

CHAPTER

5

OBJECTIVES

Understand the difference between psychiatric and psychological criminology.

Know the gist of psychoanalytic theory, including Freudian elements of personality and defense mechanisms. Know how psychoanalytic theory and psychoanalysis has been applied to delinquents and criminals.

Comprehend the principles of learning (operant conditioning, classical conditioning, and observational learning) and how they relate to theories of crime.

Understand the two areas of cognitive psychology, (cognitive structure and cognitive content) and how they have been applied to criminal behavior.

Distinguish between general personality research and research on a “criminal personality.”

Grasp the debate on the relationship between IQ and criminal behavior.

Know the policy implications derived from theories of learning, personality, and cognition.

Psychology and Crime

“

Debi Newberry: You're a psychopath.

Martin Blank: No, psychopaths kill for no reason. I kill for money. . . . That didn't sound right.

— Minnie Driver (Debi) and John Cusack (Martin), *Grosse Pointe Blank*¹

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YOU ARE THE CRIMINOLOGIST

The BTK Killer

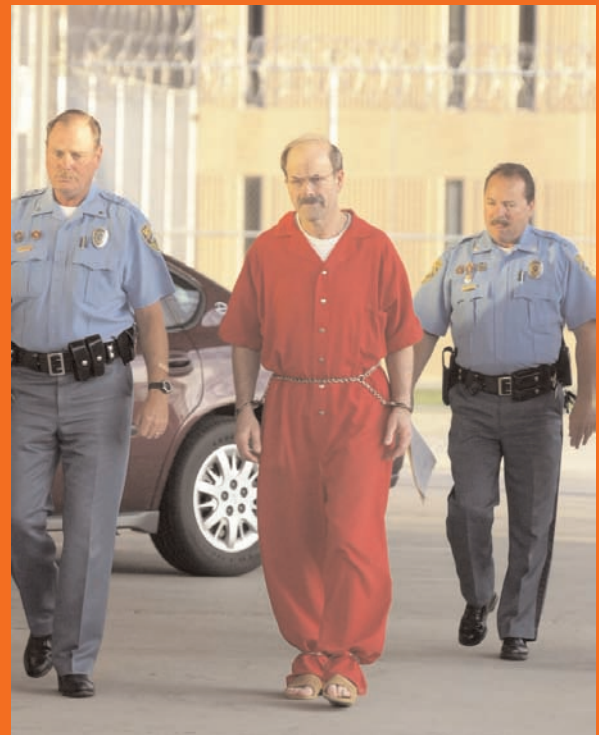
On February 25, 2005, Dennis L. Rader was arrested as a suspect in several killings in Wichita, Kansas, dating back to 1974. This long-term killer was known to police and the media as “BTK” based on his method of murder — bind, torture, kill. On June 28, 2005, Rader pled guilty to murdering 10 individuals between 1974 and 1991. Soon after the first murder, Rader taunted the police and media with mysterious messages, including poetry about or dedicated to the victims. After years of silence, he resurfaced in 2004, sending *The Wichita Eagle* a letter that included photographs of a 1986 murder victim, along with a photocopy of her driver’s license.

In the plea hearing, Rader was emotionless but courteous as he recounted to the judge the details of each murder. He told of comforting a victim by giving her a glass of water before putting a bag over her head and strangling her. At times, he described his activities using almost academic language — discussing “phases” of a serial killer, such as “trolling” and “stalking.” He admitted carrying a “hit kit” that included rope and tape. Rader described his victims as “targets” and the murders as “projects.” He talked of “putting down” the victims as a veterinarian might discuss animals. As for the cause of his behavior, Rader said that the murders allowed him to fulfill sexual fantasies.

Dennis Rader was liked by some who knew him and despised by others. He was a husband and the father of two children. He was a Boy Scout leader and president of his church council. Some who knew Rader described him as arrogant, confrontational, and egotistical. Some residents of Park City, Kansas, where Rader was a city code compliance officer, described him as a control freak who enjoyed the power of his office. Some reported that he would film his neighbors in the hopes of catching them committing a minor misbehavior. He allegedly measured the grass of one woman he disliked in an attempt to catch her in violation of a city ordinance. Others described him as efficient, nice, and a friendly guy who was simply doing his job.

How might a Freudian theorist explain Rader’s letters to the police and media?

Does Dennis Rader show signs of being a psychopath? What characteristics of psychopathy appear to fit with Rader? What characteristics do not fit?



Convicted serial killer Dennis Rader walks into the El Dorado Correctional Facility in August 2005 in El Dorado, Kansas. Rader was convicted of killing 10 people over the course of 30 years.

Sources: Matt Sedensky, “Suspect Pleads Guilty in BTK Murder Case,” June 28, 2005, available at http://news.yahoo.com/news?tmpl=story&u=/ap/20050628/ap_on_re_us/btk_killings_28, accessed June 28, 2005; Marilyn Bardsley, Rachael Bell and David Lohr, “The BTK Story,” available at www.crimelibrary.com/serial_killers/unsolved/btk, accessed June 28, 2005; Fred Man and Les Anderson, “Liked by Many, Loathed by Some,” *The Wichita Eagle*, February 27, 2005, available at www.kansas.com/mld/kansas/news/special_packages/btk/11004728.htm, accessed June 28, 2005.

Introduction

Blockbuster movies and best-selling novels often star psychopathic killers. The killer is methodically tracked down by a psychologist or psychiatrist who has a keen understanding of the criminal mind. However, is there such a thing as a psychopath or criminal mind? How exactly does psychology contribute to the study of criminal behavior? This chapter introduces some of the basic psychological concepts developed to analyze and explain criminal behavior. Specifically, after a brief introduction to psychodynamic theory, four areas in psychology — behaviorism, cognition, personality, and IQ — are highlighted and examined as their contributions to the criminological theory and the effort to rehabilitate delinquents and criminals.

Like the biological approach, psychological theories focus on how characteristics of the individual lead to criminal behavior. Criminologists often contrast this individual approach with sociological theory. Sociological approaches tend to focus on how social structure causes crime. For example, they might suggest that neighborhood conditions (e.g., poverty, residential mobility) create high-crime rates in a certain geographical area. An important point to make is that there is room for both types of explanations. A psychological approach, for example, would question why some individuals succumb to the criminal pressures of the neighborhood, while others seem unaffected. A psychologist might highlight negative personality traits, low intelligence, or poor learning history. Of course, neither the psychological nor the sociological approach is *wrong* — ideally combining such approaches will give a more comprehensive portrait of criminal behavior.

Different psychologists use distinct approaches to explain criminal behavior. Bartol and Bartol distinguish between the psychological and psychiatric schools of criminology.² *Psychological criminology* is the science of behavior and the thought processes of the criminal. Both environmental and personality influences on criminal behavior are considered along with the mental processes that mediate that behavior. Psychological approaches to the study of crime also consider such factors as biology and heredity (see Chapter 4). This chapter covers the psychological concepts of personality traits, learning experience, and cognitive patterns.

Psychiatric criminology (forensic psychiatry) is dominated by the psychodynamic tradition. Here,

criminal behavior is explained in terms of motives and drives. The prime determinant of human behavior lies within the person. After the first few years of life, the environment plays a minor role. Psychoanalytic theory is discussed next, followed by the central theories of psychological criminology in the remainder of the chapter.

Psychoanalytic Theory

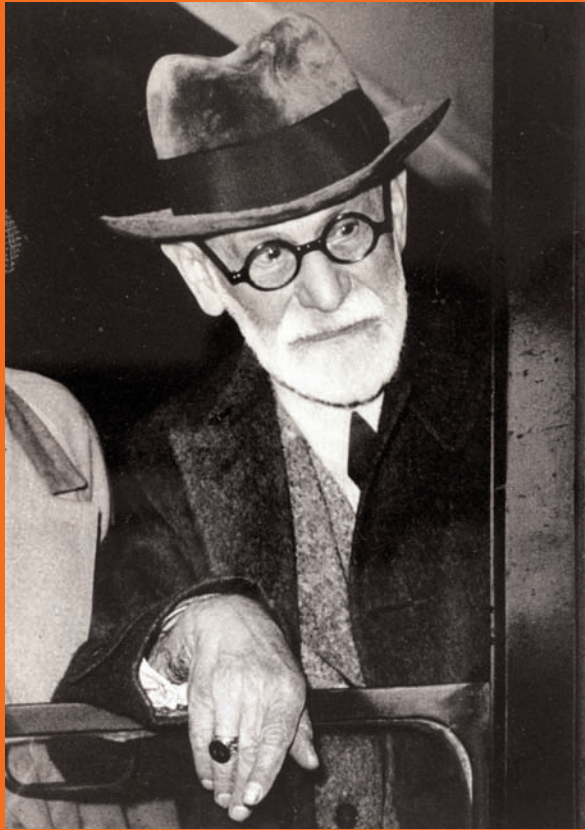
Early theorists interested in the psychiatric aspects of crime focused on a variety of areas. For example, Henry Maudsley (1835–1918) studied the relationship between crime and insanity, especially “epileptic madness.”³ He believed that criminals suffered from “moral degeneracy” — a deficiency of moral sense. In writing of the criminal “who has such a strong interest in deceiving himself” and who is not thoroughly conscious of his crime, Maudsley anticipated the Freudian concept of the unconscious.⁴

As the father of psychoanalytic theory and psychoanalysis (a therapy derived from this theory), Sigmund Freud was perhaps the most influential psychological theorist at the beginning of the 20th century. Although psychoanalysis is still practiced, most acknowledge its limited application to criminal offenders. Nevertheless, psychoanalytic theory is discussed in some detail because many key concepts in this theory are utilized by current sociological and psychological theories of criminal offending.

Freud believed that one can understand human behavior best by examining early childhood experiences. These experiences, traumatic or not, can profoundly affect behavior without the individual being consciously aware of their impact. Freud developed psychoanalytic theory from the late 1800s through the early 1900s to explain both normal and abnormal behavior.⁵ Although the full theory is extraordinarily complex and often vague (Freud himself changed his mind over time on a number of issues), the key concepts are fairly straightforward.

