

Chapter 2

Theoretical Explanations

TEACHING POINTS

- Among the criminological theories, the first formal school is generally called the classical or free will school. According to this school of thought, we commit deviant behavior by voluntarily choosing a course of action.
- The classical or free will school is an outgrowth of the Age of Enlightenment that dominated Europe for most of the 18th century.
- Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham were strongly influenced and adapted the ideas of the Age of Enlightenment to theories regarding human behavior and crime causation. Beccaria and Bentham were the leaders in the classical or free will movement.
- Social contract governance theory is based on the concept that by forming social groups, the citizens are agreeing on the moral and political obligations. These obligations are based upon a contract or agreement among the people for them to form the society in which they live.
- In the latter half of the 19th century, the positivist school was the leading school on crime causation. The school or concept was a product of the realism movement and a reaction to the harshness of the classical school.
- In determining the causes of crime, the positivists would examine the criminal and not the crime, whereas the followers of the classical school would examine the crime.
- The basic difference between the positivists and the classical school followers is whether or not humans have free will.
- The classical school is based on the concept of free will, and the positivist school on the fact that humans lack free will.
- Social determinism is based on the hypothesis that social interactions and constructs alone determine individual behavior, as opposed to biological or objective factors.
- A social determinism when studying certain human behaviors, such as committing murder, would look only at social phenomena, such as customs and expectations, education, interpersonal interactions, and memes, to decide whether or not a given person would exhibit any of these behaviors.
- The rational choice theory is based on the utilitarian belief that humans are reasoning persons who weighs means and ends, costs and benefits, and make a rational choice.
- Social control theories propose that people's relationships, commitments, values, norms, and beliefs encourage them not to break the law. If moral codes are internalized and individuals are tied into and have a stake in their community, they will limit their propensity to commit deviant acts.
- The social disorganization theory is an ecological theory that was developed by the Chicago School. The theory looks directly to neighborhood ecological characteristics to explain crime causation.
- A lasting perspective from the Chicago School was the social-psychological theory of

symbolic interactionism.

- From symbolic interactionism two theories of crime causation developed: differential association and labeling.
- Edwin H. Sutherland originated differential association theory to explain criminal behavior. He published his first version of differential association in 1939 and his final version in 1947.
- Sutherland considered that all behaviors are learned in an individual's social environment. Sutherland stated that the major difference between conforming behavior and criminal behavior is in what is learned rather than how it is learned, because he considered that individuals learn both criminal and noncriminal behavior in much the same way.
- Differential association theory contends that criminal behavior is learned in association with intimate others by interacting and communicating with those others.
- According to the strain theories, the social structures within society pressure individuals to commit deviant behavior. The theories consider two different types of pressures: structural and individual.
- Generally the biological explanations focus on genetic predisposition toward deviance.
- Psychological explanations of deviant behavior are generally based on either those that focus on intelligence or those that focus on personality.
- The most frequent psychological justifications are based on low intelligence.

TEST BANK

True/False Questions

1. Anomie is a Greek term defined as lawlessness. [T]
2. The classical school of criminology supported the concept of lack of free will. [F]
3. The first formal school of criminology was the positivist school. [F]
4. The classical school was an outgrowth of the Age of Realism. [F]
5. The positivist school is based on the concept that individuals freely commit crime. [F]
6. Cesare Beccaria and Jeremy Bentham were strongly influenced and adapted the ideas of the Age of Enlightenment. [T]
7. The rational choice theory is based on the utilitarian belief that humans are reasoning persons who weighs means and ends, costs and benefits, and make a rational choice. [T]
8. The social disorganization theory is an ecological theory that was developed by the Chicago School. [T]
9. Robert Merton developed the theory of differential association. [F]

10. From symbolic interactionism two theories of crime causation developed: differential association and labeling. [T]

Multiple Choice

1. The originator of the differential association theory was
 - a. Robert Merton.
 - b. Jeremy Bentham.
 - *c. Edwin Sutherland
 - d. Robert Askers
2. The classical school is base on the concept of
 - *a. free will.
 - b. lack of free will.
 - c. determinism.
 - d. social strain.
3. The rational choice theory is based on the concept of utilitarian belief that humans
 - a. do not have free will.
 - b. lack free will.
 - *c. are reasoning persons.
 - d. none of the answers are correct.
4. The social disorganization theory was developed by
 - a. Robert Merton.
 - b. Jeremy Bentham.
 - c. Richard Parks.
 - *d. the Chicago School.
5. According to the social control theories, if ___ are internalized and individuals are tied into and have a stake in their community, they will limit their propensity to commit deviant acts.
 - a. customs
 - *b. moral codes
 - c. choices
 - d. reasoning concepts
6. The theory that is based on the hypothesis that social interactions and constructs alone determine individual behavior, as opposed to biological or objective factors is the
 - a. classical.
 - b. Chicago.
 - c. rational choice.
 - *a. social determinism
7. Sutherland stated that the major difference between conforming behavior and criminal

behavior is

- *a. in what is learned rather than how it is learned.
 - b. the behaviors of our parents.
 - c. based on our customs.
 - d. based on our relationships.
8. Antisocial personality disorder (APD) is identified by DSM-IV as a mental disorder with
- a. biological roots.
 - b. environmental roots.
 - c. unknown roots.
 - *d. both a and b.
9. Routine activity theory focuses on
- a. the neighborhood.
 - *b. situations of crimes.
 - c. types of crimes.
 - d. none of the above are correct.
10. Generally what term do we use the term to refer to a complex set of emotional and behavioral attributes that tend to remain relatively constant.
- a. personal codes
 - b. sanctions
 - *c. personality
 - d. common attributes.

Short Essay Questions

1. Explain the chromosomal abnormality theory.
2. How does the strain and control theories differ?
3. Define the body type theories.
4. How did Merton revise Durkheim's concept of anomie?
5. What are the basic assumptions of the strain theories?
6. Explain the symbolic interactionism perspective.
7. Explain the concentric zone theory.
8. What major theories were development by the Chicago School?
9. Explain the concept of social determinism.

10. What influence did the Age of Realism have on the development of crime causation theories?