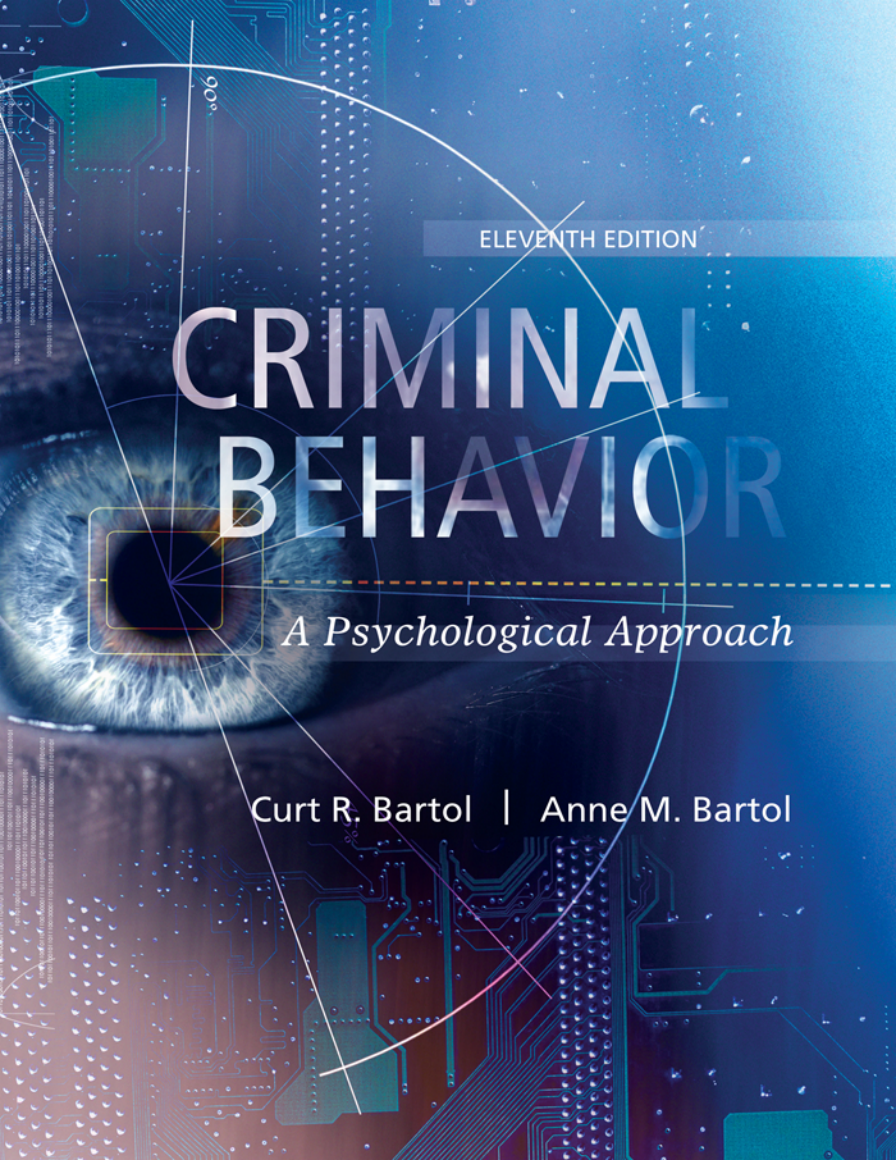
ELEVENTH EDITION
CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR
A Psychological Approach
Curt R. Bartol | Anne M. Bartol

Eleventh Edition

CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR

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Eleventh Edition

Criminal Behavior

A Psychological Approach

Curt R. Bartol, PhD

Anne M. Bartol, PhD

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To Shannon

For the love, fun, beauty, and sheer joy you bring to our lives.

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PREFACE

In this text we focus on criminal behavior and antisocial behavior (because antisocial behavior is not always criminal) from a psychological perspective. More specifically, adults and juveniles who violate the law or who act antisocially are portrayed as embedded in and continually influenced by multiple systems within the psychosocial environment. Meaningful theory, well-executed research, and skillful application of knowledge to the "crime problem" require an understanding of the many levels of events that influence a person's life course—from the individual to the individual's family, peers, schools, neighborhoods, community, culture, and society as a whole.

The psychological study of crime has taken a decidedly developmental approach, while retaining its interest in cognitive-based explanations for antisocial behavior. Scholars from various academic disciplines have engaged in pathways-to-crime research, for example. A very common conclusion is that there are multiple developmental pathways to criminal offending; some begin to offend very early while others begin offending in adulthood. In addition, a variety of risk factors enable antisocial behavior, and protective factors insulate the individual from such behavior. The pathways approach does not always focus on psychological factors, but it coexists very well with psychological theories of child and adolescent development. In addition to developmental and cognitive research, much contemporary work is focusing on biopsychology and crime, or the way in which a range of genetic and biological factors may affect one's behavior, particularly aggressive behavior.

