

CHAPTER 4
A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RECIDIVISM AND
CRIME

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this chapter is to interpret and contextualise crime and recidivism from a theoretical perspective. Due to the complexity of the concept recidivism the researcher came to the conclusion that to focus on only one theory will be inadequate. An eclectic approach whereby various complementary theories were integrated was therefore followed. The theories that were explored were behaviourism, the social process theories, the labelling theory and the coping and relapse theory.

The behaviourism theory was used as a point of departure. This theory explains crime from a cause-and-effect perspective whereby the assumption is followed that the causes of criminal behaviour lie within society. The environment is viewed as the key determinant in the formation of a person's behaviour. A person's personality is moulded through past and present life experiences through a socialization process within the environment. Learning forms the essence of this developmental process.

The social process theory can be divided into three sub-theories namely the learning, control and developmental theories. Through the literature study the researcher came to

the conclusion that behaviouristic principals are integrated within these theories. These theories explore crime and delinquency from a perspective whereby the cause of criminal behaviour is searched for within a person's life course development. Attention is also given to everyday interaction with the environment and society.

In contrast with the previous theories the labelling theory focuses on consequences of stigmatisation as causation of repeat offending. The emphasis therefore falls on the criminal career, rather on the prediction of the onset thereof. The theory furthermore emphasizes the role of society in the attachment as well as maintaining of a label and the role this plays in relation to offending.

Lastly, the researcher focuses on the coping and relapse theory. The theory analyses the process associated with relapse into repeat criminal behaviour. From the coping and relapse theory a recidivism process model was formulated. In contrast with the behavioural and social process theories the coping and relapse theory emphasise the individual's personality traits, and more specifically coping skills as causative factor of crime and recidivism.

The researcher is of the opinion that a hiatus exists in the theories explored in this study. She argues that the various theories focus on individual aspects of recidivism, for instance the relationship between learning and recidivism, or the

offender's coping skills versus recidivism. By creating an integrated, holistic model on recidivism the researcher aims to address this gap. The model reflects the assimilation and integration of information as discussed in Chapter 2 and 3 of this research report as well as the researcher's experience in working with recidivists.

As point of departure the respective theories underpinning recidivism will be discussed.

4.2 BEHAVIORISM

John B. Watson is the founder of the behaviouristic approach. He stated that psychology is not a science of the mind but of behaviour (Goodwin, 1999:319; Staddon, 1993:11 and Nye, 1992:48). His peers viewed Watson as an extreme environmentalist. He was known for his controversial and extreme statements and thoughts. Even though the most famous of these statements was over emphasized, his view on hereditary traits is regularly featured in the introduction of psychology textbooks, namely:

"Give me a dozen healthy infants, well-formed, and my own specified world to bring them up in and I'll guarantee to take any one at random and train him to become any type of specialist I might select - doctor, lawyer, artist, merchant-chief and, yes, even beggar-man and thief regardless of his talents, penchants, tendencies, abilities, vocations, and race of his ancestors" (Goodwin, 1999:316-317).

Further critique against Watson's work was based on the fact that his research was mostly limited to animals and conducted within a laboratory setting (Nye, 1992:48 and Swenson, 1980:35). Even though Watsonian behaviourism was a failure, as most of his proclamations could not empirically be justified, it succeeded in effectively bridging the gap between basic and applied psychology (Goodwin, 1999:318).

Burrhus F. Skinner, Watson's successor, shared his strong advocacy for a behavioural approach but felt that his extreme statements created the wrong impression of behaviourism (Nye, 1992:49 and Staddon, 1993:16). Building on Watson's work Skinner, together with various other behaviourists, among others Tolman and Hull, extended behaviourism to address real world problems. Problems that were addressed by them included education, therapy, aggression and crime (Baldwin & Baldwin, 1981:3 and Goodwin, 1999:326 - 350).

In a nutshell the behaviouristic approach strives to "...discover(ing) functional relations (or, informally expressed, "cause-and-effect connections") between environmental conditions and behavior" (Nye, 1992:49). In this sense the theory is applicable for this research study. It is relevant because the theory's emphasis is placed on the role that social and physical conditions within the environment plays in determining behaviour and in this instance criminal behaviour. The influence of the environment extends to internal behaviour (thinking and feeling) as well as external actions. Baldwin and

Baldwin (1981:4) refer to this aspect as the interaction of "nature" and "nurture". *Nature*, as stated in Chapter 3 refers to hereditary predispositions while *nurture* in turn focuses on the influence of the environment on human behaviour. From a behaviouristic perspective the external environment is viewed as the key determinant of a person's behaviour rather than internal mental events (compare Hjelle & Ziegler, 1992:294 and Siegel & Senna, 2000:105).

The effect that exposure to various events during a person's life span has on behaviour is of critical importance, for these exposures or relationships will give an account of a person's functioning. The typical social background associated with chronic offenders, as mentioned in Chapter 2, attest to the influence that the environment can have on the causation of criminal behaviour. In this respect Skinner stated, " In a behavioural analysis, a person is an organism ... which has acquired a repertoire of behavior... He is not an originating agent; he is a locus, a point in which many genetic and environmental conditions come together in a joint effect. As such, he remains unquestionably unique" (Hjelle & Ziegler, 1992:301). A person's personality therefore can be viewed as the organisation of unique behaviour equipment required under the special conditions of his development (Meyer, Moore & Viljoen, 1988:191).

