The Chicago school of sociology emerged in the 1920's and produced two significant theoretical explanations for deviance: (1) social disorganization; and (2) differential association (a.k.a. learning theory). We will discuss each in turn.

(1) The Social Disorganization Perspective:

Many people have an image of deviance being triggered by forces of rapid social change. The idea is that as society becomes disorganized, people start to lose social controls over their behaviors, suddenly engaging in behaviors that would previously have been unthinkable. Such images are not new, but emerged as a distinct theoretical perspective at the University of Chicago in the 1920's. By emphasizing social causation, as opposed to rational choice or illness, the Chicago school departed from the individualistic focus of classical and pathological theorizing. In this regard, we will look at the work of two interrelated groups of sociologists at the University of Chicago: (1) those outlining the conceptual dynamics of social disorganization (W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki); and (2) those studying its ecological or social-spatial dimensions (R.E. Park and Ernest Burgess).

The Dynamics of Disorganization: Thomas and Znaniecki:

The basic theoretical image of disorganization was formulated by W.I. Thomas - a flamboyant intellectual with provocative views who got himself in trouble on a number of occasions and was ultimately expelled from the faculty. Despite these escapades, his ideas remained influential. His initial formulation of the perspective was found in a study, jointly authored with Znaniecki, entitled The Polish Peasant in Europe and America. There, it was stated that social disorganization could be defined as "a decrease of the influence of existing social rules of behavior upon individual members of the group." Just such decreases were found in the lives of rural Polish peasants who had migrated to large U.S. cities in the early 20th century (e.g. through an analysis of their diaries, letters, and other personal documents). In document after document they detail the inability of immigrant families to exert control over their members, that the ways of the "old world" don't work in the "new world," and their difficulties in assimilating the norms and standards of the new social environment. Together, Thomas and Znaniecki produced a detailed sociological story of the manner in which rapid social change dissipates the impact of social norms. Without strong normative standards, the immigrants developed an attitude that "anything goes," drifting into delinquency, divorce, mental disorder and other forms of unruly behavior.

Thomas and Znaniecki's depiction of social disorganization had a great influence on other sociologists working at the university. This is particularly evident in the work of Robert Park, a journalist who had studied sociology in Germany and was brought to Chicago by Thomas. While at Chicago, Park embarked on a detailed study of changes in the U.S. social

landscape, drawing heavily on the idea of social disorganization - particularly in relation to the urban environment.

The Ecology of Disorganization: Park and Burgess

Park, along with his colleague Ernest Burgess, introduced an ecological model for the study of disorganization that is now seen as the hallmark of the Chicago perspective on deviance. Referring to the study of spatial relations between various species of living organisms, ecology - along with the interdependent, symbiotic relationships it emphasizes - was taken to mean that the life of each person affects and is affected by all others in a particular geographic area.

The image of symbiotic relationships between organisms within a super-organism held a certain attraction for Park. As an urban journalist, he had observed the complex network of interrelated human parts that made up the life of the city. With this perspective on the interdependence of organisms in a human community, he described dangers in the activity of an ecological community in terms of a fourfold process involving: (1) invasion by a competing species; (2) conflict for dominance between species; (3) the accommodation of weaker species to demonstrably dominant ones; and (4) assimilation of a new order of symbiosis based on the accommodative outcomes of the previous three stages. In relation to deviance this suggested that the normative order of a well-organized community was disrupted by the invasion of some competing basis for social order (e.g. technology, immigration and urbanization). Each produced conflict for dominance within symbiotically interdependent human communities (disorganization). At this point, symbiotic coordination was lacking, the breakdown of normative structure represented a breakdown in social control, so deviance became widespread. It would remain high until the processes of accommodation and assimilation were complete - until society became symbiotically reorganized around a new dominant form of social order.

