

Lander: socio-economic -> unstable -> Hi
anomie

Lander, for example, argues that socioeconomic status is not "per se" related to delinquency, because areas of low socioeconomic status that are socially stable would have low rates of juvenile delinquency, while only those low status areas that are unstable would have high delinquency rates. Hence, not socioeconomic status, but anomie, a product of social instability rather than of low socioeconomic status "per se," is the cause of juvenile delinquency.¹ The author thus rejects theories that state socioeconomic status is a cause of delinquency. But there is no such thing as socioeconomic status "per se," and no theory properly so-called states that socioeconomic status "per se" causes delinquency, for the phrase has no meaning. There are, however, theories which state that areas of low socioeconomic status have high juvenile delinquency rates because they are socially disorganized, and hence anomie. Theories of this kind would predict the very pattern of deviant cases that Lander describes: since low socioeconomic status is viewed as the major cause of social disorganization and/or anomie, socioeconomic status and juvenile delinquency should be correlated, but where poor areas are not disorganized or anomie, juvenile delinquency rates should be low. On the other hand, a theory which interpreted socioeconomic differentials in juvenile delinquency as due to differences in the absolute level of economic need would not find confirmation in Lander's data, for stable low areas are presumably no more needy than unstable low areas.

As Mirschi and Selvin² have carefully shown, Lander's analysis is theoretically inconclusive because of his failure to consider the problem of causal ordering among the variables considered.¹ For our present purposes, it is enough to point out that a useful review of theories must discuss them according to the explanatory variables they set forth--those that are more proximate to the dependent variable, and those that are

most general from an analytic standpoint (for example, anomie, status deprivation)--rather than according to the more remote, more specific variables (socioeconomic status, ethnic origin, migration) that in turn cause the intervening conditions. Otherwise theories cannot be compared, for similarities and differences are obscured: a theory focusing on age and another emphasizing rural-urban differences may both be similar in that the explanation offered is couched in terms of similar disruptions in social control; on the other hand, theories fastening on the same independent variable may adduce radically different explanatory variables to account for the identical correlate--as in the case of the very different explanations of socioeconomic differentials in juvenile delinquency rates.

In the following analysis, therefore, we will begin in each case by trying to determine what are the most general explanatory variables used to account for delinquency, and then work backward to ascertain what more specific, independent variables are judged to cause the more general condition that in turn causes delinquency.

Is the nature of the "general-specific" dimension clear?

Underlying Assumptions of Two Approaches to Delinquency

When theories of delinquency are analyzed according to the general types of explanations offered, they fall broadly into two main categories.

A. Theories which view delinquency as the result of structural and/or cultural malfunctioning in the realization of shared values.

The definition of delinquency and the goal of delinquency control are treated as uniform throughout the society, and delinquency is traced to structural and cultural inadequacies: failures to meet individual and societal requirements for effective functioning. The explanation of group differences in rates of juvenile delinquency is sought in variations in pressures toward deviance resulting from differential capacity

to achieve similar goals, and/or variations in constraints on deviance resulting from differences in the ease or difficulty of violating shared norms. These theories are implicitly based on two premises.

(1) First, there is a large measure of agreement among nearly all the members of our society and among all the various social groups and social categories that constitute the society on the values that define certain behaviors as delinquent and criminal. Consequently, differences in juvenile delinquency rates between social categories cannot be explained on the basis of differences in values governing delinquency. It may or may not be the case that delinquents and criminals have values that differ from those of non-delinquents and non-criminals. But even if they do, the social groups from which delinquents are disproportionately drawn do not espouse values condoning delinquency. The theories in question do, of course, admit (in fact, insist) that the value orientations of people occupying different social locations differ in marked and important ways; they claim only that evaluations do not differ substantially in the definitions of lawful conduct.

This premise concerning the uniformity of cultural values defining delinquency is in its turn based on certain further assumptions, depending on how far the theorist wants to carry the assumption of uniformity. The theorist may assume that there is uniformity between all societies, within all societies, or within some kinds of societies. If the theorist assumes (as none to be examined here do) that there is a rough uniformity of values governing lawful and unlawful behavior between all societies, this assumption may be based on either or both of two further premises: that there are uniform requirements for the effective functioning of social systems (e.g., no group could survive that tolerated uncontrolled murder) and/or there are uniform requirements of human nature (e.g., the

uniform requirements
↓
1) between all
2) w/in all
3) w/in some

Somehow by...
human nature

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need of all individuals for protection of the integrity of the person).

If the theorist assumes only that within all societies (but not between societies) will there be a substantial uniformity of values governing delinquency, this belief is based on adaptations of the two foregoing premises: the kinds of values embodied in laws tend to be those required for the effective functioning of each given society, so that any particular society requires consensus on the basic values that are institutionalized in its laws, and cannot therefore permit internal social differentiation to proceed so far as to result in substantial differences in outlook in respect to those values. Or else the assumption of internal uniformity is based on the belief that if human nature is so plastic as to allow for great variability in conceptions of unlawful conduct between societies, there are nevertheless some universal characteristics of human nature—too weak to maintain their identity in the face of wide variations in culture between whole societies, but of sufficient strength so that being subjected to some degree of environmental similarity, they assert themselves in similarity of basic value orientations. That is, within a society there is insufficient dissimilarity of social condition to obliterate the identity of certain universal human needs, which then serve as a foundation for a common core of value agreement within the society,

Finally, the theorist may assume only that within some types of society is there uniformity in values defining delinquent conduct, because of the peculiar requirements of the specific type. This is as far as most of the theorists we shall consider go. For example, a democratic equalitarian society by definition holds out similar values and goals in many spheres of social life for all members of the society, so that diversity in respect to these goals and values is not institutionalized.

The requirements of a democratic society for universal participation and universal assent also generate pressures for the restriction of certain kinds of social differentiation, which further prevents the emergence of integral, subcultural variations in basic value orientations. In short, democratic cultural values do not tolerate, nor structural arrangements permit sufficient insulation for the development of radically different orientations in respect to basic values of the kind institutionalized in laws.

Proceeding still further into the logical demands of the premise of value uniformity, we find that it entails certain assumptions concerning the nature of law and of the state. However much laws may reflect the unequal power of the constituent groups of a society, law is also an expression of the value consensus of the entire society. Neither is the state merely or primarily a tool of the ruling class or any other dominant group, but an instrument for the realization of common values and the general welfare.

(1) Agreement on values that define certain behaviors as criminal

(2) The second major premise of theories of structural and cultural malfunctioning is that human beings are capable, under specified conditions, of committing acts they believe to be wrong. That is, norm violation can and often does occur without prior commitment to alternative values that positively sanction the proscribed behavior. Deviance need not be normative. If the pathological conditions that cause delinquency are very marked and persist over long time periods, delinquency subcultures may arise in the afflicted social locations, where there are high concentrations of delinquents. These subcultures may (but need not necessarily) evaluate delinquent behavior positively, and, for some children inducted into them, a positive evaluation of delinquent conduct may therefore precede their delinquency. But neither delinquent sub-

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cultures ^{or} a positive evaluation of delinquent conduct by the offender are necessary intervening developments between the causes of delinquency and delinquent behavior. The underlying assumption is that socialization is never perfect; although socialization may vary from inadequate to adequate levels under different circumstances, it never achieves that state of perfect articulation between man and society where men cannot bear to violate norms unless their deviance is sanctioned by alternative values. Hence, when structural and cultural conditions encourage law violations when needs are pressing or controls are weak such violations will occur irrespective of the institutionalization of deviant values (even though the institutionalization of deviant values may augment the impact of delinquency-producing social conditions).

