

# The classical school by beccaria criminology essay

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The classical school by Beccaria generally places emphasis on the individual suggesting that we have the ability to make our own choices and that crime in society is a product of an individual's free will. Unknown. (Unknown). Beccaria's Theory. Beccaria's theory is not really concerned with the nature of the criminal, but with delivering justice. He believed that behaviour is determined by hedonism which is known as the pleasure – pain principle. This is where if the pain outweighs the pleasure, then you won't commit crime. The classical school states that we need a more equitable form of law and introduced a programme of law reforms. He says that social order is based on law and not religion; punishment should be prompt because if it is not prompt, then the individual has not learned their lesson. This punishment should be proportional to the harm caused to society. The classical school is considered a good alternative to a system based on fear and control as the new system is more reasonable and just. It also provided a benchmark for other theories to develop and compare. However, it fails to take into account why individuals commit crime e. g. social and environmental factors. It also raised questions such as do we always have free will and are we all equal in society, suggesting that children and mental health patients fail to acknowledge that social reason affect rationality. WiseGeek. (2013). What Is the Classical School Of Criminology?.

The panopticon was designed by Jeremy Bentham in 1775. It was a circular prison that had a central observation tower in the middle with cells around it. Each prisoner had their own cell that cut all interaction with other inmates. It provided round the clock surveillance on every prisoner without knowing who was watching or when they were being monitored. This caused the prisoners

to change their behaviour. The surveillance tower windows were masked so that prisoners could not tell if anyone was inside. Oliver, P. (2010). The panopticon " perfects the operations of power by increasing the number of people who can be controlled, and decreasing the number needed to operate it. It gives power over people's minds through architecture". Unknown. (2012). Discipline and Punish Michel Foucault. Bentham's prison was very influential as many prisons were based off this model. However, it is argued that this form of surveillance might not work for everyone thus not being beneficial for a prisoner to learn their lesson. Michel Foucault extended the idea of Bentham's panopticon as he believed that many prisons were not successful. He said that it represents how punishment functions in modern society and how constant surveillance can break a prisoner which made them easy to control. McGaha, S. (2000). Foucault's idea of the panopticon was that fear of being constantly watched would be imprinted onto a prisoner even after their release, making them feel like they are being watched leading to them correcting their behaviour. Both Bentham and Foucault's panopticon idea has been successful in the idea that our behaviour will change if we are constantly watched, but will our changed behaviour become good or bad? Positivism by Lombroso says that our behaviour is determined, but not always by free will and is the first school to find out why we break the law. Biological positivism says that our behaviour is determined by genetics and that criminals have a certain physical ' type' including characteristics like a prominent jaw and a narrow sloping brow. Unknown. (2011). Classical Vs. Positivist Criminology. This produced the idea that criminals are a very primitive species. Although he attempted to back

up his theory with his study on 3, 000 soldiers with chromosome abnormalities, it can be said that his theory created stereotypes within society as many of us view evil people to be ugly and good people to be beautiful. Psychological positivism states that crime is located in the mind and an individual may have a criminal personality. Freud was more interested in human behaviour rather than what actually caused crime. He stated that all behaviour has a purpose and that some behaviours are social unacceptable and are repressed into the unconscious. Conflict and tension then occurs between the id, the ego and the superego, therefore Freud's psychoanalytic approach states that crime is caused by failure to control inner tension. There have been many studies that agree with Freud's idea, especially by Jones (1998) who argued that a weak superego can cause crime to occur. However, this approach doesn't offer an explanation for all types of crime e. g. white-collar crime. The Chicago School in social positivism states that there is a link between crime and the environment. Burgess and Park developed the Concentric Zone Theory as they believed cities had five zones, each showing different levels of crime. The Transitional Zone produced the most crime due to poor living conditions. Bunyi, J. (2010). Concentric Zone Model. The Chicago School is considered to be good because it identified a relationship between crime and the environment and that it is not just biological. However, it doesn't look at other factors that can cause crime, just the environment. Emile Durkheim was a well-known Sociologist and Functionalist. He believed that society should be studied as a whole rather than individuals actions because society had an existence of its own and is a powerful force in influencing behaviour. He argues that crime is

a part of everyday life and exists in every society, thus serving a vital social function. He states that crime is behaviour that violated social norms and values. The majority of his work was based on social facts which he defined as "every way of acting which is general throughout a given society, while at the same time existing in its own right independent of its individual manifestations." Prather, C. (2009). Durkheim introduced the idea of a socio-evolutionary approach. He described the evolution of society from mechanical solidarity to organic solidarity. Mechanical solidarity is where members of society share common values and beliefs which constitute as a collective conscience; whereas organic solidarity is where social integration occurs through individual's need of one another's services. Unknown. (2013). Mechanical and organic solidarity. Under the aspect of law, mechanical solidarity is concerned with making punishment public and extreme, whereas, organic solidarity is more concerned with repairing any damage done. Durkheim also introduced Anomie which is when a state of normlessness occurs in society due to a breakdown of social integration. Unknown. (2005). Durkheim's Anomie. Durkheim also identified three different types of deviants; the biological deviant which is down to genetic malfunction, the functional deviant who indicates strain on the social system and the skewed deviant who is not socialised properly into an unhealthy society. It is argued that crime and punishment is inevitable, but is also functional, therefore a healthy society requires both. Durkheim's theory has been influential to other sociologists such as Robert Merton who expanded Durkheim's idea of anomie. However, anomie only explains minor crimes and does not explain crimes of extreme violence.