Learning is the essence of this developmental process. It governs the formulation of personality and regulates the

functional relationship between environment and behaviour. It can be stated that a person's personality is "...learned throughout life during interaction with others" (Siegel & Senna, 2000:105). Radical or Skinnerian behaviourism made use of two categories of behaviour to explain the process of learning, namely respondent and operant conditioning. Respondent conditioning is based on the Pavlovian model where the behaviour comprises of a reflexive-type of response resulting from a preceding stimulus. Reaction to the stimulus is reflexive, for example the blinking of a person's eyes if a puff of air is blown into their face. Respondent behaviour becomes learned behaviour if a reflexive response following a neutral stimulus becomes conditioned behaviour. An example of conditioned behaviour is for instance a once off painful experience at a dentist, which results in a fear of all dentists (compare Goodwin, 1999: 350, Staddon, and 1993:13 and Nye, 1992:54).

Operant conditioning is based on the cause-and-effect principal where " ...a behavior occurs, (is) followed by some consequences, and its future chance of occurring are determined by those consequences" (Goodwin, 1999:350). Therefore the nature of the consequence (acquired skill) will determine if the behaviour is repeated in the future. An example of operant conditioning is the playing of a piano, riding of a bicycle or even reading and writing, where the consequences are based on voluntary learned responses (compare Baldwin & Baldwin, 1998:41; Staddon, 1993:31 and Hjelle & Ziegler, 1992:304). Baldwin and Baldwin (1998:41) refer to this as the law of effect stating that

"(A)ccording to the law of effect, behaviour that produces good effects tends to become more frequent over time; behavior that produces bad effects tends to become less frequent". These principles are better known as reinforcement and punishment.

Reinforcement pertains to the response where learning or strengthening of behaviour takes place through a process of repetition. Reinforcement can be divided in positive and negative reinforcement. Both positive and negative reinforcement increase the frequency of behaviour through different means. Positive reinforcement is based on the positive or favourable response as the result of specific behaviour, for example, working in order to receive a salary. In contrast, negative reinforcement involves the removal or termination of an aversive or negative stimulus. This results in an escape response where a person "gets away" from the aversive or negative stimulus. An example thereof is when a person drives within the speed limit in order to avoid a fine (compare Goodwin, 1999:350-352; Staddon, 1993:42 and Nye, 1992:58-61).

In contrast with reinforcement the aim of punishment is to suppress or decrease the frequency of behaviour. Punishment can also be divided into positive and negative punishment where positive punishment's outcome leads to an addition of an aversive stimulus, for instance the spanking or scolding of a child for misbehaving. Negative punishment occurs whenever

behaviour is followed by the removal or subtraction of a presumed positive stimulus or reward. As an example time-out procedure, or suspension of privileges can be mentioned. Punishment is most effective if it immediately follows the targeted behaviour and is not opposed by reinforcement (Baldwin & Baldwin, 1998: 62 - 71).

The effectiveness of punishment in the reduction of negative behaviour is the subject of continues debate. One of the characteristics of the recidivist is that they do not learn from previous punishment but persist with criminal behaviour. In this respect Skinner's opinion is that the punished behaviour is likely to re-appear after the punitive contingencies are withdrawn. This phenomenon is known as suppression. It occurs when the negative behaviour temporarily ceases in order to avoid punishment. A further problem with punishment, according to Skinner is the possibility of "counter attack". This often results from an attempt to fight the aversive control (Staddon, 1993:69, Nye, 1992:61). Skinner advocates the use of positive reinforcement in behaviour modification (Goodwin, 1999:353).

In conclusion it can be stated that the cause- and-effect explanation of human behaviour is of importance for this study as it emphasises the reciprocal interaction associated with the recidivism process. The exploration of criminal behaviour as learned behaviour furthermore creates insight into the

dynamics of the recidivism process. This aspect will be discussed more comprehensively in the learning theory.

4.3 SOCIAL PROCESS THEORIES

The social process theories are grounded in the basic assumptions as mentioned in the behaviouristic theory. These theories aim to examine the relationship between socialization and delinquent behaviour. The theoretical point of departure is that transgressors of the law's behaviour are formed through socialization within an environment. Offenders differ from law-abiding citizens in so far that they do not conform to acceptable behaviour within conventional society (Siegel & Senna, 2000:166). The social process theories further emphasise that crime is not limited to lower social classes but manifest on all social levels.

The social process perspective comprises of three main theories, namely the learning, control and developmental theories. Siegal and Senna (2000:167) maintain that these theories share similar basic principals even though criminal behaviour is viewed from different perspectives. The researcher is of the opinion that the interconnection between these theories and the behaviouristic theory can be depicted as follows:

