Social Disorganization Theory. A type of criminological theory attributing variation in crime and delinquency over time and among territories to the absence or breakdown of communal institutions (e.g. family, school, church and local government) and communal relationships that traditionally encouraged cooperative relationships among people. The concept is defined in terms of the absence or breakdown of certain types of relationships among people, and is intimately tied to conceptions of those properties of relationships that are indicative of social or communal "organization." Relationships among people in a given territory are presumed to be especially "organized" when there high levels of involvement across age-levels in activities coordinated by representatives of communal institutions (e.g. family-heads, pastors, school organizations and local officials). Such organized interaction is presumed to be closely and reciprocally associated with the development of a sense of community or communal bonds among people in close geographic proximity to one another. The concept was developed to refer to the absence of organization among people in relatively small ecological units (neighborhoods, census tracts, communities), but has been used to explain variations in crime among larger units (e.g. counties, states and nations) as well as variations over time.

The concept of social disorganization was applied to the explanation of crime, delinquency and other social problems by sociologists at the University of Chicago in the early 1900s. As a booming industrial city, increasingly populated by recent immigrants of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds, the city of Chicago provided a social laboratory for the development of American criminology. Rapid growth and change were viewed as "disorganizing" or "disintegrative" forces contributing to a breakdown in the teaching and learning of those prior "social rules" which had inhibited crime and delinquency in European peasant society (Thomas and Znanieki, 1918).

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Although better known in contemporary criminology for his "differential association" theory of criminal behavior, Edwin Sutherland (1924, 1934, 1939) elaborated on the concept in the development of his theory of systematic criminal behavior, and Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay (1929) applied it to the explanation of specific patterns of delinquency documented for Chicago and its suburbs.

In the early editions of his classic textbook, Principles of Criminology (1924, 1934, 1939), Edwin Sutherland invoked the concept of social disorganization to explain increases in crime that accompanied the transformation of preliterate and peasant societies where "influences surrounding a person were steady, uniform, harmonious and consistent" to modern Western civilization which he believed was characterized by inconsistency, conflict and "un-organization (1934: 64)." He believed that the mobility, economic competition and an individualistic ideology that accompanied capitalist and industrial development had "disintegrated" both the large family and homogenous neighborhoods as agents of social control, expanded the realm of relationships that were not governed by family and neighborhood, and undermined governmental controls. This disorganization of institutions that had traditionally reinforced the law facilitated the development and persistence of "systematic" crime and delinquency. He also believed that such disorganization fosters the cultural traditions and cultural conflicts that support such activity. The seventh proposition in the 1939 version of his textbook was that "social disorganization is the basic cause of systematic criminal behavior." Systematic criminal behavior referred to repetitive, patterned or organized offending as opposed to random events. He depicted the "law-abiding culture" as "dominant and more extensive" than alternative criminogenic cultural views and capable of "overcoming systematic crime *if* organized for that purpose (1939: 8)." However, because society

was "organized around individual and small group interests," society "permits" crime to persist. Sutherland concluded that "if the society is organized with reference to the values expressed in the law, the crime is eliminated; if it is not organized, crime persists and develops (1939:8)." In later works, he switched from the concept of social disorganization to differential social organization to convey the complexity of overlapping and conflicting levels of organization in a society. This notion has been elaborated in recent reformulations of social disorganization theory (See Bursik and Grasmick 1993)..