But park and Burgess went further, attempting to geographically identify the "natural" areas of high or low deviance. High deviance areas were spatially the most susceptible to the competitive invasion of the forces of rapid change. Low deviance areas were least susceptible. To test this notion, social ecologists mapped out the "natural" physical spaces of the city into a ring of five concentric zones. Each possessed a unique population with a unique organizational style - qualities, interests, and cultural characteristics that were similar to each other but different from the inhabitants of other zones. Each zone was organized or disorganized by virtue of a varying symbiotic relationship between its component parts and its organic whole.

At the center of the five urban zones was the central business district, the heart of the city and of its business, technology and industry. This was the dynamic force behind urban life, as well as the engine of change. At the outer edges of the city, in contrast, was the commuter zone populated by wealthy commuters shielded from the forces of urbanization in the city core. The middle zone comprised working class neighborhoods characterized by two and three family flats. Out from that lay the old city neighborhoods more spatially removed from social change. The zone most affected by change was the area into which the growing central business district

constantly encroached. This "transition zone" was the site of most social disorganization and deviance, characterized by light industry, warehouses, cheap, run-down rental properties, rootless people, vagabonds and bums - essentially a slum. In this area the battle of competition-dominance was being fought out, and its residents were the losers caught in the crossfire. Disorganized by rapid change, such zones were said to experience the highest rates of deviance as measured by Chicago researchers. The prevalence of deviance decreased the further one moved out from this area into other zones of the city.

Shaw and MacKay (1929; 1942) applied this model to the study of delinquency. Looking at almost 56,000 juvenile court records, they found that the closer one went to the city core, the higher the rates of delinquency, peaking in the "transition zone." Moreover, they found that these forms of social pathology were unrelated to changes in ethnic population or population composition. Regardless of which ethnic group occupied the transitional area, the social pathology rates are high, and they stay proportionately the same zone by zone. Essentially, factors of social disorganization associated with this zone (e.g. denial of economic opportunity to the poor, ethnic segregation, and physical deterioration) are associated with the relative incidence of social problems, not the specific characteristics of the people living there. This was interpreted to be due to the breakdown of the formal and informal mechanisms that are normally thought to regulate behavior in these areas (e.g. family dissolution, poverty, ethnic heterogeneity, etc. prevents the exercise of community control).

Identifying Disorganizational Deviance:

Early study of social disorganization at the University of Chicago combined two research traditions: (1) efforts to objectively measure external factors and conditions which were believed to affect the relative disorganization of society (e.g. to develop statistical maps of the city); and (2) an emphasis on the subjective side of social life (e.g. attempts to explore the meaning of social life as experienced by people themselves (e.g. through in depth interviews, firsthand observations and personal histories). This willingness to combine the two approaches was a strong point of the early Chicago school - today these contrasting research traditions often represent irreconcilable differences between many sociologists.

Together, the statistical and field studies carried out by Chicago researchers can be compared to a mosaic. In many respects, filed data were used not only to make preliminary explorations, but as the basis of hypotheses tested by the use of both types of methodology.

Social Control of Disorganizational Deviance

Social control was the central fact and the central problem of society for the Chicago school. Yet, because of their mission of creating an objective social science, and the attendant need to dissociate themselves from the image of sociology as social reform, Chicago sociologists avoided advocating a particular strategy of social control.

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Yet, despite this public posture, the social disorganization approach pointed to a distinctive method of social control: one focussed on treating society rather than separately treating individuals (which would be a mistake). Shaw and McKay, for example, argued for the need to develop programs which seek to effect changes in the conditions of life in specific local communities and in whole sections of the city. The idea was to restore normative stability within disorganized communities (e.g. the "Chicago Area Project").

In this specific instance, local residents were placed in positions of key organizational decision making, and most staff were recruited from the "disorganized" neighbourhoods. Under their leadership the program sought to prevent delinquency by two broad strategies: (1) coordinating the community resources of a wide variety of otherwise fragmented and competing groups (e.g. churches, schools, unions, etc.); and (2) sponsoring a host of specific youth-activity programs (e.g. counselling by field workers, neighbourhood improvement programs, and recreational activities). It was hoped that these tactics would reduce social disorganization and that potentially deviant youth would be thrown a lifeline back to the normative shores of a well-organized society.