Freudian Elements of Personality

Freud’s greatest contributions to psychology include his distinction between the conscious and the unconscious mind, and his concepts of id, superego, and ego. If you’ve ever seen a cartoon where the devil (id) appears on one shoulder and



Sigmund Freud. The 82-year-old Austrian-born psychoanalyst and neurologist is the father of psychoanalytic theory and psychoanalysis.



How has Freud's theory influenced modern theories of crime?

an angel (superego) appears on the other — and the character (ego) must choose a course of action, you can understand the gist of these basic elements of personality.

Lester and VanVoorhis note the Freud did not conceive of these concepts as actual parts within the brain. Rather, they are best conceived as wishes or desires.⁶ The **id** is the unconscious, instinctual aspect of the personality. Id wishes often include the immediate gratification of basic drives (e.g., sex, aggression). The primary rule for the id is, “If it feels good, do it!” The **superego** is akin to a conscience — the keeper of prohibitions (“Stealing is wrong”) and wishes about what a person wants to be (“I am going to be just like my father when I grow up”). Parents, schools, and other social institutions serve as

models for the content of the superego. Even though it lies in the realm of the unconscious, the superego manifests itself in the restraints imposed by moral, ethical, and societal values. The **ego**, a conscious part of the personality, is a “psychological thermostat” that regulates the savage wishes and demands of the id and the social restrictions of the super ego. The ego delays certain behaviors until the time is suitable for their gratification and can entirely deny certain behaviors.

Freud was particularly concerned with anxiety. In psychoanalytic theory, anxiety stems from one of two sources. First, people feel anxious when a desire (whether conscious or not) is unmet. Second, people become anxious when an unconscious desire starts to become conscious.⁷ Freud outlined a number of **defense mechanisms** that individuals employ (often unconsciously) to reduce or eliminate this anxiety. These mechanisms represent another major contribution of psychoanalytic theory to psychology and to the study of criminal behavior (see **TABLE 5-1**).

Based on the importance Freud placed on the unconscious mind, anxiety, and defense mechanisms, psychoanalysis (a treatment technique) is designed to bring to awareness inner conflicts and emotional problems. Basically, the therapist attempts to get the patient to replay those thoughts, feelings, and events from the past that are influencing present behaviors and to make unconscious desires

TABLE 5-1

Selected Freudian Defense Mechanisms

- **Denial:** The truth of some experience is denied. For example, a child's father abandons the family, but the family acts as though he just went on a vacation and will return soon.
- **Rationalization:** Finding a satisfactory reason for doing something inappropriate. For example, one indulges in fermented brews instead of studying and flunks a test the following day. The person reacts by saying, “That professor is a schmuck . . . this class sucks. . . . I think I'll switch majors.”
- **Repression:** Desires or thoughts are forced back into the unconscious mind and their existence is denied. For example, memories of childhood abuse are forgotten.
- **Reaction formation:** An individual hides one instinct from awareness through the use of the opposite impulse. For example, love becomes a mask to hide hatred.
- **Projection:** Attributing one's desires or wishes to someone else. For example, a person is angry at someone and accuses them of being angry at that person.

conscious. This is sometimes facilitated through **free association**, where the patient verbalizes, uncensored, anything that comes to mind.

Freudian Explanations of Delinquency

The basic assumption behind Freudian theory is that human nature is inherently antisocial. Due to the influence of the id, infants start life with antisocial drives. As infants grow and develop, however, they confront social rules to which they are expected to abide. Thus, they must give up the primitive drives of instant gratification, unbridled sexuality, and unrestrained aggression. Children develop a superego from experience and from role models such as parents and siblings that guides them along the path of appropriate behavior. Ego development helps children negotiate id demands for instant gratification with superego demands against such behavior. Any problem or trauma that upsets the development of the ego or superego can increase the risk of delinquency and crime.

The Freudian perspective on the psychological roots of delinquency and criminality has been developed by theorists such as Redl and Wineman, Healy, and Aichorn. Redl and Wineman applied psychoanalytic theory to a group of delinquent children as part of a treatment program.⁸ They dismissed the possibility that abnormally strong id wishes resulted in delinquent behavior. Instead, they focused on the ego and superego. For example, they describe a **delinquent ego** that effectively blocks any potential restraint from the conscience (superego) and permits the delinquent to rationalize criminal behavior. Inappropriate role models might create a **delinquent superego**, which is guided by a delinquent code of behavior, rather than appropriate values.

Yet another possibility is the **overdeveloped superego**. As noted earlier, the superego expresses displeasure (e.g., when its wishes are violated) in the form of anxiety. The result of this displeasure upon the personality is guilt. The more guilt the person accumulates, the more the person feels the need to be punished. It is only through punishment that the personality can truly be absolved of any guilt feelings. In this sense, some people may commit crimes because they want to be caught and punished.

As the concept of the overdeveloped superego indicates, Freudians often stress criminal acts as an

indication of an underlying personality conflict. Aichorn, consistent with this Freudian principle, developed the concepts of “manifest” and “latent” delinquency. Aichorn wrote that manifest delinquency was the overt, expressed criminal behavior of stealing, robbing, and the like. Latent delinquency was the root cause of this behavior — the instinctual wishes lurking in the background, waiting for an opportunity to break through for satisfaction. According to Aichorn, the challenge of psychoanalysis is to “seek the provocation which made the latent delinquency manifest and also determine what caused the latent delinquency.”⁹

Warren and Hindelang summarize several basic interpretations of Freudian psychology as it relates to crime.¹⁰ Within the psychoanalytic tradition, criminal behavior is often viewed as a form of neurosis — guilt and anxiety stem from unconscious strivings. Criminals may therefore suffer from a compulsive need for punishment to alleviate guilt. Criminal activity is also considered a means for gratifying needs and desires not met by the family. Delinquency has roots in repressed memories of traumatic experiences and may be the result of displaced hostility towards those who caused trauma.

Policy Implications of Freudian Theory

The most obvious drawback of Freudian theory is that it is difficult, if not impossible, to test empirically. Concepts such as the id, ego, and superego cannot be directly observed or measured.¹¹ Moreover, motivations for delinquency are often hidden (unconscious), even to the offender. Psychoanalytic explanations of delinquency and crime therefore tend to be “after the fact” and untestable. As a rehabilitation technique, psychoanalysis is also wanting. Finckenauer notes that the effectiveness of psychoanalysis is limited to generally intelligent, articulate, adult neurotics. Conversely, the typical delinquent is less intelligent, inarticulate, and not neurotic.¹²

LINK In Chapter 1, it was noted that a good scientific theory must be testable; that is, one must be able to collect empirical information that can refute or support the theory. When a concept (e.g., id, superego) cannot be measured, the theory cannot be tested.

Not surprisingly then, recent studies of the rehabilitation literature confirm that insight-oriented therapies like psychoanalysis do not reduce criminal offending.¹³ Finally, even if it were effective,

psychoanalytic treatment lasts a long period of time (even a lifetime) and is expensive — traits unlikely to play well when the public foots the bill. Indeed, Redl and Wineman's treatment ended not because delinquents were deemed "cured," but because the funding ended. A complete treatment might have lasted several years.¹⁴

Despite these considerable drawbacks, psychoanalytic theory maintains an important place in the psychology of criminal behavior for a number of reasons. First, while most offenders are not neurotic adults, some crimes *are* tied to deep-seated (and perhaps unconscious) anxiety or hostility. Psychologist Palmer suggests that such unresolved issues may create a barrier to any rehabilitation effort.¹⁵ The results of a 2004 study by Ted appear to support this position.¹⁶ Here, researchers found that a well-supported cognitive-behavioral rehabilitation program did not have a positive effect on neurotic offenders.

Second, Lester and Van Voorhis argue that counselors (regardless of their theoretical background) who deal with offenders should be aware of the Freudian concepts of **transference** and **countertransference**.¹⁷ Transference occurs when the client uses the counselor as a stand-in for someone in the client's past, such as a father or sibling. Countertransference occurs when the client "pushes the buttons" of the counselor so that the resulting anger and hostility interferes with treatment.

Finally, many Freudian concepts appear, albeit sometimes altered and often with different terminology, in other theories of crime. Thus, concepts within Freud's theory have been modified such that they can be scientifically tested. Freudian defense mechanisms, for example, occupy a central role in current cognitive and social learning theories of crime. Current theories also point to the importance of "morals" (e.g. superego) that are learned from role models and to the importance of "self-control" (ego strength).

Behavioral Psychology

The behavioral psychologist operates from a completely different perspective than a person trained in psychoanalysis. The focus is on specific behavior, and the orientation is very much on the here and now. A behaviorist-oriented rehabilitation program would not spend time on the childhood emotions of an adult offender.¹⁸ The basic principle underlying

behaviorism is that all behavior is learned. The father of behaviorism, John B. Watson, believed that the purpose of psychology is to understand, predict, and control human behavior.¹⁹ B. F. Skinner, another dominant figure in behaviorism, felt that there is nothing emotionally or morally wrong with persons who commit crimes. Rather, they are simply responding to rewards and punishments within their environments.²⁰

Principles of Learning

Psychologists have identified three types of learning — classical conditioning, operant conditioning, and observational (vicarious) learning. **Classical conditioning** was first identified by Ivan Pavlov, a Russian physician. Pavlov's work focused on the relationship between a stimulus and response. By pairing an unconditioned stimulus (meat) with a conditioned stimulus (a bell), he eventually reproduced a conditioned response (salivation) in dogs using only the bell.²¹ John Watson later demonstrated this principle with a human subject, "little Albert" (see **FIGURE 5-1**). Initially, Watson used a loud noise, which produces the unconditioned response of fear in a child. Then, by pairing the loud noise with a white rat (the rat initially produced no fear), he was able to condition Albert to be afraid of the lab rat. Although this technology is still sometimes used to treat criminals (see the following sec-

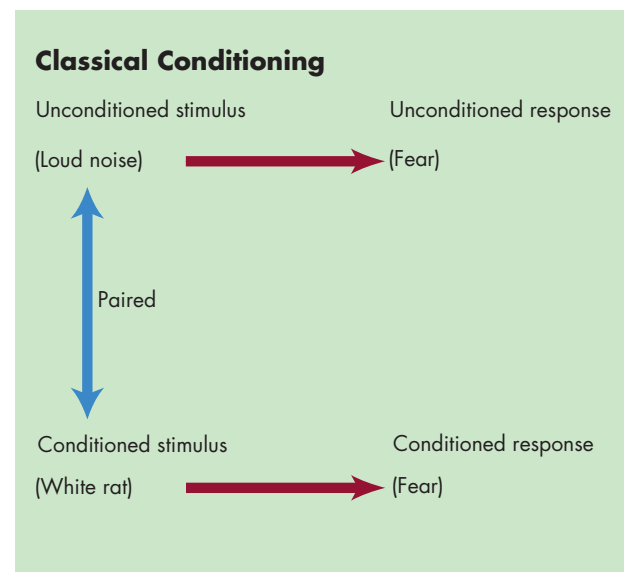


FIGURE 5-1 The Classical Conditioning Process
Over time, the conditioned stimulus alone will produce the conditioned response.

tion on aversion therapy), few would argue that classical conditioning explains why people originally engage in crime. Typically, psychologists point to either operant or vicarious learning to explain the acquisition of criminal behavior.