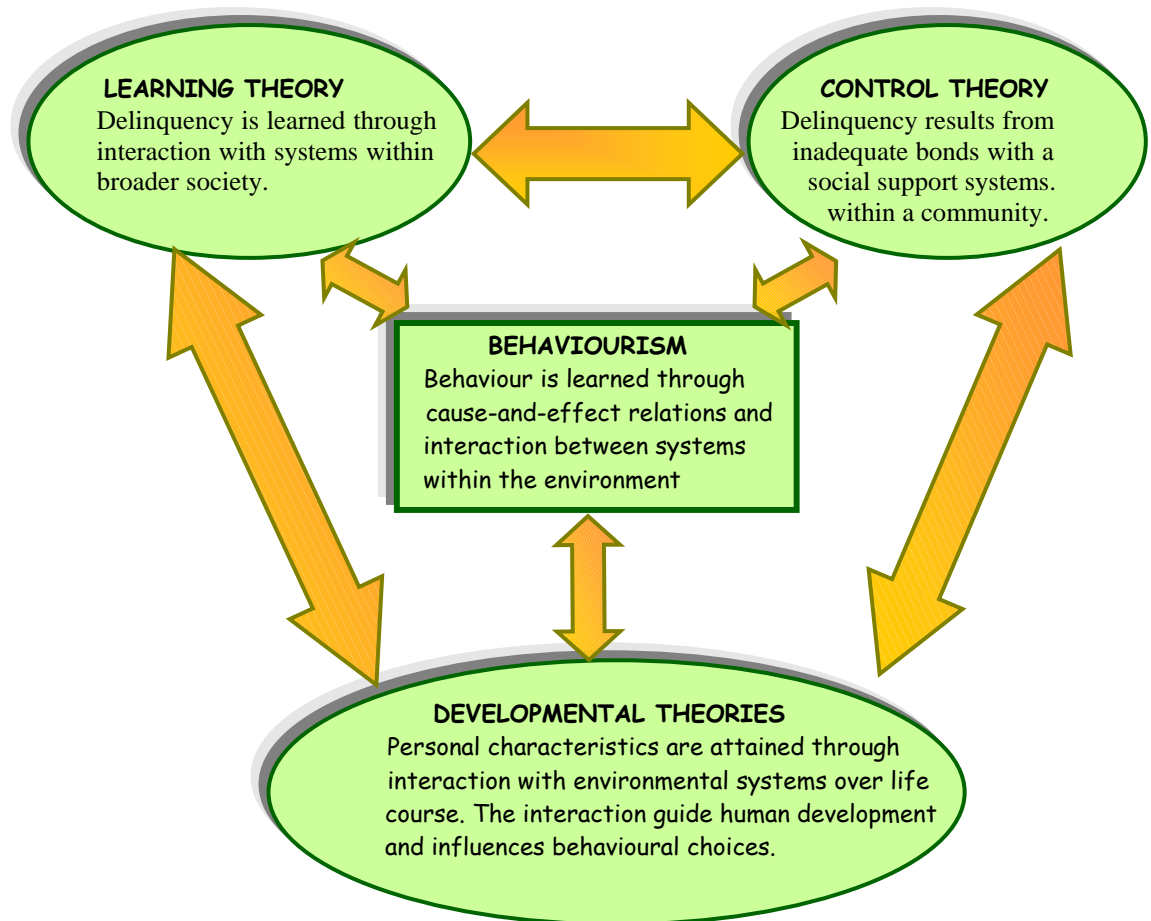


Figure 4: The reciprocal interconnected relation between the behaviouristic, learning, control and developmental theories.

The learning, control and developmental theories are grounded in behaviourism insofar that the cause and effect relationship between crime and the environment are emphasised. Notwithstanding the interconnectedness between the social process theories and behaviourism, each theory focuses on another factor that could be associated with criminal causation. In order to attempt to develop further insight into causative factors of crime each of the social process theories will subsequently be discussed.

4.3.1 **Learning theory (Differential association theory)**

Edwin H. Sutherland is the father of the learning theory. In 1939 he presented a thesis on criminality as learned behaviour. He posits that crime is "...learned through a process of association with others who communicate criminal values and who may advocate the commission of crime" (Schmallenger, 1996:244). The commencing of a criminal career, as discussed previously, is largely based on learned behaviour through association with systems in society that adhere to pro-criminal values.

Sutherland's theory on differential association or learning is based on nine propositions namely:

Proposition 1

Criminal behaviour is learned behaviour

It is acquired through a learning process similarly as in learning to ride a bicycle or reading. The assumption is therefore that criminal behaviour is a learned and not an inherited trait (compare Moyer, 2001:122; Siegel & Senna, 2001:168 and Bartollas, 1997:164).

Proposition 2

Criminal behaviour is learned through interaction with other persons by means of a communication process

Sutherland views learning as an active process and in this respect claims that "An individual does not become a delinquent simply by living passively in a high-crime environment" (Siegel & Senna, 2000:168). It can therefore be viewed as an active process whereby individuals within society act as teachers and guides in acquiring criminal skills. According to Sutherland this process cannot appear spontaneously but takes place within a group by means of verbal as well as non-verbal communication (compare Siegel & Senna, 2000:169 and Bartollas, 1997:165).

In contrast with Sutherland, Baldwin and Baldwin (1998:8) postulate that "(E)very type of learning we have can be placed on a continuum from unplanned to planned; and mixtures of the two are more common than the pure types at either end of the continuum". Learning is divided into natural (unplanned) and planned learning. Natural learning refers to learning by being exposed to everyday events and interactions with the environment and systems within society. This type of learning takes place without the cognisance of the learner, for example a child learning to share due to the natural reward of positive social gratification. In the case of criminal behaviour the "easy money" can act as incentive, motivating the learning of skills beneficial to crime.

Planned learning on the other hand involves verbal guidance by a person playing the role of a teacher and is thereby an active process (Baldwin & Baldwin, 1998:8 - 11). Fundamentally,

applying Baldwin and Baldwin's principals, criminal behaviour can be learned either through an active learning process or unknowingly through interaction with systems adhering to criminal ethics and norms.

