Delinquency as a non-conformist behavior on the part of a child not only manifests a problem of personal disorganization but also symptomatizes a state of social breakdown. The problem in its entirety seldom comes to the surface, most of it being outside the reach of law enforcement agencies. The nature of the problem varies from culture to culture and within the same culture from time to time. Delinquent behavior could be analyzed from different viewpoints. It is often described as a normal response to an abnormal situation. Social scientists have discussed it as a form of social maladjustment and a sub-culture of its own. To psycho-analysts, delinquency
occurs as a reaction to the feelings of insecurity, conflict and frustration in the child. Some leading criminologists have theorized its genesis in terms of cultural lag, culture conflict, behavior imitation, differential association, differential response and differential opportunity. In fact, personality oriented and situational factors are so intricately interwoven in the causation of this problem that no single explanation appears to provide a conclusive answer.

Juvenile Delinquency is a social, clinical, and legal label for a wide variety of law and norm-violating behavior. The legal definition of Delinquency is 'behavior against the criminal code committed by an individual who has not reached adulthood' (Bartol, 1999). But the term delinquency has numerous definitions and meanings beyond this one sentence definition. In some states, the legal definition also includes status offending, which is not behavior against adult criminal code but is behaviors prohibited only for juveniles. For example, running away, violating curfew laws, and truancy all qualify as status offences.

In addition, social, legal and psychological definitions of delinquency overlap considerably. Social definition of delinquency consists of a wide variety of youthful behavior considered inappropriate, such as aggressive behavior, truancy, petty theft, vandalism, drug abuse and sexual promiscuity. The behavior may or may not have come to the attention of the police and, in fact, often does not, if the behavior is known to the police, it is not unusual for social delinquents to be referred to community social service agencies or to the juveniles justice courts/boards, but these youth do not qualify for the legal definition of delinquency unless they are found at a court/ board hearing to have committed the crime for which they are charged. Therefore, legally speaking, a juvenile delinquent is one who commits an act against the criminal code and who is adjudicate by an appropriate court/board. In India the

legal definition is restricted to persons younger than age 18, but in some countries there may be variations in their age distinctions.

Psychological or psychiatric definitions of delinquency include the system-based labels of 'conduct disorder' and 'anti-social behavior'. Conduct disorder is a diagnostic designation used to represent a group of behaviors characterized by habitual misbehavior, such as stealing, setting fires, running away from home, skipping school, destroying property, fighting, being cruel to animals and people and frequently telling lies. Under this definition the delinquent may or may not have been arrested for this behavior. Some of the behavior, in fact are not even against the criminal law. If the misconduct began in childhood (before the age of 10), it is called conduct disorder: childhood onset type. If the misconduct began in adolescence, it is called conduct disorder: adolescent-onset type.

The more psychological term anti-social behavior is usually reserved for more serious habitual misbehavior, which involves actions that are directly harmful to the well being of others. It is to be distinguished, however, from anti-social personality disorder, a psychiatric diagnostic label reserved primarily for adults who displayed conduct disorders as children or adolescents and who continue serious offending well into adulthood.

The theories of causation of Juvenile Delinquency have focused on the personal idiosyncrasies of individuals to explain delinquency and crime. These personal attributes—such as an individual's physical or psychological makeup—have been used by researchers and practitioners to formulate theories of deviance and to design policies to deal with lawbreakers. However, one commonality is that all of these theories look at the personal (internal) attributes of people. In the alternative, and using an external approach, sociologists have examined the role of societal factors to explain human behavior.

Sociologists study interrelationships between individuals, socio-economic groups, social processes, and societal structures. They have long examined the association between societal factors and criminal causation, focusing on the effects of society on individual and collective behavior. Sociological theories are not strongly deterministic, in that they tend to explain predispositions toward criminal deviance, and they therefore allow for some degree of free will.

Beginning in the 1920s, the Chicago School of Sociology (centered at the University of Chicago) pioneered modern sociological research. A great deal of research and a number of theories since that time have been developed and continue to be developed, to improve our understanding of the relationship between society and human deviance. Several elements are commonly present in sociological explanations of delinquency and crime:

- Socio-economic conditions and pressures shape individual and collective behavior.
- Inequality and deprivation are associated with delinquency and criminality.
- Sub-cultural norms are often at odds with accepted norms of society creating tensions that can result in sub-cultural conflict with the greater society.
- Delinquency and crime are associated with underclass conditions such as poverty, neighborhood degeneration, low educational achievement inadequate housing, and family dysfunction.

The topic of juvenile delinquency is a fertile area for construction of sociological theory. Three major sociological traditions, including Structural Functionalism, Symbolic Interactionism, and Critical Theory, contribute to the explanation of delinquency and have been the inspiration behind the present study to contribute to the explanation of delinquency.
SOCIOLOGICAL THEORY

1) Structural-Functional Theories

Structural-functional theories regard delinquent behavior as the consequence of strains or breakdowns in the social processes that produce conformity. These theories focus on institutions, such as the family and school that socialize individuals to conform their behavior to values of the surrounding society and on the ways in which these institutions can fail in this task. Wide agreement or consensus is assumed about which behaviors are valued and disvalued in society.

a) Anomie Theory: Emile Durkheim, a French sociologist, introduced the concept of anomie in his book *The Division of Labor in Society*, published in 1893. He used anomie to describe a condition of deregulation that was occurring in society. This meant that rules on how people ought to behave with each other were breaking down and thus people did not know what to expect from one another. Anomie, simply defined, is a state where norms (expectations on behaviors) are confused, unclear or not present. It is normlessness, Durkheim felt, that led to deviant behavior. In 1897, Durkheim used the term again in his study on Suicide, referring to a morally deregulated condition. Durkheim was preoccupied with the effects of social change. He best illustrated his concept of anomie not in a discussion of crime but of suicide.

In *The Division of Labor in Society*, Durkheim proposed two concepts. First, that societies evolved from a simple, non-specialized form, called mechanical, toward a highly complex, specialized form, called organic. In the former society people behave and think alike and more or less perform the same work tasks and have the same group-oriented goals. When societies become more complex, or organic, work also becomes more complex. In this society, people are no longer tied to one another and social bonds are impersonal. Anomie thus refers to a breakdown of social norms and is a condition where norms no longer control the activities of members in society.
Individuals cannot find their place in society without clear rules to help guide them. Changing conditions as well as adjustment of life leads to dissatisfaction, conflict, and deviance. He observed that social periods of disruption (economic depression, for instance) brought about greater anomie and higher rates of crime, suicide, and deviance. Durkheim felt that sudden change caused a state of anomie. The system breaks down, either during a great prosperity or a great depression, anomie is the same result.

Durkheim in his book ‘The Division of Labour in Society’ (1960) argued that the social regulatory forces are at their lowest point during the transition period from primitive, agricultural society to industrial society. Reynolds T Larry & Herman-Kinney J Nancy said that during this time period, old normative structures are disbanded, but new regulatory forces are not fully established. This lack of formal rules, coupled with industrial society’s emphasis on individual wants and motives, leads to the condition Durkheim refers to as ‘anomie’. Anomie represents a state of normlessness or social deregulation. It is in this context that deviance arises. Specifically, in positioning a theory of suicide, Durkheim found that low levels of social regulation leads to a high level of suicide among certain social groups.

Such a perspective of suicide and deviant behavior in general, does not imply that such phenomena are pathological entities. Working from the assumptions that behavior do not persist unless they perform some social function, and since deviant behavior is a persistent entity, Durkheim thus conceived of these phenomena as normal entities and studied then in terms of their functions in maintaining the existing social order. In his classic essay, “The Normal and the Pathological”, Durkheim contends that crime and deviance are present in all societies. Such behavior serves the following functions for the society: (1) it functions as a boundary maintenance

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mechanism- it defines the boundaries of right conduct; (2) it also functions to reconfirm the solidarity of society- it reemphasizes the norms and values of society, strengthening collective sentiments against infringement of the norm; (3) deviance and criminal behavior functions to initiate social change. According to him “Where crime exists, collective sentiments are sufficiently flexible to take on new form, and crime sometimes helps to determine the form they will take. How many times, indeed, it is only an anticipation of future morality- a step towards what will be.”

