

Individualistic Theories of Criminality

LO1 – DESCRIBE INDIVIDUALISTIC THEORIES OF CRIMINALITY		
Assessment Criterion	Content	Amplification
AC1.1 <i>You should be able to -</i> Describe Individualistic Theories of Criminality	Individualistic Theories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Theories • Psychodynamic Theory • Psychological Theories 	You should have knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bandura's Social Learning Theory ✓ Freud's Psychodynamic Theory ✓ Bowlby's Maternal Deprivation Theory ✓ Eysenck's Personality Theory

Learning theories suggest that learning through experience is very important in shaping criminal behaviour. Therefore, they are a nurture theory

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory proposes that we learn all of our behaviour from others. This theory can be used to explain all kinds of behaviour, including criminal behaviour.

Banduras Bobo Doll Experiment

BANDURA (1961) CONDUCTED A CONTROVERSIAL EXPERIMENT EXAMINING THE PROCESS BY WHICH NEW FORMS OF BEHAVIOUR – AND IN PARTICULAR, AGGRESSION – ARE LEARNT. THE INITIAL STUDY, ALONG WITH BANDURA'S FOLLOW-UP RESEARCH, WOULD LATER BE KNOWN AS THE BOBO DOLL EXPERIMENT. THE EXPERIMENT REVEALED THAT CHILDREN IMITATE THE AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR OF ADULTS. THE FINDINGS SUPPORT BANDURA'S SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY, WHICH EMPHASISES THE INFLUENCE OF OBSERVATIONAL LEARNING ON BEHAVIOUR.

BANDURA ALSO CONDUCTED A NUMBER OF FOLLOW-UP STUDIES DURING THE 1960S WHICH EXAMINED HOW WITNESSING A THIRD PARTY BEING REWARDED OR PUNISHED FOR BEHAVING IN A PARTICULAR MANNER CAN INFLUENCE A BYSTANDER'S OWN ACTIONS. HE CONCLUDED THAT VICARIOUS LEARNING, AS WELL AS DIRECT REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS, CAN IMPACT ON AN OBSERVER'S BEHAVIOUR.



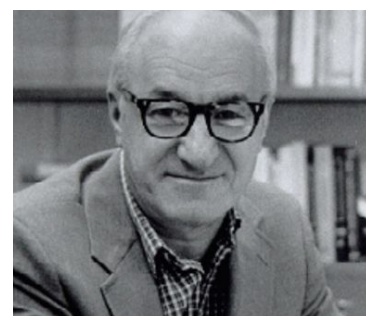
Social Learning Theory and Criminal Behaviour

Role Models.

Bandura invented the term role model to describe individuals who people will imitate; this is particularly true of children. Children seem to actively seek out people to copy. Role models are people that we look up to and respect, such as parents, older siblings, peers, and people and characters we see in the media.

Vicarious Learning

This is a type of learning that occurs when a person sees another rewarded for their behaviour. Vicarious means literally experiences through others. The important thing is that the reward is experienced by the person whose behaviour is being imitated.



A YOUNG GIRL MIGHT IDENTIFY WITH HER OLDER SISTER, WHO IS IN A GROUP OF FRIENDS WHO GET INTO TROUBLE, SECONDLY, A TEENAGE BOY MAY IDENTIFY WITH A GANGSTER CHARACTER FROM HIS FAVOURITE FILM.



ACTIVITY 1: Use the following terms to explain how social learning theory would explain why the boy and girl end up involved in deviant and/or criminal behaviour.

- Observational learning
- Role Models
- Vicarious Learning (rewards)
- Imitation (copying)

SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY (EVALUATION)

STRENGTHS OF SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

- ✔ The BoBo doll experiment showed the role models have an effect on the child's, the model's behaviour was copied or imitated, often very closely. Children were likely to imitate the behaviour of role models, even if that behaviour was wrong.
- ✔ The experiment allowed researchers to control important variables, such as the gender and actions of the model, were controlled for, thus allowing greater accuracy. The study has been replicated with slight changes and similar results have been found.
- ✔ Social learning theory can account for learning that we do not have direct experiences of. For example, few children are rewarded directly for aggressive behaviour, in fact for most children it is discouraged, yet aggression is still acquired by many.