We do not consider all offenders psychologically flawed, and only some have diagnosable mental illnesses or disorders. Persons with serious mental disorders sometimes commit crimes, but the vast majority do not, and crimes that are committed by the mentally disordered are most typically minor offenses. The exceptional cases, such as some mass murders or other particularly shocking crimes, attract media attention and lead many people to draw unwarranted conclusions about the dangerousness of the mentally ill. Many offenders do have substance abuse problems and these may co-occur with mental disorders. In addition, emotionally healthy people break the law, and sometimes emotionally healthy people end up on probation or in jails and prisons. Like the earlier editions of this book, the 11th edition views the criminal offender as existing on a continuum, ranging from the occasional offender who offends at some point during the life course, usually during adolescence, to the serious, repetitive offender who usually begins his or her criminal career at a very early age, or the one-time, serious offender.

The book reviews contemporary research, theory, and practice concerning the psychology of crime as completely and accurately as possible. The very long list of references at the end of the book should attest to its comprehensive nature. Nevertheless, it is impossible to do justice to the wide swath of behavior that is defined as crime, nor to the many models and approaches used in studying it. We have selected representative crimes and representative research. If your favorite crime, theory, model, or prevention or treatment program is not found here, we hope you will still appreciate what is offered.

An early chapter sets the stage by defining crime and describing how it is measured. It is important to stress that crime rates in the United States have gone down for most serious offenses, something which rarely comes to public attention. Then, the book is organized from broad to specific content. Early chapters discuss individual and social risk factors, developmental principles, and the psychology of aggression, including its biological basis. We include a complete chapter on psychopathy, because it remains arguably one of the most heavily researched topics in the psychology of crime. The specific crimes covered in the latter part of the book are both very common ones and crimes that are rare but attract media and research attention because of their serious nature.

NEW TO THIS EDITION

The 11th edition was completed with the help of extensive reviews of the previous edition. The most significant changes reflect recent theoretical developments and models in criminology as well as ongoing psychological research on specific topics and offenses. Every chapter includes updated citations and illustrations. We have retained the 16-chapter structure used in the past few editions. However, some topics have been deleted and others added, as we explain below.

- We have provided more coverage of contemporary antisocial behavior, including crimes that are facilitated by the Internet, such as cyberstalking and cyberbullying, as well as cybercrimes like computer intrusions.
- Several changes in UCR definitions are relevant to the gathering of statistics and the measurement of crime. They are indicated in the early chapters of the book.
- The chapter on individual risk factors includes information about specific environmental toxins (e.g., lead, cadmium, mercury, manganese) that can negatively affect brain development in young children.
- Two sex offending chapters have been revised extensively. This required the updating of information on the dominant sex offender classification systems and addressing sex offender typologies.
- All material relating to the DSM is updated to conform to its latest edition, the DSM-5. Diagnoses that are relevant to discussions of mental disorder and crime comport with diagnoses listed in the DSM.
- Early in the book we discuss cumulative risk and developmental cascade models, and reiterate throughout the book that risk factors for antisocial behavior both accumulate and interact with one another in a dynamic fashion during the life course.
- Material on juveniles continues to form a separate chapter, but it is also interspersed throughout the text in sections of many chapters (e.g., juvenile substance abuse, sex offenders, juveniles who kill).
- Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) is discussed in a separate section of the chapter that also includes family violence, to reflect increasing research interest in this area. This edition covers IPV in specific populations, such as the elderly, non-heterosexual couples, and law enforcement and military families.
- In addition to cumulative risk and dynamic cascade models, several other models are highlighted, including Steinberg's dual systems model of adolescent brain development, the dual-process model of psychopathy, and the three-path model of sexual offending. While new general theories of criminal behavior have not been proposed, new models for illustrating theoretical concepts have appeared and are recognized when relevant.
- New models of why people join terrorist groups and act as lone wolves are introduced in the chapter on terrorism.
- Material on substance abuse and crime has been substantially updated to encompass ongoing changes in substance use patterns and dangers therein.
- Every chapter includes at least one box, and most often two. Box topics were chosen thematically: the boxes either illustrate a contemporary issue (e.g., Internet-facilitated crime), a research project (e.g., research on bystander apathy), or a program (e.g., treatment program for juvenile sex offenders). As a pedagogical aid, boxes include questions for discussion.

In addition to the boxes, pedagogical materials include 68 tables, all of which are either author-created or available from public documents, and 16 figures. As for other recent editions, chapter objectives are listed at the beginning of each chapter, and key concepts and review questions are included at the end.

The book includes updated examples and illustrations of the crimes and concepts being discussed, but retains illustrations of some past events that reflect many of the psychological

concepts discussed (e.g., hostage taking, school shootings; sniper events). However, over half of the examples used refer to significant recent events, such as cases involving the insanity defense, mass murders, acts of terrorism, and corporate crime.

In addition to the above listed new features, the eleventh edition includes:

- More attention to female offending.
- More information on prescription drug abuse, especially among juveniles.
- Greater coverage of the role of neuropsychological factors in the development of antisocial behavior.
- Better presentation of structured professional judgment in risk assessment approaches.
- More emphasis on the importance of pre-school experiences for preventing antisocial behavior.

