Vold's Theoretical Criminology

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OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

EIGHTH EDITION

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New York Oxford
OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research,
scholarship, and education by publishing worldwide. Oxford is a registered
trade mark of Oxford University Press in the UK and certain other countries.

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America.

For titles covered by Section 112 of the US Higher Education
Opportunity Act, please visit www.oup.com/us/he for the latest
information about pricing and alternate formats.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Bernard, Thomas J., author. | Snipes, Jeffrey B., author. | Gerould, Alexander L., author.
Title: Vold's theoretical criminology / Thomas J. Bernard, The Pennsylvania State University, Jeffrey B. Snipes, San Francisco State University, Alexander L. Gerould, San Francisco State University.
Description: Eighth edition. | New York : Oxford University Press, [2019] | Includes bibliographical references and index. | Summary: "The standard text in the field, Vold's Theoretical Criminology is universally known by scholars in the discipline. Taking a largely historical approach, it discusses both classic and contemporary theories, presenting historical context and empirical research for each one. The book concludes with a chapter on assessing theories and their policy implications"—Provided by publisher.
Identifiers: LCCN 2019033690 (print) | LCCN 2019033691 (ebook) | ISBN 9780190940515 (hardback) | ISBN 9780190084417 (ebk) | ISBN 9780190940522 (ebk)
Subjects: LCSH: Criminal anthropology. | Criminology. | Deviant behavior. | Social conflict.
Classification: LCC HV6035 .V6 2019 (print) | LCC HV6035 (ebook) | DDC 364.2—dc23
LC record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019033690
LC ebook record available at https://lccn.loc.gov/2019033691

Printing number: 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1
Printed by LSC Communications, Inc., United States of America.

DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to Shawn Snipes,
for all his love and support.

We would like to thank everyone at Oxford University Press
who has worked on this book alongside us, especially
Steve Helba and Kora Fillet.

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PREFACE

It is our great pleasure to carry on the tradition of building upon George Vold's original *Theoretical Criminology*. *Vold's Theoretical Criminology* is one of the longest-running texts in the field, with its first edition published in 1958. This span of sixty years has seen a total of eight editions, with the following authors and coauthors, in sequence: George Vold, Thomas Bernard, Jeffrey Snipes, and Alexander Gerould.

As we determined which materials to update, sections to add, and reorganizations to make, we were informed by the rigorous and highly specific reviews of the previous edition by fifteen anonymous reviewers; we are greatly appreciative of their contributions.

The former Chapter 16, on assessing criminology theories, has been merged with Chapter 1, the introduction to theory and crime. Chapter 2, on theory and policy in context, now has more information about how crime data is collected, and a discussion and analysis of trends in crime over the past five years (covering the period since the seventh edition). Chapter 3 now includes a section on the neoclassical school, has a revamped and updated section on deterrence theory, and an expansion of routine activities that includes L-RAT (lifestyle routine activities theory). To Chapter 4 we added a new section on epigenetics, a promising new area in line with the biosocial movement in criminology. We include a section on Freud and psychoanalysis in Chapter 5, and we expanded the section on research that uses personality tests. Chapter 6 includes a discussion of the modern applicability of Durkheim.

Chapters 7 and 8 are now reversed in order from the previous edition. Chapter 7 is now strain theories, and Chapter 8 is on neighborhoods and crime. Chapter 7 has undergone considerable reorganization, and it contains a significantly expanded section on Agnew's general strain theory and research evaluating it. In Chapter 8, we now discuss micro-places, and we added a section on social disorganization and crime in rural areas. Chapter 9 now has a new section on Tarde's laws of imitation and Bandura's social learning theory. It also contains a new section on assessing Akers's social learning theory, as well as an expansion of Athens's theory of violentization, which includes policy implications he recently put forth. Zimbardo's Lucifer

effect is no longer included in this chapter, and labeling theory has been moved here from the chapter on conflict theory. In Chapter 10 we added a significant amount of new research that assesses Gottfredson and Hirschi's general theory of crime, which is based on self-control. Chapter 11 is now solely dedicated to conflict theory, as we moved labeling theory to Chapter 9. This chapter has a new section on minority threat theory.

Chapter 12 now covers Marxist, postmodern, and green criminology. Approximately a quarter of the chapter is devoted to green criminology, which is a new addition to this volume. Chapter 13 includes a new section on the narrowing of the gender gap in violence, as well as some discussion of the backlash to feminist criminology. Chapter 14 is renamed "Developmental and Life-Course Theories." In this chapter we discuss the influence of the developmental theorist Glen Elder Jr. on later developmental and life-course theories of crime; include some discussion of Laub and Sampson's follow-up book to Sampson and Laub's age-graded theory; and we have a new section on future directions in developmental and life-course theory, which is largely spent discussing desistance from criminal behavior. Chapter 15 has updated several integrated theories with recent research evaluating their hypotheses. A new, brief conclusion examines the proliferation of theory in criminology, and assesses the policy relevance of the multitude of criminological theories.

New to this edition is a supplement, which includes a bank of test questions useful for all instructors, especially for those who use this volume in undergraduate courses.

Vold's Theoretical Criminology

CHAPTER 1

Theory and Crime

Criminology as a field of study has been well documented by a long line of excellent and distinguished textbooks going back many decades.[1] Most of these texts concentrate on presenting facts that are known about the subject of crime. For example, they discuss the extent and distribution of criminal behaviors in society; the characteristics of criminal law and procedure; the characteristics of criminals; and the history, structure, and functioning of the criminal justice system. The theoretical material presented in these texts is usually somewhat limited. Almost all texts review the major theories about the causes of criminal behavior, and some texts present other theoretical material such as sociology of law, philosophy of punishment, or theories of correctional treatment.

As a text in theoretical criminology, this book does not concentrate on presenting the facts known about crime, although at least some of these facts are presented in the various chapters. Instead, it concentrates on the theories that are used to explain the facts. The theories themselves, rather than the facts about criminality, are the focus of this book.[2]

Basically, a theory is part of an explanation.[3] It is a sensible way of understanding something, of relating it to the whole world of information, beliefs, and attitudes that make up the intellectual atmosphere of a people at a particular time or place. In the broad scope of history, there are two basic types of theories of crime. One relies on spiritual, or other-world, explanations, while the other relies on natural, or this-world, explanations. Both types of theories are ancient as well as modern.

SPIRITUAL EXPLANATIONS

Spiritual explanations of crime are part of a general view of life in which many events are believed to result from the influence of otherworldly powers. For example, primitive people regarded natural disasters, such as famines,

floods, and plagues, as punishments for wrongs they had done to the spiritual powers.[4] They responded by performing sacred rites and rituals to appease these powers.

A spiritual view of the world was closely tied to the origin and development of the modern criminal justice system.[5] In the Middle Ages in Europe, crime was a largely private affair in which the victim or the victim's family obtained revenge by inflicting a similar or greater harm on the offender or the offender's family. But private vengeance had a tendency to start blood feuds as each side inflicted greater harms on the other side. These feuds could continue for many years until one or the other family was completely wiped out. The feudal lords therefore instituted methods by which God could indicate who was innocent and who was guilty. The first such method was trial by battle. Both parties would swear to the truth of their claims in the dispute. Then they, or their designated representatives, would fight each other. God would give victory to the righteous person, defeating the one who had just sworn a false oath. Thus the family of the loser would have no grounds for exacting vengeance on the winner, and the blood feuds were ended.

The problem with trial by battle was that great warriors (and those who could afford to hire them as designated representatives) could commit as many crimes as they wanted because God would always give them victory. Therefore somewhat later in history, trial by ordeal was instituted. In this method the accused was subjected to difficult and painful tests, from which an innocent person (protected by God) would emerge unharmed while a guilty person would die a painful death. For example, a common method of determining whether a woman was a witch was to tie her up and throw her into water that had just been blessed.[6] Generally, if the accused sank, she was considered innocent, but if she floated, she was guilty. Other forms of ordeal included running the gauntlet and walking on fire. Trial by ordeal was condemned by the pope in 1215 and was replaced by compurgation, in which the accused gathered together a group of twelve reputable people who would swear that he or she was innocent. The idea was that no one would lie under oath for fear of being punished by God. Compurgation ultimately evolved into testimony under oath and trial by jury.

Spiritual explanations of crime appeared in the New World in the Puritan colony on Massachusetts Bay. During the first sixty years of its existence, this colony experienced three serious crime waves that were thought to be caused by the devil. The most serious of these crime waves occurred in 1692, when the community was thought to have been invaded by a large number of witches.[7]

Our modern prison system also originated in association with a spiritual explanation of crime. Around 1790, a group of Quakers in Philadelphia conceived the idea of isolating criminals in cells and giving them only the Bible to read and some manual labor to perform. The Quakers thought that criminals would then reflect on their past wrongdoings and repent.[8] They used the term *penitentiary* to describe their invention, a place for penitents who were sorry for their sins.

Today, many religious individuals and groups explain crime in spiritual terms. For example, Charles Colson was special counsel to President Richard M. Nixon and served seven months in prison for his part in the Watergate affair. As a result of his prison experience, he underwent a religious conversion and founded Prison Fellowship International, which now operates in more than one hundred countries to reform criminal justice and to bring the Christian message to prisoners.[9] Colson attributes crime to sinful human nature and argues that religious conversion is the only "cure" for crime.[10]

NATURAL EXPLANATIONS

Spiritual explanations make use of otherworldly powers to account for what happens; natural explanations make use of objects and events in the material world to explain the same things. Like the spiritual approach, the natural approach to explanation is ancient as well as modern.

The early Greeks developed naturalistic, this-world explanations far back in their history. For example, Hippocrates (460 B.C.) provided a physiological explanation of thinking by arguing that the brain is the organ of the mind. Democritus (420 B.C.) proposed the idea of an indestructible unit of matter, called the atom, as central to his explanation of the world around him. With Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle the ideas of unity and continuity came to the fore, but the essential factors in all the explanations remained physical and material.

By the first century B.C., Roman thought had become thoroughly infused with naturalism. For example, Roman law combined the spiritualism of the Hebrew tradition with the naturalism of the Greek tradition to provide a natural basis for penalties as well as for rights. The Hebrew doctrine of divine sanction for law and order merged with Greek naturalism and appeared in Roman law as a justification based on the "nature of things." Later, the rule of kings by divine right became a natural law that looked to the nature of things for its principal justification.

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, writers such as Hobbes, Spinoza, Descartes, and Leibniz studied human affairs as physicists study matter, impersonally and quantitatively. Modern social science continues this naturalistic emphasis. The disagreements among social scientists are well known, but at least they have in common that they seek their explanations within observable phenomena that are found in the physical and material world.

SCIENTIFIC THEORIES

Scientific theories are one kind of natural explanation. In general, they make statements about the relationships between observable phenomena.[11] For example, some scientific theories in criminology make statements about the

relationship between the certainty or severity of criminal punishments and the volume of criminal behaviors in society. Others make statements about the relationship between the biological, psychological, or social characteristics of individuals and the likelihood that these individuals will engage in criminal behaviors. Still others make statements about the relationship between the social characteristics of individuals and the likelihood that these individuals will be defined and processed as criminals by the criminal justice system. All these characteristics can be observed, and so all these theories are scientific.

