The Chicago School and Cultural and Subcultural Theories of Crime

This section will examine the origin and evolution of the Chicago or Ecological School theory, otherwise known as the ecological perspective or the theory of social disorganization. We will also discuss modern research on this theory, which assumes that the environments people live in determine their behavior. Finally, we will discuss the assumptions and dynamics of cultural and subcultural theory in society, highlighting differences in certain models emphasizing inner-city subcultures and other modern examples of subcultures (e.g., street gangs). We will finish by reviewing the policy implications that have been suggested by this perspective of crime.

The Chicago School evolved during the late 19th and early 20th centuries when the city of Chicago desperately needed answers for its exponentially growing problem of delinquency and crime. This became a primary focus in Chicago, where total chaos prevailed at the time.

A significant portion of the Chicago perspective focused on the transmission of cultural values to peers, and even across generations, as the older youths relayed their antisocial values and techniques to the younger children. Thus, the cultural and subcultural perspective is also a key area of this theoretical model. This cultural aspect of the Chicago model is also examined in this section, as are other subculture frameworks of offending behaviors.
The Ecological School and the Chicago School of Criminology

Despite the fact that its name specifies one city, the Chicago School of criminology represents one of the most valid and generalizable theories we will discuss in this book in the sense that many of its propositions can be readily applied to the growth and evolution of virtually all cities around the world. The Chicago School, which is often referred to as the Ecological School or the theory of social disorganization, also represents one of the earliest examples of balancing theorizing with scientific analysis and at the same time guiding important programs and policy implementations that still thrive today. Perhaps most important, the Chicago School of criminology was the epitome of using theoretical development and scientific testing to help improve conditions in society when it was most needed, which can be appreciated only by understanding the degree of chaos and crime that existed in Chicago in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

Cultural Context: Chicago in the 1800s and Early 1900s

Experts have determined that 19th-century Chicago was the fastest-growing city in U.S. history. Census data show that the population went from about 5,000 in the early 1800s to more than 2 million by 1900.2 This massive rate of growth—much faster than that seen in other large U.S. cities such as Boston, Baltimore, New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco—was due to Chicago’s central geographic position. It was in many ways landlocked because, although it sits on Lake Michigan, there was no water route to the city from the Atlantic Ocean until the Erie Canal opened in 1825, which provided access to the Great Lakes region for shipping and migration of people. Three years later came the first U.S. passenger train, the Baltimore and Ohio railroad, whose route extended from the mid-Atlantic to central areas of the country. These two transportation advancements created a continual stream of migration to the Chicago area, which increased again when the transcontinental railroad was completed in 1869, linking both coasts with the U.S. Midwest.3

It is important to keep in mind that, in the early to mid 1800s, many large U.S. cities had virtually no formal social agencies to handle the problems of urbanization—no social workers, building inspectors, garbage collectors, or even police officers. Once police agencies were introduced, their duties often included finding lost children and collecting the garbage, primarily because there weren’t other agencies to perform these tasks. Therefore, communities were largely responsible for solving their own problems, including crime and delinquency. By the late 1800s, however, Chicago was largely made up of citizens who did not speak a common language and did not share each other’s cultural values. This phenomenon is consistent with Census Bureau data from that era, which show that 70% of Chicago residents were foreign born and another 20% were first-generation Americans. It was almost impossible for these citizens to organize themselves to solve community problems because, in most cases, they could not even understand each other.

This resulted in the type of chaos and normlessness that Durkheim predicted would occur when urbanization and industrialization occurred too rapidly: in fact, Chicago represented the archetype of a society in an anomie, with almost a complete breakdown in control. One of the most notable manifestations of this breakdown in social control was that children were running wild on the streets in gangs, with adults making little attempt to intervene. So, delinquency was soaring, and it appeared that the gangs controlled the streets as much as any other group.

