

Sociological Approaches

Functionalist: Durkheim

Crime is inevitable and has 3 positive functions.

- 1. Boundary maintenance** –reaffirms what is right and wrong by making an example of those who break the law through eg: court appearances, media attention, public hangings (in the past).
- 2. 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 eg: Fathers4Justice.
- 3. Social cohesion** –After any horrific crime often society pulls together as a community which reinforces the sense of belonging and social cohesion.

Subcultural: Merton

Merton suggests everyone is encouraged to strive towards the American Dream of a big house, lots of money and fast cars etc.

Not everyone has an equal chance of achieving success legitimately because society is unequal. Opportunities of w/c people are often blocked by poverty and inadequate schools.

This creates a strain between what society encourages people to achieve and the lack of legitimate means to do so.

People respond in one of 5 ways:

- Conformity
- Innovation
- Ritualism
- Rebellion
- Retreatism



Those who innovate find other illegitimate (criminal) ways to achieve the American Dream.

Subcultural: Cohen

Deviance results from the lower classes' failure to achieve in mainstream society by legitimate means.

Subcultures offer a solution in the form of an alternative status hierarchy where they get recognition and status from their peers for engaging in deviant acts.

Subcultural: Cloward & Ohlin

Different neighbourhoods give rise to different deviant subcultures: Criminal subculture, conflict subculture, retreatist subculture.

Interactionism

It is not the act that is deviant, but society's reaction to the act.

Agents of social control (police, judges) label certain acts as deviant/criminal.

Crime is a social construct.

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.

Sociological Approaches

Realist theories

Crime is a real problem not a social construction.

Right Realism –3 causes of crime
RIB

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.

Left Realism

–causes of crime **MRS**

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.

Marxism

There are two classes in society that are in conflict. The rich, upper class – Bourgeoisie

and the working class –proletariat. Capitalism causes crime –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 –eg: vandalism and violence.

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.

Some laws exist to give the false impression that capitalist society cares. eg: H&S laws to protect workers suggest they are cared for however breaches are rarely prosecuted.

Psychodynamic theories

Individualistic Approaches

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, to the reality principle, where the ego is dominant.



Bowlby's maternal deprivation

Studied 44 juvenile delinquents. 39% had experienced complete separation from their mothers for 6 months or more during the first 5 years of their lives compared with 5% of the control group. His findings support Freud's view that early childhood experiences influence future behaviour.

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.

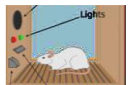
If a person's pro crime associations outweigh their anti crime associations they are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour.

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.



Psychological

Individualistic Approaches

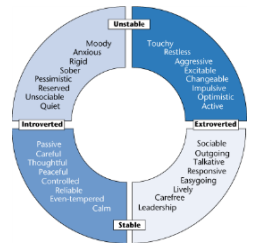
Eysenck

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.

Cognitive theories

Criminal personality - Yochelson & Samenow

Suggested criminals are prone to faulty thinking and this makes them more likely to commit crime.

Conducted a longitudinal study of 240 male offenders who had been committed to a psychiatric hospital. Identified a number of common 'thinking errors' in the offenders. These errors and biases lead the individual to commit crime.

Kohlberg's theory

Kohlberg argues that our ideas of right and wrong develop through a series of levels and stages from childhood to adulthood. This theory suggests that criminals' moral development is stuck at a less mature level than everyone else's.

Brain injuries and disorders

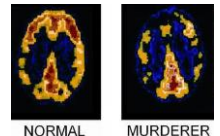
Biological Approaches

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.

Diseases

Some brain diseases have been linked to criminal and antisocial behaviour. In the 1920s there were epidemics of encephalitis lethargica among children which was linked to impulsive behaviour and abnormal sexual behaviour.

Brain tumours have also been linked to deviant behaviour.



Raine et al (1994)

Carried out PET scans to study the living brains of impulsive killers. Damage was found in the pre-frontal cortex in the brains of the criminals, the part of the brain that controls impulsive behaviour.

Genetic theories

Twin studies



Genetic theories use twin studies to test their theory of criminality. Monozygotic (MZ) twins share exactly the same genes, therefore if one twin is criminal, the other twin should also be criminal.

Christiansen studied 3586 twin pairs.

52% concordance rate between MZ twins

22% concordance amongst Dizygotic (DZ) twins.

Adoption studies

These studies compare adopted children to their biological and their adopted parents. If the behaviour of an adopted child matches that of their biological parents rather than their adopted parents, it would support a genetic explanation.

Mednick et al examined 14,000 adopted sons in Denmark from 1924-1947. Sons were more likely to have a criminal record if a birth parent also had a record.

Hutchings & Mednick – compared adoptees with and without criminal records. Adoptees with criminal records were more likely to have biological parents with criminal records than those whose parents did not have criminal records.

Jacob's XYY study

Men with an extra Y chromosome tend to be tall, more aggressive and have lower intelligence. Jacobs et al claim men with XYY syndrome are more aggressive and violent than other men – therefore more likely to be involved in violent crimes.

Physiological

Biological Approaches

Lombroso's theory

Studied the physical features of prisoners and concluded that criminals could be identified by their distinctive physical features eg: high cheek bones, large arm span, protruding ears, enormous jaws. Saw criminals as atavistic, as throwbacks to an earlier, primitive stage of evolution.



Sheldon

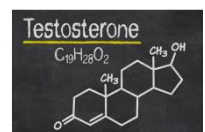
Certain body types (somatotypes) are linked to criminal behaviour. Endomorphs, ectomorphs and mesomorphs. Mesomorphs are more likely to engage in criminal behaviour. They are more likely to be attracted to risk taking and their physique can be an advantage in some aspects of crime.



Biochemical explanations

Sex hormones

Over or under production of hormones can cause emotional disturbances that can lead to criminal behaviour. Over production of the male hormone testosterone has been linked with crimes such as rape and murder.



Blood sugar levels

Hypoglycaemia (low blood sugar) can trigger aggressive reactions. In individuals that drink alcohol this can be exacerbated as alcohol further lowers blood sugar.



Substances

The intake of drugs and other substances can lead to criminal behaviour eg: cocaine has been linked to violent and aggressive offending. Some food colourings such as tartrazine have been linked to hyperactivity.