A structural malfunctioning individual will not be a delinquent if deviant values

(B) Theories of the autonomy of cultural value systems condoning delinquency. Delinquency results from lack of agreement on values defining delinquent conduct, not from impediments to the realization of shared values. Neither malfunctioning individuals nor malfunctioning social/cultural systems are required to account for the institutionalization of deviant values. These theories have sometimes been called culture conflict theories ^{or} cultural transmission theories, but these labels are inappropriate for our purposes, for not all kinds of culture conflict or cultural transmission theories need entail an explanation of delinquent conduct that ties it to value differences in the definition of delinquency itself. We are concerned now only with theories that explain delinquency in terms of differential definitions of delinquency derived from autonomous value systems. Delinquency occurs because one value system condemns as delinquency what another condones as right conduct. For example, some culture conflict theories may refer to conflicts

of values other than those defining delinquent conduct, so that when culture conflict is used to explain delinquency, it does not involve the assertion that delinquents are socialized into a culture having delinquent values. Or else culture conflict may be viewed as encompassing value clashes that include differing conceptions of delinquent conduct, but culture conflict is thought to cause delinquency for reasons other than the positive sanctioning of delinquent conduct by one of the contending cultures: because it results in disintegration of parental control in the subordinate group, or tensions between the conflicting groups that weaken community controls, or weakening of commitment to any system of values, etc. Such theories do not qualify under the rubric we are now considering because none of the intervening variables invoked to explain why culture conflict causes delinquency is commitment to a system of values conventional in one group but delinquent in another.

For present purposes, then, the theories under review may be called theories of value deviance or theories of normative deviance--since they assert that groups with high rates of deviance have conventional values that are deviant only according to the standards of some other cultural system, and that deviance is simply normative behavior in such groups.

These theories depend on two premises which are the opposite of those specified above. (1) Within our society there are marked differences in cultural values defining delinquency. In some cases these differences are openly acknowledged by the several social groups that carry divergent values; in other cases a seeming uniformity may prevail in respect to evaluations of delinquency, but this uniformity results from pressures of dominant conventional groups and fears of subordinate

2 premises

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deviant groups, leading to mere verbal agreement with official values.

The variability of cultural values as between societies is startling and obvious; and this variability extends even to the most basic values, such as those defining lawful and unlawful conduct. Human nature is so plastic that it cannot serve as a constraint on the formation of marvelously diverse conceptions of right conduct. Uniform human needs or uniform requirements for effective human functioning cannot be discovered; or if they can, they are so general and malleable that they can be satisfied in ways too various to result in uniformities of values defining lawful conduct. Likewise, the requirements for the effective functioning of societies are either undiscoverable or so general that they can be fulfilled in such an extraordinary variety of ways that again no uniformities in basic values can issue from this source.

Within each society, no basis for uniformity can be found either. While it is true that the idea of a society implies at least some value consensus, this consensus is insufficient to override the inherent plasticity of human nature; so that even given that degree of similarity of condition which must prevail in any entity sufficiently knit to be called a society, uniformities of human nature will still be too feeble and too general to result in their uniform expression throughout the society.

Further, while it certainly is true that within each society a more effective level of functioning would result if there were uniformity of basic values, societies can obviously persist at less than perfect levels of integration; therefore, equilibrating tendencies to restore consensus on basic values need not be set in motion until drastic levels of malfunctioning are reached. Hence within any society groups carrying deviant values as their conventional cultural heritage may serve as

a more or less constantly present source of delinquent conduct. In addition, functional equivalents to consensus on values defining delinquency may be found in the use of physical force or economic or social domination by powerful groups to insure conformity to institutional rather than delinquent values.

Finally, where theorists of the first type base their assumption of value uniformity concerning delinquency on the particular requirements of modern democratic societies, theorists of value deviance deny that such requirements, even if they exist, can obliterate the effects of social differentiation in producing divergent subcultural value systems defining delinquency in nonconventional terms. In the first approach, the requirements of modern democratic societies are seen as providing a thrust toward incorporation of constituent subgroups into the larger society. On the structural side, the processes of incorporation, by reducing inequalities of social condition, set limits to social differentiation of subgroups, thereby diminishing their capacity to serve as a potent source of divergent subcultural values. For example, where manual workers receive greater economic rewards and where their economic rights are institutionalized in the form of legal acceptance of unionism, social security, and the like, their fuller incorporation into society diminishes their distinctiveness as a class and thus the capacity of class differentiation to produce distinctive values.

But of course social differentiation, though limited in certain ways by democratization, is nevertheless a fact of modern as of all societies. However, on the cultural side, the high value placed on universal incorporation of the members of a democratic society means that differentiated social groups do not find it easy to develop differ-

entiated moral values because segregation of moral goals by social condition is not legitimate according to democratic values. If democratic values hold out the same economic goals to all (everyone should strive for economic success and everyone has the right to access to the means of achieving it); if democratic values designate the same political goals for all (everyone has the duty of participating in the political process and the right of full citizenship); then democratic values above all define the same moral goals for all, whatever these moral goals may be (not service for the serf and honor for the lord, but service and honor for all moral equals). By insisting that all share the same moral community, democratic values inhibit the development of different definitions of delinquent conduct. Where a value system legitimates one standard of conduct for elect social groups, and a different standard for lesser social groups, social differentiation is far more likely to result in different definitions of delinquent conduct. In a democracy the enormous appeal to all groups of the assumption of moral equality and the illegitimacy of distinct moral values for different social categories combine to dampen the will of differentiated social groups to set up separate standards of delinquent conduct.

In contrast, theorists in our second category deny that modern societies are capable of producing value uniformity in respect to delinquency. Only simple, folk societies where social differentiation is at a minimum and values are sacred can achieve consensus in respect to what is defined as delinquent. The outstanding characteristics of modern, complex societies are their extreme social differentiation, the secularization of values, and the diversity of values, all of which result in failure to achieve consensus in respect to basic values, including those defining delinquency, and the formation of many subcultural value systems. On the structural side, the complexity of the division of labor and the migration

and immigration of groups bearing different cultures result in a social structure so differentiated that the encapsulation of diverse social groups, not their incorporation into the larger society, is the primary fact of our time. Such extensive structural differentiation would by itself be enough to produce divergent conceptions of delinquency, but its impact is increased by the correlated barriers to achievement of officially valued goals. So marked are the restrictions to full participation in the larger society that subgroups retain or develop value systems that diverge markedly from one another. Disadvantaged groups thus never develop commitment to or turn away from institutional values they cannot realize. Values congruent with their position emerge or persist and these serve as the basis for different evaluations of acts called delinquent by those not similarly situated.

As for the cultural aspect of modern societies, there are no doubt some common values in any society, even modern ones, but they are so few, so enfeebled by their lack of sacred legitimation, and so general that they cannot serve as effective guides to uniform definitions of delinquency among the multitude of diverse groups that comprise a complex society. Just as there are no effective barriers to substructural encapsulation, there are no effective barriers to sub-cultural encapsulation. On the contrary, complex societies, democratic or not, encourage rather than discourage encapsulation.

If there is no agreement about values governing delinquency, then the legal system cannot be an instrument for the expression of value consensus. The definitive characteristic of legal norms is that they institutionalize the values of dominant groups at the expense of those of subordinate groups. Neither is the state an instrument for the realization of the general welfare, for there is no consensus about what constitutes the common good. Not the general interest, but

particular interests are sought in political institutions, and the state reflects the interests of the most powerful groups at the expense of those who are less powerful.

