However, Cohen assumes that the boys believed the middle class success goals at first and then deviated from then, when in fact they may not have shared their goals in the first place which Merton acknowledges.

Cloward and Ohlin comment that there are three different subcultural responses that can occur. Their main reason in explaining why these exist is not only because of unequal access to legitimate means of success, but also unequal access to illegitimate opportunity structures. Their first type of deviant subcultures they say result are criminal subcultures which provide youths with an apprenticeship for a career in utilitarian crime. They allow for a young person to interact with adult criminals who provide them with training and are their role models for employment on the criminal career ladder. The sociologists also identify conflict subcultures which arise in areas where there are high population levels. This results in high level of social disorganisation and prevents a stable professional criminal act developing. Its absence means that only illegitimate opportunities are available within loosely organised gangs. Lastly, they identify retreatist subcultures. These exist in any neighbourhood; the people don’t always succeed in becoming a professional criminal or a gang leader. These people are called ‘double failures’, as they fail in succeeding both through legitimate and illegitimate means. Cloward and Ohlin say that this is the most common type of subculture based on illegal drug use.

However, the pair do not allow their theory for one person to be more than one of these subcultures, which has been proven that it is possible in other research.

Recent strain theorists have argued that young people have more goals than only financial success: popularity, autonomy form adults and the desire for young males to be treated like ‘real men’. They argue, like earlier theorists of this idea, that failure to achieve these goals may result in delinquent and deviant behaviour. They argue that middle class juveniles have barriers trying to achieve these goals and this offers an explanation to why there are delinquent young middle class people.

Messner and Rosenfield argue that the institutional anomie theory focuses on the American Dream. They say that economic goals are valued above all, and there is immense pressure towards crime encouraging anomic cultural environment in which people are encouraged to adopt an ‘anything goes’ mentality when trying to achieve wealth, leading to people using illegitimate means to reach their aspirations of financial success. All these functionalist sociologists theories contribute to our understanding of crime and deviance in society.