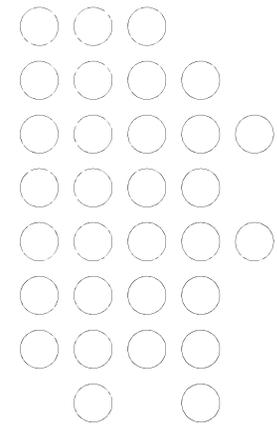


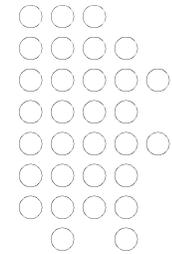
# Criminology

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## **Trait Theory: It's in Their Blood**

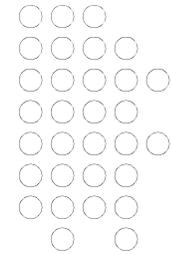


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## Foundations of Trait Theory

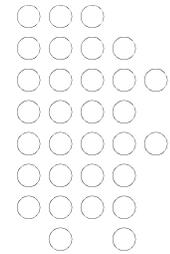
- The view that criminality is a product of abnormal biological or psychological traits
- The view began with Lombroso and fell out of favor in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, only to re-emerge in the early 1970s
  - Inheritance School
    - Believed that there is evidence that criminal tendencies were based on genetics
    - Traits can be passed down from generation to generation



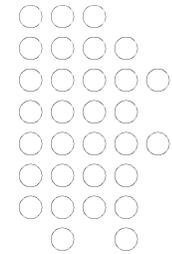
## Somatotype School

- Developed by William Sheldon
- A criminal's physique makes him/her more susceptible to particular types of antisocial behavior
  - ❑ Mesomorphs
    - ❑ Well developed muscles/athletic appearance
    - ❑ Active, aggressive, sometimes violent
    - ❑ Most likely to become criminals
  - ❑ Endomorphs
    - ❑ Heavy builds and slow moving
    - ❑ Known for lethargic behavior
    - ❑ Unlikely to engage in violent crime
    - ❑ More likely to be involved with less strenuous criminal acts
  - ❑ Ectomorphs
    - ❑ Tall/Thin
    - ❑ Introverted
    - ❑ Less social/more intellectual

## Sociobiology



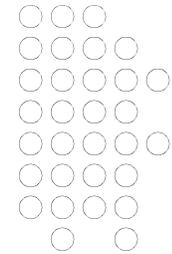
- Emerged as a result of the rejection of biological factors being the sole explanation for criminality
  - Revival in finding biological basis for crime
- Biology, environment, and learning are viewed as mutually interdependent factors
- Stresses that biological and genetic conditions affect how social behaviors are learned and is ultimately responsible for a person choosing criminal or conventional behavior
- Suggests that individuals have an innate need to have their genetic material survive and dominate others



## Modern Trait Theories

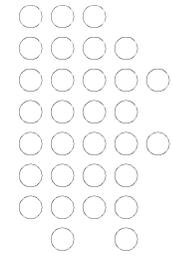
- There is no single biological or psychological attribute to explain criminality
  - Each offender is considered unique
    - Inherited
    - Neurological problems
    - Blood chemistry disorder
- Focus is on basic human behavior and drives that are linked to antisocial behavior patterns
- Human traits alone do not explain criminality
- Environmental conditions have an influence on antisocial behavior

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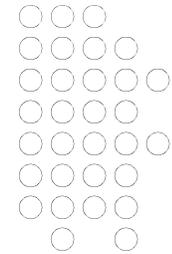
## Biological (Biosocial) Trait Theories

- One major subdivision of trait theories
- Core principles
  - Assumes that genetic makeup contributes significantly to human behavior
  - Not all humans are born with the equal potential to learn (equipotentiality)
  - No two people are alike (except identical twins)
  - Combination of human genetic traits and environment produce individual behavior patterns



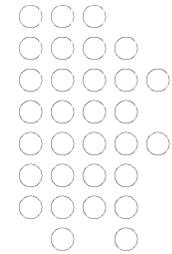
## Subareas Within Biosocial Theory

- Biochemical conditions
- Neurophysiological conditions
- Genetics
- Evolutionary views



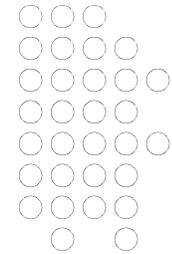
## Biochemical

- The major premise is that crime, especially violence is a function of diet, vitamin intake, hormonal imbalance and food allergies
- The strengths of the theory are that:
  - It explains irrational violence
  - It shows how the environment interacts with personal traits
- The research focuses on
  - Diet
  - Hormones
  - Environmental contaminants