One of the most important works in the development of criminology (the scientific study of crime) in the United States was Clifford Shaw's work with Henry McKay and other collaborators on Delinquency Areas (1929) which described and sought to explain the distribution of a variety of social problems in the city of Chicago. Their study yielded a great deal of information about crime and delinquency, including the following: 1) "Rates of truancy, delinquency and adult crime tend to vary inversely in proportion to the distance from the center of the city...2) Those communities which show the highest rates of delinquency also show, as a rule, the highest rates of truancy and adult crime...3) High rates occur in areas that are characterized by physical deterioration and declining populations...4) Relatively high rates have persisted in certain areas notwithstanding the fact that the composition of population has changed markedly...(1929: 198-204)." The observation that certain areas tended to keep high rates despite successive changes in the ethnic groups residing in them suggested that those problems were a) generated by the social conditions experienced by these groups rather than by any genetic or biological predisposition and/or b) by "traditions of crime and delinquency" that develop and are perpetuated through interaction among new and established members of social areas. Shaw and

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McKay argued that "when business and industry invade a community, the community thus invaded ceases to function effectively as a means of social control. Traditional norms and standards of the conventional community weaken and disappear. Resistance on the part of the community to delinquent and criminal behavior is low, and such behavior is tolerated and may even become accepted and approved. (1929: 204-205)." This was the same argument adopted by Sutherland. He argued that crime could become "systematic" (i.e. organized and enduring) when society was "un-organized" for its prevention.

Robert E. L. Farris (1948) extended the concept of social disorganization to explain "social pathologies" and social problems in general, including crime, suicide, mental illness, mob violence and suicide. Defining organization as "definite and enduring patterns of complementary relations" (1955: 3), he defined social disorganization as "the weakening or destruction of the relationships which hold together a social organization (1955: 81)." Such a concept was to be employed "objectively" as a measurable state of a social system, independent of personal approval or disapproval. When applied to crime, Farris' central proposition was that "A crime rate is ...a reflection of the degree of disorganization of the control mechanisms in a society." In turn, crime also contributed to disorganization, a proposition that would be revived four decades later (See Bursik 1988). Disorganization of such conventional mechanisms was especially likely in large, rapidly growing industrial cities where such disorganization "permits highly organized criminality" as well as less organized forms of group and individual crime and delinquency.

Social disorganization theory and the evidence cited as support for this type of theory generated considerable criticism. One line of criticism came from theorists advocating alternative perspectives which addressed the sources of motivation for crime. In Delinquent Boys, Albert

Cohen challenged social disorganization theory on the grounds that "It is wholly negative. It accounts for the presence of delinquency by the absence of effective constraints (1955: 33)." Cohen argued that an adequate theory had to explain the presence of impulses or dispositions toward delinquency that were expressed when constraints were absent. Social disorganization theorists assumed that a high crime rates was a natural outcome when communal constraints were weak.

Robert Merton (1957) was critical of all perspectives that assumed high rates of deviance were a natural outcome when social control mechanisms broke down. He believed an adequate sociological theory had to address "how some social structures exert a definite pressure upon certain persons in the society to engage in nonconforming rather than conforming conduct (1957: 132)." In defense of theories that focus on the absence of constraints, Travis Hirschi (1973: 165) notes that this criticism is based on a non-scientific "procedural rule" in the sociology of deviance to the effect that an adequate theory has to address both why people break laws as well as why they do not. The criteria for scientifically adjudicating among competing theories are the degree to which they parsimoniously explain known facts and yield predictions that are confirmed. If an assumption survives theoretical competition, then there is nothing inherently wrong in making that assumption. In short, the merits of the criticism of social disorganization theory for slighting the issue of motivation, or societal pressures towards deviance, depends on the outcome of research proposing such pressures.

Another criticism raised by Cohen (1955: 32-33) is that the neighborhoods or areas depicted as "socially disorganized" "are by no means lacking in social organization." Cohen argues that from the perspective of the people who live in an area there is "a vast and ramifying

