

# KRM 310 (A): CRIMINOLOGY THEORY

## UNIT 8: SOCIAL PROCESS PERSPECTIVES

### Sutherland: Differential Association Theory

The influences of Sutherland's theory of differential association:

- **Symbolic interactionists:**
  - People construct relatively permanent "definitions" of their situation out of the meanings they derive from their experiences. They derive particular means from particular experiences but then generalize them so that they become a set way of looking at things. On the basis of those definitions, two people may act toward similar situations in very different ways.
  
- **Culture conflict:**
  - Crime is an outcome of a clash between cultures:
    - Homogenous society: the conduct norms that are codified into law represent a consensus of the society's members. But in a:
    - Heterogenous society (many diverse subcultures): the law represents the conduct norms of the dominant culture only, and members of various subcultures may violate the law when they follow their groups' indigenous conduct norms.

### Sutherland's 9 Propositions:

**1 Criminal behaviour is learned**

- Not inherited

**2 Criminal behaviour is learned in interaction with other people through communication**

**3 Learning criminal behaviour takes place within intimate groups**

- ("primary groups" – family + friends)

**4 Learning includes**

- a) techniques and
- b) directions of motives, drives and attitudes

**5 Directions of motives/drives is learned from definitions of legal codes as favourable and unfavourable**

- 6 Crime = excess of definitions favourable to violation of law over definitions unfavourable to violation of law.**
- Differential association

**7 Differential association vary in:**

- frequency
- duration
- priority
- intensity

- *Associations that occur often (frequency) and are long-lasting (duration) will have a greater impact on an individual than brief, chance encounters.*
- *Associations that occur early in a person's life (childhood) are more important than those that occur later on (priority)*
- *Associations with prestigious people will be more influential than those for whom one has little regard/who are socially distant in one's life.*