

## *The Psychology of Criminal Behavior: A Psychological Analysis of Criminal Motives and Personality Types*

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### **Abstract:**

This study examines criminal behavior through a psychological lens, analyzing factors that contribute to crime and classifying offenders into profiles such as the sadistic, psychopathic, and pressure-driven types. It explores the link between these profiles and psychological disorders using theories like Freud's psychoanalysis, social learning theory, and cognitive-behavioral therapy. The paper highlights the role of psychological treatment—such as group therapy and in-prison programs—in reducing recidivism. It also emphasizes the importance of family and societal support during reintegration. Ultimately, the study advocates for a holistic therapeutic approach to understanding and addressing criminal behavior.

**Keywords:** Criminal Behavior; Psychotherapy; Offender Typologies; Psychological Disorders.

### **1. Introduction**

Crime is one of the oldest social phenomena that has accompanied human societies since their inception. It has been inherently linked to human behavior in the pursuit of fulfilling needs and desires—often leading to conflict with the laws and norms that regulate collective life. Although the definition of crime varies across cultures and societies, the common thread lies in its nature as a behavior that violates both legal and social standards. As such, it is subject to legal punishment due to the harm it inflicts on individuals and society at large.

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With the advancement of societies and the increasing complexity of social relations, it has become essential to investigate the underlying causes of criminal behavior—particularly from a psychological perspective that focuses on understanding individuals' motives and behaviors. Understanding crime should not be limited to legal or sociological dimensions; rather, it must extend to the exploration of psychological factors that drive individuals to commit criminal acts. This necessitates the application of psychological principles and theories to analyze the offender's personality and comprehend the mechanisms behind their thoughts and actions.

Within this context, criminal psychology has emerged as a branch of applied psychology concerned with the study of the offender's personality, motivations, and the psychological factors influencing criminal behavior. It also seeks to explain defense mechanisms and personality disorders that may be present in offenders (Ben Youssef, 2024, p. 67).

The importance of this study is reflected in its aim to provide a comprehensive analytical reading of the phenomenon of crime from a psychological perspective. It focuses on analyzing the offender's personality and the psychological motives that may drive criminal behavior, in addition to classifying offenders according to psychological patterns. This represents an attempt to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon, which can contribute to the development of preventive and therapeutic psychological and social programs for offenders, and enhance the effectiveness of criminal justice policies.

### **Study Objective**

This study aims to analyze the phenomenon of crime and criminal behavior from a psychological perspective by:

- Reviewing the most prominent psychological theories that explain criminal behavior.
- Identifying the underlying psychological motives behind criminal acts.
- Classifying offenders based on psychological personality patterns.
- Providing recommendations for employing psychological analysis in crime prevention efforts.

## **2. Conceptual Framework**

Crime is considered a complex and multidimensional phenomenon, resulting from the interaction of psychological, social, and environmental factors in shaping criminal behavior. From this perspective, understanding crime through a psychological framework becomes highly significant, as it enables us to explain why some individuals commit crimes while others adhere to laws and social norms.

### **2.1 Definition of Crime**

Crime is commonly defined as a behavior that violates the prevailing laws of a particular society and is punishable by law. However, the concept of crime varies across cultures and societies—what may be considered a crime in one place might not be viewed as such in another. Criminal psychology, in turn, focuses on studying crime from the perspective of the individuals who commit it. It aims to understand the psychological factors that drive these individuals toward criminal behavior (Sahi, 2022, p. 83).

### **2.2 The Definition of Crime**

The definition of crime remains one of the most debated concepts in the social and legal sciences, as it varies depending on the lens through which it is examined. From a legal perspective, crime is defined as an act—or failure to act—that is criminalized by law and punishable by it. In contrast, psychology views crime as a manifestation of disturbances in an individual's psychological and social structure, which are reflected in behaviors that violate prevailing moral and social norms.

However, the definition of crime remains relative and subject to change across time and place. What is considered a crime in one culture may not be seen as such in another, highlighting the contextual nature of criminality. This underscores the importance of distinguishing between the criminal act as an objective occurrence and criminalization as a social and legal decision. For example, certain behaviors that were once criminalized—such as some forms of political dissent—are no longer deemed criminal in many countries today, reflecting the evolution of social norms and legislative frameworks.

From a psychological standpoint, crime cannot be fully understood in isolation from individual psychological and personal factors—such as impulsivity, poor self-control, or issues related to social upbringing. Therefore, the legal definition alone is insufficient to grasp or explain

the underlying motives behind criminal behavior. A more comprehensive understanding requires a psychological, social, and contextual analysis that delves into the internal and external dynamics influencing the individual's actions.