The leaders and people of Chicago needed theoretical guidance to develop solutions to their problems, particularly regarding the high rates of delinquency. This was a key factor in why the Department of Sociology at the University of Chicago became so important and dominant in the early 1900s. Essentially, modern sociology developed in Chicago because this city needed it the most to solve its social problems. Thus, Chicago became a type of laboratory for sociological researchers, and they developed a number of theoretical models of crime and other social ills that are still shown to be empirically valid today.

Ecological Principles in City Growth and Concentric Circles

In the 1920s and 1930s, several new perspectives of human behavior and city growth were offered by sociologists at the University of Chicago. The first relevant model was proposed by Robert E. Park, who claimed that much of human behavior, especially the way cities grow, follows the basic principles of ecology that had been documented and applied to wildlife for many years at that point.4 Ecology is essentially the study of the dynamics and processes through which plants and animals interact with the environment. In an application of Darwinian theory, Park proposed that the growth of cities follows a natural pattern and evolution.

Specifically, Park claimed that cities represent a type of complex organism with a sense of unity composed of the interrelations among its citizens and groups. Park applied the ecological principle of symbiosis to explain the dependency of various citizens and units on each other: Everyone is better off working together as a whole. Furthermore, Park claimed that all cities would contain identifiable clusters, which he called natural areas, that would take on a life or organic unity of their own. To clarify, many cities have neighborhoods that are made up of primarily one ethnic group or are distinguished by certain features. For example, New York City’s Hell’s Kitchen, Times Square, and Harlem represent areas of one city that have each taken on unique identities; however, each of them contributes to the whole makeup and identity of the city. The same can be seen in other cities, such as Baltimore, which in a two-
A similar example can be found in the introduction of bison on Santa Catalina Island off the Southern California coast in the 1930s. About three dozen buffalo were originally imported to the island for a movie shoot, and the producers decided not to spend the money to remove them after the project, so they have remained and multiplied. Had this occurred in other parts of the United States, it would not have caused a problem. However, the largest mammal native to the island before the bison was a 4-pound fox. So, the buffalo—now numbering in the hundreds, to the point where several hundred were recently shipped to their native Western habitat—have destroyed much of the environment, driving to extinction some plants and animals unique to Catalina Island. Like the kudzu, the bison came to dominate the environment; in this case, other species couldn’t move off the island and died off.

Park claimed that a similar process occurs in human cities as some areas invade other zones or, and the previously dominant area must relocate or die off. This is easy to see in modern times with the growth of what is known as urban sprawl. Geographers and urban planners have long acknowledged the detriment to traditionally stable residential areas when businesses move in. Some of the most recent examples involve the battles of longtime homeowners against the introduction of malls, businesses, and other industrial centers in districts previously zoned residential. The media have documented such fights, especially with the proliferation of such establishments as Walmart and Kmart superstores, which residents perceive, and perhaps rightfully so, as an invasion. Such an invasion can create chaos in a previously stable residential community due to increased traffic, transient populations, and perhaps most important, crime. Furthermore, some cities are granting power to such development through eminent domain, by which the local government can take land from homeowners to rezone and import businesses.

When Park developed his theory of ecology, he observed a trend in which businesses and factories were invading the traditionally residential areas of Chicago, which caused major chaos and breakdown in the stability of those areas. Readers, especially those who were raised in suburban or rural areas, can likely relate to this; going back to where they grew up, they can often see fast growth. Such development can devastate the informal controls (such as neighborhood norms or family ties) because it promotes invasion by a highly transient group of consumers and residents who do not have strong ties to the area.

This leads to a psychological indifference to the neighborhood in which no one cares about protecting the community any longer. Those who can afford to leave the area do, and those who can’t afford to get out remain until they can save enough money to do so. When Park presented his theory of ecology in the 1920s, having factories that moved into the neighborhood often meant having a lot of smoke billowing out of chimneys. No one wanted to live in such a place, particularly at a time when the effects of pollution were not understood and smokestacks had no filters. Certain parts of Chicago and other U.S. cities were perpetually covered by the smoke these factories created. In highly industrial areas, the constant and vast coverage of smoke and pollutions made it seem to be snowing overcast most of the time. It is easy to see how such invasions can completely disrupt the previously dominant and stable residential areas of a community.