Robert King Merton also adopted the idea of anomie to explain deviant behavior. While Durkheim contended that anomie resulted from social deregulation, and thus, took as his major focus, the analysis of breakdowns in the social order, Robert Merton, by contrast, introducing a class variable, focuses his theory on the imperfections in the social order specifically, the inconsistencies between cultural goals and the means of achieving them.

The essay by Merton entitled, “Social Structure and Anomie” centers around this idea of “structured strain” which means that the general forces and pressures in the social system that push individuals into deviation. Merton used the concept of anomie to develop ‘Strain Theory’, defining it as the discrepancy between common social goals and the legitimate means to attain those goals. In other words, an individual suffering from anomie would strive to attain the common goals of a specific society yet would not be able to reach these goals legitimately because of the structural limitations in society. As a result the individual would exhibit deviant behavior.

According to Merton, social life is comprised of two elements:
(1) the social situation i.e. sets of relationships among individuals; and (2) the cultural situation i.e. socially approved goals to which people aspire and the institutional means for

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25 Merton Robert (1957), Social Theory and Social Structure, New York, Free Press, pg-154
achieving such goals. Anomie, for Merton, arises not as a result of social
deregulation, but from a disjunction between socially approved goals and the
institutional means of achieving them. While both the goals and means are prescribed
by culture, when society over-emphasis the goals in proportions to the means (or
when the means becomes inaccessible for certain social classes), Merton contends
that a state of anomie or demoralization results which expresses itself in deviant
behavior of various forms.

Merton outlined a number of ways individuals adapt when faced with inadequate
means of attaining their goals. Wherever approved means to approved goals are not
available, Merton argues that the following deviant adaptations may emerge\textsuperscript{26}, Type
I adaptation consists of ‘conforming behavior’. Such an adaptation occurs where
culturally approved goals and means of achieving them are pursued successfully.
Type II adaptation i.e. ‘innovation’, occurs when the culturally goals are accepted
but the institutionalized means are absent. Merton states.... “[innovation]...occurs
when the individual has assimilated the cultural emphasis upon the goal without
equally internalizing the institutional norms governing ways and means of its
attainment.” This adaptation is common to the lower social and economic classes.
Type III adaptations i.e. ‘ritualism’, occurs when the culturally approved goals are
not accepted but the institutionalized means are accepted. The ritualist, frequently a
member of the lower middle class has given up all hope of achieving societal goals,
but nevertheless, clings to the institutionalized means of achieving them. Type IV
adaptation is ‘retreatism’, occurs when the socially approved goals and approved
means are both rejected. The retreatist is a social outcast and is termed as a vagrant,
tramp, alcoholic etc. Type V adaptation i.e. ‘rebellion’, occurs when both the
approved goals and means are rejected, and new goals and means are substituted in
their place. Specifically, this adaptation represents an organized struggle for social
change, function to “introduce a social structure in which the cultural standards of
success would be sharply modified and provision would be made for a closer

\textsuperscript{26} Merton Robert (1957), Social Theory and Social Structure, New York, Free Press, pp-155-160
correspondence between merit, effort and reward”.

In short, Merton’s perspective on deviance expanded upon Durkheim’s theory in two directions. First, through his introduction of the concept of anomie as a disjunction between goals and means, Merton was able to posit an association between limited institutional means and deviant behavior. Secondly, through the introduction of class variable, Merton was able to posit that the amount of deviance varied as a result of the degree of disjunction between means and goals in different social classes, a disjunction which Merton contended occurred more frequently among the lower class.

b) Sub-cultural Theory: In criminology, sub-cultural theory emerged from the work of the Chicago School on gangs and developed through the symbolic interactionism school into a set of theories arguing that certain groups or sub-cultures in society have values and attitudes that are conducive to crime and violence. The primary focus is on juvenile delinquency because theorists believe that if this pattern of offending can be understood and controlled, it will break the transition from teenage offender into habitual criminal. Some of the theories are functionalist assuming that criminal activity is motivated by economic needs, while others posit a social class rationale for deviance. Group-based adaptations to the failure to attain success goals involve the delinquent sub-culture.

Culture is all that is transmitted socially rather than biologically, representing the norms, customs and values against which behavior is judged by the majority. A sub-culture is a distinctive culture within a culture, so its norms and values differ from the majority culture but do not necessarily represent a culture deemed deviant by the majority. A sub-culture is distinguished from a counter-culture which operates in direct opposition to the majority culture. Cultural Transmission Theory and Social Disorganization Theory posit that, in the poorest zones of a city, certain forms of behavior become the cultural norm transmitted from one generation to the next, as
part of the normal socialization process. Successful criminals are role models for the young, demonstrating both the possibilities of success through crime, and its normality. Sub-cultural Theory proposes that those living in an urban setting are able to find ways of creating a sense of community despite the prevailing alienation and anonymity. The cultural structure is dominated by the majority norms, which forces individuals to form communities in new and different ways.

More recently, Fischer (1995) proposed that the size, population, and heterogeneity of cities actually strengthens social groups, and encourages the formation of sub-cultures, which are much more diverse in nature compared to the general culture. Fischer defines a sub-culture as, "...a large set of people who share a defining trait, associate with one another, are members of institutions associated with their defining trait, adhere to a distinct set of values, share a set of cultural tools and take part in a common way of life" In less densely populated and less diverse environments, the creation of such sub-cultures would be nearly impossible. But ethnic minorities, professionals, the artistic avant-garde, displaced agricultural families, etc. come to live in cities and their lifestyles come to typify cities.

The use of sub-cultural theory to explain deviant behaviour was first developed by Albert Cohen (1955), who wished to explain why most delinquent acts were not motivated by money as the anomie model suggests. He concluded that delinquency was not a result of concern for "money success" as Merton claimed but instead a result of the pressures of all dominant values. As working class male adolescents in the inner city fail in school, they begin to feel that they cannot achieve in society by legitimate means and experience a social "status frustration".


Merton suggested that they then turn to crime in order to attain wealth. However, Cohen argued that instead they form a sub-culture that "takes its norms from the larger culture but turns them upside down". Stealing and vandalism are valued within the gangs and so not only provide delinquents with a method of retaliating against the society that rejected them but also provide them with an alternative means of gaining status in the eyes of his peers.

The features of Cohen's theory of Sub-culture were:

- Anti-utilitarian: in many cases, there was no profit motive in thefts or other crimes. The main intention was to foster peer bonding through sharing the experience of breaking the laws.
- Collective reaction formation: the gang inverted the values of the majority culture, deliberately pursuing the mirror image of the American Dream.
- Malice: many acts of vandalism and property damage were motivated by spite, contempt, and personal intention to injure.
- Short-termism: the gang lived for the moment, looking for instant gratification.
- Group autonomy: everything was aimed at consolidating group loyalty.

Cohen suggests that children of the underclass, and potential members of a delinquent sub-culture, first experience a failure to achieve when they enter school. When assessed against a "middle class measuring rod," these children are often found lacking which in turn results in a growing sense of "status frustration." Underclass children are simply not prepared by their earliest experiences to satisfy middle class expectations. The delinquent sub-culture therefore emerges as an alternative set of criteria or values that underclass adolescents can meet.

Another influential work on delinquent sub-culture was written by Richard Cloward and Lloyd Ohlin, Delinquency and Opportunity: A Theory of Delinquent Gangs
These authors were the first to argue that different types of delinquent subcultures can be linked to different types of communities. Thus not only can one imagine the pressures towards delinquency and crime from a structural perspective, but one can also assess the form of sub-culture on the basis if the local social structure in each community.