### **3. Classification of Crimes**

Classifying crimes represents a fundamental step in understanding the overall structure of criminal behavior—whether from a legal, social, or psychological perspective. These classifications are not merely intended to organize or categorize criminal acts; they also serve as critical tools for identifying underlying causes, predicting potential risks, and developing appropriate intervention and prevention strategies.

Many criminologists have proposed various classifications of crimes to facilitate their study and to establish effective mechanisms for addressing them.

#### **3.1 Classification According to the Severity of the Crime**

This type of classification divides crimes into two main categories:

- Major (Serious) Crimes: These include acts such as premeditated murder, rape, and armed robbery. Such offenses typically involve significant harm to individuals or society and are met with severe legal penalties.
- Minor (Petty) Crimes: These refer to less serious violations, such as traffic infractions, verbal insults, or minor disturbances. Though they are legally punishable, they often result in lighter sanctions, such as fines or warnings.

#### **3.2 Classification According to Motive**

Crimes can also be categorized based on the underlying motive that drives the offender:

- Crimes Motivated by Revenge: Such as retaliatory killings driven by personal or familial vendetta.
- Crimes Motivated by Greed: Including theft, fraud, and embezzlement, where the goal is material gain.
- Crimes Motivated by Sexual Impulse: Such as sexual assaults or other offenses rooted in deviant sexual urges.

#### **3.3 Classification According to Means**

Some typologies focus on the method or tool used to commit the crime, distinguishing between:

- Crimes Involving Physical Violence: These include acts like murder, assault, and physical abuse, where direct bodily harm is inflicted.
- Crimes Involving Psychological or Emotional Violence: Such as threats, blackmail, and intimidation, which aim to harm the victim through mental or emotional coercion.

### **3.4 Classification According to the Victim**

Identifying the nature of the victim plays a crucial role in categorizing the type of crime:

- Crimes Against Property: These include offenses such as theft, burglary, and arson, where the primary target is material possessions.
- Crimes Against Society: Such as bribery, forgery, and corruption, which undermine social order and public trust (Sahi, 2022, pp. 88-90).

Crime classification contributes significantly to identifying the nature of criminal behavior and determining effective methods for addressing it, as each category is often linked to distinct psychological and social conditions that must be considered within the scope of criminal psychology, as well as in the development of preventive and therapeutic measures.

However, one of the key challenges in crime classification lies in the overlap between categories. A single crime can fall under multiple classifications simultaneously. For example, an honor-related murder could be categorized both as a violent crime and a culturally-driven offense. This overlapping complicates scientific analysis and presents a challenge to researchers seeking precise interpretation and categorization.

In light of social and technological developments, it has become increasingly necessary to adopt flexible and dynamic crime classifications that account for the emergence of new forms of criminal behavior. These include cybercrimes and indirect psychological offenses such as emotional blackmail or digital abuse, which do not fit neatly within traditional categories.

This shift highlights the need for an adaptive analytical framework that can evolve alongside societal changes, ensuring more accurate identification, interpretation, and intervention regarding contemporary criminal phenomena.

The classification of crimes is not an end in itself, but rather a methodological tool aimed at understanding the phenomenon of

criminal behavior and directing efforts toward rehabilitation and prevention. However, such classification must be analytical and flexible, taking into account psychological, social, and cultural contexts, rather than relying solely on strict legal definitions.

A nuanced approach allows for a deeper comprehension of criminal motivations and patterns, enabling the design of more effective intervention strategies that extend beyond the limits of formal legal categorization.

#### **4. Definition of the Criminal**

A criminal is an individual who commits an offense and is distinguished from other members of society by behavior that violates legal and moral norms. However, this figure cannot be confined to a purely legal definition. It is essential to examine the psychological drives that underlie criminal behavior, as these motives vary from person to person.

Psychological factors such as frustration, anger, emotional distress, and aggression often play a pivotal role in prompting individuals to make impulsive decisions that may ultimately lead to criminal acts (Harmel, 2024, p. 177).

The concept of the criminal is one of the most complex and multifaceted in the human sciences, as it involves an interplay between legal, psychological, social, and cultural dimensions—even if legal definitions may appear clear and precise.

Approaching the definition of a criminal cannot be limited to the rigid legal formulation that views them merely as someone who has broken the law. Although this definition is necessary, it remains superficial and fails to capture the complexity of the human experience behind criminal behavior. At their core, the criminal is not just a violator of legal norms, but an individual shaped by a set of psychological tensions, motives, and emotions—often invisible, yet profoundly influential.

The diversity of psychological motives—ranging from frustration and anger to feelings of helplessness or a desire for self-assertion—makes each criminal a unique case that cannot be judged by uniform standards. This highlights the importance of the psychological dimension—not to justify the crime, but to understand it in depth. Criminal acts cannot be separated from the emotional and mental context in which they emerge, and any attempt to understand crime without considering its psychological drivers is incomplete and may lead to ineffective solutions.

