

PART I

The Origins of Modern Criminology

For much of Western history the dominant theory of crime was the “demonic perspective” (Einstadter and Henry, 1995; Pfohl, 1985). Crime was said to be the result of supernatural forces. People engaged in crime because they succumbed to the temptations of evil forces, such as Satan, or because they were possessed by evil forces. As Pfohl (1985) points out, this perspective can be summed up using the language of comedian Flip Wilson: “The devil made me do it.” Although no longer the dominant explanation of crime, this perspective can still be seen today. Many people, for example, argue that certain individuals engage in crime because they are “evil.”

According to the demonic perspective, crime is sinful behavior or an offense against God (or the gods). It is not surprising, then, that this perspective inspired very harsh reactions to crime. Brutal methods were often used to determine whether people were possessed or had given into evil forces, with many of these methods involving torture. And those found guilty were often brutally punished. For example, they might be burned alive or otherwise slowly tortured to death in a public ceremony. These punishments were designed “to purge the body of a sinner of traces of the devil and thereby restore the body of the community as a whole to its proper relation to God” (Pfohl, 1985: 25).

The demonic perspective was dominant through the 1700s, when it was challenged during the Age of Enlightenment by a group of individuals who came to be known as the “classical” criminologists. Cesare Beccaria was the first and most prominent of these criminologists, and

selections from his book, *An Essay on Crimes and Punishments*, are reprinted here. This book, first published in 1764 in Italy, was immensely popular and had a profound impact on criminology and the Western legal system.

The essential ideas of “classical theory” are quite simple. Individuals are rational beings who pursue their own interests, trying to maximize their pleasure and minimize their pain. And unless they are deterred by the threat of swift, certain, and appropriately severe punishments, they may commit crimes (harm others) in their pursuit of self-interest (for overviews, see Bernard et al., 2009; Hochstetler, 2010; Martin et al., 1990; Pfohl, 1985).

This simple theory differs from the demonic perspective in a fundamental way. Rather than arguing that crime is caused by *supernatural* or “other-wordly” forces, classical theory argues that crime is caused by natural forces or forces of this world—such as the absence of effective punishments. Supernatural forces cannot be observed, which means that the demonic perspective cannot be tested to determine whether it is true or false—there is no way to definitively test whether crime is caused by demonic possession. As such, the demonic perspective is not a scientific theory of crime. Classical theory focuses on natural forces that can be observed. For example, we can observe how swift and certain punishments are. As a consequence, we can test classical theory and thus it is seen as the first of the modern theories of crime.

Classical theory dominated criminology from the late 1700s until the late 1800s. It then came

under heavy attack, with Cesare Lombroso being one of its primary opponents. Lombroso's own theory, first proposed in 1876, soon replaced classical theory as the dominant explanation of crime. Drawing on Darwin's theory of evolution, Lombroso argued that many criminals are "genetic throwbacks," or primitive people in the midst of modern society. Their primitive, savage state is what leads them to engage in crime. Criminals, then, are *not* normal, rational individuals who choose to engage in crime to maximize their pleasure and minimize their pain. Rather, they are fundamentally different than noncriminals, and these differences compel them to engage in crime.

Although Lombroso's theory differs from classical theory in important ways, it too argues that crime is caused by natural forces. Lombroso developed his theory after conducting extensive examinations of criminals and noncriminals. He emphasized that theories must be based on or tested against observations of the world; in fact, he attacked the "armchair theorizing" of classical criminologists. Lombroso is sometimes called the "father" of modern criminology in part because of his emphasis on scientifically testing theories. Brief selections from a book summarizing Lombroso's theory of crime are presented here.

It is important to examine the theories of Beccaria and Lombroso because of their enormous impact on contemporary theories of crime. Many modern theories of crime continue to argue that people are motivated to engage in crime through the pursuit of their self-interests and that what determines whether they engage in crime are the constraints they face, such as the threat of punishment (see the discussions of control theory in Part V and of deterrence, rational choice, and routine activity in Parts X and XI). Other theories of crime draw more heavily on the tradition established by Lombroso, arguing that individuals differ greatly in their motivation for crime, with such differences being determined by forces largely beyond their control, including biological factors and the social environment.

Classical Theory

Classical theory was developed in reaction to the harsh, corrupt, and often arbitrary nature of the legal system in the 1700s. Classical theorists were mainly interested in critiquing this system and offering proposals for its reform, but embedded in their arguments is a theory of criminal behavior.

Laws in the 1700s were frequently vague and open to interpretation. Judges, who held great power, would often interpret these laws to suit their own purposes. So the punishment for a particular crime might vary widely, with some people receiving severe penalties and others not being punished at all. Poor people, who could not afford to bribe the judges, were at a special disadvantage. Further, the punishments for many crimes were quite harsh, often involving torture and death.

Beccaria and other classical theorists thought that this system was both unjust and ineffective at controlling crime. They based their critique on the work of several philosophers, particularly Thomas Hobbes. Hobbes argued that people naturally pursue their own interests and that this pursuit of self-interest frequently leads people to harm one another. People, being rational, agree to give up some of their freedom to the state in order to prevent this harm from occurring. That is, people essentially enter into a social contract with one another, agreeing to accept certain limits on the pursuit of their self-interests so as to prevent a "war of all against all." The state enforces this social contract, establishing laws that place limits on the pursuit of self-interest and punishing people who violate these laws.

Beccaria and other classical theorists applied these ideas to the legal system. Like Hobbes, they assume that people act in a rational manner, choosing those actions that result in the greatest pleasure and least pain. Given this assumption, how should crime be controlled?

Classical theorists argue that people will be deterred from crime if the pain associated with punishment outweighs the pleasure associated with crime. But if such punishments are to be effective, they must be well known, swift, and

certain. The system will break down if the laws are unknown or obscure, if punishments are delayed, or if judges apply the laws in an arbitrary or discriminatory manner so that only some offenders are punished. Individuals must believe that if they commit a particular crime they will quickly suffer the punishment defined in the law.

For that reason, Beccaria favors clearly defined laws, public punishments, and the elimination of judicial discretion. In his view, the role of judges should be to determine guilt or innocence, not to decide on the punishment to be administered.

Crime, then, stems from the pursuit of self-interest in the absence of effective punishments. Beccaria did not fully explain why some individuals in a particular society are more likely than others to engage in crime, but he offered certain suggestions. He states, for example, that theft

is commonly the effect of misery and despair; the crime of that unhappy part of mankind, to whom the right of exclusive property . . . has left but a bare existence. (1983: 36)

The circumstances of some individuals, then, may lead them to evaluate the potential pains of punishment and pleasures of crime differently than other individuals. Poor people, for example, may be less deterred by the pains of punishment and more attracted by the pleasures of crime. These arguments, however, are only briefly mentioned and do not form a central part of classical theory.