1) Marked societal diff. in cultural values defining delinquency

(2) The second major premise of theories of value deviance is that people cannot generally commit delinquent or criminal acts unless these acts have first been defined as proper or desirable by the groups to which they owe allegiance.

The process of socialization into any human group is so compelling and so successful that men cannot bear to do things they believe are wrong. Their conceptions of right and wrong are determined by the groups that socialize them. The experience of socialization creates overriding social needs, such as the need for group approval or the need for group affiliation.

Social man thus experiences a degree of socialized terror so overwhelming that he will not ordinarily risk violating the norms of his group. Exceptions to this rule, for example, persons who desire punishment by the group, or persons with a compulsion to violate laws against their will, are usually suffering from some psychopathology. But psychological causes of delinquency are not very important because most delinquents are normal, and most people aren't that psychologically disabled.

In trying to explain group differences in rates of delinquency, the search for variations in pressures toward delinquency, or constraints on delinquency, is misguided, if the search is conducted without reference to value differences, because no matter how strong the pushes and pulls toward delinquency, they will not, for the normal individual, produce delinquent acts until those acts have group approval. But an individual cannot create group approval of a delinquent act; only a group can create a culture defining that act as non-delinquent. A group under stress may come to evaluate some acts as non-delinquent which more favored groups evaluate as delinquent; but unless it does, the stresses or opportunities experienced by group members will not produce delinquency. Furthermore,

not all group differences in evaluations of delinquency have their origin in differential group stresses; some result from conquest or migration; some are historical residues; many must simply be laid to the inexplicable variability of human values, since there are no natural or social limits to what kinds of conduct may be defined as right or wrong. In any case, if the source of group differences in evaluations of delinquency may in many instances be undiscoverable, the source of group differences in rates of delinquency must always lie in different definitions of delinquency: in no other way can the effects of socialization be nullified. [The sole pressure toward delinquency is conformity to values condoning delinquency. The delinquent is not violating a conventional norm; he is conforming to a norm conventional for his group but delinquent for those who make and enforce laws.]

The foregoing elaboration of the assumptions underlying two different theoretical orientations toward delinquency results from drawing out the logical presuppositions of the two approaches. It is not claimed that any particular theorist in either camp is necessarily aware of these assumptions; on the contrary, the views just outlined are almost entirely implicit rather than explicit. Further, these are the assumptions which theorists in one or the other camp would make if they were logically consistent, but there are of course many instances of inconsistency. [For example, the assumption of value uniformity about delinquency implies that law, at least in this society, is consensual; but the most popular view of law among students of delinquency, including those who, like Cloward and Ohlin, believe there is consensus about delinquent values, is that it expresses the interests of dominant groups.]

Early Theories of Structural and Cultural Malfunctioning: Shaw and Thrasher

Current sociological thinking in delinquency has its roots in the work of Thrasher and of Shaw and his collaborators. At the theoretical level, very few new explanations have been advanced that were not hinted at in their work, albeit not always systematically; instead, there has been a narrowing of horizons in considering what causal factors are at work, some of which has been constricting, but some of which has resulted in greater theoretical rigor and elegance.

Beginning in 1929 Shaw and various associates, principally McKay, conducted a series of studies, using official records, which showed that in Chicago and many other cities delinquency rates, truancy, recidivism, commitment to correctional institutions, and adult criminality varied markedly by area. In general, rates were highest in slum areas near the city center and diminished as economic level and distance from the center of the city increased, exceptions to this rule occurring in areas of industry and commerce outside the city center. Areas of high and low delinquency rates maintained their relative positions over many years, as analysis of series compiled in different time periods showed. The theoretical task is to explain these area differentials in delinquency.

Thrasher in 1927 reported on more than 1300 gangs in Chicago. His theory of delinquency is designed to explain why delinquent gangs were concentrated in slum areas.

The causes of delinquency may be divided into pressures toward delinquency and constraints on delinquency. The motivation to deviate or conform is affected by two different sources of gratification and deprivation: the rewards and

punishments experienced by gaining or not gaining the goals (toys, status)
for which delinquent acts are the means, and the rewards and punishments
(sanctions) attached to using or not using delinquent means (stealing). Pres-
sures refer to extrinsic forces that increase or decrease the desire to engage
in delinquency for the sake of the goals it can achieve, that is, variations
in the motivation to commit delinquent acts, considered apart from the sanctions
intrinsicly attached to the use of delinquent means. Unmet needs that can
be satisfied through delinquency are the source of pressures toward delinquency.
Constraints refer to intrinsic forces that increase or decrease the desire to
engage in delinquency for the sake of avoiding punishment for using delinquent
means, irrespective of the level of motivation to achieve the extrinsic goals
of delinquent acts. Constraints are the set of social controls, both external
and internal, direct and indirect. In sum, pressures toward delinquency are the
rewards gained from delinquency; constraints on delinquency are the punishments
earned from delinquency. (Put the other way round, pressures toward conformity
are the rewards for conforming, such as freedom from guilt or social approval,
and constraints on conformity are the punishments suffered for conforming,
such as lack of desired material things.)

The Chicago school emphasizes constraints on delinquency rather than
pressures toward delinquency, since it explains area differentials primarily
in terms of variations in community disorganization, and hence of capacity for
effective social control. | Shaw and Thrasher took it for granted that the extrin-
sic rewards of delinquency (acquisition of desired goods, for example) were an
obvious and ever-present source of pressure toward delinquency, and that the
more important determinant of delinquency lay in variations in the intrinsic

Chicago school: constraints on del. ^{empirical}

rewards and punishments for conformity or deviance, as determined by the strength and effectiveness of the system of social control. But in both instances crucial causal importance is given to variations in pressures toward delinquency, and this serves as a basic organizing principle in each approach. It is best to begin here, since this portion of their work is more logically consistent and establishes their theories as at least partially opposed to the approach of value deviance.

A. Pressures

*a) capacity to satisfy certain "needs" of a certain nature
b) "cultural goals of material & economic status" - heterogeneity, mobility, etc.*

In explaining area differentials in delinquency, Thrasher and Shaw find two general causes of variations in pressures toward delinquency: variations in the capacity to satisfy certain universal human needs, and variations in the capacity to reach the cultural goal of a uniformly high level of material gratification and economic and social status. Thrasher in particular put considerable emphasis on a set of basic needs he assumed were common to all children: security, fellowship, status, and excitement (these are the same as W. I. Thomas' four wishes: security, response, recognition, and new experience).³ There is no systematic effort to show how and why these needs are not met in slum communities; it is more or less taken for granted as obvious. The proximate cause of failure to meet these needs is attributed to the disorganization of institutions, but tracing back far enough in the chain of causes (see below) we finally get to economic level as the main determinant, as well as the heterogeneity and mobility of slum populations. In wealthier, more stable, and more homogeneous communities the family and other institutions have more and better means of gratifying children's needs than in poor communities composed of uprooted, diverse, and mobile individuals. Boys thus join gangs to "achieve a more adequate satisfaction of their wishes"⁴ and gangs result from the "effort

of boys to create a society for themselves where none adequate to their needs exists."⁵ The gang "fills a gap"; it "offers a substitute for what society fails to give."⁶

In their earlier work Shaw and McKay also give some attention to the same four needs.⁷ Because the slum community fails to provide institutional means for their satisfaction, slum children are propelled into delinquent gangs in order to gratify these unmet needs.

