Integrated Theoretical Models and New Perspectives of Crime

This section will introduce integrated theories: those in which two or more traditional theories are merged into one cohesive model. We will then discuss the pros and cons of integrating theories and explain the various ways theories can be integrated. A review of integrated theories will demonstrate the many ways different theories have been merged to form more empirically valid explanations for criminal behavior.

This section examines relatively recent changes in criminological development; virtually all of these advances have taken place in the past few decades. Specifically, we discuss the types of models that modern explanatory formulations seem to have adopted, namely integrated theories. Of course, other unique theoretical frameworks have been presented in the past 30 years, but most of the dominant models presented during this time fall into the category of integrated theories.

Integrated theories attempt to put together two or more traditionally separate models of offending to form one unified explanatory theory. Given the empirical validity of most of the theories discussed in previous sections, as well as the failure of these previously examined theories to explain all variation in offending behavior, it makes sense that theorists would try to combine the best of several theories while disregarding or de-emphasizing the concepts and propositions that don't seem to be as scientifically valid. Furthermore, some forms of theoretical integration deal with only concepts or propositions, while others vary by level of analysis (micro vs. macro, or both). Although such integrated formulations sound attractive and appear to be surefire ways to develop sounder explanatory models of behavior, they have a number of weaknesses and criticisms. Here, we explore these issues as well as the best-known and most accepted integrated theories that are currently being examined and tested in the criminological literature.

Integrated Theories

About 30 years ago at a conference at the State University of New York at Albany, leading scholars in criminological theory development and research came together to discuss the most important issues in the growing area of theoretical integration. Some integrated theories go well beyond formulating relationships between two or more

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traditionally separate explanatory models; they actually fuse the theories into one all-encompassing framework. The following sections will examine why integrated theories became popular over the past several decades while discussing different types of integrated theories, the strengths and weaknesses of theoretical integration, and several of the better-known and better-respected integrated theories.

The Need for Integrated Theories in Criminology

The emphasis on theoretical integration is a relatively recent development that has evolved due to the need to improve the empirical validity of traditional theories, which suffer from lack of input from various disciplines. This was the result of the history of criminological theory, which we discussed in prior sections of this book. Specifically, most 19th-century theories of criminal behavior are best described as based on single-factor (e.g., intelligence quotient, or IQ) or limited-factor (e.g., stigmata) reductionism. Later, in the early 1900s, a second stage of theoretical development involved the examination of various social, biological, and psychological factors, which became known as the multiple-factor approach and is most commonly linked with the work of Sheldon and Eleanor Glueck.

Finally, in the latter half of the 20th century, a third stage of theoretical development and research in criminology became dominant, which represented a backlash against the multiple-factor approach. This stage has been called systemic reductionism, which refers to pervasive attempts to explain criminal behavior in terms of a particular system of knowledge. For example, a biologist who examines only individuals' genotypes will likely not be able to explain much criminal behavior because he is missing a lot of information about the environment in which the people live, such as their levels of poverty or unemployment. For the past 60 years, the criminological discipline in the United States has been dominated by sociologists, which is largely due to the efforts and influence of Edwin Sutherland (see Section VIII). Thus, as one expert has observed,

It is not surprising to find that most current explanations of criminal behavior are sociologically based and are attempts to explain variations in the rates of criminal behavior as opposed to individual instances of that behavior. Even when the effort is to explain individual behavior, the attempt is to use exposure to or belief in cultural or social factors to explain individual instances or patterns of criminal behavior. We find ourselves at the stage of development in criminology where a variety of sociological systemic reductionistic explanations dominate, all of which have proven to be relatively inadequate (to the standard of total explanation, prediction, or control) in explaining the individual occurrence or the distribution of crime through time or space. Other criminologists have also noted this sociological dominance, with some going as far to claim that Sutherland and the sociologists were intent on turning the study of crime into an exclusively sociological enterprise and... they overreacted to the efforts of potential intruders to capture some of what they regarded as their intellectual turf.

This dominance of sociology over the discipline is manifested in many obvious ways. For example, virtually all professors of criminology have doctorates of philosophy (PhDs) in sociology or criminal justice, and virtually no professors have a degree in biology, neuropsychology, or other fields that obviously have important influence on human behavior. Furthermore, virtually no undergraduate (or even graduate) programs in criminal justice and criminology currently require students to take a course that covers principles in biology, psychology, anthropology, or economics; rather, virtually all the training is sociology based. In fact, most criminal justice programs in the United States do not even offer a course in biopsychological approaches to understanding criminal behavior, despite the obvious need for and relevance of such perspectives.

Many modern criminologists now acknowledge the limitations of this state of systemic reductionism, which limits theories to only one system of knowledge, in this case sociology. What resulted is a period of relative stagnation in theoretical development; experts regarded the 1970s as "one of the least creative periods in criminological history." In addition, the mainstream theories that were introduced for most of the 1900s (such as differential association, strain, social bonding, and labeling, which we reviewed in previous sections) received limited empirical support, which should not be too much of a surprise given that they were based on principles of only one discipline—namely, sociology. Thus, it has been proposed that integrated theories evolved as a response to such limitations and the need to revitalize progress in the area of criminological theory building. After reviewing some of the many integrated theories that have been proposed in the past two decades, we think readers will agree that combining explanatory models has indeed helped stimulate much growth in the area of criminological theory development. But, before examining these theories, it is important to discuss the varying forms they take.

Different Forms of Integrated Theories

There are several different types of integrated theories, which are typically categorized by the way that their creators propose that the theories should be fused together. The three most common forms of propositional theoretical integration, meaning synthesis of theories based on their postulates, are known as end-to-end, side-by-side, and up-and-down integration. We will first explore each of these types before discussing a few more variations of combining theoretical concepts and propositions.

End-to-End Integration

The first type, end-to-end (or sequential) integration, typically is used when theorists expect that one theory will come before or after another in terms of temporal ordering of causal factors. This type of integration is more developmental in the sense that it tends to propose a certain ordering of the component theories that are being merged. For example, an integrated theory may claim that most paths toward delinquency and crime have their early roots in the breakdown of social attachments and controls (i.e., social bonding theory), but later, the influence of negative peers (i.e., differential association) becomes more emphasized. Thus, such a model would look like this:

Weak Social Bond → Negative Peer Associations → Crime

We will now turn to the other forms of theoretical integration that combine theories in different ways.
Side-by-Side Integration

Another type of integrated theory is called **side-by-side (or horizontal) integration**. In the most common form of side-by-side integration, cases are classified by a certain criterion (e.g., impulsive vs. planned), and two or more theories are considered parallel explanations depending on what type of case is being considered. So, when the assumptions or target offenses of two or more theories are different, a side-by-side integration is often the most natural way to integrate them. For example, low self-control theory may be used to explain impulsive criminal activity, whereas rational choice theory may be used to explain criminal behavior that involves planning, such as white-collar crime. Traditionally, many theorists would likely argue that low self-control and rational choice theory are quite different, almost inherently opposing perspectives of crime. However, contemporary studies and theorizing have shown that the two models complement and fill gaps in each other. Specifically, the rational choice and deterrence framework has always had a rather hard time explaining and predicting why individuals often do very stupid things for which there is little payoff and a high likelihood of getting in serious trouble, so the low self-control perspective helps fill in this gap by explaining that some individuals are far more impulsive and are more concerned about the immediate payoff (albeit often small) than they are about any long-term consequences.

An illustration of side-by-side integration of these two theories might thus look something like this:

- For most typical individuals:
  - High Self-Control → Consideration of Potential Negative Consequences → Deterred from Committing Crime

- For more impulsive individuals or activities:
  - Low Self-Control → Desire for Immediate Payoff → Failure to Consider Consequences → Decision to Commit Criminal Act

This side-by-side integration shows how two different theories can each be accurate, depending on what type of individual or criminal activity is being considered. As some scholars have concluded, rational choice theory is likely not a good explanation for homicides between intimates (which tend to be spontaneous acts), but it may be very applicable to corporate crime.