How successful were these strategies? Sympathetic commentators have argued that "in all probability delinquency was reduced," yet the real accomplishments of the Chicago Area Project were never really systematically evaluated. A similar project in Boston, however, was evaluated by Walter Miller over a 3 year period. On the one hand he discovered that this project succeeded in promoting close ties between community organizers and local youth gangs, and in organizing many gangs into more conventional, club-like associations. It also increased recreational outlets, educational and occupational opportunities, citizen involvement, and higher levels of inter-agency cooperation. Yet, despite these successes, it had a negligible impact in preventing delinquency. The ratio of "moral to immoral conduct," as measured by outreach workers, remained constant throughout the life of the project. This was backed up by statistics on court appearances recorded before, during and after the term of the project, showing no measurable differences between boys with project contact and a matched control group.

Such evaluations don't speak well for the practical usefulness of such preventative social programs suggested by disorganization theory. While measurable gains were made in community reorganization, delinquency was not reduced. Terrence Morris argues that disorganization theorists were thus wrong - that disorganization and deviance may both be the products of another factor: structured social inequality. Hence, efforts at neighbourhood reorganization fail to address the deeper structural factor behind deviance - the symptom not the cause - and are thus doomed to failure.

Assessment of the Social Disorganization Perspective

While a thoroughly social viewpoint on deviance and social control transcending many of the individualistic limitations and biases of earlier perspectives, and one enabling us to imagine deviants as people like ourselves, there are serious weaknesses in the formulation and application

of disorganization theorizing. We will discuss four of these.

First, despite an emphasis on relating theory to research, disorganization researchers were not always careful in operationalizing their conceptual measurements. This occurred in two ways. Sometimes researchers failed to justify why a particular indicator of disorganization was taken as a measure of normative breakdown (e.g. why should a high proportion of working women be considered as evidence of disorganization). Perhaps this is indirect evidence of normative breakdown. Then again, it may be the researcher's own normative bias. The second problem in the measurement of disorganization was that statistics on deviance were themselves at times used as indicators of disorganization. The problem was that disorganization was said to cause deviance. Can something be both a cause and an effect at the same time. Unfortunately, disorganization researchers have not always been logically consistent on this point.

Secondly, disorganization theorists have tended to be disproportionately white, middle-class males whose sociological journeys don't take them far from their own back yards. As such, many fail to appreciate the ways that people from other class, cultural or ethnic backgrounds organize their worlds. Differences in organization may thus be confused with disorganization by interpreting the cultures of others through the distorting lenses of their own viewpoints (e.g. the 1965 Moynihan Report explaining high rates of black crime by the relative "social disorganization of the black family." Yet, we must ask whether their female-headed households are really disorganized, or merely another organized, highly adaptive response to the systematic removal of black males through discriminatory welfare rules? Moreover, are black males as absent from the home as is stereotypically assumed?) Yet, bound to a stereotypical, ethnocentric view of what constitutes proper organization, researchers were blind to these important distinctions. Confusion of this kind is a liability of much disorganization theorizing.

Third, the types of deviance disorganization researchers focus on in the so-called "transition zone" (e.g. street crime, delinquency, mental illness, drug addiction, etc.) Are generally "disrespectable" in character. But what about white collar crime? Embezzlement, false advertizing, stock manipulation, creative accounting, price fixing, insider trading, and so on are typically performed by well-organized, respectable individuals who generally don't live in the "transition zone." Disorganization theory is totally inapplicable to such forms of deviance, and has no answer to this criticism.

Finally, the disorganization perspective's emphasis on deviance as a natural by-product of rapid social change has led critics to suggest that it fails to consider the potential causal influences of structured differences in social power and social class. Such social stratification may actually be what the problem is in the transition zone, not social disorganization. For example, by describing slum dwellers as disorganized, the disorganization perspective neglects the fact that they are poor. Yet slums are the product of an unequal distribution of material resources - socially created, not naturally occurring. Similarly, the central business district is considered the natural engine of change, not the socially structured location of powerful and privileged economic forces which exploit as well as disorganize. People are said to deviate

because social disorganization has robbed them of norms and constraints - neglecting the possibility that people deviate because social stratification has robbed them of human resources and a sense of dignity. Perhaps the poor really deviate because they are frustrated, angry, or seeking escape from an oppressed social existence. Yet the social disorganization perspective sidesteps disturbing political questions about the unequal organization of our society in favor of questions about the disproportionate disorganization of specific areas.