Of much more importance in the work of Shaw and McKay is the belief that a primary source of variation in pressures toward delinquency lies in the differential capacity of the several economic strata to meet uniform goals for achievement of high social and economic status. "In a free society the struggle to improve one's status in terms of accepted values is common to all persons in all social strata."⁸ But there is a "disparity in the facilities available to people in different communities for achieving a satisfactory position of social security and prestige."⁹ "In the low-income areas . . . there exists the greatest disparity between the social values to which the people aspire and the availability of facilities for acquiring these values in conventional ways."¹⁰ The great causal importance Shaw and McKay attached to this discrepancy is indicated in the following quotation:

The general theoretical framework within which all community data are interpreted . . . is . . . that the differentiation of areas and the segregation of population within the city have resulted in wide variation of opportunities in the struggle for position within our social order. The groups in the areas of lowest economic status find themselves at a disadvantage in the struggle to achieve the goals idealized in our civilization. These differences are translated into conduct through the general struggle for those economic symbols which signify a desirable position in the larger social order. Those persons who occupy a disadvantageous position are involved in a conflict between the goals assumed to be attainable in a free society and those actually attainable for a large proportion of the population. It is understandable, then, that the economic position of persons living in the areas of least opportunity

- 19 - *Basic diff. between Shaw and Thrasher & McKay*
Structural strain ↓ *Cult. deviance*
Cultural conflict

should be translated at times into unconventional conduct, in an effort to reconcile the idealized status and their practical prospects of attaining this status. Since, in our culture, status is determined largely in economic terms, the differences between contrasted areas in terms of economic status become the most important differences.¹¹

The inability to realize conventional values, then, pushes the slum child into delinquency as a means of achieving the same goals he shares with children from other strata.

In respect to pressures toward delinquency, the crucial difference between Shaw and Thrasher and theorists of value deviance is that Shaw and Thrasher are not attributing the thrust toward delinquency to being socialized into a value system which prescribes delinquent goals. Unlike Sellin, they are not implying that children from various ethnic or racial groups may desire a separate set of cultural goals conventional for them but delinquent for the rest of the society. Nor do they say, like Miller, that lower-class culture embodies distinctive values, such as violence, which lead the child into delinquency simply as a result of conformity to the accepted standards of his class. They do not view an open class structure in a democratic society as sufficiently rigid or as sufficiently insulating to produce segregated class goals. On the contrary, they speak of the "traditions of a fluid status structure" in which the poor cannot resist the seductive lure of a central value system that proclaims the "assumption that all persons have access to the luxury pattern of life, and that if the person does not have access he is being deprived of what he justly deserves."¹²

Boys do not join delinquent gangs because they are pursuing delinquent goals prescribed by some subculture, but because they are pursuing conventional goals derived from universally present human needs, or conventional goals derived from uniformly distributed cultural values. | Their lack of legitimate means to

satisfy these goals leads them into delinquent gangs where illegitimate means are then justified by delinquent values. Delinquent values are the dependent variable, not the independent variable.

In summary, Shaw and Thrasher have identified two causes of pressures toward delinquency: Group differences in delinquency rates are explained by variations in the magnitude of (1) the discrepancy between the desire and the reality of achieving human goals of security, status, fellowship and excitement; and (2) the discrepancy between the desire and the reality of achieving high social and economic status.

In the first instance the size of the discrepancy is determined by one constant (human needs), and one variable (access to the means of achieving those needs); therefore the search for determinants of the size of the discrepancy need only focus on the determinants of variations in access. But in the second instance the size of the discrepancy is actually determined by two variables: the height of the aspiration level (which Shaw and McKay, like Merton, Cohen, and Cloward and Ohlin after them, loosely speak of as uniform, and therefore a constant), and the degree of access. It follows that proof of this theory is not dependent on finding a uniform aspiration level for every stratum, but only on finding a higher discrepancy score for the lower than the higher strata. Suppose that there are six occupational strata, ranging from unskilled at level 1 to professionals at level 6. Group 5 and 6 boys aspire to the 6th and highest occupational level, and expect to reach it, giving them a discrepancy score of 0; the group 4 boys aspire to 5, but don't expect to reach it, giving them a discrepancy score of 1; the lowest stratum, group 1 boys, only aspire to level 3, but don't expect to reach it—their discrepancy score is 2. The theory states that group 1 boys, who have the

greatest gap, would have the highest delinquency rates, even though they have the lowest aspiration levels. In short, an equalitarian society, even if it doesn't hold out exactly the same status goals for all, not only exhorts everyone to aspire higher than their position of origin, but stresses their right to better themselves. As long as this value leads lower strata to desire higher goals than they have the means to reach, the lower strata will have greater discrepancies between their desire for status and the possibility of achieving it.

More recent formulations of views similar to Shaw and McKay's have excited marked disbelief because critics have wrongly believed that the theories required that there be identical aspiration levels for all strata. Since all studies show that there are some strata differences in absolute level of aspiration, the theory is taken to be false. But it has just been demonstrated that this is an erroneous basis for invalidating these theories. All studies having data on both desired goals (what respondents would like to achieve, either educationally or occupationally) and expected goals (what they realistically estimate they will be able to get), show that the lowest strata have the highest discrepancy between desire and reality. This is the very pattern required by the theories under review.

Furthermore, within the lowest stratum, selection for delinquency must follow the same principle. Kitsuse and Dietrick¹³ chide Cohen for failing to see that his theory requires the slum "college boy," not the slum delinquent, to be the one who has the most ambivalence to the middle class system, since by aspiring so high the "college boy" has to give up all his working class friends and habits. But Cohen does not say that high aspirations and the

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sacrifices they entail are the basis of ambivalence and hence reaction-formation. He says that it is status deprivation deriving from the gap between desired status and expected status that causes the ambivalence leading to delinquency. High aspirations coupled with expected success in achieving them do not produce status deprivation, no matter what the sacrifice. If the "college boy" is doing well in school and getting support for his goals from teachers, family, and friends, his special resources and current success would lead him to believe he'll get to college: he has no discrepancy between his goal of college and his estimate of whether he'll reach there, and thus isn't suffering from status deprivation. [A boy who has much lower aspirations but doesn't feel he's going to get anywhere at all in the status system is the one who has the most discrepant goals, and who will therefore suffer the most status anxiety. Kitause and Dietrick's error lies in failure to see that status deprivation is a function of two variables--- height of aspirations and expectation of reaching them---not just one.]

B. Constraints

In establishing the causes of delinquency Shaw and Thrasher place greater emphasis on constraints, or the set of social controls, than on pressures.

