

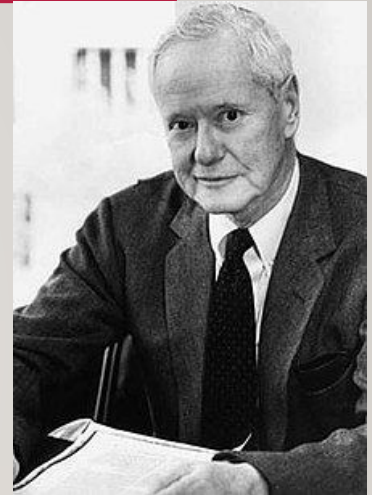
TOPIC 4: MORAL DEREGULATION, INEQUALITY AND DEVIANT ASPIRATIONS

ED:
moral deregulation, brought about by structural changes
leads to individuals infinite desires that are social psychological and are not regulated/put a lid on
by normative structures
and hence leads to criminal/deviant motivation

• Robert Merton and the theory of Anomie

RM 1938:
Believes in anomie but thinks that the starting point is material desires
brought about by capitalism
then leads to criminal/deviant motivation

- Typology of Criminal/Deviant Adaptations
- Limitations of Merton's Theory
- Differential Association Theory and the Work of Edwin Sutherland



Social Structure and
Anomie

Merton, R.K. (1938)

ROBERT MERTON AND THE THEORY OF STRAIN

as long as there is conventionality, there will always
be deviance

because everyone is socialised to accept the same
goals (conventional) but because of the class

- Located the problem of criminal motivation in the **materialistic society**
- Borrowed the concept of anomie from Durkheim but used it in a slightly different way
- For Robert Merton, material desires led to moral deregulation
- Historical context of the Great Depression of the 1930s



CRIMINAL ADAPTATIONS

- Mertonian Anomie – refers to the **disjunction** between the **internalization of material cultural goals** and the availability of **institutionalized/legitimate means** to achieving them
- Since **members of society are placed in different positions in the social structure** (class position), they do not have the **same opportunity** of realizing shared values and goals
- **Experiencing of strain leads to criminal adaptations** i.e. innovation, retreatism, ritualism and rebellion

Merton's typology of individual adaptations to environmental pressures

Type of adaptation	Cultural goal	Institutionalized means
I. Conformity	+	+
II. Innovation	+	–
III. Ritualism	–	+
IV. Retreatism	–	–
V. Rebellion	±	±

Note: + signifies acceptance, – signifies rejection, and ± signifies rejection of prevailing goal or means *and* substitution of new goal or means.

Source: Adapted from Robert K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, rev. ed. (New York: Free Press, 1957), p. 150.

CRIMINAL ADAPTATIONS

- Conceptually, the criminal adaptations can be understood in terms of “economic crimes”, “expressive crimes” and “retreatist crimes”
- Merton’s paradigm represents an ideal-type which is dynamic thus allowing for movement between and among the roles
- Concepts of absolute and relative deprivation
- Anomie and **Singapore Society**

when talking about class, need to think about cumulative advantage,

Many low-income kids skipping school: Survey

Several in one neighbourhood not prepared for Primary 1

By PATT MCELHANEY

Just before the start of compulsory education here, a survey of one low-income neighbourhood has found that more than one in four children at primary-school age are not in school.

Eight per cent of the seven to 10-year-olds in this neighbourhood neighbourhood had never been to school by Primary 1 - possibly because the national school-leaving age is 12.

teacher blocks over eight months. There are more than 2,000 households there.

Ms Ng said of the findings: "Some households did not have proper adult supervision. Younger children are left in the care of teenage siblings. Sometimes, the parents are busy themselves."

There were a total of 233 children in the families interviewed.

"The parents or caregivers themselves are either not highly educated or illiterate, and do not understand the importance of education. They are more concerned with bread-and-butter issues."

Some missed the Primary 1 registration deadline last July. Others did not know they had to register the children the year before they were due to start school.

Among pre-schoolers there, in the four-to-six age group, 30.9 per cent were not in pre-school or kindergarten.

Of those who are in pre-school, some cannot count up to 10, write their names or hold a pencil properly, said Secord's programme coordinator Nushedah Kamsari.

Once in primary school, more than two out of three may not be able to cope.

She said: "By Primary 1, the kids should know how to spell simple three-syllable words such as 'butterfly' or 'carpenter'. But they can't."

Their English is so poor that they sometimes cannot understand their teachers. But their parents cannot afford to spend \$70 a month for each pre-schooler.

"Children absorb and learn the most when they are young,



LIMITATIONS OF ROBERT MERTON THEORY

- Does it predict too little middle-class crime?
- Is it deterministic?
- Too individualistic?
- Ahistorical?

FROM EXPLAINING CRIMINALITY TO CONFORMITY: A REJOINDER TO MERTON

- Protective Mechanisms
- Control mechanisms which mediate the embarking of criminal adaptations - attachment, involvement, commitment and belief
- Work of Gottfredson and Travis Hirschi

- Edwin H. Sutherland was born on August 13, 1883 in Gibbon, Nebraska.
- In 1906, Sutherland left his hometown to study at the University of Chicago.
- Sutherland received his doctorate in 1913 and later joined the sociology department at Indiana University.
- Sutherland held this post until his death in 1950.



The Criminology of Edwin Sutherland

Galliner, John F.

Note: This is not the actual book cover

EDWIN SUTHERLAND: CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR AS LEARNED

- Theory of Criminal Behaviour as Learned
- Cultural transmission of criminal values and norms
- Potentiality of explaining inter-generational and intra-generational criminality
- Sutherland's 8 Points of Differential Learning
- Provided the basis for conceptualizing delinquent subcultures

EDWIN SUTHERLAND'S THEORY OF DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION

- Criminal behaviour is learned
- Criminal behaviour is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication
- Most of this learning happens in intimate personal groups



EDWIN SUTHERLAND'S THEORY OF DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION

- Learning criminal behaviours involves both (a) learning the techniques of crime and (b) acquiring the appropriate attitudes, motives, neutralizations and rationalizations
- Acquiring appropriate criminal attitudes requires negative evaluation of the law

"take the law into my own

EDWIN SUTHERLAND'S THEORY OF DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION

- Persons become delinquent because of an excess of negative attitudes to the law over positive ones: this is the principle of differential association
- Differential associations may vary in terms of time, significance and commitment
- The process of learning criminal behaviour is similar to all other kinds of learning