

Biological Theories – Physiological Theories

LO1 – DESCRIBE BIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF CRIMINALITY

Assessment Criterion	Content	Amplification
AC1.1 Describe Biological Theories of Criminality	Criminal Behaviour <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Genetic Theories Physiological Theories 	You should have knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Jacob's XXX Theory ✓ Twin and Adoption Studies ✓ Lombroso's Physiological Theory ✓ Sheldon's Type Theory. ✓ Brain Abnormalities

LOMBROSO'S ATAVISTIC FORM THEORY

Cesare Lombroso wrote *L'uomo delinquente* (The criminal man) in 1876 setting out his view that offenders possessed similar characteristics to lower primates, and this could explain their criminality. He formulated his ideas at the time when Charles Darwin had recently introduced the theory of evolution. Based on this theory, Lombroso suggested that criminals are essentially throwbacks to an earlier species. He used the term atavistic to describe the physical appearance of criminals.

Atavistic Features Identified by Lombroso:

- High cheekbones
- Flattened or upturned nose
- Low, sloped forehead
- Large ears and a large jaw
- Long arms when compared to lower limbs

He believed you could tell what type of crime a person will commit due to the way they look. For example, a murderer had bloodshot eyes and curly hair whereas sex offenders had thick lips and ears that stuck out. Lombroso also suggested there were other aspects of a 'born criminal' including being insensitive to pain, using criminal slang, having tattoos and being unemployed.

Lombroso concluded that these characteristics indicated that such people were more primitive in an evolutionary sense. He went on to say that such individuals were therefore not responsible for their actions as they could not be blamed for their innate, inherited physiology.

Lombroso's Research

Lombroso's Research: Lombroso based his theory on his own research using post-mortem examinations of criminals and studying the faces of living criminals. Over the course of his career, he and his co-workers examined over 50,000 bodies. In one particular study of 383 convicted Italian criminals, he found that 21% had one atavistic trait and 43% had at least five.

MORE MODERN RESEARCH

Wu et al. (2016) found that facial features do give criminals away. 1,856 Chinese men (half of who had criminal convictions) were added to an artificial intelligence programme which went on to identify 83% criminals with only 6% of all men being incorrectly identified.



Examples of physiognomy of criminals illustrated from *L'uomo Delinquente* (Criminal Man), 1876, by Cesare Lombroso.

William Sheldon's Theory

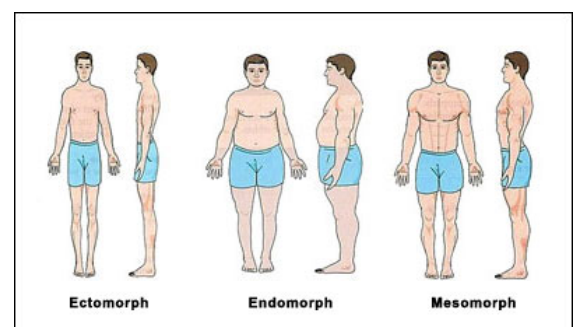
William Herbert Sheldon associated body types with human temperament types. He claimed that a body type could be linked with the personality of that person. He says that a fat person with a large bone structure tends to have an outgoing and more relaxed personality while a more muscular body-typed person is more active and aggressive. A slim or scrawny person with thin muscles is usually characterized as quiet or fragile. He split up these body/personality types into three categories called somatotypes.

- **Endomorphic** (fat and soft) tend to be sociable and relaxed
- **Ectomorphic** (thin and fragile) are introverted and restrained
- **Mesomorphic** (muscular and hard) are more aggressive and adventurous.

Sheldon argued that both mesomorphs were much more likely to commit crime. This is because they were impulsive and natural risk takers.

SHELDON'S RESEARCH

Sheldon carried out a study using photographs of nearly naked college students and a sample of juvenile delinquents. He rated each on how closely they fitted to the mesomorph body type on a scale of 1 – 7. The results showed that the delinquents scored higher on mesomorphy (4.6) than college students (3.8).