## Neurological

- The major premise is that criminals suffer brain impairment
  - Can be measured by the EEG
- ADHD and minimal brain dysfunction are related to antisocial behavior
- The strengths of the theory are that:
  - It explains irrational violence
  - Shows how the environmental interacts with personal traits to influence behavior

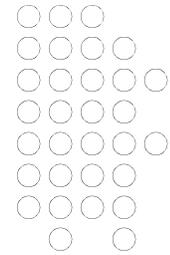


## Genetics and Crime

- The major premise of the theory is that criminal traits and predispositions are inherited
- The criminality of parents can predict the delinquency of children (controversial)
  - Antisocial behavior is inherited
  - Genetic makeup of parents is passed on to children
  - Genetic abnormality is linked to a variety of antisocial behaviors
- The strengths are that the theory explains why only a small percentage of youth in high-crime areas become chronic offenders

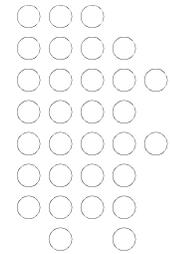
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# Research Focus of Genetics and Crime



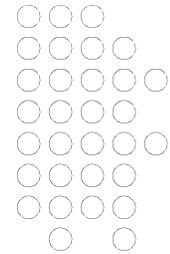
- **Parental Deviance**
  - No certainty about the nature and causal relationship between parental and child deviance
  - Studies have shown that parental deviance influence their children's delinquent behavior
  - Delinquent youth grow up to be parents of antisocial children
- **Sibling Similarities**
  - Research shows that if one sibling engages in antisocial behavior so do his/her brothers and sisters
  - More of an effect on same-sex siblings
  - May also be the result of other factors

# Research Focus of Genetics and Crime

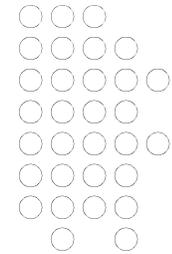


- Twin Behavior
  - Studies that compare identical (MZ) and fraternal (DZ) twins
  - MZ twins are closer in personal characteristics
    - 60% of MZ twins shared criminal behavior
    - 30% of DZ twins share criminal behavior
  - More recent studies are looking at twins reared apart
    - Twins reared apart are very similar
    - Environment induces little or no personality resemblance on twins
    - Still a lot of research to be done

# Research Focus of Genetics and Crime



- Adoption Studies
  - Can help to decide the nature vs. nurture argument
  - If adopted children behave like that of their biological parents then genetics is the cause
  - If adopted children behave like that of their adopted parents then environment is the cause
  - Results
    - The criminality of the biological father was a strong predictor of the child's behavior
    - When the biological and adopted parents were criminals that increased the chances of the child becoming delinquent

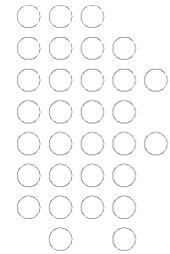


## Evolutionary Theory

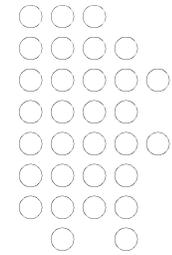
- The major premise of the theory is that as the human race evolved, traits and characteristics have become ingrained
  - Some of these traits make people aggressive and predisposed to commit crime
- There is a competition for scarce resources
- People who promote their well being ensure their survival and reproduction of their genes
- Explains why human history has been marked by war, violence and aggression
- The strengths are that the theory explains high-violence rates and aggregate gender differences in the crime rate

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## Evaluation of the Biosocial Branch of Trait Theory

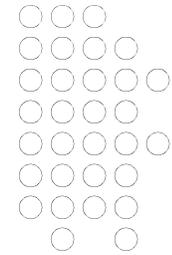


- Raised some questions
- These theories may be racist and dysfunctional
  - Claiming certain groups are flawed and inferior
- Ignores the reports that almost everyone has engaged in some type of criminal activity
- More recent theorists claim that some people may carry the potential to become criminal but that it takes environmental conditions to trigger the act
- Biological explanations cannot account for the geographic, social, and temporal patterns in the crime rate
- Still is a lack of empirical testing



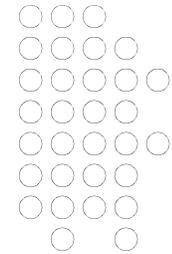
## Psychological Trait Theories

- Second branch of trait theories
- Focus on the psychological aspects of crime
  - including the associations among intelligence, personality, learning, and criminal behavior
- Have a long history
- Goring (1870-1919)
  - Found a relationship between crime and defective intelligence
  - Believed this defective intelligence was inherited and a way to control this is to prevent those individuals from procreating
- Tarde (1843-1904)
  - People learn from imitating