Aspects highlighted within this proposition are that the learning is a process, within a group, whereby criminal behaviour is actively learned through verbal or non-verbal communication. In this respect the researcher concurs with both Sutherland and Baldwin and Baldwin's (1998) points of view. She is further of the opinion that learning of criminal behaviour can be viewed as being part of a socialization process. The process does not only include verbal teaching of criminal values or knowledge but also the non-verbal learning of the criminal culture and behaviour patterns.

Proposition 3

The fundamental part of the learning of criminal behaviour takes place within intimate groups

Groups, among others family, friends and peers have a powerful influence on the learning of criminal behaviour and attitudes. Siegel & Senna (2000:169) is of the opinion that "Relationships with these individuals can color and control the interpretation of everyday events, helping youths to overcome social controls and embrace delinquent values and behavior".

From her experience, working as a social worker within the Department of Corrections, the researcher concurs with Siegel and Senna's (2000:169) views and contend that this behaviour is not only limited to juvenile delinquents but to all criminal offenders. Prison gangs can be mentioned as an example of an influential group within which criminal values are taught. Within a prison environment, gangs, especially in the absence of stable support systems, will take the place of other intimate personal groups. The result thereof is that a person subsequently drawn into this group will conform to "acceptable" behaviour within this group.

Proposition 4

Learned criminal behaviour includes techniques of committing a crime as well as "...direction of motive, drives, rationalization, and attitudes" (Brown *et al.*, 1998:306)

The learning process of criminal behaviour therefore not only includes the learning of techniques, but as stated previously, also behaviour patterns and a criminal culture.

Proposition 5

The motive and drive for committing an offence is learned based on the definition of legal codes as being favourable or unfavourable

Within a diverse society, systems have varied views of social rules and laws. Notwithstanding these views, most systems will

conform to universal rules and laws. The exception can be found in systems adhering to delinquent rules. When a person is subjected to or socialized within these delinquent rules it results in conflict leading to confusion between what is right and wrong (compare Siegel & Senna, 2000:169; Brown *et al.*, 1998:306 and Bartollas, 1997:163). Social rules are perceived as being unfavourable and criminal codes as favourable.

Proposition 6

A person becomes delinquent if the motivation is stronger to break, than uphold the law

Fundamentally this proposition expresses the basic principal of the learning or differential association theory, namely that a person becomes delinquent due to his or her involvement with delinquent groups, peers or events. The absence of counteracting forces that promotes conventional and conforming behaviour promotes delinquency (compare Wright *et al.*, 2001:341; Siegel & Senna, 2000:169 and Bartollas, 1997:166).

Proposition 7

The learning of criminal behaviour is influenced by the frequency, duration, priority and/or intensity of the contact with criminal socializing agents

The impact that adverse groups or peers have on a person will depend on:

- the frequency of the social contacts;
- the length of the period of time over which the contact takes place;
- the age at which a person experiences these contacts; and
- the intensity of these social interactions (Bartollas, 1997:166).

Proposition 8

The process of learning criminal behaviour involves all the mechanisms associated with conventional learning

The learning process is therefore inclusive of interaction with and socialization by offenders in criminal behaviour patterns (Siegel & Senna, 2000:170 and Bartollas, 1997:166).