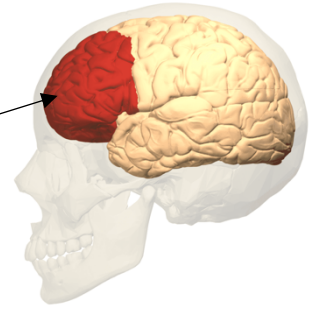


Biological Theories – Brain Abnormalities

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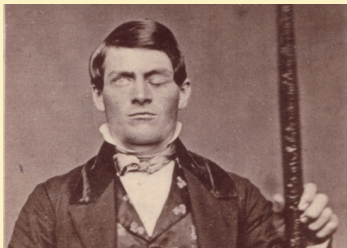
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The location of the Prefrontal Cortex in a Human Skull



THE CASE OF PHINEAS GAGE

Gage was a railroad worker who survived an accident in which a large iron rod went through his head, destroying much of the left frontal lobe of the brain. Gage's personality and behaviour were greatly affected, with friends reporting that he was no longer Gage. He became extravagant and anti-social, used bad language, had bad manners and became a liar.



The part of the brain that he had lost was associated to the mental and emotional functions that had changed. His doctor believed that the balance between his intellectual faculties and animalistic behaviour was destroyed in the accident.

PET SCANS

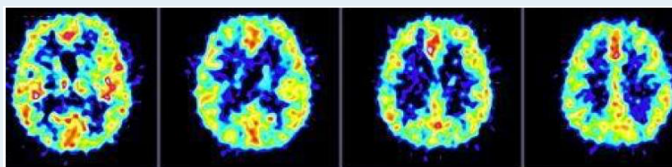
PET Scan – a type of brain imaging where scans are used to produce 3 dimensional images of the brain. PET scans involve the injection of a radioactive tracer; this tracer then appears as a bright colour on the scan, indicating which areas of the brain are most active in metabolising glucose during a task.

HEAD INJURY RESEARCH

Mc Isaac et al. (2016) found that people who have suffered serious head injuries are twice as likely to end up in prison (0.5% compared to 0.2%). Female prisoners were even more likely to have survived traumatic brain injuries. For women with these injuries, the risk of winding up in a Canadian federal prison was 2.76 times higher than it was for uninjured women.

THE PREFRONTAL CORTEX AND CRIMINAL BEHAVIOUR

Several research studies have suggested that damage to the pre-frontal cortex of the brain may cause individuals to have an altered behaviour pattern. Becoming more immature and having an increased loss of self-control as well as having an inability to modify behaviour. Raine et al (1994) used PET scans to study the living brains of impulsive killers.



The murders in Raine's study had all pleaded 'not guilty by reason of insanity (NGRI)' to a charge of murder. Raine wanted to see if the findings of studies linking brain structure to aggression in animals could be generalised to humans. Raine found consistent differences in the brains of murders when compared to non-murderers, in particular there was decreased activity in some area of the brain connected to impulse control and thinking. However, he did not find that this pattern of brain activity in all murderers, so was not able to conclude that this was the cause of the murderer's behaviour.

BIOCHEMICAL EXPLANATIONS

There are a number of biochemical substances that have been linked with criminal behaviour, particularly criminal behaviour related to aggression:

- **Male offending and testosterone:** Males are more aggressive than females, this is true of every mammalian species. One substance that has been linked to male aggression is the sex hormone 'testosterone'. Testosterone peaks in adolescent males before gradually declining with age. It promotes muscle strength and is responsible for the sex drive. Similarly, offending, particularly offences involving aggression or a sexual motive peaks in males in the early 20s before declining.
- **Female offending and Hormones:** Female offending has also been linked with hormones. Both pre-menstrual tension and post-partum depression have been linked to hormonal changes in females and have been accepted as mitigating factors for crimes committed by women.
- **Substances abuse:** Drugs both legal and illegal have been linked with the causes of crime. Alcohol is implicated in over 80% of cases of domestic violence and crack cocaine is known to increase aggression in people of both sexes.