Beccaria's book was quite popular and formed the basis for the legal systems in the United States, France, and other countries. The classical idea that offenders are rational individuals who choose to engage in crime is at the foundation of our legal system. It is the reason that we feel it is proper and just to punish offenders. The idea that the law should be applied equally to everyone (blind justice) also derives from classical theory. In particular, we tend to base punishments on the crimes committed by the offender rather than on the characteristics of the offender. Finally, current proposals to control crime by increasing the certainty and severity of punishment derive from classical

theory. People, being rational, should reduce their criminal behavior in response to increases in the certainty and (perhaps) severity of punishment. Beccaria, however, argues that the certainty of punishment is more important than the severity. He states that overly harsh punishments are unnecessary, are unjust, and frequently backfire. For example, "if punishments are very severe, men are naturally led to the perpetration of other crimes, to avoid the punishment due to the first" (1983: 43).

Even though classical theory has had a large effect on our legal system and on contemporary theories of crime, its central assumptions have been challenged. First, classical theory assumes that everyone is motivated to engage in crime through the pursuit of their self-interests. That is, everyone experiences situations where engaging in crime might help them better satisfy their interests, such as monetary interests. While this remains a central assumption of certain control and deterrence theories, most modern theories of crime argue that individuals and groups differ greatly in the motivation for crime (for example, see Parts III, IV, and XII of this book).

Second, classical theory assumes that people are rational and engage in crime to minimize their pain and maximize their pleasure. Some criminologists, however, argue that many offenders are not rational and that crime is not in their self-interest. Rather, they engage in crime because of forces beyond their control and they often suffer greatly because of their behavior (see the critique of deterrence and rational choice theories in Part X). The legal system has partly recognized the validity of this challenge by changing the law so that punishments are based not simply on the offense committed but also to some extent on the characteristics and circumstances of the offender. In particular, certain categories of offenders, such as juveniles and the insane, are treated differently because they are seen as being less rational or having less control over their behavior than other offenders. And judges now have more discretion in determining the punishments to be administered, so they can take into account those circumstances

that influence the commission of crimes (see Bernard et al., 2009, on the “neoclassical” school).

Third, classical theorists state that whether people engage in crime is largely dependent on the swiftness, certainty, and appropriateness of the punishments they face. Almost all criminologists now recognize that other factors have a larger impact on the likelihood of crime than the punishments administered by the legal system. Those other factors are described throughout this text. Nevertheless, classical theory was the first of the modern scientific theories of crime and, as you will see in subsequent sections, many of its ideas live on today.

Lombroso and the “Positive School” of Criminology

Although classical theory was the dominant theory of crime for close to 100 years, it came under heavy attack in the late 1800s. One reason for this was that crime rates appeared to be increasing despite changes in the legal system inspired by classical theory. There was also some evidence that punished offenders were more, rather than less, likely to continue offending (see Bernard et al., 2009). Further, the image of the offender suggested by classical theory—a rational, self-interested person who chooses to engage in crime—was challenged by the biological sciences, particularly the work of Darwin. While several criminologists challenged classical theory during this time, the work of Lombroso attracted the most attention.

Lombroso first presented his theory of crime in 1876. He challenged the idea that criminals are normal, rational people who choose crime in order to maximize their pleasure and minimize their pain. In the initial version of his theory, Lombroso argued that criminals are anything but normal. Rather, they are “genetic throwbacks,” primitive people in the midst of modern society, and their primitive or savage state compels them to engage in crime. Lombroso, a physician who worked in the military and at an asylum, based his theory on extensive examinations of criminals and noncriminals. These examinations led him to develop a list of traits that could be used to

determine whether a person is one of these throwbacks or “born criminals.” These traits included a large jaw and cheekbones, swollen or protruding lips, an arm span greater than the individual’s height, excessive wrinkling, and a prehensile foot.

If you imagine what someone with these traits might look like, you will likely think of the stereotypical “caveman.” It should be noted that Lombroso increasingly came to recognize that environmental factors also play an important role in the causation of crime, and he later argued that there were several different types of criminals, with the “born criminals” making up about one-third of all criminals (see Baez, 2010; Beccalossi, 2010; DeLisi, 2013; Gibson and Rafter, 2006).

Lombroso’s work helped lay the foundation for what is known as the “positive school” of criminology, which now dominates the field. The positive school argues that crime is due to forces beyond the individual’s control—biological, psychological, or social forces. The positive school is distinguished by its search for these forces or causes of crime and by its reliance on the “scientific method” in this search. That is, the positive school argues that the theories we develop must be tested against our observations of the world. The positive school is often contrasted with the classical school.

It is said that the classical school argues that individuals *freely choose* to engage in crime, whereas the positive school implies that criminals have no choice in their actions. This difference between the schools, however, has been exaggerated. As Beirne (1991) argues, classical criminologists did *not* place as much emphasis on free choice as is commonly portrayed. In fact, they point to several factors, such as the pursuit of self-interest and the nature of punishments, that strongly influence or determine whether individuals engage in crime. For this reason, Beirne contends that Beccaria’s theory might better be viewed as a forerunner of positive criminology. Nevertheless, there is a clear difference in the theories; although both describe the causes or determinants of crime, they focus on rather different causes.

What does the evidence say about Lombroso’s theory? His theory and other early biological theories were rather simplistic: they pointed to gross

biological features that were said to distinguish criminals from noncriminals, and they argued that biological factors often lead directly to crime. These theories were rigorously evaluated during the early to middle 1900s, with researchers comparing the traits of criminals to those of carefully matched samples of noncriminals (similar in age, class, race, and so on to the criminals being studied). Such comparisons provided little support for the early biological theories. This finding, along with a concern for the policy implications of these theories (e.g., selective breeding and sterilization, justification for racist policies), led to the decline of biological theories of crime (see Baez, 2010; Beccalossi, 2010; Bernard et al., 2009; Brennan

et al., 1995; DeLisi, 2013; Gibson, 2002; Horn, 2003; Rafter, 1997, 2004; Raine, 1993 for excellent overviews of early biological theories).

There has, however, been a recent resurgence of interest in biological theories of crime. The new biological theories are, of course, much more sophisticated than Lombroso's theory. They consider a range of biological factors, argue that these factors increase the likelihood that individuals will develop traits conducive to crime (biological factors do *not* lead directly to crime), and recognize that the impact of biological factors on crime is influenced by the social environment. These contemporary biological theories are described in Part XII.

