

SUTHERLAND'S 9 PROPOSITIONS

Proposition 1:

Criminal behaviour is learnt

Differential association argues that criminal behaviour is learnt from other people. It does not acknowledge the role of heredity, human nature and innovation.

Proposition 2:

Criminal behaviour is learnt through interaction with other people by means of communication.

Socialising and interacting with criminal elements may cause criminal behaviour to be acquired.

Eg: prisoners exchange info on how to commit the "perfect crime" without being apprehended

Proposition 3:

The learning process takes place mainly within intimate, personal groups.

Family, friends and peers form the most important intimate social relationships and one models these relationships. These relationships shape our thought of acceptable behaviour.

Proposition 4:

When criminal behaviour is learnt, the learning process includes the following:

Techniques needed to commit a specific crime and the presence of the necessary motive, drives, rationalisation and attitude.

The techniques ensure the success of the criminal act.

Eg: raping a women- it is the necessary attitude that is primary in the act- raping does not have to be taught or learnt.

Proposition 6

A person engages in delinquency or crime when the preponderance of definition is in favour of breaking the law.

If the majority favour criminal behaviour, the individual is more likely to be swayed in that direction.

Eg: teenager associating with peers using drugs.

Proposition 5

The specific direction of motives and drives is learnt from definitions of legal codes as favourable or unfavourable.

The dominant views of an individual in terms of crime being acceptable or unacceptable will determine one's willingness to do crime.

Eg: Aran children will grow up believing the world needs cleansing

Proposition 7

Differential association varies in respect of frequency, duration, priority and tensity.

Not all associations carry same weight- adolescent friends may carry more weight than a concerned sibling.

Frequency-how often, duration-how long, priority- phase association takes place eg: childhood, intensity-degree of identification with associations.

Proposition 8

The process of learning criminal behaviour by means of association involves all the mechanisms that apply in any learning process.

Mechanisms are: affection (feelings and emotional responses to values), cognition (thoughts and experiences) and conation (performance guiding factor or pace).

Eg: learning to build a puzzle or pick pockets- the association will determine whether or not the individual performs the act and at what pace.

Proposition 9

Although criminal behaviour is an expression of general needs and values, offence is not explained by such needs and values because non-criminal behaviour is an expression of the same needs and values.

Eg: break ins explained in terms of socio-economic circumstances.