Because they make statements about the relationships among observable phenomena, a key characteristic of scientific theories is that they can be falsified.[12] The process of attempting to falsify a scientific theory involves systematically observing the relationships described in the theory and then comparing the observations to arguments of the theory itself. This process is called research: that is, the assertions of the theory are tested against the observed world of the facts.[13] If the observations are inconsistent with the assertions of the theory, then the theory is falsified. If the observations are consistent with the assertions of the theory, then the theory becomes more credible, but it is not proved; there are always alternative theories that may also explain the same observed relationships.

A theory can gain a great deal of credibility if all the reasonable alternative theories are shown to be inconsistent with the observed world of facts. At that point, the theory may simply be accepted as true. However, it is always possible that some new facts will be discovered in the future that are inconsistent with the theory, so that a new theory will be required. For example, Newton's laws of physics were accepted as true for two hundred years, but they were replaced by Einstein's theory of relativity at the beginning of the twentieth century because of the discovery of some new facts.[14]

Six criteria may be used to evaluate a scientific theory: comprehensiveness (is broad in scope); precision and testability (defines constructs well, is open to measurement through falsifiable hypotheses); parsimony (is presented in a simple fashion); empirical validity (accounts for evidence that disconfirms it, in addition to confirming evidence); heuristic value (generates intellectual stimulation in other fields); and applied value (offers solutions to problems).[15] When reading the theories presented in this volume, the reader may wish to consider them along these dimensions.

CAUSATION IN SCIENTIFIC THEORIES

Causation is one type of relationship among observable variables, and all scientific theories in criminology make causal arguments of one type or another. Generally speaking, causation in scientific theories means three things: correlation, time sequence, and the absence of spuriousness. However, to be meaningful scientific theories should also have a theoretical rationale—in this discussion, we also consider the need for theories to propose mechanisms by which variables may influence each other.

Correlation means that things tend to vary systematically in relation to each other. For example, height and weight are correlated: people who are taller generally weigh more, and people who are shorter generally weigh less. The relation is not perfect—some short people weigh more, and some tall people weigh less. But the tendency still exists for more height to go with more weight and less height to go with less weight. This is called a "positive" correlation.

A "negative" correlation is when more of one thing tends to be associated with less of the other. For example, the more miles you have on your car, the less money it generally is worth. As with height and weight, the relation is not perfect because some old cars are worth a lot and some new cars are not worth much. But for cars in general, mileage and price are negatively correlated.

Correlation, whether positive or negative, is necessary for causation. If two things do not vary together in some systematic way, such as height and IQ, then the one cannot cause the other. But correlation alone is not sufficient for causation. You also need a good reason to believe that a causal relation exists. This is the theoretical rationale, the second element of scientific causation.

For example, some criminologists argue that harsh erratic discipline by parents increases the likelihood of delinquency in their children.[16] There must be a correlation: parents who use such techniques must be more likely to have children who are delinquent than parents who use moderate consistent discipline. But there also must be a theoretical rationale—a coherent explanation of why these techniques by the parents may cause delinquency in the children.

A theoretical rationale would be that harsh discipline conveys anger, rather than love, and increases the chance that the child will rebel and engage in delinquency to get back at the parents. In addition, erratic discipline means that most of the time there is no punishment for misbehavior anyway. So in this example, a theoretical rationale exists that, if coupled with evidence of a correlation, would support a conclusion that harsh erratic discipline causes delinquency.

But correlation and theoretical rationale are not enough to infer causation. Imagine, for example, two loving parents who have a delinquent child. Moderate consistent discipline just does not work, and eventually when the child gets into trouble, the parents either do nothing (because nothing works anyway) or use harsh discipline (because they are angry and frustrated).[17] In this scenario, the child's delinquency causes the parents' harsh erratic disciplinary techniques.

The problem is the *direction* of causation: Does the discipline cause the delinquency, or does the delinquency cause the discipline? The solution can be found by determining time sequence, the third element of scientific causation. If the discipline comes first and the delinquency comes later, then we would conclude that the discipline causes the delinquency. But if the

delinquency comes first and the discipline comes later, we would conclude that the delinquency causes the discipline.

The fourth and final element of meaningful scientific causation is called the absence of spuriousness. Suppose that parents in high-crime neighborhoods are more likely, for social and cultural reasons, to use harsh erratic discipline even when their children are not delinquent. And suppose that for the same reasons, children in high-crime neighborhoods are more likely to engage in delinquency, regardless of the parents' disciplinary techniques. It may look like there is a causal relationship between harsh erratic discipline and delinquency, but in fact both the discipline and the delinquency could be caused, in one way or another, by the high-crime neighborhood.

In this example, the relationship between delinquent behavior and parental disciplinary techniques would be spurious. But suppose the researchers control for the neighborhood—that is, suppose they compare parents in the neighborhoods who use harsh erratic discipline with other parents in the same neighborhoods who use moderate consistent discipline. Then if they find that delinquency is associated with harsh erratic discipline, it cannot be because of the neighborhood. In this case, it is reasonable to conclude that a causal relation exists.

The conclusion that a causal relation exists, however, is always a statement about probability, never an assertion of certainty. To say that harsh erratic discipline causes delinquency is like saying that smoking causes cancer. Most people who smoke do not get cancer. Rather, smokers have a greater probability of getting cancer than do nonsmokers. Similarly, if our causal theory is correct, then children who are raised with harsh erratic discipline are more likely to become delinquent than are children who are raised with moderate consistent discipline, but there is no absolute guarantee about this outcome.[18]

The whole point of causal theories is to gain power and control over the world in which we live. When we want less of something (such as crime and delinquency) or more of something (such as law-abiding behavior), we try to find out the causes of what we desire. Then we try to influence those causes to get what we want.

Even though causal theories in social science deal only with probabilities, knowing about the probabilities can be useful for policy purposes. For example, if harsh erratic discipline actually does increase the probability of delinquency, even if by a small amount, then it may be useful to try to affect parenting styles. Special classes could teach effective disciplinary techniques to parents whose children are otherwise at risk of becoming delinquent (e.g., because they live in a high-crime neighborhood). If these classes succeeded in changing the disciplinary techniques used by parents, then we should end up with less delinquency in the future. In fact, such classes appear to reduce delinquency by significant amounts over the long run.[19]

All scientific theories in criminology make causal arguments, but there are different categories in which we can classify them. One such categorization divides criminological theories into those based on individual differences, structure/process, or the behavior of law.

THREE CATEGORIES OF CRIMINOLOGICAL THEORIES

Some theories focus on characteristics of individuals that are thought to increase or decrease the probabilities that an individual will engage in crime. In reviewing these characteristics, it is important to keep two points in mind. First, none of these characteristics absolutely determines that the person will engage in crime. Most people with these characteristics do not engage in crime at all—it is just that people with these characteristics are somewhat more likely than are other people to engage in crimes.[20] Second, while these characteristics may increase the probability that a particular individual will engage in crime, they may have no effect on overall crime rates. The following is a list of individual differences characteristics that are associated with increases in the probability of committing criminal behavior:

1. A history of early childhood problem behaviors and of being subjected to poor parental child-rearing techniques, such as harsh and inconsistent discipline; school failure; and the failure to learn higher cognitive skills, such as moral reasoning, empathy, and problem solving.
2. Certain neurotransmitter imbalances, such as low serotonin; certain hormone imbalances, such as high testosterone; central nervous system deficiencies, such as frontal or temporal lobe dysfunction; and autonomic nervous system variations, such as unusual reactions to anxiety.
3. Ingesting alcohol, a variety of illegal drugs, and some toxins like lead; head injuries; and complications during a subject's pregnancy or birth.
4. Personality characteristics, such as impulsivity, insensitivity, a physical and nonverbal orientation, and a tendency to take risks.
5. Thinking patterns that focus on trouble, toughness, smartness, excitement, fate, and autonomy and a tendency to think in terms of short-term rather than long-term consequences.
6. Association with others who engage in and approve of criminal behavior.
7. Weak attachments to other people, less involvement in conventional activities, having less to lose from committing crime, and weak beliefs in the moral validity of the law.
8. A perception that there is less risk of punishment for engaging in criminal behavior.
9. Masculinity as a gender role.

All these factors somewhat differently affect individuals at different ages. In addition, the following set of differences seems to increase the probability that a person will be a victim of crime:

10. Frequently being away from home, especially at night; engaging in public activities while away from home; and associating with people who are likely to commit crime.

In contrast to individual difference theories, we will also discuss a wide range of structure/process theories, especially in the later chapters of this book. These theories assume that some situations are associated with higher crime rates, regardless of the characteristics of the individuals within them. The theories therefore attempt to identify variables in the situation itself that are associated with higher crime rates.

In discussing these theories, it is important to keep several points in mind. First, these theories tend to be complex and descriptive, and it is sometimes hard to determine the proposed causes of crime. To the extent that this is true, the policy recommendations of the theory will be vague. Second, these theories have often been interpreted and tested at the individual level. Such testing necessarily involves some variation of the "ecological fallacy,"[21] and it has led to considerable confusion about the theories themselves. Third, situations with high crime rates often have a large number of variables, all of which are correlated with each other and all of which are correlated with crime—for example, poverty, inequality, high residential mobility, single-parent families, unemployment, poor and dense housing, the presence of gangs and illegal criminal opportunities, inadequate schools, and the lack of social services. It can be extremely difficult to determine which (if any) of these variables is causally related to high crime rates and which have no causal impact on crime at all.[22] In each theory in this category, there will be some structural characteristic that is associated with some rate or distribution of crime. This is the "structure" portion of a structure/process theory. There will also be a description of the supposed reasons why normal people in this structural situation may demonstrate a greater probability of engaging in crime than people in other situations. This is the "process" portion of a structure/process theory. The following structural arguments describe societal characteristics that seem to be associated with higher crime rates.

1. Economic modernization and development is associated with a rise in property crime rates. Property crime tends to increase until the society is highly developed and then to hold steady at a high level. The processes that result in this pattern of crime involve changes in routine activities and in criminal opportunities, which eventually are balanced by the increasing effectiveness of countermeasures.
2. Cultures that emphasize the goal of material success at the expense of adherence to legitimate means are associated with high rates of

utilitarian crime; an unequal distribution of legitimate means to achieve material success is associated with an inverse distribution of utilitarian crime; and in situations without legitimate means to economic success, the development of illegitimate means is associated with increased utilitarian crime, while the lack of such development is associated with increased violent crime. In these situations, the inability to achieve status by conventional criteria is associated with status inversion and higher rates of nonutilitarian criminal behavior. The processes involved in these structural patterns involve either frustration or the simple tendency to engage in self-interested behavior.