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1. An Essay on Crimes and Punishments

Cesare Beccaria

Beccaria's book, *An Essay on Crimes and Punishments*, presents the first of the modern or scientific theories of crime. The book, first published in 1764, became the foundation for the classical theory of criminology, which dominated explanations of crime for close to 100 years. According to classical theory, people are rational and concerned with minimizing their pain and maximizing their pleasure. Their efforts to do so often lead them to engage in crime, unless they are deterred by the threat of punishment.

Beccaria's book is primarily concerned with criticizing the legal system in the 1700s and offering proposals for its reform, but he presents the classical theory of crime in the process. Beccaria draws heavily on Thomas Hobbes's theory of society in critiquing the legal system, and his book opens with a brief summary of that theory, reprinted in the opening paragraph here. Hobbes noted that the pursuit of self-interest often leads people to harm one another and that individuals must give up some of their liberty for the sake of "peace and security." In particular, they form nations and such nations establish laws and administer punishments to deter people from harming one another in their pursuit of their interests or "passions." However, to be effective, punishments must meet certain conditions. Beccaria describes the characteristics of effective punishments in the remainder of this selection, noting that such punishments should be set by the "sovereign" or representative of the state

(not decided by judges), clearly stated, proportionate to the crime, swift, and certain (for an overview of Beccaria's work, see Carpenter, 2010; see also Sweet and Groarke, 2010, on Jeremy Bentham, another major figure in the classical school).

Beccaria's theory is reflected in modern deterrence theories, which focus on the impact of official punishments on crime. Such theories and the evidence on their validity are discussed in Part X. Briefly, some evidence shows that the certainty of punishment influences the likelihood of crime, but it is probably not among the most important causes of crime. The swiftness of punishment appears to have little impact on crime. Not much research has been done on the other characteristics of punishment listed by Beccaria, primarily because they are difficult to measure with existing data.

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Of the Origin of Punishment

Laws are the conditions, under which men, naturally independent, united themselves in society. Weary of living in a continual state of war, and of enjoying a liberty which became of little value, from the uncertainty of its duration, they sacrificed one part of it, to enjoy the rest in peace and security. The sum of all these portions of the liberty of each individual constituted the sovereignty of a nation; and was deposited in the hands of the sovereign, as the lawful administrator. But it was not sufficient only to establish this deposit; it was also necessary to defend it from the usurpation of each individual, who will always endeavour to take away from the mass, not only his own portion, but to encroach on that of others. Some motives, therefore, that strike the senses, were necessary to prevent the despotism of each individual from plunging society into its former chaos. Such motives are the punishments established against the infractors of the laws. I say, that motives of this kind are necessary; because, experience shows, that the multitude adopt no established principle of conduct; and because, society is prevented from approaching to that dissolution, (to which, as well as all other parts of the physical, and moral world, it naturally tends) only by motives, that are the immediate objects of sense, and which being continually presented to the mind, are sufficient to counterbalance the effects of the passions of the individual, which oppose the general good. Neither the power of eloquence, nor the sublimest truths, are sufficient to restrain, for any length of time, those passions, which are excited by the lively impressions of present objects. . . .

Of the Interpretation of Laws

Judges, in criminal cases, have no right to interpret the penal laws, because they are not legislators. . . . The laws receive their force and authority from an oath of fidelity, either tacit, or expressed,

which living subjects have sworn to their sovereign, in order to restrain the intestine fermentation of the private interests of individuals. From hence springs their true and natural authority. Who then is their lawful interpreter? The sovereign, that is, the representative of society, and not the judge, whose office is only to examine, if a man have, or have not committed an action contrary to the laws. . . .

Of the Obscurity of Laws

If the power of interpreting laws be an evil, obscurity in them must be another. . . . Crimes will be less frequent, in proportion as the code of laws is more universally read and understood: for there is no doubt, but that the eloquence of the passions is greatly assisted by ignorance, and uncertainty of punishments. . . .

Of the Proportion Between Crimes and Punishments

. . . *It* is not only the common interest of mankind, that crimes should not be committed, but that crimes of every kind should be less frequent, in proportion to the evil they produce to society. Therefore, the means made use of by the legislature to prevent crimes, should be more powerful, in proportion as they are destructive of the public safety and happiness, and as the inducements to commit them are stronger. Therefore there ought to be a fixed proportion between crimes and punishments.

It is impossible to prevent entirely all the disorders which the passions of mankind cause in society. These disorders increase in proportion to the number of people, and the opposition of private interests. . . . That force, which continually impels us to our private interest, like gravity, acts incessantly, unless it meets with an obstacle to oppose it. . . . Punishments, which I would call political obstacles prevent the fatal effects of private interests. . . .

Of the Intent of Punishments

The end of punishment . . . is no other, than to prevent the criminal from doing further injury to society, and to prevent others from committing the like offence. Such punishments, therefore, and such a mode of inflicting them, ought to be chosen, as will make the strongest and most lasting impressions on the minds of others, with the least torment to the body of the criminal. . . .

Of the Advantage of Immediate Punishment

The more immediately after the commission of a crime a punishment is inflicted, the more just and useful it will be. . . . *The degree of the punishment, and the consequences of a crime, ought be so contrived, as to have the greatest possible effect on others, with the least possible pain to the delinquent.* If there be any society in which this is not a fundamental principle, it is an unlawful society; for mankind, by their union, originally intended to subject themselves to the least evils possible.

An immediate punishment is more useful; because the smaller the interval of time between the punishment and the crime, the stronger and more lasting will be the association of the two ideas of *Crime and Punishment*; so that they may be considered, one as the cause, and other as the unavoidable and necessary effect. It is demonstrated, that the association of ideas is the cement which unites the fabric of the human intellect; without which, pleasure and pain would be simple and ineffectual sensations. . . .

It is, then, of the greatest importance, that the punishment should succeed the crime as

immediately as possible, if we intend, that in the rude minds of the multitude, the seducing picture of the advantage arising from the crime, should instantly awake the attendant idea of punishment. Delaying the punishment serves only to separate these two ideas. . . .

Of the Mildness of Punishments

Crimes are more effectually prevented by the *certainty*, than the *severity* of punishment. . . . The certainty of a small punishment will make a stronger impression, than the fear of one more severe, if attended with the hopes of escaping; for it is the nature of mankind to be terrified at the approach of the smallest inevitable evil, whilst hope, the best gift of heaven, hath the power of dispelling the apprehension of a greater; especially if supported by examples of impunity, which weakness or avarice too frequently afford. . . .