Readers familiar with previous recent editions of the text also may want to take note of the following:

As in the last two editions, there is less information on the juvenile justice process and the history of juvenile justice, and there is little delinquency material in Chapter 1. As noted above, however, a separate chapter is devoted to research on pathways to delinquency, and juvenile-related material is found in many other chapters. We have removed sections on boot camps for juveniles in favor of more coverage of evidence-based programs like Multisystemic Therapy, Functional Family Therapy, and the closely watched Fast Track experiment.

Also as in the 10th edition, we did not discuss some sex offenses such as prostitution and exhibitionism, nor did we cover in detail psychologically relevant issues relating to prisons and jails, such as violence, the effects of overcrowding, or conditions of confinement. Likewise, little attention is given to political crimes committed by agents of government, although we have included a box on this topic. Nevertheless, in light of their continued importance, we hope professors will find a way to incorporate some of these topics in their course content.

Criminal Behavior is designed to be a core text in undergraduate and graduate courses in criminal behavior, criminology, the psychology of crime, crime and delinquency, and forensic psychology. The material contained in this book was classroom-tested for over 30 years. Its emphasis on psychological theory and concepts makes it distinctive from other fine textbooks on crime, many of which are more sociologically based. The book's major goal is to encourage an appreciation of the many complex issues surrounding criminal behavior by citing relevant, contemporary research.

Once again, we have benefited from the encouragement and help of many individuals in completing this very long project. We cherish our main sources of emotional support—Gina, Ian, Soraya, Jim, Kai, Maddie, Darya, and Shannon. They are always there for us, and we continue to be awed by their goodness, their wit, their fun-loving spirit, the love they display, and their many accomplishments in so many different realms.

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1

Introduction to Criminal Behavior

CHAPTER OBJECTIVES

- Emphasize that criminal behavior has multiple causes, manifestations, and developmental pathways.
- Identify the different perspectives of human nature that underlie the theoretical development and research of criminal behavior.
- Introduce various theories that may help explain crime.
- Describe the three major disciplines in criminology: sociological, psychological, and psychiatric.
- Point out that the study of criminal behavior and delinquency, from a psychological perspective, has shifted from a personality toward a more cognitive and developmental focus.
- Define criminal behavior and juvenile delinquency.
- Introduce the reader to the various measurements of criminal and delinquent behavior.

Crime intrigues people. Sometimes it attracts us, sometimes it repels us, and occasionally, it does both at once. It can amuse, as when we read that two men dressed as "Spider-Man" and "Batman" were arrested after a brawl in Times Square in 2014. Many people chuckled, as well, at a YouTube video of a burglar who was sprawled and napping on a bed in the victims' home, next to a bag containing jewelry he had stolen. Presumably, no one was seriously injured by the conduct in either of these instances (though some children may have been devastated that their heroes acted less than nobly), but the homeowners likely suffered emotional distress and faced inconveniences that accompany being victims of a crime. Although readers will cite some exceptions, you are likely to agree that most crime leaves victims in its wake; most crime harms.

Crime can frighten, especially if we believe that what happened to one victim might happen to us or those we love. News of a child abduction or even an attempted one places parents at heightened alert. Crime can also anger, as when a beloved community member is brutally killed, a person or animal is subjected to heinous abuse, or individuals have had their credit card data compromised or have been deprived of their life savings by fraudulent schemes. Fatal accidents caused by inebriated drivers are noteworthy for the anger they arouse—and the anger may be directed at the friends of the driver who did not stop him from driving, as well as the driver himself.

What is crime? Legally, it is defined as conduct or failure to act in violation of the law forbidding or commanding it, and for which a range of possible penalties exist upon conviction. Criminal behavior, then, is behavior in violation of the criminal code. To be convicted of crime, a person must have acted intentionally and without justification or excuse. For example, even an intentional killing may be justified under certain circumstances, as in defense of one's life. Although there is a very narrow range of

offenses that do not require criminal intent (called strict liability offenses), the vast majority of crime requires it. Obviously, this legal definition encompasses a great variety of acts, ranging from murder to petty offenses.

While interest in crime has always been high, understanding why it occurs and what to do about it has always been a problem. Public officials, politicians, various experts, and many people in the general public continue to offer simple and incomplete solutions for obliterating crime, particularly violent and street crime: more police officers, video cameras and state-of-the-art surveillance equipment, armed teachers and more guns, sturdy locks, self-defense classes, stiff penalties, speedy imprisonment, or capital punishment. Some of these approaches may be effective in the short term, but the overall problem of crime persists. Solutions that attack what are believed to be root causes of crime—such as reducing economic inequality, improving educational opportunities, or offering substance abuse treatment—have considerable merit, but they require public commitment, energy, and financial resources.

Our inability to prevent crime is also partly because we have trouble understanding criminal behavior and identifying and agreeing upon its many causes. Explanations of crime require complicated, involved answers, and psychological research indicates that most people have limited tolerance for complexity and ambiguity. We apparently want simple, straightforward answers, no matter how complex the issue. Parents become impatient when psychologists answer questions about child rearing by saying, "It depends"—on the situation, on the parents' reactions to it, or on any number of possible influences. Today, the preference for simplicity is aided by the vast array of information available in the media, including the Internet and social media. Search engines provide instant access to a multitude of both reputable and questionable sources. Discerning students are well served by this information explosion; they can find up-to-date research on virtually all topics covered in this book, for example. However, many people acquire information—but not necessarily knowledge—by clicking links, entering chat rooms, reading blogs and accompanying comments, and following friends and "friends" and friends of friends who may or may not be providing legitimate data. Thus, the selective and careful use of information technology is a crucial skill for all students to acquire.

