

Differential Association

Sociology

Sutherland's claim that criminal conduct is learned like any other conduct.

Sutherland's theory that criminal behaviour is learned in intimate groups, including both technique and the definitions that make an act acceptable.

PROPOSED

Sutherland, 1939

MECHANISM

learning in groups

- Learned in interaction, not inherited or invented.
- Both technique and justification are transmitted.
- Excess of definitions favourable to breaking law.
- Frequency, duration, priority and intensity matter.
- Applies to white-collar offending equally.
- Needs no assumption of pathology or deficit.

LOOK FOR IT

Accounting fraud learned from colleagues who describe it as ordinary practice within the firm.

Educational reference. Hard to test: exposure to definitions is difficult to measure independently of the outcome.