

Week 1 – Introduction

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WEEK 1 – INTRODUCTION

- Sociological approach – macro/ society level V. Psychological approach – micro/ individual level
- Science can provide evidence in moral debates by backing up moral questions, or demonstrating the opposite, thus proving the question wrong.
- Free will/determinism – choosing to commit v being influences by one’s past
- Nature/nurture – crime inherited biologically or learned
- Normal/pathological – motivations behind the crime out of the persons control e.g. mental?
- Person/situation – wanting to commit the crime v personal situation leading to the crime (environment)
- Mental pathology means he has a disease – implies it can be cured with medicine
- Mental pathology means he is morally sick – implies that one’s perception of morality is universal
- Mental pathology means he is not normal – there is no definition of normal. It is based on societal opinion and differs universally.
- Naturalistic fallacy = something is natural, so it is morally acceptable or unnatural = undesirable. (Fallacy = mistaken belief from unsound arguments)
- Determined behaviour ≠ intentional, but it can still be intentional as the person intends to commit the crime. It is basically a correct prediction.

WEEK 2 – EVOLUTIONARY THEORY

- Natural Selection = It is the notion of adaptive design, where adaptations are formed and spread throughout generations, to deal with issues surrounding reproduction within the environment
- Kin selection ensures representation of genes through having offspring, and helping other close genetic relatives have offspring. Altruism is self-destructive behaviour, performed for the benefit of others. They are related, as kin selection can explain altruism if the act aids the genetic kin.
- Rape through evolutionary perspective = The feeling of entitlement to have sex and ‘pushy’ to have multiple partners for a reproductive edge.
- Spousal assault through evolutionary perspective = Belief that one maintains exclusive access and sexual right to a partner, and if they feel like they are losing this, they will act violently.
- Child abuse through evolutionary perspective = When there are more children that the parents can care for, when there is doubt of genetic link, or when child has minimal reproduction possibilities.
- EEA = demonstrates how reliable development characteristics have helped to solve problems throughout evolution. How we have developed from cavemen to functioning members of society.
- According to evolutionary theory, blood relatives kill each other so rarely because there is no need to routinely kill offspring within humans, we develop attachment to offspring, and want our gene pool to thrive.

WEEK 3 – CRIME AND GENETICS

- Genetic research cannot explain why specific individuals commit crime, because genes do not directly affect behaviour. It can demonstrate genetic relatedness, which can explain if criminal behaviour runs in the family.

2000CCJ Revision Notes

- Twin selection studies are so important because MZ twins share 100% the same genes, so control can be assured in experimenting.
- Heritability for violent crime: Studies find heritability for violent crime to be infrequent but increases when self-reported. It can range from .3 to .5
- Interaction b/w heritability and environment: If the environment is different to another's with the same heritable traits, the two individuals can still be different to cater to the environmental needs (i.e. Eskimos and Australian's hair colour)
- Adult crime has stronger heritability than juvenile crime. Genetic factors do not switch on till later in life, social factors swamp genetic effects on adolescence. However, there are two different types of juvenile offenders including few serious offenders who do have a high heritability rating, and more frequent and less serious crimes which have a low heritability rating. Juvenile crime is highly heritable, and these childhood disorders generally predict antisocial behaviour. Early starters proved more frequent than late starters.
- Two common errors people could make about highly heritable traits: Genes are not the only thing causing behaviour **and** there is a gene for this behaviour in every culture
- Two common errors people could make about trait that are not highly heritable: Genes aren't the cause of X **and** evolution didn't create X

WEEK 4 – BIOBEHAVIOURAL THEORY

- Possible explanations for consistent finding that offender have low IQ: Spurious correlation, high IQ protects you from criminal influences, low IQ causes frustration, and an inability to resolve conflicts
- Psychological factors to understanding crime: Functioning of bodily organs and the autonomic nervous system (ANS). Offenders tend to have lower ANS responses, such as heart rate during times of stress.
- Biochemical factors to understanding crime: Chemical produced in the body (hormones = sex glands and neurotransmitters = the way communication is received and sent)
- Neurological factors to understanding crime: the way the brain functions
- The limbic system = group of sub-cortical structures that are involved in many of the motivational behaviours such as need for food, sex and emotional behaviours such as fear, anger and the storing of memories.
- The neocortex (a.k.a. the cerebral cortex)
- Reward dominance theory: Behaviour is regulated by the BAS and BIS. Offenders have strong BAS meaning they are more susceptible to rewards and more incentive to punishment.
- Seizuring theory: Subconscious seizures in the limbic system can result in episodic dyscontrol characterised by abnormal, episodic and frequently violent and uncontrollable social behaviour. Epilepsy is four to five times more prevalent among prisoners. The suggestion is that these subconscious seizures cause crime.
- Frontal lobe theory: Frontal lobe is involved with personality, emotions and motor behaviours, so damage to this impact each of these and overall moral reasoning.
- Hemispheric functioning: Left hemisphere is more involved in linguistic processing and is involved in interpreting laws. Right hemisphere is associated with impulsivity and negative emotions. It implies that offenders may be disproportionately right hemisphere functioning and therefore are more likely to be impulsive and not understand the law/respect the law.

WEEK 5 – PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORIES

- ID: present at birth, it is essentially one's unconscious
 - Weak id: If one has poor early development experiences, their id will become affected. Operates on the pleasure principle, so it would cause the person to seek pleasure through crime
- Ego: common sense, one's conscience awareness
 - Weak ego: A person may commit crime to avoid being punished (rational decision in their mind)
- Superego: ego ideals (life goals, ideal self), the voice of morality, one's conscience.
 - Weak super ego: The voice of morality – this would ideally prevent criminal behaviour
- Defence mechanisms: Help to manage anxiety caused by conflicts b/w id and superego.
- 5 stages of development in psychoanalytic theory.