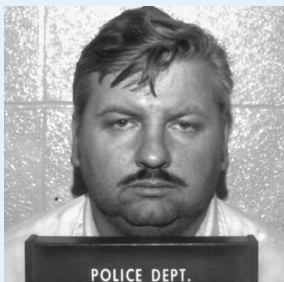
Biological Theories – Genetic Theories

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XYY THEORY – SUPERMALES

This theory suggests that criminality might be caused by chromosomal abnormalities in the cells of criminals. A person's biological sex is determined by the paired sex chromosome, XX for a female and ZY for males – XYY men have an extra Y chromosomes are sometimes called **super males**



Some studies that suggest XYY men are over-represented in the prison population. There are 15 sufferers per 1,000 in prisons and one per 1,000 in the general population. The serial killer John Wayne Gacy (left) is said to have XYY syndrome. He sexually assaulted, tortured and killed at least 33 men in the USA.

CONCORDANCE RATE

The rate of agreement (match) between on a trait between pairs of twins – normally expressed as a percentage. The concordance rates for MZ twins should be higher than DZ twins if genes play a part.

TWIN STUDIES

Identical twins are **monozygotic**, that is both of the twins develop from the same fertilised egg. Non-identical (fraternal) twins are **dizygotic**, that is the develop from two separate eggs which are fertilised by two different sperm.

	Monozygotic Twins	Dizygotic Twins
AKA	Identical Twins	Fraternal Twins or Non-Identical Twins
Genes Shared	100%	50%

The logic of twin studies is that both MZ and DZ twins grow up in the same household, with the same family, at the same time. They often go to the same schools and share some of the same friends. In short, their environment is very similar. However, there is a difference, MZ twins are 100% genetically identical, whereas DZ twins only share 50% of their genes.

What this means is that if we look at some aspect of behaviour such as whether the twins smoke, drink, like football or are attracted to people of the same sex. If there is a difference between how often we see that behaviour in monozygotic twins and dizygotic twins, that difference is very likely due to genetic factors. That is because MZ twin share 100% of their genes whereas DZ twins share just 50% of their genes but importantly, they share very similar environments.

BIOLOGICAL THEORIES

Biological theories focus on the idea that physical characteristics make some people more likely to commit crime than others. Such criminal tendencies can be genetic and therefore inherited. Hence, it could be said that the person is

CHROMOSOMES

Chromosomes are structures found in all cell nuclei, they carry the DNA, which is the genetic information that all living things are based on.



Humans have 22 pairs of chromosomes plus the two sex chromosomes (XX in females and XY in males) for a total of 46.

These boys are identical or monozygotic twins (MZ) - they share 100% of the same genes. The girls on the other hand are dizygotic (DZ) and only share only 50% of their genes.



If the boys are more similar than the girls on some measure, that is likely to be because of the extra genes by shared by both of them, as the amount of environment shared by both sets of twins is 100%

TWIN STUDIES AND CRIMINALITY

One of the earliest twins' studies was reported by the German physician **Johannes Lange** (1929). He found that MZ twins showed a much higher degrees of concordance for criminal behaviour than DZ twins. **Christiansen** (1977) also studied twin. He found that concordance rates of 35% for MZ twins and only 13% for DZ twins in 3,586 pairs of twins.

ADOPTION STUDIES

Another way to examine the influence of genes and environment is to look at what happens when children are adopted. Adopted children have a genetic link with their biological parents but (nature) but the environmental link (nurture) is broken as they grow up in a new family.

One study **Hutchings and Mednick** (1975) looked at over 14,000 adopted boys. They found that a large number of the boys who had criminal convictions had biological parents with criminal convictions.