[Shaw and Thrasher explain community differentials in delinquency rates by variations in the degree of social disorganization. This statement is not yet a theory, for the theory consists in stating what the components of social disorganization are; but many students of delinquency have criticized the very concept of social disorganization and by implication the whole theoretical enterprise implied by its use. Again and again it is claimed (Sutherland, Whyte, Ebrdua, Wilensky and Lebaux)¹⁴ that the concept of social disorganization is

misleading because it implies on the structural side a lack of organization, and on the cultural side a moral vacuum. These implications are held to be sociologically impossible, or at least suspect (every group has an organization and a culture), and empirically untrue (the slum contains a rich network of informal relations and of delinquent and criminal institutions, at the least, and an elaborate delinquent and criminal culture). It is tiresome to accuse the Chicago school of failure to recognize the delinquent and criminal organization and culture since their work is replete with description and emphasis of those very facts. Delinquent and criminal groups are not coterminous with the slum, however: most slum dwellers are not delinquents or criminals. What they are referring to by social disorganization is the paucity and weakness of conventional institutions and cultures. What they want to explain is precisely why delinquent structure and culture are strong. |

That anthropological descriptions of slum communities, like Whyte's, which contain no comparative data for non-slum communities, suggest that there is a sizable network of informal groups and primary relations, does not prove that the over-all structure of the slum is as densely or as effectively organized as other communities. The vast number of studies showing that membership in formal voluntary associations is absolutely and relatively very low among the poor are too well known to be cited. But it has also been shown that membership in informal groups (such as social and athletic groups) is lower among the poor, and primary ties--allegedly so rich in the slum--are in fact fewer: number of friends, frequency of visits with friends or neighbors, and frequency of contacts with family members outside the immediate conjugal unit are all less for the lower than the higher strata. Of course these measures are but one

kind of index of the degree and effectiveness of organization, but on the face of it, the assertion that slums are disorganized relative to other communities is empirically confirmed rather than not.

Furthermore, the idea that communities can vary in institutional effectiveness or cultural integration, that structures and cultures can break down, is hardly a sociological heresy. Anomie is a very respectable notion, and when it is present, there is indeed a kind of moral vacuum. That it is more likely to occur in lower than higher strata has also been shown. The opposite premise---i.e., that every group has an equally adequate structure and culture---negates the possibility of sociological theory and leaves the sociologist only the possibility of description. The use of the concept of social disorganization is a strength rather than a weakness of the approach of Shaw and McKay and Thrasher, for it indicates their willingness to make judgments about the adequacy of social arrangements and to search for what is distinctive about a given system. Where students of delinquency have eschewed the concept of social disorganization or its equivalent---for example, Sutherland, who proposes that the "concept" of differential social organization be substituted for the concept of social disorganization---they have refused to judge institutional systems as more or less adequate to achieve given ends, and they have refused to ask what is distinctive about systems that give rise to more or less delinquency.

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A more justifiable complaint is that the Chicago school has never adequately defined the concept of social disorganization. The definition they do essay implies that a socially disorganized community is one that is unable to realize its values. Shaw and McKay show that other "representative community problems," such as infant mortality, tuberculosis, mental disorder,

truancy, and adult crime are correlated with juvenile delinquency. These phenomena are all taken to be indexes of social pathology---that is, social disorganization---because they are conditions that would not exist if the citizenry were able to avoid them. "Many other 'problem' conditions might be listed, each representing a state of affairs considered undesirable by most citizens. This would include various forms of unemployment, dependency, misconduct, and family disorganization, as well as high rates of sickness and death."¹⁵ "Social disorganization . . . [is] the lack of organized community effort to deal with these conditions." Thus, the values of health, life, order (lawful conduct), economic sufficiency, and family stability are viewed as common to all the members of the society; and a state of social disorganization exists when the structure of a community is incapable of implementing its cultural values. This definition is not very helpful analytically, but for present purposes its main utility lies in showing that this theory begins with a premise the opposite of that of the cultural deviance school. All members of the society are said to have the same basic values, and the source of delinquency is sought in conditions that prevent the achievement of them. We are not directed to look for an ethnic culture, or a class culture, or a slum culture that harbors delinquent values; we are told to look for a community that cannot meet the functional requirements of maintaining order.

What, then, are the components of social disorganization? That is, what are the variable elements in the systems of constraints or social controls that cause community differences in rates of juvenile delinquency?

Primary causes of social disorganization. The logic of Shaw and Thrasher's theory demands that components of social disorganization be viewed as the effects of antecedent social and cultural conditions that must be divided

into primary and secondary causes of disorganization and hence of delinquency. A serious error in their work arises from their failure consistently to follow the causal ordering of variables that their theory requires (see below). For the present we will rearrange the sequence of variables in accordance with the tenets of the theory. Primary causes of social disorganization are those structural and cultural conditions which must be present for high rates of delinquency both to arise and to persist. Secondary causes are additional disorganizing conditions that arise if the continuation of high delinquency rates over a long period of time results in the establishment of a delinquent subculture. This is not simply a temporal ordering of variables, but a causal ordering. Secondary causes are secondary because the primary causes of social disorganization would cause comparatively high rates of delinquency without them, because the primary causes must be present before the secondary causes can emerge, and because the primary causes must continue to be present in order for the secondary elements to persist.

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The components of social disorganization include both cultural and structural characteristics. In respect to culture, the two most general explanatory variables used to account for slum delinquency are (1) attenuation of the common (non-delinquent) value system, and (2) attenuation of subcultural (non-delinquent) value systems (see left side of chart, level 2). The cultural characteristic that causes these two conditions is cultural diversity in respect to non-delinquent values (left side of chart, level 1-a). Attenuation of common and subcultural values in turn causes delinquency because it results in anomie at the community and subgroup level, and hence a loss of direct external control, and anomie at the individual level, and hence a loss of direct internal control.

attenuation: Diversity ≠ delinquency but does if assume certain other things about society such as cult administration.

Social Disorganization (causes, components, and consequences of an ineffective system of social control)

Economic Segregation

Low Economic Status, Heterogeneity, Mobility

Cultural Structure

Social Structure

Causes of:

1. a. Cultural diversity re non-delinquent values
(b. Cultural universalism)
(c. Pattern inconsistency)

1. a. Limited access to institutional means
(b. Isolation of institutions: lack of linking organizations, lack of linking functions)

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- d. Cultural diversity: delinquent vs. non-delinquent values

- c. Increased access to illegitimate means
- d. Interpenetration of legitimate and illegitimate institutions

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Components of:

2. a. Attenuation of common cultural values
b. Attenuation of subcultural values

2. a. Institutional discontinuities in socialization due to isolation
b. Institutional incapacity to provide routes to valued goals

Consequences of:

3. a. Inability of an attenuated common value system to serve as basis for effective community opinion → loss of direct external control → community anomie
b. Inability of attenuated common value system to serve as basis for adequate socialization → paucity of internalized values → lack of direct internal control → individual anomie

3. a. Lack of social bonds to institutions: loss of indirect external control through institutional inability to exact instrumental conformity; loss of direct external control through alienation from cultural values
b. Inadequate socialization: individual anomie

values cannot be built up, due to the continuous movement outward of the most successful and the continuous movement in of the least successful.

The presence of groups bearing so many different kinds of cultures, and cultures in such different stages of obsolescence gives rise to the outstanding cultural cause of disorganization: cultural diversity in respect to non-delinquent values. (Once again it should be noted that by cultural diversity Shaw and McKay and Thrasher are referring to the variety of customs and values defining goals other than lawful conduct. They assume all ethnic and racial groups, rural as well as urban migrants, and the poor as well as the rich have substantially the same conception of lawful conduct. The culture conflicts with which they are now concerned are thus between varieties of conventional values, not between delinquent and conventional values.) Because of so many competing standards of value, and because of the competitive disadvantage of all of them in contending with American culture, the several sub-cultures break down, and the range of consensual community values becomes extremely narrow. Hence the principal component of social disorganization--attenuation of common cultural values--is largely a function of cultural diversity.

There is a common value system, then, but it is so enaciated that it cannot serve as an effective basis for the emergence of a sufficiently robust neighborhood or community opinion in respect to right conduct, legal or otherwise. The neighborhood or community ceases to be an agency of social control, since consensus is so minimal that community opinion cannot evoke shame in the individual when he transgresses. A state of community anomie exists.