network of informal associations among like minded people" as opposed to "a horde of anonymous families and individuals." Acknowledging the " absence of community pressures and concerted action for the repression of delinquency," Cohen proposes that "defects in organization" should not be confused with "the absence of organization." Sutherland had been wary of this type of criticism and introduced the notion of "differential social organization" by his 1947 edition of Principles of Criminology. This theme is expressed in recent editions by noting that "social conditions in which the influences on the person are relatively inharmonious and inconsistent themselves constitute a kind of organization (Sutherland, Cressey and Luckenbill 1992: 105)." In The Social Order of the Slum (1968), Gerald Suttles introduced the concept of "ordered segmentation" to refer to the type of social organization that existed in the slum. That concept was intended to convey the notion that there was organization at some levels, but not at others, an idea elaborated in later years by Robert Bursik and Harold Grasmick (1993). Because the concept of "social disorganization" had negative connotations and could reflect observer bias in the depiction of social life, the concept was largely abandoned in sociology by the 1960s. It should be noted, however, that no one disputed the facts that there were differences in degrees and types of social organization among areas of cities and that these differences affected crime rates.

Another criticism of social disorganization theory was methodological. The value of the concept for explaining crime and delinquency was problematic because crime and delinquency were often cited as indexes of social disorganization. In Toward an Understanding of Juvenile Delinquency, Bernard Lander (1954) depicted delinquency as indicative of disorganization and attempted to explain it in terms of other dimensions of social disorganization. In their analysis of

sources of variation in city crime rates, Schuessler and Slatin (1964) directly acknowledge that they "found it necessary to use the dependent variable" (i.e. crime) as "an index of the very condition in which the explanation is concerted to lie" (i.e. social disorganization). As Bursik notes in his review of social disorganization theory (1988: 531), conceptual ambiguity in the definition of social disorganization was compounded by the lack of direct measures of variation in organization and disorganization. Social disorganization was inferred from a complex of related social problems in ecological areas and was used to explain specific problems as well. Of course, the same issue can be raised with regard to other concepts referring to underlying criminogenic conditions such as strain, anomie, or cultural conflict. All such concepts were introduced as the underlying source of variations in crime with no direct measurement across ecological territories.

Since there is generally some order to social life even when it is organized around illegal activities, the concept of social disorganization can be misleading, especially when taken to an extreme. Furthermore, the concept itself is vague and difficult to use in a non-circular fashion. Yet, the concept of social disorganization does tie together a variety of explanations of crime and delinquency that focus on the social conditions that affect conventional social institutions, as well as the bonds between people and those institutions. Moreover, some theorists have reintroduced the same central arguments using somewhat different terms to refer to the same causal processes at the ecological level. Crutchfield, Geerken and Gove (1982: 467-482) and Stark et al. (1983: 4-23) hypothesize that the "social integration" of communities is inhibited by population turnover and report supporting evidence in the explanation of variation in crime rates among cities. The greater the mobility of the population in a city, the higher the crime rates. Similarly, Stark et al. (1983: 4-23) argue that population turnover is a satisfactory inferential measure of variation in

social integration `and` provide supporting evidence based on states. The greater the proportion of a state's population that consists of newcomers or transients, the higher the crime rate. These arguments are identical to those proposed by social disorganization theorists and the evidence in support of it is as indirect as the evidence cited by social disorganization theorists. But, by referring to the positive end of a continuum (social integration rather than disintegration), such research has not generated the same degree of criticism as social disorganization theory. Shaw and McKay, Sutherland and Farris were referring to the same criminogenic circumstances as contemporary social integration theorists. However, it should be noted that the social integration theorists argue that the theory is more relevant to property crimes than to interpersonal violence. They attribute this difference to the "impulsive" nature of homicide and assault, but others (Jensen and Rojek 1998) have argued that it may reflect the fact that homicide and assault involve people who know one another. Hence, population turnover might have different consequences for different crimes.

Ralph Taylor (2001: 128-29) introduces yet another concept to encompass the positive end of a social organization-disorganization continuum–collective efficacy. He argues that social disorganization is high for a locale when residents do not get along with one another, do not belong to local organizations geared to the betterment of the community, hold different values about acceptable behavior on the street, and are unlikely to intervene when they encounter wrong doing. In contrast, the opposite end of the continuum is "collective efficacy." When residents do get along, work through local organizations to better the community and take steps to informally control trouble in their neighborhood, they are high in collective efficacy. Basically, collective efficacy refers to the same characteristics of residents of particular "locales" as the concept of

social integration.

