

AC3.2 Evaluate the effectiveness of **criminological theories** to explain causes of criminality

SOCIAL LEARNING THEORY

- ✔ The BoBo doll experiment showed the model did have an effect on the child's, the model's behaviour was copied or imitated, often very closely. Children were likely to imitate the behaviour of role models, even if that behaviour was wrong.
- ✔ Social learning theory can account for learning that we do not have direct experiences of. For example, few children are rewarded directly for aggressive behaviour (positive reward), in fact for most children it is discouraged (punished), yet aggression is still acquired by many. By looking at the social learning context in which this learning takes place we are able to better understand it.
- ✗ The situation involves a child and adult model in a very artificial situation. The child and the model are strangers to one another; this is not really how learning occurs in the 'real' world. 'Modelling' typically takes place within the family where children are familiar with their role models.
- ✗ The theory does not account for people who turn to crime, even though they have not been exposed to criminal role models. In these cases, criminal behaviour may be better explained by innate factors (nature) such as genes or brain abnormalities.

EYSENCK'S PERSONALITY THEORY

- ✔ Dunlop et al. (2012) found that both extraversion and psychoticism, as well as lie scales, were good predictors of delinquency. A study by Van Dam et al. (2007) found that a group of male offenders in a juvenile detention centre had high scores on all three of Eysenck's variables.
- ✗ However, It is very unlikely that personality can explain the broad range of crimes that criminals commit. It seems implausible that the sort of person who spontaneously robs people in the street would be in the same kind of person that spends months planning a complicated fraud.

BOWLBY'S MATERNAL DEPRIVATION THEORY

- ✔ Bowlby concluded that the effects of maternal deprivation had caused affectionless psychopathy and delinquent behaviour among the juvenile thieves. This has implications for prevention of delinquency. Treatment of emotional problems in young delinquents is slow and difficult, so he suggested that it is preferable to try to prevent the problem in the first place by avoiding early separations.
- ✗ Studies which looked at children and later offending have not provided much support for the maternal deprivation hypothesis. **Hilda Lewis** (1954) analysed data drawn from interviews with 500 young people and found that maternal deprivation was a poor predictor of criminal behaviour.

FREUD'S THEORY

- ✔ Psychodynamic theories have contributed to research about crime and behaviour. In particular, the focus on childhood experiences and the importance of them on future behaviour should be regarded as very important in many modern theories of criminality.
- ✔ The id, ego and superego relate to different parts of the brain, and their functions and development. The limbic system is the brain's emotion centre, rather like the id, and the pre-frontal cortex is responsible for rational decision making, just like the ego.
- ✗ Freud's theories are very difficult to investigate. Concepts such as the unconscious are almost impossible to research scientifically which is regarded as important by most modern criminologists.
- ✗ Freud's main method, the case study is not regarded as a scientific or accurate method. The case study method involves people recalling things from early childhood; research has shown that our memory for events that happened in childhood is very unreliable. We may just be imagining the things that 'remember'.