In **operant conditioning**, some behavior (often called a target behavior) must first be displayed. A desired target behavior can then be reinforced, which increases the likelihood of this behavior in the future. An undesirable target behavior (e.g., lying, stealing) can be punished, which decreases the likelihood of this behavior in the future (see **TABLE 5-2**). **Positive reinforcement** increases the target behavior by rewarding the individual. This reward can be tangible (money, a treat) or intangible (praise, an approving look). Importantly, what is rewarding to each individual may be different. Many people confuse **negative reinforcement** with punishment. Negative reinforcement, however, *increases* the target behavior, while punishment has the opposite effect.

Negative reinforcement increases a target behavior by removing some unpleasant stimulus. For example, consider how small children often use behavior to manipulate others: Children are masters at using negative reinforcement to “train” parents. Suppose a child in a grocery store picks up a treat, but is told “no” by the parent. The child then proceeds to fall on the floor screaming, crying, and attracting the attention of other shoppers (in behavioral terms, the child has introduced a noxious stimuli). When the parent (out of embarrassment or perhaps frustration) relents, the child terminates the tantrum. The child has just used negative reinforcement (the removal of the tantrum and



Who is in charge here? Children are masters at training their parents. One common technique that kids use to obtain what they want is to throw a temper tantrum.



How would an effective parent respond?

TABLE 5-2

The Operant Conditioning Process

Operant Conditioning

Behavior —————> Reinforcement/
Punishment —————> Future
Behavior

Positive reinforcement: Awarding something (e.g., money, food, praise) when a desired action is taken, in order to increase that behavior in the future.

Negative reinforcement: When target behavior is demonstrated, noxious stimuli (e.g., screaming, bad smell) is removed in order to increase the target behavior in the future.

Punishment: Introduction of noxious stimuli (e.g., scolding, spanking) to reduce or suppress a target behavior.

parental embarrassment) to increase the odds that the next time, the parent will relent more quickly and easily. The child may even throw in some positive reinforcement (“You’re the best daddy ever!”) to further the cause.

Unlike reinforcement, **punishment** (a scolding, spanking) reduces the odds of the target behavior being repeated. Through experimentation with both animals and humans, behaviorists have developed a knowledge base about the most effective way to condition behavior. One golden rule is that the consistency of reinforcement and punishment matters more than the severity. Indeed, parental use of harsh but *inconsistent* punishment is a good predictor of delinquent behavior.²² Additionally, reinforcement shapes behavior more efficiently than punishment — psychologists recommend that reinforcers outnumber punishers by a ratio of four to one.²³ Finally, both punishment and reinforcement should follow quickly after the target behavior.

There is an interesting connection between operant conditioning and deterrence theory (see Chapter 3). In essence, philosophers such as Beccaria and Bentham, writing during the 1800s, correctly predicted that swift and certain punishment would be most effective in controlling human behavior. Indeed, at least one commentator has suggested that deterrence could be absorbed into a broader theory of learning.²⁴ In that sense, punishment

Headline Crime

The Columbine Massacre

On April 21, 1999, two students entered Columbine High School in Colorado, detonated bombs, and started shooting their fellow students. The final toll — 15 killed and 28 wounded — made the Columbine Massacre the worst school shooting in U. S. history. Over the next several months, media commentators, scholars, and others offered a number of explanations for this tragic incident:

- Lack of parental supervision
- The shooters were members of the “Trench Coat Mafia,” a gang-like group of social outcasts.
- Video games and music (e.g., Marilyn Manson), which encourage violence
- Bullying by “jocks” and other students within the high school

How do these factors relate to psychological theories of criminal behavior?

Should parents of delinquents be held responsible (e.g., civil suits or criminal charges) for the actions of their children?

Source: Mark Obmascik, “Massacre at Columbine High: Bloodbath Leaves 15 Dead, 28 Hurt,” *Denver Post* (April 21, 1999). A-1.

through the criminal justice system would represent another form of operant conditioning (among many) that shapes human behavior.

LINK In Chapter 3, the concept of specific deterrence — the idea that swift, certain, and severe punishment would teach offenders a lesson and reduce the odds that they will re-offend — was introduced. A behavioral psychologist would view criminal justice sanctions as a form of operant conditioning, one punishment (among many) in an offenders’ life.

Theorists across the disciplines of psychology and sociology tie delinquency to the failure of parents to effectively condition their children (using operant conditioning) away from aggression, stealing, lying, and other antisocial behavior. Sociologists often refer to this as *direct parental control* (see Chapter 7). Research on children and adolescents has long supported the link between parental use of operant conditioning and delinquency.²⁵ Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck’s study of 500 delinquent and 500 nondelinquent boys found that “harsh and erratic” punishment had a strong influence on delinquency.²⁶ Reviews of the literature find that other measures of parenting, including supervision and discipline, are among the stronger predictors of delinquency.²⁷ Reporters, commentators and the public often blame the parents of criminals in high-profile crimes (see **Headline Crime** for further discussion of this topic.)

Gerald Patterson and his associates at the Oregon Social Learning Center work extensively with delinquent children and their parents. Patterson’s social interactional theory, derived from this work,

has parental efficacy (effectiveness) as its central concept.²⁸ Parents who monitor their children closely, recognize deviant behavior, and use consistent punishment and reinforcement, are more likely to rear nondelinquent children. Conversely, Patterson notes that parents of children who steal, “do not track, they do not interpret stealing . . . as ‘deviant,’ they do not punish, and they do not care.”²⁹ Patterson recognizes, however, that parenting efficacy is dependent (to some extent) on family environment (see **FIGURE 5-2**). For example, single parents living on a marginal income might need to work two jobs and sacrifice some supervision over their children.

Patterson’s theory and others that are similar are not without their critics. Judith Rich Harris’ 1998 book entitled *The Nurture Assumption: Why Children Turn Out the Way They Do — Parents Matter Less Than You Think and Peers Matter More* was an argument against such theories.³⁰ This was a book designed for a popular audience and her research was acclaimed in the media as “truly revolutionary” and a “paradigm shifter.”³¹ Harris’ main thesis is that parental behaviors have few effects (if any) on the long-term development of their children. What does Harris make of the substantial amount of research linking parenting behavior to delinquency? She explains this relationship by arguing that the children are influencing parenting behavior.³² In other words, difficult children will produce (over time) the type of parenting characteristics (lax supervision, harsh/inconsistent punishment) highlighted in research.

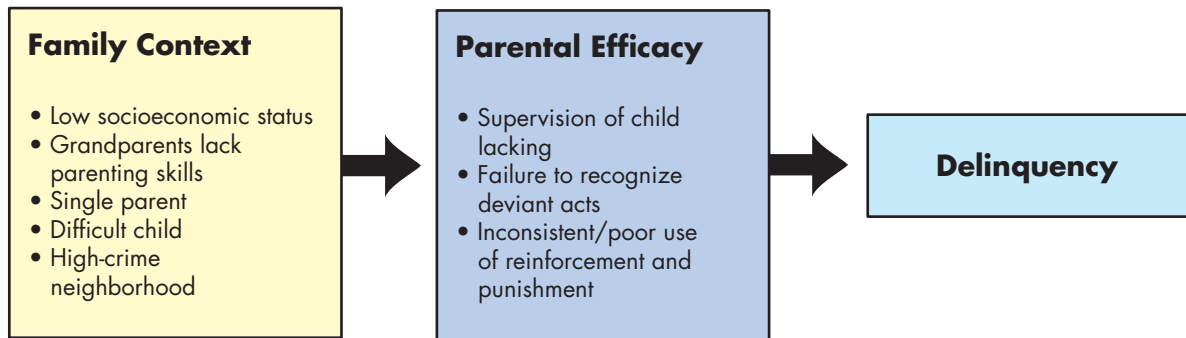


FIGURE 5-2 The First Stage of Patterson's Social Interactional Theory

Source: Adapted from Gerald Patterson, John Reid, and Thomas Dishion, *Antisocial Boys* (Eugene, OR: Castalia, 1992): 12.

One way to untangle the relationship between parenting skills and a child's behavior is to examine what happens when parenting practices change. If a change in parenting practices has no effect on the child, then Harris may be correct. If, however, changing parental behaviors reduces delinquency, Patterson's theory would be supported. Patterson and his associates have devised several methods for training parents. Those are discussed in greater detail later, but it is worth noting here that parent training programs are moderately successful at reducing delinquency.³³

Although Harris dismisses the importance of parenting, she does believe the criminal behaviors are (in part) learned. Specifically, she argues that group socialization (childhood playgroups, adolescent peer groups) are an important source of childhood behaviors, including delinquency.

Modeling Theory

Research on peer effects usually focuses on **observational learning** — role modeling the behavior of others. Albert Bandura recognized that much of what is learned is not based on trial and error (operant condition). Rather, as humans, behaviors are acquired simply by observing others. Bandura argues that although everyone has the capacity for aggression, they must still acquire a behavioral repertoire (through observation) in order to act aggressively.³⁴ Bandura and his associates demonstrated this principle in the now-famous "Bobo doll" experiments.³⁵ The researchers randomly divided a sample of children into two groups, both of whom watched a videotape of a playroom. In the first group, the video included people punching and kicking an inflated doll that was weighted on the

bottom (the Bobo doll). The second group saw a similar video, but there was no violent behavior toward the doll. As one might expect, when the children were released into the playroom, only the group of kids who saw the Bobo doll kicked and punched in the video replicated this behavior.