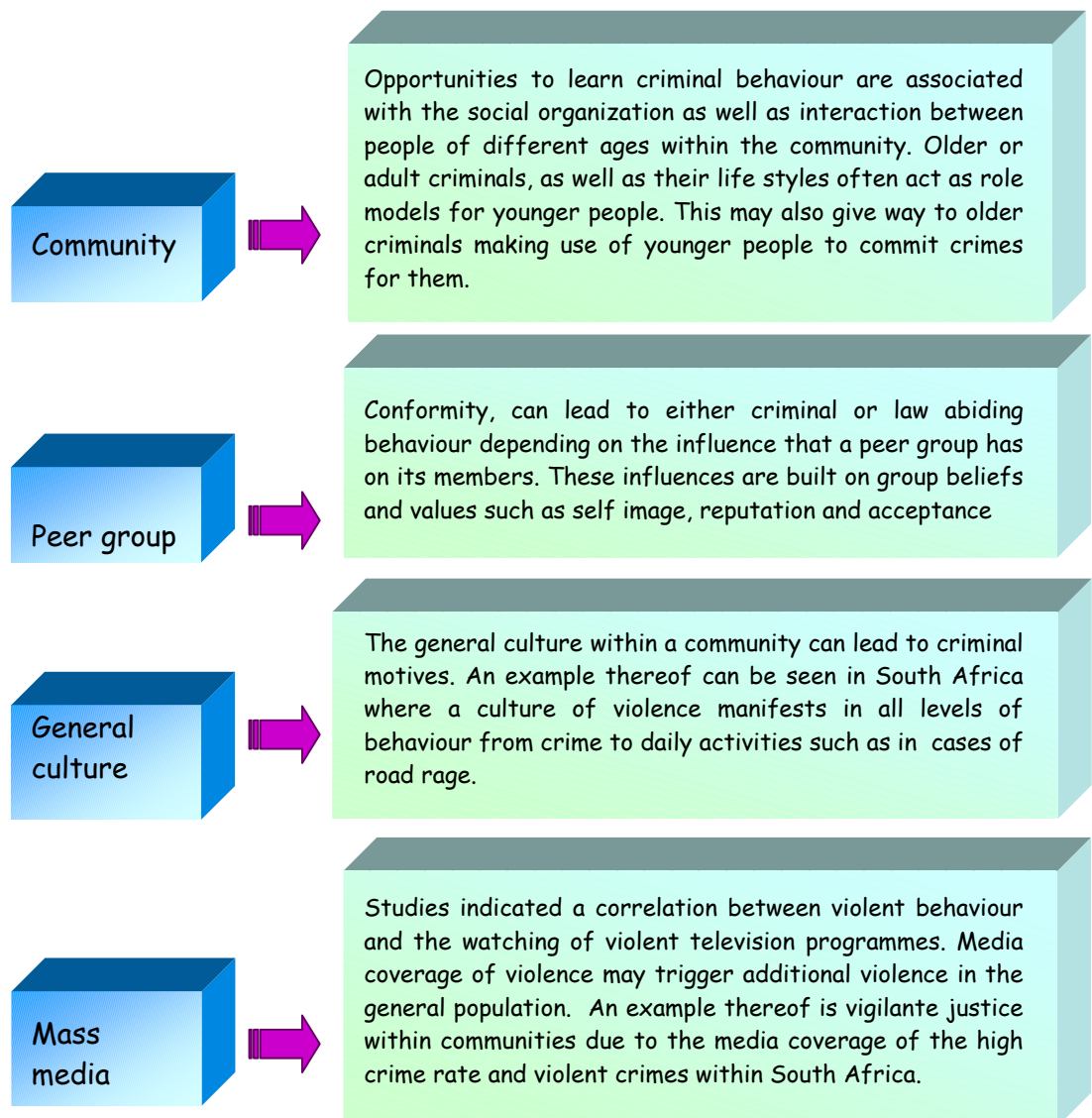
Proposition 9

Even though criminal behaviour is an expression of general needs and values it cannot be used to explain those general needs and values, since non-criminal behaviour is an expression of the same needs and values

Sutherland as quoted by Siegel and Senna (2000:170) maintains that motives for criminal and non-criminal behaviour cannot be the same. The motivation for crime can therefore not be factors such as accumulation of wealth, personal frustration or social status. It is argued that these needs can be fulfilled

through non-criminal behaviour such as getting a better education (Siegel and Senna, 2000:170).

From the above propositions it can be assumed that crime is acquired behaviour, learned through a process of interaction and socialization within influential groups. Conklin (1995: 246 - 255) identifies the following groups as possible facilitators in this learned process namely:



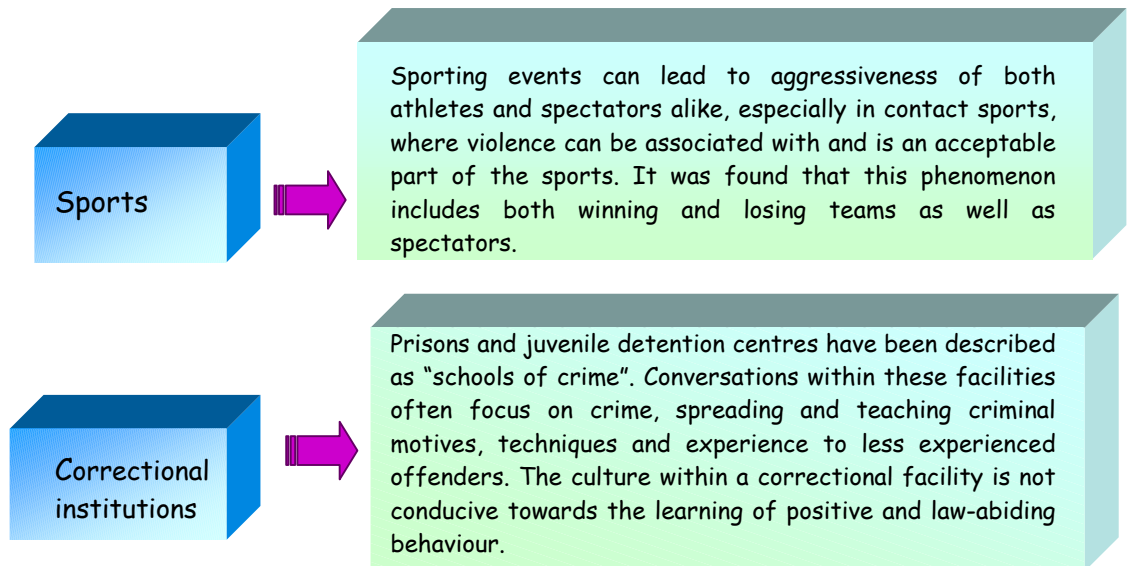


Figure 5: Systems in society that can be associated with criminal causation (Source Conklin, 1995:246 - 255 as adapted by researcher)

In evaluation of the learning theory it can be stated that the most distinct critique against the theory is that it alone is not sufficient to explain causation of crime. The question still remains why only specific individuals adhere to criminal values and behaviour patterns? The theory therefore falls short in addressing the concept of free choice. Further criticism of the theory is that it describes how a person initially becomes involved in crime but lacks an explanation for the continuation of his/her criminal career. Despite its critics, the theory still fulfils an important role in so far as it provides a consistent explanation of all types of criminal behaviour through all levels of society (compare Hesselink-Louw, 2001:116-117; Siegel & Senna, 2000:171-172; Brown, 1998:309-310; Bartollas, 1997:166-171; Schmallerger, 1996:245 and Conklin, 1995:257).