Research on social disorganization theory has focused on crime rates as reported in annual Uniform Crime Reports compiled by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and the measures used to infer social disorganization were some form of census information on cities or areas of cities. Reliance on such data has been viewed as a major limitation for testing all theories that introduce some abstract, underlying social condition as a source of crime. The best solution to the problem is to collect data that allows more direct measurement of the underlying trait. One of the earliest studies to use other sources of data to test social disorganization theory was Robert Kapsis' (1978) study of self-reported as well as officially recorded delinquency in three neighborhoods that were at different stages of racial change or succession. Consistent with social disorganization theory, Kapsis found delinquency to be lowest in the most stable neighborhood and highest in the neighborhood undergoing racial change. A more recent study using self-reports (Simcha-Fagin and Schwartz (1986) found residential stability and level of organizational participation in neighborhoods affected adolescent delinquent behavior as predicted by social disorganization theory as well.

In a study of "Community Structure and Crime", Robert Sampson and W. Byron Groves (1989: 774-802) use data from the British Crime Survey for over 200 communities to measure self-reported criminal offending, criminal victimization, and social disorganization. They define the key mediating mechanisms in that type of theory as sparse local friendship networks, unsupervised teenage peer groups and low organizational participation. These mediating conditions are affected by low economic status, ethnic heterogeneity, residential mobility, family disruption and urbanization. The key measures of community social disorganization were significant correlates of

crime and delinquency and mediated "in large part" the impact of other measures of community structure. In 1991 , E. Britt Paterson reached similar conclusions using interviews aggregated by neighborhood to measure victimization, residential instability, and neighborhood integration. Paterson concluded that the strongest evidence to emerge from his analysis was that the "non-economic" characteristics of neighborhoods (i.e. those most directly relevant to social disorganization theory) were the strongest correlates of crime. Hence, when research has addressed the criticisms based on prior research, the findings have been quite compatible with social disorganization theory.

Some of these new assessments of social disorganization theory have drawn on the notion of "social networks" as a more precise way of conceptualizing and measuring the organization or disorganization of communities. In 1983 Stark and his colleagues proposed that "Social integration...can be effectively defined in terms of social networks" and in 1986 Marvin Krohn (1986) and William Freundenberg(1986) both proposed more specific attention to properties of social networks in the study of communities. Krohn proposed that high "network density," defined in terms of direct relationships among members of communities, facilitates informal social control, inhibiting crime and delinquency. Sampson and Groves linked this network terminology to conceptions of social organization and disorganization as "different ends of the same continuum with respect to systemic networks of community control (1989: 777)." Concepts such as network density, social integration and collective eficacy avoid the negative connotations that critics leveled at social disorganization theory, but the basic criminogenic process is the same.

In addition to the introduction of network terminology to more objectively specify measurable characteristics of neighborhoods or communities, more elaborate conceptions of

social organization and disorganization have been proposed. Bursik and Grasmick (1993) differentiate among personal, parochial and public "levels of social control." Personal social control is high when there are pervasive interpersonal ties among residents of an area or community. Such ties were central to Shaw and Mckay's formulation of social disorganization theory and are encompassed by the concept of network density. The parochial level of social control refers to relationships between the people in an area and social institutions such as the church, schools and businesses. Interpersonal network ties might be strong even when relationships with social institutions are weak or strained. Finally, Bursik and Grasmick propose that there is a public level of control distinct frm personal and parochial social control. When people lack influence with the government and/or the justice system, they are low in public control. This conception of the different ways in which people in an area can be organized or "disorganized" elaborates on Sutherland's notion of differential social organization and Suttle's conception of "ordered segmentation" (See above).The introduction of levels of social control or levels of organization helps explain the emergence and persistence of gang problems in ecological settings characterized by residential stability and neighborhood ties.