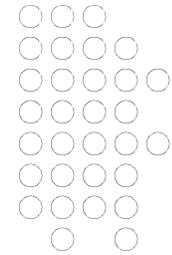
## Sub-areas within Psychological Trait Theory

- Psychodynamic perspectives
- Behavioral perspectives
- Cognitive theories
- Personality
- Intelligence



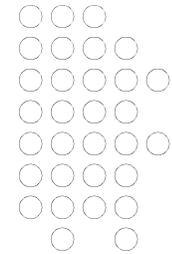
## Psychodynamic

- The development of the unconscious personality early in childhood influences behavior for the rest of a person's life
- Criminals have weak egos and damaged personalities
- Explains the onset of crime and why crime and drug abuse cut across class lines
- Research focuses on the theory are on mental disorders, personality development, and unconscious motivations and drives



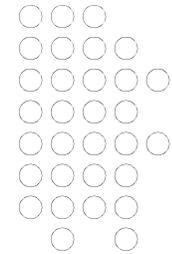
## Elements of Psychodynamic Theory

- Sigmund Freud developed psychodynamic psychology
- Focus is on instinctive drives and forces and the importance of developmental processes in shaping personality
- Human personality has three parts and through their interaction some criminals may emerge
- The roots of behavioral problems develop in the early years of life



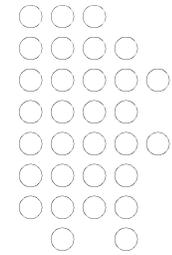
## Freud's Model of the Personality

- **Id**
  - Primitive part of mental make-up that exists at birth
  - Requires instant gratification
  - Operates according to the pleasure principle
- **Ego**
  - Develops early in life as children learn
  - Helps compensate for the demands of the id
  - Operates according to the reality principle
- **Superego**
  - Develops later
  - Considered the moral aspect of the personality
  - Acts as the conscience, forces the ego to control the id



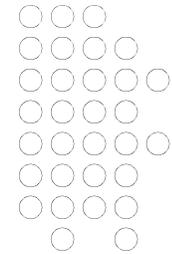
## Psychodynamics of Antisocial Behavior

- Common terms
  - Inferiority complex
  - Identity crisis
  - Latent delinquency
- Essentially the criminal offender is depicted as an aggressive, frustrated person dominated by events that occurred early in childhood
- Can suffer from a variety of disorders
  - Bipolar disorder
  - Mood disorders
  - Schizophrenia
  - Psychosis



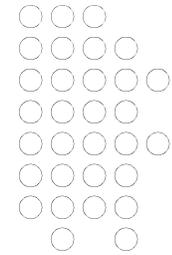
## Behavioral Theory

- People commit crime when they model their behavior after others they see being rewarded for the same acts
- Behavior is reinforced by rewards and extinguished by punishment
- Explains the role of significant others in the crime process
- Shows how media can influence crime and violence
- Research focuses are on the media and violence as well as the effects of child abuse



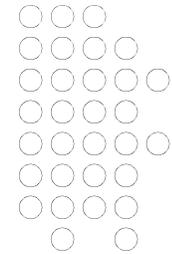
## Cognitive Theory

- Individual reasoning processes influence behavior
- Reasoning is influenced by the way people perceive their environment
- Shows why criminal behavior patterns change over time as people mature and develop their reasoning powers
  - May explain the aging-out process
- Focus is on perception and cognition and sub-disciplines include
  - Moral development
  - Humanistic psychology
  - Information processing
  - Shaping perceptions



## Psychological Traits and Characteristics

- **Personality and Crime**
  - Personality is defined as the reasonably stable patterns of behavior that distinguishes people
  - Personality processes include:
    - Antisocial personality, sociopath/psychopath, abnormal affect, lack of emotional depth
- **Intelligence and Crime**
  - Debate as to whether IQ has a relationship to criminal behavior
  - What is known is that low IQ leads to poor school performance and poor decision making ability



## Public Policy Implications of Trait Theory

- **Primary Prevention Programs**
  - Front-end programs that seek to treat personal problems before they manifest themselves as crime
    - Family therapy
    - Substance abuse clinics
    - Mental health associations
- **Secondary Prevention Programs**
  - More for those who are at risk for law violations
- **Tertiary Prevention Programs**
  - A requirement for those who have already violated laws
  - May be a condition of probation, part of a diversion program, aftercare