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Up-and-Down Integration

Another way of combining two or more theories is referred to as up-and-down (or deductive) integration. It is generally considered the classic form of theoretical integration because it has been done relatively often in the history of criminological theory development—even before it was considered integration. It often involves increasing the level of abstraction of a single theory so that postulates seem to follow from a conceptually broader theory. Up-and-down integration can take two prevalent forms: (1) theoretical reduction and (2) theoretical synthesis.

Theoretical reduction is typically done when it becomes evident "that theory A contains more abstract or general assumptions than theory B and, therefore, that key parts of theory B can be accommodated within the structure of theory A." We have discussed this form of integration previously in this book, for example, in Section X, we discussed how differential reinforcement theory subsumed Sutherland's differential association theory. By equating concepts contained in both theories, the authors of differential reinforcement argued somewhat effectively that the learning that takes place through interactions with primary groups is one type of conditioning. As you will recall, the main point is that the concepts and propositions of differential reinforcement theory are more general than—but entirely consistent with—those of differential association theory, such that the latter is a specific form of the former model. In other words, differential reinforcement is a much more broad, general theory, which accounts for not only differential association (i.e., classical conditioning) but also many other theoretical concepts and propositions (opponent conditioning, modeling, etc.).

This same type of theoretical reduction was also discussed in Section VI when we noted that general strain theory subsumed Robert Merton's traditional strain theory. Specifically, traditional strain theory focused on only one type of strain: failure to achieve positively valued goals. While general strain theory also places an emphasis on failure to achieve positively valued goals, it is more general and broader because it also focuses on two other forms of strain: loss of positively valued stimuli and exposure to noxious stimuli. Therefore, it seems to make sense that general strain theory would subsume traditional strain theory, because the concepts and principles of traditional strain appear to simply represent a specific type of general strain and can be fully accounted for by the more general version of the theory.

Despite the obvious efficiency in theoretical reduction, many theorists have criticized such subsuming of theories by another. Specifically, many experts in the social sciences view such reduction as a form of theoretical imperialism, because the theory being reduced essentially loses its unique identity. Therefore, the very phrase theoretical reduction generally has a negative connotation among scholars. In fact, one of the most accepted rejections in 20th-century criminological literature, the differential association-differential reinforcement synthesis we referred to previously, was once condemned as a "revisionist takeover...a travesty of Sutherland's position." So, even the most widely known and cited forms of theoretical reduction have been harshly criticized, which gives readers some idea of how much social scientists can frown upon the subsuming of one theory by another.

The other form of up-and-down integration is referred to as theoretical synthesis, which is "done by abstracting more general assumptions from theories A and B, allowing parts of both theories to be incorporated in a new theory C." This form of up-and-down integration is more uncommon in social science than theoretical reduction, perhaps because it is more difficult to achieve successfully, since by definition it requires the formulation of a new theory with new concepts or hypotheses that are not already found in the original component models. Furthermore, if the constituent theories are competing explanations, then it is quite likely that new terminology will have to be created or incorporated to resolve these differences. However, if theoretical synthesis can be done correctly, it is perhaps the type of integration that provides the most advancement of theory development because, in addition to bringing together previously independent models, it also results in a new theory with predictions and propositions that go beyond the original frameworks.

One of the best-known and most accepted (despite its critics) examples of theoretical synthesis is Elliott's integrated model, which we review in detail later in this section. For our purposes here, it is important only to understand why Delbert Elliott's model is considered theoretical synthesis. This is because Elliott's model integrates the concepts and propositions of various theories (e.g., social control and differential association) and contributes additional propositions that did not exist in the component theories.

Levels of Analysis of Integrated Theories

Beyond the variation in types of propositional theoretical integration discussed previously, such synthesis of explanatory models also differs in terms of the level of analysis that is being considered. Specifically, the integrated models can include component theories of micro-level, meso-level, macro-level, or even micro-meso-macro level combinations. For example, Elliott's integrated theory is a micro–macro level level theory, which means that all of the component theories that make up the synthesized model refer to the individual as the unit of analysis. Although these models can provide sound understanding for why certain individuals behave in certain ways, they typically do not account for differences in criminality across groups (gender, socioeconomic groups, etc.).

On the other hand, some integrated models include theories from only macro levels. A good example of this type of integration is seen in Robert Bursik's synthesis of conflict theory and the social disorganization framework. Both of these component theories focus only on the macro (group) level of analysis, thus neglecting the individual level; for example, they would fail to explain why some individuals do or do not commit crime even in the same structural environment.

The most complicated integrated theories, at least in terms of levels of analysis, are those that include both micro and macro models. Such models are likely the most difficult to synthesize successfully because this involves bringing together rather unnatural relationships between individual-based propositions and group-level postulates. However, when done effectively, such a model can be rather profound in terms of explanation of crime. After all, one of the primary objectives of a good theory is to explain behavior across as many circumstances as possible. Thus, a theory that can effectively explain why crime occurs in certain individuals as well as certain groups would be better than a theory that explains crime across only individuals or only groups.


An example of such a theory is Braithwaite’s reintegrative shaming theory, which begins with an individual (or micro) level theory of social control and bonding—which he refers to as interdependency—and then relates levels of this concept to a group or community (or macro) level theory of bonding—which he refers to as communitarianism. This theory will be discussed in far more detail later, but it is important here to acknowledge the advantages of explaining both the micro (individual) and macro (group) level of analysis in explanations of criminal behavior, such as in the theory of reintegrative shaming.

Ultimately, the levels of analysis of any component theories are important considerations in the creation of integrated models of crime. It is particularly important to ensure that the merging of certain theories from within or across particular levels makes rational sense and, most important, advances our knowledge and understanding of the causes of crime.

### Additional Considerations regarding Types of Integration

Beyond the basic forms of propositional integration models and levels of analysis, there are two additional types of integration—conceptual integration and theoretical elaboration—that are quite common, perhaps even more common than the traditional forms discussed previously. Conceptual integration involves the synthesis of models in which "the theorist equates concepts in different theories, arguing that while the words and terms are different, the theoretical meanings and operations of measurement are similar." Essentially, the goal in such a formulation is to take the primary constructs of two or more theories and merge them into a more general framework that aids understanding in explaining behavior by unifying terms that represent fundamentally similar phenomena or issues. Such formulations are considered less intrusive on the component theories than the propositional integrations we discussed previously.

One of the first and most cited examples of conceptual integration was provided by Frank Pearson and Neil Weiner in 1985. As shown in Table 12.1, Pearson and Weiner attempted to map the various concepts of numerous criminological theories. This was done by creating categories that numerous concepts from various theories would appear to fit into through their inclusion in explanatory models of criminal behavior and across levels of explanation. Although based on a social learning and differential reinforcement perspective, Pearson and Weiner’s model attempts to include concepts of virtually all existing theories of crime and delinquency. A particular strength is that this model includes feedback or behavioral consequence elements as well as classifying each model by unit of measurement and analysis.

For example, as illustrated in Table 12.1, the conceptual model shows that differential association theory has concepts that apply to all internal aspects and one of the two concepts under consequences or feedback at the micro level but none of the aspects under the external model or any of the four macro-level concepts. On the other hand, Marxist-critical theory is shown to apply to three of the internal micro and one of the consequences or feedback concepts and to most of the macro-level concepts as well. Although only some of the theories that we have discussed in this book are included, largely because Pearson and Weiner’s conceptual integration was done in the mid-1980s, this model includes most of the dominant theoretical frameworks that were prevalent in the criminological literature at the time of their formulation. Thus, this conceptual model remains as a sort of prototype for future attempts to conceptually integrate established theories explaining criminal conduct.