Like Cohen they also focused on delinquent gangs that are typically found among adolescent males in the lower-class areas of large urban centers. Those in the lower class often find opportunity for success blocked and these individuals suffer strain. This strain leads to the formation of delinquent sub-cultures that eventually lead to delinquent behavior. They further elaborated upon three delinquent sub-cultures and suggested that the route to delinquency involved one of three sub-cultures:

1) Criminal Sub-cultures: This is the manifestation of Merton's anomie theory, in which adolescents use crime for material gain. This sub-culture usually forms in areas where there is an established organisation of adult crime that provides an "illegitimate opportunity structure" for youths to learn the "tricks of the trade".

2) Conflict Sub-cultures: When an illegitimate opportunity structure is not available, delinquents often form conflicting gangs out of frustration at the lack of any available opportunity structures.

3) Retreatist Sub-cultures: Retreatist sub-cultures, which involve drug use and hustling, are generally found among "double failures" - those that cannot find acceptance in either legitimate groups or the two other sub-cultures.

Cloward and Ohlin felt that delinquency was not a result of failure in school but was,

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as Merton suggested, a result of adolescents' frustration at their lack of "money success".  

**Walter Miller**  
Miller (1958, 1959) agreed with Cohen that there was a delinquency sub-culture, but argued that it arose entirely from the lower class way of life. There was a clear distinction in values between the two social classes. Whereas the middle class is achievement and social goal oriented, Miller thought that lower class parents were more concerned with ensuring that their children stayed out of trouble, e.g. sons avoiding fights and daughters avoiding pregnancy. Boys were expected to be tough and street-smart which gave them an incentive to join a gang. Given that their ordinary lives were boring, the excitement of crime was a welcome relief, bringing a sense of autonomy by denying the social controls imposed by the state.

For the middle class, the most important institutions are family, work, and (for the child) school. For the lower class another institution plays a crucial role – the same sex peer group or gang is more important than family, work or school because it offers a sense of belonging, and a way to achieve status that they cannot easily achieve in mainstream society. Thus, delinquency was not a reaction against middle class values but rather a means of living up to their own cultural expectations for toughness and smartness. Indeed, the gang only recruited the most “able” members, so membership of a gang confirmed high status. It was simply unfortunate that the state had decided that many gang activities were criminals.

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c) **Social Control Theory**: Social control theory is a major theory of deviant behavior although it has been utilized primarily in the study of delinquent behavior in contrast with other traditional theories of deviance which ask the question, "Why do people commit deviant acts?"; social control theorist ask, "Why don't they do it?". Social control theorists begin with the assumption that we all find deviance attractive, enticing, lucrative etc. Why is it, then, that most people do not engage in deviant behavior? Why don't they break the law and become criminals?

As Hirschi explains in "A Control Theory of Delinquency", the answer lies in the bonds or ties we have with conventional society. If these bonds are weak or broken, we will be free to deviate from the norm. At the level of individuals, to have neither goals nor means is to be uncommitted and thus uncontrolled. He has argued that the absence of control is all that really is required to explain much delinquent behavior.

There are other types of controls (besides commitment to conformity) that may also operate: involvement in school and other activities; attachments to, friends, school, and family; and belief in various types of values and principles. According to Hirschi delinquent behavior is inversely related to the presence of these controls. Alternatively, as these controls accumulate, so too does conformity. Again, Hirschi's point is that no special strain between goals and means is necessarily required to produce delinquent behavior; all that is required is the elimination of the constraining elements of the social bond.

It is our lack of ties to conventional society that lead to deviance and delinquency. Control theory has four essential elements: (1) attachment (2) commitment (3) involvement and (4) belief.

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The first bond, attachment, refers to one's interest in others. One's acceptance of social norms and the development of social conscience depend on attachment for other human beings. Hirschi views parents, schools, and peers as important social institutions for a person. Attachment takes three forms--attachment to parents, to school, and to peers. While examining attachment to parents Hirschi found that juveniles refrain from delinquency due to the consequences that the act would most likely produce, therefore putting such a relationship between parent and child in jeopardy. In some respect, we can argue that this acts as a primary deterrent to engaging in delinquency.

The second bond is that of commitment and it involves time, energy, and effort placed on conventional lines of action. In other words, the support of and equal partaking in social activities tie an individual to the moral and ethical code of society. Hirschi's control theory holds that people who build an investment in life, property, and reputation are less likely to engage in criminal acts which will jeopardize their social position. A lack of commitment to such conventional values will cause an individual to partake in delinquent or criminal acts.

The third bond is involvement. This addresses a pre-occupation in activities which stress the conventional interests of society. Hirschi argues that an individual's heavy involvement in conventional activities doesn't leave time to engage in delinquent or criminal acts. He believes that involvement in school, family, recreation, etc., insulates a juvenile from potential delinquent behavior that may be a result of idleness.

The final bond is that of belief and it deals with assents to society's value system--which entails respect for laws, and the people and institutions which enforce such laws. Hirschi argued that people who live in common social settings share similar
human values. If such beliefs are weakened, or absent, one is more likely to engage in anti-social acts. Also, if people believe that laws are unfair, this bond to society weakens and the likelihood of committing delinquent acts rises.

Hirschi thus argues that the more attached we are to normal conventional members of the society such as our parents, teachers, employers, clergy, etc., the less likely we will commit deviant behavior. Further, the more involved we are in culturally-sectioned activities, such as the boy scouts and organized little league, the less likely we will commit deviance. Finally, the more deeply we believe in societal norms, the less likely we will commit deviant and delinquent acts.

In sum then, deviance, for social control theorists, is held in check or contained by social bonds to conventional institutions, persons, activities and beliefs. The stronger are such bonds, the less likely will individuals deviate.

2) Symbolic-Interactionist Theories
Early versions of symbolic-interactionist theories focused on how adolescents acquired these meanings and definitions from others, especially peers; more recently, theorists have focused on the role of official control agencies especially the police and courts, in imposing these meanings and definitions on adolescents. The significance of this difference in focus will become apparent as we consider the development of the symbolic-interactionist tradition.

He argued that people violate laws only when they define such behavior as acceptable and that there is an explicit connection between people and their ideas (that is, definitions).

So, for example, in his book ‘White Collar Crime’ he wrote that delinquent behavior is "learned in association with those who define such behavior favorably and in isolation from those who define it unfavorably, and that a person in an appropriate situation engages in such criminal behavior if, and only if, the weight of the favorable definitions exceeds the weight of the unfavorable definitions."37

Later Edwin Sutherland and Donald R. Cressey wrote an essay on “The Theory of Differential Association”. In their essay, Sutherland and Cressey maintain that “deviance is a group product, the result of an excess of definition unfavourable to violation of the law”38. Further, such definitions are learned in a normal learning process with other individuals who are in a process of communication. The chief source for learning criminal behavior occurs within small, intimate groups. This learning process includes techniques of committing the crime, the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations and attitudes.

The efficiency of this learning process is a function of the frequency, duration, priority and intensity of differential association. In sum, for these theorists, deviant behavior is not caused by biological or genetic processes, nor is it discovered accidentally. It involves a learning process that one person passes on to others; people who develop deviant careers differentially associate with others who condone deviant/illegal activities. Individuals engage in deviance because of an excess of definitions favorable to the violation of law over definitions unfavorable to the violation of law.

37 Bhushan B (1989), Dictionary of Sociology, New Delhi, Anmol Publication, pg-74
Differential association theory was Sutherland's major sociological contribution to criminology; similar in importance to strain theory and social control theory. These theories all explain deviance in terms of the individual's social relationships. The principle of differential association asserts that a person becomes delinquent because of an "excess" of definitions favorable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation of law. In other words, criminal behavior emerges when one is exposed to more social message favoring conduct than pro-social messages.