Individualistic Theories – Learning Theories

LO1 – DESCRIBE INDIVIDUALISTIC THEORIES OF CRIMINALITY

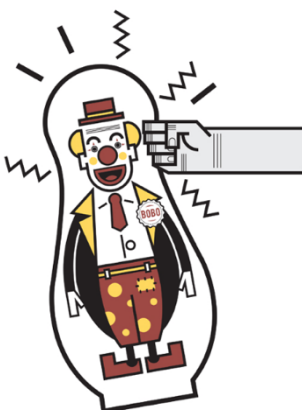
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AC1.1 You should be able to - Describe Individualistic Theories of Criminality	Individualistic Theories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning Theories • Psychodynamic Theory • Psychological Theories 	You should have knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Bandura's Social Learning Theory ✓ Sutherland's Differential Association Theory ✓ Freud's Psychodynamic Theory ✓ Bowlby's Maternal Deprivation Theory ✓ Eysenck's Personality 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.

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.



ROLE MODELS

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. We go through a process of **identification**, where we decide we want to be like these people; we watch what they do and try to copy them. These are the processes of **observation** and **imitation**.

VICARIOUS REINFORCEMENT

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.

CLASSICAL CONDITIONING

Classical conditioning is learning through **association** and was first demonstrated by Ivan Pavlov. Pavlov found that dogs could be **conditioned** to salivate to the sound of a bell if that sound was repeatedly presented at the same time as they were given food. Gradually, Pavlov's dogs learned to associate the sound of the bell (a stimulus) with the food (another stimulus) and would produce the salivation (a reflex response) every time they heard the sound.

Animals learn new associations in classical conditioning

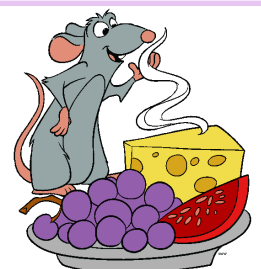


OPERANT CONDITIONING

Skinner believed that the best way to understand behaviour is to look at the causes of an action and its consequences. In operant conditioning there are three types of consequences of behaviour:

- **Positive reinforcement** is receiving a reward when a certain behaviour is performed; for example, praise from a teacher for answering a question correctly in class.
- **Negative reinforcement** occurs when an animal (or human) avoids something unpleasant. When a student hands in an essay so as not to be told off, the avoidance of something unpleasant is the negative reinforcement.
- **Punishment** is an unpleasant consequence of behaviour, for example being shouted at by the teacher for talking

Food is an example of a positive reinforcement for Remy the Rat



SUTHERLAND'S DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION THEORY

According to Sutherland (1939), if an individual experiences repeated attitudes which are positively associated with crime, rather than negatively – They are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour. The way in which a person becomes an offender is through:

- **Learned attitudes**
- **Imitation of (criminal) acts**

One strength of differential association is that it is compatible with other learning theories. People may learn positive associations with crime through others (**classical conditioning**); they may be positively rewarded for their criminal behaviour (**operant conditioning**) and they may see others being rewarded for their criminal behaviour (**social learning theory**)

Individualistic Theories – Psychodynamic Theory

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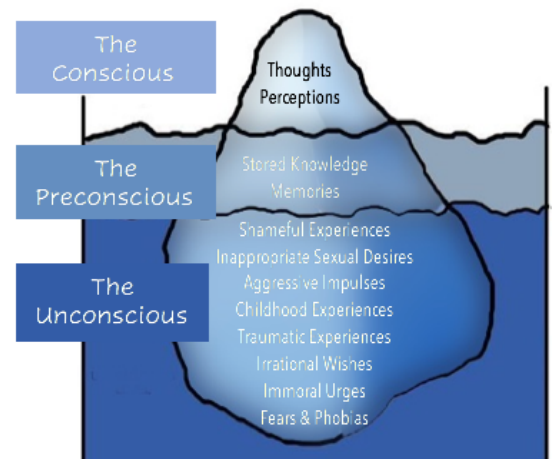
THE TRIPARTITE STRUCTURE OF PERSONALITY

As a compliment to his theory of mind Freud described three parts to human personality – the **id**, the **ego**, and the **superego**. The **id** is the first part of the personality to develop and contains all the basic drives and impulses that we need to survive. The **id** is essentially amoral and selfish and works entirely on the **pleasure principle**, i.e., immediate satisfaction of any wish. The **id** is also very extreme in its reactions; frustration often results in aggression or extreme protest. As the child grows it becomes clear that such behaviour is not acceptable. As a consequence, a more realistic and 'social' part of personality, the **ego** emerges. This works according to the **reality principle**, i.e., it tries to satisfy the **id**'s demands but in such a way that takes into account external reality. As the child develops further, a third part of the personality emerges which acts as a kind of 'internalised parent'. This is the **superego** and its role is to act as the **conscience** of the child – it works on the **ego ideal** which is a set of standards of moral behaviour morals which it demands the **ego** live up to.