That a punishment may produce the effect required, it is sufficient that the *evil* it occasions should exceed the *good* expected from the crime; including in the calculation the certainty of the punishment, and the privation of the expected advantage. All severity beyond this is superfluous, and therefore tyrannical. . . .

Conclusion

From what I have written results the following general theorem. . . .

That a punishment may not be an act of violence, of one, or of many against a private member of society, it should be public, immediate and necessary; the least possible in the case given; proportioned to the crime, and determined by the laws.

Discussion Questions

1. According to Beccaria, why is it necessary for the state to sometimes punish people?
2. Beccaria assumes that offenders are rational individuals pursuing their self-interest. Do

you think this is an accurate view of all or most offenders?

3. Do you think Beccaria would favor the death penalty? Why or why not? (He discusses this issue in some detail in his *Essay on Crimes and Punishments*.)

4. Evaluate our current system of punishing offenders using the criteria for effective punishments listed by Beccaria. In particular, do we satisfy the criteria listed by Beccaria?
5. Beccaria states that the “end of punishment . . . is no other, than to prevent the criminal from doing further injury to society.” Do you agree or do you feel that there are other purposes for punishment? Defend your answer.

2. The Criminal Man

Cesare Lombroso

As Summarized by Gina Lombroso Ferrero

Lombroso's theory is the most prominent of the early biological theories of crime; it replaced classical theory as the dominant explanation of crime in the late 1800s. Lombroso first presented his ideas in 1876 and then revised and expanded on them several times over the next three and a half decades. The selection that follows describes the key features of his theory, as summarized by his daughter.

Lombroso argued that crime is the result of biological differences between criminals and "normal individuals." Drawing on Darwin's evolutionary theory, he claimed that criminals are not as evolved as other individuals: they are savages in the midst of modern society (he described such people as "atavistic"). It is their savage or primitive state that causes their criminal behavior. As indicated in the following selection, Lombroso came to this conclusion while working as a physician in the army and at an asylum. His examinations of criminals convinced him of their biological inferiority, and through such examinations he developed a list of traits that could be used to distinguish "born criminals" from others. Many of these traits are listed in the selection (for excellent overviews of Lombroso's work, see Baez, 2010; Beccalossi, 2010; Bernard et al., 2009; DeLisi, 2013; Gibson, 2002; Gibson and Rafter, 2006; Horn, 2003; Martin et al., 1990; Rafter, 1997).

Lombroso's later research convinced him that environmental factors also play an important role in

crime. Further, he came to the conclusion that there are actually several different types of criminals. "Born criminals," or the genetic throwbacks he first described, made up only about one-third of all criminals, but the savagery of their crimes made them an especially important class of criminals. Subsequent research discredited Lombroso's arguments regarding biology, as most of the traits he listed failed to distinguish criminals from carefully matched samples of noncriminals (see Bernard et al., 2009).

Lombroso's research is important, however, because it helped establish what is known as the "positive school" of criminology. The positive school is distinguished by its search for the causes of crime, whether biological, psychological, or sociological. Positivism is also distinguished by its reliance on the scientific method: Theories must be tested against observations of the world. So even though Lombroso's theory was discredited in the early to middle part of the 1900s, his influence on criminology lives on.

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The classical school based its doctrines on the assumption that all criminals, except in a few extreme cases, are endowed with intelligence and feelings like normal individuals, and that they commit misdeeds consciously, being prompted thereto by their unrestrained desire for evil. The offence alone was considered, and on it the whole existing penal system has been founded, the severity of the sentence meted out to the offender being regulated by the gravity of his misdeed.

The Modern, or Positive, School of Penal Jurisprudence, on the contrary, maintains that the anti-social tendencies of criminals are the result of their physical and psychic organisation, which differs essentially from that of normal individuals; and it aims at studying the morphology and various functional phenomena of the criminal with the object of curing, instead of punishing him. . . .

If we examine a number of criminals, we shall find that they exhibit numerous anomalies in the face, skeleton, and various psychic and sensitive functions, so that they strongly resemble primitive races. It was these anomalies that first drew my father's attention to the close relationship between the criminal and the savage and made him suspect that criminal tendencies are of atavistic origin.

When a young doctor at the Asylum in Pavia, he was requested to make a postmortem examination on a criminal named Vilella, an Italian Jack the Ripper, who by atrocious crimes had spread terror in the Province of Lombardy. . . . "At the sight of that skull," says my father, "I seemed to see all at once, standing out clearly illumined as in a vast plain under a flaming sky, the problem of the nature of the criminal, who reproduces in civilised times characteristics, not only of primitive savages, but of still lower types as far back as the carnivora."

Thus was explained the origin of the enormous jaws, strong canines, prominent zygomae, and strongly developed orbital arches which he had so frequently remarked in criminals, for these peculiarities are common to carnivores and savages, who tear and devour raw flesh. Thus also it was easy to understand why the span of the arms in criminals so often exceeds the height, for this is a characteristic of apes, whose fore-limbs are used in walking and climbing. The other anomalies exhibited by criminals—the scanty beard as opposed to the general hairiness of the body, prehensile foot, diminished number of lines in the palm of the hand, cheek-pouches, enormous development of the middle incisors and frequent absence of the lateral ones, flattened nose and angular or sugar-loaf form of the skull, common to criminals and apes; the excessive size of the orbits, which, combined with hooked nose, so often imparts to criminals the aspect of birds of prey, the projection of the lower part of the face and jaws (prognathism) found in negroes and animals, and supernumerary teeth (amounting in some cases to a double row as in snakes) and

cranial bones (epactal bone as in the Peruvian Indians): all these characteristics pointed to one conclusion, the atavistic origin of the criminal, who reproduces physical, psychic, and functional qualities of remote ancestors.

Subsequent research on the part of my father and his disciples showed that other factors besides atavism come into play in determining the criminal type. These are: disease and environment. Later on, the study of innumerable offenders led them to the conclusion that all law-breakers cannot be classed in a single species, for their ranks include very diversified types, who differ not only in their bent towards a particular form of crime, but also in the degree of tenacity

and intensity displayed by them in their perverse propensities, so that, in reality, they form a graduated scale leading from the born criminal to the normal individual.

Born criminals form about one third of the mass of offenders, but, though inferior in numbers, they constitute the most important part of the whole criminal army, partly because they are constantly appearing before the public and also because the crimes committed by them are of a peculiarly monstrous character; the other two thirds are composed of criminaloids (minor offenders), occasional and habitual criminals, etc., who do not show such a marked degree of diversity from normal persons. . . .