Sutherland argued that the concept of differential association and differential social organization could be applied to the individual level and to aggregation (or group) level respectively. While differential association theory explains why any individual gravitates toward criminal behavior, differential social organization explains why crime rates of different social entities are different from each other's. The theory was elaborated and refined in various editions of Sutherland's highly influential textbook Principles of Criminology (later co-authored with Donald Cressey), and came to be presented in nine propositions. These were:

1. Criminal behavior is learned.
2. Criminal behavior is learned in interaction with other persons in a process of communication.
3. The principal part of the learning of criminal behavior occurs within intimate personal groups.
4. When criminal behavior is learned, the learning includes techniques of committing the crime, which are sometimes very complicated, sometimes simple and the specific direction of motives, drives, rationalizations, and attitudes.
5. The specific direction of motives and drives is learned from definitions of the legal codes as favorable or unfavorable.
6. A person becomes delinquent because of an excess of definitions favorable to violation of law over definitions unfavorable to violation of the law.

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39 Sutherland Edwin (1974), Criminology, Philadelphia, Lippincott Company, pp- 75-76
7. Differential associations may vary in frequency, duration, priority, and intensity.

8. The process of learning criminal behavior by association with criminal and anti-criminal patterns involves all of the mechanisms that are involved in any other learning.

9. While criminal behavior is an expression of general needs and values, it is not explained by those needs and values, since non-criminal behavior is an expression of the same needs and values.

In summary, he believed that an individual's associations are determined in a general context of social organization (for instance, family income as a factor of determining residence of family and in many cases, delinquency rate is largely related to the rental value of houses) and thus differential group organization as an explanation of various crime rates is consistent with the differential association theory.

b) Labeling Theories: Beginning in the 1950s with the work of people like Becker (1963) and Lemert (1951), the symbolic interactionist approach to deviance began to focus on the way in which negative labels get applied and on the consequences of the labeling process. The symbolic-interactionist theories focused on how adolescents acquired these meanings and definitions from others, especially peers; more recently, theorists have focused on the role of official control agencies especially the police and courts, in imposing these meanings and definitions on adolescents.

Edwin Lemert, for example, made a distinction between primary deviance and secondary deviance. Primary deviance is rule-breaking behavior that is carried out by people who see themselves and are seen by others as basically conformist. People break rules in all kinds of circumstances and for all kinds of reasons, such that Lemert thought sociology can't possibly develop any general theories about primary deviance.
But when a negative label gets applied so publicly and so powerfully that it becomes part of that individual's identity, this is what Lemert calls secondary deviance.

These dramatic negative labelings become turning points in that individual's identity; henceforth s/he is apt "to employ his or her deviant behavior or a role based upon it as a means of defense, attack, or adjustment to the problems created the subsequent societal reaction."\(^{42}\) Having been processed by the Juvenile Justice System and labeled a delinquent, or harassed by the police as a gang member, the individual takes on that label as a key aspect of his/her identity.

The way labels are applied is likely to have important consequences for the delinquent. The degree to which youngsters are perceived as deviants may affect their treatment at home and at school. Parents may consider them a detrimental influence on younger brothers and sisters. Neighbors may tell their children to avoid the 'troublemaker'. Teachers may place them in class reserved for students with behavior problems, minimizing their chances of obtaining higher education. The delinquent label may also affect the attitudes of society in general, and the youthful offenders are subjected to sanctions ranging from mild reprimands to incarceration.

As the negative feedback of law enforcement agencies, teachers, and other figures strengthens their commitment, delinquents may come to see themselves as 'screw-ups'. Thus, through, a process of identification and sanctioning, re-identification, and increased sanctions, young offenders may transform. They are no longer children in trouble: they are 'delinquents' and they accept the label as personal identity. This process is called self-labeling\(^ {43} \).

\(^{42}\) Lemert Edwin (1951), Social Pathology, New York, Mcgraw Hills, pg-76
\(^{43}\) Lemert Edwin (1951), Social Pathology, Mcgraw Hills, New York, pg-78
Howard Becker on the other hand noted that the process of segregation creates "outsiders", who are outcast from society, and then begin to associate with other individuals who have also been cast out. When more and more people begin to think of these individuals as deviants, they respond to them as such; thus the deviant reacts to such a response by continuing to engage in the behavior society now expects from them. This "Labeling Theory," found in *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (1963), is perhaps his most important and influential contribution to sociology. The label of deviant is applied to an individual when others observe their behavior and react to it by labeling that person as deviant. No particular act is inherently deviant until a group with socially powerful statuses or positions label it as such. This theoretical approach to deviance has influenced criminology, gender, sexuality and identity research.

He also developed the term "moral entrepreneur". In Becker's terminology, those who take the lead in getting a particular behavior negatively labeled (or in getting a negative label removed) are called *moral entrepreneurs*. Moral entrepreneurs can be individuals' organizations or social movements.

According to the labeling theory, youths may violate the law for a variety of reasons, including poor family relationships, peer pressures, psychological abnormality, and pre-delinquent learning experiences. Regardless of the cause, if individual's delinquent behavior is detected, the offenders will be given a negative label that can follow them through out life. These labels include 'troublemaker', 'juvenile delinquents', 'mentally ill', 'junkie', and many more.

When kids who have been rejected by society violate the criminal law, they may be given official labels, applied in 'ceremonies', for example, during trials or expulsion

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hearing in schools, that are designed to redefine the deviant identity. The effect of this process is a durable negative label and an accompanying loss of status. The labeled deviant becomes a social outcast who is prevented from enjoying higher education, well paying jobs, and other societal benefits. Because this label is 'official, few question the accuracy of the assessment. People who may have been merely suspicious now feel justified in their assessment.

Although Lemert's work is related to labeling theory, he was not influenced by the earlier writer's works. The origins of labeling theory can be traced back to the work of three sociologists' concepts regarding the concept of self and the effect that tagging or labeling can have on an individual's self-concept. First, Charles Horton Cooley, in his book entitled Human Nature and the Social Order, presented a concept which he termed the "looking glass self" in which a person will react to others based upon his imagining how he appears to others. According to Cooley, there were three principal elements of the concept: "the imagination of our appearance to the other person; the imagination of his judgment of the appearance, and some sort of self-feeling such as pride or mortification." Additionally, what moves us to pride or shame is the imagined effect of this reflection on the other's mind. This social self can be called a "looking-glass self."

George Herbert Mead was the second sociologist who contributed to the labeling perspective with the presentation of the concept of self as a social construct. His work involved the study of social interactionism. The concept of self image described the meaning that people gave to themselves, "the self as a social construct." The concept of symbolic interaction involved the study of how symbolic meaning, or language, was used in the process of social interaction among human beings. According to Mead, the self was viewed as a process, not as a structure.

46 Cooley H Charles (1902), Nature and the Social Order, New York, Scribners, pg- 152
Lastly, Frank Tannenbaum introduced the concept of the "dramatization of evil." Tannenbaum's view was that an act defined as evil is actually transformed into a definition of the actor as evil. He states that the process can be divided into three stages. In the first stage, the individual engages in activities which were first created through maladjustment to society. It is in the second stage, however, that "there is a gradual shift from the definition of the individual as evil, so that all his acts come to be looked upon with suspicion." Finally, in the third stage of the process of the dramatization of evil, from the point of view of the individual, a change in his self-concept has taken place. The one who is singled out and labeled now recognizes that the definition of him as an individual is different from the other children in his community. This plays a greater role in making the criminal than perhaps any other experience. The individual lives in his own world and associates with those like him due to these changes. Therefore, once labeling occurs, the juvenile begins to engage in the same behavior which has been complained of.

The labeling process helps create a self-fulfilling prophecy. If children continually receive negative feedback from significant others such as parents, teachers and others whose opinion they take to heart, their behavior will begin to conform to the negative expectations, they will become the person others perceive them to be. The self-fulfilling prophecy leads to damaged self-image and an increase in anti-social behavior. Labeling creates a deviant identity. Those exposed to negative sanctions experience both self-rejection and lower self-esteem. Self-rejection by self-fulfilling prophecy attitudes result in both a weakened commitment to conventional values and the acquisitions of motives to deviate from social norms.

