

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Chapter 5: Criminological Theory

Learning Objectives

After reading this section, students will be able to:

- Distinguish between classical, biological, psychological, and sociological explanations of criminal behavior.
- Understand the links between crime control policy and theories of criminal behavior.
- Demonstrate effective application of criminological theories to behavior.

This section introduces the importance of theory and theory creation. It also briefly describes some of the major paradigms of criminal explanations.

Critical Thinking Questions

1. How do we know what theories explain crime better than other theories?
2. How did the classical theory of crime influence the American criminal justice system?
3. Why is it difficult to study biological theories of crime without thinking about the social environment?
4. Which theory do you think explains criminal behavior the best? Why?
5. Why do you think there have been so many different explanations to describe the origins of criminal behavior?

[5.1: What is Theory?](#)

[5.2: What Makes a Good Theory?](#)

[5.3: Pre-Classical Theory](#)

[5.4: Classical School](#)

[5.5: Neoclassical](#)

[5.6: Positivist Criminology](#)

[5.7: Biological and Psychological Positivism](#)

[5.8: The Chicago School](#)

[5.9: Strain Theories](#)

[5.10: Learning Theories](#)

[5.11: Control Theories](#)

[5.12: Other Criminological Theories](#)

[5.13: "Spare the Rod, Spoil the Child" Myth](#)

[5.13.01: "Spare the Rod, Spoil the Child" Myth](#)

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