

# Choice theories and how they relate to crime

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



The term choice theories also known as rational choice theories was developed by Dr William Glasser in 1995. This theory explains human desire to satisfy their genetic needs for survival, connecting, belonging, power, freedom, and fun (Allwords. com, 2011). These human desires require humans to make conscious choices and act upon those choices in any way they see fit to ensure the desires are satisfied. This relates to criminal activity because criminals may feel that crime is their only means of satisfying these needs. To survive means to remain or continue in existence (Dictionary. com, 2011). The need to survive is experienced by all humans. Every person develops their own way to survive and makes conscious decisions to ensure their survival. Criminals make the decision to commit crimes such as theft to help pay for their survival while law abiders may choose to work for it. Connecting and belonging go hand-in-hand. To connect with someone means to associate with someone in a personal, professional, mental, or emotional way (Dictionary. com, 2011). Belonging is what comes after the connection has been made. All people have a need and desire to connect with others and feel a sense of belonging with another person or group. Criminals may commit crimes because the people they have connect with or belong with commit crimes. They may do it because, in the group of people they spend time with, it is what makes you accepted. Law abiders may satisfy this need and desire through family and friends or through co-workers. Power is the possession of control or command over others or the capability of doing or accomplishing (Dictionary. com, 2011). Most humans have a strong, urging desire to have power. Not as much to control or command others; but to be capable of accomplishing their goals in life. To

satisfy this human desire, criminals may resort to a variety of crimes such as dealing drugs or violence. The drug cartels typically have one person who is in charge of the entire operation. This individual, in his eyes, has succeeded, accomplished much, and maintains power over the operation. Someone who commits acts of violence may do it to gain power over a certain individual or group of people to control their actions. Law abiding citizens also seek power. For example, the President of the United States is in a very powerful position but did not get there by criminal means. Freedom is what Americans are blessed with in the United States and is defined as the state of being free rather than in confinement or under physical restraint. Another definition is the power to determine action without restraint (Dictionary. com, 2011). All humans seek freedom from one thing or another. All Americans begin with the freedom to make their own decisions. This freedom can be taken away from anyone choosing to violate the laws of the United State or any state within. Criminals seek freedom just as any other person and in doing so they may commit crimes such as evading police. They make the choice to do this because they know the police officer is there to take their freedom away for another crime they may have committed and they want to retain their freedom. The importance of fun in a person's life is very high. Without fun a person would have a rough time being happy in life. Fun is defined as something that provides amusement or enjoyment. Americans have fun in a variety of ways to include vacations, family days, and many other ways. Criminals sometimes choose to have fun in ways that may be illegal like using drugs or hunting out of season. There are a lot of things that are considered fun but are also illegal. This is where choice theory comes in.

Americans may want to do something fun that is also illegal. Most will choose not to do it because of its illegal nature but some will go ahead and do it without regard to the laws against it. This conscious decision to violate the law is what separates criminals from law abiders. Crime is defined an intentional act which is socially harmful or dangerous and specifically defined, prohibited and punishable under criminal law (Farlex, 2011). Society determines which acts are criminal and which are not using two common models. These common models are the consensus model and the conflict model. The consensus model shows that the majority of citizens in a society have the same values, morals and beliefs (JustAnswer, 2011). This model assumes that if several people came together, they would be able to come to agreement on the difference between right and wrong very quickly and easily. This society would have what they consider to be normal behavior and what they consider to be criminal behavior and everyone would agree that that is how it is. Any citizens following the criminal behavior would be a threat to the normal society and would be punished. This society would pass laws to prevent other from falling into the criminal behavior. The conflict model shows that the difference between right and wrong would be determined by those holding economic, political, and social power (JustAnswer, 2011). This model assumes that not all people share the same values and beliefs and therefore could not make sound decisions during law making. What this means is that, whoever has control in the economic, political, and social community controls what is wrong and what is right. Under this model, laws will vary greatly and constantly. One year something might be illegal and the next year it may not be. All Americans alike have a

desire to maintain their survivability, connections, belongings, powers and fun. In doing so, some resort to criminal acts. These criminal acts must be handled in order to maintain peace and safety in the American communities. The common models show how Americans determine which acts are criminal and show how Americans respond to the acts deemed criminal. After all, without morals, beliefs, and laws, the world would be nothing but chaos and disaster because everyone would be fighting each other to meet the needs and desire they all strive for.