

Social-Structural Approach: The Formation of Subcultures

Subcultural Theories

- Developed to account for delinquency among lower-class males, especially gangs
- Argues that delinquent subcultures emerge in response to special problems that member of the dominant culture do not face

Albert Cohen The Lower-Class Boy and Middle-Class Measuring Rod

- Theory focuses on young males living in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods who are judged by middle class standards but who are unable to meet them because they lack proper socialization
- The result is the development of a subculture that is:
 - Nonutilitarian
 - Negativistic
 - Versatile
 - Characterized by short run hedonism and group autonomy

Differential Opportunity Richard Cloward & Lloyd Ohlin

- Delinquent subcultures flourish in lower-class areas and take the forms they do because opportunities for illegitimate success are no more equitably distributed than those for conventional success.



Three Types of Gangs Cloward and Ohlin

- Criminal Gangs
- Conflict Gangs
- Retreatist Gangs

The Lower-Class Boy and Lower-Class Culture, Walter Miller

- Lower-class boys who become delinquent are responding to a lower-class culture, which is characterized by a female-based household, and the one-sex peer unit.
- Miller viewed the structure of this class in terms of six *focal concerns*: trouble, toughness, smartness, excitement, fate, and autonomy, which combine to distinguish lower-class from middle-class culture