Discussion Questions

1. The positive school of criminology, which Lombroso helped found, argues that crime is not the result of free will; rather, it is due to factors over which the individual often has little or no control. As such, this school focuses less on the punishment of the offender and more on "curing" the offending. To what extent do you think crime is an act of free will or one caused by forces beyond the individual's control?
2. What policy recommendations might an adherent of Lombroso's theory make for controlling crime? (A consideration of these recommendations will help you understand one of the reasons why the theory was later attacked.)
3. List those factors said to distinguish "born criminals" from others. How would one go about providing a good test of Lombroso's theory?

PART II

The Chicago School: The City, Social Disorganization, and Crime

As the United States proceeded into the 20th century, individualistic theories of crime enjoyed substantial popularity (Gould, 1981). Cesare Lombroso's biological theory, for example, was widely read and accepted (Lindesmith and Levin, 1937). In 1939, Harvard anthropologist E. A. Hooton not only claimed boldly that "criminals are organically inferior," but also proposed that "the elimination of crime can be effected only by the extirpation of the physically, mentally, and morally unfit; or by their complete segregation in a social aseptic environment" (quoted in Vold and Bernard, 1986: 6). Hooton's work may have been extreme, even for its time (see Merton and Montagu, 1940), but it represented a way of thinking that persists more than six decades later: The seeds of crime lie within people and the only way to protect public safety is to incapacitate this dangerous class (see Herrnstein and Murray, 1994; cf. Cullen et al., 1997 and Gordon, 1994).

Other social observers in the early part of the century, however, criticized these individualistic theories for their myopia. While criminal anthropologists like Lombroso and Hooton focused their attention on discerning whether criminals had larger foreheads or more tattoos than non-criminals, they ignored the larger changes in society that were occurring around them. The United States was rapidly moving into the modern era, transforming itself from a land sprinkled with small, stable farming communities into a land

dominated by crowded cities that were centered around booming industries and whose residents were constantly in flux. For these social observers, it defied common sense not to see how these vast changes were intimately implicated in the cause of crime. In fact, they claimed that our understanding of the origins and prevention of criminal conduct depended on a careful study of how the forces *outside* individuals prompted their willingness to break the law.

Social Disorganization in the City

Perhaps nowhere was social change more rapid and more dramatic than in the city of Chicago. When first incorporated in 1833, Chicago had a population of just over 4,000. By 1890, this number had climbed to 1 million, and in just 20 years, the population had doubled to 2 million (Palen, 1981). Sheer numbers, however, capture only part of the changes that were taking place. Like other large cities, Chicago was the settling place for virtually every racial and ethnic group, as African Americans traveled to the North in search of a better life and immigrants from Europe ended their journey in the "windy city" that butted up against Lake Michigan. These urban newcomers typically secured work at and settled in the shadows of factories erected in the center of the city. Their lives were hard—they worked long hours in the factories and lived in overcrowded tenements dirtied by industrial

pollution. Upton Sinclair captured the social reality of these inner-city neighborhoods in the title of his book *The Jungle* (1905).

In this context, it may not be surprising that scholars at the University of Chicago believed that the key to understanding crime lay not in studying the traits of individuals but in studying the traits of neighborhoods. Did it make a difference, they asked, if a child grew up in an inner-city community that was characterized by poverty, a mixing together of diverse peoples (i.e., “heterogeneity”), and by people constantly moving in and, when able, moving out (i.e., “transiency”)? And if so, might not the solution to crime lie more in changing neighborhoods than in changing people?

This line of inquiry was developed most clearly by Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay (1942 [Chapter 3 in this volume]), who worked at the Institute for Social Research in Chicago and who were deeply influenced by the thinking of sociologists at the University of Chicago. To explain how cities such as Chicago develop, Ernest Burgess (1967 [1925]) had theorized that urban areas grow through a process of continual expansion from their inner core toward outer areas. As this growth process matures, we find cities that have a central business or industrial area. Just outside this area is the “zone in transition.” It is here that impoverished newcomers settle, attracted by factory jobs and inexpensive housing. In a series of concentric circles, three more zones exist outside the inner city; Burgess called these the “zone of workingmen’s homes,” the “residential zone,” and the “commuters’ zone.” These areas are settled by people who have adjusted to city life and have accumulated the resources to leave the zone in transition.

Shaw and McKay believed that Burgess’s theory of the city might help direct their investigations of juvenile delinquency. If Burgess was correct, then rates of delinquency should be higher in the inner-city areas. In these locations, the intersection of persistent poverty, rapid population growth, heterogeneity, and transiency

combined to disrupt the core social institutions of society such as the family; that is, these conditions caused *social disorganization*. They hypothesized that delinquency would be higher in these communities and lower in neighborhoods that were more affluent and stable (i.e., “organized”).

But how would they test these ideas? In an innovative and enormous effort in data collection, whose results were published in *Juvenile Delinquency and Urban Areas* (1942), Shaw and McKay analyzed how measures of crime—such as youths referred to the juvenile court, truancy, and recidivism—were distributed in the zones of the city. By hand, they mapped the addresses of each delinquent, which they then compiled to compute rates of delinquency by small census area and then by city zone. They discovered that over time, rates of crime by *area* remained relatively the same—regardless, that is, of which ethnic group resided there. This finding suggested that characteristics of the area, not of the individuals living in the area, regulated levels of delinquency. They also learned, as their theory predicted, that crime rates were pronounced in the zone of transition and became progressively lower as one moved away from the inner city toward the outer zones. This finding supported their contention that social disorganization was a major cause of delinquency (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993: 30–31).

Just how did social disorganization cause delinquency? Unfortunately, Shaw and McKay did not supply a refined discussion of this concept in which they systematically explored the dimensions of disorganization and how each one was criminogenic (Bursik and Grasmick, 1993). Even so, they broadly suggested that social disorganization referred to the breakdown of the social institutions in a community. In the inner city, then, families would be disrupted, schools would be marked by disorder, adult-run activities for youths would be sparse, churches would be poorly attended, and political groups would be ineffectual. When such a pervasive breakdown occurred, adults would be unable to control youths or to stop competing forms of criminal

organization from emerging (e.g., gangs, vice activities). This combination was highly criminogenic. Freed from adult control, youths roamed the streets, where they came into contact with older juveniles who transmitted to them criminal values and skills (see also Thrasher, 1927).