Neither can such a thin common value system serve as a basis for adequate socialization. Slum families have too meager a cultural heritage to transmit

to their children. The child suffers from a paucity of internalized values, resulting in anomie. If the various subcultures were capable of surviving, these might serve as an adequate basis for socialization, and hence of controlling the young through internalization of values. But since these too become attenuated, the cultural vacuum expands.

Shaw and McKay put the most emphasis on attenuation of common cultural values as the explanatory variable (component of social disorganization) that accounts for delinquency. In their theory, the cultural characteristic that causes attenuation is cultural diversity. The first major deficit in their theory is their over-emphasis on cultural diversity as a source of value attenuation, and their failure to see what other characteristics of a unified cultural structure are of great importance in causing value attenuation. Their treatment of culture in relation to disorganization may be criticized on ~~these~~ ^{three} grounds.

(1) Both in the theory of urbanism from which Shaw and Thrasher draw their conceptual orientation, and in many theories of delinquency, value diversity as a source of disorganization is crudely treated. There is a failure to state the conditions under which value diversity is disorganizing, and a failure to see that value diversity can be a source of strength as well as weakness. When subcultures are strong and able to maintain themselves, they bind people into institutions and values—who are then not available for delinquent behavior. Even Shaw and McKay dimly perceived this—for example, in their comments on the Chinese, whose children had very low delinquency rates, they conclude that their success is due to the insulation which permitted their culture to remain intact. Medieval societies, which were often congeries of diverse ethnic groups, and which had very diverse cultural codes for the several strata and communities

that comprised the society, did not thereby suffer from attenuation of the common value system. In modern societies, cultural diversity has not necessarily led to value breakdown. England, which has much more diverse class subcultures than the United States, does not for this reason suffer from a more attenuated common value system. It is beyond the scope of this paper to offer an analysis of the function of value diversity in different kinds of cultures and social systems. It is sufficient to note that the Chicago school, by failing to specify the conditions under which value diversity is disorganizing, have tied social disorganization too closely to value diversity, and have consequently over-emphasized the importance of value diversity as a cause of delinquency.

Furthermore, Shaw and McKay have failed to tell us what cultural characteristics would cause value attenuation in a culturally homogeneous slum community. Would not a homogeneous but impoverished community still have a more attenuated common culture than a more affluent community? Their overwhelming concern with cultural diversity led to their failure to note two characteristics of the common (non-diverse) value system that caused attenuation of the common value system in slum communities. These two characteristics are cultural universalism and pattern inconsistency. In order to be logically consistent, the theory of social disorganization must include these two features among the causes of value attenuation.

(2) Cultural universalism. Cultures are characterized by universalism when their common value systems hold out the same goals and moral standards as right for all members of a society. (Though related to equalitarianism, universalism is distinct from it: a culture can be universalistic without being equalitarian. The values of the classic Greek city state were universalistic but not equali-

tarian. Participation in the polis--and the special virtues required to fulfill the role obligations of citizenship--was considered the greatest privilege and the most binding duty for all citizens regardless of rank or other social characteristics. Segregation of the most highly valued moral goals was thus considered inappropriate within the class of citizens.)

Now Shaw and McKay, in their discussion of pressures toward delinquency have already made it clear that they consider American culture to be universalistic, in that it holds out the same success goals to all. And they have also emphasized that the common culture of the slum, such as it is, is also characterized by universalism: slum dwellers want to achieve the same high status goals as the rest of the society, and they are also committed to other universalistic values, as indicated in their desire for Americanization. Shaw

and McKay also showed how the combination of universalistic goals and limited access to the institutional means of achieving those goals (due primarily to stratification) resulted in greater pressures toward deviance among the poor than the rich. What they fail to realize is that universalism plus stratifi-

cation affects the system of social control as well, because cultural universalism destroys the capacity of negatively privileged groups to create goals appropriate to their condition, and thus makes their value orientations but attenuated versions of the common culture instead of rich adaptations to their special disabilities.

Merton, in his more penetrating analysis of this point, has noted that uniform goals in conjunction with the unequal distribution of legitimate means results in a discrepancy between what is desired and what is possible, which leads to the retention of the goals but the rejection of legitimate means in favor of innovated illegitimate means, and hence delinquency. The question

Merton's analysis leads us to ask is,

~~Why~~ why aren't the goals rejected instead---why is there no innovation in respect to goals? Why don't the lower strata evolve new goals, geared to their condition---for example, why isn't collective advancement for the working class as a whole selected as the appropriate mode of success instead of individual material success? Why do ethnic and racial minorities, when denied full status as Americans due to their low rank in the system of racial and ethnic stratification, rush so precipitously to abandon their distinctive cultures? Why do they not seek to realize separate, subculturally defined goals rather than the goal of complete Americanization which can only be gained at the price of destroying their several cultures?

The reason is that cultural universalism inhibits the segregation of moral values according to social condition. By holding out the same virtues as appropriate to all ranks and positions, a system characterized by universalism confers dignity on all members of the society, for it treats them as moral equals. In such a system, to develop separate goals---goals differentiated according to the capacity of persons in different statuses to realize cultural values---is a sign of moral inferiority. Cultural universalism is therefore destructive of genuine subcultural adaptations to the problems of realizing cultural values with limited means; but it also is destructive of the common value system. For disadvantaged subgroups demonstrate their moral equality by retaining culturally valued goals, and solve their difficulties by ignoring or adulterating the institutional means designated for achieving them. If the value of success remains, the values governing means---thrift, honesty, hard work---are glossed over. The fund of common values is thereby diminished. Or, if the value of Americanization remains, the values defining citizenship---that is, the institutional means by which Americanization is legitimately

achieved---become adulterated. Instead of seeking to become Americanized through exercising the rights and duties of citizenship---political participation, civic responsibility, etc.---the disadvantaged immigrant chooses means more easily available: moving up in the world, sporting the latest consumer goods, flag-waving. And once again the fund of common values becomes thinned out, as the concept of citizenship becomes adulterated.

Thus it is that disadvantaged groups, if they are the main beneficiaries of value systems characterized by universalism, are also its main victims. The price of moral equality may become cultural impoverishment. More favored groups are not forced to choose between moral equality and illegitimate means, so that their community cultures, not being subject to value attenuation from this source, are to that extent richer. Since the Chicago school argues that an attenuated community value system is a prime component of social disorganization, and hence of community and individual anomie, which lead to delinquency; and since they grant that ours is a culture characterized by universalism; it follows that cultural universalism must be added to the list of cultural characteristics that cause value attenuation in the slum community.

(3) Pattern inconsistency. A set of cultural values is characterized by pattern inconsistency when the pursuit of one value involves violation of other values. Pattern inconsistency often results when a value is too narrowly defined for its realization to be possible without transgressing another value. Pattern inconsistency generates deviance. For example, if a culture values both chastity and virility, but defines virility exclusively in terms of sexual prowess, men seeking to demonstrate their virility will be under great pressure to violate norms of chastity. On the other hand, another culture, which also

valued both chastity and virility, but defined virility more broadly so as to include sexual prowess plus leadership plus prowess in war, would be less pattern inconsistent, and would generate less deviance, for men could demonstrate their accession to manhood through leadership and jousting or becoming a warrior, without violating norms of chastity. It is clear, then, how pattern inconsistency can increase pressures toward deviance. At this point, however, we are interested in the way in which pattern inconsistency can cause weaknesses in the system of constraints (social controls) on deviance. Pattern inconsistency debilitates the system of social controls because of the failure to institutionalize the disparaged values in a pattern-inconsistent set. This means that they can be violated with impunity, and these values wither, thereby attenuating the value system to that degree. For example, where acceding to full male status requires violating norms of chastity, the institutions charged with guarding sexual morals will fail to institutionalize the value of chastity for males. Churches will neglect male transgressions, law enforcement agents will fail to prosecute violators. In time, the value itself will fade: religious sermons will be concerned only with female chastity, as will discussion of sexual problems in public forums. Since, however, no new standard of sexual conduct for males becomes institutionalized, the fund of common values is attenuated by the continued presence of a lame-duck value.

