

4 Contemporary Classical and Deterrence Research





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Learning Objectives

As you read this chapter, consider the following topics:

- Explain the various types of research performed from the 1960s to the present to determine whether perceptions of sanctions had a significant impact on individual decisions to commit crimes.
- Name the components of rational choice theory that were not included or emphasized by traditional Classical/deterrence theory in explaining criminal behavior.
- Compare and contrast formal and informal sanctions.
- List the three key elements of routine activities theory and be able to articulate which of the elements you think is most important.
- Describe which types of individuals are most likely to be deterred from committing most crimes, as well as which types of people are least likely to be deterred.
- Provide examples of modern-day applications and policies that most apply Beccaria's principles and the Classical school.

Introduction

On two separate days in August 2012, 13-year-old Brandon Mathison's mother forced him to wear a humiliating sign and walk along a busy intersection in Beaufort, South Carolina.¹ She made him do this because she had caught him smoking marijuana with his friends. The rather large placard he wore read, "Smoked pot, got caught! Don't I look cool? NOT!" on the front. On the back it read, "Learn from me, don't do drugs." This type of shaming strategy is an informal form of deterrence that stems from family, friends, and community as opposed to the formal sanctions of law enforcement, courts, and jail or prison. And for most individuals in society, the informal controls are what actually deter and reduce their likelihood of engaging in criminal activity, because they don't want to risk losing their friends and jobs and they care what their families and others think about them. The various theoretical models that emphasize such informal deterrent elements are examined in this chapter. But first, let's briefly review the [previous chapter](#) and see where we are headed in this one.

In the [previous chapter](#), we examined the early history of theorizing about crime, which included pre-Classical School perspectives (e.g., religious, supernatural explanations) as well as early Classical School theorizing during and just after the Age of Enlightenment. Early theorizing by Cesare Beccaria and others during the late 18th century remained dominant in terms of academics and, more important, policy makers for close to 100 years. But the Classical framework as a model for understanding crime fell out of favor among academics and researchers in the late 19th century.

While the Classical model never stopped being the favorite of policy makers, virtually all dominant theories presented by scientists of the past century have been premised on assumptions and propositions that go against such Classical concepts as deterrence, free will/choice, and rational decision-making. However, Classical School concepts, assumptions, and propositions have experienced a "rebirth" in the past few decades. Furthermore, since the 1980s, several modern theoretical frameworks, such as rational choice, routine activities, and lifestyle perspectives, have given new life to the Classical perspective of criminological theorizing.

We will see that some of these more modern Classical School-based theories emphasize only the potential negative consequences of criminal actions, whereas other theories focus on the possible benefits. Still others concentrate on the opportunities and existing situations that predispose one to engage in criminal activity. Regardless of their differences, all the modern theoretical perspectives discussed in this chapter emphasize a common theme: Individuals commit crime because they identify certain situations and/or acts as beneficial due to the perceived low risk of punishment and perceived likelihood of profits, such as money or peer status. In other words, the potential offender weighs out the possible costs and pleasures of committing a given act and then behaves in a rational way based on this analysis of the situation.

Case Study

Wayne

Wayne, raised in an upper-middle-class household in South Florida, was intelligent but also a risk taker, even at an early age. He was charismatic and made friends easily; even his teachers tended to like him, despite his sometimes deviant behavior. In high school, he engaged in many delinquent activities but nothing too serious. Although he had some encounters with police, it was usually for underage drinking or minor offenses, so he was never officially arrested. This is quite common, especially among teenage males.

This pattern took a more serious turn in college, when he was apprehended by police for a couple of incidents. However, these were also relatively minor, such as public intoxication, and even for these incidents, either charges were dismissed or he was never officially charged. But that is what it took to wake him up to the risks he was taking that could possibly jeopardize his future career. He wanted to be a lawyer, and he realized it would be difficult to get into law school, let alone be approved by the state bar association, if he had a criminal record. He was also potentially risking losing the respect of and strong bonds he had with family and friends.

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So he realized around his junior year that he had to keep his nose clean and refocus his efforts on school, which he did. He eventually made the grades and test scores needed to gain entry into one of the top-tier law programs in the country, in Washington, DC—perhaps the best place to study law in our nation, given the opportunities and resources of that area. He did fantastically in law school and then moved back to Florida, where he became a respected and effective assistant district attorney. After a few years, he joined a private practice for a while, and within about 10 years he started his own law firm, where he has continued to be successful.

We shall see in this chapter that most individuals in society grow out of teenage tendencies to engage in delinquent or criminal behavior, largely due not to the fear of going to jail but, rather, the fear of losing positive aspects of their lives that they have worked hard for, such as bonds with friends and family and, often most important, a great career.

We will follow up on Wayne at the conclusion of this chapter as a reminder to apply some of the theoretical models and concepts to explaining his change in behavior. These so-called informal elements of deterrence (e.g., family, friends, employers) are the ones that matter most for the vast majority of society—namely, the ones who have much to lose. And it is these types of considerations that the more traditional versions of Classical School/deterrence theory do not specify or take into account. Thus, the more modern versions of deterrence theory, such as rational choice theory, are far more robust and valid. But first, we will examine the rebirth of research in deterrence theory, which led to an evolution of theorizing and testing that resulted in the formation of these more fully specified explanations of criminal offending.

Think About It:

1. Why do you think Wayne did not have to serve a jail term and yet seemed to stop breaking the law?
2. Can you think of someone you know personally who committed minor delinquent/criminal acts when he or she was younger but eventually grew out of offending, as Wayne did?

THESE SO-CALLED INFORMAL ELEMENTS OF DETERRENCE (E.G., FAMILY, FRIENDS, EMPLOYERS) ARE THE ONES THAT MATTER MOST FOR THE VAST MAJORITY OF SOCIETY.

The most important distinction of these Classical School theories, as opposed to those discussed in future chapters, is that they emphasize individual decision-making regardless of any extraneous influences on a person's free will, such as the economy or bonding with society. Although many outside factors may influence an individual's ability to rationally consider offending situations—and many of the theories in this chapter deal with such influences—the emphasis remains on the individual to consider all influences before making the decision to engage in or abstain from criminal behavior.

Given the focus on individual responsibility in modern times, it is not surprising that Classical School theories are still used as the basis for U.S. policies on punishment for criminal activity. Because they place responsibility on the individual, the modern Classical School theories discussed in this chapter are highly compatible and consistent with the conservative “get tough” movement that has existed since the mid-1970s. Thus, the Classical School still retains the highest influence in terms of policy and pragmatic punishment in the United States, as well as throughout all countries in the Western world. So the theories we examine in this chapter are the modern versions of the important assumptions, concepts, and propositions currently in use in virtually every system of justice in the Western world. Although most practitioners (even the judges who decide on sentences for a given illegal act) are likely not aware of these modern Classical theories of why individuals commit crimes (or do not), these modern perspectives represent the very types of concepts that all practitioners in our criminal justice system use to decide what is deserved or needed to reform an individual who has engaged in criminal activity.

Rebirth of Deterrence Theory and Contemporary Research

As discussed above, the Classical/Neoclassical framework fell out of favor among scientists and philosophers in the late 19th century, largely due to the introduction of Darwin's ideas on evolution and natural selection. However, virtually all Western criminal systems, particularly that of the United States, retained the Classical/Neoclassical framework for their models of justice. Despite the use of Beccaria's framework as the model for most justice systems, the ideology of his work was largely dismissed by academics and theorists after the presentation of Darwin's theory of evolution in the 1860s. Therefore, the Classical/Neoclassical model fell out of favor in terms of criminological theorizing for about 100 years. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, however, the Beccarian model of offending experienced a rebirth.

This rebirth was largely due to scientific reviews showing that the rehabilitation programs popular during the 1960s had virtually no impact in reducing recidivism among offenders, especially chronic offenders.² Specifically, Walter Bailey's review of 100 programs in the late 1960s revealed that very few showed beneficial outcomes in reducing offenders' recidivism. Even more attention was given to Robert Martinson's review of such rehabilitative programs, which concluded that “nothing works.” Although this conclusion was a bit overstated, it was true that virtually none of the rehab programs significantly reduced offending among participants. Therefore, criminologists returned to their “roots” in focusing more on Classical/deterrence principles.

The Four Waves of Modern Deterrence Research

Aggregate Studies.

