Individualistic Theories – Psychological Theories

| Assessment Criterion	Content	Amplification
AC1.1 *You should be able to -* Describe Individualistic Theories of Criminality	Individualistic Theories • Learning Theories • Psychodynamic Theory • **Psychological Theories**	You should have knowledge and understanding of: ✓ Bandura's Social Learning Theory ✓ Sutherlands Differential Association Theory ✓ Freud's Psychodynamic Theory ✓ Bowlby's Maternal Deprivation Theory ✓ **Eysenck's Personality Theory**

HANS EYENCK'S PERSONALITY THEORY

Eysenck believed that certain personality types are more likely to commit crime. This is because they crave excitement and are slow to learn that crime has negative consequences. He based his theory on the results of surveys carried out on 700 soldiers, who were being treated for various disorders at the Maudsley Hospital in London, shortly after the second world war. From the soldiers' responses, Eysenck was able to identify 3 main personality traits, these were introversion-extroversion (E); neuroticism-stability (N) and psychoticism-normality (P)

- **Extraversion-Introversion** - extroverts are characterised as outgoing, having positive emotions, but may get bored easily.

- **Neuroticism-Stability** - neuroticism is the tendency to experience negative emotional states (such as anger, anxiety and depression) rather than positive emotional states.

- **Psychoticism-Normality** - psychotics are egocentric, aggressive, impulsive, impersonal, lacking in empathy and generally not concerned about the welfare of other people.

PERSONALITY AND BEHAVIOUR

The first of these traits, **extroversion**, refers to how socially oriented we are – some people need the company of others in nearly all situations, these people are extroverts, while others are happier with their own company introverts; most of us are somewhere in between the two extremes. The second of these traits is **neuroticism**, that is the degree to which we experience negative emotions such as anxiety, depression or anger. A high score might be indicative of someone who frequently experiences some or all of these negative emotions, people with low N scores are described as stable.

Eysenck thought all psychologically healthy people could be placed somewhere on the extraversion-introversion and the stability-neuroticism scales, some people will score at the extremes, but this does not make them abnormal or unhealthy. **Psychoticism** on the other hand refers to character traits that would make us cold, uncaring and unfeeling. Eysenck thought that this trait would not be found in healthy people and that people who scored high on this trait were potentially criminal.

PERSONALITY HAS A BIOLGOCAL BASIS
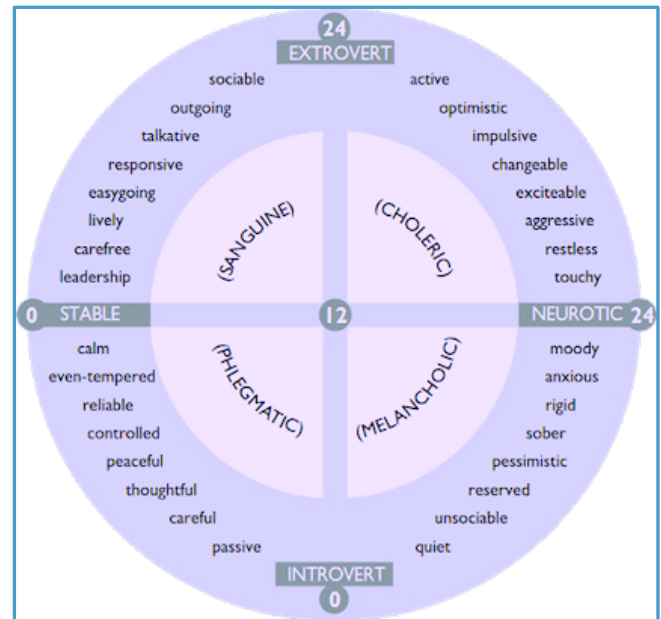
Eysenck (1982) suggested that personality has a biological basis which is mainly innate. **Extraversion** is determined by the **overall level of arousal** in a person's nervous system. A person who is under-aroused requires more stimulation, whereas an over-aroused person doesn't require this. Extraverts seek external stimulation to increase their cortical (brain) arousal. Introverts are innately over-aroused and thus seek to reduce or avoid stimulation.

Neuroticism is determined by the level of stability (i.e., amount of reactivity) in the **sympathetic nervous system** - how much a person responds in situations of threat (fight-or-flight). A neurotic person is someone who is slightly unstable and reacts/gets easily upset quickly. At the opposite end of this dimension the 'stable' personality has a more unreactive nervous system.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF PERSONALITY TO CRIMINALITY

- Eysenck believed that high E scorers, when coupled with a high N score could under some circumstance be more likely to commit crime.
- A high P score would invariably be associated with crime as these individuals do not have the social tools to fully function in society.
- Psychoticism has been related to higher levels of testosterone, which means that men (who have higher levels of testosterone than women) are more likely to be found at this end of the spectrum.

THE 44 JUVENILE THIEVES STUDY, BOWLBY (1944)

There has been research comparing the personalities of criminals and non-criminals. Dunlop et al (2012) found that both extraversion and psychoticism, as well as lie scales, were good predictors of delinquency. Dam et al (2007) found that only a small group of male offenders in a juvenile detention centre had high scores on all three of Eysenck's variables.