Id Dominant	Person is dominated by basic biological needs and urges - food, drink, sex, aggression and so on. Personality will be perceived by others as crude and antisocial.
Ego Dominant	Person will follow rules but be inflexible. Ego dominant individuals will be obedient, but choices made are not based on what is right or wrong, simply is allowed by the rules.
Superego Dominant	Person will be very judgemental and will expect perfection from all – people including own self, will always fall short against this personality's high moral standards.

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 developed conscience, sometimes they have no conscience at all. Perhaps more surprising is that an over-developed super ego can also be related to crime as the personality is so weighed down by guilt that they react against this and turn to crime this a coping mechanism



THE IMPORTANCE OF THE UNCONSCIOUS MIND

Sigmund Freud was a doctor working with women who were experiencing a range of physical symptoms known as 'hysteria'. The cause of hysteria was a mystery, but Freud became convinced that the roots of such problems lay deep in a hidden part of the mind known as the **unconscious**. Freud developed a model of the human mind as being like an iceberg, with most of it hidden beneath the surface.

JOHN BOWLBY & THE MATERNAL DEPRIVATION HYPOTHESIS

John Bowlby was a psychologist who was heavily influenced by Freud. In the 1940's Bowlby outlined the **maternal deprivation hypothesis**; this was the idea that frequent or prolonged disruptions to the child's primary attachment relationships would have serious consequences for the later development of the child and on into adulthood.

- An inability to form attachments in the future
- Affectionless psychopathy (inability to feel remorse)
- Delinquency (behavioural problems in adolescence)
- Problems with Cognitive Development

Bowlby's thinking was shaped by various sources of evidence including his own research on emotionally and behaviourally disturbed children attending the Tavistock clinic in London.

THE 44 JUVENILE THIEVES STUDY, BOWLBY (1944)

John Bowlby (1944) supported his claims with his own investigation of 44 juvenile thieves. He found, through interviews with the thieves and their families, that 14 of the sample he studied showed personality and behavioural characteristics that could be classified as '**affectionless psychopathy**'. Of these 14, 12 had experienced prolonged separation from their mothers during infancy (in particular, the first two years of their lives). In a non-criminal group, only two had experienced similar early separation. Bowlby concluded that the effects of maternal deprivation had caused affectionless and delinquent behaviour among the juvenile thieves.

Individualistic Theories – Psychological Theories

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HANS EYSENCK'S PERSONALITY THEORY

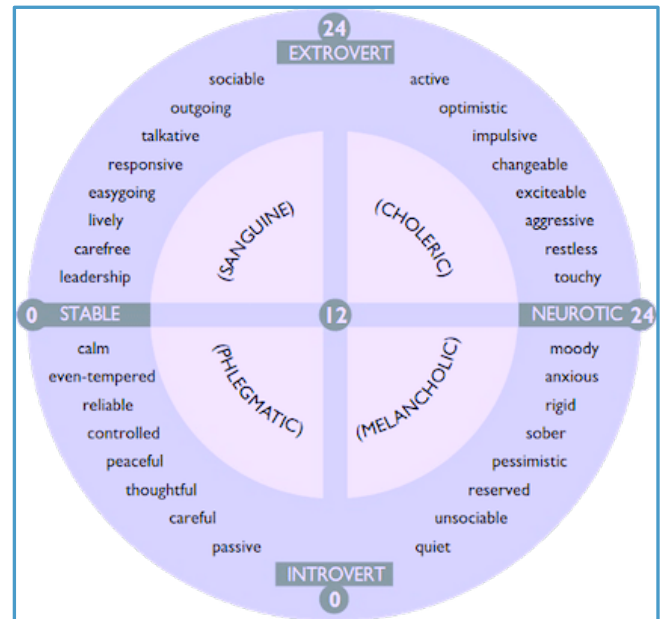
Eysenck believed that certain personality types are more likely to commit crime. This is because they crave excitement and are slow to learn that crime has negative consequences. He based his theory on the results of surveys carried out on 700 soldiers, who were being treated for various disorders at 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, **extraversion**, 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 BIOLOGICAL 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.

