Journal Article Questions

# Chapter 8: Social Structure Theories of Crime I

Article 1: Murphy, D., & Robinson, M. (2008). The maximizer: Clarifying Merton's theories of anomie and strain. Theoretical Criminology, 12(4), 501–521. Retrieved from

http://journals.sagepub.com/stoken/default+domain/kzGQ8D6KRpiSfjGKeAuh/full

Robert Merton’s (1957) theories of anomie and strain are among the most widely examined theories of criminality. Messner and Rosenfeld’s (1994) theory of institutional anomie built on Merton’s conception of anomie, delineating how specific institutions lead to conditions of anomie and criminality. Cloward and Ohlin’s (1961) theory of differential opportunity built upon Merton’s strain theory, underscoring the fact that those involved in illegitimate means of opportunity require a set of learned skills as do those involved in legitimate means. In this tradition, the present paper further expands Merton’s theories of anomie and strain, suggesting that Merton’s categories of conformist and innovator are not mutually exclusive. In fact, some individuals combine both legitimate and illegitimate means of opportunity in pursuit of the American Dream. The Maximizer, the authors suggest, merges elements of both the conformist and the innovator (i.e., legitimate and illegitimate means). The present paper explores the justification for merging legitimate and illegitimate means of opportunity in pursuit of the American Dream.

Questions that apply to this article:

1. What is institutional anomie?

2. What is special about Merton’s conformist and innovator categories?

3. What is the Maximizer? What does it do?

Article 2: Ngo, F., & Paternoster, R. (2016). Toward an understanding of the emotional and behavioral reactions to stalking: A partial test of general strain theory. Crime & Delinquency, 62(6), 703–727. Retrieved from

http://journals.sagepub.com/stoken/default+domain/7rtYdVjKZiq9kmEknQ9B/full

Using data from the Supplemental Victimization Survey and relying on theoretical direction provided by Agnew’s general strain theory, we examine whether specific types of stalking experiences trigger specific types of negative emotional states and whether specific negative emotional states are in turn associated with specific types of noncriminal coping mechanisms. We find that while several of the stalking experiences trigger a variety of negative emotional states, other stalking experiences do not exhibit any association with negative emotions. We also uncover that negative emotional states in response to strain can trigger legitimate coping mechanisms. One notable finding that emerged from our results is that feeling annoyed/angry is significantly associated with noncriminal coping strategies. The policy implications of our findings are also discussed.

Questions that apply to this article:

1. What are the two hypotheses of the study?

2. How was the sample selected?

3. Do the findings support either or both of the hypotheses?