Park’s ideas became even more valid and influential with the complementary perspective offered by Ernest W. Burgess, who proposed a theory of city growth in which cities were seen as growing not simply on the edges but from the inside outward. It is easy to observe cities growing on the edges, as in the example of urban sprawl, but Burgess claimed that the source of growth was in the cities’ centers. Growth of the inner city puts pressure on adjacent zones, which in turn begin to grow into the adjacent zones, following the ecological principle of succession identified by Park. This type of development is referred to as radial growth, meaning beginning on the inside and rippling outward.

An example of this can be seen by watching a drop of water fall into the center of a bucket filled with water. The waves from the impact will form circles that ripple outward. This is exactly how Burgess claimed that cities grow. Although the growth of cities is most visible on the edges, largely due to development of business and homes where only trees or barren land existed before, the reason for growth there is the pressure forming at the very heart of the city. Another good analogy is the domino effect, cent zones, and so forth.

Burgess also specified the primary zones—five pseudodistinctive natural areas in a constant state of flux due to growth—that all cities appear to have. He depicted these zones as a set of concentric circles. The first, innermost modern skyscrapers that are home to banks, chambers of commerce, courthouses, and other essential business, and political centers such as police headquarters and post offices.

Just outside the business district was the unnumbered factory zone. It was perhaps the most significant in terms of fostering crime because it invaded the previously stable residential areas in Zone II, which Burgess identified as the zone in transition. Zone II was appropriately named because it was truly in a state of transition from residential to industrial, primarily because this was the area of the city in which businesses and factories were invading residential areas. Zone II was the area

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Image 7.2 The American Buffalo was introduced to Catalina Island in California and destroyed much of the unique plant life there. This is an example of a foreign element creating chaos, such as crime does in residential areas.

Source: © Stefan Dianz - Schenstenberg.

Image 7.3 The Chicago ecological model proposed that as factories invaded and dominated residential areas, the residents who could afford to leave did and those left were the poor and deprived, which increased risk of crime.

Source: © Thinkstock Images / Stockbyte / Thinkstock.

Image 7.4 Virtually all large cities in the world historically developed and grew with the same basic design of concentric circles.

Source: http://commons.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Burgess_model

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Footnotes:


that was most significantly subjected to the ecological principles Park suggested: invasion, domination, recession, and succession. Subsequent criminological theorists focused on this zone.

According to Burgess's theory of concentric circles, Zone III was the workingmen homes, relatively modest houses and apartment buildings; Zone IV consisted of higher-priced family dwellings and more expensive apartments; and Zone V was the suburban or commuter zone. These outer three zones Burgess identified were of less importance in terms of crime, primarily because, as a general rule, the farther a family could move out of the city, the better the neighborhood was in terms of social organization and the lower the rate of social ills (e.g., poverty, delinquency). The important point of this theory of concentric circles is that the growth of each inner zone puts pressure on the next zone to grow and push into the next adjacent zone.

It is easy for readers to see examples of concentric circles theory. Wherever you live in the United States, any major city provides real-life evidence of the validity of this perspective. For example, whether people drive on Interstate 95 through Baltimore or Interstate 5 through Los Angeles, they will see the same pattern of city structure. As they approach each of the cities, they see suburban wealth in the homes and buildings, often hidden by trees off the highway. Closer to the cities, they see homes and buildings deteriorating in terms of value. Because parts of the highway systems near Baltimore and Los Angeles are somewhat elevated, drivers entering Zone II can easily see the prevalence of factories and the highly deteriorated nature of the areas. Today, many 20th-century factories have been abandoned or have limited use; these factory zones consist of rusted-out or demolished buildings. Zone II is also often the location of subsidized or public housing. Only the people who can’t afford to live anywhere else are forced to live in these neighborhoods. Finally, as drivers enter the inner city of skyscrapers, the conditions improve dramatically because the major businesses have invested their money there. Compared to Zone II, this innermost area is a utopia.