Although this experiment is rather simple, the implications for explaining crime are immense. For example, children who observe their parents abusing each other, or adolescents who observe their friends engaging in delinquency, would be at risk for engaging in similar acts themselves. Of course, people do not randomly choose behaviors to model. Rather, people tend to imitate the behavior of those who are attractive and competent, especially if the role models are rewarded for the behavior.³⁶ Another important point is that people do not automatically use the behaviors that are acquired through observation.³⁷ Some are discarded without being used, while others are used extensively.

The effect of observational learning on criminal behaviors is difficult to determine. Researchers typically use indirect measures of learning. The most common measure is whether or not a person has delinquent peers — the assumption is that people imitate and role model the behavior of their peer group. Indeed, the relationship between delinquent peer associations and delinquency is among the strongest in criminology.³⁸ Parents have also played a central role in the study of observational learning. For example, it is possible that crime runs in families because children are modeling the behavior of adults. A study of 111 parolees from Buffalo, New York, found that children who observed their parents' violent confrontations were more likely to batter their partners during

adulthood.³⁹ Childhood observations of parental violence predicted future violence better than childhood physical abuse.

Media and Crime

Psychologists have also focused on the effect of media (particularly television and movies) on aggression, violence, and some forms of criminal behavior. A host of studies have shown that television and movies are laden with violent content, and that Americans spend a great deal of time watching violent programs.⁴⁰ Violence in the media is often portrayed in a way that is conducive to role modeling. For example, perpetrators of violence are not punished, the target of violence shows little pain, and there are few long-term negative consequences for the violence.⁴¹ There is no shortage of media-hyped examples of behaviors that seem to be direct imitations of television or movie characters. Examples of such anecdotal evidence include⁴²:

- MTV cartoon characters Beavis and Butthead have been blamed for children starting fires.
- In a reenactment of a scene from the movie *Money Train*, two men armed with flammable liquid burned a clerk's booth inside of a Brooklyn subway.
- John Hinkley, Jr., who attempted to assassinate President Reagan, was imitating the main character in the movie *Taxi Driver*.
- A 15-year-old Seattle girl placed poison in a peanut butter sandwich that was intended for a playmate — she got the idea from the movie *Heathers*.

Not surprisingly, a 2001 survey indicated that roughly one half of Americans believe that movies, television, and video games substantially contribute to violence.⁴³ Is this anecdotal evidence and public opinion supported by scientific research? Researchers have studied this issue using a variety of methods, including survey research and laboratory and field experiments. Laboratory experiments, like the “Bobo doll” research by Bandura and his associates, typically demonstrate clear links between media violence and aggression.⁴⁴ Although results from survey research are less clear, the majority of studies do find a relationship. One recent study examined children from 707 families over 17 years.⁴⁵ The researchers found that the amount of time spent watching television during adolescence predicted self- or parent-reported aggression (including assault and robbery) during adulthood. This relation-



Some scholars believe that kids learn violence and other antisocial behavior from the mass media.



Do video games train kids for violent behavior in the real world?

ship was evident, even after controlling for a host of environmental influences (e.g., family income, childhood neglect, neighborhood violence). A 2002 review of this body of research found that regardless of the methodology, there is a moderate relationship between exposure to media violence and aggression or violence.⁴⁶

Because studies of observational learning often use indirect measures, their conclusions are open to question. For example, one common interpretation of peer-delinquency relationship is that like-minded individuals hang out together. In other words, “birds of a feather flock together.”⁴⁷ Similarly, critics of the media-violence link suggest that violence-prone individuals will seek out violent programming. If this logic is correct, then delinquent peers and television have no causal effect on a person's behavior. Common sense suggests there is some truth to this point; for example, one would not expect a hardcore delinquent to hang out with members of the chess club. These issues will be discussed in greater detail in the context of sociological learning theories (Chapter 7).

It is worth noting here that one way to test whether a relationship is causal is to put it into practice. With regard to delinquent-peer example, one might study what happens if a delinquent is denied access to his or her normal (delinquent) peer group. Regarding media effects, there is some evidence that reducing exposure to media violence reduces aggres-

sion among children. For example, Robinson and colleagues reported that one program designed to reduce television viewing significantly reduced aggression in a sample of third and fourth graders.⁴⁸

Observational learning is a component in many theories of crime. Theorists in this area typically incorporate both operant and vicarious learning, as well as cognitive aspects into a single “social learning theory.” Because sociologists and psychologists have both advanced similar social learning theories, they will be addressed in greater detail in Chapter 7.

Policy Implications of Behaviorism

Perhaps the most appealing aspect of behavioral theory is that it translates easily into treatments and interventions for delinquents and criminals. Further, unlike psychoanalysis, it does not require the presence of trained therapeutic personnel or years of therapy sessions. As a general principle, behaviorists argue that because criminal behavior is learned, it can be unlearned.⁴⁹ In addition, criminals can learn pro-social behaviors to replace criminal actions. One practical application of classical conditioning, for example, is **aversion therapy**. Aversion therapy is used to eliminate links between stimuli and troublesome behaviors. For example, alcoholics can be conditioned to experience alcohol as noxious rather than pleasant, or sex offenders can be conditioned so that deviant images are repulsive rather than stimulating.

Aversion therapy works by pairing a stimulus that elicits pleasure with a noxious stimulus (typically a light electric shock or a noxious odor). For example, a therapist might show a pedophile a sexual image of a child, while at the same time exposing them to a very noxious odor (rotting meat seems to be a favorite).⁵⁰ After repeating this procedure over time, the deviant sexual image produces revulsion and nausea rather than sexual stimulation. For ethical reasons (how does one procure a sexually deviant image?), and because the general public finds this process itself somewhat repulsive, aversion therapy is used sparingly.

The principles of both operant and vicarious learning, however, are present in virtually every successful rehabilitation program. One simple application of operant conditioning is a **token economy**. In a token economy, participants earn points (or tokens) if they behave in the appropriate manner and lose tokens for inappropriate behavior. Later, the participants can exchange the tokens for items that they desire (e.g., television privileges, weekend furloughs,

purchases from a store). In the same way that money motivates people in the outside world, tokens provide a way for institutions to establish a work-payment incentive system.⁵¹ Token economies, when administered correctly, are efficient at reducing inmate misconduct and increasing desirable behaviors ranging from personal hygiene to academic achievement.⁵² For this reason, they have become a mainstay of juvenile correction institutions. Of course, the main drawback to a token economy is its artificial nature. A juvenile released from a correctional institution quickly discovers that studying for school or keeping a neat room no longer elicits “tokens.”

To avoid the artificial nature of token economies, many psychologists advocate working with parents and children within their home. Gerald Patterson, for example, trains parents to monitor the behavior of children and use reinforcements in the home.⁵³ To encourage adequate supervision and the consistent and correct use of reinforcement and punishment, he has parents chart out the frequency of problem behaviors (e.g., stealing, lying, staying out past curfew). Often, this is followed by a **contingency contract**, a formal contract signed by the parent and child that specifies behaviors that the child is to complete (chores) and avoid (stealing). In addition to the behaviors, the contract specifies how the child will be reinforced or punished based on their behaviors. Parent training programs have been moderately successful in reducing the delinquency of children.⁵⁴

Note, however, that behavioral treatments are not a silver bullet for curing crime. In fact, behavioral programs that narrowly focus only on operant and/or classical conditioning (e.g., token economy, aversion therapy) have only limited impact on offender behavior.⁵⁵ Aversion therapy is portrayed in movies as almost magical (as in the movie *A Clockwork Orange*), but the reality is that conditioning is relatively easy to overcome. An alcoholic conditioned to experience alcohol as nauseating, for example, needs only to drink a few times (getting sick each time) before the conditioning wears off. Among the most effective treatments are those that combine behavioral principles with cognitive theory.⁵⁶

Cognitive Psychology

Behavioral psychology is criticized by some for its portrayal of learning as a rather mechanical process. Cognitive psychologists believe that the human

ability to engage in complex thought processes makes people different from other animals. Imagine, for example, walking down a crowded sidewalk on a busy city street. Someone walking in the opposite direction bumps a shoulder and almost knocks a person down. What thoughts go through that person's mind? They might think, "That #@!! is disrespecting me!" or perhaps, "Whoa, I should watch where I'm going." Cognitive theorists argue that those thoughts, more than the actual shoulder bump, will impact how a person responds.

Note that there is a great deal of overlap between cognitive psychology and behaviorism. For example, cognitions (like behaviors) can be learned. Once learned, a person's thoughts serve to prompt, reinforce, or punish behavior.⁵⁷ In other words, a person's mind can use operant conditioning to punish or reinforce behavior. With respect to crime, cognitive psychologists focus on two broad areas: the content of a person's thoughts (what is thought) and general thought structures (how a person thinks).⁵⁸

Cognitive Structure

Cognitive structures refer to stable ways of thinking about one's self and the environment. Lawrence Kohlberg's theory of moral development fits well within this definition. Kohlberg argued that humans advance through predictable stages of moral reasoning, defined as how a person thinks about fairness, justice, and a right course of action. Kohlberg had subjects reason through various moral dilemmas and decide a course of action. He was less interested in *what* people decided than *how* they came to that decision. From this research, he developed six stages of moral reasoning (see **TABLE 5-3**). Subsequent research on Kohlberg's stages revealed that delinquents tend to have delays in moral development.⁵⁹ Moral education is now a component in many rehabilitation programs. Here, offenders work through moral dilemmas, and with the aid of a trained leader, learn to think about such issues in a more complex manner.⁶⁰

Of course, moral reasoning is just one aspect of a person's cognitive structure. Criminologists often discuss cognitive structure as a series of skills acquired through prior learning and applied consistently to different situations. Examples of cognitive skills other than moral reasoning include self-control, the ability to empathize (take the perspective of others), the ability to formulate short-term

TABLE 5-3

Lawrence Kohlberg's Stages of Moral Development

Stage 1	The right course of action is determined by blindly obeying those with power and authority. Emphasis is on avoiding punishment. The interests of others are not considered.
Stage 2	The right course of action is to further one's own interests. The interests of others are important only as a way to satisfy self-interests.
Stage 3	Moral reasoning is motivated by loyalties to others and a desire to live up to other people's standards; to follow the Golden Rule.
Stage 4	Right is following the rules of society and maintaining important social institutions (e.g., family, community).
Stage 5	Moral decisions are made by weighing individuals' rights against legal principles and the common good.
Stage 6	Moral decisions are based on universal principles such as the concern for human dignity, a respect for life, and a desire for justice. These principles are considered across different contexts and are independent of the law.

