts of crime and that the role of an individual's ability to exercise self-control in crime causation is largely limited to specific circumstances in which an individual deliberates over action alternatives because of a conflict between his/her morality and the motivation to perform a particular action.

We suggest that our conceptualizations of 'crime', 'executive capability' and 'self-control', and our specifications of the interrelationship between these concepts and their relationship to 'morality', may help advance the understanding and empirical analysis of the role of key individual differences in crime causation. We argue that this is particularly true when these processes are placed within the wider framework of an action theory that can link individuals and their behavioural contexts to their actions (acts of crime), and that the situational action theory of crime causation may provide such a theory.

Table 1 Definitions of key concepts

Concept	*Definition*
Crime	Act of moral rule breaking defined in law
Executive capabilities	The set of cognitive faculties that allow an individual to create and use *internal representations* to guide his/her action decisions
Self-control	The successful inhibition of perceived action alternatives, or interruption of a course of action, that conflict with an individual's morality

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