Therefore, viewing the criminal as the end product of intertwined psychological and social circumstances enables the development of more realistic and humane rehabilitative and corrective policies, rather than relying solely on punitive responses.

#### **4.1 Key Psychological Traits of the Criminal**

Analyzing the psychological traits of criminals is a fundamental topic in forensic psychology, as it contributes to understanding the internal makeup of the delinquent individual and offers insights into criminal behavior from personal, emotional, and cognitive perspectives.

These traits vary depending on the type of crime and its underlying motives; however, psychological studies have generally agreed on the existence of a set of common characteristics shared by the majority of offenders.

- **Aggressiveness:** Many criminals exhibit high levels of aggressiveness, whether verbal or physical, which often emerges as an emotional response to situations that provoke anger or a sense of threat. This trait is considered one of the primary indicators of a tendency toward violent behavior.
- **Poor Emotional Regulation:** Criminals often show a marked inability to regulate their emotions, making them easily excitable and impulsive. They typically lack the capacity for reflective thinking before acting, which leads them to make emotionally driven decisions that may result in criminal behavior (Harmel, 2024, p. 118).
- **Social Indifference:** The criminal is often characterized by a lack of concern for laws and social norms, coupled with a diminished sense of responsibility toward their community. Such individuals tend to disregard the rights of others and view deviant behavior as a legitimate means to fulfill personal desires, with little regard for the consequences of their actions (Harmel, 2024, p. 119).
- **Weak Sense of Guilt:** Criminals typically exhibit a limited or absent sense of guilt or remorse following their offenses. This psychological deficit significantly hinders their reintegration into society or prospects for rehabilitation, particularly among repeat offenders.
- **Dependency and Low Self-Esteem:** Psychological studies have indicated that some offenders exhibit traits of excessive dependency on others and low self-confidence. These

psychological vulnerabilities may drive them to seek recognition or assert their presence through criminal behavior, particularly in the absence of positive motivation.

- **Distorted Thinking:** The offender often adopts irrational cognitive patterns that justify deviant behaviors, such as rationalizing aggression, blaming others, or interpreting criminal acts as legitimate means of revenge or self-expression (Yaïch Khazzar, 2017, p. 19).

It becomes evident, through the examination of the key psychological traits of offenders, that the criminal personality is often marked by a complex and disturbed emotional makeup—characterized by aggression, poor self-control, and a lack of guilt. These traits serve as warning indicators that must be taken into account when analyzing the motives behind criminal behavior and attempting to predict it. Moreover, the repeated presence of distorted emotional and cognitive patterns—such as dependency and social indifference—highlights the need to approach crime as a multifaceted psychological and social phenomenon, rather than as an isolated legal act.

Dealing with the traits of offenders should not be limited solely to the legal dimension; rather, it must extend to the implementation of early preventive psychological and social programs. These programs should aim to identify and address aggressive tendencies, strengthen emotional regulation skills, and foster a sense of social responsibility from an early stage in an individual's development.

- **Psychological Factors Influencing Criminal Behavior:** A range of psychological factors intertwine to influence an individual's decision to commit a crime. These can be broadly categorized as follows:
  - **Personal Factors:** These include personality disorders, psychological trauma, and the emotional pressures individuals may experience. Such internal struggles can distort judgment, increase impulsivity, and lower resistance to deviant behavior.
  - **Environmental Factors:** These pertain to the social environment in which a person is raised, including family dynamics, economic hardship, and experiences of harm or abuse during early developmental stages. These conditions often shape behavioral tendencies and may predispose individuals to criminal behavior if left unaddressed.
  - **Biological Factors:** These refer to genetic influences and neurological alterations that may play a role in shaping

criminal behavior. Studies suggest that abnormalities in brain function or inherited traits can predispose individuals to aggression or impulsivity, thereby increasing the likelihood of engaging in criminal acts (Yaïch Khazzar, 2017, p. 19).

From the above, it becomes evident that psychological factors constitute a central axis in the interpretation of criminal behavior. They serve as a link between the individual's inner characteristics and their surrounding environment. Personality disorders, distorted cognition, inner conflicts, and emotions such as aggression or inferiority all contribute to the development of criminal tendencies, which vary in intensity depending on the individual's psychological and social context.

Understanding the psychological motivations behind crime is not merely a theoretical endeavor—it is a practical necessity. It allows for accurate diagnosis of the causes of crime and enables the design of effective therapeutic and rehabilitative programs. Such interventions are vital to reducing the recurrence of criminal behavior and promoting the successful reintegration of offenders into society.