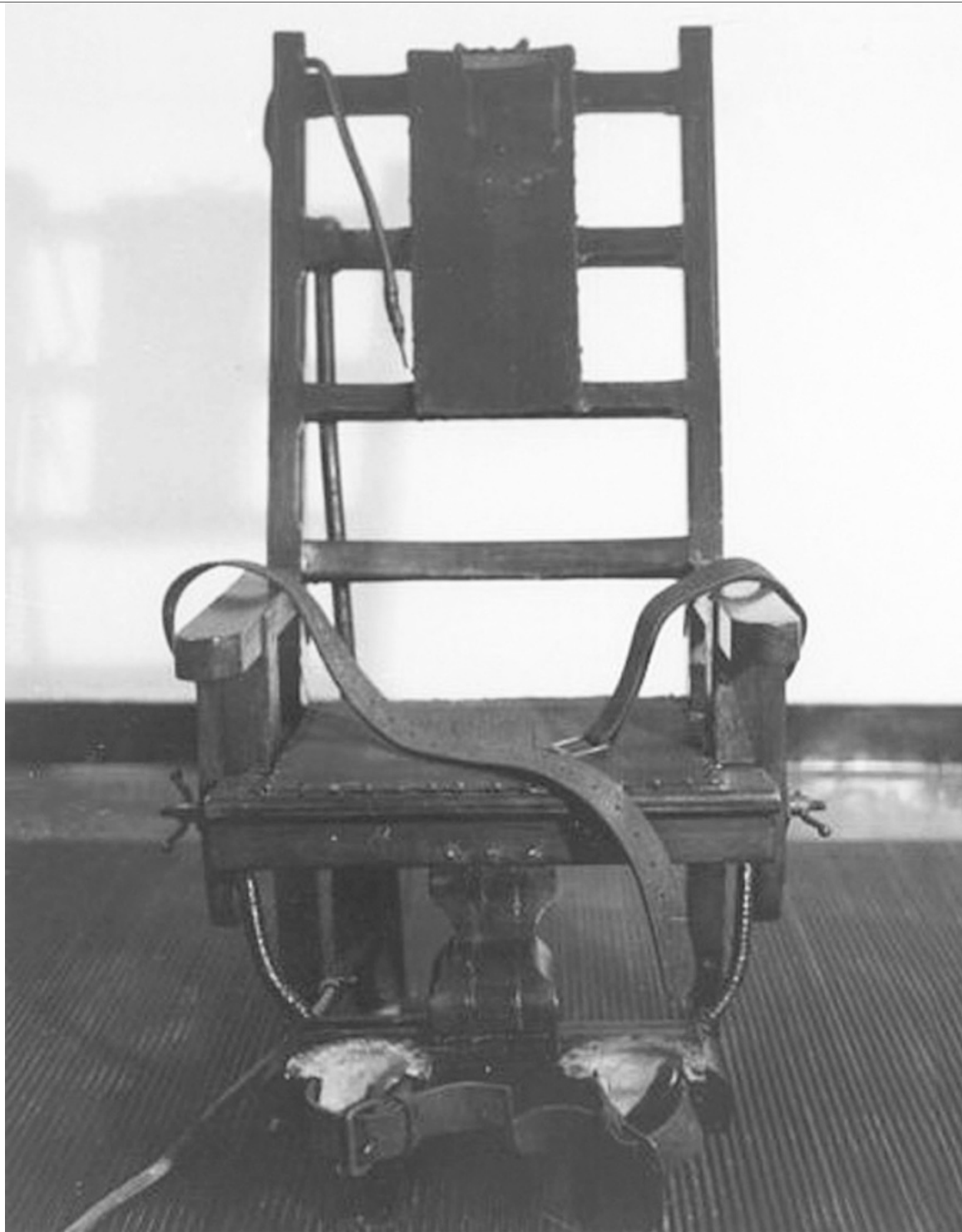
In the late 1960s, several studies were published that used aggregate measures of crime and punishment and a deterrence model for explaining why individuals engage in criminal behavior.³ These **aggregate studies** revealed a new interest in the deterrent aspects of criminal behavior and further supported the importance of certainty and severity of punishment in deterring individuals from committing crime, particularly homicide. Specifically, evidence showed that increased risk or certainty of punishment was associated with less crime for most serious

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offenses. Plus, most offenders who are arrested once never get arrested again, which lends some basic support for deterrence.

A traditional electric chair. At one point in American history, electrocution was the primary method of execution, but it has since been largely replaced by lethal injection. Is the death penalty an effective deterrent?

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Many of these studies used statistical formulas to measure the degree of certainty and severity of punishment in given jurisdictions. Specifically, the measures of certainty of punishment often were determined by creating a ratio of the crimes reported to police compared with the number of arrests in a given jurisdiction. Another employed measure of certainty of punishment was the percentage of arrests that resulted in convictions, or findings of guilt, in criminal cases. Although other similar measures were employed, most of the studies showed the same result—namely, that an examination of both measures indicated that the higher the likelihood of arrest given reports of crime, or the higher the conviction rate after arrest, the lower the crime rate in a given jurisdiction. On the other hand, the scientific evidence regarding measures of severity, which such studies generally indicated by the length of the sentence for comparable crimes or a similar type of measure, did not show much impact on crime.

Additional aggregate studies examined the prevalence and influence of capital punishment and crime in given states.⁴ The evidence largely showed that the states that had death penalty statutes also had higher murder rates than did non-death-penalty states. Furthermore, these studies showed that murderers in death penalty states who were not executed actually served less time than did murderers in non-death-penalty states. Thus, the evidence regarding increased sanctions, including capital punishment, was mixed. Still, a review by the National Academy of Sciences of the early deterrence studies concluded that there was more evidence for a deterrent effect than against it overall, although the Academy stated this in a tone that lacked confidence—perhaps cautious of what future studies would show.⁵

However, it was not long before critics noted that studies incorporating aggregate (i.e., macro-level) statistics are not adequate indicators or valid measures of the deterrence theory framework, largely because the model emphasizes the perceptions of individuals. After all, aggregate/group statistics are unreliable because different regions may have higher or lower crime rates than others, thereby creating bias in the level of ratios for certainty and/or severity of punishment. Further, the group measures produced by these studies provide virtually no information on the degree to which individuals in those regions perceive sanctions to be certain, severe, or swift. Therefore, the emphasis on the unit of analysis in deterrence research shifted from the aggregate level to a more individual level.

Cross-Sectional Studies.

The following phase of deterrence research focused on individual perceptions of certainty and severity of sanctions, primarily drawn at one point in time—known as **cross-sectional studies**. A number of cross-sectional studies of individual perceptions of deterrence showed that perceptions of the risk or certainty of punishment were strongly associated with intentions to commit future crimes, but individual perceptions of severity of crimes were mixed. Furthermore, it was not clear whether perceptions were causing changes in behavior or whether behavior was causing changes in perception. This led to the next wave of research—longitudinal studies of individual perceptions and deterrence, which measured perceptions of risk and severity as well as behavior over time.⁶

aggregate studies: collections of studies, generally on a particular topic.

cross-sectional studies: a form of research design model in which a collection of data is taken at one point in time (often in survey format).

Police conducting a field test with a suspected drunk driver. Driving under the influence is a popular topic in deterrence research because it tends to range across social status and racial/ethnic groups.



Joe Raedle/Getty Images

Longitudinal Studies.

One of the primary concepts revealed by longitudinal research, which is studies that take certain measures over two or more time periods, was that behavior was influencing perceptions of the risk and severity of punishment more than perceptions were influencing behavior. This was referred to as the **experiential effect**, appropriately named because an individual's previous experience highly influences expectations regarding the chances of being caught and the resulting penalties. A common example is people who drive under the influence of alcohol (or other substances).

Studies show that when asked the chances of getting caught driving under the influence, most people who have never driven drunk predict an unrealistically high likelihood of arrest. However, if you ask persons who have been arrested for driving drunk—even those arrested several times for this offense—they typically predict that the chance of being caught is low. The reason for this is that chronic drunk drivers have typically been driving under the influence for many years, mostly without being caught. After all, it is estimated that drunk drivers traverse more than 1 million miles before one drunk driver is arrested.⁷ If anything, this is likely a conservative estimate. Thus, people who drive drunk—some doing so every day—are not likely to be deterred even when arrested more than once, largely because they have been driving drunk for years by that time. In fact, H. L. Ross—perhaps the most notable expert on the deterrence of drunk drivers—and his colleagues concluded that drunk drivers who “perceive a severe punishment if caught, but a near-zero chance of being caught, are being rational in ignoring the threat.”⁸ Even the most respected scholars in this area admit that sanctions against drunk driving are nowhere certain enough, even if they are growing in severity.

A similar phenomenon is seen among white-collar criminals. Some researchers have used the measure of being caught by authorities for violating government rules—often enforced by the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)—as an indication that the organizations in violation will be less likely to commit future offenses.⁹ However, organizations in violation of established practices that have been caught once by authorities have likely been committing these offenses for years, so they are more likely to continue doing so in the future than are

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organizations that have never violated the rules. Like the conclusion made regarding drunk driving, the certainty of punishment for white-collar violations is so low (and many would argue that the severity is also quite low) that it is rational for businesses and business professionals to take the risk.

experiential effect: the extent to which previous experience affects individuals' perceptions of how severe criminal punishment will be when deciding whether or not to offend again.