Another line of research proposed by Bursik (1988: 542-43) is a consideration of the "reciprocal relationship" between crime and social disorganization. Farris proposed such a reciprocal connection in 1948, but research on the topic was not conducted until forty to fifty years later. Wesley Skogan (1986) argues that high crime rates in a neighborhood causes fear among the residents, resulting in social disorganization as reflected in physical and psychological withdrawal, weakening of informal control mechanisms, a decline in organizational life, and deteriorating business conditions among other consequences. Most research has considered social

disorganization to be the variable which explains crime and delinquency, but there are sound

theorretical reasons to consider feedback loops between crime and social disorganization. A

recent study by Marowitz, Bellair, Liska and Liu (2001: 293-319) based on three waves of data

from the British Crime Survey found support for this type of feedback loop in that decreases in

neighborhood cohesion were found to increase crime, but increases in fear also undermined

cohesion. Social disorder increases crime and crime increases disorder through its effect on fear of

crime.

Since social disorganization theory focuses on the absence or breakdown of social control

mechanisms, there are obvious links between disorganization theories and the brand of theory

named "social control" theory. Social control theory as presented by Travis Hirschi in Causes of

Delinquency (1969) was one of the dominant theoretical perspectives in the last three decades of

the 20th century. Hirschi argued that variations in delinquent behavior among youth could be

explained by variation in attachment to others, commitments to conventional goals, acceptance of

conventional moral standards or beliefs, and involvement in conventional activities. These four

were considered to be dimensions of the social bond and the greater the social bonds between a

youth and society, the lower the odds of involvement in delinquency.

When social bonds to conventional role models, values and institutions are aggregated for

youth in a particular setting, they measure much the same phenomena as captured by concepts

such as network ties or social integration. Indeed, in a comparison of theoretical traditions, Gary

Jensen and Dean Rojek (1980) categorized social disorganization theory and social control theory

together as a common macro-micro theory and outlined their shared contrasts with other

perspectives. Social disorganization theory addresses ecological variations in crime addresses

variable behavior among individuals. As expressed by Bursik (1988: 521), social disorganization

theory is the "group-level analogue of control theory." Both social disorganization theory and

social control theory focus on variations in barriers to crime and delinquency and the absence or

breakdown of social institutions as correlates of crime and delinquency at either the ecological or

individual level. This shared emphasis is reflected in the common criticism that they are "absence

of something" theories. They both presume that crime is most probable when those institutions

and control mechanisms which ordinarily function to reinforce conformity are weak or disrupted.

Both focus on failures or inconsistencies in the socialization of the young as part of the underlying

causal process when explaining delinquency, but disorganization theory highlights the ecological

variables assumed to generate those inconsistencies and failures.

As noted above, one of the criticisms leveled at social disorganization theory is that it is an

"absence of something" perspective, ignoring societal pressures(Merton) or motivational forces

(Cohen) generating crime and delinquency. This criticism has been leveled at both social

disorganization theory and social control theory. Both Merton and Cohen propose alternative

theories that focus on driving forces rather than barriers. The societal pressure driving crime from

Merton's perspective is a cultural value system, widely embraced by Americans, emphasizing the

pursuit of economic success. When coupled with limited means for the full realization of such

goals, the social system exerts pressures to adopt innovative ways of realizing those goals. Cohen

challenges this "illicit means" theory and argues that it is frustration in the pursuit of the good

opinions of conventional adults, especially teachers, that generates anger and frustration. A

collective solution to status problems is rejection of the conventional system and its values, and

formation of oppositional subcultures (contracultures). In such subcultures status is accorded for

law-breaking. Since both Merton and Cohen focus on discrepancies between goals and prospects of realizing goals as the societal pressure (Merton) or source of individual motivation (Cohen) accounting for crime, their theories have been labeled "strain" theories.

