

A summary of criminological theories



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Criminology Matrix

Demographic Information

Social Disorganization Theory

Beginning on the 20th Century 1920-1930's. Created by theorists Robert Park, Ernest Burgess, W. I. Thomas, Florian Znaniecki, Clifford Shaw, and Henry McKay. Social disorganization shows social change, conflict, and the lack of social consensus as the root causes of crime and deviance. Social disorganization, Chicago school of criminology, Chicago Area Project, demographics, concentric zones, delinquency areas, and cultural transmission (Schmallegger, 2008).

Strain Theory

Began on the 20th century 1930's to present. Created by Robert K. Merton, Steven F. Messner, Richard Rosenfeld, Peter Blau, Judith Blau, and Robert Agnew. The concept of strain theory is innovation, ritualism, rebellion, differential opportunity, relative deprivation, and distributive justice. Strain theory argues that a socially approved success of goals and a lack of appropriate ways to achieve those goals. As a consequence, according to the perspective of strain theory, individuals who are unable to succeed often turn to other ways that promise social recognition and success (Schmallegger, 2008).

Culture Conflict

Culture conflict began on the 1920's to present. Created by theorists Thorsten Sellin, Frederic M. Thrasher, William F. Whyte, Walter Miller, Gresham Sykes, David Matza, Franco Ferracuti, Marvin Wolfgang, Richard A. Cloward, Lloyd E. Ohlin, and Albert Cohen. The concept of culture conflict is subcultures, socialization, delinquency and, illegal opportunities (Schmalleger, 2008).

Learning Theory

Learning theory began in 1930's and to the present. Created by Edwin Sutherland, Robert Burgess, Ronald L. Akers, and Daniel Glaser. Actions are learned, and crime is like another action that is also learned. People tend to learn how to commit crime from others, and such learning comes from the achievements of norms, values, and patterns of behaviors that are conducive to crime. The standpoint of the theory's concept is that communication and social achievement of learned criminal behavior that values that behavior is detrimental (Schmalleger, 2008).

Social Control Theory

Social control theory began on the 1950's to present. Created by Walter C. Reckless, Howard B. Kaplan, Travis Hirschi, Michael Gottfredson, Charles R. Tittle, and others. The concept of social control theory is the inner and outer takeover, of self-derogation, social bond, and control balanced. Social control theory predicts that when a social restriction or antisocial behavior are weakened delinquent behavior begins. This theory questions law abiding citizens rather than criminals (Schmalleger, 2008).

Labeling Theory

Labeling theory began on 1938-1970, 1960's-1980, 1990's to revival.

Created by Frank Tannenbaum, Edwin M. Lemert, Howard Becker, John Braithwaite, and others. The concept of labeling theory begins with tagging, labeling, outsiders, moral initiative, primary and secondary deviance, and shaming. Labeling theory is the concept that negative labels within a society lead individuals to commit crime (Schmallegger, 2008).

Rational Choice Theory

Rational choice theory began in the late 18th century. Created by Cesare Beccaria. The concept of rational choice theory is that criminals make a rational, and informed choice to commit a crime. This makes criminals making the decision, based on, if the crime is worth committing based on the benefits that outweigh the cost or punishment.

The XYY “ Supermale”

The XYY theory began in 1965. Created by Patricia A. Jacobs. Patricia Jacobs examined 197 Scottish prisoners for chromosomal abnormalities with a simple blood test. The supermale, also known as XYY syndrome has little evidence that men with this syndrome commit crimes of greater violence than other man. However, they may commit more crimes (Schmallegger, 2008).

Behavior Genetics

Behavior genetics theory began in 1907. Created by Sir Francis Galton. Sir Francis study heredity and the possible influences on human behavior. According to the theory it is easy to show that some criminals inherit criminal nature. Behavioral genetics is “ the study of genes and the environmental contributions to individual deviation in human behavior” Galton might have believe that heredity was related to criminal behavior however, he had no opportunity to explore the relationship in profundity (Schmalleger, 2008).

Sociobiology

Sociobiology began in 1975. Created by Edward O. Wilson. It is the study of biology and its impact on social behavior taking some of its research from evolution and applying it to modern population (Schmalleger, 2008). Certain forms of behavior contribute to the survival of a social group. Human behavior was the link of survival from one generation to another one. Territoriality explains the conflict between humans, this includes homicide, warfare, and other types of aggression.

Pherenology

Pherenology began in early 19th century. Created by Franz Joseph Gall (1758-1828). This theory explained that the shape of the human skull was an indicative of the personality and could be used to predict criminality. The theory has four tenets the brain, personality, character, and skull shape (Schmalleger, 2008).

Early Positivism

Early positivism began in 1880's – 1930. Created by Franz Joseph Gall, Johann Gaspar Spurzheim, Cesare Lombroso, Charles Buckman Goring, and Earnest A. Hooton. The concept of early positivism is the phrenology, atavism, born criminals, and criminaloids. Criminality was the result of instincts that humans used to survive the evolutionary process. Lombroso has been called the father of criminology because he was the first criminologist to apply the scientific method.

Empirical Foundation

Social Disorganization Theory

Four distinct conclusions resulted from Shaw and McKay's research. The juveniles' rates were consistent with an order three-dimensional pattern. There was an identical three-dimensional pattern revealed by several social problems. The three-dimensional pattern of juvenile rates showed long-term stability even though the structure in the city areas had changed. The city areas were becoming more delinquent this occurred through a network or interpersonal relation with family, gangs, and neighbors (Shaw, 1969).