This theme has been noted by many British researchers who put a different spin on the Chicago school's observation that common crimes and deviance are concentrated in slums and zones of ecological transition (Rex and Moore, David Downes, and Terrence Morris come to mind). Whereas the Chicago tradition blurred the natural forces of disorganization, critical British researchers have instead defined disorganization as an historical by-product of social domination by the powerful.

To be fair, not all disorganization researchers ignored social stratification (e.g. the later work of Shaw and McKay on delinquency gave more emphasis to structural factors related to unequal social position). Yet, much work inspired by the social disorganization perspective has failed to follow suit.

(2) The Learning Perspective

The second major theoretical approach to emerge from the Chicago school is the learning perspective. The central theme of this perspective is simply that deviance is a form of learned behavior, like any other. Unlike other sociological perspectives, however, it does not view society as a whole as the cause of deviance - that is too abstract. Rather, the focus is on how deviance arises in the diverse ways that people learn through interacting with each other in everyday life.

Sutherland's Theory of Differential Association:

Edwin Sutherland formulated the learning theory of deviance in terms of differential association. This asserts that "any person can be trained to adopt and follow a pattern of criminal behavior." While initially trained in the thought of the Chicago school and its attendant social disorganization perspective, Sutherland came to believe that differences in the crime rates between groups in the same society could be better explained by the social psychological processes of learning. Sutherland's 1947 theory was intended as a comprehensive explanation of criminal and non-criminal deviant behavior. It was based on two core assumptions: (1) that deviance occurs when people define a certain human situation as an appropriate occasion for violating social norms or criminal laws; and (2) that definitions of the situation are acquired through an individual's history of past experience, particularly in terms of past associations with others. The emphasis here is on social-psychological, not structural factors. Sutherland felt that in explaining the causes of individual deviance, it was "not necessary to explain why a person has the associations he has," but the normal learning process whereby a person comes to define a particular social situation as more or less appropriate for deviant behavior.

According to Sutherland, learning deviance involves learning to: (1) define certain situations as the appropriate occasions for deviant behavior; (2) master the techniques of successful deviant activity; and (3) acquire motives, drives, attitudes and rationalizations which justify violations of norms and/or laws. The theory of differential association states that these three things are learned principally in the process of communicative interaction with others, within intimate personal groups. The crucial step occurs when people acquire an excess of definitions favorable to deviance over definitions unfavorable to deviance. Acting deviant then becomes probable. The probability of deviant behavior, however, is further said to depend on the frequency, duration, priority, and intensity of one's associations with those who define deviance positively or negatively (see Sutherland's 9 propositions which lay this all out clearly).

Of course, the frequency, duration, priority and intensity of pro-deviant and anti-deviant associations are difficult to measure. Ideally, each of these factors could be converted into a precise mathematical formula, and the likelihood of deviant behavior determined by calculating the difference between favorable and unfavorable associations. Yet, as Sutherland himself recognized, the development of such a technique would be extremely difficult in practical terms.

The Legacy of Differential Association:

Sutherland's theory normalized our understanding of deviance, allowing us to imagine that, given exposure to different interpersonal forces, we could easily be as deviant as any of our fellow human beings. This idea of deviance as learned behavior has become the most widely accepted modern perspective of deviance.

Sutherland's ideas encouraged research aimed at testing key elements of his theory. For example, in 1957 James Short reported an admittedly limited study of adolescents housed in a training school for youths. Comparing self-reported measures of delinquency (e.g. theft, drug use, etc.) and respondents' accounts of friends they associated with most often, Short found a moderately strong relationship between exposure to delinquents and delinquent behavior.