LIMITATIONS OF SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

- ✗ The theory does not account for people who turn to crime, even though they have not been exposed to criminal role models. In these cases, criminal behaviour may be better explained by innate factors (nature) such as genes or brain abnormalities.
- ✗ Bowlby's original experiment involves a child and adult model in a very artificial situation. The child and the model are strangers to one another, they have never met before but 'Modelling' typically takes place within the family where children are familiar with their role models. Parents and others often offer guidance as to what is appropriate behaviour, they will explain what is right and wrong, in Bandura's experiment this did not happen.

So Bandura's original experiment may not tell us much about learning in the 'real' world

Psychodynamic Theory

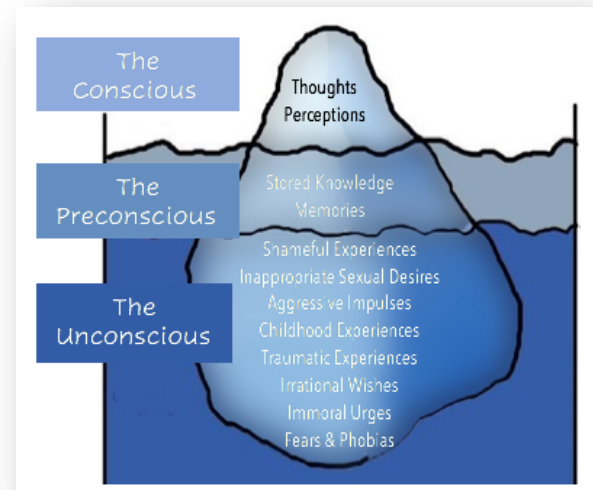
Psychodynamic theory was developed in the 19th century by Sigmund Freud. Freud was one of the first people to point out that early childhood experiences were important in shaping the adult personality. For Freud the roots on all adult problems could be found in childhood.

The Importance of the Unconscious Mind

Freud developed a model of the human mind as being like an iceberg, with most of it hidden beneath the surface.

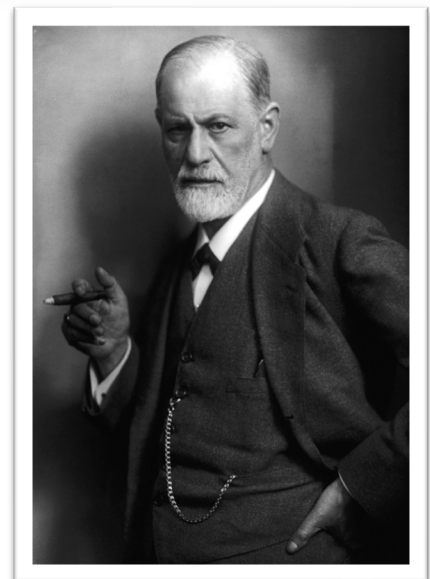
The Tripartite Structure of Personality

Freud described three parts to human personality - the **id**, the **ego**, and the **superego**.



The Tripartite Structure of Personality

- **Id** – (DEVIL) FIRST PART TO DEVELOP – SELFISH/IMPULSIVE – LIVES IN THE **UNCONSCIOUS**
- **Superego** (ANGEL) – DEVELOPS WHEN WE INTERNALISE PARENTS' RULES – MORALISTIC PART OF THE MIND/ PERFECTIONIST – ALSO FOUND IN **UNCONSCIOUS**
- **Ego** (REFEREE) – REALISTIC PART OF THE MIND – BALANCES THE DEMANDS OF SUPEREGO AND ID – LARGELY **CONSCIOUS**