Criminal behavior may be seen as a vastly complex, sometimes difficult-to-understand phenomenon. Our focus is the *psychological perspective*, although other viewpoints are also described. However, it is important to stress that there is no all-encompassing psychological explanation for crime, any more than there is a sociological, anthropological, psychiatric, economic, or historic one. In fact, it is unlikely that sociology, psychology, or any other discipline can formulate basic "truths" about crime without help from other disciplines and well-designed research. Criminology—the scientific study of crime—needs all the interdisciplinary help it can get to explain and control criminal behavior. To review accurately and adequately the plethora of studies and theories from each relevant discipline is far beyond the scope of this text, however. Our primary goal is to review and integrate recent scholarship and research in the psychology of crime, compare it with traditional approaches, and discuss strategies that have been offered to prevent and modify criminal behavior. We cannot begin to accomplish this task without first calling attention to philosophical questions that underlie any study of human behavior, including criminal behavior.

THEORIES OF CRIME

In everyday conversation, the term "theory" is used loosely. It may refer to personal experiences, observations, traditional beliefs, a set of opinions, or a collection of abstract thoughts. Almost everyone has personal theories about human behavior, and these extend to criminal behavior. To illustrate, some people have a personal theory that the world is a just place, where one gets what one deserves. "Just-worlders," as they are called, believe that things do not happen to people without a reason that is closely related to their own actions; for example, individuals who experience financial difficulties probably brought these on themselves. In 2008–2009, when many homeowners in the United States were facing foreclosure because they could not afford high mortgage payments, a just-worlder would be likely to say this was more their own fault than the fault of bank officers who enticed them into paying high interest rates.

In reference to crime, just-worlders may believe both that a burglar deserved a severe penalty and that the victims did not protect their property sufficiently. Because the world is a just place, the battered spouse must have provoked a beating. The man who sent in a $500 deposit to claim his million dollar prize should have known: if it's too good to be true, it isn't.

The above beliefs represent individual "theories" or assumptions about how the world works. However, psychologists have also developed a somewhat more elaborate *scientific theory* based on just-world ideas, and they have developed scales to measure one's just-world orientation (Lerner, 1980; Lerner & Miller, 1978). A variety of hypotheses—sometimes discussed under the umbrella term **just-world hypothesis**—have been proposed and tested. For example, people identified as just-worlders on the basis of their scores on the scales have been shown to favor capital punishment and to be nonsupportive of many social programs intended to reduce economic disparity between social groups (Sutton & Douglas, 2005).

Interestingly, the most recent research on just-world theory has identified two tracks: belief in a general just-world—described above—and belief in a personal just-world (Dalbert, 1999; Sutton & Douglas, 2005). Belief in a personal just-world ("I usually get what I deserve") is considered adaptive and helpful in coping with dire circumstances in one's life. For example, Dalbert and Filke (2007) found that prisoners with a high personal just-world orientation evaluated their prison experiences more positively and reported better overall well-being than those without such an orientation. Belief in a general just-world, however, seems to be far more problematic because it is associated with less compassion for others and even a derogation of victims of crime.

Scientific theories like the above are based on logic and research, but they vary widely in complexity. A scientific theory is "a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena" (Kerlinger, 1973, p. 9). A scientific theory of crime, therefore, should provide a general explanation that encompasses and *systematically* connects many different social, economic, and psychological variables to criminal behavior, and it should be supported by well-executed research. Moreover, the terms in any scientific theory must be as precise as possible, their meaning and usage clear and unambiguous, so that it can be meaningfully tested by observation and analysis. The process of theory testing is called **theory verification**. If the theory is not verified—indeed, if any of its propositions is not verified—the end result is **falsification** (Popper, 1968). For example, a theory of child sexual abuse that includes the proposition that all child sex offenders were sexually abused as children would be falsified as soon as one nonabused offender was encountered.

The primary purpose of theories of crime is to identify the causes or precursors of criminal behavior. Some theories are broad and encompassing, whereas others are narrow and specific. Basically, theories of criminal behavior are summary statements of a collection of research findings. Perhaps, more importantly, they provide direction for further research. If one component of a theory is falsified or not supported, the theory is not necessarily rejected outright, however. It can be modified and retested. In addition, each theory of crime has implications for policy or decisions made by society to prevent crime.

Over the past few decades, many researchers have been interested in proposing models to accompany various theories. A **model** is a graphic representation of a theory or a concept, designed to enhance its understanding. Throughout the text, you will encounter different models pertaining to criminal and delinquent behavior.