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<th>Table 12.1.</th>
<th>Mapping of the Selected Criminological Theories into the Integrative Structure</th>
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<td>Differential Association</td>
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<td>Social Learning</td>
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<td>Differential Reinforcement</td>
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<td>Differential Consequence</td>
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<td>Differential Incentive</td>
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<tr>
<td>Differential Sanctioning</td>
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One notable strength of Pearson and Weiner's conceptual integration is the inclusion of most mainstream theories—differential association, labeling, social control, deterrence, economic, routine activities, neutralization, strain, normative (culture) conflict, generalized strain, and Marxist-critical group conflict—in existence at the time in which they created their integrated framework. Another strength of their integrated framework is the fact that they account for concepts at different levels of analysis, namely the micro (individual) and macro (group) levels, as shown in Table 12.1. So, the framework clearly does a good job at creating links between the most prominent theories in terms of the concepts they propose as the primary causes of crime.

However, Pearson and Weiner's conceptually integrated framework does have several notable weaknesses. One of the most prominent criticisms of the conceptual model is that it is based on a single theory, specifically social learning theory (tied to Akers' differential reinforcement and social learning theory, discussed in Section VII), and the authors never really provide a strong argument for why they chose this particular base framework for their model. Another major weakness of this conceptual framework is that it completely neglects many biological and biosocial factors—hormones, neurotransmitters, toxins—that have been consistently shown to have profound effects on human behavior. Still, despite the criticisms of this integrated framework, respected theorists have noted that Pearson and Weiner's integration of these concepts into a consistent, coherent framework is impressive, but the model has never received much attention in the criminological literature.28

However, despite the obvious tendency to simplify formulations through conceptual integration, many critics have claimed that such attempts are simply a means toward propositional integration. Thus, despite its categorization as conceptual, this type of integration is not necessarily seen as such, and it may be seen by many as a form of deductive integration. However, many experts have noted that conceptual integration is actually not a form of side-by-side integration, nor is it end-to-end integration. Rather, it is what it says it is: conceptual integration. It is nothing more and nothing less.29 Therefore, it appears that conceptual integration is a distinct derivative form of integration and that it can and should occur independently if it helps to advance understanding of why people commit crime. As the most knowledgeable experts recently concluded, "establishing some conceptual equivalence is necessary for deductive integration."30

An additional variation of integration is theoretical elaboration, which is a strategy that takes an existing theory that is arguably underdeveloped and then further develops it by adding concepts and propositions from other theories. Many critics of traditional theoretical integration have argued that theoretical elaboration is a more attractive strategy because theories are not developed enough to fully integrate them.31 An example of theoretical integration can be seen in the expansion of rational choice theory, which had traditionally focused on ratios of perceived costs and benefits, to include deontological constructs, such as moral beliefs. Specifically, studies have consistently shown that ethical constraints condition the influence of expected consequences on criminal behavior ranging from violence to academic dishonesty to white-collar crime.32 Although they are not without critics, most rational choice scholars appear to agree that such elaboration advanced the theoretical framework and

30 Ibid., 16.

30 Much of this discussion is taken from Brown et al., Criminology: Explaining Crime; and Messner et al., Theoretical Integration.
32 Bernard and Stanis, "Theoretical Integration?" Hirschi, "Exploring Alternatives.
33 Hirschi, "Separate but Unequal."

made it a more accurate explanation of human behavior. In sum, theoretical integration, like conceptual integration, is an option for merging and improving theoretical models without completely synthesizing two or more entire paradigms.

Criticisms and Weaknesses of Integrated Theories

A number of criticisms have been leveled at theoretical integration. Perhaps one of the most obvious and prevalent, not to mention extremely valid, criticisms is the argument that caution should be taken in attempting to integrate theories that have apparent contradictions or inconsistencies in their postulates.31 As we have seen, different theories are based on varying, often opposite, perspectives of human nature. While most versions of strain theory (e.g., Merton's theory) assume that human beings are born with a natural tendency toward being good, most variations of control theory (e.g., Hirschi's social bonding and self-control theories) assume that humans are innately selfish and hedonistic. At the same time, most versions of learning theory (e.g., Sutherland's theory of differential association and Akers's differential reinforcement theory) assume that humans are born with a blank slate; in other words, people are born with neither good nor bad tendencies but rather learn their morality moment to moment from social interaction.

Obviously, attempts to integrate these theories face the hurdles of dealing with such obvious contradictions, and many formulations that do emerge some of these perspectives simply do not deal with this issue. The failure to acknowledge, let alone explain, such inconsistencies is likely to result in regression of theoretical development instead of leading to progress in understanding, which is the primary goal of integrating theories in the first place.

Other experts have argued that any attempts to integrate theories must unite three different levels of analysis, including individual (micro), group (macro), and microsituational, which merges the micro level with the spontaneous context.32 While we agree that this would be the ideal for theory formulation, we know of no theory that does so. Therefore, this proposition is more of an ideal that has not yet been attempted. Thus, we are inclined to go with the best that has been offered by expert theorists. Still, it is hoped that in the future, such an integrated model will be offered that addresses all of these aspects in an explanatory model.

Another argument against theoretical integration is the stance that explanatory perspectives of crime are meant to stand alone. This is the position taken by Travis Hirschi, who has been one of the most cited and regarded scholars in criminology for the last 40 years.33 As others have noted, Hirschi confirmed his position on this debate unequivocally when he stated that "separate and unequal is better" than integrating traditionally independent theoretical models.34

This type of perspective is also called oppositional tradition or theoretical competition, because the separate theories are essentially pitted against one another in a form of battle or opposition. Although scientists are trained to always be skeptical of their own beliefs and open to other possibilities, especially the desire to refine theoretical models that are shown to be invalid, it is surprising that such a position exists. Despite the rather unscientific nature of this stance, such a position of oppositional tradition has many supporters. Specifically, one of the most respected and cited criminologists, Hirschi, claimed the following:

The first purpose of theoretical theory construction is to make the world safe for a theory contrary to currently accepted views. Unless this task is accomplished, there will be little hope for the survival of the theory and less hope for its development. Therefore, oppositional theorists should not make
life easy for those interested in preserving the status quo. They should instead remain at all times blind to the weaknesses of their own position and stubborn in its defense. Finally, they should never smile.25

Unfortunately, this position against theoretical integration is presented in a very unscientific tone. After all, scientists should always be critical of their own views and theories. By stating that theorists should be "blind" to opposing viewpoints and "stubborn" in their own perspective's defense, Hirsch advocates a position that is absolutely against science. Still, this statement, albeit flawed, demonstrates the extreme position against theoretical integration that is favorable toward having each independent theory standing opposed to others. It is our position that this stand does not have much defense, which is shown by Hirsch's lack of rational argument. Furthermore, it is generally acceptable to smile when presenting any theoretical or empirical conclusions, even when they involve opposition to or acceptance of integrated theoretical models of criminal behavior.

Perhaps one of the most important criticisms against Hirsch's and others' criticisms of integrated models is that most traditional models alone explain only a limited amount of variation in criminal activity. Elliott and colleagues have claimed the following:

Stated simply, the level of explained variance attributable to separate theories is embarrassingly low, and, if sociological explanations for crime and delinquency are to have any significant impact upon future planning and policy, they must be able to demonstrate greater predictive power.26

While some put this estimate at 10% to 20% of the variance in illegal activities, this is simply an average across different theories and various forms of deviant behavior.27 However, this range is an overestimate based on many studies investigating the accuracy of separate theories, which tend to show weak support (explaining well under 10% of the variation in offending), particularly social bonding and strain models.28

On the other hand, this estimated range of explained variance underestimates the empirical validity of some theoretical frameworks that consistently show high levels of explained variation in certain criminal behaviors. For example, a large number of studies investigating Akers's differential reinforcement and social learning theory (discussed in Section VIII), which examine not only a wide range of samples (in terms of age, nationality, and other demographic characteristics) but also a large range of deviant activities (e.g., cigarette smoking, drug usage, violent criminal acts), consistently account for more than 20% of variation in such behaviors.29 Specifically, most of these

27 This estimate can be found in Bernard and Snipes, "Theoretical Integration," 706, but is based on the estimates of others, as discussed in this work.
28 See in Akers and Sellers, Criminological Theories.

studies estimate that Akers's social learning model explains up to 68% or more of the variation in certain deviant behaviors, with the lowest estimate being around 30%.

Obviously, not all independent theories of crime lack empirical validity, so this does not support critics' claims that traditionally separate theories of crime do not do a good job of explaining criminal behavior. However, it is also true that many of the theories that do the best job in empirical tests for validity are those that are somewhat integrated in the sense that they have often been formed by merging traditional theories with other constructs and propositions, much like Akers's differential reinforcement theory, which added more modern psychological concepts and principles (e.g., operant conditioning and modeling) to Sutherland's traditional theory of differential association (see Section VIII). So, in a sense, an argument can be made that theoretical integration (or at least theoretical elaboration) had already occurred, which made this theory far more empirically valid than the earlier model.

Another example of the high level of empirical validity of existing models of offending can be found in some models of rational choice, which have been revised through theoretical elaboration and have explained more than 60% of the explained variation in deviant behavior.30 However, much of the explanatory power of such frameworks relies on incorporating the constructs and principles of other theoretical models, which is what science is based on; specifically, they revise and improve theory based on what is evident from empirical testing. After all, even some of the harshest critics of theoretical integration admit that traditional theories do not own variables or constructs.31 For example, Hirsch claimed the following:

Integrationists somehow conclude that variables appear... with opposition theory labels attached to them. This allows them to explain all variables by the theory that owns them. Social disorganization theory... might own economic status, cultural heterogeneity, and mobility.... Each of the many variables is measured... the theories are ranked in terms of the success of their variables in explaining variation in delinquency... such that integration is in effect required by the evidence and surprisingly easily accomplished.32

This is the way that science and theoretical development and revision are supposed to work, so in our opinion, this is exactly as it should be. All scientists and theoreticians should constantly be seeking to improve their explanatory models and be open to ways to do so as opposed to being staunch supporters of one position and blind to existing evidence.

Despite the criticisms against theoretical integration, a strong argument has been made that theoretical competition and oppositional tradition are generally pointless.33 A big reason for this belief among proponents of theoretical integration is that various theories tend to explain different types of crime and varying portions of the causal processes for behavior. For example, some theories focus more on property crimes while others focus on violent crimes, and some theories emphasize the antecedent or root causes of crime (e.g., genetics, poverty) while others emphasize more immediate causes (e.g., current social context at the scene). Given that there are multiple factors that contribute to crime and that different factors are more important for different types of crime, it only makes sense that a synthesis of traditionally separate theories must come together to explain the wide range of criminal activity that occurs in the real world.

Ultimately, there are both pros and cons of integrating theories. It is our belief that theoretical integration is generally a good thing as long as there is caution and attention given to merging models that have opposing assumptions, such as those regarding the natural state of human beings (e.g., good vs. bad vs. blank slate). But only

30 For example, see Tittle's, "College Student Perceptions," which showed that an elaborated rational choice model explained more than 60% of variation in test cheating among college students.
33 Bernard and Snipes, "Theoretical Integration," 706, based on the rationale provided by Elliott et al., Explaining Delinquency.
after considerable empirical research will the true validity of integrated models be tested, and many have already been put to the test. We will now examine a handful of integrated theories that have been proposed over the past couple of decades as well as the studies that have examined their empirical validity. Not surprisingly, some integrated and elaborated theories appear to be more valid than others—with most adding considerably to our understanding of human behavior and contributing to explaining the reasons why certain individuals or groups commit criminal behavior more than others.

**Examples of Integrated Criminological Theory**

We have already discussed the advantages and disadvantages of theoretical integration as well as the ways in which traditionally separate explanatory models are combined to form new, synthesized frameworks. We will now review a number of the most prominent examples of theoretical integration that have been proposed in the past 35 years, which is largely the time period when most attempts at integration have been presented. We hope that readers will critique each theory based on the criteria that we have already discussed, particularly noting the empirical validity of each model based on scientific observation and the logical consistency of its propositions.

**Elliott's Integrated Model**

Perhaps the first and certainly the most prominent integrated model is that proposed by Elliott and his colleagues in 1979, which has become known as Elliott's integrated model.⁴⁶ In fact, this model "opened the current round of debate on integration." because it was essentially the first major perspective proposed that clearly attempted to merge various traditionally separate theories of crime.⁴⁶ Elliott's integrated framework attempts to merge strain, social disorganization, control, and social learning and differential association-reinforcement perspectives for the purpose of explaining delinquency, particularly in terms of drug use but also for other forms of deviant behavior (see Figure 12.1).

As can be seen in Figure 12.1, the concepts and propositions of strain and social disorganization, as well as inadequate socialization, are considered antecedent (or root) causes of delinquency. In other words, failing to achieve one's goals (i.e., strain theory) and coming from a disadvantaged neighborhood (i.e., social disorganization) are key factors predisposing people to criminal behavior. Furthermore, the fact that many low-income households tend to lack adequate socialization, such as when a single parent has to work two or three jobs to make ends meet, is also a major root cause of delinquency.

Because this model clearly shows some constructs that lead to criminality as coming first (e.g., strain, social disorganization) and others as coming later (e.g., weak bonding and then affiliations with delinquents), this is a good example of end-to-end theoretical integration. In other words, this is an end-to-end form of integration because some models or concepts, such as strain, occur first, which then lead chronologically to other models and concepts, such as weak conventional bonding or strong delinquent bonding, which then lead to crime.

The notable ways in which this perspective becomes a true integrated model is seen in the mediating or intervening variables. Although some antecedent variables (such as strain) can lead directly to delinquent activity, most of the criminal activity is theoretically predicted through a process that would include a breakdown of conventional bonding (i.e., social control and bonding theory), which occurs in many individuals who experience strain or social disorganization in their neighborhoods along with inadequate socialization. Furthermore, individuals who have such a breakdown in conventional bonding tend to be more highly influenced by the associations that they make in the streets among their peers (i.e., differential association-reinforcement and social learning theory). According to Elliott's integrated theory, this factor—strong delinquent bonding—most directly results in delinquent behavior among most juvenile offenders.

One of the notable features of this theoretical model is that it allows for various types of individuals to become criminal. In other words, unlike traditionally separate frameworks that assume that offenders expect not to achieve their goals (e.g., strain theory) or come from bad neighborhoods (e.g., Chicago or social disorganization theory), Elliott's integrated theory allows for a variety of possibilities when it comes to causal paths that explain how crime and delinquency develop in certain people and groups. This is what makes integrated models so much more powerful; namely, they bring several valid explanations together and allow for various possibilities to occur, all of which explain some criminality. Whereas traditional theories largely provide for only one causal process, Elliott and his colleagues showed right from the first major integrated theory that different types of trajectories, or paths to crime, are possible.

One of the major criticisms of merging such theories, particularly strain (which assumes individuals are born relatively good) and control or social bonding (which clearly assumes that people are born relatively bad [i.e., selfish, greedy, aggressive]), is that they tend to have extremely different, even opposite, assumptions of human behavior. As a recent review of theoretical integration noted, Elliott and his colleagues attempted to circumvent this obvious contradiction in basic assumptions by claiming that the model allows for variation in individual motivations for why people engage in delinquency and crime.⁴⁷ For example, they claimed that failure to achieve one's goals (i.e., strain theory) is not always the motivation for crime; rather, crime can result from inadequate socialization or from coming from a disadvantaged neighborhood.

⁴⁶ Elliott et al., "An Integrated Theoretical Perspective." For further elaboration and refinement of this theory, see Elliott et al., Explaining Delinquency.

⁴⁷ Ibid.
Furthermore, Elliott's integrated model allows for different forms of control or social bonding with not all of the delinquents being required to have weak social bonds with conventional society. For instance, as can be seen in Figure 12.1, a person who has experienced strain (or failure to achieve her or his goals) can move directly to the social learning and differential association-reinforcement variables of strong delinquent bonding so that the weak conventional bonding construct is not a required causal process in this theoretical model. So, while some critics claim that Elliott and his colleagues have combined theories that simply cannot be synthesized due to contrasting assumptions, we believe that this integrated theory did, in fact, find a logical and consistent way of showing how both models can be merged in a way that makes a lot of sense in the real world. On the other hand, the model does indeed claim that strain directly causes weak conventional bonding, and the theoretical framework implies that the probability of delinquency is highest when an individual experiences both strain and weak conventional bonding, so to some extent, the critics make an important point regarding the logical consistency of the full model, which Elliott and his colleagues have not adequately addressed.45

Despite the presence of elements of four traditionally separate theories (strain, social disorganization, social control or bonding, and social learning or differential association-reinforcement), Elliott and his colleagues identified this integrated theory with social control, as opposed to any of the other perspectives, which they argue is a more general theory and can explain crime and delinquency across different levels of explanation. They also noted that the social control perspective is more sociological in the sense that it places more importance on the role of institutional structures in controlling criminal behavior.46 Perhaps another reason why they identified their model with social control or bonding theory was because both intervening constructs represent types of bonds formed or not formed with others: weak conventional bonding and strong delinquent bonding. However, it is important to keep in mind that these constructs actually represent two traditionally separate theories—namely, social bonding theory and differential association-reinforcement or social learning, respectively.

The authors of this textbook believe that when an integrated theory (which claims to be such an integrated model) chooses a primary or dominant theory as its basis, this does not help in selling it to the scientific community, let alone others. A similar problem was seen in Pearson and Weiner's conceptual integration in their identifying a single traditionally separate theory—social learning or differential association-reinforcement—as the foundation for their framework. Obviously, the first reaction by many other theoreticians, even those that are not inherently against this theoretical integration, would be somewhat cautious or even resistant. After all, why would a theory that claims to be integrated outright claim a single explanatory framework as its basis?

Rather, such models may be seen more as examples of theoretical elaboration, which tends to start with the assumptions and concepts of one theory and draw from other models to improve the base model. Still, despite the criticisms against identifying a single model as a basis for developing an integrated framework for explaining criminality, it is apparent that latitude has been granted. It is important to note that Elliott's model is considered the first true attempt at theoretical integration and is still widely respected as the prototype and example of what an integrated model could and should be.

Much of the empirical evidence supporting Elliott's integrated model has been provided by Elliott and his colleagues themselves through their testing of the theory. Specifically, much of the testing they have done has been via the National Youth Survey (NYS), a national survey collected and synthesized by criminologists at the University of Colorado Boulder, which is where Elliott and most of the colleagues with whom he works are professors. This longitudinal measure of delinquency has been administered and analyzed for several decades, and it represents perhaps the most systematic collection of information from youths regarding key developmental variables and delinquency rates that has ever existed.

Most of the evidence from the NYS shows general strong support for Elliott's model.47 However, some evidence has shown few direct effects of the strain and social control concepts, which is surprising given that the basis of the model was the social control and bonding elements of the theory.48 In fact, the original hypothesis in the model—that strain and social control or bonding would have a direct effect on delinquency—was not observed.49 Rather, only bonding to delinquent peers had a significant and strong effect on future criminality, which supports social learning and differential association-reinforcement theory. This strongly supports the social learning variables in the model and diminishes the claim made by Elliott and his colleagues about the fundamental theoretical perspective of social control and bonding.

Furthermore, a critical review of Elliott's framework, as presented in his 1985 book (with David Huizinga and Suzanne Ageton), noted that a major problem is that its "most puzzling feature...is the inclusion of social disorganization in it as a causal factor, in the absence of any attempt to measure or test the importance of this factor. These authors, presumably wished to claim that their theory was 'more sociological than psychological.'"50

This point is particularly important given that virtually none of the tests of Elliott's integrated model have included social disorganization factors in their studies, even after this critical review was published more than 25 years ago. So, Elliott and his colleagues should either drop this portion from consideration in the model or provide an adequate test of it in relation to the rest of the framework. Although we would opt for the latter, one of these two alternatives must be chosen.

However, from the presentation that Elliott gave as his presidential address to the American Society of Criminology (ASC) in 1993, it appears that the former alternative was chosen. Specifically, in his model of the onset of serious violent offending, all of the antecedent variables could be explained by the other traditionally separate theoretical models in his framework. He included two bonding constructs (family and school), parental sanctions, stressful life events (i.e., strain), and early exposure to crime and victimization. Perhaps the last factor could be construed as related to social disorganization theory, but it is probably regarded more as a social learning and differential association-reinforcement variable, as is suggested from the original model.

In addition, this critique noted that the existing evidence shows that most delinquent activity is committed among groups of juveniles, and, thus, youths who tend to commit illegal acts naturally associate with delinquents. Yet, the affiliation with delinquent peers is not considered the basic foundation of the theory—as tests of this model declined social disorganization factors in their model. The author of this critique claims that Elliott's model does not emphasize this point strongly enough and thereby does not provide convincing evidence that delinquent peers cause or facilitate offending.51

In light of these findings, even Elliott and his colleagues acknowledged that their integrated model best fit the data as a social learning and differential association-reinforcement framework of delinquency.52 However, they chose to retain social control and bonding theory as the primary foundation of their integrated model, stating that "it is not clear that a social learning model would have predicted a conditional relationship between conventional bonding... and deviant bonding."53 Elliott and colleagues went on to say that they did not attribute most of the explained variation in the model to social learning and differential reinforcement as being the most important

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45 Ibid.
46 Ibid., 311–12.
47 See review in Alkers and Sellass, Criminological Theories, 273–76.
48 Elliott et al., Explaining Delinquency.
49 Alkers and Sellass, Criminological Theories, 275.
51 Farrington, book review, 433.
52 Ibid.
53 Ibid., based on a quote from Elliott et al., Explaining Delinquency, 137.
construct because they claimed that such variables did not play a strong enough part in the indirect effects that were seen in the estimated models.

This is actually a logical position, given the fact that their integrated framework would, in fact, predict that social learning and differential association-reinforcement variables were the primary direct effects on delinquency, and social control, strain, and social disorganization variables were considered primarily indirect all along, according to their model. However, some critics, especially the proponents of social learning and differential reinforcement theory, have claimed the following:

Even with the addition of the interactive effects of conventional bonding, the final model reported by Elliott et al. is more of a variation on social learning theory (with bonding modifications) than it is a variation on social bonding theory (with learning modifications).

After all, the measures of delinquent peer bonds used by Elliott and his colleagues are essentially measures that have been used by theorists and researchers of social learning theory over the past few decades regarding differential associations, reinforcements, and modeling.

Additional analyses using the NYS have tended to agree with the critics regarding the importance of social learning and differential reinforcement variables in predicting crime and delinquency. Specifically, one relatively recent reanalysis of NYS data showed that social learning variables appeared to predict more variation in deviance than did the other models or constructs in the model. The assumption that strong attachments to others, regardless of who they are, reduces offending, has been shown by empirical research to be false (see Section VII). This is true, and all future integrated models must address this issue if they include social control or bonding propositions or constructs in their models.

Despite these criticisms and empirical observations, it appears that Elliott's integrated model has contributed to our understanding of the development of delinquent behavior. In the least, it inspired other theoretical frameworks, some of which we review here. However, it should also be obvious that there are some valid criticisms of this model, such as the claim that it is based on social control and bonding theory while depending heavily on the strong delinquent bonding that takes place in most cases of criminality, clearly implicating social learning and differential reinforcement theory. Again, we want to stress that a true integrated model should not place any emphasis on a particular theory; otherwise, the critics will have a sound argument when findings show that one theory is more influential than another.

Thornberry's Interactional Theory

After Elliott's integrated model, presented in 1979, the next major integrated framework was that of Terrence Thornberry in 1987. This model incorporated empirical evidence drawn since Elliott's presentation to create a unique and insightful model of criminality, which addressed an extremely important aspect that had never been addressed previously in criminalological theory. Specifically, Thornberry's interactional theory was the first to emphasize reciprocal, or feedback, effects in the causal modeling of the theoretical framework.

As a basis for his model, Thornberry combined social control and social learning models. According to Thornberry, both of these theories try to explain criminality in a straightforward, causal process and are largely targeted toward a certain age population. Thornberry uniquely claimed that the processes of both social control and social learning theory affect each other in a type of feedback process.

Thornberry's integrated model incorporates five primary theoretical constructs, which are synthesized in a comprehensive framework to explain criminal behavior. These five concepts include the following: (1) commitment to school, (2) attachment to parents, (3) belief in conventional values (these first three are taken from social control and bonding theory), (4) adoption of delinquent values, and (5) association with delinquent peers (these last two are drawn from social learning and differential association-reinforcement theory). These five constructs, which most criminalologists would agree are important in the development of criminality, are obviously important in a rational model of crime, so at first it does not appear that Thornberry's model clearly points out that different variables will have greater effects at certain times; for example, he claims that association with delinquent peers will have more effect in the middleyears than at other ages.

What Thornberry adds beyond other theories is the idea of reciprocity or feedback loops, which no previous theory had mentioned, much less emphasized. For much, the previously existing criminalological literature had spent much time debating whether individuals become delinquent and then start hanging out with similar peers or whether individuals start hanging out with delinquent peers and then begin engaging in criminal activity. This has been the traditional chicken-or-egg question in criminology for most of the 20th century; namely, which came first, delinquency or bad friends? It has often been referred to as the self-selec tion versus social learning debate; in other words, do certain individuals decide to hang out with delinquents based on their own previous behavior, or do they learn criminality from delinquents with whom they start associating? One of the major contributions of Thornberry's interactional model is that he directly answered this question.

Specifically, Thornberry noted that most, if not all, contributors to delinquency (and criminal behavior itself) are related reciprocal theory, affect each other's criminal behavior. It is quite common for individuals to commit crime and then start hanging out with other peers who are doing the same, and it is also quite common for people to start hanging out with delinquent peers and then start committing offenses. Furthermore, it is perhaps the most likely scenario for a person who is offending to be dealing with both the influences of past experiences and peer effects as well.

As mentioned previously, Thornberry considered the social control and bonding constructs, such as attachment to parents and commitment to school, the most essential predictors of delinquency. Like previous theoretical models of social bonding and control, Thornberry's model puts the level of attachment and commitment to conventional society ahead of the degree of moral beliefs that individuals have regarding criminal offending. However, lack of such moral beliefs leads to delinquent behavior, which in turn negatively affects the level of commitment or attachment an individual may have built in her or his development. Thornberry claimed the following:

While the weakening of the bond to conventional society may be an initial cause of delinquency, delinquency eventually becomes its own indirect cause precisely because of its ability to weaken further the person's bonds to family, school, and conventional beliefs.
Thus, the implications of this model are that variables relating to social control or bonding and other sources cause delinquency, which then becomes, in itself, a predictor and cause for the breakdown of other important causes of delinquency and crime.

Such a model, although complex and hard to measure, is logically consistent, and the postulates are sound. However, the value of any theory has to be determined by the empirical evidence that is found regarding its validity. Much of the scientific evidence regarding Thornberry’s empirical model has been contributed by Thornberry and his colleagues.

Although the full model has yet to be tested, the researchers “have found general support for the reciprocal relationships between both control concepts and learning concepts with delinquent behavior.”46 One test of Thornberry’s model used the longitudinal Rochester Youth Development Study to test its postulates.42 This study found that the estimates of previous unidirectional models (nonreciprocal models) did not adequately explain the variation in the data. Rather, the results supported the interactional model, with delinquent associations leading to increases in delinquency, delinquency leading to reinforcing peer networks, and both directional processes working through the social environment. In fact, this longitudinal study demonstrated that, once the participants had acquired delinquent beliefs from their peers, the effects of these beliefs had further effects on their future behavior and associations, which is exactly what Thornberry’s theory predicts (see Figure 12.2).46

**Case Study: Thornberry’s Interactional Model**

As an example, consider a person we shall call Johnny who has an absent father and a mother who uses inconsistent discipline and sometimes harsh physical abuse of her son. He sees his mother’s state of constant neglect and abuse as proof that belief in conventional values is wrong, and he becomes indifferent toward governmental laws; after all, his main goal is to survive and be successful. Because of his mother’s psychological and physical neglect, Johnny pays no attention to school and rather turns to his older peers for guidance and support. These peers guide him toward behavior that gives him both financial reward (selling what they steal) and status in their group (respect for performing well in illegal acts). At some point, Johnny gets caught, and this makes the peers who taught him how to engage in crime very proud, while alienating him from the previous bonds he had with his school, from which he is suspended, and with his mother, who further distances herself from him. This creates a reciprocal effect or feedback loop to the previous factors, which were lack of attachment to his mother and lack of commitment to school. The lowered level of social bonding and control with conventional institutions and factors (mother, school) and increased influence by delinquent peers then leads Johnny to commit more frequent and more serious crimes.

45Thornberry et al., “Delinquent Peers.”
46Ibid.
principles from several theories, primarily social control or bonding theory and labeling theory with elements of strain theory, subculture and gang theory, and differential association theory. All of these theories are synthesized in a clear and coherent framework that is presented in both descriptive and graphic form. We will spend extra time discussing John Braithwaite's theory because it addresses not only U.S. culture but also cultural and justice tendencies in Japanese culture.

Braithwaite's idea for the theory was obviously inspired by the cultural differences he observed in Eastern (particularly Japanese) culture, in terms of both socialization practices and the justice system, as compared to the Western world. (Note that Braithwaite is from Australia, which uses the same Western practices as England and the United States.) Specifically, he emphasized the Japanese focus on the aggregate, such as the family, school, or business, to which the individual belongs. In contrast, in many Western cultures, epitomized by U.S. culture, the emphasis is clearly placed on the individual.

This contrast has often been referred to as the we culture versus the me culture (Eastern vs. Western emphases, respectively). Although this is seen in virtually all aspects of culture and policy practices, it is quite evident in people's names. In most Eastern cultures, people are known by their family name, which is placed first in the ordering. This shows the importance that is placed on the group to which they belong. In contrast, Western societies list individual names first, implying a focus on the individual herself or himself. These naming practices are a manifestation of a virtually all-embracing cultural difference regarding group dynamics and social expectations across societies, especially in their justice systems. For example, it is quite common in Japan to receive a sentence of apologizing in public, even for the most serious violent crimes. In his book, Braithwaite pointed out that, after World War II, Japan was the only highly industrialized society that showed a dramatic decrease in its crime rate.

Criminological theory would predict an increasing crime rate in Japan, given the extremely high density of urban areas due to rapid industrialization, especially on such a small amount of land—Japan being a large island. As Braithwaite described it, the Japanese suffered from anomic after the war in the sense of a general breakdown of cultural norms, but the nation was able to deal with this anomic state despite the odds. Japan definitively decided not to follow the Western model of justice after the war; rather, it rejected the Western system of stigmatizing convicted felons. Instead, the Japanese implemented a system in which offenders are reintegrated (hence reintegration) via a formal ceremony in which citizens accept the offenders back into conventional society. In contrast, in the United States, we typically give our ex-cons about $200 on average and make them promise always to identify themselves as felons on legal documents.

Japan is also extremely lenient in sentencing offenders to prison. In contrast, by rate of incarceration, the United States is the most punitive developed nation. In Japan, Braithwaite noted the following:

Prosecution only proceeds in major cases... where the normal process of apology, compensation, and forgiveness by the victim breaks down. Fewer than 10 percent of those offenders who are convicted receive prison sentences, and for two-thirds of these, prison sentences are suspended. Whereas 45 percent of those convicted of a crime serve a jail sentence in the U.S., in Japan the percentage is under two.

Public apology is the most common punishment among the Japanese, which strongly reflects the nature of honor in Japanese society, as well as pointing out the fundamental differences between how we deal with offenders. Braithwaite claimed that this cultural and political difference has a huge impact on why crime rates in both nations have experienced such different trends.

Most developing Western nations, including the United States, experienced a rising crime rate in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s. Braithwaite argued that this was likely due to culture and the differential treatment of its offenders:

It might be argued that this [the downward trend in crime rates after World War II in Japan] was a result of the re-establishment of cultural traditions of shaming wrongdoers, including the effective coupling of shame and punishment... One contention is that the uncoupling of shame and punishment manifested in a wide variety of ways in many Western countries is an important factor in explaining the rising crime rates in those countries.

Furthermore, in contrast to American society, the Japanese are typically less confrontational with authority. For example, some scholars have noted that the Japanese accept the authority of law, and police officers are considered similar to "elder brothers" who rely "on positive rather than negative reinforcement" when it comes to crime control. This difference in the way officers and other authority figures are considered is likely due to the way that the Japanese view society in terms of neighborhood, community, school, and work—the informal institutions of control that we have mentioned earlier in this book as having more effect on the crime rate than formal institutions (i.e., police, courts, prisons).

Beyond discussing the cultural differences, Braithwaite's integrated theory addresses some of the most notable scientific observations regarding which types of individuals and groups are likely to commit crime. Specifically, Braithwaite stated that most crime is committed by young, poor, single males who live in urban communities that have high levels of residential mobility; they are likely to be unattached to or to do poorly in school, have low educational or occupational aspirations, are not strongly attached to their parents, associate with delinquent peers, and do not have moral beliefs against violating the law.

It is obvious from this list that Braithwaite incorporated some of the major theories and corresponding variables into his theoretical perspective. The emphasis on poor people who do not have high educational or occupational aspirations obviously supports strain theory, whereas the inclusion of urban individuals who live in communities with high residential mobility reflects the Chicago School or social disorganization theory. At the same time, Braithwaite clearly highlighted the predisposition of people who have limited moral beliefs and weak attachments, which conjures up images of social bonding and control theory; individuals having delinquent peers obviously supports differential association and reinforcement theory. Thus, a handful of theories are important in the construction of Braithwaite's integrated theory.

Braithwaite noted that much of the effectiveness of the Japanese system of crime control depends on two constructs: (1) interdependency and (2) communitarianism. Interdependency is the level of bonding of an individual to conventional society, such as the degree to which he or she is involved with or attached to conventional groups in society, which would include employment, family, church, and organizations. According to Braithwaite, interdependency is the building block of the other major theoretical construct in his integrated model; communitarianism. Communitarianism is the macro (group) level of interdependency, meaning that it is the cumulative degree of the bonds that individuals have with conventional groups and institutions (e.g., family, employment, organizations, church) in a given society. Obviously, these theoretical constructs are mostly based on the theory of social bonding and control in the sense that they are based on attachments, commitment, and involvement in conventional society.
Brathwaite's model has a causal ordering that starts with largely demographic variables, such as age, gender, marital status, employment, and aspirations, on the individual level and urbanization and residential mobility on the macro (group) level. All of these factors are predicted to influence the level of interdependency and community service expectations in the model, which, as we previously discussed, is based on social control and bonding theory. Depending on which type of culture is considered, or what forms of shaming are used in a given jurisdiction, the various types of shaming that are administered are key in this integrated model.

According to Brathwaite, societies that emphasize reintegrative shaming, such as Japan, will reduce the rates of crime in their societies. When an offender in Japan completes her or his sentence or punishment for committing a crime, the government will often sponsor a formal ceremony in which the offender is reintegrated or reintegrated into conventional society. According to Brathwaite, we in the United States do not reintegrate offenders into our society after shaming them but rather stigmatize them, which leads them to associate only with people from criminal subcultures (e.g., drug users, gang members). Brathwaite claimed that this leads to the formation of criminal groups and the grasping of illegitimate opportunities offered in the local community. Ultimately, this means that people who are not reintegrated into conventional society will inevitably be stigmatized and labeled as offenders, preventing them from becoming productive members of the community, even if their intentions are to do so.

Most empirical studies of Brathwaite's theory show mixed results, with most being in favor of this theory, especially regarding its implementation for policy. Some tests have shown that reintegrative ideology regarding violations of law can have a positive impact on future compliance with the law; others have found that high levels of shaming in parental practices do not increase offending. Studies in other countries, such as China and Iceland, show partial support for Brathwaite's theory. While some studies have found encouraging results, other recent studies have also found weak or no support for the theory.}

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Tittle's Control-Balance Theory

One of the more recently proposed models of theoretical integration is Charles Tittle's control-balance theory. Presented by Tittle in 1995, control-balance integrated theory proposes that (a) the amount of control to which one is subjected and (b) the amount of control that one can exercise determine the probability of deviance occurring.

The most recent reports regarding the effects of shame show that outcomes largely depend on how shame is measured, which Brathwaite's theory largely ignores. There are, for example, episodic or situational shame states as well as long-term shame traits or propensities. Recent reviews of the literature and studies of how different types of shame are measured show that certain forms of shame are positively correlated with offending, whereas other forms of shame tend to inhibit criminal behavior. If individuals consistently feel shame, they are more likely to commit criminal activity, but if persons who are not predisposed to feel shame perceive that they would feel shame for doing a given illegal activity, then they would be strongly inhibited from engaging in such activity. This is consistent with findings from another recent study that demonstrated that the effect of reintegrative shaming had an interactive effect on delinquency.

Furthermore, Brathwaite's theory does not take into account other important self-conscious emotions, such as guilt, pride, embarrassment, and empathy, that are important when individuals are deciding whether to commit criminal behavior. Although some theorists claim that shame is the key social emotion, studies show that they are clearly wrong. Rather, self-conscious emotions, such as guilt and embarrassment, are based on social interaction and self-consciousness; in many ways, they are just as inhibitory or rehabilitative as shame. The literature examining rational choice theory is also an indication of the effects of emotions other than shame in influencing decisions on offending.