3. Neighborhoods with high unemployment, frequent residential mobility, and family disruption tend to have high crime rates. The processes involve neighborhood anonymity that results in social disorganization.
4. Media dissemination of techniques and rationalizations that are favorable to law violation are associated with increased rates of law violation. The process involves direct learning of techniques and rationalizations and indirect learning of the consequences that criminal behaviors have for others.
5. Joblessness and racism can generate an inner-city code of the street that promulgates normative violence in a variety of situations. The process includes feelings of hopelessness and alienation among inner-city residents and the generation of an oppositional subculture as a means of maintaining self-respect.
6. Increases in the objective certainty of punishments are associated with reductions in crime rates, but increases in the objective severity of punishments seem to be associated either with no changes or with increases in crime rates. In addition, crackdowns on certain types of crimes are associated with short-term reductions in the rates of those crimes that may extend beyond the life of the crackdown policy itself.
7. Societies that stigmatize deviants have higher crime rates than do those that reintegrate deviants. The process involves blocked legitimate opportunities and the formation of subcultures.
8. Societies in which some people control others have higher crime rates than do societies in which people control and are controlled by others in approximately equal amounts. The process involves people's natural tendency to expand their control.

There is no contradiction between structure/process theories and individual difference theories. Nothing in the structure/process theories contradicts the assertion that there are some people who are more likely to engage in crime regardless of their situation. Similarly, nothing in the individual difference

theories contradicts the assertion that there are some situations in which people, regardless of their individual characteristics, are more likely to engage in crime. These are separate assertions, and both types of theories can be integrated into a larger theory of criminal behavior.

Theories of the behavior of criminal law suggest that the volume of crime and the characteristics of criminals are determined primarily by the enactment and enforcement of laws. Most people who are convicted of crimes are poor, but not because poverty causes crime. Rather, the actions typical of poor people are more likely to be legally defined as crimes, and the laws that apply to such crimes are more likely to be strictly enforced. Consider the death penalty as an example. Criminologists who hold this view argue that there are differences in the enforcement of laws: wealthy and powerful people who kill are less likely to be arrested, tried, or convicted or are convicted of a less serious offense and given a more lenient sentence. These criminologists also argue that there are differences in the enactment of laws. Under felony murder laws, an offender is liable for first-degree murder if a death results from the commission of certain dangerous felonies, such as robbery or burglary. No intent to kill is required, because the intent to commit the lesser offense is transferred to the greater one.[23] In contrast, many serious injuries and deaths that are associated with corporate decision-making occur where there is the intent to commit a lesser offense (for example, to violate health or safety laws), combined with the full knowledge that the decision may result in serious injury and death to a number of innocent people. If a law similar to felony murder were applied to white-collar crime, then death row might be filled with corporate executives.

The following are some assertions about the behavior of criminal law.

1. When the social solidarity of a society is threatened, criminal punishment increases independent of whether crime increases.
2. The enactment and enforcement of criminal laws reflect the values and interests of individuals and groups in proportion to their political and economic power.
3. In addition to stratification, the quantity of law that is applied in particular cases is influenced by morphology, culture, organization, and the extent of other forms of social control.
4. Regardless of what other interests are served by the criminal law, it must serve the economic interests of the owners of the means of economic production.
5. Actions that involve simple and immediate gratification of desires but few long-term benefits are exciting and risky but require little skill or planning and generally produce few benefits for the offender while causing pain and suffering to the victim are more likely to be defined and processed as criminal than are other actions.

Theories of the behavior of criminal law do not contradict theories of criminal behavior. More than anything else, they ask a different question: Why are some behaviors and people, but not others, defined and processed as criminal?

The chapters in this volume have been organized primarily for the sake of convenience and clarity; no necessary separateness or mutual exclusiveness should be inferred. In general, the chapters are organized in the historical sequence in which the theories originated, so that the earliest theories are presented first. This organization is intended to provide the reader with a sense of how the field of criminology has evolved over time. One exception to this general rule is Chapter 2, which explores the intersections of theory and policy by examining the recent crime drop in the United States.

Chapter 3 focuses on the classical and neoclassical schools of criminology, since this was the origin of criminology itself. It begins with historical materials on how classical criminology emerged as a field of study during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and then brings that discussion up to date by presenting theory and research on deterrence and routine activities. Chapters 4 and 5 examine biological and psychological theories, since these were the first types of positivist theory to emerge. Because later theories and research in criminology focused more strongly on social factors, they are presented in later chapters. Critical theories (such as those of the behavior of law) are also included among the later chapters. Most chapters contain modern as well as historical materials, beginning with the work of the early theorists and then presenting more recent theories and research that take the same general point of view. After all the different types of theories are presented, Chapter 15 discusses attempts to integrate the different theories into broader approaches. A brief conclusion offers thoughts on the current state of theorizing in criminology and its relevance to policy.

KEY TERMS

theory
spiritual explanations
trial by battle
trial by ordeal
compurgation
penitentiary
natural explanations
scientific theories
falsification
causation
correlation
theoretical rationale
direction of causation
time sequence
absence of spuriousness
control
probability
individual difference theories
structure/process theories
theories of the behavior of criminal law

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In what ways do spiritual, sometimes called demonological, explanations of crime still enter into the criminal justice system today?
2. Provide examples of how a correlation, but not causation, can be found between a given situation and criminality.
3. Using a multifactor approach, create a hypothetical individual with various biological, psychological, and sociological backgrounds. Alter the individual's attributes and, as you do so, assess how you think the changes would affect the individual's probability (risk level) of offending.

NOTES

1. A large number of. textbooks focus on general criminology, including Larry J. Seigel, *Criminology*, 13th ed. (Boston: Cengage, 2018); Frank Schmalleger, *Criminology Today*, 8th ed. (New York: Pearson, 2016); John E. Conklin, *Criminology*, 11th ed. (New York: Pearson, 2012); and Freda A. Adler, Gerhard O. W. Mueller, and William S. Laufer, *Criminology*, 9th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2017).
2. Some recent texts that focus on criminology theory include J. Mitchell Miller, Christopher J. Schreck, and Richard Tewkesbury, *Criminology Theory,* 4th ed. (New York: Pearson, 2014); Mark M. Lanier and Stuart Henry, *Essential Criminology*, 4th ed. (New York: Avalon Publishing, 2014); Ronald Akers, Christine S. Sellers, and Wesley G. Jennings, *Criminological Theories: Introduction, Application, and Evaluation*, 7th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016); and Franklin P. Williams III and Marilyn D. McShane, *Criminological Theory*, 7th ed. (New York: Pearson, 2017). Several books of readings also focus on criminology theories, including Lanier and Henry, eds., *The Essential Criminology Reader* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2004); Francis T. Cullen, Robert S. Agnew, and Pamela Wilcox, *Criminological Theories,* 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017); Eugene McLaughlin and John Muncie, eds., *Criminological Perspectives,* 3rd edition (London: Sage, 2013); and Suzette Cote, *Criminological Theories* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2002).
3. Arthur L. Stinchcombe, *Constructing Social Theories* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968), pp. 3–5.
4. Graeme Newman, *The Punishment Response* (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1978), pp. 13–25.
5. Harry Elmer Barnes, *The Story of Punishment*, 2nd ed. rev. (Montclair, NJ: Patterson Smith, 1972), pp. 7–10.
6. Newman, *The Punishment Response*, p. 97.
7. Kai T. Erikson, *Wayward Puritans* (New York: John Wiley, 1966).
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12. Ibid., pp. 5–6; Thomas J. Bernard, "Twenty Years of Testing Theories: What Have We Learned and Why," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 27 (1990): 325–347.
13. Thomas J. Bernard and R. Richard Ritti, "The Role of Theory in Scientific Research," in *Measurement Issues in Criminology*, ed. Kimberly L. Kempf (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1990), pp. 1–20.
14. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1969).
15. See, e.g., the descriptions of each criteria discussed in Kenneth M. Cramer, "Six Criteria of a Viable Theory: Putting Reversal Theory to the Test," *Journal of Motivation, Emotion, and Personality* 1 (2013): 9–16.
16. Robert J. Sampson and John H. Laub, *Crime in the Making* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).
17. For example, Eric A. Stewart, Ronald L Simons, Rand D. Conger, and Laura V. Scaramella, "Beyond the Interactional Relationship Between Delinquency and Parenting Practices," *Journal of Research in Crime and Delinquency* 39 (2002): 36–59, argued that the child's involvement in the legal system increases ineffective parenting.
18. For example, see David P. Farrington, "Early Predictors of Adolescent Aggression and Adult Violence," *Violence and Victims* 4 (1989): 79–100. This article reports the percentage of juveniles who engage in delinquency for each of a large number of characteristics. Thus, it gives a good sense of how much (or how little) a particular characteristic affects the probability of engaging in delinquency.
19. See, for example, Peter W. Greenwood, Karyn E. Model, C. Peter Rydell, and James Chiesa, "Diverting Children from a Life of Crime" (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 1996).
20. See, for example, David P. Farrington, "Early Predictors of Adolescent Aggression and Adult Violence," *Violence and Victims* 4 (1989): 79–100. This article gives percentages for a large number of characteristics of those who engage in adolescent aggression, teenage violence, and adult violence and who have been convicted of a violent crime.
21. W. S. Robinson, "Ecological Correlations and the Behavior of Individuals," *American Sociological Review* 15 (June 1950): 351–357.
22. This is because these variables are all highly correlated, leading to the statistical condition of multicollinearity, which causes model estimations to be inaccurate.
23. Hazel B. Kerper, *Introduction to the Criminal Justice System* (St. Paul, MN: West, 1972), pp. 111–112.

CHAPTER 2

Theory and Policy in Context

The Great American Crime Decline

This is a text on theoretical criminology, and Chapter 1 emphasized the importance of theory in the field and that, by and large, this book will focus on theories rather than facts about crime. However, there is increasing pressure on criminologists to show how theory relates to trends in crime and how theory and policy are connected. It is well to have criminological theories that vary in their perspective, tradition, and formative processes, but how do the myriad theories connect to our current crime landscape? While the remaining chapters in the book address the types of theories, this chapter will discuss how some of the theories (and their associated policies) may or may not help explain one of the most monumental criminological occurrences in modern history: the Great American Crime Decline,[1] taking place from the early 1990s to the present day. Exploring this crime decline will help us see how criminologists are in a constant struggle to explain real-world phenomena with the theories they proclaim are the most relevant and predictive.

After providing some basic data on crime trends over the past few decades, this chapter contrasts two approaches to explaining why the United States had such high levels of violence by the early 1990s. One takes the position that the increase in crime was related to very real sociological root causes—poverty, to name one. The other takes the position that the increase in crime was related not to economic poverty but to moral poverty—children not learning right from wrong and associated ills such as drug abuse. The former is a liberal argument; the latter is a more conservative approach.