It is interesting to note that of the many forms of criminal offending, white-collar crimes and drunk driving should be among the most likely to be deterred, due to their prevalence among citizens of the middle and upper socioeconomic classes. After all, if the extant research on deterrence has shown one thing, it is that individuals who have something to lose are the most likely to be deterred by sanctions. This makes sense because many unemployed, poor individuals will probably not be deterred by incarceration or other punishments, largely because they do not have much to lose. For some persons, particularly those of lower-class minority populations, incarceration does not present a significant departure from the deprived lives they already lead.

The fact that official sanctions are limited in deterring individuals—many of whom have a lot to lose—from drunk driving and white-collar crime is not a good indication of effectiveness for deterrence-based policies. This becomes even more questionable when other populations are considered, particularly the offenders in most predatory street crimes (e.g., robbery, burglary), who typically have nothing to lose because they come from poverty-stricken areas and are often unemployed. One recent study that examined the influence of sanctions showed that arrests had little effect on perceptions of certainty, whereas offending corresponded with decreases in such perceptions.¹⁰

Some individuals do not consider incarceration much of a step down in life, given the three meals a day, shelter, and relative stability entailed. This epitomizes one of the most notable paradoxes of the discipline: The individuals we most want to deter are the least likely to be deterred, primarily because they have nothing to fear. Even going back to early Enlightenment thought, Thomas Hobbes claimed that fear was the tool used to enforce the social contract; however, persons who don't fear punishment cannot be effectively deterred. Thus, it remains true that the individuals we most need to deter (chronic offenders) are the least likely to be deterred by the threatened punishments of our society, because they have so little to lose.

Along these same lines, studies have consistently shown that official deterrence is highly ineffective against criminal acts that involve immediate payoff, young male offenders, higher risk, low emotional/moral inhibitions, low self-control, and impulsivity.¹¹ Thus, many factors affect the extent to which official sanctions can deter crime. However, even among the most "detrable" offenders, official sanctions exhibit failings, particularly when individuals in the highly deterrable categories have experience in the criminal behavior because they are rarely caught.

Identification and understanding of the experiential effect had a profound influence on evidence regarding the impact of deterrence. After all, any estimation of the influence of perceived certainty or severity of punishment must control for previous behaviors and experiences with such behavior to account for an experiential effect. Identification of the experiential effect was the primary contribution of the longitudinal studies of deterrence, but such studies faced even further criticism.

Longitudinal studies of deterrence provided a significant improvement over the preceding cross-sectional studies. However, such longitudinal studies typically involved designs in which measures of perception of certainty and severity of punishment were collected up to a year apart, including long stretches between the time of the criminal offense and when offenders were asked their perceptions of punishment. After all, psychological studies have clearly established that perceptions of the likelihood and severity of sanctions vary significantly from day to day, not to mention month to month and year to year.¹² Therefore, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, a new wave of deterrence research evolved that asked study participants to estimate their immediate intent to commit a criminal act in a given situation as well as requesting their immediate perceptions of certainty and severity of punishment in the same situation. This wave of research was known as **scenario research**, or **vignettes**.¹³

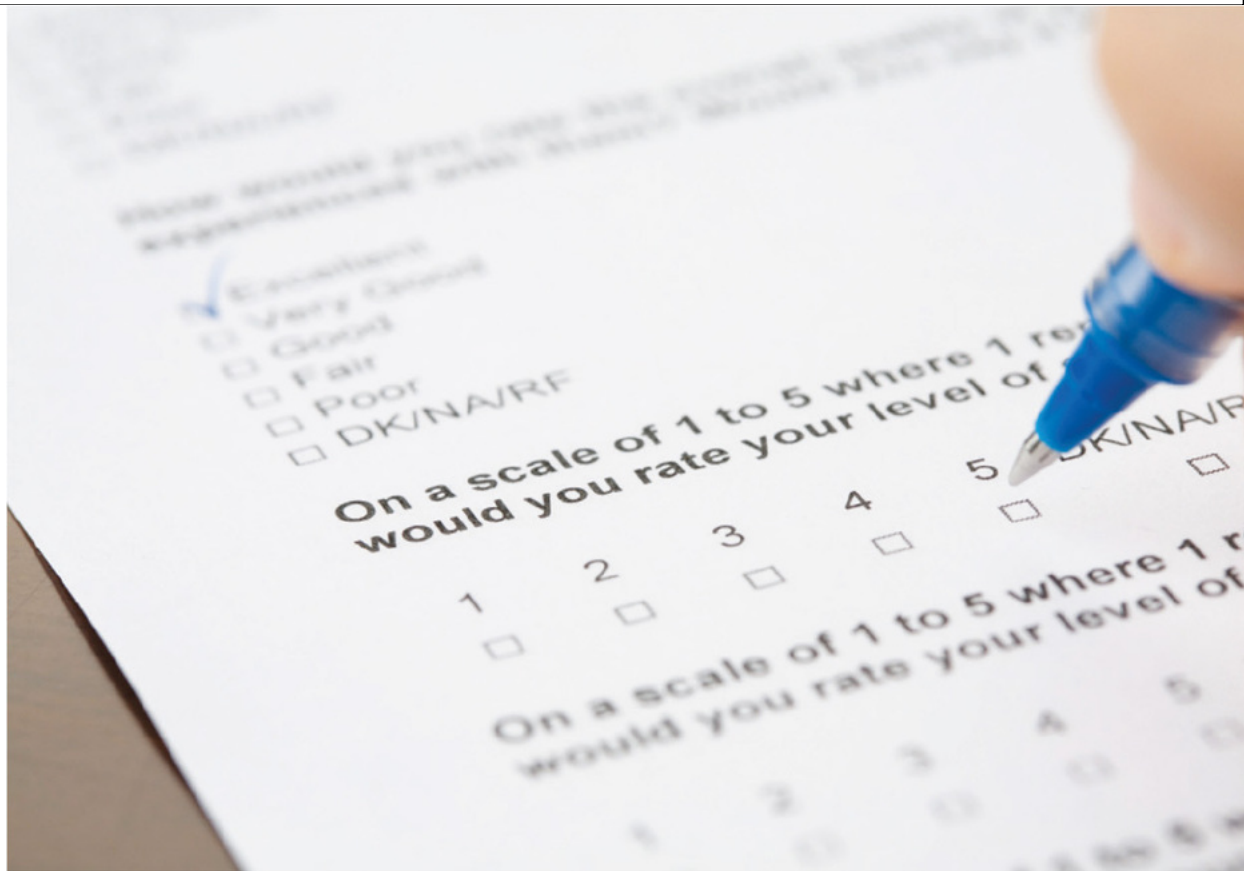
scenario research: studies that involve providing participants with specific hypothetical scenarios and then asking them what they would do in each situation.

vignettes: short, descriptive sketches.

Scenario/Vignette Studies.

Scenario research was created to deal with the limitations of the previous methodological strategies for studying the effects of deterrence on criminal offending. Specifically, the critics of longitudinal research argued that individuals' perceptions of the certainty and severity of punishment changed drastically from one time to another, especially in different situations. The scenario method dealt with this criticism directly by providing a specific, realistic (albeit hypothetical) situation in which a person engages in a criminal act. The participant in the study was then asked to estimate the chances that he or she would engage in such an activity under the given circumstances as well as to respond to questions regarding his or her perceptions of the risk of getting caught (i.e., certainty of punishment) and the degree of severity of punishment expected.

The vast majority of findings on why people commit crimes are gained through self-report studies. Such studies explore factors (e.g., psychological, family life) that are not present in police reports or victimization studies.



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Another important and valuable aspect of scenario research was that it promoted a contemporaneous (i.e., instantaneous) response regarding perceptions of the risk and severity of possible sanctions. In comparison, previous studies (e.g., aggregate, cross-sectional, longitudinal) had always relied on either group rates or individual measures of perception across long stretches of time. As discussed previously, individuals' perceptions regarding risk and/or severity of punishment vary significantly by time and situation, but the scenario method eliminates such criticisms. Some argue that the estimated likelihood of committing a crime given a hypothetical situation is not an accurate measure of what one would actually do. However, studies have shown an extremely high correlation between what one reports doing in a given scenario and what one would do in real life.¹⁴ A recent review of criticisms of this method showed that one of the aspects where this research was lacking was in not allowing respondents to develop their own perceptions and costs associated with each offense.¹⁵ Despite such criticisms, the scenario method appears to be the most accurate method we have to estimate the effects of individual perceptions on the likelihood of individuals engaging in a given criminal activity at a given time. This is something the previous waves of deterrence research—aggregate, cross-sectional, and longitudinal studies—could not estimate.