This theory applies around the world, and we challenge readers to find any major city throughout the world that did not develop this way. Nowadays, some attempts have been made to plan community development, and other cities have experienced the convergence of several patterns of concentric circles as central business districts (i.e., Zone I) are developed in what was previously suburbia (i.e., Zone V). However, for the most part, the theoretical framework of concentric circles still has a great deal of support. Indeed, cities found in Eastern cultures have evolved this way. Therefore, Park’s application appears to be correct. Cities grow in a natural way across time and place, abiding by the natural principles of ecology.

Shaw and McKay’s Theory of Social Disorganization

Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay drew heavily on their colleagues at the University of Chicago in devising their theory of social disorganization, which became known as the Chicago School theory of criminology. Shaw had been producing excellent case studies for years on the individual (i.e., micro) level before he took on theorizing on the macro (i.e., structural) level of crime rates. However, once he began working with McKay, he devised perhaps the most enduring and valid model of why certain neighborhoods have more social problems, such as delinquency, than others.

In this model, Shaw and McKay proposed a framework that began with the assumption that certain neighborhoods in all cities have more crime than other parts of the city, most of them located in Burgess’s Zone II, which is the zone in transition from residential to industrial due to the invasion of factories. According to Shaw and McKay, the neighborhoods that have the highest rates of crime typically have at least three common problems (see Figure 7.1): physical disorganization, poverty, and heterogeneity (which is a fancy way of saying a high cultural mix).
zone in transition. Shaw and McKay believed there is a breakdown of informal social controls in these areas and that children begin to learn offending norms from their interactions with peers on the street, through what the researchers call play activities. Thus, the breakdown in the conditions of the neighborhood leads to social disorganization, which in turn leads to delinquency in children who learn criminal activities from older youths. Ultimately, the failure of the neighborhood residents to organize themselves allows the older youths to govern the behavior of the younger children. Basically, the older youths in the area provide a system of organization where the neighborhood adults cannot, so younger children follow them.

One of the best things about Shaw and McKay's theoretical model is that they supported their propositions with data from U.S. census and city records, showing that neighborhoods with high rates of poverty and physical dilapidation and high cultural mix also had the highest rates of delinquency and crime. Furthermore, the high rates of delinquency and other social problems were consistent with Burgess's framework of concentric circles in that the highest rates were observed for the areas that were in Zone II, the zone in transition. There was one exception to the model: The Gold Coast area along the northern coast of Lake Michigan did not have the high rates of social problems, particularly delinquency, even though it was geographically in Zone II according to the otherwise consistent model of concentric circles and neighborhood zones.

Thus, the findings of Shaw and McKay were as predicted in the sense that high delinquency rates occurred in areas where factories were invading residential districts. Furthermore, Shaw and McKay's longitudinal data showed that it did not matter which ethnic groups lived in Zone II; all groups (with the exception of Asians) that lived in that zone had high delinquency rates during their residency. On the other hand, once most of an ethnic group had moved out of Zone II, the delinquency rate among its youths decreased significantly.

This finding rejects the notion of social Darwinism because it is clearly not the culture that influences crime and delinquency but rather the criminogenic nature of the environment. If ethnicity or race made a difference, the delinquency rates in Zone II would fluctuate based on who lived there, but the rates continued to be high from one group to the next. Rather, the zone determined the rates of delinquency.