48 Tannenbaum F (1938), Crime and the Community, Boston, Glinn, pg- 17
3) Critical Theory

Critical theory of delinquency argues that deviance is a product of inequalities created in all societies. These inequalities are endemic to socio-economically hierarchical societies, which allow many members of society to prosper, but which also prevents many members from participating in this prosperity. Three Critical theories of delinquency are examined in this section. First the Conflict Theory and second the Feminist Theory and finally Foucault Discourse Theory

a) Conflict Theory

Conflict theory of causation hypothesizes that social tensions and conflict are indelible features of society. Conflicts arise between dominant groups and 'subordinate classes, races, genders, political groups, ethnic groups and other defined outsiders in the society. The fundamental characteristic of these tensions is that they often pit the have against the have-nots, with the latter being labeled as criminals or insurgents during the conflict. Because such tensions are indelible, they can be best controlled by social institutions rather than completely eradicated. In practice, this means that the have-nots must be coerced to obey the laws and rules of those in power. From this perspective, laws and rules are simply instruments of control used by the ruling elites to maintain control of key institutions, and thereby shut out others who might challenge the authorities of the elites. The focus of conflict theories is on the entire economic and political system, and the socio economic tensions theoretically created by this system.

An early Group-Conflict Theory. George Vold was the first North American to write explicitly about a group-conflict theory of delinquency. He began with the assumption that criminality involves both human behavior (acts) and the judgments or definitions (laws, customs, or mores) of other as to whether specific behavior is appropriate and acceptable or inappropriate and disreputable. Of the two components, Vold regarded

judgments and definitions as more significant. His salient interest was in how groups impose their value judgments by defining the behaviors of others as illegal.

Vold regarded delinquency as 'minority group behavior. For example, he argues that the "juvenile gang... is nearly always a "minority group", out of sympathy with and in more or less direct opposition to the rules and regulations of the dominant majority, that is, the established world of adult values and powers". In this struggle, the police are seen as representing and defending the values of the adult world, while the gang seeks the symbolic and material advantages not permitted under the adult code. At root, Vold argues, the problem is one of intergenerational value conflict, with adults prevailing through their control of the legal process.

**A Theory of Legal Bureaucracy**- According to this viewpoint, determining which group in society will experience more delinquency than others may be largely a matter of deciding which laws will be enforced. William Chambliss and Robert Seidman observe that in modern, complex, stratified societies such as our own, we assign the task of resolving such issues to bureaucratically structured agencies such as the police. The result is to mobilize what might be called the primary principle of legal bureaucracy. According to this principle, laws will be enforced when enforcement serves the interests of social control agencies and their officials; and laws will not be enforced when enforcement is likely to cause organizational strain. In other words, the primary principle of legal bureaucracy involves maximizing organizational strains.

Chambliss and Seidman also said that the consequence of this principle is to bring into operation a 'rule of law' whereby "discretion at every level... will be so exercised as to bring mainly those who are politically powerless (e.g. the poor) into

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51 Vold George (1958), Theoretical Criminology, New York, Oxford University Press, pg-211
the purview of the law". According to the conflict theorists, poor minority youth appear disproportionately in our delinquency statistics more because of class bias and police and court prejudice than because of actual behavior differences.

**Marxist Conflict Theory:** Marxist theories argue that those who own the means of production (e.g., factories, businesses) have the greatest power. This group—the capitalist class—uses its power for its own advantage. Capitalists work for the passage of laws that criminalize and severely sanction the "street" crimes of lower-class persons, but ignore or mildly sanction the harmful actions of business and industry (e.g., pollution, unsafe working conditions). And capitalists act to increase their profits; for example, they resist improvements in working conditions and they attempt to hold down the wages of workers. The economically powerful use the laws and state to protect their interests. Economic powerlessness translates into political powerlessness.

In response to the expropriation of their labor and the exploitation of their potential in commercialized relationships, criminals come to recognize their true objective interests and engage in proto-revolutionary action to bring about the end of capitalism and the start of socialist or guaranteed freedom from want and misery. Here's what Marx said about criminals "The proletariat created by the breaking up of feudalism and the forcible expropriation of people from the soil could not possibly be absorbed by the newly-created capitalist manufacturers. At the same time, the proletariat could not suddenly adapt to the discipline of their new conditions, and so were turned into beggars, robbers, and vagabonds, partly from inclination, but in most cases from the stress of circumstances. Hence, by the end of the 16th century, the whole of Europe engaged in a bloody war against vagrancy, and legislation was created to treat them as

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53 Chambliss Williams & Seidman Robert (1971), Law Order and Power, Massachusetts, Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, pg-268
criminals. It was also assumed that their criminal behavior was voluntary and the result of free will, when in actuality it was because they could not adapt to the new economic conditions.55

Marxists explain crime in several ways. Some draw on strain theory, arguing that workers and unemployed people engage in crime because they are not able to achieve their economic goals through legitimate channels. Also, Marxists argue that crime is a response to the poor living conditions experienced by workers and the unemployed. Some draw on control theory, arguing that crime results from the fact that many workers and the unemployed have little stake in society and are alienated from governmental and business institutions. And some draw on social learning theory, arguing that capitalist societies encourage the unrestrained pursuit of money. Marxist theories, then, attempt to explain both class and societal differences in crime.

A recent effort to answer behavior questions with the insights from conflict theory is an “integrated structural Marxist theory” proposed by Colvin and Pauly (1983)56. This theory integrates elements of control theory and Marxian theory. The theory is comprehensive, and only some of its most striking features can be outlined here. These features include Marxian focus on working class parents experiences’ of coerciveness in the workplace, which Colvin and Pauly suggest lead to coerciveness in parenting, including parental violence towards children. In turn, Colvin and Pauly argue that such children are more likely to be placed in coercive control structures at school and to enter into alliances with alienated peers. All of these experiences make delinquent behavior more likely, including the violent and instrumental kinds of delinquents that may be precursors of adult criminality.

55 Marx Karl (1867), *Capital*, Vol 1, London: Lawrence & Wishart, pg- 734
b) Feminist theories. Feminist theories focus on gender differences in power as a source of crime. Most theories of crime were developed with males in mind; feminists argue that the causes of female crime differ somewhat from the causes of male crime.

Gender differences in crime are said to be due largely to gender differences in social learning and control. Females are socialized to be passive, subservient, and focused on the needs of others. Further, females are more closely supervised than males, partly because fathers and husbands desire to protect their "property" from other males. Related to this, females are more closely tied to the household and to child-rearing tasks, which limits their opportunities to engage in many crimes.

Some females, of course, do engage in crime. Feminist theories argue that the causes of their crime differ somewhat from those of male crime, although female crime is largely explained in terms of Strain Theory. Meda Chesney-Lind and others⁵⁷ argue that much female crime stems from the fact that juvenile females are often sexually abused by family members. This high rate of sexual abuse is fostered by the power of males over females, the sexualization of females—especially young females—and a system that often fails to sanction sexual abuse. Abused females frequently run away, but they have difficulty surviving on the street. They are labeled as delinquents, making it difficult for them to obtain legitimate work. Juvenile justice officials, in fact, often arrest such females and return them to the families where they were abused.

Further, these females are frequently abused and exploited by men on the street. As a consequence, they often turn to crimes like prostitution and theft to survive. Theorists have pointed to still other types of strain to explain female crime, like the financial and other difficulties experienced by women trying to raise families without financial

support from fathers. The rapid increase in female-headed families in recent decades, in fact, has been used to explain the increase in rates of female property crime. It is also argued that some female crime stems from frustration over the constricted roles available to females in our society\(^{58}\).