Strain Theory

Merton said that all people have high economic ambitions and that social classes are linked to crime. Merton said that when individuals had high goals with income and education coupled with low chances of achieving the goals is strain theory (Liska, 1971). Studies with educational goals as measurements were unconvincing and suggested that income was a better component to use. Different studies used goals over expectation and

reported any criminal connection which found hardly any support for Merton's theory (Epps, 1967).

Culture Conflict

Thorsten Sellin observed that in a society where two cultures inevitably clash and it occurs because of the development of a combined culture. One of the outcomes of culture conflict is criminal behavior. This leads to the creation of criminals defining the surrounding everyday behavior of the individual. Sellin indicated that a diversified and more assorted society the bigger it gets and the more conflict occurs creating an increase in deviance (Classical Criminology, 2002).

Learning Theory

Sutherland's Learning Theory was based on observation. The studies concluded that criminal behavior is learned. Not only it is learned but criminal behavior is learned within intimate groups. It also shows that differential associations vary in frequency, duration priority, and intensity (Boundless, 2014).

Social Control Theory

Walter C. Reckless, observes that social pressure to follow community ideals, usually imposed by social isolation, was sufficient to control behavior. As society becomes complex, authority played a significant role in deciding whether people followed public laws. The research has found that economic class has little to do with predicting delinquent behavior, and that young

people who do not connect or have attachment to parents or school are more likely to become juveniles (Criminology, n. d.).

Labeling Theory

In 2003, Jon Gunnar Bernburg and Marvin D. Krohn studied the impact of negative official intervention on young men in Rochester, New York. Data available was on men from the time they were 13.5 years old until they were 22. In keeping with what labeling theory would predict, Bernburg and Krohn found that intervention during adolescence led to increased delinquency in early adulthood because it reduced chances for achievement and successful employment. Negative labels come with harsh liabilities, as well as the consequence that the person starts to believe the label that has been given to him. (Schmallegger, 2008).

Rational Choice Theory

The research involving rational choice cannot be measured with regular crime statistics. It can only be applied through individual research because the theory is too specific to individuals (Schmallegger, 2008).

XYY Theory

British researcher examined 197 Scottish prisoners for deviations from regular chromosomes through a simple blood test known as “karyotyping” 12 members displayed a deviation of chromosomes that were unusual, and seven were found to have an XYY chromosome (Schmallegger, 2008).

Behavior Genetics

Twin researchers assumed that individuals choose partners that have an opposing personality. Equal environments, twin research also assumed that twins raised in similar environment share similar experiences. Genetic traits can be inherited through different genetic mechanisms involving a gene inherited from one parent and different gene from the other parents (Winerman, 2004).

Sociobiology

Edward O. Wilson research sociobiology by examining the genetic and how through affected human behavior and applied them through criminology theory. Research on what genetics are passed on and how they affect human behavior.

Theoretical Components

Social Disorganization

Social disorganization theory comes from Chicago school of sociology. Social Disorganization is caused when a community does not solve the problems of its people which results in the breakdown of institutions within that community (Short, 1976). The theory states that delinquent behavior was not a result of the individual but it was a normal response of people adapting to less than favorable social conditions (Short, 1976).

Strain Theory

Merton came up with a sociological theory that explained how deviant behavior illustrated the conflicts between culturally defined goals and the official way of getting them (Boundless, 2015).

Culture Conflict

Suggest that human behavior is social, that results from conflicts between competing groups. Conflict theory originated with work of Karl Marx. Marx understood that human society in terms of conflict between social classes, markedly the conflict in capitalist societies between those who owned the means of economic production and those who didn't. (Chegg, 2015). This is a sociological theory.

Learning Theory

Social learning theory, looks at the individual learning process, the formation of self and the influence of society in socializing. Learning theory is the formation of one's identity to become responsive to a learned response to social stimulation. People engage in crime because of the association with others that also engage in crime. Criminal behavior is learned beliefs that are favorable to crime (Crossman, 2015). This is a sociological theory.

Control Theory

Control theorists generally argue that there are no problems to explain why people who commit crime because all human beings suffer from human weaknesses which makes it impossible to resist temptation. This is a sociological theory.

Labeling Theory

When someone has been labelled as a criminal or deviant, the label attached becomes the individual. Each label carries prejudices and images and this leads to others interpreting the behavior of the labeled person in a particular way. While the behavior would be seen as stereotypical to some, others would conclude that it is a self-fulfilling prophecy resulting from being labelled (History Learning, 2000-2015). This is a sociological Theory.

Rational Choice

This theory sees man as a reasoning actor that weights means and ends, costs and benefits, and makes a rational choices. Including the choice to engage in criminal activity, criminal activity is based on determined decisions that the potential benefits outweighs the risks taken by the individual. This is a psychological theory.

XYY “ supermale”

XYY males are more likely to engage in criminal behavior but not violent behavior. XYY men were convicted of crimes are more likely to be guilty of property offenses and less likely than convicted XY men. XYY males were born criminals, XYY males according to the theory were more likely to commit violent crimes. This is a biological Theory

Behavior Genetics

Behavior genetics is the field in which a difference among individuals is separated into genetic against environmental. Environmental influences can

be divided into two classes, shared and nonshared environments. Shared is the environment that is mutual by siblings such as socioeconomic statuses and parental education, and nonshare is the environment that is unique to a person/individual. (SAPA, 1998).

Early positivism.

Early Positivism is a social and psychological theory that commits to practical application. It claims that determining criminal behavior and its cause comes from the physical, genetic, and psychological makeup that makes people predisposed to behave criminally (Marshall, 2015).

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