**Reaction and Research on Social Disorganization Theory**

Over the last few decades, the Chicago School theoretical framework has received an enormous amount of attention from researchers.10 Virtually all of the research has supported Shaw and McKay's version of social disorganization and the resulting high crime rates in neighborhoods that exhibit such deprived conditions. Modern research has supported the theoretical model proposed by Shaw and McKay, specifically in terms of the high crime rates in disorganized neighborhoods. Also, virtually every city that has an elevated highway (e.g., Richmond, Virginia; Baltimore, Maryland; Los Angeles, California) visually supports Shaw and McKay's model of crime in concentric circles. Drivers entering those cities can see the pattern of dilapidated structures in the zone of transition surrounding the inner-city area. Before and after this layer of dilapidated structures, drivers encounter a layer of houses and residential areas that seem to increase in quality as the driver gets farther away from the inner-city area. Some critics, however, have raised some valid concerns regarding the original model, arguing that Shaw and McKay's original research did not actually measure their primary construct: social disorganization. Although

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this criticism is accurate. Recent research has shown that the model is valid even when valid measures of social disorganization are included. Such measures of social disorganization include simply asking members of the neighborhood about the neighborhood. Many neighbors know by name or how often they observe unsupervised peers in the area.

Additional criticism of Shaw and McKay’s formulation of social disorganization focus on the emphasis that the theory places on the macro, or aggregate, level of analysis. Although their theory does a good job of predicting which neighborhoods have higher crime rates, the model does not attempt to explain why most youths in the worst areas do not become offenders. Furthermore, their model does not attempt to explain why some youths—although a very small number of them—may experience a lack of social disorganization (i.e., in Zone V) choose to commit crime. However, the previously cited case studies and published by Clifford Shaw, such as The Jackerter and Burglars in Crime, attempted to address the individual (macro) level of offending.

Also, there was one notable exception to Shaw and McKay’s proposition that all ethnic and racial groups have high rates of delinquency and crime: while they were in Zone II. Evidence showed that when Japanese Americans made up a large portion of residents in this zone in transition, they had very low rates of delinquency. Thus, as in most theoretical models in social science, there was an exception to the rule. Perhaps the biggest criticism of Shaw and McKay’s theory, one that has yet to be adequately addressed, deals with the fact that they have not proposed ways to ameliorate the most problematic source of criminality in Zone II neighborhoods. Although they clearly point to the invasion of factories and businesses into residential areas as a problem, they do not recommend how to slow such invasion. This is due to political and financial problems: Owners of factories and businesses profit from their research and later were the primary funders of implementation of their policies. Neglect is further represented in their failure to explain the exception of the Gold Coast in their results and conclusions.

Despite the criticisms of the Chicago School perspective of criminality, this theory resulted in one of the largest programs to date in attempting to reduce delinquency rates. Clifford Shaw was put in charge of establishing the Chicago Area Project (CAP), which created neighborhood centers in the worst crime-ridden parts of Chicago. These centers offered activities for youths and tried to establish ties between parents and officials in the neighborhood. Although this program was never scientifically evaluated, it still exists, and many cities have implemented programs based on this model. For example, Boston implemented a very similar program, which was evaluated by Walter Miller. This evaluation showed that, although the project was effective in establishing relationships and interactions between neighborhoods and community groups and in providing educational and vocational opportunities, it seemed to fail in reducing delinquent and criminal behavior. Thus, the overall conclusion made by the Boston project and other similar programs, like the CAP, typically failed to prevent criminal behavior.

Cultural and Subcultural Theories of Crime

Cultural and subcultural theories of crime assume that there are unique groups in society that socialize their children to believe that certain activities that violate conventional law are good and possible ways to behave. Although it is difficult to find large groups of people or classes who fit this definition, it may be that some subcultures or isolated groups of individuals buy into different set of norms than the conventional, middle-class set of values.

