



Criminology Unit 2 Knowledge organiser



The Criminal

Crime:
'An action or omission which constitutes an offence and is punishable by law.'

Deviance:
'The fact or state of diverging from usual or accepted standards, especially in social or sexual behaviour.'

Crime as a social construct

Social norms and values determine what is deviant and influence our laws to define crime. But social norms and values change over time and are different in each country. This means the acts or behaviours that are considered to be deviant and/or criminal also change over time, from place to place and are dependant on context and the characteristics of the people involved.

Individualistic Theories

Eysenck—Personality

Certain personality types are more likely to commit crime. Carried out a personality questionnaire with 700 soldiers who were being treated for neurotic disorders. The answers suggested there were a number of different personality traits.

- Extraversion/introversion
- Neuroticism/stability
- He later introduced a 3rd dimension
- Psychoticism
- Eysenck's theory predicts that people who have extrovert, neurotic and psychotic personalities are more likely to offend because it is difficult for them to learn to control their immature impulses. Criminals are more likely to be impulsive, risk taking and unable to accept and understand the rules of society.

Psychodynamic theory—Freud

Our personality contains active forces that cause us to act as we do.

Freud Psychoanalysis—Our early childhood experiences determine our personality and future behaviour.

The mind has 3 parts Id – controls our selfish urges

Ego – seeks rational and sensible control

Super ego – our moral conscience A healthy personality needs a balance between all 3 parts. Children need to progress from the pleasure principle, being id dominated.



Functionalism

Durkheim = Crime is inevitable and has positive functions!
Boundary Maintenance = reaffirms what is right and wrong by making an example of those who break the law through e.g. court appearances, media attention, public hangings (in the past).

Social change = For society to progress, existing norms and values must be challenged. This occurs via functional rebels that act in deviant ways to encourage changes in laws etc.

Social cohesion = after any horrific crime often society pulls together as a community which reinforces the sense of belonging and social cohesion.

Marxism

There are two classes in society that are in conflict. **The rich, upper class – Bourgeoisie** and **the working class – proletariat**.

Crimogenic Capitalism – capitalism encourages us to value material goods, those that cannot afford these consumer goods turn to crime to obtain them. The proletariat are kept on low wages by the Bourgeoisie causing some to have to commit crime to survive.

Capitalism promotes greed – explains white collar/ corporate crime. Proletariat feel alienated and frustrated with their position in society and turn to **non utilitarian** crime to act out their frustrations – e.g. vandalism and violence.

The role of state & law making—Laws are made by the bourgeoisie and therefore protect the bourgeoisie. Laws are enforced differently, with penalties being more lenient for working class crime compared with white collar crime. This gives the impression that crime is a working-class problem (**Selective Enforcement**). Some laws exist to give the false impression that capitalist society cares. e.g. Health & Safety laws to protect workers suggest they are cared for however, H&S breaches are rarely prosecuted.



Sociological Theories of Crime

Strain Theory

Strain theories state that **certain strains or stressors increase the likelihood of crime**. These strains lead to negative emotions, such as frustration and anger. These emotions create pressure for corrective action, and crime is one possible response.

Merton's explanation combines two elements:

Structural Factors – society's unequal opportunities structure

Cultural Factors – the strong emphasis on success goals and the weaker emphasis on using legitimate means to achieve them.

The '**American Dream**' encouraged individuals to pursue a goal of success which was largely measured in terms of the acquisition of wealth and material possessions. People were expected to pursue this goal through legitimate means such as education and work.

5 responses to anomie = Conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism & rebellion



Left & Right Realism

Realist theories crime is a real problem not a social construction.

Right Realism – causes of crime

Rational Choice – deciding to commit a crime is a choice based on a rational calculation of the consequences. Do the costs of committing the crime outweigh the benefits or not?

Inadequate socialisation – Effective socialisation reduces the chances of engaging in crime. **Murray** – welfare dependent, lone parents fail to adequately socialise their children and increase the risk of them offending.

Biological differences – personality differences eg: anger and low IQ lead to offending.

Solutions = Zero tolerance policing & Target Hardening

Left Realism – causes of crime

Marginalisation – people on the margins of society are not supported or represented and therefore more likely to engage in crime.

Relative deprivation – people recognise that they are less well off in comparison to others and may turn to crime to close the deprivation gap.

Subcultures – those who cannot achieve in mainstream society will turn to a subculture. However, this is not always a deviant subculture, it might be a religious subculture that provides an explanation for their deprivation.

Solutions = Multi-agency approach to policing & tackling structural causes.

Interactionism (labelling theory)

Becker believed that the act done by the person was not deviant, rather that the **labelling** caused it to be viewed as such.