Source: Lawrence Kohlberg, *Stages in the Development of Moral Thought and Action* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969).

and long-term plans, the ability to anticipate the consequences of behavior, and the ability to recognize and control anger.⁶¹ In the shoulder-bumping incident, someone who has high self-control, is empathetic, and anticipates consequences well would probably be unlikely to respond in a violent manner. Relating to criminal behavior, cognitive theorists in this area tend to focus on what a person *is not thinking about*, including the long-term consequences of his or her actions, how the victim might feel, and legal alternatives to the criminal act.⁶²

Cognitive Content

The content of cognitions refers to what people think. Criminologists focus on rationalizations or denials (recall Freud's defense mechanisms) that support criminal behavior. Different theorists refer to such thoughts as criminal thinking errors, cognitive distortions, techniques of neutralization, or "stinking thinking."⁶³ All of these terms refer to illogical or irrational thoughts that can prompt or support behavior. For example, a criminal might rationalize a burglary by thinking, "They've got insurance; I'm not really hurting anyone." Almost without exception, research in this area finds that

criminals or delinquents are more likely to express such thoughts than law-abiding citizens.

LINK The sociological learning theories identified in Chapter 7 include concepts that are similar to what a cognitive psychologist might call *cognitive content*. Within Edwin Sutherland's differential association theory, cognitions are called "definitions" (as in how one defines a situation) that can either support or run counter to the legal code.

The primary criticism of this research deals with time ordering and causation. Do these thoughts actually *cause* criminal behavior or are they simply after-the-fact excuses used to justify actions and deflect blame? To cognitive scholars, this is a relatively unimportant issue. Regardless of whether the thoughts happen before (a prompt) or after the criminal act (reinforcement), they serve to reduce the guilt of the offender. Recalling the discussion of negative reinforcement, the *thought* allows the burglar to terminate a noxious stimulus (guilt/anxiety), which increases the likelihood he or she will burgle again. Such rationalizations are especially common for sex offenders, where guilt associated with the act is strong. Pedophiles, for example, will report that children enjoy sexual contact with adults; they feel that sex is "good" for children and that children often initiate sex and know what they want.⁶⁴

Policy Implications of Cognitive Psychology: Cognitive-Behavioral Programs

Like behaviorism, cognitive theory translates easily into practice. In fact, most cognitive-oriented rehabilitation programs incorporate principles of learning. The cognitive component of such cognitive-behavioral interventions includes the content of thought, the structure of thought, or both. **Cognitive skills programs** focus on cognitive structure and attempt to teach offenders skills such as moral reasoning, self-control, or anger management. The therapist teaches these skills using the principles of learning. Typically, a behavior is modeled by the therapist, and offenders are given several opportunities to practice the skill. Offenders are then reinforced when they employ these skills in role-playing sessions and (more importantly) outside of a specific session.⁶⁵

Cognitive restructuring refers to attempts to change the content of an individual's thoughts. In essence, criminal-thinking errors (e.g., rationalizations, distortions) are identified and forcefully re-

jected by the therapist. Often times, this is done in a group setting where offenders are taught to identify and correct others' thinking errors. Cognitive-behavioral treatments have accumulated a track record of success for reducing the criminal behavior of children, adolescents, and adults.⁶⁶ For example, a 2002 review of evaluations from cognitive-behavioral programs concluded that "cognitive-behavioral programs can reduce recidivism rates by significant amounts. This was found to be true for the overall collection of cognitive-behavioral studies and also for the subcategories social skills development training and cognitive skills training."⁶⁷

The same study found that strictly behavioral programs (e.g., token economy, contingency contracting) were not as effective. In that sense, treatments that have multiple targets for change and those that operate in the "real world" have proven more successful. Multisystemic therapy (MST) is a good example of this type of treatment. Devised by psychologist Scott Henggeler and his associates, MST is a cognitive-behavioral treatment that emphasizes "providing home-based and family-focused services that are intensive, time limited, pragmatic, and goal oriented."⁶⁸ MST has proven successful at reducing offending for a variety of populations, including inner-city juvenile offenders, adolescent sex offenders, and abusive parents (see **Theory in Action: Multisystemic Therapy** for a detailed description of this program through a case study.)

Personality and Crime

Personality theory provides further possible insights into the psychological aspects of crime. The primary assumption behind this perspective is that crime and delinquency are related to the presence of some personality trait. A **personality trait** is a characteristic of an individual that is stable over time and across different social circumstances. For example, an impulsive person is not likely to suddenly become a cautious person. Further, one would expect the person to be impulsive in a variety of domains — from driving a car to shopping for groceries. A **personality** is therefore the sum of personality traits that define a person. Psychologists typically link personality to criminal behavior in one of two ways. First, an offender may have specific traits within their personality that are conducive to crime. Second, some psychologists believe that certain criminal offenders, called



THEORY IN ACTION

Multisystemic Therapy (MST)

Multisystemic therapy has been hailed by many scholars as one of the best rehabilitation programs currently available. This praise stems from research findings that show MST reduces criminal behavior, even among very difficult populations. What makes MST unique is its comprehensive approach. While some cognitive-behavioral programs teach a set of skills or work with parents, MST targets many areas for change and uses many different techniques. Consider the case of “Homer,” provided by MST creator Scott Henggeler and his associates:

Homer is a 15-year-old Caucasian male with an extensive history of delinquent behavior, including assault and battery with intent to kill, simple assault and battery, malicious destruction of real property, trespassing, petty larceny, contempt of court, and resisting arrest. Homer had a reputation for fighting and bullying his peers and had been expelled in the 7th grade for assaulting a classmate and cursing his teachers. Homer was in a gang of juvenile delinquents who affectionately called themselves “Death Row.” Aside from his criminal record and association with deviant peers, Homer had an extensive history of abusing inhalants, marijuana, and alcohol.

At the time of referral, Homer had recently been released from a 45-day juvenile justice evaluation facility. He resides alone with his mother, who is employed full-time and has a history of alcohol abuse. Homer also has a 17-year-old sister with a history of crack cocaine dependence. She was recently released from a state-supported treatment facility and at the time of referral was living with her boyfriend and his family. A maternal uncle also lived in the community, though he refused to have contact with Homer due to his antisocial behavior.

The MST therapist (a graduate student) identified a number of targets for change, including:

- Homer’s deviant peer group (he hung around with older, “streetwise” youth)

- Homer’s refusal to go to school (he spent most days at home, getting high with friends)
- Homer’s thinking biases (anyone who failed to comply with his requests was “dissing” him, and he felt justified in responding aggressively)
- Homer’s mother failed to monitor or punish his behavior (Homer was allowed to stay out as long as he wanted and did pretty much as he pleased).

The therapists also identified a number of strengths:

- Homer’s mother was still emotionally attached to her son and willing to learn new parenting skills.
- Homer was intelligent, could be quite personable, and excelled at sports.
- Both Homer and his mother wanted him to attend high school rather than continue in the 7th grade (Homer wanted to play high school football).

The therapist modified Homer’s behavior by utilizing a number of behavioral techniques. For example, Homer’s mother was trained to monitor Homer’s whereabouts and punish his misbehavior (parent training). She produced a list of chores and responsibilities for Homer and consistently rewarded or punished him, depending upon whether he completed his chores (contingency contract). The therapist also worked with Homer and his mother to get him admitted into high school. Once admitted, his time was more structured; he had less access to delinquent peers and more access to prosocial peers. Further, playing football became a natural reward that helped shape Homer’s behavior. Finally, as Homer’s behavior improved, his uncle began to spend more time with him, serving as a good adult role model (observational learning).

Sources:

Excerpt reprinted from Scott W. Henggeler, Phillippe B. Cunningham, Susan G. Pickrel, Sonja K. Schoenwald, and Michael J. Brondino, “Multisystemic Therapy: An Effective Violence Prevention Approach for Serious Juvenile Offenders.” *Journal of Adolescence* 19 (1996): 55–56, with permission from Elsevier.

Francis T. Cullen and Paul Gendreau, “Assessing Correctional Rehabilitation: Policy, Practice, and Prospects,” in *Criminal Justice 2000* (Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice, 2001).

psychopaths, sociopaths, or antisocial personality disordered, have a criminal personality. In other words, they have a specific cluster of personality traits that drives them toward criminal behavior.

Personality Traits and Crime

In general, personality theorists attempt to define and outline basic traits that form the building blocks of human personality.⁶⁹ Typically, a number of related traits are combined to form “super factors” or broad dimensions of personality. For example, a common dimension of personality with which many are familiar is extroversion (i.e., outgoing, sociable) and introversion (i.e., reserved, private, cautious). A substantial number of general personality theories exist, each with their own traits and dimensions. One example is the five-factor model, which identifies five dimensions of personality (hence the name).⁷⁰ The dimensions include:

1. Neuroticism (emotional stability versus instability)
2. Extraversion (sociability)
3. Openness to experience (curiosity, interest in trying new things)
4. Agreeableness (antagonistic versus agreeable interpersonal strategy)
5. Conscientiousness (impulse control, ability to follow moral code, organizational ability)

Another example is Auke Tellegen’s personality model.⁷¹ Tellegen identifies three dimensions of personality: (1) positive emotionality, (2) negative emotionality, and (3) constraint. As outlined in **TABLE 5-4**, each of these dimensions is composed of several traits. An individual exhibiting high constraint, for example, would score high on *traditionalism* (desires conservative environment, endorses high moral standards), *harm avoidance* (avoids excitement or danger, prefers safe activities), and *control* (reflective, cautious, careful).