Hagan (1989) on the other hand attempts to explain large and persistent gender differences in delinquency by taking power relations into account through his Power-Control Theory\(^{59}\). Power relations in the family are the starting point of this theory. The cornerstone of the theory is the observation that, especially in more patriarchal families, mothers more than fathers are involved in controlling daughters more than son. A result of this intensified mother-daughter relationship is that daughters become less inclined to take what they perceive as greater risks of involvement in delinquency. Police and other processing agencies act on stereotypes that extend these gender differences in officially recorded delinquency. Power-control theory generally predicts that in more patriarchal families, sons will be subjected to less maternal control, develop stronger preference for risk taking, be more delinquent, and more often be officially labeled for being so\(^{60}\).

Parents' class position, as defined through their work experiences, influences the delinquent behavior of their children\(^{61}\). When fathers occupy the traditional role of sole breadwinner and mothers have only menial jobs or remain at home to handle domestic affairs, the paternalistic or patriarchal family is indicated. Here the father's experience of control over others or being controlled is reproduced in the household. His focus is directed outward towards his instrumental responsibilities, while the mother is left in charge of the children, especially their daughters. Sons are granted

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\(^{59}\) Adler Freda (1992), New Directions in Criminological Theory, New Jersey, Transaction Publishers, pp-381-398


greater freedom as they are prepared for the traditional male role symbolized by their fathers. Daughters are socialized into the cult of domesticity under the close supervision of their mothers, preparing them for lives oriented towards domestic labor and consumption; while sons are encouraged and allowed to "experiment" and take risks. Daughters in this scenario are closely monitored so that participation in deviant or delinquent activity is unlikely.

According to Siegel the egalitarian family is characterized by little difference between the mother's and father's work roles, so that responsibility for child rearing is shared. Here neither child receives the close supervision present over females in the paternalistic family. Middle class aspirations and values dominate: mobility, success, autonomy, and risk taking. Daughter's deviance now mirrors their brother's. This pattern seems to hold true for single parent (female-headed) households; even within the working/lower class. Here, without the presence of the father, the mother's supervision over her children is not as intense as in the paternalistic family and, in fact, children of both sexes may be encouraged to experiment with risk taking, instrumental roles. He said that "middle-class girls are the most likely to violate the law because they are less closely controlled than their lower-class counterparts. And in homes where both parents hold positions of power, girls are more likely to have the same expectations of career success as their brothers. Consequently, siblings of both sexes will be socialized to take risks and engage in other behavior related to delinquency. Power-control theory, then, implies that middle-class youth of both sexes will have higher crime rates than their lower-class peers."  

Morash and Chesney-Lind argue that a better explanation of female deviance, especially their lower rates of participation, would focus on nurturing relationship developed during socialization, leading them towards more pro-social behaviors.

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Female deviance becomes a product of the "sexual scripts" within patriarchal families that make it more likely for them to become the victims of both sexual and physical abuse. If they run away, the juvenile court supports parental rights and returns them to the home.

c) Foucault Discourse Theory
Michel Foucault, the French philosopher, was one of the most influential thinkers of the 20th Century. Discipline and Punish, written in 1975, gave people a new way to view the prison system. In this book, Foucault describes the history of prisons. He explained why prisons continue to be popular even when they are not successful. Foucault believed prisons serve a greater purpose than just incarcerating criminals. He described how prisons really enslave everyone to a life of government-imposed discipline. Today, Foucault's theories are still popular in all areas of academia.

Foucault is considered one of the most influential of the postmodern philosophers. Discipline and Punish (1975) is considered Foucault's most important and lasting work. This book shows how Foucault arrived at his major theme of power and domination. Discipline and Punish lays out Foucault's thoughts on how the elite in society dominate and control the rest of society. Foucault believed no societal advancements have occurred since the Renaissance, only technology has grown, further enslaving the human spirit. Foucault theorized the reason the prison system has lasted so long is it benefits the ruling social class. He believed the ruling class used criminality as a way of preventing confrontations that could lead to revolution. According to Foucault, the dynamic groups of the lower social class commit crime. By committing crimes, they were calling for a change in the social system and rebelling against the social elite. The ruling class used the law as a means to diminish the power of these uprisings.

According to Foucault, "It would be hypocritical or naive to believe that the law was made for all in the name of all; that it would be more prudent to recognize that it was
made for the few and that it was brought to bear upon others; that in principle it applies to all citizens, but that it is addressed principally to the most numerous and least enlightened classes."

The legal systems segregated the most dynamic of the lowest social class from the rest of society, then forced them together as a group of outcasts, thus rendering them politically harmless. Foucault also stated by marking this group as criminals they are easier to supervise and keep disorganized by keeping the members flowing in and out of the prison system.

Foucault believed the dominant class used the delinquent class as a means of profiting themselves and said that “Delinquency, controlled illegality, is an agent for the illegality of the dominant groups. The setting up of prostitution networks in the nineteenth century is characteristic in this respect. Police checks and checks on the prostitutes’ health, their regular stay in prison, the large-scale organization in the prostitution milieu, its control by delinquent-informers etc. made it possible to canalize and to recover by a whole series of intermediaries the enormous profits from a sexual pleasure. An ever-more insistent everyday moralization condemned to semi-clandestine and naturally made expensive; setting a price for pleasure, in creating a profit from repressed sexuality and in collecting this profit, the delinquent milieu was in complicity with a self-interested Puritanism: an illicit agent operating over illegal practices”.

Michel Foucault is considered as the philosopher of the history of ideas, and his work looks broadly at a number of institutions each with their accompanying knowledge – criminology and the prison may be one, but he also looks at “the birth of the clinic” as a distinctly modern way of handling health, the development of the psychiatric

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discourse and modern approaches to madness, and the development of our modern languages around sexuality. He even asks questions about the very idea of what it means to be an “individual” human being in Western societies.

Foucault questions the roots and patterns of ideas found in social life and how they help construct what is going on in social worlds. He holds no simple view of cause and effect or of knowledge being linear and straightforward. Instead, he sees ideas as circulating in local complexes. They are disordered, contradictory, and fragmentary. For Foucault, there is no scientific hierarchy any more. Instead, he traces genealogies. In general, he has looked at a number of major changes that mark out the distinctive ways we think in ‘the modern world’ when compared with past ones.

He was concerned with the way in which criminology as a discipline grows at the same time as a whole new apparatus of crime control is brought into being. The whole professions of criminology, he suggests, is there not really to solve the problem of crime but to extend and organize power and surveillance.

Always a radical and critical thinker, he saw dramatic ruptures with the past and suggested that these modern developments are not signs of simple ‘enlightened’ progress, often backed up by institutions. Thus, criminology is a discourse that invents or produces its own set of ideas and languages about the criminal as an object to be studied, backed up by many institutions such as the prison and the courts. Power works its way distinctly through this discourse to help shape the whole society’s view of crime. ‘Knowledge’ in this view may act as a way of keeping people under control.