For example, individuals with certain personality disorders, such as narcissistic or sadistic traits, may display criminal behaviors characterized by violence or cruelty toward others. On the other hand, social deprivation or poverty may drive some individuals to commit crimes as a means to improve their economic or social conditions.

## **5. Psychological Theories Explaining Crime**

Psychological theories constitute essential tools for gaining a deeper understanding of criminal behavior. They aim to identify the internal psychological factors that lead individuals to engage in criminal acts. These theories vary according to different schools of thought within psychology, each offering its own hypotheses and theoretical foundations for interpreting criminal phenomena.

### **5.1 The Criminal Personality Theory (Freud's Theory)**

Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory is one of the most prominent approaches in explaining criminal behavior from a psychological perspective. According to Freud, criminal tendencies arise from disturbances in the unconscious mind, particularly due to imbalances among the three components of the psyche: the id, the ego, and the superego.

- **The Id:** This component represents innate, instinctual drives and seeks immediate gratification of desires without regard for

consequences. It operates based on the pleasure principle and is the source of aggressive and impulsive urges.

Freud posited that when the id dominates behavior due to a weak or underdeveloped ego and superego, the individual becomes more likely to engage in impulsive or socially unacceptable acts—some of which may manifest as criminal behavior.

- The Ego: This is the rational component of the psyche that mediates between the impulsive desires of the id and the constraints of external reality. It seeks realistic and socially acceptable ways to satisfy inner urges.
- The Superego: Representing conscience and moral standards, the superego imposes ethical guidelines and internalized societal norms on the individual's behavior.

According to Freud, when the balance among these three elements—id, ego, and superego—is disrupted, the likelihood of engaging in criminal behavior increases. For instance, if the ego is too weak to regulate the powerful impulses of the id, or if the superego fails to provide sufficient moral restraint, the individual may resort to reckless decisions that lead to criminal acts (Maansar, 2021, p. 14).

Freud's analysis of criminal behavior presents an internal and profound perspective, connecting crime to the hidden dynamics of the psyche rather than merely to observable actions. According to this view, a person does not become a criminal simply due to an unstable environment, but rather as a result of unresolved inner psychological conflicts. The strained relationship between the id, which drives the individual toward instinctual gratification, the ego, which mediates between desire and reality, and the superego, which embodies the moral conscience, creates an internal stage where personal choices are formed. It is within this mental theater that the dominance of primitive urges over rational and ethical control can give rise to criminal behavior.

When the id dominates, and the ego weakens or the superego is absent, the individual becomes more prone to committing actions without regard for consequences or moral considerations. In this context, Freud's understanding of crime emerges as a result of a failure to regulate internal psychic energy. Though seemingly theoretical, this perspective helps explain certain types of crimes that cannot be accounted for by material or social motives alone, but rather stem from irrational impulses or unconscious drives. It offers a

psychological lens through which seemingly senseless or unprovoked criminal acts can be more clearly interpreted.

The strength of this theory lies in its emphasis on long-term therapeutic intervention. Reforming the offender is not merely a matter of changing their environment or applying legal deterrence; in some cases, it requires restoring their internal psychological balance. This is where psychoanalysis proves valuable, especially in cases of delinquency that do not respond well to superficial or purely punitive approaches. By addressing the unresolved inner conflicts that may drive criminal behavior, this theory advocates for a more profound and humane path toward rehabilitation.

### **5.2 Social Learning Theory (Albert Bandura)**

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory views learning as the primary factor behind criminal behavior. According to this theory, individuals are not inherently delinquent; rather, they acquire criminal tendencies through observation and imitation.

When a person grows up in an environment where aggressive or deviant behaviors are modeled and reinforced—whether by family members, peers, or cultural influences—they are more likely to adopt similar behaviors. The repeated exposure to such conduct, especially when it appears to yield rewards or lacks negative consequences, strengthens the likelihood of replication.

Bandura emphasizes that learning is not purely behavioral but also involves cognitive processes, including attention, retention, and motivation. This suggests that criminal behavior can be shaped not only by direct experience but also by indirect exposure to deviant role models.

This theory underscores the significance of social context in shaping behavior and highlights the importance of positive reinforcement and healthy social modeling in early life as key tools in crime prevention.

The theory emphasizes the influential role of social models—such as parents, peers, or media—in shaping individual behavior. Research indicates that children raised in environments saturated with violence and criminal imagery are more likely to engage in delinquent acts later in life (Bougraaf, 2023, p. 05).

Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory offers a realistic and practical perspective on criminal behavior, based on a simple yet profound idea: individuals learn through what they observe and experience. This approach moves away from viewing crime as an innate tendency or purely psychological deviation, and instead places it within the context of acquired behavior shaped by ongoing

interaction with the social environment. When a person is surrounded by models that encourage violence or normalize deviant conduct—whether through family, peers, or even the media—criminal behavior becomes almost instinctive, especially during childhood and adolescence.

The strength of this theory lies in the fact that it does not merely explain behavior, but also opens avenues for preventive intervention. If behavior is learned, then it can also be unlearned or redirected. Moreover, the emphasis on social models serves as a reminder of our collective responsibility, since a child does not grow up in a vacuum, but rather in an environment that shapes their awareness and guides their actions.

In the end, Bandura's theory confronts us with a clear truth: crime prevention does not begin in courtrooms, but rather in the everyday spaces where personality is shaped, values are instilled, and the earliest responses to life are formed.

### **5.3 The Social Analysis Theory (Émile Durkheim's Theory)**

Émile Durkheim's theory is considered one of the most significant sociological approaches to explaining crime. According to Durkheim, crime is not merely a psychological phenomenon but a natural component of any society. He argues that modern societies experience considerable diversity in values and norms, leading to conflict among these values, and as a result, crime emerges as a consequence of this divergence.

Durkheim also posits that crime can, at times, be necessary for the functioning of society, as it plays a role in redefining and reinforcing social norms and values. Furthermore, he suggests that crime can promote social cohesion by drawing attention to deviant behaviors and facilitating their correction (Ben Saada, 2019, p. 222).

Émile Durkheim's conception of crime remains one of the most compelling contributions in the field of sociology, as it challenges the traditional view that treats crime solely as a dysfunction or threat. Instead, Durkheim saw crime as an indicator of a society's vitality.

From his perspective, crime cannot be fully understood through an individual psychological lens alone; rather, it is a natural consequence of the divergence in values within the very structure of society—particularly in modern societies, where normative diversity is prominent. This variation inevitably leads to friction or deviation from dominant norms, which, in Durkheim's view, renders crime a sometimes functional phenomenon.

What makes Durkheim's perspective coherent and insightful is that it does not justify crime, but rather situates it within a dynamic social context. In his view, crime plays an indirect yet important role in correcting deviant behaviors and redefining societal boundaries.

In other words, crime provokes collective reactions that, in turn, reaffirm moral limits and reinforce shared values. This understanding removes the notion of crime as an absolute evil and instead frames it as a phenomenon that requires contextual analysis—not merely punitive response.

Ultimately, what this theory offers is a framework for understanding crime not merely as a violation of the law, but as a product of complex social interactions—interactions that may, in some cases, be necessary for societal development and adaptation to change.

Through the review of various theories explaining crime, it becomes clear that criminal behavior cannot be attributed to a single factor or unified explanation. Rather, it results from a complex interaction between psychological, social, and biological dimensions. Each theory sheds light on a specific aspect of criminal phenomena and reveals distinct mechanisms that contribute to deviant behavior.

Despite the methodological and ideological differences among these theories, they complement one another to offer a more comprehensive understanding of criminal behavior. This integrative perspective paves the way for the development of multidimensional preventive and therapeutic strategies grounded in a deep understanding of individual motives and environmental pressures. Therefore, approaching crime through a multi-theoretical lens remains a scientifically essential choice for effectively understanding and addressing this phenomenon.

Psychological theories derive their significance in explaining criminal behavior from their ability to delve into the depths of the individual and explore the hidden drivers behind deviant conduct. While other approaches may focus on external factors such as poverty or the social environment, psychological perspectives serve as a reminder that criminal acts cannot be separated from the internal state of the individual — from their emotional, cognitive, and behavioral makeup.

The diversity of psychological schools — from psychoanalysis to behaviorism to cognitive theory — enriches our understanding of criminal behavior and provides us with multiple perspectives. Each school begins from its own set of assumptions to explain why some individuals commit crimes while others, under similar circumstances, do not. This divergence should not be seen as a contradiction, but rather as evidence of the complexity of criminal behavior and the

necessity of adopting multiple approaches to comprehend it thoroughly.

The greatest strength of these theories lies not only in their ability to explain criminal behavior, but also in their potential to offer therapeutic or preventive solutions based on a nuanced understanding of the offender's nature — not merely the nature of the crime itself.

## **6. Types of Criminals**

The classification of criminals represents a central issue in criminal psychology, as it contributes significantly to understanding the behavioral and psychological motivations behind criminal acts. Such classification aids security, judicial, and psychological institutions in addressing each type of offender according to their specific characteristics. Researchers have developed various typologies based on differing criteria — some classify criminals according to psychological factors, others by motives, planning and execution, or the nature of the relationship with the victim, among other considerations.

### **6.1 The Sadistic Criminal**

This type of offender commits crimes as a way to satisfy a pathological desire to inflict harm or suffering on others, whether the harm is physical or psychological. Their behavior is typically marked by cruelty, a lack of empathy, and often a diagnosable personality disorder—especially Sadistic Personality Disorder. Such individuals are frequently involved in crimes that include torture or humiliation.

Studies indicate that sadism is tied to the personal gratification an individual derives from causing pain and suffering to others. It is closely associated with psychological disorders, particularly sexual sadism disorder, where the act of harming is linked to deep-seated psychological or emotional disturbances (Qaitouni, 2016, p. 399).

### **6.2 The Psychopathic Criminal**

The psychopathic offender is characterized by a lack of guilt or remorse for their actions, and a high capacity for manipulating others. They pursue their personal goals at the expense of others, showing no human empathy or emotional concern for their victims. Psychopaths are often intelligent, socially charming, but utterly ruthless, and they tend to engage in repeated criminal behavior.

This type of criminal usually lacks the ability to form healthy relationships or to respond to normal human emotions. They may

suffer from personality disorders, particularly Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD). What makes psychopathic criminals especially dangerous is their ability to hide their true intentions, making them difficult to detect or anticipate (Qaitouni, 2016, p. 399).

### **6.3 The Pressure-Driven Criminal**

This type of offender commits criminal acts as a response to psychological or social pressures, such as poverty, emotional failure, or chronic stress. Often, these individuals are driven by internal motives like revenge or the desire for material gain.

They are frequently victims of their surrounding circumstances, and their criminal behavior usually does not manifest until they experience intense psychological pressure. Research highlights social deprivation as one of the most significant factors contributing to the emergence of such criminal patterns.

**The Emotional Offender:** This type of offender acts under the influence of intense emotional arousal, often triggered by sudden or situational factors. Crimes committed by emotional offenders are typically impulsive, arising from overwhelming feelings such as jealousy, anger, or humiliation, and are seldom premeditated.

**The Revenge-Driven Offender:** This individual commits criminal acts as a form of retaliation against a person or institution perceived to have wronged them. Motivated by a deep sense of injustice or personal grievance, the act is often fueled by a desire to restore personal dignity or to inflict harm equivalent to the perceived offense.

**The Opportunistic Offender:** This type of offender takes advantage of unforeseen or convenient circumstances to commit a crime, without prior planning or strong motivation. The driving force is often personal gain, greed, or the lure of easy benefit, rather than a deeply rooted intention to harm.

**The Economic Offender:** Motivated primarily by financial gain, this offender engages in crimes such as theft, embezzlement, or robbery. Their actions are typically calculated and goal-oriented, reflecting a utilitarian view of crime as a means to secure material benefits.

**The Political Offender:** This category includes individuals who commit crimes in pursuit of ideological or political objectives. Acts such as sabotage, assassination, or subversion are driven by the desire to influence political systems or challenge authority, rather than by personal motives.

**The Revenge-Driven Offender:** Also classified under psychological typologies, this offender acts out of a strong desire to retaliate, often

as a response to perceived injustice, humiliation, or harm, whether from an individual or an institution.

Criminals can also be categorized based on the level of organization and premeditation behind their actions:

- The Professional Criminal: A seasoned offender with extensive experience in crime. Their operations are thoroughly planned, often involving sophisticated tactics designed to evade detection and escape legal accountability.
- The Non-Professional (Impulsive) Criminal: Commits crimes spontaneously, without prior knowledge or preparation. Their behavior is typically driven by a fleeting emotional or situational impulse rather than deliberate intent.
- The Repeat Offender: Tends to return to criminal activity following release from prison or after serving a sentence, demonstrating a recurring pattern of deviant conduct (Qaitouni, 2016, p. 401).
- The Occasional Offender: Has no prior criminal background; their offenses usually occur under extraordinary or uncharacteristic circumstances.
- The Criminal with Insanity: Suffers from severe mental illness that significantly impairs reasoning and legal responsibility. These individuals are typically deemed unaccountable for their actions under the law.
- The Offender with a Psychological Disorder: Experiences mental or emotional disturbances that influence behavior, yet in most cases, these do not absolve them of legal responsibility (Yaïch Khazzar, 2017, p. 15).

These classifications affirm that criminal behavior is not a singular phenomenon, but rather varies depending on psychological, social, and situational factors. This necessitates an in-depth examination of the offender's personality before issuing judgments or implementing rehabilitation programs. The diversity of criminal typologies clearly illustrates that crime is not a one-dimensional act, but rather the outcome of a complex interplay of psychological, social, personal, and even political factors. On one hand, for example, both the sadistic and psychopathic offender represent a particularly dangerous type, rooted in profound psychological dysfunction—where conscience is absent, and the emotions of others are reduced to mere tools for pleasure or control. Although relatively rare, this form of criminality is especially

alarming due to its emotional coldness and detachment from basic human values.