Formal and Informal Deterrence

Ultimately, the studies using the scenario method showed that participants were more affected by perceptions of certainty and less so—albeit sometimes significantly—by perceptions of severity. This finding supported previous methods of estimating the effects of **formal/official deterrence** (see [Figure 4.1](#)), meaning the deterrent effects of law enforcement, courts, and corrections (i.e., prisons and probation or parole). So the overall conclusion regarding the effects of official sanctions on individual decision-making remained unaltered. However, one of the more interesting aspects of scenario research is that it helped solidify the importance of extralegal variables in deterring criminal behavior, which had been neglected by previous methods.

These extralegal variables, called **informal deterrence** factors, include any factors beyond the formal sanctions of police, courts, and corrections—such as employment, family, friends, and community. These studies helped show that such informal sanctions are what provide most of the deterrent effect for individuals considering criminal acts. These findings coincided with the advent of a new model of deterrence,

which became commonly known as **rational choice theory**.

formal/official deterrence: deterrent effects of law enforcement, courts, and corrections.

informal deterrence: factors like family, church, or friends that do not involve official aspects of criminal justice such as police, courts, and corrections (e.g., prisons).

rational choice theory: a modern, Classical School–based framework for explaining crime that includes the traditional formal deterrence aspects and other informal factors that studies show consistently and strongly influence behavior.

Rational Choice Theory

Rational choice theory is a perspective criminologists adapted from economists, who used it to explain a variety of individual decisions regarding different behaviors. This framework emphasizes all important factors that go into a person's decision to engage, or not engage, in a particular act. In terms of criminological research, the rational choice model emphasized official/formal forms of deterrence as well as the informal factors that influence individual decisions to engage in criminal behavior. This represented a profound advance in the understanding of human behavior. After all, as studies showed, most individuals are affected more by the influence of informal factors than by official/formal factors.

Although there were several previous attempts to apply the rational choice model to the understanding of criminal activity, the most significant work that brought rational choice theory into the mainstream of criminological research was Derek B. Cornish and Ronald V. Clarke's (1986) *The Reasoning Criminal: Rational Choice Perspectives on Offending*.¹⁶ Furthermore, around the same time, Jack Katz (1988) published his work *Seductions of Crime*, which for the first time emphasized the benefits (mostly the inherent physiological pleasure) of committing crime.¹⁷ Before Katz's publication, virtually no attention had been paid to the benefits of offending, let alone the "fun" people can have when engaging in criminal behavior. A recent study showed that the publication of Cornish and Clarke's book, as well as the timing of other publications such as Katz's, led to an influx of criminological studies based on the rational choice model in the late 1980s to mid-1990s.¹⁸

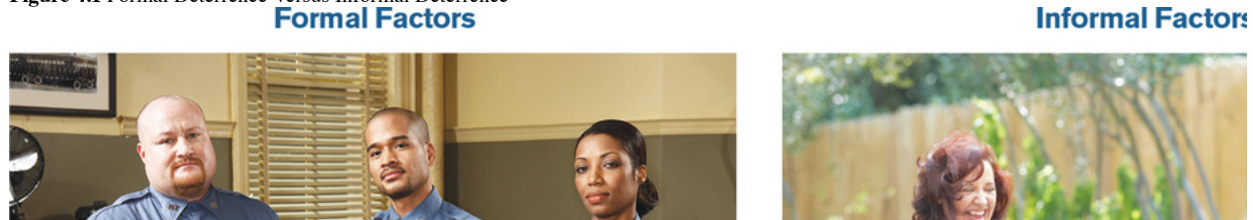
These studies on rational choice showed that while official/formal sanctions tend to have some effect on individuals' decisions to commit crime, they almost always are relatively unimportant compared with extralegal/informal factors. Specifically, individual perceptions of how much shame or loss of self-esteem one would experience, even if no one else found out about the crime, was one of the most important variables in determining whether or not one would commit a crime.¹⁹ Additional evidence indicated that females were more influenced by shame and moral beliefs when deciding to commit offenses than were males.²⁰ Recent studies have shown that levels of certain personality traits, especially low self-control and empathy, are likely the reason why males and females differ so much when it comes to engaging in criminal activity.²¹ Finally, the influence of peers has a profound impact on individual perceptions of the pros and cons of offending—namely, by significantly decreasing the perceived risk of punishment when one sees friends getting away with crimes.²²

Learning Check 4.1

1. According to the text, for which type of studies examining deterrence does the "experiential effect" pose the biggest threat of biased results?
 1. Longitudinal studies
 2. Aggregate studies
 3. Cross-sectional studies
2. According to the text, when looking at the results from the various waves of studies examining deterrence, which element of punishment has shown the most consistent deterrent effect?
 1. Perceived certainty of getting caught
 2. Perceived severity of the punishment/sentence
 3. Perceived swiftness of being punished
 4. They are all about equally important
3. According to the text, which type of studies by definition use data collected at one point in time?
 1. Longitudinal
 2. Aggregate
 3. Cross-sectional

Answers located at www.edge.sagepub.com/schram2e

Figure 4.1 Formal Deterrence Versus Informal Deterrence



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Law enforcement



Family and friends



Courts



Employment



Discrimination



Community

Applying Theory to Crime: Driving Under the Influence



The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) program separates criminal offenses into two categories: Part I and Part II crimes. Part I offenses include criminal homicide, forcible rape, robbery, aggravated assault, burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. Part II offenses include fraud, vandalism, gambling, and driving under the influence (DUI). The UCR defines DUI as “driving or operating a motor vehicle or common carrier while mentally or physically impaired as the result of consuming an alcoholic beverage or using a drug or narcotic.”²⁴ According to the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have laws defining what constitutes “drunk driving.” These laws designate a blood alcohol concentration (BAC) at or above a certain level; currently, this level is 0.08% (i.e., 0.08 grams of alcohol per 100 milliliters of blood).²⁵

The FBI reported a total of 1,117,852 DUI arrests in the United States in 2014, with a national rate of 348.6 arrests per 100,000. When examining these rates by region, the West reported the highest rate (408.6), followed by the Midwest (373.3), the South (318.1), and the Northeast (285.4). Overall, there was a 21.8% decrease in DUI arrests from 2005 to 2014. Specifically, for those under 18 years of age, there was a 63.5% decrease; for those 18 years of age or older, there was a 26.4 decrease.²⁶

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported that every day, almost 28 people in the United States die due to motor vehicle accidents involving an alcohol-impaired driver. The annual cost of alcohol-related accidents totals more than \$44 billion. At all BAC levels, young people are at a higher risk of being involved in an alcohol-related accident compared with older people. In 2014, three out of every 10 fatal crashes involved someone between 21 and 24 years of age (30%), followed by those between 25 and 34 (29%) and those between 35 and 44 (24%).²⁷

One of the suggestions to prevent death and injury due to impaired driving is to reduce the legal BAC limit to 0.05%. “[The National Transportation Safety Board has] pushed for states to reduce the threshold for DWI/DUI to 0.05 BAC or lower because research clearly shows that most people are impaired by the time they reach 0.05.”²⁸

Another suggested prevention is to install ignition interlock devices in vehicles. This device is installed in the vehicle, usually in the glove compartment on the passenger’s side. It is then wired to the engine’s ignition system. In a vehicle with such a device installed, the driver has to blow about 1.5 liters of air into a handheld alcohol sensor unit. If his or her BAC is over a preset limit, the car will not start. While these preset limits vary by state, they are usually between 0.02% and 0.04%.²⁹ All 50 states have some type of ignition interlock law. Twenty-three states have mandatory ignition interlock provisions for all offenses. California currently has a pilot program in four of its largest counties. While Colorado and Maine’s laws are not mandatory for the first conviction, there are incentives to install the device on the first conviction.³⁰ For instance, in Florida, certain individuals convicted of DUI are required to install an ignition interlock device. The defendant has to contact specific vendors who install approved devices. If the court determines that the offender is unable to pay for the installation of the device, then a portion of the fine paid by the offender can be reallocated to the costs of the installation.³¹

Think About It:

1. Do you think these efforts, such as lowering the BAC or requiring offenders to install an ignition interlock program, deter individuals from driving while under the influence?
2. Do you think if these laws were removed “from the book,” more people would drive while under the influence?

Another area of rational choice research dealt with the influence of an individual’s behavior on other individuals. A recent review and test of perceived social disapproval showed that this was one of the most important variables in decisions to commit crime.²³ In addition to self-sanctions, such as feelings of shame and embarrassment, the perception of how loved ones and friends as well as employers would react is perhaps the most important factor in a person’s decision to engage in criminal activity.