From Merton's
Herten, ~~in his~~ discussion of success goals, ~~shows~~ *we can infer* how pattern inconsistency in this part of the cultural value system results in value attenuation, consequent anomie, and ultimately high delinquency rates. When a culture places extreme emphasis on success and when the criteria of success are defined almost exclusively in terms of material achievement, the intensity of emphasis, and the narrowness of focus result in the failure to institutionalize the values

governing the choice of means to success. If the valued means to success are defined as honesty and hard work, the status-conferring institutions and groups in such a society, when faced with the dilemma of choosing which values in the pattern-inconsistent set to enforce (honesty vs. achievement), may fail adequately to protect the values governing means, by yielding to the culturally induced temptation to recognize material success no matter how it is achieved. For example, the spectacular wealth of the late nineteenth century, ^{not her} barons was able to buy entry for them, before long, into high society, despite the often notorious means used in its acquisition. In slum communities, the rich racketeer is accorded far from grudging admiration for his success. Thus, in economic institutions, and in class-based status-conferring groups, there is a failure adequately to institutionalize the value of honesty. The individual who violates norms of honesty is not made to feel enough shame for doing so, and the common value system becomes attenuated, leading to anomie in respect to choice of means to success.

However, the effect of pattern inconsistency in causing value attenuation is not uniform throughout the social structure. It is among disadvantaged groups, who are unable to achieve success (or other goals) so easily as more favored strata, that the strains inherent in the value system will produce the most attenuation of the values that stand in the way of gaining success. For example, while it is true that the central value system defines success very narrowly, it is also true that the conceptions of success held by the various strata vary in the breadth of values included in the definition. Many studies have shown that for the lowest strata, money alone is considered the criterion of class status, while for the middle and upper strata, some combination of money with morality, or service to the community, or other style of life elements is required.

In choosing jobs and in judging the prestige of occupations, financial rewards are somewhat more important to the lower than higher strata. Claims to status are therefore not so easily validated among the rich as among the poor, when the means used to gain success are illegitimate. Hence, pattern inconsistency combined with stratification results in greater attenuation of the values governing means among disadvantaged versus favored groups. Therefore, a theory of social disorganization which states that attenuation of the common value system is a major variable explaining the relation between slum residence and delinquency must include pattern inconsistency among the cultural characteristics causing such attenuation in slums.

Addendum: It may seem as if the discussion of pattern inconsistency as a cause of value attenuation simply duplicates the analysis of cultural universalism as a cause of value attenuation. But in fact each of these characteristics of cultural value systems is independently variable. Example: Suppose that there are two societies, both characterized by cultural universalism in respect to success goals (the same logic would hold true for any other goals). In each society the low status people aspire to the highest success goals; therefore, in each society the discrepancy between desired goals and expected goals would cause equal pressures to reject the legitimate means to success. This would result in equal amounts of attenuation of the values governing means, among the lower strata. But suppose that culture A had more pattern inconsistency in that it defined success strictly in terms of money, while society B defined success as money gained through following an occupation that involved service to the community. Society A would suffer an added amount of value attenuation due to the additional impact of pattern inconsistency. In Society B there would be less attenuation of the values governing means to success because

the definition of success includes following an honorable occupation. The institutions validating status claims would fail to recognize mere material achievement as success, and the values of honesty, service, etc. would be protected. Hence, even though the pressures to deviate in the two societies might be the same, the constraints on deviance would be stronger in society B. A disadvantaged person in society B would suffer from the use of illegitimate means, because the values governing means would not be so attenuated as in society A. He would fail to gain status by using illegitimate means. As a result, delinquency rates would be lower in society B than in society A.

We turn now to an examination of the structural components of social disorganization (see right side of chart). Despite their promise to explain delinquency in terms of disorganization, Shaw, McKay, and Thrasher give inadequate attention to analyzing the institutional structure of the slum, and the way in which institutional processes result in the lack of social bonds, to which lack they attribute great importance in causing the high delinquency rates in slums.

In respect to social structure, the two principal explanatory variables (components of social disorganization) used to account for slum delinquency are (1) institutional discontinuities in socialization and (2) institutional incapacity to provide routes to valued goals (see level 2 of chart). The various institutions charged with socializing the young act in isolation from each other and the standards they teach are so unintegrated that the bewildering assortment of values promulgated by family, school, church and other institutions are incapable of serving as an adequate basis for socialization. Even though all these institutions stand for conventional values, the standards of

working class parents and middle class school teachers, or immigrant parents and Americanized pastors, or slum children and the middle class functionaries of settlement houses are not easily fused together into one meaningful system of values. Because these institutions fail to provide an integrated set of standards, children are inadequately socialized and fail to internalize the values which form the basis of direct internal control, another source of anxiety. Secondly, slum institutions, because they are unable to provide routes to valued goals, lose the ability to act as agents of indirect external control. Where institutions can provide means to goals, they can exact instrumental conformity to values, even when the values themselves are not internalized. For example, if the school serves as a route to mobility, or if the school provides enjoyable means of recreation, children, in order to avail themselves of these means, will conform to the values the school serves, whether or not they share those values. Where the family can protect the child, or can serve the child in gaining access to jobs or educational facilities, or gratify other important needs, it can maintain indirect external control even if it has failed in its efforts to socialize the child via internalization of values. Institutions which fail to provide the means for achieving valued goals also lose their effectiveness as socializing agents. Since they cannot provide the means to realize the values they are supposed to embody, they become meaningless to their clientele, who respond by loosening their ties to the institutions and becoming alienated from cultural values. There is thus a lack of social bonds and a loss of direct external control, which further frees slum children for delinquency.

What features of the slum social structure cause institutional discontinuities in socialization and institutional incapacity to provide routes to

valued goals? Once again the diversity of cultures represented in the slum looms large in the explanation offered by Shaw and McKay. Because of the extreme heterogeneity of social origins of slum dwellers, there is no consensus about how to effect social control and so they are unable to concert their actions to achieve it. Also important are the poverty of the inhabitants and their inability to command facilities (money, knowledge, contacts) to remedy their situation or to gain entry into legitimate institutions. The mobility of the population is another contributing factor because it makes people unwilling to expend the effort needed to remedy problems they hope soon to evade. These attributes (poverty, heterogeneity, mobility) of slum populations lead to two general characteristics of slum institutions (see level 1 of chart) which in turn lead to disorganization. These are (1) limited access to institutional means, and (2) isolation of institutions. The impact of stratification on the institutional structure of the slum is clear enough without much explanation. It contributes directly to the incapacity of institutions to provide for their clients' needs. For example, to the slum child who has limited access to the legitimate opportunity structure, education serves no purpose, and the school becomes irrelevant to the goals he seeks. The slum parent who lacks knowledge and economic resources is also unable to provide adequate means for the realization of valued goals. As a cause of value attenuation, limited access to institutional means, when combined with certain features of the cultural value system, has already been discussed in the preceding pages.