Following the publication of these works, crime—especially violent crime—began its incredible descent across the United States. Within a few years of this decline, around the turn of the twenty-first century, as it appeared it may have teeth and not be a temporary downtick, hoards of scholars began to proffer explanations for it; this chapter examines several of the more prominent reasons given. A decade later the crime decline kept on

path, and in one city in particular—New York—violent crime declined at a rate much greater than the nation's overall rate. The chapter concludes by discussing what may have been different in New York to warrant such a spectacular change for the better.

CRIME IN THE UNITED STATES: THE PAST HALF-CENTURY

Figures 2-1 and 2-2 display the crime trends for violent crime and property crime rates from 1960 to 2017. Violent crime indexes are comprised of murders, rapes, robberies, and aggravated assaults. Property crime consists of burglaries, larceny thefts, and vehicle thefts. Both indexes are calculated using data from the FBI, which gathers reported crime counts across categories from police departments voluntarily participating. Crime rates are calculated by adjusting raw numbers per capita, such as crime per 100,000 citizens. Crime rates allow for meaningful comparisons across jurisdictions and over time.

These Uniform Crime Report (UCR) data published by the FBI has some significant problems.[2] It underreports actual crime, because many victims fail to report crime; further, underreporting varies across crime categories. Crime committed in areas where the police do not participate in reporting (about 4%) is not included. Police may misclassify or falsify reported crime statistics. Certain crime types, such as tax evasion, hazardous waste dumping, and white-collar crimes, are not included. Finally,

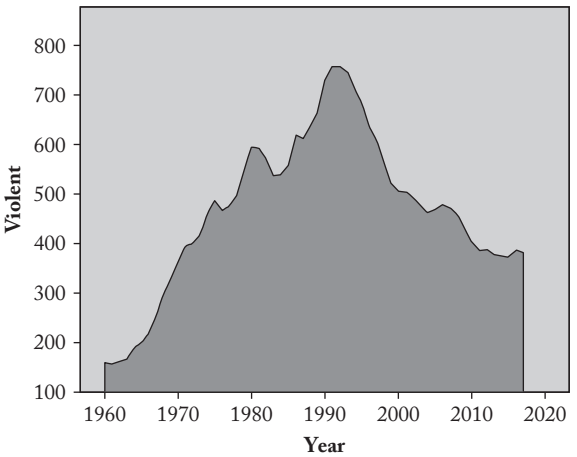

FIGURE 2-1 Violent Crime in the United States (index rates per 100,000) 1960–2017.
(Configured using Uniform Crime Reports Data, FBI, Crime in the United States.)

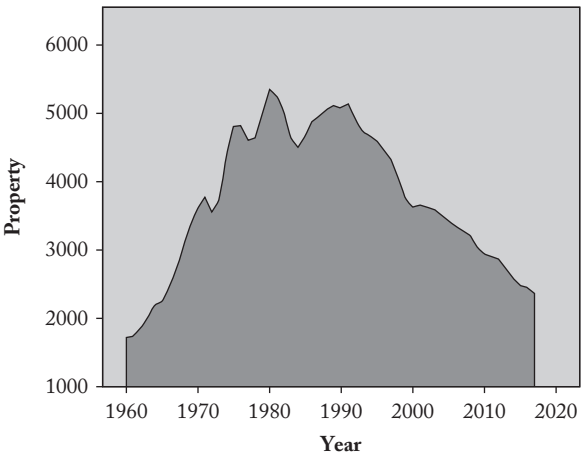

FIGURE 2-2 Property Crime in the United States (index rates per 100,000) 1960–2017.
(Configured using Uniform Crime Reports Data, FBI, Crime in the United States.)

police might only report the most serious offense in a multiple-offense incident to the FBI.

Crime victimization surveys such as the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), which interviews a sample of individuals twice a year, asking them for information about offenses they may or may not have reported to the police, could help address the "shadow figure," or degree of underreporting, but these surveys suffer flaws as well—for example, "victimless" crimes are not counted, nor are crimes against businesses; there is no independent confirmation of reported victimizations; and interviewees may have difficulties recalling information accurately.[3] As an effort to collect more sophisticated data on criminal offenses, in the 1980s officials began designing and implementing the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), which should account for all offenses, not just the most serious in any incident, and contain much more extensive information about the offenders and the victims than the UCR does. However, a very small proportion of police departments in the United States currently participate in NIBRS.[4] Thus data from this chapter are from the Uniform Crime Report, despite its flaws.

As the 1960s progressed, there was an explosion of both violent and property crime. In the 1980s violent crime continued its climb, while property crime began to level off. In 1960 there was a violent crime rate (per 100,000 inhabitants) of 161 and a property crime rate of 1,726. By 1991 these rates had skyrocketed to 758 and 5,140, representing increases of 371 percent in violent crime and 198 percent in property crime. Beginning in the

early 1990s, both violent and property crime began their famous declines. In 2017 the rates were 383 and 2,362, respectively. This represents a decrease in violent crime of 49 percent and a decrease in property crime of 54 percent (from 1991 to 2017).

TWO OPPOSING NARRATIVES OF THE CRIME WAVE

In 1996 and 1998 two influential works were published addressing the question of why crime was so high by the early 1990s. Both relied on data from the early to mid-1990s, and while crime had just begun its descent, none of the authors could foresee that it would plummet over the next twenty years; instead, they focused on what was wrong in the United States—what factors were responsible for the miserable state of affairs, especially with regard to violent crime. These works were considerably different in their explanations, and a brief tour of them will demonstrate how divided conservative and liberal ideologies were on the crime problem in the United States. The first work was *Body Count: Moral Poverty . . . And How to Win America's Work Against Crime and Drugs*,[5] by conservative authors William Bennett, John DiIulio, and John Walters. The second was *Crime and Punishment in America: Why the Solutions to America's Most Stubborn Social Crisis Have Not Worked—And What Will*,[6] by liberal author Elliott Currie.

Body Count was named for the escalating homicide numbers as well as for the eponymous Blood gang member who got his name because "When da shootin's ova', das what I do, coun' da bodies."[7] The book began by shocking its readers with stories and statistics about how violent the United States had become by the early 1990s. In the course of a single business trip, one of *Body Count*'s authors (in each city as he arrived) read of teenagers killing foreign tourists in Florida, the murder of Michael Jordan's father by teenagers, an abduction of a little girl by a convicted sex offender, the murder of a woman waiting to pick up her daughter from a Bible study class, the homicide of a seventeen-year-old boy at a high school football game, and a murder-for-hire of a businessman ordered by his former father-in-law.[8] The authors pointed out that the country's murder rate was 5.1 per 100,000 in 1965 and had risen to 9.5 by 1993.[9] From 1985 to 1994 the *adult* homicide rate *dropped* by 25 percent, whereas the homicide rate for eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds *jumped* by 61 percent.[10] Black males aged fourteen to twenty-four represented about 1 percent of the population, and this had remained stable over the past decade (mid-1980s to mid-1990s) yet this demographic now accounted for 17 (instead of 9) percent of homicide victims and 30 (instead of 17) percent of perpetrators.[11]

Body Count's authors predicted that as of the mid-1990s crime was going to soar further, due to a combination of an increasing proportion of juveniles in the population and a new generation of "superpredators," offenders who

are the "youngest, biggest, and baddest generation any society has ever known."[12] This group of juveniles was "radically impulsive, brutally remorseless youngsters, including ever more preteenage boys, who murder, assault, rape, rob, burglarize, deal deadly drugs, join gun-toting gangs, and create serious communal disorders. They do not fear the stigma of arrest, imprisonment, or the pangs of conscience."[13] Superpredators would act out in extreme violence at the slightest sense of being disrespected. They placed no value whatsoever on their victims' lives. These superpredators, according to *Body Count*, were an entirely different sort of entity than youth criminals in the middle of the twentieth century. So what accounted for their emergence?

Before answering this question, *Body Count* dismissed the overall influence on crime of several explanatory factors put forth by both liberals and conservatives. For liberals, they addressed the variables of poverty and racism. Poverty will be discussed at more length later in this chapter, but to these authors, poverty did not matter much because during periods of increased government spending on social programs (creating more opportunities), as well as overall improved economic prosperity (such as the 1960s), crime still soared. *Body Count's* straightforward argument against the liberal notion that racism and racial disproportionality in the justice system is a source of crime was that different races simply commit different levels of crime.[14]

The authors also discounted the impact of several conservative theories: that crime would be mitigated with "tougher" prisons, greater use of the death penalty, wider availability of guns to law abiders, and closing legal loopholes such as *Miranda* constraints. Making prisons less "coddling" and "no-frills" will not work, because most criminals do not expect to end up in prison. (See Chapter 3 of this book for a discussion of deterrence theory.) Utilizing the death penalty as a crime control method was futile, because the legal system is set up to protect most murderers from execution. Putting either more guns out there (following the theory that guns in good citizens' hands are a deterrent) or fewer guns (following the notion that we need to keep them out of the hands of the bad guys) has not been shown to reverse crime trends; highly specific gun-related policies that can reduce crime need to be explored, but currently, gun policies have little impact on crime. Finally, legal protections afforded suspects during the Warren Court, such as *Miranda*, may work to the advantage of a small percentage of offenders, but they have a very small effect on the total crime rate.[15]

So what did account for high violence and drug use rates among young men? Not *economic* poverty, to *Body Count*, but *moral* poverty. Moral poverty is

> the poverty of being without loving, capable, responsible adults who teach you right from wrong; the poverty of being without parents and other authorities who habituate you to feel joy at others' joy, pain at others' pain, satisfaction when you do right, remorse when you do wrong; the poverty of growing up in the virtual absence of people who teach

> morality by their own everyday example and who insist that you follow suit. In the extreme, moral poverty is the poverty of growing up severely abused and neglected at the hands of deviant, delinquent, or criminal adults.[16]

Those youth living with moral poverty experience an inability to control their impulses and a lack of empathy. Early drug use, to these authors, was a huge player in the crime-causing formula, so deeply entangled with criminal acts that the two together were a virtual cocktail for a career in crime. Those living in moral poverty were contrasted with those raised in moral health—the latter were raised by loving parents or guardians and grow up with a network of caring adults who afford them both encouragement and discipline and who teach by example. *Body Count*'s authors were careful to indicate that the presence of moral poverty or moral health was the driving force of crime no matter what the child's race, socioeconomic status, or any other demographic.[17]As evidence in support of their thesis that moral poverty causes crime, the authors pointed to a number of studies that have explored the effect of family and other contextual factors on crime and delinquency, such as parental criminality, parental absence, child maltreatment, and neighborhood criminogenic characteristics—such as the prevalence of felons, ex-felons, and drug addicts.[18]

Body Count concluded with some prescriptions that could presumably help avoid "get-tough" strategies for addressing the problems of the drug-crime connection and moral poverty, including stigmatizing drug use; boosting the potency of the institutions of families, churches, schools, and the media; eliminating needless barriers to adoption; and, to them, most important, restoring bonds of affection, devotion, and love between adults and children, and "remembering God."[19] Simultaneously, though, the authors put forth an extensive defense of get-tough approaches to street criminals—especially chronic offenders—involving both punishment (doing a better job of implementing incapacitation policies especially with the most serious and frequent offenders), supervision (reforming probation and parole practices to allow for more effective monitoring), and policing (adopting zero-tolerance approaches to law enforcement).[20] It is the latter set of policies that *Body Count* is best known for: a conservative punishment-oriented approach to crime and justice. Its authors believed that the nation's government had been failing its citizens egregiously by being too lenient on criminals. To them, social policies had failed, and it was up to law enforcement and the correctional system to protect the people.

