

Stoddard Dare – Sociology – 1st Period – Off-Site Learning Packet Day 6

Sociology
Mr. Stoddard Dare
Tuesday, March 31, 2020

Today we will begin examining different theories that explain deviant behavior. Below you will find two articles, each followed by a guided reading. As you read each article, complete the accompanying guided reading.

Both of these theories, Differential Association Theory and Control Theory fall under the Symbolic Interactionist Perspective of Sociology.

Enjoy,

Mr. Stoddard Dare

Differential Association Theory

Differential association is when individuals base their behaviors by association and interaction with others.

Key Points

- In criminology, differential association is a theory developed by Edwin Sutherland.
- Differential association theory proposes that through interaction with others, individuals learn the values, attitudes, techniques, and motives for criminal behavior.
- Differential association predicts that an individual will choose the criminal path when the balance of definitions for law-breaking exceeds those for law-abiding.
- One critique leveled against differential association stems from the idea that people can be independent, rational actors and individually motivated.

Key Terms

- **Edwin Sutherland:** Considered as one of the most influential criminologists of the 20th century. He was a sociologist of the symbolic interactionist school of thought and is best known for defining white-collar crime and differential association—a general theory of crime and delinquency.
- **Differential Association Theory:** This theory predicts that an individual will choose the criminal path when the balance of definitions for law-breaking exceeds those for law-abiding.
- **differential association:** a theory in criminology developed by Edwin Sutherland, proposing that through interaction with others, individuals learn the values, attitudes, techniques, and motives for criminal behavior

In criminology, differential association is a theory developed by Edwin Sutherland (1883–1950) proposing that through interaction with others, individuals learn the values, attitudes, techniques, and motives for criminal behavior. Differential association theory is the most talked-about of the learning theories of deviance. This theory focuses on *how* individuals learn to become criminals, but it does not concern itself with *why* they become criminals.

Differential association predicts that an individual will choose the criminal path when the balance of definitions for law-breaking exceeds those for law-abiding. This tendency will be reinforced if social association provides active people in the person's life. The earlier in life an individual comes under the influence high status people within a group, the more likely the individual is to follow in their footsteps. This does not deny that there may be practical motives for crime. If a person is hungry but has no money, there is a temptation to steal. But the use of "needs" and "values" is equivocal. To some extent, both non-criminal and criminal individuals are motivated by the need for money and social gain.

Sutherland's Nine Points

The principles of Sutherland's theory of differential association can be summarized into nine key points.

Stoddard Dare – Sociology – 1st Period – Off-Site Learning Packet Day 6

1. Criminal behavior is learned.
2. Criminal behavior is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication.
3. The principal part of the learning of criminal behavior occurs within intimate personal groups.
4. When criminal behavior is learned, the learning includes techniques of committing the crime (which are sometimes very complicated, sometimes simple) and the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes.
5. The specific direction of motives and drives is learned from definitions of the legal codes as favorable or unfavorable.
6. A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favorable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation of the law.
7. Differential associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity.
8. The process of learning criminal behavior by association with criminal and anti-criminal patterns involves all of the mechanisms that are involved in any other learning.
9. While criminal behavior is an expression of general needs and values, it is not explained by those needs and values, since non-criminal behavior is an expression of the same needs and values.

An important quality of differential association theory is the frequency and intensity of interaction. The amount of time that a person is exposed to a particular definition and at what point the interaction began are both crucial for explaining criminal activity. The process of learning criminal behavior is really not any different from the process involved in learning any other type of behavior. Sutherland maintains that there is no unique learning process associated with acquiring non-normative ways of behaving.

One very unique aspect of this theory is that it works to explain more than just juvenile delinquency and crime committed by lower class individuals. Since crime is understood to be learned behavior, the theory is also applicable to white-collar, corporate, and organized crime.

One critique leveled against differential association stems from the idea that people can be independent, rational actors and individually motivated. This notion of one being a criminal based on his or her environment is problematic—the theory does not take into account personality traits that might affect a person’s susceptibility to these environmental influences

Adopted from: Libretexts. “7.6A: Differential Association Theory.” *Social Sci LibreTexts*, Libretexts, 7 Oct. 2019, socialsci.libretexts.org/Bookshelves/Sociology/Book%3A_Sociology_%28Boundless%29/7%3A_Deviance%2C_Social_Control%2C_and_Crime/7.6%3A_The_Symbolic-Interactionalist_Perspective_on_Deviance/7.6A%3A_Differential_Association_Theory.