Sociological Theories - Functionalism

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FUNCTIONALISM

Functionalism is one of the key sociological perspective. Institutions in society such as the family, education, the media, etc, have clear social functions. More surprisingly, things such as crime can also be seen to be functional when looked at in the right way.

That's right, crime has function and can be good for society!

SOCIAL CHANGE IS A FUNCTION OF CRIME AND DEVIANCE

Functionalists argue that all societies need some change to remain healthy and stable. Durkheim (1897) suggested that deviance was important in allowing **social change** to occur. Durkheim suggested crime and deviance had an **optimal level**; too high and societies would descend into a state known as **anomie** (literally without norms), and if it was too low, they would become stale and incapable of change. Durkheim argued that deviant behaviour is seldom welcomed by society when it first appears. However, over time the 'deviants' may come to be seen as **visionaries** or **innovators**; for example, suffragettes and abolitionists are seen in very different light today, than the way they were regarded in their time.



Suffragists attend a meeting of the National Women's Party of America wearing their prison uniforms

ROBERT MERTON'S STRAIN THEORY

American society was, according to Merton, was based on the **American Dream**. This is the idea that success in life is achieved through hard work and not through luck or inherited wealth. Any person no matter where they start can attain wealth, status and happiness; the American places no limits on what a man or woman can achieve in life. This dream is normally attained through socially approved mechanisms, i.e., education and employment. However, many people end up in dead end, boring jobs with low pay and prospects. When this happens, they experience a sense of '**strain**'. Merton (1938) outlined a number of responses people can make to these blocked opportunities.

Merton identified a number of distinct responses to this sense of strain:

- **Conformity** - most cope with their disappointment by accepting their lot. They continue to dream about the goal of material success and conform to the accepted means of achieving that goal, i.e., by working hard.
- **Rebellion** - rebel and seek to replace the shared goals with alternative, often opposing goals and values. They set about achieving them by revolutionary means, e.g., via terrorism.
- **Retreatism** - drop out of mainstream society and therefore reject both the wider goals of 'conventional' society and the means of achieving those goals, e.g., the drug addict, vagrants, hippies, new-age travellers.
- **Ritualism** - describes the attitude of people who have lost sight of the goals but plod on in meaningless jobs, working hard but never really thinking about what they are trying to achieve.
- **Innovation** - reject the conventional means of acquiring wealth and adopt non-conventional and sometimes illegal means, i.e., they turn to crime. Note that this group still accepts the wider goals of society, it is the conventional means of achieving those goals that they reject.

OTHER FINCTIONS OF CRIME

Crime acts as a **safety valve** – Davies (1967) argued deviance acted as a safety valve for society. He gives the example of prostitution, suggesting that it has the positive function of releasing men's sexual tension.

Crime is important for **boundary maintenance**, it reminds people of what is right, and what is wrong. Most people will agree on this so crime helps to bind us together.

Crime and deviance act as a **warning light**, Cohen argues that deviance indicates that an institution is not working; e.g. high truancy rates may indicate problems with the education system

Sociological Theories - Marxism

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MARXIST EXPLANATIONS OF CRIME

Marxist's see crime as inevitable in a capitalist society as most of the structures of society exist to exploit the working class and to benefit the ruling class. This is true of many of the institutions of society such as the education system, the police, the justice systems and even the law.