Many of Foucault’s ideas challenge common sense. Whereas we like to see criminology as a science that studies and helps us understand crime, Foucault sees it as a discourse that extends surveillance and power relations. Whereas prisons are
conventionally understood to combat crime, he sees them as mechanisms for extending crime. Some experts view the cause of delinquency as essentially psychological. After all, most behaviors labeled delinquent -- for example violence, theft, sexual misconduct -- seem to be symptomatic of some underlying psychological problem. Psychologists point out that many delinquent youths have poor home lives, destructive relationships with neighbors, friends and teachers, and conflicts with an authority figures in general. These relationships seem to indicate a disturbed personality structure. Furthermore, numerous studies of incarcerated youths indicate that the youth's personalities are marked by negative, anti-social behavior characteristics. And because delinquent behaviour occurs among youths in every racial, ethnic, and socio-economic group, psychologists view it as a function of emotional and mental disturbance, rather than purely a result of social factors, such as racism, poverty and class conflict. Although many delinquents do not manifest significant psychological problems, enough do to give clinicians a powerful influence on delinquency theory. Because psychology is a complex and diversified discipline, more than one psychological perspective on crime exists. Three prominent psychological perspectives on delinquency are

a) Psycho-dynamic Theory
b) Behavioral Theory
c) Cognitive Theory

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67 Carrabine Eamon, Maggy Lee, Nigel South, Pam Cox and Ken Plummer (2008), Criminology: A Sociological Introduction (2nd Edition), USA, Routledge, pg-113
Psycho-dynamic Theory

(Psychoanalytic)

Behavioral Theory

Cognitive Theory

Cause

Intra-psychic Processes
- Unconscious conflicts
- Childhood Traumas
- Family Abuse
- Neurosis
- Psychosis

Cause

Learning Processes
- Past experiences
- Stimulus
- Rewards and punishments

Cause

Information Processing
- Thinking
- Problem solving
- Script
- Moral development

Source

1) Psycho-dynamic Theory

According to psycho-dynamic theory, whose basis is the pioneering work of the Austrian physician Sigmund Freud (1856-1939), law violations are product of an abnormal personality structure formed early in life and which thereafter controls human behaviour choices. In extreme cases mental torment drives people into violence and aggression. The basis of psycho-dynamic theory is the assumption that human behavior is controlled by unconscious mental processes developed early in childhood.

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68 Siegel J Larry & Welsh C. Brandon (2008), Juvenile Delinquency Theory, Practice and Law (10th edition), USA, Wadsworth Press, pg. 91

69 Siegel J Larry & Welsh C. Brandon (2008), Juvenile Delinquency Theory, Practice and Law (10th edition), USA, Wadsworth Press, pg. 91
According to Freud, the human personality contains three major components. The id is the unrestrained, primitive, pleasure seeking component with which each child is born. The ego develops through the reality of living in the world and helps manage and retrain the id's for immediate gratification. The superego develops through interaction with parents and other significant people and represents the development of conscience and the moral rules shared by most adults. Unconscious motivations for behavior come from the id's action in response to two primal needs—sex and aggression. Human behavior is often marked by symbolic action that reflects hidden feelings about these needs.

All three segments of the personality operate simultaneously. The id's dictates, needs and desires, the superego counteracts the id by fostering feelings of morality and righteousness, and the ego evaluates the reality of a position between these two extremes. In these components are properly balanced, the individual can lead a normal life. If one aspect of the personality becomes dominant at the expense of the others, the individual exhibits abnormal personality traits (see figure below).
A number of psychologists and psychiatrists expanded upon Freud's original model to explain the onset of anti-social behaviors. Eric Erikson speculated that many adolescents experience a life crisis in which they feel emotional, impulsive and uncertain of their role and purpose. He coined the phrase identity crisis to donate this period of inner turmoil and confusion. Erikson's approach might characterize the behavior of youthful drug abusers as an expression of confusion over their place in society, their inability to direct behavior towards useful outlets, and perhaps their inability to direct behavior toward useful outlets, and perhaps their dependency on others to offer them solutions to their problems.

Applying these concepts, psycho-dynamic theory holds that youth crime is a result of unresolved mental anguish and internal conflicts. Some children especially those who have been abused or mistreated, may experience unconscious feelings associated with resentment fear and hatred. If this conflict cannot be reconciled, the children may regress to a state in which they become id dominated. This regression may be considered responsible for a great number of mental diseases, from neuroses to psychoses and in many cases it may be related to criminal behavior.

Delinquents are 'id' dominated people who suffer from the inability to control impulsive drives. Perhaps they suffered unhappy experiences in childhood and have families who could not provide proper love and care, delinquents suffer from weak or damaged egos that make them unable to cope with conventional society. Adolescent anti-social behavior is a consequence of feeling unable to cope with feelings of oppression. Criminality actually allows youths to strive by producing positive psychic results; helping them to feel free and independent; giving them the possibility of excitement and the chance to use their skills and imaginations providing the promise

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70 Siegel J Larry & Welsh C. Brandon (2008), Juvenile Delinquency Theory, Practice and Law (10th edition), USA, Wadsworth Press, pg-91
of positive gain; allowing them to blame others for their skills and imagination, providing them the promise of positive gain; allowing them to blame others for their predicament (e.g. police) and giving them the chance to rationalize their own sense of failure.

The psycho-dynamic approach places heavy emphasis on the family’s role. Anti-social youth frequently come from families in which parents are unable to provide the controls that allow children to develop the personal tools they need to cope with the world. If neglectful parents fail to develop a child superego adequately the child’s id may become the predominant personality force; the absence of the strong superego results in an ability to distinguish clearly between right and wrong. Their destructive behavior may actually be a call for help. In fact some psycho-analysts view delinquent behavior as motivated by an unconscious urge to be punished; hence, they deserve punishment later, the youth may demand immediate gratification, lack compassion and sensitivity for the needs of others, disassociate feelings act aggressively and impulsively, and demonstrate other psychotic symptoms. Anti-social behavior then, may be the result of conflict or trauma occurring early in a child development, and delinquent activity may become an outlet for violent and anti-social feelings.

2) Behavioral theory
Psychological theory maintains that human actions are developed through learning experiences. Rather than focusing on unconscious personality traits or cognitive development patterns produced early in childhood, behavior theorists are concerned with the actual behaviors people engage in during the course of their daily lives. The major premise of behavior theory is that people alter their behavior according to the reactions it receives from others. Behavior is supported by rewards and extinguished by negative reactions or punishments. Behavioral theory is quite complex with different sub-areas. With respect to criminal activity, the behaviorist views crimes, especially violent acts, as learned responses to life situations that do not necessarily
represents psychologically abnormal responses. The main theory of the Behavioral Theory is the Social Learning Theory.

a) Social Learning Theory
Social learning is the branch of behavioral theory most relevant to criminology. Social learning theorists, most notably Albert Bandura, argue that people are not actually born with the ability to act violently but that they learn to be aggressive through their life experiences. These experiences include personally observing others acting aggressively to achieve some goals or watching people being rewarded for violent acts on television or in movies. People learn to act aggressively when, as children, they model their behavior after the violent acts of adults. Later in life, these violent behavior patterns persist in social relationships. Though social learning theorists agree that mental or physical traits may pre-dispose a person towards violence, they believe that activating a person's violent tendencies is achieved by factors in the environment. The specific forms that aggressive behavior takes, the frequency with which it is expressed, the situations in which it is displayed, and the specific targets selected for attack are largely determined by social leanings. However, people are self aware and engage in purposeful leaning. Their interpretations of behavior outcomes and situations influence the way they learn from experiences. One adolescent who spends a weekend in jail for drunk driving may find it the most awful experience of her life—one that teaches her to never drink and drive again. Another person, however, may find it an exciting experience about which he can brag to his friends.

Social learning theorists view violence as something learned through a process called behavior modeling. In modern society, aggressive acts are usually modeled after three principal sources:

1. **Family Interactions:** Studies of family show that aggressive children have parents who use similar tactics when dealing with others. For example, the children of wife batterers are more likely to use aggressive tactics themselves than children in the general population, especially if the victims (their mothers) suffer psychological distress from abuse.

2. **Environmental experience:** People who reside in areas in which violence is a daily occurrence are more likely to act violently than those who dwell in low-crime areas whose norms stress conventional behavior.

3. **Mass media:** Films and television shows commonly depict violence graphically. Moreover, violence is often portrayed as an acceptable behavior, especially for heroes who never have to face legal consequences for their actions.