Early Theoretical Developments and Research in Cultural and Subcultural Theory

One of the key developments of cultural theory is the 1967 work of Ferracuti and Wolfgang, who examined the violent themes of a group of inner-city youths, Philadelphia. Ferracuti and Wolfgang's primary conclusion was that violence is a culturally learned adaptation to deal with negative life circumstances and that learning such norms occurs in an environment that emphasizes violence over other options. These researchers based their conclusion and Wolfgang were clear that their theory was based on subcultural norms. Specifically, they proposed that no subculture of urban subculture to the forefront. A culture represents a variant set of norms and values among identifiable groups of people, values that are capitalist because it emphasizes equality over competition, and it values utopia (i.e., everyone gets to share all a different culture than capitalists. There is also a substantial difference between a culture and a subculture, which is that a Ferracuti and Wolfgang developed is not so much a cultural theory as much as a subcultural one.

A more recent subsection of the culture, proposed by Elijah Anderson, has received a lot of attention in the past few years. This theory focuses on African Americans; people who live in the inner cities, Black although many African Americans believe in middle-class values, these values have no weight on the street, particularly his book, is to maintain one's reputation and demand respect. For example, to be treated with disrespect (“disrespected”) characteristics: immediacy, the immediate environment is perceived as the only thing people can control, given the harsh con-

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Criticalisms of Cultural Theories of Crime

Studies on cultural theories of crime, at least in the United States, find no large groups that blatantly deny the middle-class norms of society. Miller's model of lower class focal concerns is not consistent across the entire lower class.
Policy Implications

Many of the policy implications suggested by the theoretical models proposed in this section are rather ironic. Regarding social disorganization, a paradox exists in the sense that the very neighborhoods most desperately in need of becoming organized to fight crime are the same inner-city ghetto areas where it is, by far, the most difficult to cultivate that organization (e.g., through neighborhood watch or block watch groups). Rather, the neighborhoods that have high levels of organization tend to be those that already have very low levels of crime because the residents naturally police their neighbors’ well-being and property; they have a stake in the area’s remaining crime free. Although there are anecdotal examples of success of neighborhood watch programs in high-crime neighborhoods, most of the empirical evidence shows that this approach is “almost uniformly unsupportive” in its ability to reduce crime there. Furthermore, many studies of these neighborhood watch programs find that the groups actually increase the fear of crime in some places, perhaps due to the heightened awareness of crime issues in these areas.

Perhaps the most notable programs that resulted from the Chicago School or social disorganization model—the CAP and similar programs—have been dubbed failures in reducing crime rates among the participants. Still, there have been some advances in trying to get residents of high-crime areas to become organized in fighting crime. The more specific the goals regarding crime reduction (a specific goal might be careful monitoring of high-level offenders through more intensive supervised probation, or better lighting in dark places), the more effective the implementation.

Regarding cultural and subcultural theories, some promising intervention and outreach programs have been suggested by such models. Many programs attempt to build prosocial attitudes among high-risk youths, often young children. For example, a recent evaluation showed that a program called Peace Builders, which focuses on children in early grades, was effective in producing gains in conflict resolution, development of prosocial values.

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and reductions in aggression; a follow-up showed that these attributes were maintained for a long period of time.

Another recent anti-aggression training program for boys in foster care showed positive effects in levels of empathy, self-efficacy, and attribution style among boys who had exhibited early-onset aggression. Ultimately, there are effective programs out there that promote prosocial norms and culture. More effort should be given to promoting such programs to help negate the antisocial cultural norms of individuals, especially among high-risk youths.

Conclusion

In this section, we examined theoretical perspectives proposing that the lack of social organization in broken-down and dilapidated neighborhoods leads to the inability to contain delinquency and crime. Furthermore, we discussed how this model of crime was linked to processes derived from ecological principles. This type of approach has been tested numerous times, and virtually all studies show that the distribution of delinquents and crime activity is consistent with this model.