Lemert – Primary deviance (acts that have not been labelled as deviant) and secondary deviance (results from labelling – once someone has been labelled deviant further deviance is likely). Once an individual is labelled as a criminal, they internalise the label and it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy – they live up to this label. When the label affects all aspects of their life it has become their master status. Media contribute by demonising labelled groups – moral panic, deviancy amplification and stereotypes.

Cicourel argues that justice is **negotiated** – when a middle-class youth was arrested, he was less likely to be charged because he did not fit the police's idea of the 'typical' delinquent.

Cicourel found that **typifications** – common sense theories or stereotypes – leads police to focus on 'typical' offenders in 'typical' areas.

Braithwaite- Reintegrative shaming-that which allows the offender to later be **readmitted** into the group. Directly **discourages** crime and participation in criminal subcultures.

Disintegrative shaming-that which creates **permanent** stigma which allows participation in **criminal** subcultures and, therefore, high crime rates

Learning theories

These theories are based on the assumption that criminal behaviour is learned.

Sutherland's differential association Individuals learn criminal behaviour through their links/associations with others, particularly peers and family. Identified 9 key principles. If a person's pro crime associations outweigh their anti crime associations they are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour.

Operant learning theory—If a particular behaviour results in a reward it is likely to be repeated. Behaviour resulting in an undesirable outcome is not likely to be repeated. The cause of someone's behaviour lies in the reinforcements and punishments that shape it.

Social learning theory Bandura - Aggression can be learned from watching others behave in an aggressive manner. Bobo doll experiment. 3 groups watch a video of an adult behaving aggressively towards the Bobo doll. Group 1 saw the adult praised, Group 2 saw the adult punished and Group 3 was a control group that saw the adult neither rewarded or punished. The children were then observed playing with a Bobo doll themselves after viewing the video. Findings: Group 1 – imitated the aggressive behaviour they had seen rewarded. Group 2 – were least likely to imitate the behaviour. Group 3 – imitated the behaviour but less so than Group 1. Whether they imitated the behaviour depended on the consequences they had observed for the model.





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Evaluation of Sociological Theories

Functionalism- X Durkheim argues that a certain amount of crime/deviance is healthy for society – but does not indicate **how much** is the right amount.

Marxism- X Ignores other **non-class inequalities** such as gender or ethnicity.

Left Realism-X The theory is too soft on the criminal as it doesn't explain how the criminals should be dealt with.

Right Realism-X They are overly concerned with street crime and ignore corporate or white-collar crimes which may be more costly and harmful to society.

Interactionism-X It tends to be deterministic, not everyone accepts their labels

Strain Theory- X Strain theory only really explains economic crime, it doesn't really explain violent crime.

Evaluation of Individualistic Theories

Psychodynamic-X it can be very difficult to prove or disprove. Freud said criminality is part of the unconscious which is impossible to research

Personality-X Measuring personality using a questionnaire is a flawed research method. Respondents might get fed up during the test and just put an answer without reading the question.

SLT- X Doesn't explain why people from crime-ridden backgrounds don't go on to commit crime.

Evaluation of Biological Theories

XYY- X This theory focusses too heavily on genetic and ignores the environmental causes of someone's behaviour

Twin studies/Adoption studies- X The small sample sizes involved in twin studies don't represent the general population and therefore we can't generalise the findings.

Biochemical- X Doesn't explain non-violent crimes such as fraud that are committed by people who aren't on steroids.

Lombroso- X Not everyone with atavistic features is a criminal and not all criminals have atavistic features. This means there must be another factor involved in determining whether someone is a criminal.

Sheldon- X Ignores the fact that ectomorphs and endomorphs can, and do, commit crime.

Brain Injury -X Ignores the fact that people **without** damage to their prefrontal cortex also commit crime.



Biological Theories of Crime

Genetic Theories

XYY Theory
Some males are born with a chromosomal abnormality, meaning they end up with a 'XYY' pattern instead of just 'XY'.

These males are sometimes called 'super males' and are thought to be more aggressive and more likely to be violent than other males.

Jacob et al. (1965) suggested that XYY men are over-represented in the prison population. In prison, there are 15 sufferers per 1,000 people.

Example case = John Wayne Gacy

Adoption Studies
If the child is more similar to their biological parents than their adoptive parents, we can suggest criminality has a genetic cause.

If the child is more similar to their adoptive parents than their biological parents, we can suggest criminality has an environmental cause.

Hutchings and Mednick (1975) – studied 14,000 adopted children and found a high proportion of boys who had committed a crime had biological parents with criminal RECORDS, suggesting crime might be genetic.

Mednick et al. (1994) – found significant correlation between the number of criminal convictions of the biological parents and their children.

Example case = Kenneth Bianchi

Twin Studies
Twin studies support the idea that a heritable trait might increase the risk for criminal behaviour. When both twins share a characteristic, there is said to be a concordance rate. The idea that concordance rates of criminality are higher in MZ twins than DZ twins suggests genetic plays a role in criminality.