4.3.2 **Control theory**

Travis Hirschi developed the control theory in 1969. The theory is based on the assumption that "people who engage in delinquency are free of intimate attachments, aspirations and moral beliefs that bind them to a conventional and law-abiding life" (Conklin, 1995:218). In essence the control theory postulates that many forms of delinquent behaviour such as drugs or alcohol abuse, sexual promiscuity, crime and violence are made attractive by the media. Opportunities to become involved in these adverse activities that have a negative influence on a person's social functioning are also readily available within society. It can further be stated that the majority of people have deviant impulses. From the perspective of the control theory it is postulated that only people with inadequate social support systems will act on these impulses and feel free to violate the law.

The assumption is that the lack of social ties to the community can be associated with a lack of ties to the conventional social order. This creates the opportunity for a person to be influenced by systems not adhering to conventional values and norms. On the other hand, those people with close relationships that bond with meaningful groups within society and who have a positive self-image will be able to resist the lure of deviant or criminal behaviour (Siegel & Senna, 2000:176 and Conklin, 1995:218).

According to McWhirter, Besett-Alasch, Horibata and Gat (2002:70) a lack of social ties often leads to emotions of loneliness. Loneliness can be defined as a distressing emotional condition arising from feelings of rejection and estrangement as well as being misunderstood by others. This is often accompanied by an inability to experience empathy and emotional intimacy. The ability to experience empathy is a fundamental skill that enables a person to anticipate, understand and experience another person's emotional reactions or viewpoints. The inability to experience empathy can lead to rejection by society (McWhirter *et al.*, 2002:70-71). On the contrary, research indicated that an ability to experience empathy enhances a person's sense of being part of a community, which in turn is associated with fewer behavioural problems (Carr & Vandiver, 2001:411). Barlow (1996:474) is of the opinion that a person's bond with society is based on four elements namely attachment, commitment, beliefs and involvement.

Attachment reflects a person's ability to form meaningful relationships with significant people, for example parents, friends and authority figures. These relationships are characterised by feelings of empathy for other people's thoughts (compare Hesselink-Louw, 2001:107; Siegel & Senna, 2000:177 and Barlow, 1996:474-475). Research indicated that attachment to stable support systems, where a stable intimate emotional bond exists, will act as deterrence for deviant behaviour.

Attachment in turn is rooted in commitment towards a relationship (compare Halpern, 2001:236; Wright *et al.* 2001:327; DeJong: 1997:561 and Barlow: 1996:474). The commitment enables a person to determine the value of a relationship in terms of loss or absence thereof. Dejong (1997:564) postulates that the strength of the bond will determine the effect it has on offending. The stronger the bond the less likely a person is to commit crime. The researcher is of the opinion that commitment to a relationship can be illustrated in terms of a scale, whereby the gain or cost of an action is weighed. It becomes a situation of "If I commit crime there is a chance that my family will reject me". In a scenario where a high amount of value is attached to the family relationship it will act as a deterrent for deviant behaviour. In the case of the absence of meaningful family relations, the opposite can take place and a higher value will be placed on the deviant behaviour. Dejong's research supports this indication that individuals with few bonds to society are more likely to recidivate following a period of incarceration (Dejong, 1997:569). It can be concluded that the emphasis should be placed on the strength of, rather than the existence of bonds with society.

Regarding beliefs, Schmallerger (1996:262) stated that a community or group has a common value system that deviants and other persons within a community believe in. The difference between law-abiding people and the deviants lies in

the respect for this value system. In this respect Halpern (2001:236) concurs stating that crime can be seen as being the result of moral decline in society and the disregard for society's norms and laws. Even though perpetrators of the society's norms and laws are aware of these rules, they basically do not care. Calabrese and Adams (1990:435-436) describe it as a form of alienation characterized by the rejection of societies values and norms as well as social organizations. It can therefore be stated that rejection of society's values and norms are based on a chosen emotion or action. In Chapter 2 of this research report typical attitudes of chronic offenders were discussed. In comparison alienation can be viewed as representative of the attitudes that characterizes these offenders.

Involvement in society can be viewed from two perspectives. First, involvement refers to the meaningful participation in daily activities, thus preventing idleness. The rationale behind this argument is that the more active a person is, the less opportunity exists for deviant activities (Siegel & Senna, 2000:179). Secondly, involvement also creates the opportunity for offending as "opportunities for criminal or delinquent activities increase along with opportunities for non-criminal activities" (Barlow: 1996:475). Interaction with the broader community also creates a greater opportunity to be exposed to deviant elements. Association with criminal prone elements may alter a person's perception of their social environment in a way that is more conducive, supportive and even demanding of

criminal behaviour (Wright *et al.* 2001:327). In this regard social trust can determine the respect and conformity to social values and rules. Halpern (2001:237) demonstrates this by stating that if a person perceives him/herself as not being trustworthy, the chance is that he/she will perceive other persons in the same way. Hence, selfish or self-interested actions and values are contrary to pro-social values.