We then discussed the ability of cultural and subcultural theories to explain criminal activity. Empirical evidence shows that cultural values make a contribution to criminal behavior, but that the existence of an actual alternative culture in our society has not been found. However, some subcultural pockets, particularly inner-city youth gangs, certainly exist and provide some validity for this perspective of crime. Furthermore, the Chicago School perspective plays a role, because these subcultural groups tend to be found in zones of transition.

Finally, we examined policy implications suggested by these theoretical models. Regarding social disorganization, we noted that neighborhood crime-fighting groups are hardest to establish in high-crime neighborhoods and easiest to build in those neighborhoods with an already low rate of crime. Nevertheless, there have been some successes. We also looked at intervention and outreach programs based on cultural and subcultural perspectives.

Section Summary

- We examined how principles of ecology were applied to the study of how cities grow, as well as to the study of crime, by researchers at the University of Chicago, and how the resultant theories became known as the Chicago (or Ecological) School of criminology.
- We reviewed the various zones of the concentric circles theory, also a key contribution of the Chicago School of criminology, and explored which zones are most prone to crime.
- We examined why the findings from the Chicago School of criminology showed that social Darwinism was not accurate in attributing varying crime rates to ethnicity or race.
- We reviewed much of the empirical evidence regarding the theory of social disorganization and examined the strengths and weaknesses of this theoretical model.
- We discussed the cultural and subcultural model presented by Ferracuti and Wolfgang, as well as the cultural model of inner-city urban youths presented by Anderson.
- We discussed Miller’s theory of lower-class culture, particularly its six focal concerns.
- We reviewed the strengths and weaknesses of cultural and subcultural theories of crime based on empirical evidence.
In this selection, Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay present a theoretical model of various characteristics of neighborhoods that contribute to higher crime and delinquency rates. Specifically, they examine physical, economic, and population factors that contribute to higher rates of delinquency in certain communities. Such observations of certain neighborhoods provide the basis for the theory of social disorganization (also known as the Chicago or Ecological School of criminology). While reading this selection, think about the places you have lived or visited that fit these characteristics; it is likely that such neighborhoods have high crime rates. Because this theory fits virtually all cities around the world, and because of their methodology, Shaw and McKay are generally considered two of the most prominent criminologists of the 20th century.

Delinquency Rates and Community Characteristics

Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay

The question has been asked many times: "What is it, in modern city life that produces delinquency?" Why do relatively large numbers of boys from the inner urban areas appear in court with such striking regularity, year after year, regardless of changing population structure or the ups and downs of the business cycle? Elsewhere a different series of male delinquents were presented which closely paralleled one another in geographical distribution although widely separated in time, and the close resemblance of all these series to the distribution of truants and of adult criminals was shown. Moreover, many other community characteristics—median rentals, families on relief, infant mortality rates, and so on—revel similar patterns of variation throughout the city. The next step would be to determine, if possible, the extent to which these two sets of data are related. How consistently do they vary together, if at all, and how high is the degree of association?

Where high zero-order correlations are found to exist uniformly between two variables, with a small probable error, it is possible and valid to consider either series as an approximate index, or indicator, of the other. This holds true for any two variables which are known to be associated or to vary concomitantly. The relationship, of course, may be either direct or inverse. In neither case, however, is there justification in assuming, on this basis alone, that the observed association is of a cause-and-effect nature; it may be, rather, that both variables are similarly affected by some third factor. Further analysis is needed. Controlled experimentation is often useful in establishing the degree to which a change in one variable "causes" or brings about a corresponding change in the other. In the social field, however, experimentation is difficult. Instead, it is often necessary to rely upon refined statistical techniques, such as partial correlation, which, for certain types of data, enable the investigator to measure the effects of one factor while holding others relatively constant. By the method of successive redistribution, also, the influence of one or more variables may be held constant. Thus, it is possible to study the relationship between rates of delinquents and economic status for a single nationality group throughout the city or for various nationality groups in the same area or class of areas. This process may be extended indefinitely, subject only to the limitations of the available data. In the analysis