The isolation of institutions, which gets ~~almost~~ no attention in the formulations of the Chicago school, is ^{nevertheless} a striking feature of the structure of the slum community, for it is a potent cause of institutional incapacity, and institutional discontinuities in socialization. ↑ Because they lack community of

The addition of the variable, viz. degree of isolation of institutions, is needed to remedy a serious lack in the theory of

purpose, because they lack the skills, resources, and will, slum inhabitants fail to form voluntary associations to protect and defend their interests and values. Voluntary associations perform linking functions. Without them secondary institutions are isolated from each other, and primary institutions (the family) are isolated from secondary institutions. Hence institutional discontinuities in socialization arise and cannot be remedied. More important, institutions that fail to supply the needs of their clients cannot be made more effective in meeting those needs, for the slum family is unable to communicate or enforce its special needs through organizations linked to the conventional institutions in the slum. The slum church continues to dispense religion characterized by "formalism" and "externality,"¹⁶ and the slum school continues to dispense education irrelevant to the capacities or opportunities of slum children. There is no inherent reason why slum institutions could not arrive at more adaptive solutions to the problems of slum populations, and thus be rendered effective in their capacity to provide the means to valued goals. The absence of linking organizations is one source of their failure to adapt.

The slum family also performs fewer linking functions. The more Americanized, wealthier, more stable middle-class family, even when it does not participate in voluntary associations, is able to perform more functions that link it and the child to community institutions. It can provide contacts with economic institutions, aid in doing school work, knowledge of recreational facilities, and perform many other functions that link the child to institutions, thus making him more capable of employing institutional routes to valued goals, and consequently binding him more effectively to conventional institutions.

The disorganization of slum institutions, then, is a function of limited access to institutional means and the isolation of institutions.

Secondary causes of disorganization. ----- The secondary causes of social disorganization are the additional characteristics of slum structure and culture which further debilitate the system of social controls. They arise because of establishment in the slum community of a delinquent and criminal subculture.

On the cultural side (left side of diagram, level 1-d), cultural diversity is increased still further by the conflict between delinquent and non-delinquent value systems. The consequence is attenuation of the common value system virtually to the vanishing point: the slum has almost no unifying cultural values, but instead two opposing systems of values. On the structural side (right side of diagram, level 1-c, 1-d) there is increased access to illegitimate means, and the interpenetration of legitimate and illegitimate institutions, so that conventional institutions are either corrupted or weakened by their implication in the illegal system. This renders institutional discontinuities in socialization still more pronounced and further increases the incapacity of conventional institutions to provide routes to valued goals.

Now there is no dispute about the fact that Shaw and Thrasher treated the structural and cultural characteristics of the delinquent system as primary causes of social disorganization, whereas I have called them secondary causes in the above presentation. For this reason they have often been classified with the cultural transmission theorists. That is, they view the conflict between delinquent and non-delinquent values as the principal source of value attenuation and its transmission from generation to generation of boys the principal cause of slum delinquency. And they view the presence of the illegitimate opportunity structure and the interpenetration of legal and illegal institutions as the primary cause of institutional weakness in the slums.

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Therefore, the social disorganization theory has rightly been accused of being circular: The Chicago school begins by stating that social disorganization is the cause of high slum delinquency, and then proceeds to state that high delinquency rates (the delinquent system) are the principal cause of social disorganization.

This circularity in reasoning constitutes the most serious failure of the social disorganization theory. It resulted in Shaw, McKay, and Thrasher giving almost their entire attention in their causal analysis to the impact of the delinquent system on value attenuation and institutional weakness. But this emphasis and the circular reasoning of which it is a product is not required by the theory as they themselves have formulated it. The premises of the theory of social disorganization in fact require that the delinquent structure and culture be viewed as secondary, not primary causes of slum disorganization and hence of slum delinquency. This means that the transformations in slum culture and structure wrought by the establishment of a delinquent system must be viewed as end-products in a developmental sequence of causes, and as such can only account for a small part of the variance in social disorganization. The major part of the variance in disorganization and hence of delinquency must be explained by the primary causes of disorganization, which must be present for the delinquent system both to arise and to persist. Primary causes are not simply temporally prior, but causally prior. Their causal priority is demonstrated for the following reasons.

(1) The primary causes of social disorganization would cause social disorganization and hence delinquency without the presence of a delinquent subsystem. A delinquent subsystem is therefore not a necessary condition for the emergence of a state of social disorganization. These social and cultural

characteristics (such as cultural diversity, isolation of institutions, etc.) which cause social disorganization produce their effect whether or not a delinquent subsystem exists. Shaw, McKay, and Thrasher of course recognize this when they tell us what other kinds of communities besides slums manifest a high degree of disorganization and consequently high rates of delinquency. Shaw and McKay note that the rapid social changes occurring during wars, which disrupt the normal relations between institutions and render traditional values obsolete, explain why institutional controls and traditional values are weakened and why delinquency consequently increases in wartime.¹⁷ Thrasher points out that delinquent gangs arise on the frontiers of advancing civilizations, on the political frontiers between nations, on the seas, and in regions within nations where social organization has broken down due to war or other causes.¹⁸

In none of these instances has a delinquent subsystem been in existence, so it cannot be used as an explanation of disorganization. In each case social and cultural processes characteristic of interstitial areas are viewed as the cause of social disorganization.

(2) The primary causes of social disorganization must be present before the secondary causes (attributes of the delinquent subsystem) can emerge. In theories of cultural deviance, the presence of delinquent values in the conventional cultures of subgroups in a society can logically be used to explain the origin of social disorganization. Since these theories assume that ethnic groups or social classes or other subgroups in the society adhere to values widely at variance with those institutionalized in law, the emergence of a delinquent value system, since it is continuous with the conventional values of various groups, can be explained without reference to a pre-existing state of social disorganization, and can then be used to explain why social disorganization arises.

In these theories the delinquent subsystem can be viewed as a primary cause of disorganization. But for the Chicago school this kind of explanation is barred, because ~~these~~ ^{they} theorists assume that all the constituent subgroups in the society have conventional values that coincide with the values institutionalized in law. Therefore, the emergence of a delinquent subsystem must be explained by other structural and cultural characteristics which first cause disorganization, and hence allow the delinquent system to arise. The statement that social disorganization is caused independently of the existence of a delinquent value system is the foundation of the entire theory. Therefore, such structural and cultural characteristics as cultural diversity, pattern inconsistency, isolation of institutions, etc., must be present as primary causes of disorganization, before the secondary causes emanating from the establishment of a delinquent subsystem can arise.)

(3) The logic of Shaw and Thrasher's theory requires them to recognize that the primary causes of social disorganization must continue to be present in order for the delinquent subculture to persist. In contrast, cultural transmission theories are not bound to this same logic. In cultural transmission theories it is assumed that the delinquent subculture has become institutionalized in the slum, that is, that it has acquired legitimacy in the slum community. They therefore argue that the primary causes of disorganization need no longer be operative in order to explain the persistence of the delinquent subculture. At some time in the past such factors as limited access to institutional means, or cultural diversity or similar factors may have produced disorganization and hence the delinquent subculture. But once the delinquent subculture has become institutionalized, the ordinary processes by which any culture is transmitted through socialization, through sanctions for failure to conform, and the like are sufficient to explain its persistence. The slum society, now indistinguishable