Comparative Criminology: Threats and Assaults

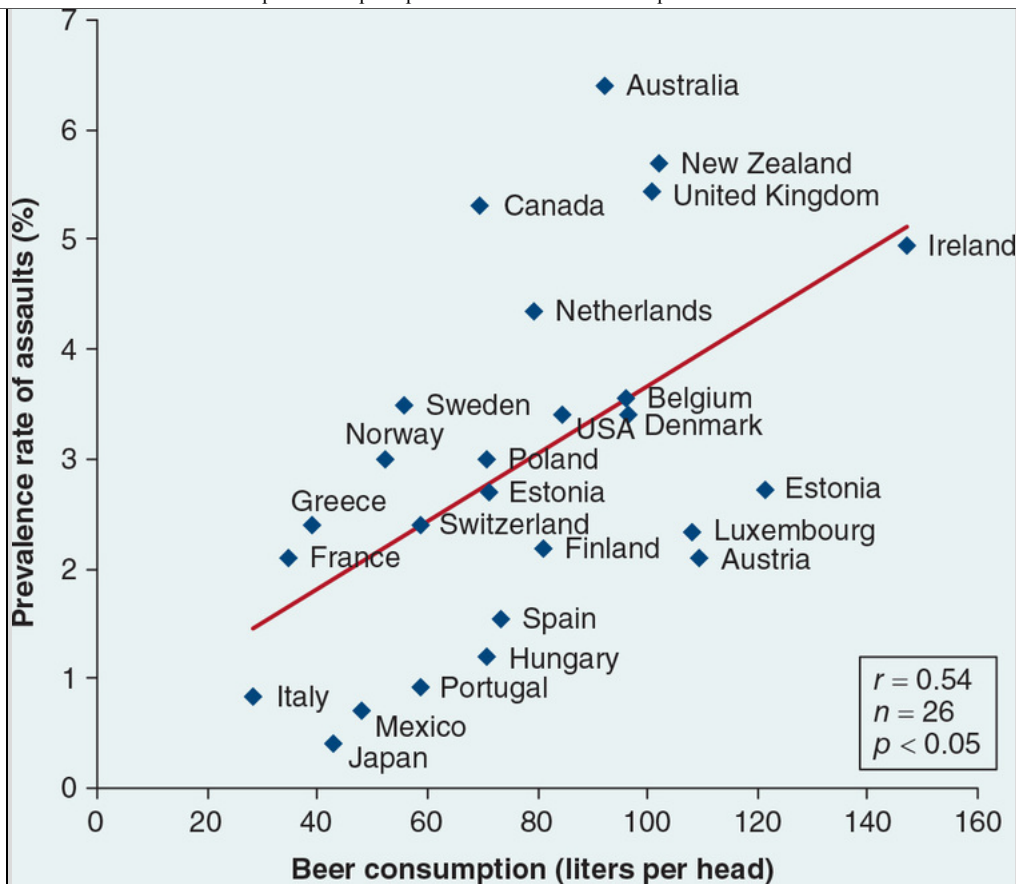


Ranking Countries by Rate of Beer Consumption and Rate of Threats/Assaults

In this section, we explore the association between rate of beer consumption and rate of violence—specifically, assaults and threats.

One of the modern versions of deterrence theory is rational choice theory. Rational choice theory assumes that individuals are rational and weigh the potential benefits against the potential costs of engaging in a criminal act. However, modern studies discussed in this chapter have shown that individuals often engage in activities, both legal and illegal, that are not rational. Many of these acts that appear quite irrational are committed by individuals who have been drinking alcohol. This fits a concept known in the field as “bounded rationality,” in the sense that individuals are sometimes not thinking clearly or at the level of the average person—a situation to which alcohol often contributes.

Figure 4.2 Rates of Victimization by Threats/Assaults in 1996-2005 and Beer Consumption (Liters per Head) in Developed Countries (2004)



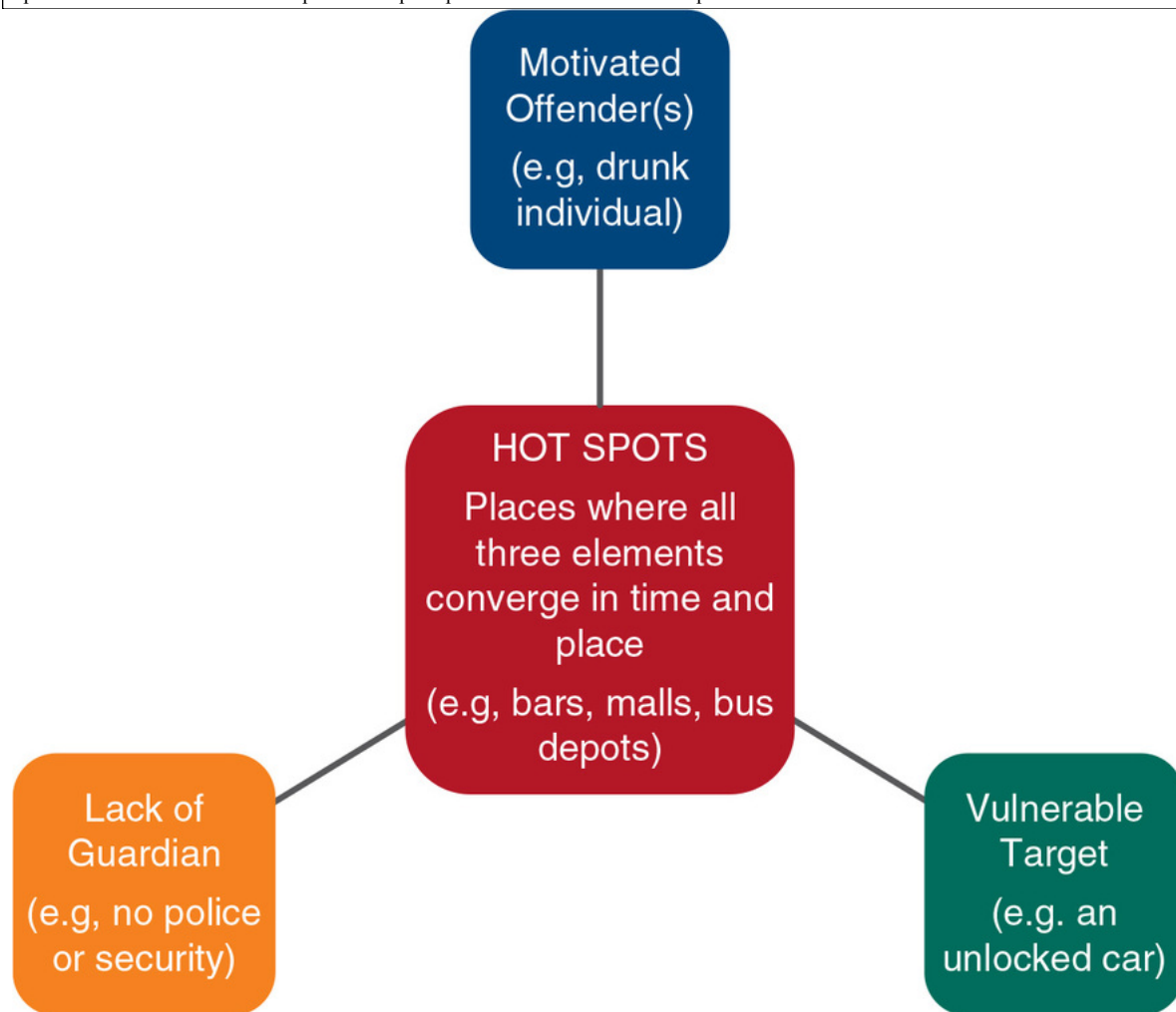
Sources: Van Dijk, J., van Kesteren, J., & Smit, P. (2007). Criminal victimisation in international perspective: Key findings from the 2004–2005 ICVS and EU ICS. Meppel, Netherlands: Boom Legal Publishers; The Hague, Netherlands: Ministry of Justice, Research and Documentation Center. World Advertising Research Center. (2004). World drink trends. Published in association with Commissie Gedistilleerd (Commission for Distilled Spirits). Henley-on-Thames, UK.

Think About It:

1. What is meant by “bounded rationality,” and can you think of additional factors (other than alcohol) that may cause this?
2. Can you think of a true example of someone you know who appeared to have “bounded rationality” when he or she committed a delinquent/criminal act?

After all, these are the people we deal with every day, so it should not be too surprising that our perceptions of how they would react strongly affect how we choose to behave. And clearly this applies to the story at the very beginning of this chapter, namely, 13-year-old Brandon Mathison. His mother made him wear a humiliating sign and walk for two days along a busy intersection in his hometown because he smoked marijuana. This is also applicable to the case study we discussed earlier in the chapter, in which Wayne stopped offending due to informal considerations, such as jeopardizing his employment and the disapproval of family and friends if he continued offending.

Figure 4.3 Routine Activities Theory



Perhaps the most important finding of rational choice research was that the expected benefits, particularly the pleasure gained from offending, were one of the most significant influences in decisions to offend. Many other conclusions have been reached regarding the effect of extralegal/informal factors on criminal offending, but the ultimate conclusion is that these informal deterrent variables typically hold more influence in individual decision-making regarding deviant activity than do the official/formal deterrent factors emphasized by traditional Classical School models of behavior.

