

# Social learning theories sutherland theory



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the differential association theory- is one of the many theories of social learning of crime and deviance

- believed that deviance is a behaviour, similar to other behaviours can be learned through socialisation

- e. g. - context to Sutherland's theory - if someone is associated with criminals then they're more likely to participate in criminal behaviour

- because you will learn attitudes that will determine you to be either deviant or conformist to 'external social norms'

Sutherland states that through your associations with deviants - you believe that deviant behaviour is in fact normal

- people who don't associate with deviants don't believe this behaviour is normal

- incorporates 9 key propositions

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Now1. criminal behaviour is learned- which is not inherited as a biological characteristics

- can learn criminal behaviours through family - not passed down

genetically2. criminal behaviour is learned in interaction with other persons

in a process of communication- communication can be verbal but behaviour can also be communicated by setting an example3. the principal part of the

learning of criminal behaviour occurs within intimate personal groups- shows we learn deviance from our most intimate associates

- friends and family

- not impersonal relationships4. when criminal behaviour is learned, the

learning includes - techniques of committing the crime and the specific direction of motives, drives and rationalisations and attitudes- several

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different dimensions of criminality that are learned<sup>5</sup>. the specific direction of motives and drives is learned from definitions of the legal codes as favourable or unfavourable- if you're surrounded by people who break the law, you think it's more acceptable to do it too<sup>6</sup>. a person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favourable to violation of law over definitions unfavourable to violation of the law- the more illegal behaviours you define as acceptable

- the more likely you are to become 'delinquent'

- you go against norms of society - legal norms<sup>7</sup>. differential associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority and intensity- there are four key dimensions of differential association

- higher contact - higher criminal behaviours<sup>8</sup>. the process of learning criminal behaviour by association with criminal and anti-criminal patterns involves all of the mechanisms that are involved in any other learning- learning crime is just like learning anything else

- sample principles<sup>9</sup>. while criminal behaviour is an expression of general needs and values, it is not explained by those needs and values, since non-criminal behaviour is an expression of the same needs and values- one person might seek out money and respect through criminal behaviour and another may seek the same things but through conforming behaviour

- the need of something cannot explain why a person turns to crime whilst another doesn't

- criminals have the same needs and values as non-criminals

- doesn't change morals - just learnt