Models are relatively new, but theories of crime have been around for centuries. During the eighteenth century, the Italian philosopher Cesare Beccaria (1738–1794) developed a theory that human behavior is fundamentally driven by a choice made by weighing the amount of pleasure gained against the amount of pain or punishment expected. Beccaria argued that in order to reduce or stop criminal offending in any given society, the punishment should be swift, certain, and severe enough to deter people from the criminal (pleasure-seeking) act. If people realized in advance that severe punishment would be forthcoming, and coming soon, regardless of their social status or privileges, they would choose not to engage in illegal behavior. This theoretical thinking, which emphasizes free will as the hallmark of human behavior, has become known as

classical theory. Both criminal and civil law are rooted in the belief that individuals are masters of their fate, the possessors of free will and freedom of choice. Many of today's approaches to crime prevention are consistent with classical theory, which in its modern form is also known as **deterrence theory** (Nagin, 2007). For example, surveillance cameras on the streets, shoulder cameras on police officers, and harsh sentences assume that individuals choose to commit crime but may be persuaded not to under the threat of being discovered or being punished with long prison time. However, even if people are not deterred by the prospect of long sentences, they must still be punished, because crime was an expression of their free will.

Another thread of theoretical thought originated with **positivist theory**, which is closely aligned with the idea of determinism. From that view, free will cannot be the major explanation for our behavior. Antecedents—prior experiences or influences—*determine* how we will act. The earliest positive theories of crime considered biological antecedents, such as one's sex, one's race, or even the size of one's brain. An early theorist from the positivist perspective, Cesare Lombroso (1876) conducted elaborate measurements on the skulls of both dead and live prisoners and drew conclusions about their criminal tendencies. Later, positivists saw social antecedents, such as negative early life experiences or lack of educational opportunity, as the culprits. According to the positivist school, human behavior is governed by causal laws, and free will is undermined. Many contemporary theories of criminology are positivist because they search for causes beyond free will. Furthermore, many approaches to crime prevention are consistent with a positivist orientation: They try to "fix" the antecedents of criminal activity, such as by providing support services for youth believed to be at risk of engaging in crime.

In summary, the classical view of crime holds that the decision to violate the law is largely a result of free will. The positivist or deterministic perspective argues that most criminal behavior is a result of social, psychological, and even biological influences. It does not deny the importance of free will, and it does not suggest that individuals should not be held responsible for their actions. However, it maintains that these actions can be explained by more than "free will." This latter perspective, then, seeks to identify causes, predict and prevent criminal behavior, and rehabilitate (or habilitate) offenders.

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON HUMAN NATURE

All theories of crime have underlying assumptions about or perspectives on human nature. Three major ones can be identified. The **conformity perspective** views humans as creatures of conformity who want to do the "right" thing. To a large extent, this assumption represents the foundation of the humanistic perspectives in psychology. Human beings are basically "good" people trying to live to their fullest potential. Similarly, the branch of psychology called "positive psychology" focuses on studying the individual characteristics that make life worth living, such as contentment and intimacy (Peterson, 2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Thus, positive psychology is very much in tune with a conformity perspective.

An excellent example of the conformity perspective in criminology is **strain theory**, which originated in the work of sociologist Robert K. Merton (1957) and continues today in the theory of Robert Agnew (1992, 2006) and his followers. Merton's original strain theory argued that humans are fundamentally conforming beings who are strongly influenced by the values and attitudes of the society in which they live. In short, most members of a given society desire what the other members of the society desire. In many societies and cultures, the accumulation of wealth or status is all important, representing symbols that all members should strive for. Unfortunately, access to these goals is not equally available. While some have the education, social network, personal contacts, and family influence to attain them, others are deprived of the opportunity. Thus, Merton's strain theory predicted that crime and delinquency would occur when there is a perceived discrepancy between the materialistic values and goals cherished and held in high esteem by a society and the availability of the legitimate means for reaching these goals. Under these conditions, a strain between the goals of wealth and power and the means for reaching them develops. Groups and individuals experiencing a high level of this strain are forced to decide whether to violate norms

and laws to attain some of this sought-after wealth or power, or give up on their dream and go through the motions, withdraw, or rebel. Note that, although the original strain theory was formulated on American society, it can be applied on a global basis.

Following Merton's seminal work, other strain theorists emphasized that crimes of the rich and powerful also can be explained by strain theory. Even though these individuals have greater access to the legitimate means of reaching goals, they have a continuing need to accumulate even greater wealth and power and maintain their privileged status in society (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1994).

In developing his General Strain Theory (Strain Theory, 1992), Agnew used the word "strain" in a slightly different way, seeing strains as events and conditions that are disliked by individuals. The inability to achieve one's goals was only one such condition; others were losing something of value, or being treated negatively by others (2006). General Strain Theory, which has attracted much research and commentary, is continually being tested and evaluated and will be discussed again in Chapter 5; the point we make here is that it remains under the umbrella of a strain theory, representative of the conformity perspective on human nature.

A second perspective—the **nonconformist perspective**—assumes that human beings are basically undisciplined creatures, who, without the constraints of the rules and regulations of a given society, would flout society's conventions and commit crime indiscriminately. This perspective sees humans as fundamentally "unruly" and deviant, needing to be held in check. For example, the biological and neurobiological theories discussed in Chapter 3 identify genetic or other biological features or deficiencies in some individuals that predispose them to antisocial behavior, like aggressive actions. In recent years, some criminologists have emphasized the importance of biological influences on behavior, not as exclusive determinants of behavior but rather as factors that should be taken into consideration (DeLisi, 2009). They may be present at birth or appear during one's early formative years. It is important to point out that a nonconformity perspective does not blame people for their deviance. As readers will learn in Chapter 3, many theorists now believe that certain behaviors, such as aggressive actions, have their genesis in malnutrition and exposure to harmful elements in the environment. These are provocative claims that should ensure debate and discussion among readers.