On the other hand, there exists a category of offenders whose actions are driven by external pressures or impulsive circumstances—such as the emotional offender, the vengeful one, or those compelled by economic hardship. These individuals are not necessarily suffering from pathological psychological disorders; rather, they often act under the weight of harsh life conditions that distort their judgment. This is not to justify their actions, but it does call for a realistic approach that takes context into account and distinguishes between those who commit crimes with calculated coldness and those who act in a moment of human vulnerability.

Distinguishing between professional and non-professional offenders, as well as between repeat and occasional offenders, highlights the importance of examining an individual's criminal history and understanding the complexity of their behavior. Moreover, including mentally ill or insane offenders within such classifications reflects an awareness of the critical role that medical and legal assessments play in evaluating an individual's mental state at the time of the crime.

Overall, this type of classification not only serves academic research purposes, but also forms a fundamental basis for developing effective intervention strategies—whether therapeutic, preventive, or punitive. Each criminal pattern requires a tailored understanding and a specific approach; it cannot be reduced to a one-size-fits-all solution.

## **7. Psychological Care for Offenders**

Understanding the psychological factors that contribute to criminal behavior opens the door to exploring effective ways of managing and treating offenders from a mental health perspective. In this context, it becomes essential to provide appropriate therapeutic interventions that address the psychological roots of criminal conduct, with the aim of reducing the likelihood of such behaviors in the future. Psychological treatment for offenders encompasses a range of methods designed to correct deviant behaviors and promote psychological and social stability.

### **7.1 Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)**

One of the most effective approaches to treating offenders is Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), which focuses on modifying the negative thought patterns that may contribute to criminal behavior. Through this form of therapy, offenders are guided to identify

distorted beliefs and harmful perceptions that may drive them toward unlawful actions. The therapist works with the individual to replace these dysfunctional beliefs by developing healthy coping strategies for dealing with challenging situations.

Numerous studies have indicated that this form of therapy is effective in reducing individuals' aggression and violent behavior (Maansar, 2021, p. 22).

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is regarded as a cornerstone in the therapeutic treatment of individuals with criminal tendencies or deviant thought patterns. What distinguishes this approach is its deep focus on the cognitive roots of behavior; it does not merely address outward actions but delves into the underlying mental frameworks that give rise to such conduct. Many offenders do not act solely out of necessity or pressure, but are also driven by distorted beliefs developed over time—such as justifying violence or questioning the legitimacy of laws. At this point, the therapist's role becomes crucial in breaking this cycle—not through moral preaching, but by empowering the individual to observe and critically examine their thoughts, and subsequently replace them with more mature and adaptive responses. What reinforces the effectiveness of this approach is that change occurs from within—at the level of cognition before behavior—which makes it more sustainable and grounded in reality. Consequently, it is no surprise that studies report a decline in violent tendencies following this form of therapy, as it recalibrates the entire psychological compass rather than merely suppressing actions on a temporary basis.

Group psychotherapy is another therapeutic approach used in the treatment of offenders, wherein individuals facing similar psychological challenges are brought together in a structured group setting to share experiences and exchange perspectives. This form of therapy can help participants recognize shared psychological issues and provides an opportunity for social support from peers undergoing comparable experiences. It is particularly valuable for offenders who struggle with social isolation or have difficulty engaging in interpersonal interactions.

Group interaction enhances an individual's ability to communicate with others and teaches them how to reintegrate into society in a constructive manner (Maansar, 2021, p. 23).

Group psychotherapy is considered one of the most humane and effective approaches in addressing the complex internal struggles experienced by individuals such as offenders who face social

interaction difficulties or suffer from isolation. Placing an individual within a group of peers who share similar struggles fosters an environment of empathy and understanding—free from judgment—which is rarely attainable in more conventional therapeutic settings. Participation in such a group is not merely about exchanging experiences; it serves as a dynamic exercise in listening, self-disclosure, and the gradual restoration of trust—both in oneself and in others. The impact extends beyond alleviating psychological symptoms; it lays the groundwork for genuine social rehabilitation. Individuals who learn to communicate and listen within the safety of group sessions are often better prepared to engage constructively once they reintegrate into society after leaving correctional institutions.

Rehabilitation programs within prisons represent one of the key methods for treating and reintegrating offenders. These initiatives are designed to develop both personal and cognitive skills, offering an educational environment that encourages behavioral change through the acquisition of new competencies—such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and anger management. In addition to these practical skills, religious and cultural programs are also provided, aiming to rebuild the offenders' moral values and foster ethical awareness.

A study conducted by the Institute of Criminal Research revealed that rehabilitation programs within prisons significantly contribute to reducing recidivism rates among released offenders (Maansar, 2021, p. 23).