Differential Association Theory

- 1) Who first developed Differential Association Theory?
- 2) According to this theory, what motivates deviant behavior?
- 3) Break down the name of the theory. What are the root words for Differential Association?
In

other words, the _____ people you _____ with lead to either deviance or conformity (use class notes to answer if needed)
- 4) This theory focuses on _____ individuals learn to become criminals, but it does not concern itself with _____ they become criminals.
- 5) “Differential association predicts that an individual will choose the criminal path when the balance of definitions for law-breaking exceeds those for law-abiding.” What does this mean?
- 6) When are people more likely to come under the influence of deviant individuals?
- 7) What type of people are most likely to influence deviant behavior?
- 8) Explain how the frequency and intensity of interactions impact deviant behavior according to Differential Association Theory.
- 9) What is the main criticism of Differential Association Theory?

Control Theory

Introduction

Control Theory, or Social Control Theory, states that a person's inner and outer controls both work together to negate deviant tendencies. Developed by Walter Reckless in 1973, Control Theory comes under the Positivist school of thought. Travis Hirschi also made significant contributions as well. Control Theory garnered intensive debates in the 1970's and 1980's under the realm of Positivism.

Definition

According to Reckless, an individual's behavior is determined by what he or she wants or desires the most at any given time. His inner and outer controls dissuade him from deviant tendencies. These controls are indoctrinated and reinforced in the individual through social bonds. Usually, the family is the first agent to inculcate these bonds within an individual. Beyond the family, social bonds are formed between the individual and society. Thus, both the family and society form bonds with the individual who inculcates certain controls that limits deviance from the social norms and customs.

Hirschi says that the inner and outer controls constitute what is commonly known as 'self-control'. Deviance, in its simplest form, means not controlled. The individual's bond with society is what determines deviant tendencies. Thus, less deviance occurs when there are strong social bonds between the individual and society. Proper socialization during childhood leads to formation of strong bonds between the individual and his family and society.

Since deviance is a result of exposure to certain social situations over a long period of time where the individual develops behavior which leads him adopt to non-conforming attitudes, proximity to family and society becomes all the more important. Social bonds negate deviance by inculcating 'controls' in the individuals. Thus, weak bonds between the individual and society lead to deviant tendencies, which result in crimes.

Hirschi identified four different types of bonds:

- Attachment – affection for people, and respect for others
- Commitment – stake in society you don't want to lose such as, family, job....
- Involvement – time and energy into certain activities
- Belief – believe it to be morally wrong

A good example of Control Theory, according to Hirschi, is people going to work. It is a known fact that most people do not like to work. However, if they do not work, they will not get an income which will sustain them. Thus, people go to work to earn an income. However, if they do not have an income or a job, they will deviate towards crimes like theft and robbery to sustain them.

Critique

Control Theory, despite its popularity, has come under a plethora of critiques. Opponents of the theory say that it is too simplified and linear. Mere lack of socialization during childhood cannot explain deviant tendencies. Crimes are committed by individuals who have families and are part of society. It is not just petty criminals who commit crimes. Rich and influential businessmen, politicians, bureaucrats and others commit crimes as well. Control theory cannot explain this nor can it explain serious crimes committed by juveniles.

Stoddard Dare – Sociology – 1st Period – Off-Site Learning Packet Day 6

The assumption that the family is a law-abiding unit is faulty. Families may have members who have committed crimes and broken laws. It does not necessarily try to form bonds with the society or individual. There is too much emphasis on bonds between the individual and society. While every society does have certain norms and value systems which try to bring in some control in the individual, it does not mean that deeper bonds between the two will lead to lesser deviance.

The theory views the individual and society in isolation. It fails to address issues like autonomy, impulsiveness and external influences like media. Thus, it gives a very narrow view of the social structures.

Adopted from: Psychology, Behavioral And Social Science. "Control Theory." *Communication Theory*, 23 Aug. 2014, www.communicationtheory.org/control-theory/.

Name _____

Control Theory

- 1) Who is credited with creating Control Theory?
- 2) Explain Control Theory.
- 3) Inner and outer controls are taught and reinforced through _____.
- 4) Which Agent of Socialization is usually the first agent to create bonds between an individual and society?
- 5) Travis Hirschi theorized that inner and outer controls constitute a person's _____ . What does deviance mean, according to Hirschi?
- 6) Control Theory states that weak bonds between the individual and society lead to _____, which result in _____.
- 7) For each of the four types of bonds identified by Hirschi, provide an example from your own life on how the bond prevents you from engaging in deviant behavior:
 - A) Attachment:
 - B) Commitment:
 - C) Involvement:
 - D) Belief:
- 8) Explain one main critique of Control Theory: