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Chapter 2: The Seven-Step Model and Early Explanations of Criminality

Multiple Choice

1. According to the classical school of philosophy, the likelihood of deterrence is determined by which principles?

a. Magnanimity, fortitude, and specificity
b. Rigor, precision, and relevance
c. Severity, certainty, and celerity
d. Balance, interest, and rationality
e. Exactitude, proximity, and equity (C—p. 15)

2. Which of the following is false according to the classical school scholars?

a. People are generally rational and can be deterred from criminal behavior through proper punishment.
b. To control crime, one should simply increase the severity of punishment.
c. People seek to maximize pleasure and minimize pain.
d. Clearly specified laws and punishments are necessary for a strong criminal justice system.
e. None of the above. (B—p. 15)

3. Positivists claim that:

a. people are all essentially the same and can be controlled by the criminal law.
b. humans are characterized by a clear and consistent rationality.
c. behavior is determined by factors that are beyond a person's control.
d. individuals sacrifice some freedom to live among others in society.
e. all of the above. (C—p. 16)

4. Which of the following resulted directly from the influence of the classical school of philosophy?

a. Legal codes and punishments that are clear and public
b. Rehabilitation and treatment
c. The death penalty
d. Probation
e. Victim impact statements (A—p. 19)

5. Propositions refer to:

a. specific explanations of criminal behavior.
b. key concepts within the theories.
c. key statements within the theories.
d. assumptions made by the different theories.
e. none of the above. (C—p. 22)

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6. Which of the following is false with regard to qualitative research?

a. It relies on methods such as ethnography and interviews.
b. It was associated with the Chicago school.
c. It uses life history narratives to understand pathways to offending and desistance from crime.
d. It is used to evaluate theories by testing their hypotheses.
e. All of the above. (D—p. 24)

7. Quantitative research:

a. is less structured than qualitative research.
b. makes use of independent and dependent variables.
c. is less common in criminology.
d. provides a means to focus more deeply on individual cases and context-specific realities.
e. relies less on numerical information. (B—p. 24)

8. According to criminological research, which of the following is/are effective in deterring future criminal behavior?

a. Boot camps
b. Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE)
c. Scared straight programs
d. All of the above
e. None of the above (E—p. 34)

True or False

1. The modern criminal justice system is informed by both classical and positivist approaches. (TRUE—pp. 15–17)

2. *Tabula rasa* refers to the notion that people are naturally selfish. (FALSE—p. 18)

3. The notions of free will and determinism demonstrate the fundamental tension in our modern criminal justice system. (TRUE—p. 19)

4. Scope refers to how much the theory explains and is less specific than problem focus. (FALSE—p. 20)

5. Theories can be falsified but are never fully proven. (TRUE—p. 21)

6. A good theory tends to be very complex, should be falsifiable, and solves every puzzle and problem for researchers. (FALSE—p. 23)

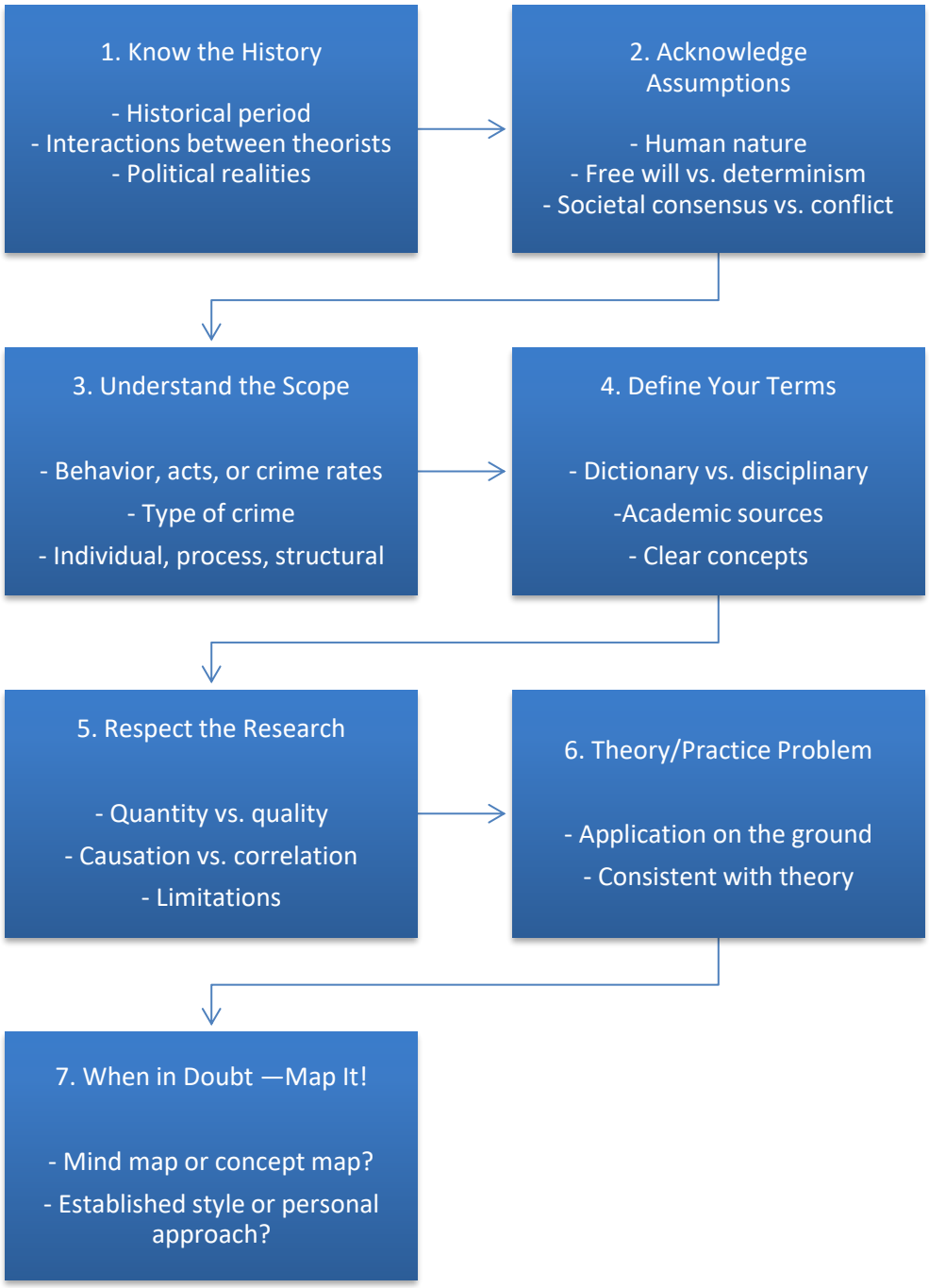
7. The political views of the time often influence the development of criminological theories. (TRUE—p. 29)

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8. Interviews with 60 repeat property offenders reveal that increases in the severity of punishment lead directly to increased deterrence effects. (FALSE—p. 33)

Short Answer

1. Present the seven steps of criminological thinking, and provide two relevant issues for each step.



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2. List the three main assumptions of human nature explored in this chapter, and explain how they can be connected to our current criminal justice system.

Classical school theorists believe that people have free will and are responsible for their own decision making. They claim that people are both rational and hedonistic, seek pleasure and avoid pain. Other theories, including many positivist theories, claim that a person is a blank slate, or *tabula rasa*. This assumption suggests that people are born without any sort of inherent nature and instead are completely shaped by their environment. People who believe in a *tabula rasa* conception of human nature fall clearly on the side of nurture in the nature–nurture debate. A third set of assumptions informs theories that start with the idea that people are naturally social or altruistic. According to some theorists, people are socially concerned actors who wish to help others and avoid harming them. This is because people tend to value social ties and do not want to risk losing them.

These assumptions can be connected to the criminal justice system in a variety of ways. If classical theories are correct and people can weigh and balance options and act in their own self-interest, justice policies can be shaped to make crime unattractive. On the other hand, if people are empty vessels whose behavior is shaped by experience, it is more likely that he or she will support the use of social programs or rehabilitation to deal with crime. Finally, if people are inherently altruistic and social forces corrupt individuals, then one might focus on how societal norms, pressures, and power allow some harmful behavior to continue yet define other harmful behavior as criminal.

3. What are two early approaches to explaining crime? How are they relevant today?

Since the earliest days of human civilization, antisocial and criminal acts have been associated with demonic possession or other evil supernatural forces. Indeed, the horrific nature of some crimes makes it easy to assume that those who commit these crimes are not only inhumane but also inhuman. This view was gradually replaced by ideas from the Enlightenment. Classical school scholars agreed that to control behavior, society needs a clearly defined set of laws and punishments, a fair legal process, and prisons for those who violate the laws. They claimed that there were three important aspects of punishment: severity, certainty, and celerity (swiftness). For punishment to deter potential criminals, these three elements had to be correctly calibrated to specific criminal acts.

These older views remain relevant today. For example, serial killers, mass murderers, sex offenders, and terrorists are often characterized as “monsters,” and some imply their behavior is thought to be unexplainable except in terms of pure evil. The classical school of thought remains a feature of the contemporary criminal justice system, although the increasingly punitive nature of the justice system defies many of the principles first articulated. Interestingly, many of the deterrence principles initially offered by Beccaria and Bentham have been supported by more modern research on rewards and punishments in psychological learning theory.

4. Compare and contrast quantitative and qualitative research in criminology, and provide examples of research that rely on these two approaches.

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Quantitative research can be described as the techniques associated with the gathering, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of numerical information. Through clearly defined dependent and independent variables, quantitative research relies on hypothesis testing to evaluate theories. This requires that researchers understand the differences between propositions, concepts, independent and dependent variables, and correlation versus causation. Quantitative techniques focus on numeric data and seek to test whether, and to what extent, some variables influence criminal acts, criminal behavior, or crime rates.

Qualitative research refers to the gathering, analysis, interpretation, and presentation of narrative information in order to establish concepts and build theories. Qualitative research was very much at the heart of early studies of crime, including the ethnographic and interview research that formed part of what is known as the Chicago school. During the 1920s and 1930s, researchers at the University of Chicago undertook numerous qualitative studies of crime and deviance. These researchers viewed the city of Chicago as a sort of social laboratory and focused on understanding how the urban landscape related to social problems such as crime.

Quantitative research has uncovered four main correlates of crime. These are age, ethnicity, gender, and class. Today, there are calls for a renewed focus on qualitative research to understand issues such as offender decision making, social networks, and the ways in which social processes shape criminal events. This includes the use of life history narratives to understand pathways to offending and desistance from crime as well as research on organizational processes and decision making within criminal justice and other relevant institutions. The benefit of qualitative analysis is that it can provide a means to focus more deeply on individual cases and context-specific realities.

5. Define key terms such as *theory, causation, correlation, proposition,* and *falsifiability.*

Theory: Specific explanations of criminality/criminal behavior that can be tested and falsified

Causation: Refers to systematic relationship between variables, in which one variable directly affects another with no outside variable interfering

Correlation: Refers to relationship between variables, although not clear which variable causes which

Proposition: Statements that explain the relationships between key concepts in a theory

Key Terms for PART I

1. Match the correct term from the first column with the proper definition in the second column.

Term	Definition

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a. Quantitative Research	1. Specific explanations of criminality/criminal behavior that can be tested and falsified
b. Qualitative Research	2. Refers to systematic relationship between variables, although not clear which variable causes which
c. Causation	3. Research based on the analysis of numeric data
d. Correlation	4. The idea that a theory could be disproven
e. Proposition	5. Relationship in which one variable directly affects another with no outside variable interfering
f. Theory	6. Research based on the exploration of narrative data
g. Falsifiability	7. Statements that explain the relationships between key concepts in a theory

Answers:

- **a. 3**
- **b. 6**
- **c. 5**
- **d. 2**
- **e. 7**
- **f. 1**
- **g. 4**

Additional Short Answer Question for PART I

1. Explain the differences between the classical school and positivist approaches in criminology. How do these two approaches vary in assumptions and problem focus? Be sure to discuss how these approaches have influenced the criminal justice system and why there is a fundamental tension between them.

The classical school emphasizes free will and assumes that people are rational actors. Furthermore, this approach focuses on how people are deterred from committing crime. The positivist school emphasizes determinism and assumes that behavior is dictated by factors beyond one's control. Positivists apply the scientific method to understanding human (and criminal) behavior. Both of these approaches have influenced the criminal justice system but in very different ways. The classical school introduced the notion of prisons as a form of punishment and suggested that laws should be made clear to the public. Positivists offered "progressive reforms" to the criminal justice system and suggested that rather than merely punishing criminals, we should attempt to treat and rehabilitate them. The tension between these approaches is based on the differing assumptions of human nature, which lead to different approaches to addressing crime and criminal behavior.

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