The discussion surrounding rehabilitation programs in prisons highlights a crucial aspect often overlooked in debates about reform and punishment. A prison should not be viewed solely as a place of confinement, but rather as a temporary space for reshaping behavior and rebuilding the self. These programs—particularly those focused on personal development skills such as critical thinking and anger management—equip inmates with practical tools to navigate life more effectively upon release.

What is also noteworthy is the integration of religious and cultural dimensions within these programs, reflecting a profound understanding of the role that values play in the process of change. The issue is not purely behavioral; it often stems from a distorted moral framework. Thus, when studies confirm that such programs reduce the likelihood of reoffending, it comes as no surprise to those who reflect on human nature and its innate capacity for learning and growth—even under the most challenging circumstances.

## 7.2 The Role of Family and Society in Rehabilitation

The treatment of offenders should not be confined to psychological sessions alone; it must also involve consistent support from both family and society. Emotional backing from family members can play a vital role in fostering positive change, as it instills a sense of responsibility and connection to others. At the same time, society plays a crucial role in reintegrating former offenders into daily life by providing employment opportunities and social activities that help channel their energy in constructive ways. Several studies have indicated that social reintegration significantly reduces the likelihood of reoffending, particularly when the individual has access to a strong support network (Maansar, 2021, p. 24).

Highlighting the role of family and society in the rehabilitation of offenders is a fundamental insight that aligns with contemporary approaches in criminology, which recognize that psychological interventions alone are no longer sufficient to address criminal behavior. Emotional support from the family, as emphasized in both psychological and sociological literature, serves as a powerful motivator for reinforcing feelings of belonging and responsibility, which in turn contributes to reshaping behavioral tendencies. Moreover, the societal role—through facilitating access to employment and encouraging participation in constructive activities—is seen as a protective factor against relapse. This conclusion is reinforced by multiple studies that have demonstrated the significant role of supportive networks in lowering the rates of recidivism. Therefore, the integration of therapeutic intervention with social support emerges as a more holistic and effective strategy within rehabilitation programs.

Based on the foregoing, psychological care for offenders brings us back to a fundamental point in understanding crime—not merely as a legal violation, but as a complex behavior often rooted in deep psychological disturbances within the individual. Focusing solely on symptoms without addressing underlying causes renders many reform efforts superficial and ineffective. Thus, the shift toward treating the psychological roots of criminal behavior marks a significant transformation in the approach to criminal justice. This approach acknowledges that deviant behavior is not always an expression of inherent malice, but may instead be an unspoken cry for help from someone who has not found a healthy way to cope with inner pain or psychological conflict. Such care goes beyond simply correcting behavior—it aims to restore psychological and social balance,

enabling the individual to become a contributing member of society rather than a burden to it. This underscores the necessity of integrating psychological treatment programs as an essential component of the justice system, rather than treating them as optional or secondary measures.

## **8. CONCLUSION**

Crime is a complex phenomenon that cannot be fully understood without considering its deeper psychological dimensions. It involves a range of individual and personal factors that influence the offender's behavior and may lead to a departure from social norms. This study has shown that criminal behavior often stems not only from legal or social dysfunctions but also from internal conflicts and psychological disorders that require careful analysis and structured intervention. Classifying offenders based on psychological and behavioral traits helps uncover hidden patterns behind criminal motivations and contributes to the development of more effective intervention strategies—both within correctional institutions and in post-release reintegration efforts.

The importance of psychological support for offenders lies not only in its therapeutic value, but also in its role as a pathway to social reintegration and meaningful, lasting reform. Psychological treatment programs—when combined with family and community support—form essential pillars in breaking the cycle of reoffending and fostering an environment that encourages positive transformation.

Understanding crime from a psychological perspective does not imply excusing it; rather, it represents an effort to deconstruct its underlying causes and address them at their roots. This approach paves the way for more humane and realistic strategies in dealing with criminal behavior and lays the groundwork for a scientifically informed vision capable of contributing to the development of a more balanced and just society.

### **Study Recommendations**

Based on the theoretical analysis presented, the study proposes the following:

- Strengthening the role of psychology within criminal justice policies by integrating psychological experts at various stages of investigation, adjudication, and rehabilitation.
- Designing specialized therapeutic programs that account for the psychological typologies of offenders, with particular

- emphasis on cognitive-behavioral therapy and emotional support.
- Developing training programs for rehabilitation personnel within correctional institutions to equip them with the skills needed to manage complex psychological cases.
  - Encouraging field-based academic research on the relationship between psychological disorders and criminal behavior, both in local and global contexts, to deepen the understanding of this phenomenon.
  - Supporting the role of families and civil society in assisting released offenders by providing support networks that facilitate reintegration and reduce the risk of relapse.

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