The rational choice model of criminal offending became the modern framework of deterrence. Even official authorities acknowledged the influence of extralegal/informal factors, which is seen in modern efforts to incorporate the family, employment, and community in rehabilitation efforts. Such efforts are highly consistent with the current state of understanding regarding the Classical School/rational choice framework—namely, that individuals are more deterred by the impact of their actions on the informal aspects of their lives than by the formal punishments they may face in committing illegal acts.

Routine Activities Theory

Routine activities theory is another contemporary form of the Classical School framework in the sense that it assumes a rational, decision-making offender. The general model of routine activities theory was originally presented by Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson in 1979.³² This theoretical framework emphasized the presence of three factors that come together in time and place to create a high likelihood of crime/victimization. These three factors are (1) motivated offender(s), (2) a suitable target, and (3) lack of guardianship (see [Figure 4.3](#)). Overall, the theory is appropriately named in the sense that it assumes that most crime occurs in the daily “routine” of people who happen to see tempting opportunities to commit crime and seize them. Studies tend to support this idea, as opposed to the idea that most offenders leave

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their homes knowing they are going to commit a crime; such offenders are called “hydraulic” and are relatively rare compared with the opportunistic type.

Excessive alcohol consumption has been strongly linked to criminal offending, especially violent crimes.



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As seen in [Figure 4.2](#), there is a strong correlation ($r = 0.54$) between beer consumption in a given country and the corresponding rates of threats and assaults. For example, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Ireland have relatively high rates of beer consumption and threats and assaults. On the other hand, Italy, Japan, France, and Portugal tend to have relatively low levels of both beer consumption and threats and assaults. Therefore, it is clear that certain countries display far more beer consumption than do other countries and that this likely contributes to higher rates of violence in those countries. So the bottom line of this analysis is that most of the countries that exhibit high levels of beer consumption, which is very likely to “bound” individuals’ rational thinking before committing illegal acts, tend to show far higher rates of violence as measured by threat and assault rates. This adds to the empirical evidence supporting the limitations of rational choice/deterrence theory in the sense that individuals are not always rational, especially when they have consumed a good amount of beer.

routine activities theory: explanation of crime that assumes crime and victimization are highest in places where three factors come together in time and place: motivated offenders, suitable or attractive targets, and absence of a guardian.

The Three Elements of Routine Activities Theory

Motivated Offender(s).

Regarding the first factor thought to increase the likelihood of criminal activity—a motivated offender—the theory of routine activities does not provide much insight. The model assumes that there are certain individuals who tend to be motivated and leaves it at that. Fortunately, we

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have many other theories, as discussed previously in this chapter and in the remainder of the book, that can fill this notable absence. The strength of routine activities theory is in its elaboration on the other two characteristics of a crime-prone environment: suitable targets and lack of guardianship.

Suitable Targets.

Suitable targets can include a variety of situations—for example, a house in the suburbs left vacant over summer vacation. After all, data clearly show that burglaries more than double in the summer, when most families are on vacation (see [Figure 4.4](#)). Other suitable targets include anything from an unlocked car to a lone female carrying a lot of cash or credit cards and/or having purchased goods at a shopping mall, which is a common setting for victimization. Another likely location to be victimized is a bar or other place that serves alcohol, which has much to do with the fact that offenders have traditionally targeted drunk persons because they are less likely to be able to defend themselves—going back to rolling drunks for their wallets in the early part of the 20th century. This is only a short list of the many types of suitable targets available to motivated offenders in everyday life.

Lack of Guardianship.

The third and final aspect of the routine activities model for increased likelihood of criminal activity is the lack of guardianship. Guardianship is often thought of as an on-duty police officer or security guard, which often is the case. However, there are many other forms of guardianship, such as a household dog, which studies demonstrate can be quite effective in home protection. Even a car or house alarm constitutes a form of guardianship. Furthermore, the presence of an adult, neighbor, or teacher can be quite effective in guarding an area against crime. Recent studies show that just increasing the lighting in an area can help prevent crime, with one study showing a 20% reduction in overall crime in areas randomly chosen to receive improved lighting compared with control areas that did not.³³ Regardless of the type of guardianship, the absence of adequate guardianship sets the stage for crime; on the other hand, each step taken toward protecting a place or person is likely to deter offenders from choosing that target over others. Locations that have a high convergence of motivated offenders, suitable targets, and lack of guardianship are typically referred to as “hot spots.”

Applications of Routine Activities Theory

The Minneapolis Hot Spots Study.

Perhaps the most supportive study of routine activities theory and “hot spots” was that analyzing 911 calls for service in Minneapolis, Minnesota.³⁴ This study examined all serious calls (as well as total calls) to police in a one-year period. Of the top 10 locations police were called to, half were bars or other places where alcohol was served (see [Table 4.1](#)). As mentioned above, establishments that serve alcohol are often targeted by motivated offenders because of a high proportion of suitable targets. Furthermore, many bars have low levels of guardianship in relation to the number of people served. Many readers of this book can likely relate to this situation. After all, most college towns and cities have certain drinking establishments known for being “hot spots” for crime.

Still, the Minneapolis study showed that a lot of other types of establishments made the top 10 or ranked high on the list. These included bus depots, convenience stores, rundown motels and hotels, downtown malls and strip malls, fast-food restaurants, and towing companies. The common theme across these locations and the bars was the convergence of the three aspects described by routine activities theory as being predictive of criminal activity. Specifically, these are places that attract motivated offenders, largely because they feature a lot of vulnerable targets or lack sufficient levels of security or guardianship. The routine activities framework has been applied in many contexts and places, many of them international.³⁵

Crime Mapping and Geographic Profiling.

One of the many applications of routine activities theory is geographic profiling, which uses satellite positioning systems and is perhaps the most attractive and marketable aspect of criminological research in contemporary times. Essentially, such research applies global positioning systems (GPS) software to identify and plot the exact location of every crime in a given jurisdiction. Such information has been used to solve and/or predict various crimes; serial killers have been caught because victim locations were triangulated to reveal the most likely residence of the killer. Furthermore, such GPS software has also been used to predict where certain chronic offenders or crews/gangs will strike next. In police departments that use geographical mapping software to show where crimes take place or 911 calls for service originate (i.e., “hot spots”), this technology helps policing authorities determine where they should concentrate their efforts, such as where to assign more officers.

Routine activities theory focuses on the presence of suitable or vulnerable targets, such as a female walking alone in a secluded location.



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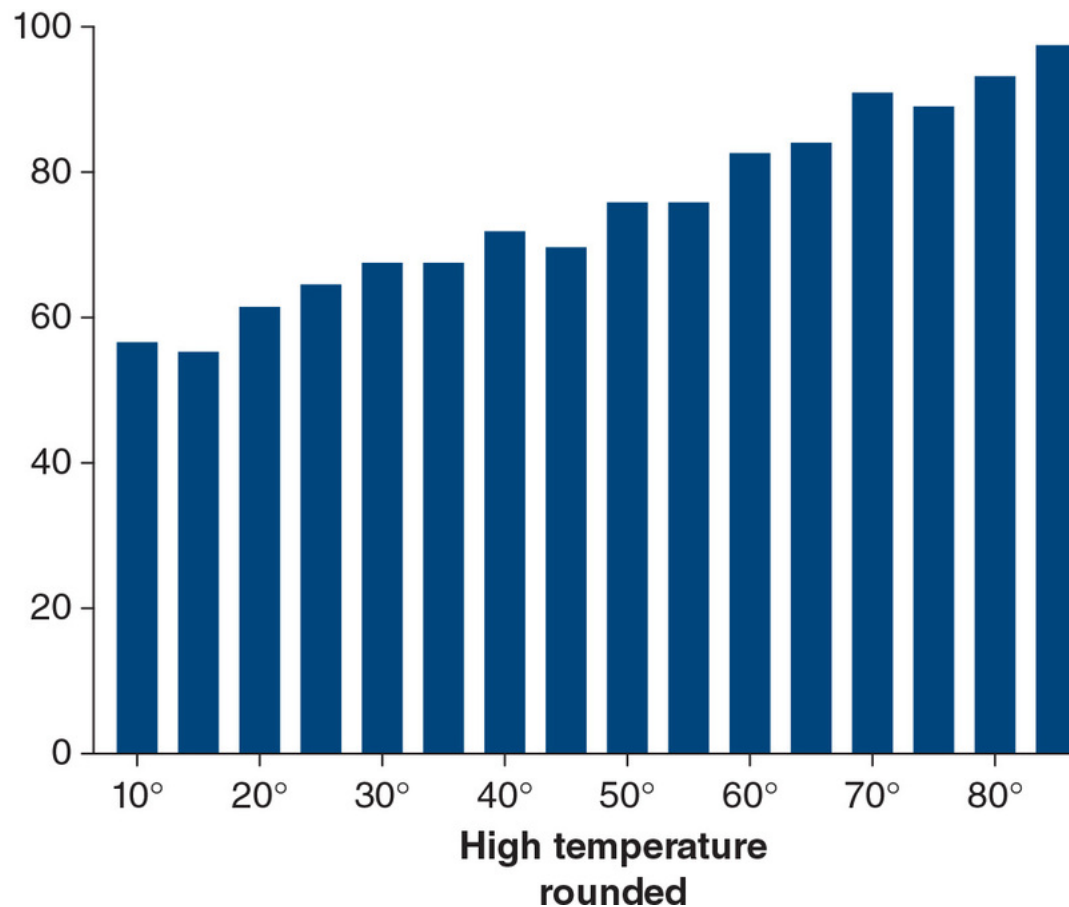
The Lifestyles Perspective.

Another theory strongly related to routine activities theory is that of the lifestyles perspective. The lifestyles theory claims that individuals increase their probability of becoming victims (as well as offenders) according to the type of lifestyle they choose. However, some recent reviews of the literature have noted the strong, perhaps even redundant, relationship between lifestyles theory and the more established routine activities theory.³⁶ To clarify, such reviews have noted that “deviant lifestyles bear more risk of victimization than do conforming ones.”³⁷ For example, elderly persons are far less likely to be victimized because they tend to stay indoors, especially at night. On the other hand, younger individuals (especially those in their teenage years and early 20s) are far more likely to be victimized, probably because they tend to go out late at night or hang out with other young persons, which significantly increases their probability of being victimized, since this is the age-group most likely to offend. Still, the bottom line in terms of theorizing about lifestyles is that certain individuals tend to increase the likelihood of their own victimization by associating with the very individuals most likely to commit offenses (e.g., young males), hanging out in locales that tend to serve alcohol, or not taking adequate measures to protect themselves from being victimized. This is a perfect scenario for raising the risk of victimization according to routine activities theory, which shows how lifestyles theory is simply an extension of routine activities theory; by itself, it offers no new revelations for why some individuals are victimized more than others.³⁸

Figure 4.4 Violent Crime and Temperature

Violent crime in Columbus increases as the high temperature rises.

Average number of violent crimes in Columbus by a day's highest temperature



Source: Fox, J. A. (2010, July 6). Heat wave has a chilling effect on violent crime. Boston.com.

TABLE 4.1

Top 10 Hot Spots in Minneapolis With 10 or More F

RANK	DESCRIPTION	ROBBERIES, RAPES, AUTO THEFTS	
1.	Intersection: bars, liquor, store, park	33	
2.	Bus depot	28	
3.	Intersection: homeless shelters, bars	27	
4.	Downtown mall	27	
5.	Intersection: adult bookstore, bars	27	
6.	Bars	25	
7.	Intersection: theater, mall, record store	25	
8.	Hotel	23	
9.	Convenience store	22	
10.	Bar	21	

Source: Sherman, L., Gartin, P., & Buerger, M. (1989). Hot spots of predatory crime: The criminology of place. *Criminology*, 27, 27–56.

Source: Sherman, L., Gartin, P., & Buerger, M. (1989). Hot spots of predatory crime: Routine activities and the criminology of place. *Criminology*, 27, 27–56.

Learning Check 4.2

- According to the text, which theorists first proposed the rational choice theory of criminal behavior?
 - Clarke and Cornish
 - Gottfredson and Hirschi
 - Sampson and Laub
 - Cohen and Felson

5. Sykes and Matza
2. According to the text, which theorists first proposed the routine activities theory of crime?
 1. Clarke and Cornish
 2. Gottfredson and Hirschi
 3. Sampson and Laub
 4. Cohen and Felson
 5. Sykes and Matza
3. According to the text, what is NOT one of the elements of routine activities theory that create a likely crime opportunity when they converge in time and place?
 1. Motivated offender
 2. Suitable/attractive target
 3. Time of day/night
 4. Absence of guardianship

Answers located at www.edge.sagepub.com/schram2e

Policy Implications

Numerous policy implications can be derived from the theories and scientific findings discussed in this chapter. In this section, we concentrate on some of the most important policies. The “broken windows” perspective—which shares many assumptions with routine activities and rational choice theories—emphasizes the need for police to crack down on minor offenses to reduce major crimes.³⁹ Although many cities (such as New York and Los Angeles) have claimed reductions in serious crime after applying this theory, crime was reduced by the same amount across most cities during the same time period (from the late 1990s to the mid-2000s).

Other policies that can be derived from theories in this section include the “three-strikes-you’re-out” policy, which assumes that offenders will make a rational choice not to commit future offenses if they could go to prison for life after committing three; in such a case, the negatives would certainly outweigh any expected benefits of the third crime. For deterrence to be most effective, punishment must be swift, certain, and severe. Where does the three-strikes policy fit into this equation? The bottom line is that it is much more severe than it is swift or certain. Given Beccaria’s theory and philosophy (see [Chapter 3](#)), this policy will probably not work because it is not certain or swift; however, it is severe, in the sense that a person can be sentenced to life for committing three felony offenses over time.

A controversial three-strikes law was passed by voter initiative in California, and other states have adopted similar laws. This law sends third-time felons to prison for the rest of their lives regardless of the nature of that third felony. California first requires convictions for two “striking” felonies—crimes such as murder, rape, aggravated assault, burglary, drug offenses, and so on. Then any third felony can trigger the life sentence. The cases of nonviolent offenders going to prison for life after stealing a piece of pizza or shoplifting DVDs, while rare, do occur.

The question we are concerned with here is, does the three-strikes policy work? As a specific deterrent, the answer is clearly yes; offenders who are imprisoned for life cannot commit more crimes on the street. In that regard, three strikes works well. Some people feel, however, that laws such as three strikes need to include a general deterrent effect to be considered successful, meaning that this law should deter everyone from engaging in multiple crimes. So is three strikes a general deterrent? Unfortunately, there are no easy answers to this question, because laws vary from state to state, the laws are used at different rates across counties in a given state, and so forth. There is at least some consensus in the literature, however.

Teens can increase the likelihood of being victimized by staying out late at night, hanging with the wrong crowd, or taking part in drinking or risky behavior.



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One study from California suggests that three strikes reduced crime,⁴⁰ but the remaining studies show that three strikes either has no effect on crime or actually *increases* crime.⁴¹ How could three strikes increase crime? The authors of those studies attributed an increase in homicide, following three strikes, to the possibility that third-strikers have more incentive to kill victims and any witnesses to avoid apprehension. Although this argument is tentative, it may be true.⁴² This is just one of the many policy implications that can be derived from this section. We expect that readers of this book will come up with many more, but it is vital that they examine the empirical literature in determining policies' usefulness in reducing criminal activity. Other policy implications regarding the theories and findings discussed in this chapter are discussed in the final section of this book.

In another strategy strongly based on the rational choice model, a number of judges have started using shaming penalties to deter offenders from recidivating. They have ordered everything from posting pictures of men arrested for soliciting prostitutes to forcing offenders to walk down their towns' main streets wearing signs that announce their crimes. These are just two examples of an increasing trend that emphasizes the informal or community factors required to deter crime effectively. Unfortunately, to date there have been virtually no empirical evaluations of the effectiveness of such shaming penalties, although studies of expected shame for committing an act consistently show a deterrent effect.⁴³

During a protest against California's "three strikes" law, Sequoia, Floyd, and Deonta Earl hold photos of their father, Floyd Earl, who is in jail for a term of 25 years to life. California voters and lawmakers approved the three-strikes law amid public furor over the 1993 kidnap and murder of 12-year-old Polly Klaas by Richard Allen Davis, a repeat offender on parole at the time of the kidnapping.



AP Photo/Damian Dovarganes

Why Do They Do It?



The Green River Killer

Gary Leon Ridgway was convicted and sentenced in 2003 after many decades of acting as the Green River Killer; he had stabbed his first victim at age 16, in 1965. He confessed to killing 71 victims (although he was convicted of only 48), virtually all of them women. He appeared to live separate lives. In one aspect of his life in the Seattle area, he was the father of a son and husband to his third wife. The other side involved picking up women, mostly prostitutes and strippers, who were willing to engage in sexual activity with him in remote locations.

He claimed that he would hide or bury the bodies of the victims he really “liked” because he knew he would want to go back and have sex with them later, which he did on occasion. He would also place various objects, such as a fish, bottle, or sausage, at the crime scene to throw off authorities, because these objects didn’t match the modus operandi they were expecting to help link the crimes together. So he did appear to plan his crimes, at least in terms of manipulating the crime scenes (whether the primary scene, where the killing took place, or the secondary scene, where the body was dumped).

He also notably said, “I would choke them . . . and I was really good at it.” But when asked by an investigator in an official interview where he ranked on a scale of evil from 1 to 5, he said he was a 3. So there appears to be a disconnect between the way he thinks and the way society at large thinks.