Social learning theorists have tried to determine what triggers violent acts. One position is that a direct, pain producing physical assault will usually trigger a violent response. Yet the relationship between painful attacks and aggressive responses has been found to be inconsistent. Whether people counterattack in the face of physical attack depends, in part, on their skill in fighting and their perception of the strength of their attackers. Verbal taunts and insults have also been linked to aggressive responses. People who are pre-disposed to aggression by their learning experiences are likely to view insults from others as a challenge to their social status and to react with violence. Still another violence-triggering mechanism is a perceived reduction in one's life conditions. Studies have shown discontent also produces aggression in the more successful members of lower class groups who have been led to believe they can succeed but then have been thwarted in their aspirations. While it is still uncertain how this relationship is constructed, it is apparently complex. No matter how deprived some individuals are, they will not resort to violence. It seems evident that people's perceptions of their relative deprivation have different effects on their aggressive responses.
Thus in summary one can conclude that according to the social learning theory the following four factors contribute to violent and/or aggressive behavior.

1. **An event that heightens arousal:** Such as a person frustrating or provoking another through physical assault or verbal abuse.

2. **Aggressive skills:** Learned aggressive responses picked up from observing others, either personally or through the media.

3. **Expected Outcomes:** The belief that aggression will somehow be rewarded. Rewards can come in the form of reducing tension or anger, gaining some financial reward, building self-esteem, or gaining the praise of others.

4. **Consistency of behavior with values:** The belief, gained from observing others, that aggression is justified and appropriate, given the circumstances of the current situation.

3) **Cognitive Theory**

One area of psychology that has received increasing recognition in recent years has been the cognitive school. Psychologists with a cognitive perspective focus on the mental processed and how people perceive and mentally represent the world around them and solve problems. The pioneers of this school were Wilhelm Wundt, Edward Titchener and William James. Today there are several sub-disciplines within the cognitive area. The moral development branch is concerned with the way people morally represent and reason the world. The information processing branch focuses on the way people process, store, encode, retrieve, and manipulate information to make decisions and solve problems.

a) **Moral and Intellectual Development Theory**

The Moral and Intellectual Development branch of cognitive psychology is perhaps the most important for criminological theory. Jean Piaget, the founder of this approach, hypothesized that people's reasoning processes develop in an orderly
fashion, beginning at birth and continuing until they are 12 years old and older\textsuperscript{75}. At first, children respond to the environment in a simple manner, seeking interesting objects and developing their reflexes. By the forth and final stage, the formal operations stage, they have developed into mature adults who can use logic and abstract thought.

Lawrence Kohlberg first applied the concept of moral development to issues of criminology\textsuperscript{76}. He found that people travel through stages of moral development during which their decisions and judgments on issues of right and wrong are made for different reasons. It is possible that serious offenders have a moral orientation that differs from that of law-abiding citizens. Kohlberg classified people according to the stage on this continuum at which their moral development ceased to grow. Kohlberg and his associates conducted studies in which criminals were found to be significantly lower in their moral judgment development than non-criminals of the same social background\textsuperscript{77}. Since his pioneering efforts, researchers have continued to show that criminal offenders are more likely to be classified in the lowest levels of moral reasoning (Stage 1 & 2) whereas, non-criminals have reached a higher stage of moral developments (Stage 3 & 4). Moral development theory suggests that people who obey the law simply to avoid punishment or have outlooks mainly characterized by self-interest are more likely to commit crimes than those who view the law as something that benefits all of society. Those at higher stages of moral reasoning tend to sympathize with the rights of others and are associated with conventional behavior, such as honestly, generosity, and non-violence.

b) Information Processing Theory

When cognitive theorists who study information processing try to explain anti-social behavior, they do so in terms of mental perception and how people use information to
understand their environment. When people make decisions, they engage in a sequence of cognitive thought processes

1. Encode information so that it can be interpreted
2. Search for proper response
3. Decide on the most appropriate action
4. Act on the decision.\(^{78}\)

Not everyone processes information in the same way, and the differences in interpretation may explain the development of radically different visions of the world. According to this cognitive approach, people who use information properly, who are better conditioned to make reasoned judgments, and who can make quick and reasoned decisions when facing emotion-laden events are the ones best able to avoid anti-social behavior choices. In contrast, crime-prone people may have cognitive deficits and use information incorrectly when they make decisions. Law violators may lack the ability to perform cognitive functions in a normal orderly fashion. Some may be sensation seekers who are constantly looking for novel experiences, whereas others lack deliberation and rarely think through problems. Some may give up easily, whereas others act without thinking when they get upset.\(^ {79}\)

People with adequate cognitive processing perceive the world as stacked against them; they believe they have little control over the negative events in their life. Chronic offenders come to believe that crime is an appropriate means to satisfy their immediate personal needs, which take precedence over more distant social needs such as obedience to the law. They have a distorted view of the world that shapes their thinking and colors their judgments. Because they have difficulty making the right decision while under stress, they pursue behavior that they perceive as beneficial and satisfying, but that turn out to be harmful and detrimental. They may take aggressive action because they wrongly believe that a situation demands forceful responses when it actually does not. They find difficult to understand or sympathize with other

\(^{78}\) Siegel J Larry (2008), Criminology (10\textsuperscript{th} Edition), USA, Wadsworth Publishing, pg-144
\(^{79}\) Siegel J Larry (2008), Criminology (10\textsuperscript{th} Edition), USA, Wadsworth Publishing, pg-145
people’s feelings and emotions, which leads them to blame their victims for their problems.

People whose cognitive processes are skewed or faulty may be relying on mental scripts learned in childhood that tell them how to interpret events, what to expect, how they should react, and what the outcome of the interaction should be. Hostile children may have learned improper scripts by observing how others react to events; their own parents’ aggressive and inappropriate behavior would have considerable impacts. Some may have had early and prolonged exposure to violence (for example child abuse), which increases their sensitivity to slights and maltreatment. Violent behavior responses learned in childhood become a stable behavior because the scripts that emphasize aggressive responses are repeatedly rehearsed as the child matures.

To violence-prone kids, people seem more aggressive than they actually are and seem to intent then ill when there is no reason for alarm. According to information processing theory, as these children mature, they use fewer cues than most people to process information some use violence in a calculating fashion as means of getting what they want, others react in an overly volatile fashion to the slightest provocation. Aggressors are more likely to be vigilant, on edge, or suspicious. When they attack victims, they may believe they are defending themselves, even though they are misreading the situation.80

Out of the various theories on Juvenile Justice discussed in detail in the chapter, this study subscribes to

- Hirschi’s Social Control Theory and

According to Hirschi’s Social Control Theory Delinquency has a direct link to the bonds or ties we have with conventional society. If these bonds are weak or broken, a juvenile may deviate from the norms of the society. He argued that the absence of

control may result in delinquent behavior. Control theory has four essential elements: (1) attachment (2) commitment (3) involvement and (4) belief.

The present study substantiates the above theory that once child’s attachment, commitment, involvement and belief in the conventional social institutions such as family are weak or broken then the child may take up acts of delinquency. A number of respondents of this study reported that since they were abused by their parents they did not feel attached to them. Their belief in this conventional social institution was broken and therefore they ran away from home which is considered to be a delinquent act.

Meda Chesney-Lind argues that much female crime stems from the fact that juvenile females are often sexually abused by family members. Abused females frequently run away. They are labeled as delinquents, making it difficult for them to obtain legitimate work. Juvenile justice officials, in fact, often arrest such females and return them to the families where they were abused.

A similar trend was observed in this study. Most of the respondents opted to run away from the abusive situations in their homes and as a result came in direct contact with the Juvenile Justice System. Despite the abusive situations at home the attempts of Child Welfare Committees is to rehabilitate them back in their families. During the course of my data collection in one of the homes a group of young girls were rescued from Mumbai Bar Club and it came to light that a village in Agra (the name of the village is deliberately not being mentioned here so as to conceal the identities of the girls in question) encourage and train their young daughters to enter the trade of bar dancing. They send their daughters to Mumbai and live on the earning sent by them. Given the circumstances sending these girls back to such families should not be an option worthy of consideration by the Juvenile Justice Officials.