SOCIAL STRUCTURE EXPLANATIONS

These theories assume that crime results from disadvantage which is inherent within the capitalist system. Crime is committed by marginalised groups such as the working class and ethnic minority groups because of unfavourable conditions such as unemployment, poor housing, poorly paid or boring jobs. Among the most widely discussed are Marxist explanations of crime



MARXISM AND CAPITALISM

Capitalism – is an economic system in which private individuals or businesses own capital goods. Ownership of the means of production (a country's trade and industry) is by a small number of people, these are the ruling or upper class. Everyone else must sell their labour, these are the 'proletariat' or the working class. Marxist do not approve of this system and believe it must be overthrown through revolution.

Marxism is a social, political, and economic philosophy named after Karl Marx. It examines the effect of capitalism on labour, productivity, and economic development and argues for a worker revolution to overturn capitalism in favour of communism.

Marxist Views on Crime

- **White Collar Crime** - is not treated as seriously as it should be. Crimes that cost the taxpayer millions of pounds, or cause massive environmental damage are routinely ignored because these are the crimes of the ruling classes. On the other hand, more minor crimes such as street robbery or shoplifting attract severe prison sentences because they are committed by the working classes and other marginalised groups.
- **The Criminal Justice Systems and Policing** - Marxist argue that the police favour the ruling class. The fact that working class people and ethnic minorities are over-represented compared to more powerful groups is not surprising because the police focus their resources on these groups and their activities. This made worse by the criminal justice system which routinely gives stiffer sentences to people from a working-class background.

Sociological Theories - Interactionism

LO1 – DESCRIBE SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF CRIMINALITY

Assessment Criterion	Content	Amplification
AC2.3 You should be able to - Describe Sociological Theories of Criminality	Sociological Theories <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Structure • Interactionism • Realism 	You should have knowledge and understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Marxism ✓ Functionalism ✓ Labelling ✓ Left and Right Realism

INTERACTIONISM

Interactionism is a sociological theory that emphasises the interactions between people rather over the importance of big institutions of society such as the class, education or political systems. Put simply interactionism emphasises the small scale over the big.

CRIMINAL RECORD

HOWARD BECKER'S LABELLING THEORY

Howard Becker (1963) argues that there is no such thing as a deviant or criminal act; an act only become deviant or criminal when the groups which have the power to label it as deviant or criminal, do so and set about controlling it. This theory works well with social structure theories such as Marxism and feminism. In a capitalist society the ruling class set the rules for the working classes, and in an ethnically divided society, minority ethnic groups are judged and labelled according to the standards of the dominant ethnic group.

PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND MASTER STATUS

The interactionist sociologist Edwin Lemert distinguishes between primary and secondary deviance. **Primary deviance** involves acts of minor deviance, such as avoiding paying fares on public transport or keeping money from being over-changed in the supermarket, nearly everyone does these acts from time to time and usually they do not attract a label. **Secondary deviance** on the other hand results from being labelled. Once caught and charged the person becomes defined by their deviance, it becomes a **master status**, all other statuses a person might have (e.g., father, son, neighbour etc) that person might have, are judged against this label. The person may find it hard to escape their status, so much so that they begin to accept it and so begins the **self-fulfilling prophecy**.

LABELLING AND DIFFERENTIAL LAW ENFORCEMENT

Interactionists argue that agencies such as are more likely to 'label' some groups as criminal. This means they are more likely to devote police time and attention on these groups and communities. This in turn means that these individual from communities will become over-represented in law enforcement actions such stop and search, arrest and ultimately conviction for criminal offences.

Put simply if the police go looking for criminality, they will find it.

THE SELF- FULFILLING PROPHECY

Another important concept associated with labelling is 'self-fulfilling prophecy'. It is suggested that when a label is applied to an individual for example, mad, bad or criminal - their behaviour will become consistent with that label - this is the Self-fulfilling Prophecy. A label once applied may increase the chances of offending by isolating the individual from society and encouraging friends and family to reject them. The 'deviant' may consequently seek comfort, sympathy, normality and status in a 'subculture' of others who have been branded with a similar label.