Relatedly, Reiss and Rhodes obtained measures of the actual delinquent behavior of 299 boys and their two best friends, discovering that close friendships were closely correlated with delinquency generally - but less so with specific patterns of delinquency of the same type as those of one's friends. In this latter respect, while the correlations were greater than chance, they were well below what would be expected from differential association theory. Nor were these correlations independent of social class. Thus, their work provides general but qualified support for differential association theory. Subsequent studies are similar in their assessments - while not all have supported the theory in its entirety, on balance the evidence supports the importance in deviant behavior of associations in primary groups such as families and peers.

Yet, despite this qualified support, differential association theory has not lacked its critics. Some have argued that Sutherland's initial theory was too vague to be adequately tested, since it is practically impossible to quantitatively assess the enormous number of pro-deviant and

anti-deviant definitions to which someone is exposed (Glueck). The theory may also be inapplicable to certain forms of deviance people learn on their own (e.g. lying, sex play), and ignores the role of various physiological or psychological factors in predisposing individuals to deviance. There is also the problem of the "overly deterministic" imagery in this theory, something that ignores the role of human choice (Matza). Others have questioned the need for firsthand, intimate associations with pro-deviant people.

Criticism has indicated the need for caution but hasn't eliminated the importance of differential association. It is essentially logically consistent, but its high level of abstraction makes it nearly impossible to test as a whole in a strictly empirical fashion. Nevertheless, it has generated a large number of more specific hypotheses capable of being operationally measured and empirically examined.

Modifying the Image of Differential Association:

Sutherland's theory has been modified by others in several important ways that extend and strengthen the applicability of the learning perspective.

For example, Daniel Glaser questions whether direct, intimate contact with pro-deviant people is necessary for deviant learning. In his theory of differential identification, Glaser points out that people are also socialized indirectly by the media and more distant reference groups. Identifying with celebrities, characters on TV and in the movies, for example, may affect us, our definitions about the world, and our actions within it. According to Glaser this identification, rather than interpersonal association per se, is at the heart of deviant learning.

In addition, Gresham Sykes and David Matza elaborate Sutherland's point that one of the things learned in learning deviance is a set of rationalizations which protect one against the moral claims of the conventional world. Going against Sutherland's deterministic imagery, however, they point out that deviants often exist with one foot in and one foot out of the deviant world - being affected by both deviants and non-deviants alike, and not strictly determined by either. In negotiating this difficult path, they choose to employ various "techniques of neutralization" to reconcile one world to the other. Such neutralizing rhetorics or vocabularies are used to ward off the normative attacks of the social world, to make the constraints of conventional social control inoperative, and to free up the deviant for further deviant action. Sykes and Matza list five such neutralizing techniques: (1) Denial of responsibility (e.g. "it's society's fault"); (2) Denial of injury (e.g. "Insurance will pay for it"); (3) Denial of victim (e.g. "They deserved it"); (4) Condemning the condemners (e.g. "Don't point fingers when your own hands are dirty"); and (5) Appeal to higher loyalties (e.g. "it was for a friend, political, moral or religious cause").

Sykes and Matza's work is important in that it recognizes deviants must regularly deal with moral challenges from members of the "straight world." Yet, sociologists such as Jack Douglas point out that such rhetorical vocabularies seem too rationalistic or cognitive. While not denying their value, Douglas points out that, in everyday life, feelings often operate

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independently of and even more powerfully than thoughts. While verbal rationalizations may be commonly used, they don't always work in interaction with others who don't share them. As such, these verbal techniques may do little more than cover a deviant's deep feelings of shame. More is really needed: strategies of self-deception or self-seduction to cover deviants' feelings of shame. If such feelings cannot be hidden or evaded, then at least they may be managed through such emotionally charged protection strategies as "aggressive countermoralism" or "counterpride displays." In this sense, Douglas' discussion of the deviant's self-deceptive or manipulative management of feelings represents an important counterpoint to the cognitive defense strategies outlined by Sykes and Matza. Both represent useful extensions of key components of Sutherland's original theory.

The final major extension of Sutherland's theory emerged from the work of psychologists Burgess and Akers. They introduced to this approach one very important concept that is utilized throughout modern social learning theory: the principle of differential reinforcement. This relates to the question of just what it is that makes one association or identification more influential than others. A common criticism of Sutherland's early theory, more recent advances in the social and behavioural sciences made it possible to fill in this vague area. Incorporating the concepts of behaviorist psychology, Burgess and Akers reformulated Sutherland's ideas in this mould.

The basic principles of operant psychology are quite simple: all behaviours, whether mental, emotional, or physical are said to be shaped or governed by the consequences they produce. This happens either by positive reinforcement (in which something good happens as a result of one's actions), or by negative reinforcement (in which something bad is removed or avoided. Other acts produce negative, painful, or undesirable consequences: punishment. This can also be of two types: positive punishment (in which something bad happens), or negative punishment (in which something good is taken away). Altogether, these comprise the essence of operant learning theory in psychology. We repeat behaviours which have in the past produced reinforcement. We shy away from behaviours which have produced punishment.

When applied to deviant behaviour, operant theory transforms the concepts of differential association into a sequence of differentially reinforced and punished social experiences. This answers the nagging questions of why it is that we may associate more or with greater intensity with prodeviant others, or why we define or rationalize certain occasions in terms of preference for deviance over conformity. According to Burgess and Akers, this is because: (1) those behaviours have been reinforced in the past; or (2) they have come to be associated with certain stimuli which give cues that reinforcement is on its way. Essentially, Burgess and Akers offer a way of measuring the balance between the prodeviant and antideviant forces of learning.

While, Burgess and Akers' formulation thus promises greater researchable precision and the strengths of an interdisciplinary focus, it doesn't escape other problems associated with the learning perspective. While reinforcements and punishments may seem more amenable to tight measurement than intensity and priority, these can still create problems (e.g. how exactly does one measure the quantity of reinforcement and punishment over a lifetime?) In this respect,

differential reinforcement may offer nothing more than a new set of hard to measure imagery.

Social Control of Learned Deviance:

According to the learning perspective, deviance may be controlled either by the *preventive learning* of proconventional attitudes and behaviours or by the *corrective unlearning* of unconventionality. The former is a broad concept that includes the entirety of a person's socialization experience (e.g. close interpersonal contacts and indirect contacts with significant others such media celebrities). Attempts at reducing violence on TV is an example of this approach. Corrective learning strategies are typically more focused, attempting to influence the imitation process in three ways:

In the first, attempts are made to provide positive, or antideviant role models. Here, programs like Big Brothers and Big Sisters are based on a belief that young, at risk participants will benefit from imitating influential adults. Control programs which employ detached youth or gang workers with positive, prosocial characteristics to reach out to kids in trouble operate with a similar philosophy. Yet, there is little evidence that such role-model control programs actually reduce deviance. Indeed, a research review by Kassebaum indicates that efforts to introduce definitions "unfavourable to the violation of the law" have the unintended side effects of increasing the frequency and intensity of interaction within gangs (as well as increased their criminal offences). This is because the attention afforded gang members by role-model youth workers increased gangs' sense of group cohesion and resulted in increased interaction among gang members. This may have resulted in both increased group pressure to deviate and a greater official visibility of the gang to the police.

In the second approach, there are attempts to alter the differential association process by surrounding a deviant with a group of persons who define deviance in an unfavourable way. This form of corrective unlearning involves exposing deviants to strong group pressures toward conventionality, typically by removing them from their deviant environment and providing them with a new source of group support for going straight. When employed by professionals, such strategies may utilize residential settings or intensive group therapy to develop proconventional differential associations (e.g. the Betty Ford Clinic). Support groups like AA and Synanon use similar strategies (the latter far more intensive). Each provides the deviant with a new set of associations, the intensity, duration, frequency and priority of which are intended to aid in the unlearning of unconventional behaviour. Such strategies may be relatively successful for those who stick with them, and are highly motivated to succeed. Yet many (like Synanon) have a very high rate of dropout. As such, measured success with long-term members may reflect more about the power of strong motivational investment than about the general benefits of proconventional group learning.