Writing in response to *Body Count*, Elliott Currie, a left-of-center criminologist, attempted to dismantle the notion that stricter punishment was the answer, argued that an economic form of poverty was behind the crime increase, and offered social policy–based solutions, in his 1998 book *Crime and Punishment in America*. Currie had a couple years more data than did

Bennett et al., so he had bare evidence of the beginning of the great crime decline. Of that, he wrote, "While guarded optimism may be in order, complacency is not. And there is no guarantee that the respite we are now enjoying will last."[21] Thus, like *Body Count*, in *Crime and Punishment in America*, Currie was operating under the assumption that crime was near its all-time high and there was no solid evidence that it would ameliorate.

Currie began by highlighting that the state and federal prison population rose dramatically from 1971 (200,000) to 1996 (1.2 million).[22] Even accounting for population, this was a near quadrupling of the incarceration rate. The increase in incarceration particularly affected black men. For example, in California, Currie observed that "four times as many black men are 'enrolled' in state prison as are enrolled in public colleges and universities."[23] This was caused predominantly by the war on drugs, as in the decade from 1985 black state prison inmates there for drug offenses swelled in numbers by over 700 percent.[24] In concluding his remarks on the growth of prisons, Currie stated, "Short of major wars, mass incarceration has been the most thoroughly implemented government social program of our time."[25] Given the magnitude of the investment in incarceration, it would seem that a large return would be in order; not the case, said Currie. Violent crime rose considerably over the same twenty-five-year period that the prison population did, especially among the young and impoverished.

Whereas *Body Count* blamed the crime escalation on moral poverty and an overly lenient prison system, Currie assigned fault to the rise of poverty and income inequality and lack of social services spending.

> An American child under eighteen was half again as likely to be poor in 1994 as twenty years earlier, and more and more poor children were spending a long stretch of their childhood, or all of it, below the poverty line. The poor, moreover, became increasingly isolated, spatially and economically, during these years—trapped in ever more impoverished and often chaotic neighborhoods, without the support of kin or friends, and successive administrations cut many of the public supports—from income benefits to child protective services—that could have cushioned the impact of worsening economic deprivation and community fragmentation.[26]

To Currie, the increased dollars spent on prison were taken from public services such as education and housing, especially services for poor children.

Currie went head to head with Bennett et al. in attempting to debunk the notion that "prison works," addressing three "myths": leniency, efficacy, and costlessness. With respect to leniency, he took issue with *Body Count*'s authors' famous saying that was published in news outlets nationwide that "only 1 in 100 violent crimes results in a prison sentence."[27] Though correct factually, Currie said it was wrong to use this statistic as fodder for putting

violent and recidivist criminals behind bars for longer periods of time; instead, the statistic was a direct result of a poor rate of *arrest* and a poor rate of *convictions* for those arrested. Currie also said that lengthy incarceration is not efficacious, as *Body Count* argued. He pointed, for example, to jurisdictions where less punitive sentencing policies were accompanied by declines in homicide and, by contrast, to jurisdictions where more punitive sentencing correlated to more violent crime.[28] Regarding the costlessness myth, Currie dismissed DiIulio's argument that "for every dollar we spend to keep a serious criminal behind bars, we save ourselves at least two or three. The $16,000 to $25,000 a year it takes to incarcerate a felon is in fact a bargain, when balanced against the social costs of the crimes he would commit if free."[29] Because the money spent on incarceration *in aggregate* did not reduce crime, it was disingenuous to base costlessness on an analysis of that unique subset of career violent offenders for whom incarceration does have a payout.

Currie's proposed solutions were not further expanding incarceration, nor "remembering God," but attacking the crime problem through prevention, social action, and reforming the justice system with a kind-handed approach. First, he assailed the notion that the first round of preventative methods (largely from the 1960s) was attempted and failed.[30] Those programs, for the most part, were too small both in scope and in funding, and naturally never had the potential to transform communities and individuals prone to criminal behavior. To Currie, much had been learned since the 1960s, and that there were four areas of emphasis that had a basis in evidence and that could work if properly implemented: "preventing child abuse and neglect, enhancing children's intellectual and social development, providing support and guidance to vulnerable adolescents, and working intensively with juvenile offenders."[31] Currie's solutions included home visiting by outsiders; working with families at high risk for abuse; enhancing school performance; providing jobs for vulnerable adolescents; and implementing "multisystemic therapy," which viewed youth as placed within a nest of interconnected systems, including family, peers, school, communities, and the job market.[32] As for social action, Currie argued that broader measures must be taken to ensure noncriminogenic environments, including reducing poverty with higher wages and an improved social security system.[33] With respect to the justice system, Currie concluded that rather than using get-tough approaches, such as extreme incarceration, boot camps, or punitive probation, Americans should identify those rehabilitation programs that *do* work and implement them on a large scale.[34]

Crime and Punishment in America and *Body Count* did have one key intersection: both believed in the importance of focusing on changing adolescents' environments, and both highlighted family health. However, the former pushed for interventions based on rehabilitation and fighting poverty and argued against punitive measures, whereas the latter wanted to bolster institutions such as the church, combat moral poverty, and use the penal

system more fully and efficiently. Regarding the future, both works envisioned a future where crime would remain high (unless their proposed set of interventions was implemented). Instead, as their respective printing presses were cooling off, the United States' great crime decline was in full force and would sustain to the present day.

EXPLAINING THE 1990s DECLINE

From 1991 to 2001 homicide rates decreased by 43 percent, violent crime indexes by 34 percent, and property by 29 percent. Furthermore, this decline occurred among all geographic areas and all demographic groups.[35] Researchers scrambled to unearth the causes, especially since conventional wisdom, such as that voiced by Currie and Bennett et al., was that crime would continue to explode. Two of the most prominent works analyzing the decline were economist Steven Levitt's 2004 article, "Understanding Why Crime Fell in the 1990s," and Berkeley professor Franklin Zimring's 2007 book *The Great American Crime Decline*.[36] This section discusses some of the more prominent explanations, organized into two categories. The first is comprised of factors that are constantly shifting over time: economic measures, population demographics, police strength, and imprisonment rates. The second pertains to time-specific accounts of phenomena that occurred sometime prior to the drop: the emergence of the crack epidemic, the legalization of abortion, and unleaded gasoline. The following section will address in detail what some have come to believe is a powerful explanation: changes in policing *quality*.

One of the most natural responses for average citizens when asked to account for changes in crime rates is to suggest the economy is responsible—downturns for increases in crime and upturns for decreases. Yet the relationship between economic factors and crime is complex, and decades of research have shown very few consistent findings (and many nonintuitive).[37] From 1991 to 2001 the real GDP per capita increased by about 30 percent, and the annual unemployment rate fell from 6.8 to 4.8 percent.[38] However, as Levitt argues, much of the impact of the economy on crime may be mediated through government budgets (e.g., increased monies available for police may result in an increase in police strength that in turn reduces crime). In fact, as the economy was swelling in the 1990s, President Clinton's initiative to hire 100,000 new police officers was well underway.[39] According to Zimring, in his analysis of a number of studies on the effect of economy on crime during this time period, "the range . . . estimates, from one-quarter to 40% of the total property crime decline, is a substantial part of the 1990s story."[40] If this were true, that would still leave 60 to 75 percent of the decline in property crime unaccounted for. Finally remains the question of what happened to income inequality during this time period. By all accounts, the share of

wealth captured by those at the top (e.g., 1%) continued to increase throughout the 1990s.[41] Moreover, income inequality continued to expand through the 2000s, as crime's great decline persevered. By 2012, after the Great Recession of 2007–2008, the US Census Bureau had declared that the income gap between the rich and the poor was the widest since 1967. The Gini index measures income distribution: a zero represents perfectly even distribution, whereas a one represents complete concentration. Its low was in 1968, at .351. Since then it has been rising, and by 2012, it was .456.[42] The general conclusion that income inequality is associated with violence *across* societies has not seemed to apply to the effect of inequality on crime *within* the United States during the period of the decline. What is not forecastable is whether if inequality continues its ascent, it will reach a tipping point past which it will impact crime rates.

Another explanation offered to account for the crime decline pertained to changing demographics, in particular the aging of the baby boomers. People age out of crime with a fairly dramatic trajectory. After World War II there was an explosion of babies. Following the Great Depression, when family growth was impractical, and the war, when family growth was often impossible, young couples gave birth at record rates. The boomer era lasted for about fifteen to twenty years (the most common period cited is 1946–1964), after which boomer mothers had reached the end of their fertility, the birth control pill emerged, and Americans became more material, with less money to spend on large families. Because most crime is caused by those in their late teens and early twenties, one would expect a large baby explosion in the 1940s and 1950s to result in crime increases in the 1960s and 1970s, which indeed did occur. From 1980 to 2000, the fifteen- to twenty-four-year-old population dropped by 26 percent. If you divide that twenty-year period into four periods of five years, crime rates declined in all except for 1985–1990, when youth offending rates increased beyond their normally high rate.[43]

On the surface, the baby-boomer argument seems a strong candidate for explaining the crime drop. However, if one takes what Zimring referred to as a predictive versus a retrospective approach to analyzing age structures and crime, the strength of the relationship is questionable. Retrospectively, Levitt estimated that changes in the age distribution "may have reduced homicide and violent crime by a few percent and property crime by as much as 5–6 percent."[44] Zimring noted that even an age-based 6 percent decrease in larceny during this period would account for 26 percent of the total decline in larceny.[45] Levitt referred to all property crime rather than just larceny and concluded that "demographic shifts may account for a little more than one-sixth of the observed decline in property crime in the 1990s, but are not an important factor in the drop in violent crime."[46] Predictively, though, age structure's impact in more recent years was not impressive. The percent of the US population of fifteen- to twenty-four-year-olds in

1980, 1990, 2000, and 2010 was 18.7, 14.9, 13.9, and 14.1.[47] While the youth population leveled off by the late 1990s, crime continued its decline.