Shaw and McKay gained many of their insights on the process by which youths become embedded in delinquency from in-depth interviews—"life histories"—that they conducted with wayward adolescents (see, e.g., Shaw, 1966 [1930]). In *The Natural History of a Delinquent Career* (1976 [1931]), for example, Shaw compiled the story of Sidney Blotzman, who by age 16 had engaged in numerous crimes, including robbery and sexual assault. Shaw recorded that Sidney had begun his "career in delinquency" by age 7, a career that persisted and grew more serious as he matured. Referring to Sidney's story, Shaw noted that due to his associations with older delinquents and adult criminals, the boy "began to identify himself with the criminal world and to embody in his own philosophy of life the moral values which prevailed in the criminal groups with which he had contact" (p. 228).

But why was Sidney exposed to these criminogenic influences? Here, Shaw reminds the reader that Sidney "lived in one of the most deteriorated and disorganized sections of the city" (p. 229). In these communities, continued Shaw, "the conventional traditions, neighborhood institutions, and public opinion, through which neighborhoods usually effect a control over the behavior [of the] child, were largely disintegrated" (p. 229). The community, however, "was not only disorganized and thus ineffective as a unit of control"; in addition, "various forms of stealing and many organized delinquent and criminal gangs were prevalent in the area" (p. 229). These criminal groups competed for the lives, in effect, of the area's children. "These groups," observed Shaw, "exercised a powerful influence and tended to create a community spirit which not only tolerated but actually fostered delinquent and criminal practices" (p. 229).

In Parts III and V, we will discuss two theoretical traditions whose roots extend to the work of Shaw and McKay: differential association/social learning theory and control theory. Thus, the work of Edwin Sutherland (Chapter 6) draws directly on Shaw and McKay's contentions that social areas have different mixes of criminal and conventional influences, and that the exposure to and learning of criminal values, mainly by associating with others in the same neighborhood, is a key source of crime. Sutherland captures these ideas in his "theory of differential association," which is an effort to systematize the insights of Shaw and McKay and of other Chicago school theorists (see, e.g., Thrasher's 1927 work, *The Gang*). Similarly, early statements of control theory, such as that by Reckless (1961) and that by Reiss (1951)—both of whom studied at the University of Chicago—build directly from Shaw and McKay's observations and helped to lay the foundation for today's control theories.

It is ironic that in contemporary criminology, these two traditions, which branched off from Shaw and McKay, now are seen as rival theories of crime (cf. Akers [1998] and Matsueda [1988] with Costello [1997], Gottfredson and Hirschi [1990], and Kornhauser [1978]). Although some efforts have been made to *integrate* these two perspectives (see Thornberry, 1987), most often advocates of learning and control theories see themselves as advancing incompatible perspectives, only one of which can be correct.

Revitalizing Social Disorganization Theory

Although Shaw and McKay's work was read by subsequent generations of criminologists, by the 1960s their theory of social disorganization had lost its appeal and its ability to direct research. Instead, other theories, advocating new ways of thinking and identifying new questions to be answered, ascended and captured scholars' attention (see Cole, 1975; Pfohl, 1985). Beginning in the 1980s, however, Shaw and McKay's

disorganization perspective earned renewed interest—an interest that has remained until this day.

In part, criminologists reconsidered the value of disorganization theory because of a more general interest in the “ecology” of crime. This approach analyzes how crime rates vary by *ecological units*, such as neighborhoods, cities, countries, states, or nations. (Recall that Shaw and McKay examined how delinquency rates varied by zones of the city.) This approach is often seen as being on the “macro-level.” In *micro-level* theories, the concern is with identifying how characteristics of *individuals* (e.g., personality, how much strain a person feels) are related to their involvement in criminal behavior. In *macro-level* theories, however, individuals and their traits are not studied; the concern is only with how the characteristics of geographical areas, such as whether they are disorganized, influence crime rates.

Beyond the general interest in ecological research (see Blau and Blau, 1982; Bursik and Grasmick, 1993; Byrne and Sampson, 1986; Reiss and Tonry, 1986), Robert Sampson was most responsible for specifically showing the relevance of using Shaw and McKay’s theory to illuminate crime in today’s society (see also Bursik, 1988; Pratt and Cullen, 2005). Sampson (1986) argued that crime was high in inner cities because the residents had lost the capacity to exercise “informal social control.” Especially in neighborhoods where most families were “broken,” the adult resources needed to supervise youths and involve them in wholesome activities were depleted. Coming from a broken home per se was not the key issue, said Sampson. Rather, it was living in a neighborhood where a high proportion of families were headed by a single parent that created a context in which control could not be exercised effectively. Like Shaw and McKay, Sampson stressed that independent of the traits of individuals, communities varied in their capacity to regulate conduct and suppress criminal behavior.

With W. Byron Groves, Sampson (1989) extended this research. Using data from the British Crime Survey, the authors tested Shaw and McKay’s idea that in communities marked by poverty, heterogeneity, residential transiency, and family disruption, informal relations and controls would be weakened and, as a result, crime would be high. Previously, empirical tests of Shaw and McKay’s perspective had only measured the structural “antecedents” or causes of social disorganization and then examined whether these factors were related to crime (e.g., do communities with more residential mobility have higher rates of crime). These studies took for granted that the social condition in between these structural factors (on the “left” side of the causal chain) and illegal conduct (on the “right” side of the causal chain) was social disorganization. In large part, scholars did not measure social disorganization directly because the existing data sets did not contain information on the extent to which community members were socially integrated and able to exercise social control over wayward conduct. Instead, they were able to compile data on structural factors from the U.S. Census and data on crime rates from the FBI’s Uniform Crime Reports. Meanwhile, they had no direct measures of the “black box” that lay in between structural factors and crime rates. Again, they merely assumed that this “black box” was a weak or “disorganized” community.

The special value of Sampson and Groves’s study was that the British Crime Survey included questions that could be combined to measure whether community members were willing to supervise rowdy teenagers, had friends locally, and participated in neighborhood voluntary organizations. The more these conditions were present, hypothesized Sampson and Groves, the greater the level of social organization; the less these conditions were present, the greater the level of social disorganization. When Sampson and Groves conducted their statistical analysis, they discovered that, to a large extent, the structural factors predicted their measures of

social disorganization and, in turn, that weakly organized areas did indeed have higher crime rates. In short, their data lent support to Shaw and McKay's conclusion that social disorganization was a significant cause of community rates of crime (see also Bursik and Grasmick, 1993; Sampson and Lauritsen, 1994).