Another good illustration of the nonconformist perspective is Travis Hirschi's (1969) social control theory. **Social control theory** contends that crime and delinquency occur when an individual's ties to the conventional order or normative standards are weak or largely nonexistent. In other words, the socialization that usually holds one's basic human nature in check is incomplete or faulty. This position perceives human nature as fundamentally "bad," "antisocial," or at least "imperfect." These innate tendencies must be *controlled* by society. Years after developing social control theory, Hirschi teamed with Michael Gottfredson to develop a **General Theory of Crime** (GTC; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990). This theory, also referred to as **self-control theory (SCT)**, represents one of the more prominent perspectives in criminology today. It suggests that a deficit of self-control or self-regulation is the key factor in explaining crime and delinquency. One controversial aspect of the theory is its contention that self-control is a stable trait that is fully in place in childhood, usually by the age of eight and is not likely to change thereafter. Many researchers have tested this aspect of SCT and have found that self-control can develop at later ages (e.g., Arnett, 2000; Sweeten & Simons, 2014; Zimmermann & Iwanski, 2014).

The third perspective—the **learning perspective**—sees human beings as born neutral (neither inherently conforming nor unruly) and subject to developmental changes throughout the life course. This perspective argues that humans learn virtually all their behavior, beliefs, and tendencies from the social environment. The learning perspective is exemplified most comprehensively by **social learning theory**, to be a main topic in Chapter 4, and the **differential association theory** of sociologist Edwin H. Sutherland (1947). Social learning theory emphasizes such concepts as imitation of models and reinforcements one gains from one's behavior. According to differential association theory, criminal behavior is learned, as is all social behavior, through social interactions with other people. It is not the result of emotional disturbance, mental illness, or innate qualities of "goodness" or "badness." Rather, people learn to be criminal as a result of messages they get from others who were also taught to be criminal. The conventional wisdom that bad company promotes bad behavior, therefore, finds validity in this theory.

TABLE 1-1 Perspectives of Human Nature

Perspective of Behavior	Theory Example	Humans Are…
Conformity perspective	Strain theory (Merton) General strain (Agnew)	Basically good; strongly influenced by the values and attitudes of society
Nonconformist perspective	Social control theory (Hirschi) Biological theories of crime General theory of crime/ self-control theory	Basically undisciplined; individual's ties to social order are weak; innate tendencies must be controlled by society; individual lack of self-control
Learning perspective	Differential association theory (Sutherland) Social learning theory (Rotter, Bandura) Developmental criminology	Born neutral; behavior is learned through social interactions with other people; changes over the life span affect behavior

From the mid-twentieth century to the present, many criminologists have embraced a developmental approach, viewing crime and other antisocial activity as behavior that begins in early childhood and proceeds to and sometimes through one's adult years. Developmental psychologists as a group identify periods in human development across the life course, sometimes conceived of as stages. Those interested in the study of antisocial behavior often examine these stages as they relate to crime. Over the past decade, emerging adulthood has been identified as a period covering the time between adolescence and adulthood—roughly ages 18 to the late 20s, with a particular focus on 18–25 (Arnett, 2000, 2014). Emerging adulthood is a time when people are generally expected to be independent from parental and other institutional controls but are still searching for self-identity. Thus, they may be carefree and exploring their options but also may be struggling to achieve adult status. Many emerging adults have not yet settled on a career choice or chosen a partner. As we discuss later in the book, emerging adulthood has prompted considerable research relating to antisocial behavior.

Developmental criminologists also have studied the life paths or "pathways" people take that lead to criminal behavior. For example, some begin antisocial activity at very early ages, while others begin in adolescence or later. Developmental criminologists identify risk factors to be addressed and protective factors to be encouraged. Some have learned that girls and women, as a group, take pathways that are quite different from those taken by boys and men, as a group, though researchers differ on the extent to which these differences occur. It is possible that cultural groups may differ in the pathways to crime, though this is not as intensely studied as gender differences.

Table 1-1 summarizes the three perspectives—conformity, noncomformist, and learning—and provides illustrations of each. Developmental criminology cannot be placed firmly in any of the three categories, although it would seem to be most at home in the learning perspective, so we place it there. Nevertheless, aspects of each perspective can be detected in the research and writing of developmental criminologists (e.g., Farrington, Ttofi, & Coid, 2009; Le Blanc & Loeber, 1998; Moffitt, 1993a, 1993b; Odgers et al., 2008; Patterson, 1982). We discuss these theories in some detail in Chapter 6.

DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES IN CRIMINOLOGY

Criminology is the multidisciplinary study of crime. As noted above, several theories we cited were framed by sociologists. Over the years, the study of crime has been dominated by sociology, psychology, and psychiatry, but in recent years more disciplines and subdisciplines have been involved. These include, but are not limited to, anthropology, biology, neurology, political science, and economics.