Personality researchers have constructed a number of personality inventories to measure the presence or extent of specific personality dimensions.⁷² Generally, these are paper-and-pencil questionnaires asking a broad array of questions that tap into a variety of personality traits.

Early research linking personality and crime was plagued by methodology problems. For example, the Psychopathic Deviate (Pd) scale in the Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI)

TABLE 5-4

Personality Dimensions in the Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire

Constraint

- *Traditionalism*: desires a conservative social environment, endorses high moral standards
- *Harm avoidance*: avoids excitement and danger, prefers safe activities even if they are tedious
- *Control*: is reflective, cautious, careful, rational

Negative Emotionality

- *Aggression*: hurts others for advantage; will frighten and cause discomfort for others
- *Alienation*: feels mistreated, victimized, betrayed, and the target of false rumors
- *Stress reaction*: is nervous, vulnerable, sensitive, prone to worry

Positive Emotionality

- *Achievement*: works hard; enjoys demanding projects and working long hours
- *Social potency*: is forceful and decisive; fond of leadership roles
- *Well-being*: has a happy, cheerful disposition; feels good about self and sees a bright future
- *Social closeness*: is sociable, likes people and turns to others for comfort

Source: Avshalom Caspi, Terrie E. Moffitt, Phil A. Silva, Magda Stoughamer-Loeber, Robert F. Krueger, and Pamela S. Schmutte, “Are Some People Crime-Prone? Replications of the Personality-Crime Relationship Across Countries, Genders, Races, and Methods,” *Criminology* 32 (1994): 163–195.

correlates well with criminal behavior. However, the scale was designed to identify dangerous individuals within psychiatric populations. Criminologists correctly criticized the use of these scales to predict criminal behavior, because the scales were constructed with questions that asked about failing on probation or engaging in crime.⁷³ It shouldn’t surprise anyone that someone who reports failing on probation has engaged in crime.

Recent personality instruments do a better job of avoiding this pitfall. For example, a recent study used the Multidimensional Personality Inventory (MPQ), which measures Tellegen’s model, to predict criminal behavior. In an impressive multinational study, researchers gave the MPQ to samples of youth in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Dunedin, New Zealand, to see what personality traits predicted self-reported, official (arrests), and parent / teacher-reported delinquency. Across samples, and regardless of how delinquency was measured, individuals with low constraint and high negative emotionality were more apt to engage in delinquency.⁷⁴

LINK Gottfredson and Hirschi's general theory of crime is introduced in Chapter 7. The central concept in this theory, low self-control, is very similar to the personality trait of low constraint.

A 2001 review of personality-crime research considered evidence across four different models of personality (including both the Tellegen model and the five-factor model). The reviewers discovered that each model successfully identified traits that predicted antisocial behavior with moderate strength. Noting similarities across the personality models, the authors suggest a general personality profile of criminals⁷⁵:

Individuals who commit crimes tend to be hostile, self-centered, spiteful, jealous, and indifferent to others. They tend to lack ambition, motivation, and perseverance, have difficulty controlling their impulses, and hold nontraditional and unconventional values and beliefs.

Criminal Personality: The Psychopath

In contrast to personality theorists who focus on general traits common to everyone, some argue that there is a class of individuals who have a distinct criminal personality. The term *psychopath* is widely used (and often misused) by both professionals and the general public to describe this personality. Variations on the concept of psychopathy have existed within the professional field since the early 1800s. Indeed, in a 2004 article that addressed the history of criminology, Rafter concluded that “moral insanity” was among the first explanations of criminal behavior.⁷⁶ Isaac Ray, a 19th century psychiatrist, defined moral mania as a “cerebral disease” that could cause a person to commit horrible crimes without any motive or remorse.⁷⁷

The term psychopathy was actually coined in 1845, and its meaning has changed over time (some people still prefer the term *sociopath*). The current conception of a psychopath is usually traced to Hervey Cleckley's book, *The Mask of Sanity*, originally published in 1941.⁷⁸ Cleckley, a psychiatrist who spent years working with criminal offenders, used case studies to outline key traits of a psychopathic personality. His laundry list of traits includes:

Superficial charm, manipulative, above-average intelligence, absence of psychotic symptoms, absence of anxiety, lack of remorse, failure to learn from experience, egocentric, lack of emo-



Convicted murderer Keith Jespersion, right, shown here at a 1995 court appearance in Portland, Oregon. Jespersion, also called the “Happy Face Killer,” is serving two life sentences in Oregon in connection with two murders in that state and has been sentenced to life in prison in Washington State for a third murder.



Although some serial killers are no doubt psychopaths, not all psychopaths are serial killers. What other types of criminals are likely to be psychopaths?

tional depth, trivial sex life, unreliable, failure to follow a life plan, untruthful, suicide attempts rarely genuine, impulsive, antisocial behavior. . .

As the title of the book suggests, psychopaths are unlikely to come across as “crazy.” They do not suffer from paranoid delusions, hallucinations, or breaks with reality (note “absence of psychotic symptoms” in the list). So, how does one identify a psychopath?

Currently, psychopathy is not listed in the latest *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM-IV), the main tool used to diagnose mental disorders. Instead, the DSM outlines “antisocial personality disorder” (APD), a much broader concept — and one that probably includes the vast majority of prison inmates. Robert Hare, a Canadian psychologist, is a leader in the study of psychopathy. Hare refined Cleckley's original list of traits to create the Psychopathy Checklist (PCL).⁷⁹ Unlike other personality tests, the PCL is not a paper-and-pencil, multiple-choice instrument. Rather, a trained interviewer asks a number of questions in an effort to gauge whether a person exhibits certain traits, such as shallowness or superficial charm. The PCL

TABLE 5-5

Psychopathy Versus Antisocial Personality Disorder**DSM-IV Diagnostic Criteria for Antisocial Personality Disorder**

A. There is a pervasive pattern of disregard for and violation of the rights of others occurring since age 15 years, as indicated by three (or more) of the following:

1. Failure to conform to social norms with respect to lawful behaviors as indicated by repeatedly performing acts that are grounds for arrest
2. Deceitfulness, as indicated by repeated lying, use of aliases, or conning others for personal profit or pleasure
3. Impulsivity or failure to plan ahead
4. Irritability and aggressiveness, as indicated by repeated physical fights or assaults
5. Reckless disregard for safety of self or others
6. Consistent irresponsibility, as indicated by repeated failure to sustain consistent work behavior or honor financial obligations
7. Lack of remorse, as indicated by being indifferent to or rationalizing having hurt, mistreated, or stolen from another

B. The individual is at least age 18 years.

C. There is evidence of conduct disorder with onset before age 15 years.

Hare's (1990) Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R)**Emotional/Interpersonal Traits**

Glibness/superficial charm
 Grandiose sense of self-worth
 Need for stimulation/prone to boredom
 Conning/manipulative
 Lack of remorse or guilt
 Shallow affect
 Callous/lack of empathy
 Lack of realistic, long-term goals
 Failure to accept responsibility for own actions
 Pathological lying

Social Deviance

Many short-term marital relationships
 Juvenile delinquency
 Criminal versatility
 Promiscuous sexual relations
 Poor behavioral controls
 Parasitic lifestyle
 Early behavior problems
 Impulsivity
 Irresponsibility
 Revocation of conditional release

Items scored on a scale of 0–2 by a trained interviewer
 (0 = not applicable, 1 = uncertain, 2 = definitely present)

Sources: American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th edition (Washington, DC: American Psychiatric Association, 1994); Robert D. Hare, *Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of Psychopaths Among Us* (New York: Guilford, 1999).

traits, along with the criteria for APD, are outlined in **TABLE 5-5**.

Hare and his associates have used the PCL to distinguish psychopathic prison inmates from nonpsychopathic inmates. Hare estimates that 15% to 25% of prisoners and perhaps 1% of the general population are psychopaths.⁸⁰ Researchers comparing nonpsychopathic prison inmates to psychopaths find some interesting differences in emotions, learning, speech patterns, and biological measures. One study, for example, revealed that psychopaths make

more logically inconsistent statements and other speaking errors than nonpsychopathic criminals.⁸¹ As the examples in the **Theory in Action: Examples of Logical Inconsistencies in Speech Among Psychopaths** box illustrate, some of these logical inconsistencies can be downright funny. Less humorous is the finding that psychopaths do not seem to benefit from any form of rehabilitation. In fact, some effective treatment programs (for non-psychopaths) can actually increase their criminal behavior.⁸² It is noteworthy that much of the biological research (see



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Examples of Logical Inconsistencies in Speech Among Psychopaths

In his book, *Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of Psychopaths Among Us*, Robert Hare gives several examples of logically inconsistent speech patterns. Hare suggests that psychopaths may have trouble monitoring their own speech and keeping up with their own lies.

When asked if he had ever committed a violent offense, a man serving time for theft answered, “No, but I once had to kill someone.”

A woman with a staggering record of fraud, deceit, lies, and broken promises concluded a letter to the parole board with, “I’ve let a lot of people down . . . One is only as good as her reputation and name. My word is as good as gold.”

A man serving a term for armed robbery replied to the testimony of an eyewitness, “He’s lying. I wasn’t there. I should have blown his f@#!ing head off.”

When Ted Bundy was asked what cocaine did to him, he replied, “Cocaine? I’ve never used it . . . I’ve never tried cocaine. I think I might have tried it once and got nothing out of it. Just snorted a little bit. And I just don’t mess with it. It’s too expensive. And I suppose if I was on the streets and had enough of it, I might get into it. But I’m strictly a marijuana man. All I do is . . . I love to smoke reefer. And Valiums. And of course alcohol.”

Source: Robert D. Hare, *Without Conscience: The Disturbing World of Psychopaths Among Us* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1993): 125–126.

Chapter 4) focuses on either psychopathy or APD. Thus, psychopaths are more prone to lower heart rates, lower levels of skin conductance, and so forth.

The primary criticism of the concept of psychopathy centers on whether these individuals are qualitatively different from other offenders. Hare and others argue that the specific cluster of traits means that this is a specific type of offender. Others suggest that a psychopath may be nothing more than a chronic or serious criminal offender. In other words, each person may have a little “psychopath” — some simply have more than others. For this reason (and because of policy implications), future research on psychopathy will continue to generate controversy.