The Link With Criminality

- ALL OF THESE COMPONENTS OF PERSONALITY HAVE AN IMPACT CRIMINALITY.
- A PERSON WHO IS **ID DOMINANT** WILL BE ANTISOCIAL, THEY MAY WELL BE BOTH **PHYSICALLY** AND **SEXUALLY** AGGRESSIVE.
- **EGO DOMINANT** TYPES MIGHT FOLLOW THE RULES BUT THAT DOESN'T MEAN THEIR BEHAVIOR WILL BE 'MORAL'. THIS TYPE MIGHT COMMIT **STATE CRIMES** BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT BREAKING ANY RULES BY TAKING PART.
- AN UNDER-DEVELOPED **SUPEREGO** IS ALSO LINKED TO CRIME. **SOCIOPATHS** ARE PEOPLE WHO HAVE A VERY WEAKLY DEVELOPED CONSCIENCE, SOMETIMES THEY HAVE NO CONSCIENCE AT ALL.

A Healthy Personality Is a Balanced Personality

All of these components of personality have an impact criminality. A person who is **id** dominant will be antisocial, they may well be both physically and sexually aggressive. **Ego** dominant types might follow the rules but that doesn't mean their behaviour will be 'moral'. For example, a person with this type of personality might commit state crimes because they are not breaking any rules by taking part in them. An under-developed **superego** is also linked to crime. Sociopaths are people who have a very weakly.

ACTIVITY 2: Explain what is meant by the following.

TRIPARTITE MODELS OF PERSONALITY

EXPLAIN HOW THE ID, EGO AND SUPEREGO ARE INVOLVED IN DIFFERENT TYPES OF CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

FREUD THEORY (EVALUATION)

STRENGTHS OF PSCHODYNAMIC THEORY

- ✔ Psychodynamic theories have contributed to research about crime and behaviour. In particular, the focus on childhood experiences and the importance of them on future behaviour should be regarded as very important in many modern theories of criminality.
- ✔ The id, ego and superego relate to different parts of the brain, and their functions and development. The limbic system is the brain's emotion centre, rather like the id, and the pre-frontal cortex is responsible for rational decision making, just like the ego.

LIMITATIONS OF PSCHODYNAMIC THEORY

- ✘ Freud's theories are very difficult to investigate. Concepts such as the unconscious are almost impossible to research scientifically which is regarded as important by most modern criminologists.
- ✘ Freud's main method, the case study, is not regarded as a scientific method. He knew his patients and therefore could not be objective. Also, the case study method involves people recalling things from early childhood; research has shown that our memory for events that happened in childhood is very unreliable.

A black and white portrait of an elderly man with white hair, looking slightly to the right. He is wearing a dark, textured jacket over a light-colored shirt. The background is blurred, suggesting an outdoor setting.

THE 44 JUVENILE THIEVES STUDY, BOWLBY (1944)

Consequences of Failure to Form Attachments Bonds in Childhood

- Activity 3:** Research the term affectionless psychopathy? – What did Bowlby mean by this and what did he think was the cause of this condition

[illegible]

MATERNAL DEPRIVATION (EVALUATION)

STRENGTHS OF MATERNAL DEPRIVATION THEORY

- ✔ Bowlby's original research remains one of the most important sources of support for the maternal deprivation hypothesis. This was a rigorous, in depth study and benefited from the inclusion of a control group (a group of boys attending the Tavistock clinic for emotional problems) Bowlby concluded that the effects of maternal deprivation had caused affectionless and delinquent behaviour among the juvenile thieves.
- ✔ Bowlby drew the conclusion from his research that the findings had implications for prevention of delinquency. Treatment of emotional problems in young delinquents is slow and difficult, so he suggested that it is preferable to try to prevent the problem in the first place by avoiding early separations. In his early research, Bowlby, together with James and Joyce Robertson, demonstrated that the key was emotional separation rather than just physical separation. They showed that children coped reasonably well with separations from parents as long as alternative emotional care was provided.

