

CHAPTER 5

5.1 Self Check page 150

List the three major types of social theories of delinquency.

The three major types are:

- social structure theories, which focus on economic and social conditions.
- social process theories, which focus on how peer group relationships, family relationships, and failure in school can affect delinquency.
- social reaction theories, which examine the roles that social institutions play in perpetuating delinquency.

5.2 Self Check page 160

1. What factors lead to delinquency according to Shaw and McKay?

The three factors described by Shaw and McKay are:

- cultural heterogeneity, where residents of a community lack similar characteristics and shared values;
- mobility, where residents do not stay in one home for long and thus cannot build community ties; and
- poverty.

2. Briefly describe the three subculture theories.

According to subculture theory, delinquents hold values, norms, and beliefs in opposition to those held in the dominant culture—but which are in agreement with those of the subculture to which the delinquents belong. The three subculture theories are:

- Cohen's delinquency and frustration theory states that, although lower-class youths have different values, norms, and beliefs than do middle-class youth, their goal is middle-class membership.
- Cloward and Ohlin's theory of differential opportunity. Cloward and Ohlin believed that juveniles did not commit crime merely because they could not achieve their goals. Rather, they believed that illegal opportunities, just like legal ones, are stratified unequally.
- Miller's lower-class focal concerns theory, which stated that delinquency occurred when youth followed certain lower-class norms that violate the law.

3. Review Miller's focal concerns theory. What flaw can you find in this view of society?

Miller's focal concerns theory creates a stereotype of the lower class that may or may not be accurate. Miller may be accurate with regards to the lower class of Boston in the 1950s; however, he does not compare his observations against those of other cities or other times.

5.3 Self Check page 170

Compare the two branches of social process theory—learning theory and social control theory.

Learning theory states that juveniles commit delinquent acts because they learn the attitudes, skills, and rationalization necessary to commit these acts.

Social control theory assumes that people will violate the law, but withhold themselves from doing so because of the effect of social controls—such as the disapproval of their families, friends, and school.

5.4 Self Check page 173

1. Describe how labeling theory has had a significant impact on the juvenile justice system.

It has had a significant impact, such as by increasing the use of diversion to keep juveniles out of the juvenile justice system and the stigmas attached to being processed through it.

2. Name two major conflict theorists and briefly explain their theories.

John Hagan believed that delinquency must be explained in terms of power relationships, such as how power in the workforce and family interact to create delinquency. Mark Colvin and John Pauly worked together to argue that delinquency resulted from inadequate socialization within the family, which is in turn affected by the parent's ability to feel self-control and power in the workforce.

3. Explain the roles society plays in increasing the risk of delinquency for certain groups according to conflict theorists and labeling theory.

According to conflict theorists, society contributes to delinquency because of its uneven distribution of wealth and power. Labeling theory contends that delinquency is encouraged because society views first-time offenders in a negative light thereby making youths fulfill the role of delinquents.