Two law-and-order lines of reasoning were also put forth to explain the decline. The first was that the *amount* of law enforcement (measured by number of police officers) was increased and that the more cops, the less crime.[48] Levitt included this variable as one of his "four factors that explain the decline in crime" and not as one of his "six factors that played little or no role in the crime decline."[49] He pointed to a number of econometric works (including his own) which showed that increasing the number of police can reduce crime: from 1991 to 2001 the effect of an increase in overall police numbers on crime, he argued, was about 5 to 6 percent.[50] Zimring noted that Levitt was selective in what studies he chose to include in his examination of the effect of police size and that "the moderate growth in policing certainly had no more than a 5% impact on crime rates and probably much less than that."[51]

The second enforcement-oriented argument was—in line with conservative thinkers—that prison expansion through the 1990s helped explain the crime drop. Imprisonment is theorized to reduce crime through its incapacitation effect (physically removing offenders from society) and general deterrent effect (demonstrating to the general population what happens when one commits crime). Levitt noted that of the prison growth between the mid-1970s and 2000, more than half occurred during the 1990s. Over two million people were incarcerated (at some point) in 2000, four times as many as in 1972.[52] According to him, the increase in incarcerated individuals during the 1990s was associated with about a 12 percent drop in homicides and violent crime, an 8 percent drop in property crime, and accounted for one-third of the total decline in crime.[53] Zimring's analysis of the effect of imprisonment distinguished between the deterrent and incapacitation effects. With deterrence, the best measure of incarceration would be the proportional increase in prison population (representing the increased threat of imprisonment), whereas with incapacitation, the best measure would be the aggregate number of incarcerated individuals (representing the number of crimes prevented by the physical barrier between offenders and the public).

While crime in the United States from the mid-1970s until 2000 followed what Zimring referred to as a "roller-coaster pattern," the increase in incarceration was "uninterrupted."[54] For both types of incarceration effects, Zimring noted that trends in neither of their measures could reliably predict crime shifts since 1975.[55] After discussing a number of issues that confuse the process of determining the effect of one on the other—such as diminishing returns once incarceration reaches sky-high levels, elasticity (an economic concept usually referring to supply and demand dynamics), the difficulty with measuring marginal general deterrence, and a focus on the cumulative effect of imprisonment (which could explain why the crime decline was the greatest toward the end of the period studied, 1995–2000)—Zimring

concluded by pointing to contrasting estimates. At the low end, incarceration explained 10 percent of the 1990s crime decline, and at the upper end it explained 27 percent of the drop.[56]

All of the explanations mentioned so far are of factors that constantly shift over time. The next three are of events that occurred sometime prior to the 1990s but had an effect that may have kicked in during that decade. The first is the emergence and recession of the crack cocaine epidemic, oft-studied by Alfred Blumstein.[57] Crack is a form of cocaine—produced by mixing powder cocaine with sodium bicarbonate and heating it—which is extremely concentrated and produces a much stronger high than powder and lasts for a much shorter time. Because of its high-to-price ratio, among other characteristics, it became extremely popular, especially in inner cities. It burst on the scene in the early to mid-1980s and immediately inspired gangs to control the crack market, with territoriality becoming key, and heavy, intergang handgun violence resulting. Levitt pointed out that the most compelling evidence in favor of a crack effect on crime is that homicide rates among black males fourteen to twenty-four years old soared in 1985 for a decade and then began a rapid descent from the mid-1990s to 2000. It is this demographic that would have been most likely to be affected if crack markets did affect homicide rates.[58]

Levitt nonetheless was moderate in his estimation of the total effect of crack on the crime decline. He noted that there was a dearth of adequate empirical studies on the causality question, but said he believed that crack did play some role for homicide rates. He estimated that the decline of crack led to about a 6 percent reduction in overall homicides in the 1990s, which would account for 15 percent of the total decline in homicide.[59] Zimring began his analysis by asserting that the rise and fall of crack, relative to the rise and fall of crime, could be summed up by the saying, "the nice thing about hitting your head against a stone wall is that it feels so good when you stop."[60] Nonetheless, while he gave credence to the rise of crack affecting the increase in crime, he was more skeptical about the rebound effect—that the decline in crack was responsible for the crime drop. First, he posed an alternative theory for the decline: that after such a dramatic increase among the young black demographic, a drop was sure to eventually occur. This is a phenomenon known as "regression to the mean," which means that when any variable departs dramatically from its historical average, it may naturally return toward the average, often times just as rapidly. Second, he asked why crime would have continued its decline after the crack markets had quieted in the early to mid-1990s.

The continuation, according to Zimring, would not be explained by either crack markets or regression to the mean.[61] Zimring attacked the crack–crime connection in another fashion as well: the crime drop in the 1990s was extremely broad, occurring across all crime types, whereas crack markets only should have affected certain types of crime (why would they

have reduced auto thefts or rapes, for example?). Additionally, homicides did not drop faster than the other crimes, a fact which made it difficult for one to argue that the effect of crack markets contributed substantially to at least one portion (homicides) of the drop.

A phenomenon with even a more delayed hypothesized effect on crime than the rise and fall of the crack cocaine was the decision to legalize abortion in 1973, in the Supreme Court decision *Roe v. Wade*. Although its impact on crime may have been suggested as early as 1990, it was not until Levitt, with his colleague John Donohue, published an article in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics* in 2001 that this proposed effect became commonly discussed within scholarly circles, media, and laypersons.[62] The role of the legalization of abortion impacting crime can be summarized simply: abortion reduces the number of unwanted children, who are at a greater risk for crime. Children who were birthed (and kept) because abortion was not legal may have grown up in negative home environments with feelings of parental resentment and, according to a body of research, were more likely to become involved in crime.[63] In support of the abortion–crime link Donohue and Levitt pointed to several pieces of evidence, including that the states which legalized abortion three years prior to *Roe v. Wade* had crime declines occurring earlier than the rest of the nation and that data over time show a strong inverse relationship between abortion legalization and crime, if one lags the effect of abortion.[64] There is approximately a twenty-year gap between the legalization of abortion and the beginning of the crime drop—this is consistent with the tendency for criminals to become active in their late teens and early twenties. The magnitude of the abortion–crime relationship was significant, according to Levitt: "Extrapolating the conservative estimates of [Donohue and Levitt's study] to cover the period 1991–2000, legalized abortion is associated with a 10 percent reduction in homicide, violent crime, and property crime rates, which would account for 25–30 percent of the observed crime decline in the 1990s."[65]

Donohue and Levitt's article sparked much controversy, both in terms of public outcry over its substance and implications by liberals and conservatives on both sides of the abortion divide, but as well in criticisms of its methodology by other economists.[66] In his book Zimring spent considerable time analyzing the abortion effect[67] (while he did not rule it out as a factor, he did not believe it had near the effect Donohue and Levitt postulated). Two conclusions of Zimring's analysis are worth pointing to. First, Zimring argued that while Donahue and Levitt's theory was based on the idea that those aborted would have been more likely to be at-risk for criminal activity (teenage single moms, economically disadvantaged), demographic trends following *Roe v. Wade* in fact showed that both the raw numbers and relative percentage of births with risk markers *increased*, rather than decreased.[68]

Second, to Zimring, a problem with the type of analysis engaged in by Donohue and Levitt is that it was specific to the United States and was

driven by a decline in need of a theory. In other words, after the decline occurred, it was easy to look for explanations that were *consistent* with it:

> There is a special danger in testing the magnitude of an impact in a time period where the decline in crime is one reason for establishing the theory of the decline. The big drop in crime in the 1990s was one original basis for the abortion dividend theory. Any theory that fit well with the actual crime declines of the 1990s might get credit for crime drops that were in fact unexplained.[69]

Zimring's preferred method of analysis would be that when testing the magnitude of something such as abortion policy on crime, examine effects transnationally, such that the single-country decline is not what is driving the explanation.

The final explanation for the 1990s crime drop discussed in this section is similar to abortion policy in that it required about a twenty-year lagged effect, but it is different in that tests of it have been carried out across nations, within nations, and even within cities, and it is purported to explain not only the crime drop of the 1990s but the crime rise in the 1960s and 1970s. This was not a commonly discussed explanation at the time Levitt and Zimring were evaluating the alternatives, its most exciting findings had not been published yet. In 2013 Kevin Drum wrote an article in the popular *Mother Jones* magazine titled "America's Real Criminal Element: Lead."[70] Drum had spent countless hours poring through works on all the explanations for the crime drop discussed so far in this chapter, and they concluded the problem was that it was impossible to disentangle the factors; they all happened at the same time. Going a different route, he considered crime as an epidemic:

> Experts often suggest that crime resembles an epidemic. But what kind? Karl Smith . . . has a good rule of thumb for categorizing epidemics: If it spreads along lines of communication, he says, the cause is information. Think Bieber Fever. If it travels along major transportation routes, the cause is microbial. Think influenza. If it spreads out like a fan, the cause is an insect. Think malaria. But if it's everywhere, all at once—as both the rise of crime in the '60s and '70s and the fall of crime in the '90s seemed to be—the cause is a molecule.[71]

The molecule responsible for the crime epidemic and crime decline, according to some researchers, was tetraethyl lead, introduced in the 1920s by General Motors and exploding in use with the post–World War II auto frenzy. Drum reviewed twenty years of studies of the effect of crime on lead, from 1994 to 2013, conducted by researchers Rick Nevin, Jessica Wolpaw Reyes, Howard Mielke, and Sammy Zahran. The mechanisms by which lead exposure affects children's development and future criminal proclivity are discussed in Chapter 4 of this book; they are neurological, affect boys more

than girls, and bring about increased aggression, impulsiveness, ADHD, and lower IQ.

Nevin's research began in the mid-1990s and was premised on the notion that there is a direct relationship between atmospheric lead (caused by leaded gasoline consumption) and crime: as lead emissions from cars rose from the postwar period until the early 1970s, violent crime followed (but lagged by twenty-three years).[72] As lead was removed from gasoline during the 1970s, violent crime declined (with a similar lag). A later study of his found that the lead-crime curve fit applied not only in the United States but in Canada, Great Britain, Finland, France, Italy, New Zealand, and West Germany.[73] Reyes analyzed the effects of lead emissions on crime at the state level. The rate of reduction of lead in gas during the 1970s and 1980s varied significantly by state, and she found that the lead-crime curve matched state by state.[74] Most recently, Mielke and Zahran found that among six US cities with good lead emissions and crime data going back to the 1950s—Minneapolis, Chicago, Indianapolis, Atlanta, San Diego, and New Orleans—the lead-crime curves fit in all six cases, with a lag of twenty-two years. Additionally, within a single city, New Orleans, they found that crime rates by neighborhood were associated with lead-based paint in homes and lead-dust-contaminated communities.[75]

After reviewing these findings, Drum wondered why the lead explanation for crime has been all but ignored by criminologists, with the exception of James Q. Wilson (a well-known conservative criminologist who cointroduced broken windows theory), who had acknowledged it in 2011, shortly before his death.[76] One reason was that criminologists tend to look for sociological explanations for crime, rather than medical reasons. Another looked to the impact of interest groups:

> Political Conservatives want to blame the social upheaval of the '60s for the rise in crime that followed. Police Unions have reasons for crediting its decline to an increase in the number of cops. Prison guards like the idea that increased incarceration is the answer. Drug warriors want the story to be about drug policy. If the actual answer turns out to be lead poisoning, they all lost a big pillar of support for their pet issue. And while lead abatement could be big business for contractors and builders, for some reason their trade groups have never taken it seriously.[77]

The lead explanation for crime trends, thus, is an argument by a small number of researchers who are not predominantly criminologists. If it does hold up to empirical scrutiny, it may explain a portion of long-term crime trends but is unlikely to account for the many roller-coaster oscillations in crime.[78]

There remained one last explanation for at least some portion of the great crime decline that is discussed in the next section: quality of policing. Proponents of this explanation typically look to New York City, since it is well known to be on the forefront of modern policing strategies (as of the early

1990s) and the crime drop there was extreme. Levitt concluded that policing strategies did not have much overall impact on the crime decline in New York because (1) New York's drop occurred three years before Commissioner William Bratton took over; (2) policing strategies occurred at the same time as the number of police grew; (3) other major cities such as Los Angles and Washington, DC, with problematic policing, nonetheless had great crime drops; and (4) New York had some of the highest abortion rates in the nation, beginning three years before *Roe v. Wade*.[79] Proponents of the notion that better policing fueled the decline could counter his first argument by saying he misunderstood New York policing during that era, that in fact Bratton (and Jack Maple, one of his lieutenants), as chief of the New York City Transit Unit prior to becoming commissioner, positively influenced crime in New York City. Subway crime—especially robberies—accounted for a significant amount of New York's safety problems, and so innovations in the Transit Unit were of major import in the early stages of the policing transformation. As for Levitt's other arguments, Zimring would take them on, armed with another decade of data, in his 2012 book *The City That Became Safe*.