It is possible, of course, that other community factors, such as the presence of delinquent subcultures, could also intervene between structural factors such as poverty and transiency and crime (Veysey and Messner, 1999). Still, subsequent research has replicated Sampson and Groves's research with data drawn a decade later from the British Crime Survey, thus indicating that Sampson and Groves's results have proven to be consistent over time (Lowenkamp et al., 2003; see also Taylor, 2001). More generally, Sampson and Groves's article furnished persuasive evidence that the social disorganization perspective had a measure of validity and warranted further empirical and theoretical investigation. Indeed, this article generated considerable excitement and did much to revitalize Shaw and McKay's theory. It was not a theory tied to a particular historical juncture—pre-World War II America—but could provide insights into community differences in rates of crime in contemporary times.

Extending Social Disorganization Theory

Theories of crime, however, are not sacred icons to be worshiped at the altar of criminology. No matter how persuasive and elegantly stated, theoretical paradigms should be viewed as provisional understandings of social reality—important in what they allow us to see but not sacrosanct. The challenge is to illuminate how such works might be reconsidered and their explanatory power improved. In this regard, scholars have recently engaged in two lines of inquiry that extend Shaw and McKay's social disorganization theory in noteworthy ways.

These two lines of inquiry are collective efficacy theory and legal cynicism theory, each discussed below.

From Systemic Control to Collective Efficacy

Beginning with Sampson and Groves's classic study, tests of social disorganization theory began to draw from the *systemic model* of community attachment within the sociology literature (e.g., Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974) in order to measure *how* communities organized for effective social control. This systemic model of community attachment views the community as a "complex system of friendship and kinship networks and formal and informal associational ties rooted in family life and on-going socialization processes" (Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974: 329). Using this systemic perspective on community, scholars such as Sampson and Groves presumed that social disorganization and its accompanying weak social control emerged from an absence of strong systems of *friendship*, *kinship*, and *associational ties* among neighborhood residents. Conversely, a systemic conceptualization of social disorganization theory suggested that neighborhood-level density of friendship, kinship, and associational ties enhanced informal social control, thus lowering crime rates.

Despite a good deal of empirical support for this "systemic control model" of social disorganization—from both Sampson and Groves's study and replications (e.g., see Lowenkamp et al., 2003)—a number of other studies in the 1990s and 2000s showed that friendship and kinship ties are not always related to neighborhood crime in the manner predicted. For example, research has shown that effective crime control emerges in communities with *infrequent* interaction and relatively *weak* interpersonal ties among residents (e.g., Bellair, 1997). Moreover, other research has shown that dense personal ties among residents might actually impede effective social control because "networks connect

not just do-gooders but the underbelly of social life, from drug dealers to gang members to crooked politicians" (Sampson, 2012: 151; see also Pattillo, 1998; Venkatesh, 1997). Other work has indicated that dense personal ties among neighbors only work to control crime in certain neighborhoods—such as those that are predominantly white and consist, predominantly, of two-parent households (e.g., Warner and Wilcox Rountree, 1997; Wilcox Rountree and Warner, 1999). Still other work has shown that dense personal ties only work to control particular types of crime involving certain types of offenders (Wilkinson, 2007).

In fact, though he led the development of the systemic control model of social disorganization theory, Robert Sampson (2002) has also been at the forefront of synthesizing evidence contrary to the theory and ultimately challenging the systemic model's implicit assumption that low-crime neighborhoods are those with pervasive interpersonal ties connecting residents. In response, some scholars have broadened the focus of the systemic control model by emphasizing ties to public agencies more than ties among residents as key in effective control of crime (Carr, 2003; Vélez, 2001; Vélez, Lyons, and Boursaw, 2012). Other scholars, including Sampson, have embraced *collective efficacy theory* as a related but distinct alternative to the systemic model of social disorganization theory.

In conjunction with Stephen Raudenbush and Felton Earls, Robert Sampson (1997) attempts to advance collective efficacy theory in a study that examines rates of violence across 343 Chicago neighborhoods (see Chapter 4 in this part). These authors show that "concentrated disadvantage"—a combined measure of a community's poverty, race and age composition, and family disruption—is related to neighborhood rates of violence, even controlling for the characteristics of the people surveyed. Importantly, they reveal that the effects of concentrated disadvantage are largely mediated by—that is, occur

through—the degree of "collective efficacy" in the neighborhood.

But what is this concept of "collective efficacy"? As envisioned by Sampson and his co-authors, collective efficacy is a concept that includes the willingness of community residents both to exercise informal control (e.g., telling youths to quiet down) and to trust and help one another. In a way, the concept of efficacy seems like the opposite of social disorganization (Taylor, 2001: 128). If so, nothing much would be new theoretically, because Sampson et al. would merely be describing the opposite end of the continuum—that is, what an organized community looks like in contrast to a disorganized community. Clearly, there is theoretical overlap between the concepts of "social disorganization" and "collective efficacy," but Sampson and his colleagues are also offering something fresh. Although their ideas are rooted in social disorganization theory, they enrich this perspective in two important ways.

First, whereas Shaw and McKay largely envisioned social organization (as opposed to disorganization) as the presence of *control*, Sampson et al. have added a second component: the notion that neighbors *mutually trust or support one another* (Sampson et al., 1999: 635). Trust or social support is important because it provides a basis on which neighbors might expect others to collaborate with them—to stand behind them—when it becomes necessary to exercise social support (see also Cullen, 1994 [Chapter 41]). Indeed, empirically, trust and the willingness to engage in informal control are highly intercorrelated. As Sampson et al. found, in reality, control and trust are coterminous; that is, "you don't get one without the other."

Second, social disorganization is typically portrayed as a "condition"—as a state of being into which a person moves or is born. In this sense, it is a *static* factor, or something that more or less constantly surrounds those in a neighborhood. In contrast, Sampson and his colleagues

envision collective efficacy as a *dynamic* factor. It is a resource that can be mobilized when the need arises—such as when teenagers become unruly on a street corner or when drug dealers brazenly establish a “crack house” in the neighborhood.

Collective efficacy thus is not simply being organized and having close social ties, but rather is the “*process* of activating or converting social ties to achieve desired outcomes” (Sampson et al., 1999: 635, emphasis in the original). Communities with weak collective efficacy lack the closeness and trust—sometimes called “social capital”—to mobilize as a group and rid their street of troublemakers and disorder (e.g., by personally confronting people, by forming crime watches, by pressuring politicians and the police to “do something” about the problems they face). In contrast, communities high in collective efficacy can amass a unified front to make life for the wayward in their neighborhood uncomfortable by watching them closely, telling them to go elsewhere, and, if necessary, exerting political pressure and getting the police involved (Sampson, 2006, 2011).