Still, Brathwaite's reintegrative theory provides an important step ahead in theoretical development, particularly in terms of combining explanatory models to address crime rates, as well as correctional policies and philosophies, across various cultures. Specifically, Brathwaite's theory makes a strong argument that Eastern (particularly Japanese) policies of reintegration and apology for convicted offenders are beneficial for that culture. Would this system work in Western culture, especially the United States? The answer is definitely unknown, but it is unlikely that such a model would work well in the United States. After all, most of the chronic, serious offenders in the United States would not be highly deterred by having to apologize to the public, and many might consider such an apology or reintegration ceremony an honor, or a way to show that they really hadn't been punished. This may not be true, but we would not know this until such policies were implemented fully in our system. However, programs along these lines have been implemented in our country, and some of these programs will be reviewed later in this book.
In other words, the balance between these two types of control, Tittle argued, can predict the type of behavior that is likely to be committed.63

In this integrated theoretical framework, Tittle claimed that a person is least likely to offend when she or he has a balance of controlling and being controlled. On the other hand, the likelihood of offending will increase when these become unbalanced. If individuals are more controlled by external forces, which Tittle calls control deficit, then the theory predicts that they will commit predatory or defiant criminal behavior. In contrast, if an individual possesses an excessive level of control by external forces, which Tittle refers to as control surplus, then that individual will be more likely to commit acts of exploitation or decadence. It is important to realize that this excessive control is not the same as excessive self-control, which would be covered by other theories examined in this section. Rather, Tittle argued that people who are controlling—that is, who have excessive control over others—will be predisposed toward inappropriate activities.

Early empirical tests of control–balance theory have reported mixed results with both surpluses and deficits predicting the same types of deviance.64 Furthermore, researchers have uncovered differing effects of the control–balance ratio on two types of deviance that are contingent on gender. This finding is consistent with the gender-specific support found for Walter Reckless’s containment theory and with the gender differences found in other theoretical models.65 Despite the mixed findings for Tittle’s control–balance theory of crime, this model of criminal offending still gets a lot of attention, and most of the empirical evidence has been in favor of this theory.

Hagan’s Power–Control Theory

The final integrated theory that we will cover in this section deals with the influence of familial control and how this relates to criminality across gender. Power–control theory is another integrated theory that was proposed by John Hagan and his colleagues.66 The primary focus of this theory is on the level of patriarchal attitudes and structure in the household, which are influenced by parental positions in the workforce.

Power–control theory assumes that, in households where the mother and father have relatively similar levels of power at work (i.e., balanced households), mothers will be less likely to exert control on their daughters. These balanced households will be less likely to experience gender differences in the criminal offending of the children. However, households in which mothers and fathers have dissimilar levels of power in the workplace (i.e., unbalanced households) are more likely to suppress criminal activity in daughters. In such families, it is assumed that daughters will be taught to be less risk-taking than the males in the family. In addition, assertiveness and risky activity among the males in the house will be encouraged. This assertiveness and risky activity may be precursors to crime, which is highly consistent with the empirical evidence regarding trends in crime related to gender. Thus, Hagan’s integrated theory seems to have a considerable amount of face validity.

Most empirical tests of power–control theory have provided moderate support, while more recent studies have further specified the validity of the theory in different contexts.67 For example, one recent study reported that the influence of mothers, not fathers, on sons had the greatest impact on reducing the delinquency of young males.68 Another researcher has found that differences in perceived threats of embarrassment and formal sanctions vary between more patriarchal and less patriarchal households.69 Finally, studies have also started measuring the effect of patriarchal attitudes on crime and delinquency.70 However, most of the empirical studies that have shown support for the theory have been done by Hagan or his colleagues. Still, power–control theory is a good example of a social control theory in that it is consistent with the idea that individuals must be socialized and that the gender differences in such socialization make a difference in how people will act throughout life.

Policy Implications

Few policy strategies have actually been derived from integrated or developmental theories, probably because most policy makers are either unaware of such theoretical frameworks or because the theories are so complicated that it is difficult for practitioners to apply them. However, one exception to this rule is Braithwaite’s theory of shaming and reintegrating. Braithwaite and others have gone to great lengths to apply his theory in Australia, and some evaluations of this approach have shown promise, even if not commonly incorporated in the United States (see Kim and Gerber reading later in this section). Interventions stress the restorative concepts of his theory, particularly the idea of reintegrating offenders into society as opposed to stigmatizing them.71

This strategy emphasizes holding offenders accountable, yet it tries to bring them back into conventional society as quickly and efficiently as possible. In contrast, the U.S. system typically gives prisoners a nominal sum of money (in most jurisdictions, about $200), and they must report themselves as convicted felons for the rest of their lives on all job applications. Would Braithwaite’s model work here in the United States? We don’t know yet, but it seems that there could be a better way to incorporate offenders back into society in such a way that they are not automatically set up to fail.

Other policy implications can be drawn from the various integrated theoretical models that we have discussed in this section. We will focus on the concepts that were most prominent, which are parenting and peer influences. Regarding the former, numerous empirical studies have examined programs for improving the ability of parents and

64 Alex Piquero and Matthew Hickman, "An Empirical Test of Tittle’s Control Balance Theory," Criminology 37 (1999): 319–42 (see chap. 8, n. 75); Matthew Hickman and Alex Piquero, "Exploring the Relationships between Gender, Control Balance, and Deviance," Deviant Behavior 22 (2001): 323–51 (see chap. 8, n. 75).
65 Hickman and Piquero, "Exploring the Relationships" For contrast and comparison, see Grasmick et al., "Changes over Time"; Grasmick et al., "Reduction in Drunk Driving"; and Tiberio, "College Student Perceptions."
expecting parents to be effective. Such programs typically involve training high school students—or individuals or couples who are already parents—on how to be better parents. Additional programs include Head Start and other preschool programs that attempt to prepare high-risk youth for starting school; these have been found to be effective in reducing disciplinary problems.69

Regarding peer influences, numerous programs and evaluations have examined the effects of reducing negative peer influences regarding crime.70 Programs that emphasize prosocial peer groups are often successful, whereas others show little or no success.71 The conclusion from most of these studies is that the most successful programs of this type are those that focus on learning life skills and prosocial skills and use a curriculum based on a cognitive behavioral approach.72 This strategy includes reinforcing positive behavior; clarifying rules of behavior in social settings; teaching life and thinking skills; and, perhaps most important, thinking about the consequences of a given behavior before acting (hence, the cognitive behavioral approach). Studies consistently show that programs using a cognitive behavioral approach (i.e., think before you act) are far more successful than programs that emphasize interactions among peers or use psychoanalysis or other forms of therapy.73

Many other policy implications can be derived from integrated theories explaining criminal behavior, but parenting practices and peer influences are the primary constructs in most integrated models. Thus, these are the two areas that should be targeted for policy interventions, but they must be done correctly. For a start, policy makers could utilize the findings from empirical studies and evaluations and see that the earlier parenting programs start, particularly for high-risk children, the more effective they can be. Regarding the peer influence programs, a combination of cognitive behavioral therapy and training in life skills appears to be more effective than other approaches.

Conclusion

In this section, we have reviewed which factors determine the types of integrated theories and which criteria make an integrated theory a good explanation of human behavior. We have also examined examples of integrated theories that have been proposed in the criminological literature in the past 30 years. All of the examples represent the most researched and discussed integrated theories, and they demonstrate both the advantages and disadvantages of theoretical integration or elaboration. We hope that readers will be able to determine for themselves which of these integrated theories are the best in explaining criminal activity.

In this section, we have examined the various ways in which theoretical integration can be done, including forms of conceptual integration and theoretical elaboration. Furthermore, the criticisms of the different variations of integration and elaboration have been discussed. In addition, numerous examples of theoretical integration have been presented along with the empirical studies that have been performed to examine their validity. Such examples include Elliott’s seminal integrated theory as well as Pearson and Weiner’s conceptual integration framework. We also examined other integrated theoretical models, such as Braithwaite’s theory of reintegration, Tittle’s model of control balance, and Hagan’s power–control theory. All have received much attention and research in order to test the propositions proposed by each integrated perspective—with mixed results.

69 See review in Brown et al., Criminology: Explaining Crime, 425.
70 Ibid.
71 For a review, see Akers and Sellers, Criminological Theories, 102–8.
72 Ibid.
73 Ibid., 108.
74 Ibid.