The third application of corrective unlearning involves efforts to shape the operant learning process by the use of behaviour-modification strategies. Essentially, behaviour modification doesn't concern itself with a person's inner thoughts or feelings or in attempts to

gain insight into the deep but hidden causes of deviance. Instead, it is directed at manipulating the various ways in which socially organized reinforcements and punishments exercise control over an individual's actions. For example, existing behaviour may be shaped by successively reinforcing elements which are in the desired direction and extinguishing those which are not (e.g. giving the gum to the catatonic schizophrenic as a reward for progressively more active behaviours). There are a variety of different applications, from reducing tantrums and violent outbursts to encouraging self-care.

By the 1970's a great number of such behaviour-modification programs were being used in mental health, correctional, and other facilities dealing with addictions, sexual deviance, and so on. Two prominent examples of such control efforts include the use of token economies and aversive conditioning.

Token economies operate as follows. Persons who demonstrate compliance with the rules or goals of a particular institution are reinforced by being given a token which can be exchanged for certain institutional privileges (e.g. snacks, smokes, a movie or day pass). When they don't comply, these tokens or credits may be taken away. These programs effectively treat the deviant like a rat in a psychologist's box, attempting to reshape the behaviour of non-conformers toward compliance. As such, they share a common conceptual and practical flaw: they fail to realize that outside the walls of a particular social control institution, candy bars and TV privileges may not be very powerful reinforcements. Indeed, there is virtually no evidence documenting a long-term pattern of conformity following a behaviourally modified deviant's graduation from a token economy program. In some respects, this is because adequate control groups haven't been included in many extant studies. But also, once released from a token economy, a person may be re-exposed to the reinforcers and punishers that gave shape to his/her deviation in the first place. Thus, most token economies represent little more than systematic efforts to instill order among deviants during the term of their containment.

Aversive conditioning, in contrast, involves associating deviant stimuli with negative consequences (e.g. shocks, nausea-inducing drugs). These are used to, for example, convert the experience of drug use from one of pleasure to one of pain. With regard to violent or sexual deviants, aversive therapy typically attempts to reduce sexual arousal associated with deviant stimuli by pairing the presentation of such stimuli with electric shock or chemically induced pain. This continues until arousal levels associated with deviant stimuli are significantly reduced. Sometimes, as well, subjects are reinforced for appropriate response to more conventional sexual stimuli. Most information on the use of aversive therapy comes from a small number of successful case studies with non-residentially treated deviants, while there are also data emerging from residential treatment programs. While many show early success in these contexts, such practices have raised ethical objections (e.g. akin to torture/lack of informed consent). Indeed, the potential for control over human behaviour is both staggering and frightening (i.e. Schwitzgebel's suggestion that deviants be electronically monitored by remote control and given shocks when their actions depart from their new "programming").

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From minor to major forms of behavioural modification, the learning perspective is associated with a posture of practical social control. New technologies for altering behaviour raise the potential for such control. They also raise the frightening spectre of mass behavioural manipulation. Indeed, the power of the state to socially control deviants has increased dramatically with recent advances within the learning perspective.

Assessment of the Learning Perspective:

The learning perspective has had an enormous impact on the study of deviance and social control. Among its positive contributions are its normalizing our images of deviance. It is no longer pathological, an abnormal condition, nor the product of abstract social forces. Rather, it is concrete, a product of learning to be in the world in a particular way, of learning with and from others about how to define, feel and act in a human world we create together.

Yet, despite this humanistic appeal, not all variants of the learning perspective have gained equal acceptance. For example, comparing Sutherland's theory of differential association with Burgess and Akers' subsequent reformulation, the former has had long-term acceptance within sociological circles, the latter suffering relative neglect. With regard to Burgess and Akers, this has a lot to do with the fact that their propositions are borrowed from psychology, as well as with the rise of the liberal societal-reaction perspective in sociology at the time Burgess and Akers were introducing their ideas. Later, however, a more conservative mood set in, and a reinvigoration of interest in basic causation in the 1980's and 1990's rekindled an interest in practical applications of the learning perspective.

