

# Theory II: positivist School of Criminology

## Positivism:

- Developed out of a scientific approach to crime and criminality
- Born out of critiques of the classical approach
- Focus on the natural science
- Incredibly racist and almost completely discredited ( specifically, biological)

Biological vs. Psychological vs. Social

## Part 1. Biological positivism

### Lombroso and Atavism

- Certain physical traits are linked to earlier primitive beings and their presence shows that certain individuals have not fully evolved
- Rooted in social darwinism: inferior races display atavistic traits
- “Throw-back” traits

Lombroso's 4 types of criminals:

1. Atavistic
2. Mentally insane
3. Criminaloids
4. Crimes of passion

### Phrenology:

- The Brain is a composite of different sections, each one controlling different behaviours (aggressive, empathy, etc)
  - By looking at the shape of the skull, they could tell which parts of the brain were overreactive or underactive
- The human Rorschach Inkblot -> Phineas Gage

---

## Early genetic studies supporting Eugenics

**The kallikak family:** a study of heredity of feeble-mindedness by Henry goddar (1912)

- Now known for factual inaccuracies and is deemed invalid
- Martin kallikak had two families: one with Martha and other with “the nameless feeble-minded girl”

**The Jukes:** a study in crime, pauperism, disease ad heredity by Richard dugdale (1877)

- A study on six members of the same family in ulster county jail
- “Margaret, the mother of criminals” aka ada

- The jukes as a composite of 42 families only 540 of his 709 subjects were related

### Sheldon's Somatotyping

- All human bodies fall within 1 of 3 types
  - Ectomorphic: skinny, weak, tall
  - Mesomorphic:
  - Endomorphic

### Ernest Hooton

- Based on his previous work in racial classification, claimed that criminals could be indemnified by their physical appearance
- Criminals have inferior characteristics, which he divided into sociological, psychological, physical, morphological and pathological areas

### Examples;

- criminals have tattoo
- Red-is brown straight hair
- Don't have blue or dark eyes
- Low- sloped foreheads, thin lips

## Part 2. Psychological Positivism

### Iceberg theory

### Psychoanalysis

#### Freud's theory of the mind

- The unconscious mind is the primary source of the human behaviour
- Some thoughts, events, or memories are too painful, so they are stored in the unconscious
- Id: lowest primal impulse
- Ego: higher functions behaviours
- Super-ego: the moral conscience

### Learning theories

- Conditioning: behaviours are elicited by the environment in which it occurs
- Positive and negative reinforcement
  - Positive reinforcement: presenting a positive stimulus
  - Negative reinforcement: removing a negative stimulus

### Learning Theory and criminality

#### Edwin Sutherland (1939) differential association theory

- Criminal behaviour is learned by associating with those who have pro- criminal attitudes and values
- Criminal behaviour is learned through the process of communication
- Delinquency is a result of learning definition favourable to criminality vs unfavourable

#### Burgess and Akers differential association reinforcement theory

- Inspired by the Skinner Bandura and Sutherland, criminal behaviour is learned through both social and non-social reinforcement
- Although criminal behaviour is learned through social interaction and modelling, it is maintained over time through the actual consequences of crime (+ & -)

### Forced sterilization

- Disproportionally targeting indigenous women
- First class action suit in 2017, but full scale is unknown as there has been no comprehensive investigation
- Eugenics was adopted in Canada in early 1900's
  - Nova Scotia 1908: first eugenics movement in the country when the league for the care and protection of the feebleminded persons was established