

# Overview of Theory

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CRM 2301

- **4 Themes:**

- 1. Mistrust: not everything is true, certain information isn't told, media plays a role in society. Be more objective in society
- 2. Relativity of Truth: defender vs victim. Different perspectives. Different sources of perception.
- 3. Criminology / Sociology
  - Interpersonal relations: individual level, what happened to a person to behave a certain way. What makes a victim vulnerable, why does it happen to them.
  - Group membership: What is it about a particular neighbourhood, community. Gangs and groups that make crime.
  - Social structure:
- 4. Criminological Problems: social problems, looking at problems that are within criminology, behaviours constructed as criminal, bad behaviours, victimizations and etc.

- **Theory Construction:**

- 1. Social Situation / Phenomenon
- 2. Concepts: ideas relevant to certain circumstances. Help understand further detail.
- 3. Hypotheses: measure and quality the concepts in different ways. Can be in a form of a question.
- 4. Theory: A type of an explanation of a social problem. Finding information confirming the hypotheses.

- **Equation:**

- WHY CRIME? — — SEARCH FOR EXPLANATION — — Criminology
- WHO? WHEN? WHERE? HOW? WHAT?

- **Paradigms: reflection of a much broader concept vs theory which is a certain concept.**

- Basic unit of consensus
- Fundamental image of subject matter

- **ROLE OF PARADIGMS:**

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- Define and Legitimate problems. Justify and rationalize why certain problems should be explored. Certain behaviours have been more criminalized than others.
- Define rules of research activity.
- Draw practitioners into the community.
- **Introductory Terms:**
  - **Epistemology:** The philosophical theory of knowledge of, how we know what we know? what's informing or influencing the theory. the background context of what starts the theory. Why does a particular theory speak about a particular topic?
  - **Objectivity:** Detached, unprejudiced, open to whatever the evidence may reveal.
  - **Etiology:** Study of causation / causality. Direct relations between certain crimes in the community. One thing causes another, it's a chain reaction.
  - **Determinism:** Informed by "biological reductionism" differences in group or individual behaviours are thought to be observed or identifiable - assuming biological causality.
- **Review:**
  - **Demonic:** Structure = Church (God & Divine Law)
    - Deviance = Sin (temptation or possession)
    - Cause = Supernatural, broader and spiritual influences
    - Response = trials, torture
    - Critique = Reliance of belief
    - Information was based on fear more than fact
- **Classical CRM:**
  - Structure = State & Legislative Power
  - Social contract - consensus
  - Deviance = utilitarian Calculus; Individual Act. Recognize peoples decision making disabilities
  - Cause = Hedonism (MAX GAIN AND MINIMIZE PAIN)
  - regardless of purpose and intentions, it is the act that is punished
  - Response = PUNISHMENTS, Deterrence has to be proportionate to the act.
  - Focus on individual
  - Still biases that filter through, certain individuals fulfill in criminal behaviour more than others.

- **Neo-Classical CRM:**
  - Structure = State (Consensus)
  - Response:
    - Mitigating circumstances. Was it by accident?
    - Record of the Offender. Is this a repeating behaviour?
    - Pathology (social inequalities and social defects)
- **Positivism:**
  - Structure = State and Science
  - Biologically rooted in the individual .
  - Cause = Differentiation - INDIVIDUAL BEHAVIOUR.. Who is involved?
  - Response = Treatment
  - Much more harmful treatments than beneficial
  - Individual is allegedly too passive

### **Broad Questions:**

- What is crime within positivist theories?
- What causes crime?
- Who is the criminal?
- How can we identify criminals or differentiate between criminals and non criminals?
- How can we intervene (control, reform, rehabilitate, prevent) in order to reduce crime?

### **Conceptualization of the Individual**

- Determinism (from biological, psychological and or social factors)
- Essentialism:
  - Set of attributes which are necessary to an entity's identity and function;
    - associate certain aspects of something and relate them to a broader identity. What the entity will represent.
  - "Possible to establish definitively the truth of a scientific theory and research" -> "complete explanations by discovering the essence... behind the appearance of a phenomenon"

### **Thought Process**

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- Distinction between normal and abnormal thinking patterns and processes. to distinguish and differentiate individuals
- Abnormal thinking patterns are part of the problem

### **Conceptualization of Society**

- Produced by a somewhat natural social order (homeostasis and coherence)

or

- Sick organism

or

- as composed of distinct sub-groups

### **Favoured Analytical Tools**

- Casual Factors
- multifactorial factors

### **Epistemology / Methodology**

- Scientism:
  - Belief in power of scientific knowledge and techniques
- Distinction between facts and values. Facts were heavily influenced by norms and values. Certain facts through political agendas to achieve something.
- Distinctions between politics and science
- Casual thinking
- World has a natural order
- Goal: Discover, predict harms and control

### **Researchers Role**

- Expert who produces applicable knowledge to solve social issues that are constructed as problems