Hirschi argues that there are striking contrasts between strain theories and social control theories, and similar contrasts can be noted for social disorganization and such theories. One contrast is the societal pressure towards crime proposed by Merton. In his illicit means theory, it is widely shared commitments to cultural goals, coupled with limits on full realization of such goals, that generates crime. In social disorganization and social control theories, the failure of conventional institutions to instill conventional values and norms is a cause of crime and delinquency. This difference is a crucial difference in that strain theory introduces the successful learning of widely shared, culturally approved goals as part of the causal nexus generating crime while social disorganization/social control theories argue that it is the failure of institutions to instill shared values and establish social bonds that contributes to crime. There has been considerable research on this issue and, at present, no on has actually shown widely shared aspirations to facilitate crime, Indeed, most research suggests that high aspirations and ambitions toward culturally approved goals inhibit crime (See Jensen and Rojek 1998; Agnew 2001).

Social disorganization theories can be contrasted with some cultural deviance theories as well, especially versions of cultural deviance theory that were advocated by theorists who specifically rejected social disorganization and strain theories. The most dramatic rejection of theories attributing crime to status problems or to the failure of conventional institutions was Walter Miller's, "Lower Class Culture as a Generating Milieu of Gang Delinquency (1958)." Miller argued that high rates of crime among lower class youth did not reflect failure to achieve

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middle-class goals, nor the absence or disorganization of communal life. Rather, crime reflected socialization into a "lower class culture" with values, norms and beliefs encouraging behaviors that "automatically" violate "certain legal norms," or where illegal acts are the "'demanded' response to certain situations." Stated quite simply, "the dominant component of motivation of 'delinquent' behavior engaged in by members of lower class corner groups involves a positive effort to achive status, conditions, or qualities valued within the actor's most significant milieu (1958: 19)."

This type of theory focuses on cultural or normative conflict as the macro condition generating crime. Because there are variable subcultural standards, behavior acceptable or tolerated in one context may be unacceptable in another. Because laws are likely to endorse the perspectives of the more advantaged citizens and to be enforced most rigidly when dealing with the disadvantaged, lower class and other disadvantaged categories of youth will experience the greatest conflicts with official authorities. However, within their own subcultural environment, they are quite normal products of successful, but subcultural, socialization. They are merely seeking status in terms of the standards characterizing their milieu. In fact, Miller proposes that lower-class gang youth "possess to an unusually high degree both the capacity and motivation to conform to perceived cultural norms." The delinquent is a conformist within a larger subcultural setting.

Hirschi 's social control theory contrasts dramatically with Miller's cultural deviance theory in that Hirschi argues that there are no sizeable subcultural milieus linked to social class where delinquency is either demanded or an automatic outcome of conformity to subcultural traditions. Not only do his survey data fail to reveal different values concerning the impropriety of

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law-breaking among social classes, but youthful interaction with the people who should be perpetuating the traditions of their community (i.e. parents) is inversely related to delinquent behavior. Hirschi proposes that there is a common cultural disapproval of law-breaking, but that youths learn the common culture to varying degrees. Those least socialized into that culture are the most likely to break laws.

Despite similarities between social control and social disorganization theories, it is not clear where social disorganization theorists stand on such cultural issues. Most contemporary social disorganization theorists focus on variables that inhibit the development of social networks, communal bonds, or effective social institutions. Early social disorganization theorists also addressed various forms of "cultural" disorganization, normative conflict, or cultural conflict, but are vague about the exact form that such cultural disorganization takes. In his 1939 edition of Principles of Criminology, Sutherland argued that "cultural conflict is a specific aspect of social disorganization and in that sense the two concepts are names for smaller and larger aspects of the same thing." He proposed "law-abiding culture was dominant," but he argued that "Differential association is possible because society is composed of different groups with varied cultures (7). " These cultures varied in desirable ways, but they also varied "with reference to values which laws are designed to protect (6)." Mobility was the "universal and most significant element in the process of social disorganization (1939: 77)," but mobility also contributed to the emergence of "cultural conflict." At some points in his discussion the conflict of cultures is illustrated by questionable business practices and the subcultural values and norms that such practices reflect. At other points the focus is on conflicts reflected in the behavior of second generation immigrants. At other points it is conflicts generated by the imposition of external colonial control. In short,

there were many ways in which culture could be disorganized, but Sutherland did not develop a

clear definition that would allow a clear differentiation between social and cultural

disorganization.