Concepts of the control theory were refined by Travis Hirschi and his colleague Michael Gottfredson and evolved in the general theory of crime. Within the general theory of crime Hirschi emphasized the importance of control in the form of self-discipline that a person is supposed to develop in early life (Brannigan, 1997:404). On a behavioural continuum self-control lies on the one side and impulsivity on the other side. Siegel & Senna (2000:182) postulates that people with limited self-control have impulsive personalities and tend to be "insensitive, physical (rather than intellectual), risk taking, short-sighted, and non-verbal". The offender focuses on "here-and-now" without long-term goals. Crime becomes attractive due to the prospect and provision of instant gratification of needs.

The causes of poor self-control can be traced back to poor parenting skills. The further effects thereof is weakened social bonds, belief system and an inadequate bond with society (Siegel & Senna, 2000:182). Wright *et al.* (2001:340) concur stating that notwithstanding social ties it was found that the persons who display the lowest self-control commit the most

crime. It was further found that the causal chain, deriving from the reciprocal relationship between social bond and social control, may be "(1) an impulsive personality, (2) poor parenting practices, (3) lack of self-control, (4) the withering of social bonds, (5) increased criminal opportunity, and (6) amplification of deviance and maintenance of a deviant career throughout the life span"(Siegel & Senna, 2000:183).

Critique against the control theory is that if the criminal opportunity is strong and tempting enough, then the incentive of the criminal deed may overcome the preventative power stemming from a person's self-control and social bonds (Siegel & Senna, 2000:184, Brown *et al.* 1998:336).

In conclusion the control theory postulates that the lack of social ties to the community can be associated with a lack of ties to the conventional social order. A lack of social ties can lead to feelings of loneliness that is often accompanied by an inability to experience empathy and emotional intimacy. This could contribute to feelings of insensitivity towards the victim in the criminal offence. Hirschi's general theory of crime further emphasized the importance of control in the form of self-discipline (Siegel & Senna, 2000:184). People with limited self-control have impulsive personalities and tend to focus on the "here-and-now" without long-term goals.

4.3.3 Developmental perspectives

Loeber and LeBlanc, as quoted by Brown *et al.* (2001:431), indicated that developmental criminology is a study of "...the development and dynamics of problem behaviors and offending with age" and "...the identification of explanatory or causal factors that predate, or co-occur with, the behavioural development and have an impact on its course". Criminal behaviour is therefore studied from a life-course perspective. In contradiction with the learning and control theory that divide people into two groups, namely offenders and non-offenders, the developmental perspective asks why some law violators sustain and even escalate their antisocial behaviour patterns in adulthood? The focus therefore falls on the link between criminal behaviour and life-course development.

In this respect Siegel & Senna (2000:185-186) explains that from birth children are expected to engage in social processes that will determine their future social functioning. From a young age a person is socialized to think and plan for the future. This necessitates a process of acquiring an education for a career as well as the forming of meaningful relationships for purposes of friendship or marital partnership and procreation. These transitions are expected to take place in an orderly chronological fashion commencing at school graduation, entering the occupational market, marriage and having children (Siegel & Senna, 2000:185-186). Due to family, environmental and personal problems some individuals are incapable of completing the process of normal maturation. Disruption in life

transitions is destructive and can promote criminality. The cumulative impact of these disruptions, together with factors influencing behaviour such as family relations, peer relations, vocational achievement and marital relations can sustain criminality from childhood into adulthood (Siegel & Senna, 2000:185-186).

Sampson and Laub's developmental model quoted in Brown *et al.* (2001:434) accentuates life course events as well as acknowledges the importance of these events in determining behavioural patterns. They presume that certain transitions are more important and relevant during specific developmental periods.

The developmental model is based on the social control theory and highlights the importance of both stability and change over a person's life course. From the model Sampson and Laub (Brown *et. al.*, 2001:434-435) derived two hypotheses regarding the influence of relations during life course on the formation of criminal behaviour, namely:

- "childhood antisocial behavior (e.g., juvenile delinquency, conduct disorder, violent temper tantrums) is linked to a wide variety of troublesome adult behaviors, including criminality, general deviance, offences in the military, economic dependency, educational failure, and marital discord. These long-term relationships are posited to occur

independent of traditional variables such as social class background and race/ethnicity".