LIMITATIONS OF MATERNAL DEPRIVATION THEORY

- ✗ Bowlby's research has been criticised, he conducted the research with the thieves himself and some people have suggested he may have biased the interview. Also, other factors might explain the results. It could be that problems in the mothers relationships caused the separations between mother and child and also caused the affectionless nature of some of the children. It could even be that the affectionless character caused the separations in some cases, e.g. a difficult child might be more likely to be placed in care.
- ✗ Studies which looked at children and later offending have not provided much support for the maternal deprivation hypothesis. **David Farrington** (2009) carried out a 40-year longitudinal study in the UK, beginning in the 1950s with 400 boys from South London. The study concluded that the most important risk factors at age 8-10 for later offending were:
 - A family history of criminality
 - A daring or risk-taking personality
 - Low school attainment
 - Poverty
 - Poor parenting.

Maternal deprivation did not feature in the list and was not regarded as important.

[illegible]

PERSONALITY THEORIES

Eysenck'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)**

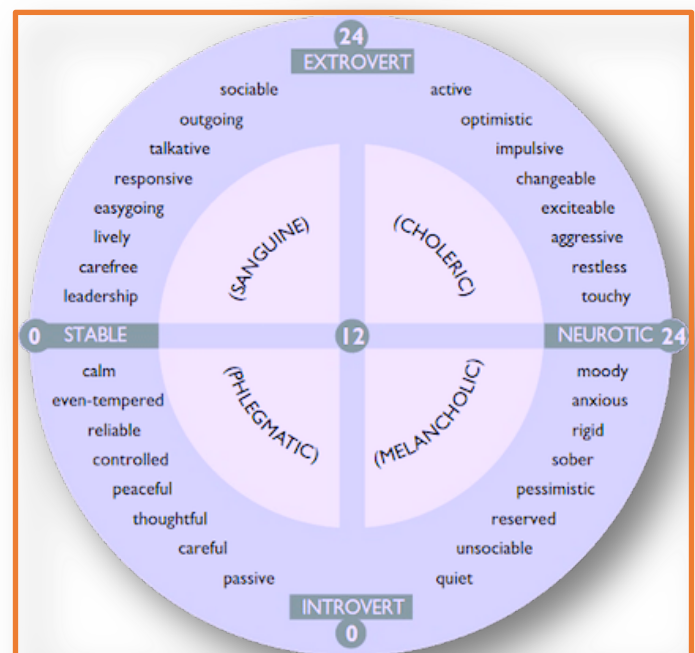
- **Extraversion-Introversion** - extroverts are characterised as outgoing, having positive emotions, but may get bored easily.
- **Neuroticism-Stability** - neuroticism is the tendency to experience negative emotional states (such as anger, anxiety and depression) rather than positive emotional states.
- **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.



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.

STRENGTHS OF EYSENCK'S THEORY

- ✔ The Eysenck Personality Inventory (The EPI) has research which suggests it is a valid (accurate) test. For example, Dunlop et al. (2012) found that both extraversion and psychoticism, as well as lie scales, were good predictors of delinquency.
- ✔ Another study by Van 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.

LIMITATIONS OF EYSENCK'S THEORY

- ✘ The EPI is a 'self-report' measure and as such is subject to some of the disadvantages of this method. People can give deliberately false answers or the answer that they think the researcher want (social desirability). This makes the test less valid.
- ✘ It is very unlikely that personality can explain the broad range of crimes that criminal's commit. It seems implausible that the sort of person who spontaneously robs people in the street would be in the same kind of person that spends month planning a complicated fraud.

PERSONALITY THEORIES (EVALUATION)

ACTIVITY 4: Explain in your own words how personality is thought to be related to criminal behaviour – include the following words – extraversion/neuroticism; neuroticism/stability and psychoticism/normality. Your answer should cover Eysenck's theory of personality and his research.

ACTIVITY 5: Mind Maps or a Poster:

Make a mind map for each of the following – Social Learning Theory; Psychodynamic Theory, Maternal Deprivation Theory and Eysenck's Personality Theory