Ridgway was caught after DNA from crime scenes was matched to a saliva test he had taken years before, when authorities had suspected him but didn’t have enough evidence to make an arrest. So he continued his killing spree for many years, until they finally obtained further evidence linking him to some of the murders. Ridgway is now serving 480 years in prison for 48 life sentences, due to a bargain that got him out of the death penalty.

But why did he do it? Obviously, he has some psychological issues. But he passed the psychological test to determine readiness to stand trial, so he was not ruled legally insane. Virtually all his victims easily fit within his lifestyle, as he traveled around in his truck and picked up women in essentially the same area where he worked and lived. He never went far out of his way. In fact, none of his victims seemed to come from outside the Seattle area. And he would almost always dump or bury the bodies within a relatively limited radius in that region—hence his label, “the Green River Killer.”

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In one notable instance, he claimed that his son was with him in the truck when he picked up a woman. He had his son stay in the truck while he took the woman a distance away and killed her. But we know that he tended to pick up and kill these women as part of his daily routine, which included working at a truck-painting factory. Thus, this case applies to the routine activities theory and lifestyles perspective covered in this chapter. Also keep in mind that even at the time when he was apprehended for these murders, he had a relatively stable marriage, which is not atypical for serial killers. They often lead separate lives, and both lives can seem fairly routine despite extreme contradictions.

Think About It:

1. What was the Green River Killer's typical method of operation (MO), or how he carried out most of his killings?
2. How is the Green River Killer's case a good example of routine activities theory?

Sources: Jensen, J., & Case, J. (2011). *Green River Killer: A true detective story*. Milwaukie, OR: Dark Horse Books.

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the rebirth of deterrence studies in criminological literature. This reemphasis on deterrence was largely a response to the failure of most rehabilitation programs to lower recidivism in criminals. Specifically, the empirical evidence from studies in the late 1960s and early 1970s regarding various rehabilitation programs showed that they were not effective in reducing recidivism, especially in chronic offenders. The first wave of research in this new focus on deterrence emphasized comparisons of jurisdictions (often various states in the United States) that tend to use more severe punishments than other jurisdictions. The subsequent waves of the rebirth of deterrence focused on longitudinal or panel studies that estimated how perceptions affect behavior, but this was quickly criticized by researchers who noted that the reverse is more likely: Behavior affects perceptions of being caught or punished. This led to the scenario methodology, in which individuals are asked their perceived likelihood of engaging in a specific situation at a given time, which is essentially where the current research on Classical/deterrence models remains.

We also examined more recent forms of Classical/deterrence theory, such as rational choice theory, which emphasizes the effects of informal sanctions (e.g., family, friends, employment) and the benefits of offending (e.g., the “fun” of offending). We also discussed routine activities theory, which explains why victimization tends to occur far more often in certain locations (i.e., “hot spots”) due to the convergence of three key elements in time and place—motivated offender(s), vulnerable target(s), and lack of guardianship—which create an attractive opportunity for crime as individuals go about their everyday activities. Another theory closely related to routine activities theory is the lifestyles perspective. The common element across all these perspectives is the underlying assumption that individuals are rational beings who have free will and thus choose their behavior based on assessments of a given situation, such as the possible risks versus the potential payoff. The bottom line of these various modern theories is that the perceptions and decisions made by individuals often put them at a much higher risk of engaging in criminal acts as well as becoming victims of such crimes.

To follow up on the case study of Wayne at the beginning of this chapter, you should be able to see how his story relates well to some of the theories and concepts presented in this chapter—most notably, rational choice theory. Just to remind you, Wayne had engaged in some delinquent/criminal acts in high school and college; it was nothing violent, but he had come close to being arrested in high school and was apprehended and held by police for a couple of incidents in college (all charges were dropped or dismissed). But he realized that he had a lot to lose, such as all the work he had put toward getting good grades and completing the pre-law curriculum. Furthermore, he realized that he wanted to maintain strong bonds with his family and friends, not to mention relationships with future employers, and they would likely lose some level of respect for him if he continued to be caught for various offenses. So he completely changed his life trajectory by focusing on his studies, career, and family life.

This is a hypothetical (and some may say prototypical) scenario of what the more modern versions of deterrence, such as rational choice theory, offer in terms of explanations for individuals' decision-making. But it is based on an actual case, according to the history of a good friend of one of the authors of this text. The point of this example is that each individual has the rationality and free will to examine the potential costs and benefits of his or her behavior and make decisions based on consideration of all major risks—both formal and informal sanctions—as well as perceived benefits. This goes well beyond the traditional Classical version of deterrence, which focused only on formal sanctions, and provides a far more robust and valid model for explaining criminal behavior—or in Wayne's case, the decision not to engage in such behavior. The assumptions of this type of theorizing will be contradicted in the following chapters, which discuss theories that assume there is virtually no rationality or free will, let alone calculated decision-making, involved in committing a crime.

Summary of Theories in Chapter 4

THEORY	CONCEPTS	PROPONENTS
Rational choice theory	Includes all traditional deterrence factors but adds <ul style="list-style-type: none"> informal factors (e.g., family, friends, employers) benefits of the crime (e.g., payoff and pleasure/thrill of offending) 	Ronald V. Clarke and Derek B. Cornish
Routine activities theory	Likely opportunity for victimization, given three concepts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motivated offender Attractive/suitable target Absence of guardianship 	Lawrence Cohen and Marcus Felson
Lifestyles perspective	Risky lifestyles of offenders/victims	Various

Key Terms

aggregate studies, 92
 cross-sectional studies, 92
 experiential effect, 93
 formal/official deterrence, 95
 informal deterrence, 95
 rational choice theory, 95
 routine activities theory, 100
 scenario research, 94
 vignettes, 94

Discussion Questions

1. Do you think the deterrence model should have been rebirthed or left for dead? Explain why you feel this way.
2. Regarding the aggregate level of research in deterrence studies, do you find such studies valid? Explain why or why not.
3. In comparing longitudinal studies with vignette/scenario studies, which do you think offers the most valid method for examining individual perceptions regarding the costs and benefits of offending situations? Explain why you feel this way.
4. Can you relate to the experiential effect? If you can't, do you know someone who seems to engage in the behavior that results from this phenomenon? Make sure to articulate what the experiential effect is.
5. Regarding rational choice theory, would you rather be subject to formal sanctions if none of your family, friends, or employers found out that you engaged in shoplifting, or would you rather face the informal sanctions with no formal punishment (other than being arrested)? Explain your decision.
6. As a teenager, did you or family or friends get a "rush" out of doing things that were deviant or wrong? If so, did that feeling seem to outweigh any potential legal or informal consequences?

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7. Regarding routine activities theory, which places, residences, or areas of your hometown do you feel fit this idea that certain places attract more crime than others (i.e., “hot spots”)? Explain how you, friends, or others (including police) in your community deal with such areas. Does it work?
8. Regarding routine activities theory, which of the three elements of the theory do you feel is the most important to address in efforts to reduce crime in “hot spots”?
9. What types of lifestyle characteristics lead to the highest criminal/victimization rates? List at least five factors that lead to such propensities.
10. Find at least one study that uses mapping/geographical (GPS) data and report the conclusions of that study. Do the findings and conclusions fit the routine activities theoretical framework? Why or why not?
11. What types of policy strategies derived from rational choice and routine activities theories do you think would be most effective? Least effective?

Web Resources

The journal article at this site provides a good explanation of the key issues involved in modern longitudinal studies of deterrence, which were discussed in this chapter.

<http://scholarlycommons.law.northwestern.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=6586&context=jclc>

This site is for the Death Penalty Information Center, which is one of the very best sources of facts and reports on the use and cost of capital punishment, as well as its limited effectiveness as a deterrent.

<http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/reports>

This site is a very thorough discussion by Robert Keel at the University of Missouri about the concepts and propositions that rational choice theory added to the traditional deterrence model.

<http://www.umsl.edu/~keelr/200/ratchoc.html>

The Center for Problem-Oriented Policing site has an excellent summary of routine activities theory and discusses its application to their approaches to policing and making high crime places safer.

<http://www.popcenter.org/learning/pam/help/theory.cfm>

This PowerPoint slideshow reviews routine activities theory and also discusses how some scholars have claimed that victims often raise the likelihood of their victimization because of their risky lifestyles.

<http://www.slideshare.net/khadijahtgo/routine-activities-theory>

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Training Helps Inmates Build a Bridge to Life Outside Prison Walls



A reconceptualization of general and specific deterrence



Decision making in the crime commission process: Comparing rapists, child molesters, and victim-crossover sex offenders



Lifestyle-routine activities and crime events



Prison Rehabilitation



Teen Who Stole Endures Public Punishment



Jail Keeper Says California Three-Strikes Law Fails to Reduce Crime



Dan Ariely: Crime and Irrationality



Shaming



The CDC on Drunk Driving



Prison Sentencing



Community Action



Crime Mapping



People V Brock Turner

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