Lange (1929) – 10 out of 13 MZ twins had both served time in prison while only 2 out of 17 DZ twins had both served time in prison.

Christiansen (1977) studied 3,586 pairs of twins and found concordance rates of 35% for MZ twins and 13% for DZ twins.

MONOZYGOTIC TWINS
Identical twins (develop from the same fertilised egg) that share 100% of their DNA.

DIZYGOTIC TWINS
Non-identical twins (develop from different fertilised eggs) that share 50% of their DNA.

Example = **Jasmiyah and Tasmiyah Whitehead**
16-year old female twins kill their mother. There was an argument involving cursing and scratching. Her lugs, back of her neck and her spinal cord were badly injured.



Physiological Theories

Lombroso's Theory
Criminals have physiological indicators that link to different types of crimes. These are biologically determined atavistic characteristics.

All criminals: strong jaw, high cheekbones, facial asymmetry, dark skin, extra toes/fingers

Murderers: bloodshot eyes, curly hair, long ears

Sexual deviants: glinting eyes, swollen lips, projecting ears

Fraudsters: thin lips

Lombroso also suggested criminals were insensitive to pain, used slang, have tattoos and are unemployed

He carefully examined the facial and cranial features of hundreds of Italian convicts, both living and dead and proposed that atavistic form was associated with a number of physical anomalies.

In total, he examined the skulls of 383 dead criminals and 3839 living ones. 40% of criminal acts could be accounted by atavistic characteristics (in other words, 40% of the criminals had atavistic characteristics)

Sheldon's Theory

Sheldon (1949) proposed a theory that suggested someone's criminal behaviour is linked to a person's physical form. He carefully examined 4,000 photos of men and put forward that there are three body types (somatotypes): ectomorphic, mesomorphic and endomorphic.

Mesomorphs are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour. They are more likely to be attracted to risk taking and their physique can be an advantage in some aspects of crime.

Biochemical

The chemistry of the brain is influenced by many things including diet. Having low levels of the neurotransmitter serotonin is linked to being more aggressive than others. Serotonin regulates our mood.

Scerbo and Raine (1993) conducted a meta-analysis into anti-social adults and children and found low levels of serotonin in all of them. Foods such as dark chocolate, cheese, turkey and salmon can raise serotonin levels.

People who take large amounts of steroids can become extremely violent. Steroids increase testosterone which is also linked to aggression.

Brain Injury

Damage to the prefrontal cortex might cause individuals to have a change in behaviour. They might become more immature and lose their self-control. **Raine et al. (1994)** used PET scans to study the living brains of killers. Damage was found in the pre-frontal cortex in the brains of the criminals.

Phineas Gage is an example of how brain injuries can lead to criminal and deviant behaviour. Gage's personality changed following a major brain injury. Some studies have also shown that prisoners are more likely to have endured brain injuries.

The Influence of Theory on Policy

Biological= Balance of Good Health Model in Prisons, Death Penalty, Sterilisation of Drug Addicts, Chemical Castration & Eugenics

Individualistic= Speeding Awareness Courses, Anger Management, Behaviour Modification, Psychological Therapy, Community Service & Incentives and Earned Privileges Scheme

Sociological = Three Strikes and You're Out, Multi-Agency Approach, ASBO, Stop and Search, Mass Imprisonment, Zero Tolerance Policing, CCTV, Restorative Justice & Penal Populism

Social Changes in Policy Development

There are various attitudes, events and policies impacting upon a range of social issues.

- Homosexuality –Alan Turing, Section 28, Wolfenden Report, Sexual Offences Act & Marriage Act 2014
- Institutional Racism-Race Relations Act, the murder of Stephen Lawrence &Macpherson Report
- Smoking-Ban of Smoking Television adverts, Health Act, Smoking ban & Menthol Smoking Ban
- Domestic Violence-Wife Beating Curfew, Crime and Victims Act & Serious Crime Act
- Revenge Porn- 2012 Tūlisa Contostavlos sex tape, Rise in Technology, Criminal Justice and Courts act & Revenge Porn statistics
- Plastic Pollution-146% Increase in Plastic Pollution in the UK, Single Use carrier bag law & UK plans to ban plastic straws and cotton buds

How campaigns affect policy making

- Individual campaigns-
A campaign that often starts from someone's 'individual' experiences, which are most commonly traumatic. The campaign is introduced as a response to the experience to ensure that nobody else has to suffer from such trauma. E.g. **Clare's Law**
- Newspaper campaigns-When Newspapers are used to spread the information and message about a campaign around the general public, to be able to reach wider audiences, gain interest, and help the cause of the campaign e.g. **Sarah's Law**
- Pressure groups-Pressure groups are organisations which campaign for changes in the law or new **policies** in areas such as crime e.g. **No knives, Better Lives**

