Structural Accounts

Outline

- Social Ecology
- Strain Theory
- Subcultural
- Functionalism

Industrialization & Urbanization
- Mechanic → Organic solidarity
- Social Facts – not individuals
  - But key = control individual aspirations
  - Assumes selfish, impulsive, dangerous if solo
- Socialization via Social ties
  - Limit impulses & prevent chaos
- Low social integration > Anomie
  - Social change upsets moral fabric → normlessness
  - Labor interdependence (organic) prevents Lord of the Flies
- Individual ideas explain cases
  - But don’t explain differences among groups/locations

Social Ecology – Ideas

- Social Disorg
  - Social pathology gave way by 1930s
  - Individuals, Groups, & Criminogenicity
  - Not bio./psych disorder, not choice per se
- City as a Natural Area
  - Concentric Zone Model – Park/Burgess
    - Central/business, transition, blue-collar, residential, commuter/suburbs
  - Delinquency/Crime distinctive by Zone
    - Highest towards center
    - Tolerated (even encouraged) in some zones

Social Ecology – Evaluation

- Explains better than ethnicity – Shaw/McKay
  - Inner zones = concentration of soc.disorg. symptoms
  - Delinquency highest there, regardless of ethnicity
- Critique
  - Methods problems – official records
    - MC escape detection, LC subject to bias/color
  - Doesn’t explain MC (or UC) delinquency
  - Circularity: delinquency as measure of soc.disorg.
  - Underestimated social organization
  - Doesn’t predict individual cases!
    - Most in these areas don’t commit crimes
    - Ethnicity can dampen rates – family ties, etc.

Durkheim & Crime

- Better data
- Better explanations
  - Low participation, few networks, low collective efficacy
  - But = 3 separate variables
    - integration, relations, organization
  - “ecology” combines/treats as
- Weaker social controls?
  - Because tradeoff (entropy). > Law!!
- Economic deprivation
  - Concentrated disadvantage & underclass
  - Relative deprivation
- Physical disorder – broken window
Strain Theory – Ideas

- "anomie, or strain" – *not* the same
- "when people's aspirations become uncontrolled and unfulfilled: – u&u *not* the same
- Robert Merton, “Social Structure & Anomie”
- Cultural Goals & Structural Means
- Modes of Adaptation
  - Conformity
  - Innovation (diff means)
  - Ritualism (diff goal; not deviant?)
  - Retreatism (reject both, e.g. addicts, hobos)
  - Rebellion (reject both, promote new)
- Crime Produced by Macro Forces

Strain Theory – Evaluation

- Poor may not commit more crimes
- Does not explain violent crimes
  - Robbery = innov? but others = passion, not econ
- Overemphasis on econ
  - Retreatism – cultural not just econ (peers, nonpoor)
- Who does what?
  - Who adapts at all? Who doesn’t conform?
  - Why some commit crime, others don’t

Functionalist

- Manifest Functions
- Latest Functions
- Equilibrium
  - System seeks harmony
  - Dynamic? Punctuated?
- Doesn’t address:
  - Dysfunctions
  - Change
  - Variation

Social Structure

- *Patterned (?) relationships (?)*
- Abstract
  - Not easily describable/measurable
  - Not easily comparable/generalizable
- Divorces micro from macro
  - Status/roles from Societies
  - Not clearly linked, but not logically separable
- Rigid/firm – Implies stasis
  - No clear way of assessing structural change

Subcultural Theories

- *Macro? Micro?*
- *Structure? Process?*

- Next time 😊

Macro Wrap-up

- Agency – responsibility
- Policy implications
- Subsequent developments
  - Extensions of strain theory
  - Left realism
  - Peacemaking criminology
  - Postmodern criminology
Macro Critique

- Adequacy
- Comprehensiveness
- Current appeal