Policy Implications of Personality Theory

Personality explanations of delinquency and crime have become more accepted in criminology over the past decade. Much of this acceptance stems from the fact that personality traits (both general traits and psychopathy) consistently predict delinquency and crime. Despite this popularity, such theories are plagued by basic questions. How are personality traits formed? Where do they come from? Can traits be changed through rehabilitation

programs? By definition, personality tends to be stable over the life course. Oftentimes, personality traits are portrayed as almost impossible to change. A cognitive theorist, though, might argue that “traits” such as impulsivity or lack of empathy are simply cognitive skill deficits that can be remedied through training. In the research with the MPQ just described, the authors suggest that low constraint may stem from ineffective parenting, whereas negative emotionality may be a biological function — inherited and difficult to alter.

Hans Eysenck, one of the first theorists to outline a personality-based theory of crime, believes that basic dimensions of personality stem from differences in biology.⁸³ For example, he argues that arousal levels are related to the concept of extroversion, and “psychoticism” is related to testosterone levels.⁸⁴ Similarly, Hare believes that at its core, psychopathy is a function of biology. He notes that, “the elements needed for the development of psychopathy — including a profound inability to experience empathy and the complete range of emotions, including fear — are provided in part by nature and possibly by some unknown biological influences of the developing fetus.”⁸⁵

There is a danger of viewing personality traits as something inborn and unchangeable. In particular, the concept of psychopathy can be used by psychologists eager to make money from the criminal jus-

tice system. Prosecutors can hire these folks to testify at trial. The psychologists (often after spending only a short time with the offender) testify that a defendant is indeed a psychopath. This testimony can lead (perhaps unfairly) to very harsh prison sentences.⁸⁶ Apart from the criminal justice system, the belief that crime stems from sources outside of one's control may lead people to ignore environmental conditions that foster crime.

Intelligence and Crime

Early positivists believed that feeble-mindedness was a primary cause of crime. The emergence of psychological testing, including IQ tests, further heightened interest in this relationship. Currently, many people view IQ scores as a measure of general, native intelligence. Others view IQ as something other than intelligence and believe that environment affects scores. What exactly is IQ and how does it relate to criminal behavior?

A Brief History of Intelligence Testing

IQ tests allegedly measure mental differences from one person to another. Experimental psychologists were the first to design psychological tests to measure intelligence. For example, Hermann Ebbinghaus (1850–1909) believed that a large part of intelligence could be quantified by measuring one's ability to memorize. Alfred Binet (1857–1911) began his research on intelligence by measuring skull size, but quickly realized that this was insufficient.

Thus, in 1905, Binet and Theodore Simon developed a scale that would identify students who were performing poorly in school and in need of academic help. The scale was created by having children perform a hodgepodge of different tasks (e.g., counting coins, identifying which face was “prettier”). The tasks were labeled according to the age at which a child of normal intelligence should be able to complete them successfully. Children proceeded through increasingly difficult tasks until they were unable to complete a task. The age assigned to the last successfully completed task was considered their mental age. The concept of IQ, which stands for intelligence quotient, was born when a statistician later divided mental age by biological age, and multiplied the result by 100.⁸⁷ Note that average intelligence, where a person's bi-

ological and mental age are equal, is therefore always scored as 100.

Aware of how such a scale might be used by others (he once believed that intelligence was fixed at birth himself), Binet included several caveats with the publication of his scale that can be summarized⁸⁸:

1. The scores are a practical device that do not support any theory of intellect. One cannot call what they measure intelligence.
2. The scale is a rough guide for identifying mildly retarded children. It is not a scale for ranking normal children.
3. Regardless of the causes of difficulty identified, emphasis should be placed on improvement through training. Low scores should not be used to mark children as incapable.

Unfortunately for Binet, his work was translated into English and made accessible to the United States at a time when the eugenics movement was in full swing. Eugenicists believed that intelligence was inherited and immutable. Therefore, great importance was placed on the ability to identify different types of feeble-minded individuals so that they could be isolated and/or sterilized. Indeed, several slang terms come from the categories created by scientists. H.H. Goddard coined the term “moron” to describe the most important type of person — one that is mentally inferior, yet still able to function in society and therefore pass on genes.

In this light, Binet's testing procedures were modified and applied to various populations (e.g., World War I army soldiers, prisoners, immigrants) in an effort to identify mentally inferior people. Many of these early tests were obviously culturally biased and testing was often carried out in a shoddy manner. Stephen Jay Gould illustrates cultural bias with three questions from an early IQ test⁸⁹:

1. Crisco is: patent medicine, disinfectant, toothpaste, food product
2. The number of Kaffir's legs is: 2, 4, 6, 8
3. Christy Mathewson is famous as a: writer, artist, baseball player, comedian

Most can probably get the Crisco question, but what about Christy Mathewson? Imagine a recent immigrant grappling with such a test. World War I army recruits who took this exam averaged a mental age of 13 years (just above “moron” status). Rather than question the exam or their testing procedure

(both were flawed), the researchers took the results as valid. When the testers found that immigrants who had been in the country for at least five years performed better, they might have become suspicious that their tests were biased. However, their conclusion was that recent immigrants came from “poor breeding stock” and were therefore less intelligent.⁹⁰

Lewis Terman, a Stanford University professor, devised the first standardized tests based on Binet’s earlier scales. The resulting Stanford-Binet test was mass marketed to schools and became the gold standard for future IQ tests. The original Stanford-Binet test (and current IQ tests) no longer identified a mental age. Rather, the test was statistically manipulated so that the average score would be 100, regardless of the person’s biological age. Most modern IQ tests are simply distant relatives of the Stanford-Binet test that follow the same format (tap into a variety of mental processes).⁹¹

How does one interpret modern IQ scores? Psychologists themselves disagree over the meaning of an IQ score. Although some interpret IQ as a measure of general intelligence that is mostly inherited and resistant to change, others argue that there are multiple forms of intelligence (learned, reflective, neural), some of which are very amenable to improvement.⁹²

IQ and Crime

One of the earliest applications of mental testing was on criminals. Goddard, for instance, tested prisoners at various correctional institutions early in the 20th century and found that 70% were “feeble-minded.”⁹³ This led him to conclude that criminality and feeble-mindedness were interchangeable, and because one was tied in with the other, all such “affected” persons should be incarcerated and sterilized. However, by the 1920s, many people were critical of the IQ tests, noting their biases and flaws (both Terman and Goddard recanted many of their own claims). Edwin Sutherland, a prominent sociologist, argued that as testing procedures improved and as IQ tests became less culturally biased, the gap in IQ between criminals and noncriminals would disappear.⁹⁴ For many years after that, criminologists ignored research on IQ.

As it turns out, Sutherland was only half correct. Although the IQ-crime relationship did indeed shrink over time, recent research suggests that an 8- to 10-point gap between criminals and noncriminals still exists. The first thing to recog-

nize is that this is not a very large difference. Many offenders have above-average IQ scores, while many law-abiding people have lower IQ scores. Still, what can one make of this difference? Several possibilities exist. It could be that smarter offenders commit less visible crimes and are less likely to be apprehended. The fact that IQ differences emerge even for self-reported delinquency (where detection of the crime is not an issue) casts this idea in doubt. It could also be that IQ tests are still biased, so that blacks, Hispanics, or those in poverty might perform worse. If this was the case, then IQ might simply be a proxy for race or class — factors that are related to offending. Yet, the IQ-crime link appears, even after statistically controlling for race and social class.

Criminologists Travis Hirschi and Michael Hindelang revived interest in the IQ-crime link by suggesting that a child’s IQ was at least as significant an indicator of delinquency as social class or race (important factors in many sociological theories of crime).⁹⁵ However, they also argued that intelligence had only an indirect effect on delinquency. IQ relates to poor school performance and possibly school failure, which in turn can lead to delinquency.⁹⁶ More recently, Herrnstein and Murray renewed the argument that IQ measures a native, general intelligence. In their book, *The Bell Curve*, they claim that the effect of IQ on delinquency is direct: people who are mentally “dull” have difficulty understanding the rules of a complex society.⁹⁷ In other words, some people are not bright enough to learn right from wrong or legal actions from illegal behavior. They conclude that⁹⁸:

People of limited intelligence can lead moral lives in a society that is run on the basis of “Thou shalt not steal.” They find it much harder to lead moral lives in a society that is run on the basis of “thou shalt not steal unless there is a really good reason to.” The policy prescription is that the criminal justice system should be made *simpler* [emphasis in original].

Leaving aside the controversy about whether IQ measures general intelligence, one might question whether an 8- to 10-point difference in IQ warrants their sweeping conclusions. In a response to *The Bell Curve*, Francis Cullen and his associates point out that IQ is not a very strong predictor of criminal behavior. When ranked on a scale with other known predictors (e.g., attitudes, personality, delinquent peer associations) of crime, IQ ends up on the bottom of the list.⁹⁹

Nevertheless, because the crime-IQ link is consistently documented, criminologists continue to study this relationship.¹⁰⁰ The bulk of research on this issue supports the indirect model outlined by Hirschi and Hindelang. For example, a 2004 study on a sample of 1727 American youth found that youths with lower IQ scores were more likely to encounter deviant peer pressure and to have lower school performance and lower levels of self-control. In turn, these factors (e.g., school performance, peer pressure) predicted delinquency. In other words, IQ was related to crime because it influenced these other factors. Of course, there are other interpretations of the IQ-crime relationship. In Chapter 4, it was noted that biologically ori-

ented criminologists view IQ as a measure of neurological health.

Policy Implications of the IQ-Crime Relationship

The policy implication of the IQ-crime relationship depends on one's view of IQ. Is IQ a measure of native intelligence or something else? It also depends on the interpretation of the IQ-crime relationship. Is IQ a direct cause of crime or does it influence other factors (school failure, peer associations) that cause criminal behavior? The policy implication in the direct-cause model has already been discussed. Early positivists believed that feeble-mindedness was a direct and unchangeable cause of crime. These early criminologists advocated a policy of eugenics. Many believe that the policy implications outlined in *The Bell Curve* take a similar stance. Although the authors did not recommend sterilizing offenders, they portray crime as an almost unavoidable consequence of being "dull" and their policy implication is to make the world simpler.