That ambiguity has not been resolved and is reflected in more recent treatments of the

concept of social disorganization. According to Taylor, one of the characteristics of residents in

socially disorganized locales is that they "hold different values about what is and is not acceptable

behavior on the street (2001: 129)." This characteristic is included together with other

characteristics that clearly reflect social relationships and network ties among people. While

shared values should facilitate social integration, "values" and other cultural phenomena (norms

and beliefs) are conceptually distinct from social relationships and should be treated as a distinct

form of disorganization.

Discussions of the different ways in which the concept of culture has been introduced into

the explanation of crime (See Yinger 1960; Empey 1967) suggest several distinct ways in which

the system of values, norms and beliefs can be "disorganized." A cultural system can be

disorganized in the sense that there are conflicts among values, norms and beliefs within a widely

shared, dominant culture. Matza and Gresham Sykes (1961) propose that in

addition to cultural prescriptions stressing the importance of

obeying laws , there are widely shared "subterranean" cultural

perspectives that encourage crime. While condemning crime in

general, law-abiding citizens accord respect and admiration to

the person who "pulls off the big con," takes risks and

successfully engages in exciting, dangerous activities. Sykes and

Matza (1957) also note that despite conventional admonitions

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prescribing conformity to the law, other cultural norms and beliefs convey the message that breaking the law is not so bad when the victim "had it coming," when those supporting the law are not morally pure themselves; when the offender believes he or she "had no choice"; when "no one was hurt"; or when the offense was motivated by social purposes more important than the law. Such beliefs, or "techniques of neutralization," are learned in quite conventional contexts and are reflected in legal codes as "extenuating circumstances." Thus, the culture shared by people in a society or locale can be "disorganized" in the sense that conflicting moral messages are built into the cultural system itself.

The depiction of a society as a collection of socially differentiated groups with distinct subcultural perspectives that lead some of these groups into conflict with the law is another form of cultural disorganization, typically called cultural conflict. There may be perfectly consistent messages conveyed within a given subculture, but they may conflict with the views of other subcultures. Thorsten Sellin (1938) outlined three ways in which such conflict could occur involving distinct cultural groups. Cultural conflict could occur when 1) groups with different standards overlap or interact in border regions, 2) laws of one group are extended to encompass others and 3) distinct groups migrate into new territories. While Sellin's conflicts involve culturally distinct groups, Walter Miller and others extend the conflict to distinctive, socially differentiated subcultures within a society as well. Taylor's view that residents of a locale are disorganized if they hold different values about acceptable behavior on the street reflects this

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subcultural view of conflict as well.

Among the theoretical challenges for criminology in the 21st century will be a more precise delineation among the many different forms of social disorganization that have been introduced in the revival of that theory and a more precise differentiation between social and cultural disorganization. Do concepts such as social integration and collective efficacy encompass distinct dimensions of social disorganization or do they refer to the exact same phenomena? How can cultural disorganization be measured and differentiated from social disorganization? Do they covary so strongly that independent effects on crime cannot be discerned? In addition to attention to conceptual and empirical issues, the unique explanatory power of this type of theory in competition with cultural deviance and structural strain theories will have to be addressed. Such a feat will require careful attention to the differences among abstract concepts such as anomie, strain, and disorganization and far more attention to the link between abstract concepts and empirical indicators than has characterized research thus far.

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