This renewed interest in the learning perspective leads us to conclude discussion of this approach with four general reservations - each of which simply cautions us against a theoretical overemphasis on learning as traditionally conceived.

The first reservation involves the tendency of the learning perspective to be overly deterministic. For example, Taylor, Walton and Young argue that human choice is not adequately stressed and the resulting behaviour appears to be totally determined. There really needs to be more of an emphasis on, for example, how potential deviants enter into subcultural associations after assessing the likely gains and losses, benefits and risks of doing so. This needs to be followed up with analysis of how, once in, the groups reinforce individuals' confidence in the rationality of their choices for deviance (e.g. by emphasizing the low probability of unforeseen negative sanctions and by promising high status to those who remain members). Essentially, what we're talking about here is a "soft determinism" that sees deviance as partly chosen and partly determined. Similarly, deviants are not always strictly segregated, but often have one foot in and one foot out of the conventional world, using neutralization techniques to actively navigate this tricky divide - and drawing attention to the inadvertent ways that the culture of the "straight world" actually encourages deviance (e.g. the American tradition of individualism, materialism, seeking excitement, risk and adventure come to mind). All of these factors interact - sometimes deterministically, sometimes through choice - to produce, over time, a possible "drift

towards" deviant behaviour. This is how, in the eyes of David Matza, deviance is learned. Others, like Edwin Pfuhl, discuss this in terms of a biographical affinity for deviance, only actualized by choice on the behalf of individuals. Yet this must not be confused with a radical free will approach. Rather, the assessment of alternative courses of action is partially shaped by one's context and history of prior learning.

Secondly, there is the criticism that learning theory ignores or underplays the role of unconscious repressions in motivating deviant behaviour. Here, the lessons of the learning perspective might be expanded by broadening its scope to include various sociological uses of psychoanalysis. If nothing is ever learned without other things being (at least temporarily) repressed from conscious memory, then learning involves not only the positive acquisition of self-definitions, behavioural techniques, and motives, but also the unconscious repression of other possible ways of acting. These excluded possibilities may often return in a disguised or distorted form (e.g. are repressive gender roles, body images, and the attendant unfair division of labour behind the fact that more women are diagnosed with eating disorders, hysteria, and anxiety disorders than men? Are competitive forms of male bonding in business and violent behaviour an expression of prohibitions against more intimate forms of contact between men?) Such questions have traditionally been ignored by most modern learning theorists.

Third, the learning perspective may be criticized as inattentive to gendered and multicultural models of learning. For example, Carol Gilligan claims to have uncovered differences in the moral reasoning of women when compared to men (i.e. women are more "caring" and "relational" than men. Similarly, in feminist "standpoint theory," each group speaks from its own standpoint and shares its own partial, situated knowledge. Because each perceives its own truth as partial, its knowledge is unfinished. To respond adequately to the issues raised by these approaches, learning theorists must recognize the partial and provisional confines of their own learned, scholarly standpoints. But for this to happen, learning theorists must first unlearn the apparent "universality" of certain of the most dominant modes of thinking.

Finally, the learning perspective may be criticized as doing little to clarify why it is that certain types of behaviour are thought of as deviant. Because it is primarily social-psychological, the contemporary learning perspective ignores or downplays the role of conflicting social interests in producing an order of conformity (favouring those with greatest power) and in controlling the non-conformity of relatively powerless individuals and groups with little stake in that order. Perhaps this has much to do with the fact that most academics studying deviance have shared, at least implicitly, the official government position on which acts and which people were really deviant (e.g. through accepting government research money with strings attached, such as finding ways to best control deviants). While social scientists wanted to test differential association theory, the government wanted more effective social control programs, and, in practical terms, the test of both became the same when funding was concerned. Deviance remained a problem of deviants, and the nearly exclusive social-psychological focus of the learning perspective guaranteed that this would happen.