The vast majority of criminologists believe that IQ plays a minor and indirect role in criminal offending. If the IQ-crime link is indirect, the policy implications would focus on those things related to both IQ and crime. For example, a program might focus on keeping learning-disabled youth in school. Another policy implication deals with newer (cognitive-behavioral) rehabilitation programs. Many of these programs require extensive reading and journaling. Some suggest using IQ tests to identify offenders who may have difficulty with a reading/writing intensive program.¹⁰¹

Summary of IQ and Crime

The meaning of IQ and its relationship to criminal behavior was neglected for many years in the field of criminology. Obviously, that situation has changed over the past 25 years. Modern studies consistently find that IQ is related to criminal behavior. Critics point out, however, that this relationship probably does not hold for many types of white-collar crime (e.g., insider trading). Also, they highlight the fact that IQ is a relatively weak predictor of criminal behavior. Most criminologists conclude that IQ matters because of its effect on other factors related to crime.



Daryl Atkins walks into a Virginia court room in July, 2005. Atkins' case led the U.S. Supreme Court to bar execution of the mentally retarded.



How does this legal issue relate to the discussion of IQ and crime presented in this chapter?

TABLE 5-6

Summary of Psychological Theories

Theory	Key Theorists	Overview	Key Concepts
Psychodynamic Theory	Sigmund Freud	Criminal behavior can be understood by examining early childhood experiences when personality is formed. Often, behavior is caused by unconscious memories, wishes, and desires.	Id, ego, superego Defense mechanisms Psychoanalysis
Behaviorism	Ivan Pavlov Albert Bandura Gerald Patterson	Criminal behavior is learned through classical, operant, or vicarious (observational) learning. Crime can therefore be “unlearned.”	Reinforcement Punishment Token economy Aversion therapy Cognitive-behavioral treatment
Personality	Auke Tellegen Hervy Cleckly Robert Hare	Personality traits or a criminal personality (psychopathy) are stable characteristics of individuals that cause crime.	Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire (MPQ) Psychopath Antisocial Personality Disorder (APD)
Intelligence	Alfred Binet H. H. Goddard Stephen Jay Gould	IQ scores predict criminal behavior, but this effect is most likely indirect.	Intelligence Quotient (IQ)

Conclusion

Psychology has made a number of important contributions to the study of crime. Each of the schools of thought has its own key concepts and theories concerning criminal behavior (see **TABLE 5-6** for a summary). The validity of each theory must be considered in terms of its ability to account for criminality. Some of these theories (behavioral approaches, personality) are well supported by empirical evidence, while others (psychoanalytic theory) are not. The primary link between all of them, however, is their emphasis on the individual. Because of this emphasis, many psychological theories translate smoothly into treatment programs for offenders.

Psychologists Don Andrews and James Bonta are among the most strident supporters of a psychological approach to criminology. The authors contrast the psychology of criminal conduct with mainstream criminology. According to Andrews and Bonta, the psychology of criminal conduct “seeks a rational and empirical understanding of variation in the occurrence of criminal acts, in particular, a rational empirical understanding of individual differences in criminal activity.”¹⁰¹ They argue that psychological constructs from cognitive, behavioral, and personality theory have much stronger associations with crime than traditional sociologi-

cal factors, and lament the “weak psychology” found in sociological theories. The authors argue that support of mainstream (sociology) theories of crime is based on faith and ideology rather than scientific evidence.

Andrews and Bonta make some valid points in their arguments. In their zeal for the psychological approach, however, they minimize the importance of sociological theories that are well supported in the literature. Many sociological theories do not focus on individual differences that predict offending; rather, they highlight macrolevel influences thought to influence crime rates across time or different geographical locations. Psychological theories largely ignore the “big picture,” or macrolevel influences. A behavioral theorist, for example, would have a difficult time explaining why violent crime rates in the United States are higher than in other countries. Are American parents that ineffective? If they are, then why does it produce more violent crime, but not more property crime? And why does crime rise and fall within the United States from year to year? Certainly, a personality theorist would have a difficult time explaining why the violent crime rate suddenly dropped in the 1990s.

Many sociological theories address differences in criminal offending across groups and over time. Some sociological theories, however, do focus on individual traits.

WRAP UP



YOU ARE THE CRIMINOLOGIST

The BTK Killer

Dennis Rader (the “BTK” killer) represents a fascinating case study. Certainly, the intense media scrutiny in this case has yielded a treasure trove of information about Rader’s background. A useful exercise for mastering theories of crime is to try to fit the “known facts” of a particular case to a particular theory. Oftentimes, information appears to fit a number of different theories. Rader’s notes to police appear to fit with the Freudian concept of an unconscious desire to get caught and punished (an overdeveloped superego). Rader also exhibits some characteristics of a psychopath — most notably his animated but emotionless description of his activities. Recognize, however, that much of the description of Rader does not fit the concept of psychopathy. For example, he maintained a family and job over a long period of time. This is inconsistent with the description of a psychopath as having “short-term marital relationships” and “poor behavioral controls.” Although “case studies” such as this can be an important tool for learning the nuances of a theory, it is crucial to note that one particular case can neither prove nor disprove any theory of crime. Rather, researchers typically study large samples of individuals to assess the validity of a theory.

Chapter Spotlight

- Sigmund Freud is responsible for psychodynamic theory and psychoanalysis (a treatment derived from his theory). Freud deserves credit for devising a number of important concepts (e.g., ego, defense mechanisms) and distinguishing between the conscious and unconscious. Although psychoanalysis is typically not appropriate for criminal offenders, many of Freud’s ideas have found their way into modern criminology.
- Psychologists have identified three types of human learning: operant conditioning, classical conditioning, and observational learning. Operant conditioning (e.g., parents socializing kids) and observational learning (e.g., television violence) are both implicated in theories of crime.
- Cognitive psychologists have highlighted the importance of cognitive content (e.g., antisocial attitudes) and cognitive structure (moral development) in the genesis of crime.
- Classical conditioning (aversion therapy), operant conditioning (parent training), and observational learning (modeling) have been used in attempts to rehabilitate offenders. Cognitive-behavioral programs have a track record of success in rehabilitating criminals.
- There is substantial evidence that certain personality traits are related to criminal behavior. A key issue in this research is how personality is formed.
- Psychopathy is among the oldest concepts in criminology. Here, the issue is whether or not a distinct, criminal personality (e.g., superficial, above average intelligence, pathological lying, egocentric) exists. In other words, are psychopaths qualitatively different from others, or do we all have a bit of psychopathy?
- There is a consistently documented link between IQ and criminal behavior. This relationship, however, is not very strong, and there is substantial debate about how to interpret the IQ-crime link.

Putting It All Together

1. Briefly describe the two general ways that psychologists have linked personality to criminal behavior.
2. How strong is the relationship between IQ-related and criminal behavior? Why are individuals with lower IQ scores more likely to engage in crime?
3. Discuss Freud’s personality elements (id, ego, and superego). How might each of these elements produce criminal behavior?

4. What is a psychopath? How is this different from antisocial personality disorder? Is there a danger in using the term “psychopath?”
5. Describe the three types of learning outlined in this chapter. Give an example of each.
6. Discuss any two rehabilitation programs used by behaviorists. What type of learning (operant, classical, observational) do they use?
7. Make up a story using Gerald Patterson’s social learning theory (see Figure 5-2). Explain how the person in your story becomes a criminal. Try to use as many elements in the theory as possible.

Key Terms

aversion therapy The use of classical conditioning to reverse an unwanted relationship between a stimulus (alcohol) and response (pleasure).

classical conditioning By pairing an unconditioned stimulus (e.g., meat) with a conditioned stimulus (a bell), over time a conditioned response (e.g., salivation) is reproduced using only the conditioned stimulus.

cognitive restructuring A rehabilitation technique for which criminal-thinking errors (cognitive distortions) are identified and contested.

cognitive skills programs Rehabilitation programs that attempt to build thinking skills, such as moral reasoning, empathy, and anger management.

contingency contract A tool to promote parental use of operant conditioning. Parents and children sign a contract that lays out expected behaviors, reinforcements, and consequences.

countertransference A term from psychoanalysis; when the client “pushes the buttons” of the counselor so that the resulting anger and hostility interferes with treatment.

defense mechanisms Psychological ploys that individuals use (often unconsciously) to reduce or eliminate this anxiety.

delinquent ego Application of Freudian principles to describe an ego that effectively blocks any potential restraint from the conscience (superego) and permits the delinquent to rationalize criminal behavior.

delinquent superego Application of Freudian principles to describe a superego that is guided by a delinquent code of behavior, rather than appropriate values.

ego The conscious part of Freudian personality; the “psychological thermostat” that regulates the savage wishes and demands of the id and the social restrictions of the superego.

free association A technique used in psychoanalysis in which the patient verbalizes, uncensored, anything that comes to mind.

id The unconscious, instinctual aspect of the Freudian personality. Id wishes often include the immediate gratification of basic drives (e.g., sex, aggression).

negative reinforcement The removal of a noxious stimulus (e.g., bad smell) to increase a target behavior.

observational learning Learning behavior by observing and modeling the behavior of others.

operant conditioning The use of reinforcement and punishment to shape behavior.

overdeveloped superego Application of Freudian principles to describe a superego that causes a person to seek out punishment.

personality The sum of personality traits that define a person.

personality trait A characteristic of an individual that is stable over time and across different social circumstances.

positive reinforcement The use of rewards (e.g., praise, money, tokens) to increase a target behavior.

punishment The presentation of a noxious stimulus (e.g., spanking, scolding) to decrease a target behavior.

superego The conscience of the Freudian personality — the keeper of prohibitions (“Stealing is wrong”) and wishes about what one wants to be (“I am going to be just like my father when I grow up”).

token economy Application of operant conditioning to corrections. Individuals are reinforced and punished using “tokens” that can be exchanged for privileges.

transference A term from psychoanalysis to describe when the client uses the counselor as a “stand in” from the past.

Notes

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