THE CITY THAT BECAME SAFE

While the nation's crime dropped substantially through the 1990s, Zimring's latest book was devoted to understanding why New York's crime drop was larger than the nation's overall and continued to decline dramatically throughout the 2000s, distinguishing it from the country's other large cities. On a combination of three dimensions, New York was a special case, based on the size, length, and breadth of its drop. In two of the most reliably measured crimes, homicides and auto thefts, other cities' statistics paled to New York's from 1990 to 2009. The Big Apple's rates plummeted by 82 percent (homicides) and 94 percent (auto thefts), compared to 71 and 68 percent for Los Angeles, 47 and 69 percent for Chicago, 64 and 74 percent for Houston, and 38 and 72 percent for Philadelphia.[80] Looking at the seven index crime rates—homicide, rape, robbery, assault, burglary, auto theft, and larceny—New York's decline placed first in all categories over Los Angeles, Houston, San Diego, San Jose, and Boston (with one exception: assaults dropped 67% in New York compared to 78% in L.A.).[81] In terms of length, Zimring noted that while New York's decline was smaller in 2000 to 2009 than in 1990 to 2000, in all of the index crimes, there was a singular, uninterrupted downward trajectory from 1990 to 2009.[82] New York also experienced great breadth in its drop both by crime type (all major crimes declined in a parallel fashion) and geography (the four most populated boroughs, each the size of a major city itself, all experienced similar declines for all index crimes).[83]

Zimring asked why the New York crime decline was twice as long and twice as large as the national trend. "What pushed this city into the

unprecedented condition of 80% drops in most street crime? There were no obvious changes in population, economy, education, or criminal justice sanctions that seem likely candidates to explain the double dose of crime decline . . . . There were large changes in policing, and some combination of new cops, new tactics, and new management appears a likely cause of much of New York's advantage over other cities."[84] While admitting that it is impossible to disentangle the various policing variables from each other to isolate their independent effects explaining the "New York effect" (the additional decline in New York not explained by the national crime drop), Zimring's analysis speculated that there were five policing measures that made a difference, two of them proven and three of them probable.

The two tactics NYPD employed that Zimring believed "almost certainly" reduced crime were hotspots policing and the targeting of drug markets. Hotspots policing involves aggressive patrol, surveillance, and enforcement in those areas that are most criminogenic and have repetitive patterns of violent crime. The positive effects of hotspots policing are well documented.[85] In New York "open-air" drug markets have historically been associated with extreme violence. The New York strategy was to target these areas and drive the dealing inside, since the violence occurs as part of the open-air nature of these markets. Thus, drug use did not decline in New York over this time period (e.g., as measured by overdoses), but the violence associated with street-level dealing and territoriality disputes did.

Three variables that probably made a difference, according to Zimring, were Compstat, getting drugs off the street, and more manpower. Compstat is a managerial concept and involves the gathering of crime information in a timely manner, mapping crimes, and having regular meetings with top brass, holding leaders of geographical divisions accountable for crime activity in their areas. New York's targeting of gun reduction (accomplished through aggressive stop-and-frisks and other investigational strategies) may have made a difference, as evidenced by gun homicides dropping more quickly than non–gun homicides.[86] Finally, the size of the overall police force in New York grew during the 1990s and may have influenced the drop during that time period, but it was unlikely to have made much of a difference in the ongoing drop during the 2000s.[87]

Some of Zimring's statistical analysis in *The City That Became Safe* could be challenged by more rigorous scientific methods, but the overall message the books sent was strong. Crime in New York declined more dramatically than crime anywhere else, and no one has found any more plausible explanations for the New York effect than policing quality. To the extent this was true, other cities could learn from New York.

One need only to look at crime statistics across different cities over time to realize that tremendous disparities exist. To demonstrate this, we used UCR data to calculate violent crime rates (per 100,000 people) from 2014 to

2017 in five large- and medium-sized cities that are the source of frequent attention by crime researchers: New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Baltimore, and St. Louis. In 2017 these rates were 539 (New York), 761 (Los Angeles), 1,099 (Chicago), 2,027 (Baltimore), and 2,082.3 (St. Louis). So for example, Chicago had a violent crime rate approximately twice that of New York. Disparities are also large in changes in crime over recent years. From 2014 to 2017 New York's violent crime rate *decreased* by 9.7 percent, while rates *increased* in other cities by 24 percent (Chicago, St. Louis), 51 percent (Baltimore), and 55 percent (Los Angeles). These are dramatic fluctuations, especially considering that the overall national violent crime rate changed from 362 in 2014 to 383 in 2017 (an increase of only 5.8%).

It is logical, then, that understanding crime trends requires analysis of events and conditions experienced in different jurisdictions. In Los Angeles, for example, information emerged showing that the city had been significantly underreporting violent crime from at least 2005 to 2012 (during that period 14,000 violent assaults were reported as minor, thereby not showing up in the violent crime rate).[88] Still, this resulted in about a 7 percent undercount of actual violent crime, which is not overly helpful in explaining the 55 percent increase in the years following.

In other cities, some have tried to explain rapid increase by local and nationwide narratives relating to police behavior. In 2014 police shot and killed Michael Brown, a black man, in Ferguson Missouri (near St. Louis), a controversial use-of-force incident which ignited activists across the nation, many of whom were already building the Black Lives Matter movement in response to the death of Trayvon Martin in Florida. In Chicago, also in 2014, police fatally shot a seventeen-year-old African American, Laquan McDonald, as he walked away from them, carrying a knife. In Baltimore the next year, Freddie Gray, also African American, died after the Baltimore Police Department failed to properly secure him in a transport van. After these incidents an anti-law enforcement wave developed around the nation, and especially in the particular affected cities.

Heather MacDonald, author of books such as *The War on Cops*,[89] has been especially vocal in arguing that violent crime in urban areas across the country increased in 2015 because law enforcement began "de-policing" (what she refers to as the "Ferguson Effect") as a result of anger against police for these highly volatile and well publicized incidents.[90] Police, the argument goes, were less likely to make arrests and get involved in anything but the most serious crimes, after Ferguson (in the social media age), apprehensive of street-level outrage, negative community response, and fear of personal civil and criminal liability.[91] The single study systematically assessing the Ferguson effect, looking at crime data in the year preceding and following the incident, found no systematic changes in overall nationwide violent or property trends, but did find that robbery rates increased, and some cities such as Baltimore

and St. Louis experienced large increases in homicide rates post-Ferguson.[92] However, New York experienced a nationally publicized incident similar to the others—Eric Garner died after being put in a chokehold during an arrest for selling black-market cigarettes in 2014—and yet the city's violent crime rate did not increase in 2015 as it did in the other cities. And Los Angeles's massive increase in violent crime between 2014 and 2017 cannot be explained by any specific city-specific incident involving police use of force. In a way, each city, and even each neighborhood within a city, is its own laboratory when it comes to understanding crime.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter began by exhorting criminological theoreticians to think how various criminological frameworks apply to the real-world landscape and how some theories may be more policy relevant than others during certain time frames. It discussed the magnitude of the crime drop that occurred in the United States from the early 1990s to the present day. It contrasted two sets of researchers' explanations, one of the crime wave occurring from the 1960s to the 1990s, and one from the 1990s on. Currie and Bennett et al. took different approaches to explaining the wave, whereas Levitt and Zimring had their share of disagreements over what accounted for the great decline. It ended with a discussion of crime in New York and policing tactics.

Many variables were discussed as part of the various thinkers' views on the reasons for crime trends. Some of these were poverty, income inequality, racism, incarceration, moral poverty, parent–child bonds, drug use, the war on drugs, religion, child abuse and neglect, age, law enforcement size, the crack epidemic, gangs, abortion, lead, and police quality. These variables will all be discussed in some way or another as part of the many theories of crime examined in the remainder of the book. They will appear in, for example, control theories and psychological theories (parent–child bonds), biological theories (drug use, lead), conflict theories (the war on drugs, income inequality, racism), classical/deterrence theories (incarceration, police size, police quality), strain theories (gangs), and neighborhood and developmental theories (age, lead, abortion). Policy implications will sometimes arise naturally; at other times, they will be tenuous at best. If lead is a major influencing factor on crime, for example, communities with lead hazards ought to be cleaned up. If police size matters, resources should be spent building police force. If police quality matters, best practices in policing should be a priority for government funding. By contrast, if abortion legalization did in fact have something to do with the crime drop, what would be any current policy implications? If poverty affects crime, how do we eliminate poverty?

Some criminologists believe that only by addressing what they view as the root causes of crime, such as social structure and economic

measures, can crime be reduced. Others take a pragmatic view that deeply entrenched societal factors are immovable in the short or mid-run, and that crime can be reduced quickly and efficaciously based on such theories as opportunity, deterrence, and routine activities, and that is where resources should be allocated. The contrasting approaches play out particularly poignantly in the case of poverty and violence. Whereas root causes theorists have traditionally argued that poverty must be dealt with prior to seeing violence wane, an emerging movement has grown arguing just the opposite. In the bestselling 2014 book *The Locust Effect: Why the End of Poverty Requires the End of Violence*, Gary Haugen and Victor Boutros make this point:

> At this critical inflection point in the fight against global poverty, we must clearly elevate an aspect of poverty in our world that is both underappreciated and very distinct . . .
>
> That aspect of poverty is *violence*—common, everyday, predatory violence. The way our world works, poor people—*by virtue of their poverty*—are not only vulnerable to hunger, disease, homelessness, illiteracy, and a lack of opportunity; they are also vulnerable to violence. Violence is as much a part of what it means to be poor as being hungry, sick, homeless, or jobless. In fact . . . violence is frequently the problem that poor people are most concerned about. It is one of the core reasons they are poor in the first place, and one of the primary reasons they stay poor. Indeed, we will simply never be able to win the battle against extreme poverty unless we address it.[93]

This volume's intention is, and always has been, to provide a history and analysis of the major theories of crime. At the same time, theoretical criminologists are in an era where it is increasingly important for them to be relevant, for their theories to have direct, tangible policy implications, for their analyses to better society. In this spirit, the reader is encouraged to reflect upon the various theories in the text, as to which are most relevant in the modern era.