Although our main concern in this text is with *psychological principles*, concepts, theory, and research relevant to criminal behavior, considerable attention is placed on the research knowledge of the other disciplines, particularly sociology, psychiatry, and biology. In fact, some psychologists today have extensive backgrounds in biology and the workings of the brain, and many specialize in the rapidly expanding fields of biopsychology and neuropsychology. It is not easy to make sharp demarcations between disciplines, because they often overlap in focus and practice. It is fair to say that all try to develop, examine, and evaluate strategies and interventions that have the potential to prevent or reduce criminal and antisocial behavior.

In addition, what distinguishes a given theory as sociological, psychological, or psychiatric is sometimes simply the stated professional affiliation of its proponent. Furthermore, alignments are not clear cut, because theorists and researchers today often work hand in hand with those from other disciplines: They obtain grants together, conduct studies, teach together, form consulting agencies, and even write books together. Finally, condensing any major discipline into a few pages hardly does it justice. To obtain a more adequate overview, the interested reader should consult texts and articles within those disciplines. **Table 1-2** summarizes the three dominant disciplinary perspectives.

Sociological Criminology

Sociological criminology has a rich tradition in examining the relationships of demographic and group variables to crime. Variables such as age, race, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnic-cultural affiliation have been shown to have significant relationships with certain categories and patterns of crimes. Sociological criminology, for example, has allowed us to conclude that juveniles as a group are overrepresented in nonviolent property offenses. Young black males from disadvantaged backgrounds are overrepresented as both perpetrators and victims of homicide. White males are overrepresented in political and corporate crimes. The many reasons for this are reflected in the various perspectives and research findings that are covered in the book. Sociological criminology also probes the situational or environmental factors that are most conducive to criminal action, such as the time, place, kind of weapons used, and the circumstances surrounding the crime.

Many sociologists today are divided into structuralist and culturalist groups. With reference to crime, structuralists are more likely to look at the underlying foundation of society, such as lack of employment and educational activities or the quality of health services offered in a community. Culturalists view the values and patterns of living within a given group of people. In recent years, some dissension between the two groups has occurred, particularly relating to the issue of race in American society (Sanneh, 2015).

Another major contribution of sociological criminology is the attention it directs to topics that reflect unequal distribution of power in society. This often takes the form of examining how crime is defined and how laws are enforced. The sale of "street" drugs has been monitored more

TABLE 1-2 The Three Major Disciplinary Perspectives in Criminology

Perspective	Influence	Focus
Sociological criminology	Sociology Anthropology	Examines relationships of demographic and group variables to crime: focuses on the structure of society and the culture of groups and how these influence criminal behavior
Psychological criminology	Psychology	Focuses on individual criminal behavior; the science of the behavior, emotional, and mental processes of the criminal
Psychiatric criminology	Psychiatry	The contemporary perspective examines the interplay between psychobiological determinants of behavior and the social environment; traditional perspectives look for the unconscious and biological determinates of criminal behavior

closely than the sale of "suite" drugs, although they may be equally potent. The actions of corporate officials—for example, allowing environmental and workplace hazards that produce serious harm—are often not defined as crimes. Political crime, such as corruption, bribery, and abuse of power, is studied by sociologists much more than by other disciplines, although psychologists have begun to explore this area more in recent years. Sociological criminology also has a stronger tradition of addressing the underlying social conditions that may encourage criminal behavior, such as inequities in educational and employment opportunities. Conflict theories in sociology are particularly influential in questioning how crime is defined, who is subject to punishment, and in attempting to draw attention to the crimes of the rich and powerful.

Psychological Criminology

Psychology is the science of behavior and mental processes. **Psychological criminology**, then, is the science of the behavior and mental processes of the person who commits crime. While sociological criminology focuses primarily on groups and society as a whole, and how they influence criminal activity, psychological criminology focuses on individual criminal behavior—how it is acquired, evoked, maintained, and modified.

In the psychology of crime, both social and personality influences on criminal behavior are considered, along with the mental processes that mediate that behavior. Personality refers to all the biological influences, psychological traits, and cognitive features of the human being that psychologists have identified as important in the mediation and control of behavior. Recently, although interest in personality differences among offenders continues, psychological criminology has shifted its focus in several ways. First, it has taken a more cognitive approach to studying criminal behavior. Second, it has paid more attention to biological and neuropsychological factors. Third, it has adopted a developmental approach to studying criminal behavior among both individuals and groups.

COGNITIVE APPROACH. **Cognitions** refer to the attitudes, beliefs, values, and thoughts that people hold about the social environment, interrelations, human nature, and themselves. In serious criminal offenders, these cognitions are often distorted. Beliefs that children must be severely physically disciplined or that victims are not really hurt by fraud or burglary are good examples of cognitions that may lead to criminal activity. Prejudice is also a cognition that involves distortions of social reality. They include erroneous generalizations and oversimplification about others. Hate or bias crimes—highlighted in **Box 1-1**—are generally rooted in prejudice and cognitive distortions held by perpetrators. Many serial rapists also distort social reality to the point where they may

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

BOX 1-1 Hate or Bias Crimes

Crimes committed against individuals out of bias, hatred, or racial, religious, and ethnic prejudice are nothing new; they are well documented in the history of virtually every nation. What is relatively new in the United States is the effort to keep track of such crimes and impose harsh penalties on those who commit them. This has been done with varying degrees of success. Bias crimes are widely underreported, not often prosecuted, and seldom punished.