Boris Johnson and Former Prime Minister David Cameron were both members of the Bullingdon Club. This was a notorious student group being associated with a wide range of illegal behaviour, this behaviour was not subject to the same social control and punishment that it would have attracted had they been poor people rioting, rather than rich people "letting off steam".

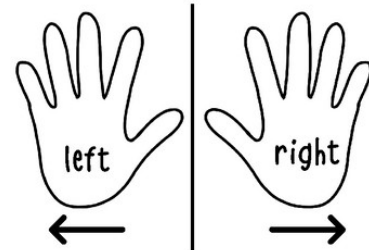
Sociological Theories - Left and Right 'Realism'

LO1 – DESCRIBE SOCIOLOGICAL THEORIES OF CRIMINALITY

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Realism

Realism is really two explanations of criminality, left realism and right realism. These two explanations share some similarities but there are important differences too.



Right Realism

Right Realism considers crime from the perspective of **political conservatism**, which tends to take a negative view of human nature. Charles Murray (1990) argued some people in society were more predisposed to committing crime because of lower intelligence and inadequate socialisation. Murray talks about the development of an 'underclass' of people who grow up in single parent households, with absent fathers, without adequate role models, and in an intellectual poverty.

CHARLES MURRAY AND THE CRIMINAL UNDERCLASS

Murray (1990) suggests there exists a distinct lower-class subculture, below the working class. People belonging to this subculture are likely to be long-term unemployed because they are 'work-shy' – they choose not to work. They prefer to be welfare-dependent, and to live off state benefits and supplement their income by being involved in criminality and the black economy. This subculture is hostile towards the police and authority in general. The subculture is generally lacking in moral values and especially commitment to marriage and family life.

RIGHT REALIST SOLUTIONS TO CRIME

Right realist believe that human beings are naturally selfish, individualistic and greedy, will generally commit crime if it is in their interests. Rehabilitation of criminals is a 'soft' option – Policies aimed at tackling crime by removing social and economic inequalities associated with poverty and unemployment have failed because they misunderstand the origins of crime.

Right realist thinking in crime is influenced by the broken windows thesis. They tend to approve of, 'zero tolerance' policing, and believe the police should keep clear the streets of deviant elements. They are also strong supporters of control and surveillance measures such as CCTV and ID cards.

Right realists think that the best way to reduce crime is not to change the criminal but to take practical measures to reduce opportunity (to 'build out' crime), and make the situation more difficult for the criminal, i.e. to make sure that the costs of crime clearly outweigh the benefits.

LEFT REALISM

Left realism analyse crime from a left-wing perspective. They agree with right realists that working class areas are crime hotspots but point out that the main victims of crime are the working class and ethnic minorities themselves. They also suggest that the police take crime in these areas less seriously than in middle or upper class (bourgeoise) areas.

CRIME, RELATIVE DEPRIVATION & MARGINALISATION

Left realists suggest that in a capitalist society we are surrounded by messages urging us on to acquire more and more stuff (consumerism). Despite society getting wealthier as a whole, working class youth will always have a sense of **relative deprivation**. In ethnic minorities this may be made worse by a belief that prejudice, and discrimination is holding them back.

Left realist argue these groups become **marginalised**. Negative treatment by the police may result in further feelings of hostility and resentment which may spill over into confrontation. Some members of these groups may look to join subcultures to help them cope with the feelings of frustration and may become involved in criminal activities such as drug-pushing and street crimes such as mugging.

LEFT-REALIST SOLUTIONS TO CRIME

Left realists are positive about human nature and are strong supporters of attempts to rehabilitate offenders. They argue strongly in support alternatives to prison, arguing that prison breaks the link between the offender and community, as such it serves to reinforce offending behaviour.

Left realist believe that the community needs to be involved in tackling crime and are sceptical about 'deterrents' such as the increased use of CCTV and ID Cards. However, they are enthusiastic advocates of initiatives such as community policing and neighbourhood schemes.