KEY TERMS

Great American Crime Decline
Uniform Crime Reports
National Crime Victimization Survey
superpredator
moral poverty
criminogenic
income inequality
Gini index
baby boomer
incapacitation
lagged effect
tetraethyl lead
New York effect
Ferguson effect

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How did the explanations for the 1990s crime drop put forth in *Crime and Punishment in America* and *Body Count* reflect to some extent the political nature of their authors?
2. What is the importance of figuring out what was behind the crime decline to the field of criminology as a whole?
3. Which explanations for the crime decline required the use of a lagged effect, and why?
4. In what ways were the New York experience the same as and different from the national experience, in terms of the crime decline?
5. What is the overall plausibility of the lead explanation for crime trends?
6. What are some of the ways in which the abortion explanation may cause public and policy-related controversies?
7. Considering the question of whether a Ferguson effect exists, in what ways is it important to understand both enforcers' motivations and behavior as well as that of law violators?

NOTES

1. Named after Franklin E. Zimring, *The Great American Crime Decline* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
2. See, for example, chapter 2 in Anthony Walsh, *Criminology: The Essentials* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2015).
3. Ibid., p. 30.
4. Arguments toward furthering the use of NIBRS are put forth by Kevin J. Strom and Erica L. Smith, "The Future of Crime Data: The Case for the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) as a Primary Data Source for Policy Evaluation and Crime Analysis," *Criminology and Public Policy* 16 (2017): 1027–1048.
5. William J. Bennett, John J. DiIulio Jr., and John P. Walters, *Body Count: Moral Poverty . . . And How to Win America's War Against Crime and Drugs* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996).
6. Elliott Currie, *Crime and Punishment in America: Why the Solutions to America's Most Stubborn Social Crisis Have Not Worked—and What Will* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1998). Currie also published a second edition of this work in 2013, including an afterword, but the discussion of the book in this chapter pertains to the 1998 edition.
7. Bennett et al., *Body Count*, p. 31, quoting interview from Mark S. Fleisher, *Beggars and Thieves: Lives of Urban Street Criminals* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1995), p. 143.
8. Bennett, *Body Count*, pp. 11–12.

9. Ibid., p. 19, citing *Murder in America* (International Association of Chiefs of Police, May 1995), p. 13.
10. Bennett, *Body Count*, p. 21, citing James Alan Fox, *Trends in Juvenile Violence* (Bureau of Justice Statistics, December 1994), p. 2.
11. Bennett, *Body Count*, p. 22, citing Fox, *Trends in Juvenile Violence*, p. 2.
12. Bennett, *Body Count*, p. 26.
13. Ibid., p. 27.
14. Ibid., pp. 41–47.
15. Ibid., pp. 47–55.
16. Ibid., p. 56.
17. Ibid., p. 57.
18. Ibid., pp. 60–63.
19. Ibid., pp. 187–208.
20. Bennett et al., *Body Count*, pp. 83–136.
21. Currie, *Crime and Punishment in America*, p. 4.
22. Ibid., pp. 12–13.
23. Ibid., p. 13.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., p. 21.
26. Ibid., p. 31.
27. Ibid., p. 40.
28. Ibid., pp. 57–63.
29. Ibid., p. 67.
30. Robert Martinson, "What Works? Questions and Answers About Prison Reform," *The Public Interest* (1974): 22–54.
31. Currie, *Crime and Punishment in America*, p. 81.
32. Ibid., pp. 80–109.
33. Ibid., pp. 110–161.
34. Ibid., pp. 162–184.
35. See, e.g., Steven D. Levitt, "Understanding Why Crime Fell in the 1990s: Four Factors That Explain the Decline and Six That Do Not," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 18 (2004): 163–190, at pp. 167–168.
36. Zimring, *The Great American Crime Decline*; Levitt, "Understanding Why Crime Fell in the 1990s." For diverse perspectives on the crime decline, see also Alfred Blumstein and Joel Wallman, eds., *The Crime Drop in America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
37. Thomas J. Bernard, Jeffrey B. Snipes, and Alexander L. Gerould, *Vold's Theoretical Criminology*, 6th ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 93–114.
38. Levitt, "Understanding Why Crime Fell in the 1990s," p. 170.
39. Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994. Established US Department of Justice, Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.
40. Zimring, *The Great American Crime Decline*, p. 68.
41. See, e.g., Thomas Piketty and Emmanuel Saez, "Income Inequality in the United States 1913–1998," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 1 (2003): 1–39.

42. Carmen DeNavas-Walt, Bernadette D. Proctor, and Jessica C. Smith, *Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2011* (Washington, DC: US Department of Commerce, US Census Bureau, 2012).
43. Zimring, *The Great American Crime Decline*, p. 62.
44. Levitt, "Understanding Why Crime Fell in the 1990s," p. 172.
45. Zimring, *The Great American Crime Decline*, p. 62.
46. Levitt, "Understanding Why Crime Fell in the 1990s," p. 172.
47. US Census Bureau, *Age and Sex Composition in the United States*.
48. Much controversy surrounds the various explanations for why more police would decrease crime. After the Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment concluded that police patrol presence accomplished very little in terms of a variety of criminal justice outcomes, the search began for why and how the overall number of police could impact crime rates and other community health outcomes (see George L. Kelling, Tony Pate, Duane Dieckman, and Charles E. Brown, *The Kansas City Preventive Patrol Experiment Summary Report* [Washington, DC: The Police Foundation, 1974]).
49. See Levitt, "Understanding Why Crime Fell in the 1990s." His "Six Factors That Played Little or No Role in the Crime Decline" were "The Strong Economy of the 1990s," "Changing Demographics," "Better Policing Strategies," "Gun Control Laws," "Laws Allowing the Carrying of Concealed Weapons," and "Increased Use of Capital Punishment." His "Four Factors That Explain the Decline in Crime" were "Increases in the Number of Police," "The Rising Prison Population," "The Receding Crack Epidemic," and "The Legislation of Abortion."
50. Ibid., p. 177.
51. Zimring, *The Great American Crime Decline*, p. 79.
52. Levitt, "Understanding Why Crime Fell in the 1990s," p. 177.
53. Ibid., pp. 178–179.
54. Zimring, *The Great American Crime Decline*, p. 49.
55. Ibid., p. 50.
56. Ibid., p. 55.
57. Blumstein was the principal proponent of the argument that changes in crack cocaine markets were at least partially responsible for the crime drop. See, for example, Blumstein and Wallman, *The Crime Drop in America*.
58. Levitt, "Understanding Why Crime Fell in the 1990s," pp. 179–180.
59. Ibid., p. 181.
60. Zimring, *The Great American Crime Decline*, p. 82.
61. Ibid., p. 83.
62. John Donahue and Steven Levitt, "Legalized Abortion and Crime," *Quarterly Journal of Economics* 116 (2001): 379–420. Their argument became the topic of widespread public discussion especially with the publication of Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner, *Freakonomics: A Rogue Economist Explores the Hidden Side of Everything* (New York: William Morrow, 2005).
63. Levitt, "Understanding Why Crime Fell in the 1990s," p. 182.
64. Ibid., p. 182.

65. Ibid., p. 183.
66. See, e.g., Theodore Joyce, "Did Legalized Abortion Lower Crime?" *Journal of Human Resources* 39 (2004): 1–28; John J. Donahue and Steven D. Levitt, "Further Evidence That Legalized Abortion Lowered Crime: A Reply to Joyce," *Journal of Human Resources* 39 (2004): 29–49.
67. Zimring, *The Great American Crime Decline*, pp. 85–103.
68. Ibid., pp. 94–95.
69. Ibid., p. 103.
70. Kevin Drum, "America's Real Criminal Element: Lead," *Mother Jones*, Jan./Feb. 2013, pp. 29–62.
71. Ibid., pp. 30–31.
72. Rick Nevin, "How Lead Exposure Relates to Temporal Changes in IQ, Violent Crime, and Unwed Pregnancy," *Environmental Research* 83 (2000): 1–22.
73. Rick Nevin, "Understanding International Crime Trends: The Legacy of Preschool Lead Exposure," *Environmental Research* 104 (2007): 315–336.
74. Jessica W. Reyes, "Environmental Policy as Social Policy? The Impact of Childhood Lead Exposure on Crime." Working paper no. 130097. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
75. Howard W. Mielke and Sammy Zahran, "The Urban Rise and Fall of Air Lead (Pb) and the Latent Surge and Retreat of Societal Violence," *Environment International* 43 (2012): 48–55.
76. James Q. Wilson, "U.S. News: Hard Times, Fewer Crimes—The Economic Downturn Has Not Led to More Crime—Contrary to the Experts' Predictions; So What Explains the Disconnect? Big Changes in American Culture, Says James Q. Wilson," *Wall Street Journal, Europe*, May 31, 2011.
77. Drum, "America's Real Criminal Element," p. 34.
78. Some unpublished research has countered the lead-crime relationship. See Wayne Hall, "Did the Elimination of Lead from Petrol Reduce Crime in the USA in the 1990s?" [version 2; referees: 2 approved, 1 approved with reservations], *F1000Research* 2013:156 (https://doi.org/10.12688/f1000research.2-156.v2).
79. Levitt, "Understanding Why Crime Fell in the 1990s," pp. 172–173.
80. Franklin E. Zimring, *The City That Became Safe: New York's Lessons for Urban Crime and Its Control* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), p. 4 (for New York); p. 16 (for the other cities).
81. Ibid., p. 18.
82. Ibid., p. 6.
83. Ibid., pp. 8–14.
84. Ibid., p. 151.
85. See, e.g., Anthony Braga and David Weisburd, *Policing Problem Places: Crime Hot Spots and Effective Prevention* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010).
86. Zimring *The City That Became Safe*, p. 144; Jeffrey Fagan, Franklin E. Zimring, and J. Kim, "Declining Homicide in New York: A Tale of Two Trends," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 88 (1998): 1277–1324.
87. Zimring, *The City That Became Safe*, pp. 138–140.

88. Ben Poston, Joel Rubin, and Anthony Pesce, "LAPD Underreported Serious Assaults, Skewing Crime Stats for 8 Years," *Los Angeles Times*, October 15, 2015.
89. Heather MacDonald, *The War on Cops* (New York: Encounter Books, 2016).
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