Nevertheless, toward the end of the twentieth century, Congress and many states began to address the crucial problem of crimes—especially violent crimes—committed out of hatred, prejudice, or bias against someone because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. Eventually, characteristics such as gender, physical or mental disability, advanced age, and military status were added to the list of protected categories. Laws were passed requiring the gathering of statistics on these offenses and/or allowing enhanced sentences for someone convicted of a hate or bias crime. The first such federal law, the **Hate Crime Statistics Act** of 1990, required the collection of data on violent attacks, intimidation, arson, or property damage that are directed at people because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. The law was amended in 1994 to include crimes motivated by bias against persons with disabilities and in late 2009 to include crimes of prejudice based on gender or gender identity (Langton & Planty, 2011).

(*continued*)

Recent official crime statistics (FBI, 2014a, reporting on crimes in 2013), indicate that 49.3 percent of the victims of bias-motivated crimes were targeted because of their race, 20.2 percent because of their sexual orientation, 16.9 percent because of their religion, and 11.4 percent because of their ethnicity. Percentages of other victims were below 2 percent. (See **Figure 1-1** on page 13 for additional data.) More than half of the bias crime victims—61.2 percent—were victims of crimes against persons, specifically intimidation, assault, rape, and murder, in decreasing order.

Relatedly, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has reported significant increases in hate groups in the United States. The SPLC identified 602 hate groups in the year 2000; in 2014, the number was placed at 939 (www.splcenter.org). Known hate groups included neo-Nazis, Klansmen, white nationalists, neo-confederatists, racist skinheads, black separatists, and border vigilantes, among others.

Hate groups are those whose beliefs or practices attack or malign an entire class of people, such as members of a given race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation. The activities of hate groups are not necessarily criminal; in fact, they are more likely to involve rallies, marches, meetings, and distributing leaflets rather than perpetrating violence. However, people who commit hate crimes are sympathetic to their message, even though they do not always belong to an organized group. The man accused of killing nine people at a prayer meeting at the historic Mother Emanuel AME church in Charleston, South Carolina, in June 2015 had made comments about wanting to start a race war. The gunman who opened fire in a Sikh Temple in Wisconsin in August 2012, killing six people and wounding others, had ties to a neo-Nazi skinhead group.

Langton and Planty (2011) analyzed hate crime victimizations from 2003 to 2009 derived from both official data and accounts of victims. Following are a few of their findings:

- More than four of five hate crime victimizations involved violence; about 23 percent were serious violent crimes.
- In about 37 percent of violent hate crimes, the offender knew the victim; in violent nonhate crimes, half of all victims knew the offender.
- Eight hate crime homicides occurred in 2009. In 2013, five murders and 21 rapes were counted as hate crimes. It should be noted, as well, that the murders of the Emanuel 9 in Charleston were charged as federal hate crimes.
- Police were notified of fewer than half (45%) of all hate crime victimizations.
- In 2009, 85.9 percent of the law enforcement agencies participating in the Hate Crime Statistics Program reported that no hate crimes occurred in their jurisdiction.

The last bullet point should lead readers to be very cautious in accepting uncritically official reports of hate crime. Psychological concepts that might help us to understand why individuals would perpetrate these offenses are discussed in Chapter 4.

Questions for Discussion

1. It is not unusual for law enforcement agencies to report no hate crime in their jurisdiction. As noted above, 85.9 percent of agencies in 2009 reported none. Why might this be?
2. Victims of hate crimes, such as assaults, do not often report their victimization to law enforcement. Discuss reasons for this.

assault only victims who they perceive "deserve it." Some sex offenders even persuade themselves that they are not harming their victims, and white-collar offenders sometimes justify their crimes as what they have to do in order to stay in business. The importance of offender cognitions in understanding criminal behavior will be stressed throughout the book.

BIOLOGICAL OR NEUROLOGICAL APPROACH. Many criminologists who identify themselves as psychologists—and some who identify themselves as sociologists—are recognizing that advances in the broad biological sciences are finding links between biology (including neuropsychology) and human behavior (Wright & Boisvert, 2009). The biological approach often focuses on aggression and violent behavior. For example, neurologists interested in criminology study to what extent damage, deficits, or abnormality of the brain may be related to antisocial behavior, particularly violent behavior. A traumatic brain injury (TBI), such as one that might occur in a traffic accident, may produce personality changes, including increased aggressive behavior (Gurley & Marcus, 2008). In early chapters of the book, we will learn that antisocial behavior can be reduced by practices and programs designed to improve neuropsychological functioning and prevent neuropsychological impairment early in life.

DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACH. Learning how criminal behavior begins and progresses is extremely important. A **developmental approach** examines the changes and influences across a person's lifetime that may contribute to the formation of antisocial and criminal behavior. These