

Table 2.7 ■ Theories of Crime Summary	
Theory	Brief Description
Classical	Crime occurs when the benefits outweigh the cost; crime is a free-willed choice.
Positivist	Crime is caused or determined.
Individual trait	Criminals differ from noncriminals on a number of biological and psychological traits.
Social disorganization	Crime occurs in the city zone (zone of transition) that has high levels of poverty, heterogeneity, and residential mobility (related to the Chicago School).
Differential association, social learning/subcultural	Crime is learned through associations with criminal definitions that approve of criminal conduct or neutralizations that justify criminal conduct.
Anomie/institutional-anomie	The gap between the American dream's goal of economic success and the opportunity to obtain this goal creates structural strain.
Strain/general strain	When individuals cannot obtain success goals such as money or status, they experience strain or pressure. People under strain adapt accordingly by either accepting or rejecting the goals and means to obtain what society values. A society that lacks common goals and means may experience anomie (normlessness).
Control	The key factor in crime causation is the presence or absence of control.
Rational choice/deterrence	Crime is seen as a choice that is influenced by its costs and benefits; crime is a rational choice.
Routine activity	People's daily routine activities affect the likelihood they will be attractive targets who encounter offenders in situations in which no effective guardianship is present.
Labeling/shaming	People become stabilized in criminal roles when they are labeled as criminals, develop criminal identities, are sent to prison, and are excluded from conventional roles.
Critical/Marxist	Inequality in power and material well-being create conditions that lead to street crime and corporate crime. The ruling class exploits the working class through labor and laws.
Peacemaking	Crime is caused by suffering that is linked to injustice rooted in inequality and daily personal acts of harm.
Feminist	Crime cannot be understood without considering gender. Crime is shaped by the different social experiences of and power exercised by men and women.
Developmental/life course	Crime causation is a developmental process that starts before birth and continues through the life course.
Integrated	Crime is caused by components described in a variety of theories.