

Learning to Offend

Criminal Justice

Sutherland and Akers: offending is learned, like any other behaviour.

Two related traditions, one mechanism.

Differential association

Criminal behaviour is learned, not inherited

Learned mainly in close personal groups

Includes techniques and justifications

Definitions favourable to law-breaking build up

Frequency, duration and intensity matter

Social learning additions

Reinforcement shapes what gets repeated

Imitation of models, near and distant

Applies to conforming behaviour too

Best supported for peer-linked offending

Peer similarity may be selection, not influence

Educational reference. Separating peer influence from peer selection needs longitudinal or experimental design.