

RCRJ 203 - Criminology Study Guide

1. Know the reports of rational choice theory, some of the criticisms we discussed about the theory, and the different methods for controlling rationalized offending.

- Benefits outweigh the cause; "Offenders weigh the opportunities, costs, and benefits of particular crimes"
- People think before they commit crimes
- Limits discretion
- Gives little attention to individual differences

2. Know the reports underlying biological theories.

- Delinquents/juveniles by birth are a distinct type (clearly different)
- Dispose them to crime; causes of crime are individual level differences
- You can identify level differences before crime

3. Be very familiar with the older biological models of offending.

Cesare Lombroso: Atavism: Insensitivity to pain (Lots of body hair, big forehead); Female offenders are more atavistic

Charles Goring: Compared English convicts and college students. Discovered that criminals were small and feeble-minded.

William Sheldon: Endomorphs: Plump, Jolly, Extroverts
Mesomorphs: Athletic, Muscular, Aggressive, More likely to be criminal
Ectomorphs: Thin, Skinny, Anxious, Introvert

4. Be very familiar with the findings from current biosocial research.

- Beaver (2010) – Low-activity MAOA alleles; polymorphic gene on X chromosome (warrior gene)

- Simmons et. Al(2011) – Gene x Environment ; gene itself does not cause behavior. Instead, it is dependent on environment.
 - Diathesis: stress perspective, dominant perspective. There are certain risk alleles that increase the probability of anti-social/destructive behavior in bad environments.
 - Differential susceptibility perspective: People who fail in bad environments will be most successful in a good environment.
 - Genes and genetic variation: 5HTT (Serotonin) and DRD4 (Dopamine)
- Cumulative susceptibility: Most effective when you have both short 5HTT gene and long DRD4 gene, more prone to bad behavior.
- **FINDINGS:** Good environment- Family support, low levels of neighborhood crime, high religious morals
 Bad environment: Neighborhood with high victimization rate
More aggressive in bad environments with both genes and more likely to abstain in good environments.

5. You need to have a good grasp of everything that we covered in relation to IQ testing.

- Alfred Binet and IQ testing: wanted to identify and address retardation in the schools of Paris
- W. Stern Intelligence Quotient : $(\text{Mental Age} / \text{Chronological Age}) \times 100$
- Lewis M. Terman: Consists of 90 tasks. Range from 3 years old to adult.
- There is a clear link between IQ and criminal behavior
- Hirichi and Hindelang (1977): IQ matters as much as race and class. IQ matters within racial and class groups.
- More recent studies: IQ predicts behavior over time. IQ predicts the severity of crimes. Offenders have essentially normal performance but lack verbal skills.
- Low verbal IQ affects ability to have complex mental function.
- Difficulty empathizing, social discourse, lower moral functioning, unable to see things from other perspectives.

6. Know Durkheim's basic arguments about anomie.

- People are naturally good and want to conform
- Suicide-> take the most personal behavior and how it's explained by social environment and individual pathology ; there is a consistent pattern
- Crises -> suicides went up in periods of crises; involves rapid change that interrupts day to day patterns ; day to day patterns control desires and create structure
 - Humans have unlimited desires. Humans don't have the ability to regulate their own desires, they must be regulated externally.

- When normal patterns break down, people experience strain.

7. In terms of Merton's strain theory, you need to know how law controls people, how people can adapt when law loses its binding force, and the criticisms of his theory.

- Merton's Strain theory is discrepancies between societal goals and means available for achievement.

At least one of two things has to happen for people to follow the rules

- 1) Intrinsic satisfaction - Gets satisfaction from just following the rules
- 2) Extrinsic satisfaction- Satisfaction that comes from following the rules and receiving an external reward

There are healthy societies and malintegrated societies

- 1) In healthy societies goals and means are stressed equally
- 2) In malintegrated societies goals are emphasized over the means
- 3) America is a malintegrated society where wealth is stressed, means don't matter and there is a lot of inequality

There is anomie, anomia and strain

- 1) Anomie is a cultural or societal level normlessness or disorder where goals are emphasized over means
- 2) Anomia is an individual level malintegration where one believes that goals are more important than means
- 3) Strain is a response to blocked opportunities

There are basically 5 adaptations to strain. You should look at the handout from discussion where I included the table illustrating these adaptations.

- 1) Conformity is the acceptance of goals and means
- 2) Innovation is the acceptance of goals but the rejection of means
- 3) Ritualism is the rejection of goals but the acceptance of means
- 4) Retreatism is the rejection of goals and means
- 5) Rebellion is the rejection of goals and means and the substitution of a new set of goals and means

8. For Agnew's general strain theory, know what it considers to be straining, the different types of strain, and the route through which this leads to crime.

- Strain is caused by negative relationships

- 1) Some PREVENTS you from obtaining positively valued stimuli
- 2) Someone REMOVES or threatens to remove positively valued stimuli
- 3) Some INTRODUCES or threatens to introduce negatively valued stimuli