Notably, collective efficacy theory has been subjected to a variety of empirical tests, including in Sampson’s important 2012 work, *Great American City: Chicago and the Enduring Neighborhood Effect*. As Sampson concludes:

The research on collective efficacy cuts across a number of different studies, investigators, specifications, time periods, outcomes, and more. . . . Overall the results presented here and by others in a growing number of studies around the world suggest that in communities that are otherwise similar in composition, those with higher levels of collective efficacy exhibit lower rates of crime. There is also evidence that collective efficacy is relatively stable over time and that it predicts future variations in crime, adjusting for the aggregate characteristics of individuals and traditional forms of neighborhood networks. (2012: 177–178)

As Sampson alludes to, there is mounting evidence that collective efficacy affects neighborhood crime not only in Chicago but also in a variety of other cities and countries, including Sweden (Sampson and Wikström, 2008), Australia (Mazerolle, Wickes, and McBroom, 2010), and China (Jiang, Land, and Wang, 2013; Zhang, Messner, and Liu, 2007). That said, the support for collective efficacy theory is not unwavering. For example, Gerben Bruinsma and colleagues (2013) found that collective efficacy was unrelated to offense or offender rates across neighborhoods in The Hague, Netherlands. Further, a Malaysian study by Massomeh Hedayati Marzbali and colleagues (2014) found that higher perceived collective efficacy was actually positively associated with victimization likelihood. Such findings indicate that the applicability of collective efficacy should continue to be assessed in a variety of national contexts (see Bruinsma and Johnson, Forthcoming).

In addition to evidence of collective efficacy’s null effects in some contexts, there is also evidence that its effects can be attenuated by levels of collective efficacy and crime in adjacent areas (Morenoff, Sampson, and Raudenbush, 2001). Additionally, there is evidence that the effects of collective efficacy may be conditional on neighborhood-level social ties (Browning, Dietz, and Feinberg, 2004). Browning and colleagues attribute this conditional effect to “negotiated coexistence” between law-abiding and criminal residents. In contexts where the personal networks of law-abiding and law-violating citizens are intertwined, strong ties might actually provide social capital for the law violators, thereby compromising the expected effect of collective efficacy (see also Pattillo, 1998; Venkatesh, 1997). Social networks linking conventional and criminal residents, and accompanying social exchange, foster collective efficacy. But such networks also pose challenges for collective efforts to control crime.

Despite some questions about the extent to which collective efficacy theory is completely

generalizable across all contexts, collective efficacy has become the central organizing concept within the Chicago school tradition in the 21st century, supplanting “social disorganization” and “systemic control.” Collective efficacy theory is thus having a defining influence on the study of communities and crime, and it should continue to do so well into the foreseeable future. Still, other important developments in community crime theory continue to emerge—including legal cynicism theory, discussed below.

Legal Cynicism and Community Crime

Led in large part by the efforts of David Kirk and Andrew Papachristos, a line of inquiry has emerged in recent years that explicitly addresses the role of community *culture*, above and beyond collective efficacy, in influencing neighborhood violence. In particular, culture in the form of *legal cynicism* is the focus. Kirk and Papachristos (2011: 1197) stress that legal cynicism is a cultural frame “through which individuals interpret the functioning and viability of the law and its agents.” From the frame of legal cynicism, the police are viewed as illegitimate, nonresponsive to residents’ needs and calls for assistance, and unable to adequately provide safety. Kirk and Papachristos stress that legal cynicism is a characteristic of communities. Although individuals in the same neighborhood might have different views of law (variable in the extent to which such views are cynical), legal cynicism is the *collective view* that emerges from social interaction, and it exists independent of individual views.

Legal cynicism is said to emerge from two interrelated neighborhood conditions: (1) concentrated disadvantage, and (2) previous police–resident encounters. Concentrated disadvantage often leads to legal cynicism because it breeds a general sense of alienation from society—a feeling that “the dominant societal institutions

(of which the police and the justice system are emblematic) will offer little in the way of security, either economic or personal” (Kirk and Papachristos, 2011: 1198; see also Sampson and Bartusch, 1998). Previous police–resident encounters, especially in disadvantaged neighborhoods, often lead to legal cynicism because there is evidence that police are less likely to file incident reports when called and more likely to harass and use force (or threats thereof) against suspects in such neighborhoods.

Legal cynicism has consequences for neighborhood rates of violence in that it serves to constrain perceived courses of action for resolving disputes. Specifically, since police are viewed with cynicism, they are not relied upon to handle grievances. Instead, residents take matters into their own hands, which often involves use of violence. Importantly, Kirk and Papachristos stress that such violence does not reflect pro-violence values on the part of the actors (residents). Rather, it reflects culturally defined appropriate action in a context in which reliance upon police is considered unhelpful. Thus, many individuals who do not personally condone violence still might resort to violence in a community with a pervasive cultural frame of legal cynicism.

Kirk and Papachristos (2011) find support for the posited causes and consequences of legal cynicism in an analysis of homicide across 343 Chicago neighborhoods (see Chapter 5 in this part). Results showed that concentrated disadvantage was positively associated with legal cynicism and that legal cynicism, in turn, was positively related to neighborhood violence. The effect of legal cynicism on violence was observed above and beyond the significant effect of collective efficacy, suggesting that legal cynicism is an additional important concept for understanding community crime. At the same time, Kirk and Papachristos’s (2011) analysis implies that legal cynicism, in part, works in conjunction with collective efficacy. In particular, legal cynicism weakens collective efficacy, thereby indirectly increasing violence.

In conclusion, collective efficacy theory and legal cynicism theory, while distinct from Shaw and McKay's original social disorganization theory, are best seen as reinforcing Shaw and McKay's ideas. That is, strong communities can act to quell disorder while communities weakened by structural and cultural problems will be fertile soil for the growth of crime. This general theoretical orientation reminds us that individuals are not islands free from outside influences, but rather are enmeshed in a web of social relations that increase or decrease one's power to influence what transpires in one's neighborhood. Those with the misfortune of residing in isolated,

impoverished, disorganized communities have the double difficulty of being exposed to conditions that might permit their criminal involvement and of being less able to do anything about crime when it occurs around them. Thus, they are at risk of being drawn into a criminal lifestyle on the one hand and on the other of being unable to prevent the disorder and victimization they witness, if not personally experience. The vitality and efficacy of community life and relations, as Shaw and McKay understood, matter greatly; this is an insight that must be included in any systematic explanation of the uneven distribution of crime in American society.

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