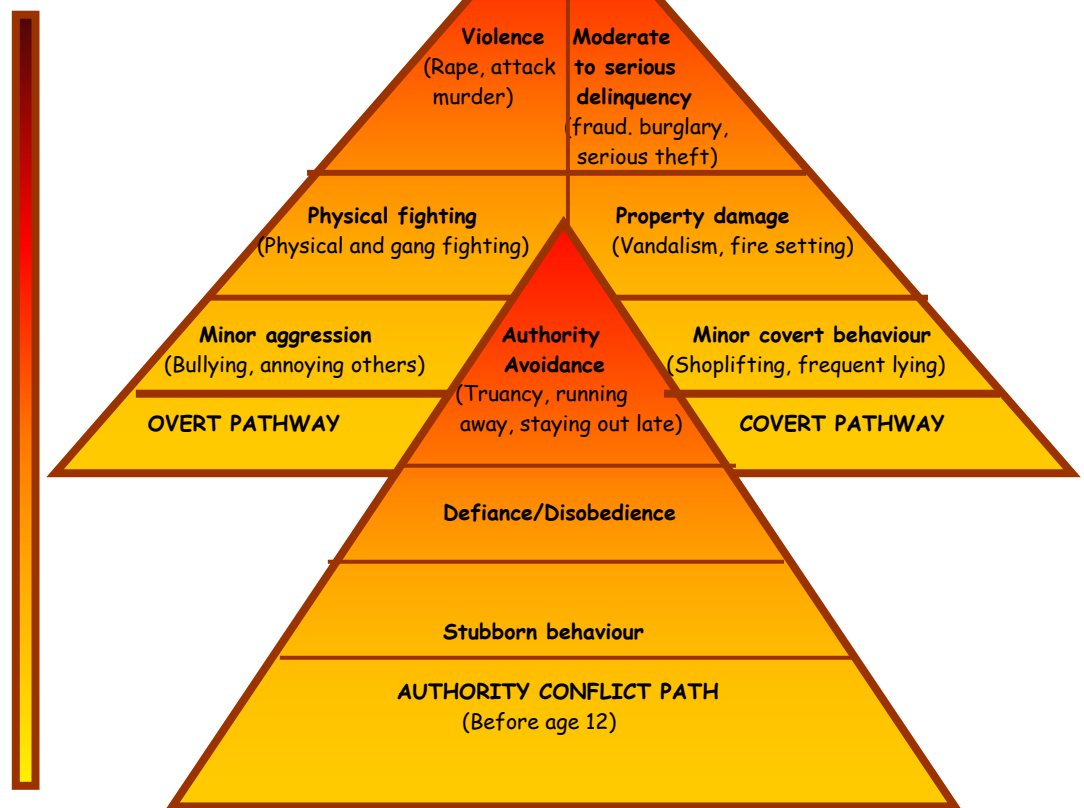
- "... social bonds to adult institutions of informal social control (e.g. family, education, neighborhood, work) influence criminal behavior over the life course despite an individual's delinquent and antisocial background".

These hypotheses focus on the link between juvenile and adult anti-social and criminal behaviour. Emphasis is also placed on the role that social bonds within society play in the facilitation of criminal behavioural patterns. The developmental model further postulates that even though some individuals have strong social bonds with support systems, as well as with society during childhood, this may change during the life course process leading to criminal involvement. The opposite can also take place where individuals emerging from childhood with weak conventional bonds, may experience positive pro-social contact within a meaningful support system or society resulting in a non-criminal path (Brown et. al., 2001:435). The model therefore gives an explanation for the variation in the initiation, as well as termination of criminal behaviour.

Loeber as quoted by Siegel & Senna (2000:189) identified three paths that during the developmental process may lead to a delinquent career, namely conflict pathway, covert pathway and overt pathway. The pathways can be depicted as follow:

AGE OF ONSET

Late



Early

Figure 6: Three pathways to disruptive behaviour and delinquency
(Source: Siegel & Senna, 2000:190)

The authority conflict pathway commences from an early age and characteristically starts off with stubborn behaviour. This is often followed by deviancy or disobedience eventually accumulating in authority avoidance. Defiance of parents and other authority figures can lead to more serious offences in later developmental stages.

The overt pathway commences with "underhand" behaviour such as lying and shoplifting. This later on expands to property damage and eventually escalates into more serious forms of delinquency. The overt pathway is depicted by the escalation of

delinquent acts, commencing with aggression, for example bullying, leading to physical fighting and ultimately, violence. Even though each of these paths can give rise to delinquency, more often two to three pathways are followed simultaneously bringing about a criminal career (Siegel & Senna, 2000:189).

Loeber's research quoted in Brown *et al.* (2001:432) postulates that stability in childhood anti-social behaviour can be associated with the development of a criminal career. Further findings indicated that an initial display of high levels of antisocial behaviour in children is likely to persist through life course. In contrast with this, children with lower levels anti-social behaviour tend to desist from offending. Aggression was furthermore found to be an important predictor of continued problematic behaviour and criminal activity (Brown *et al.*, 2001:432). In Chapter 3, during the discussion of risk factors associated with criminal causation, the role of early onset as predictor for a criminal career was also emphasised.

The strongest critique against the theory according to Brown *et al.* (2001:432) comes from Gottfredson and Hirschi. They are of the opinion that life events have virtually no effect on criminal activity as crime decreases as a result of maturation and not due to activities such as marriage, procreation and employment. They furthermore postulate that personal characteristics such as aggression and impulsivity remain stable over time and are not affected by life course development.

In conclusion, the three social process theories, namely the learning, control and developmental theory, view delinquency and crime as a function of everyday human interaction within society. They reject the viewpoint that delinquents and criminals are born or that it is caused by the socio-economic or other adverse influences in society. The learning theory stresses the learning of delinquent as well as non-delinquent behaviour, whereas the control theory is concerned with forces of social control. Lastly, the developmental theory strives to identify social processes that explain changes in delinquency and criminal behaviour through a person's life course. All of the social process theories concur and suggest that delinquency, and ultimately crime, can be prevented through the strengthening of relations between the offender and institutions responsible for socialization. This can be accomplished through either the strengthening of the institution or equipping of the offender with coping skills in order to handle pre-existing conditions.

4.4 LABELLING THEORY

In contrast with the theories previously discussed the labelling theory does not attempt to explain the causes of defiant or criminal behaviour but is concerned with the consequences of stigmatisation by agents of social control, among others, police, courts and parents (Siegel & Senna, 2001:220; Conklin, 1995:314). Furthermore it emphasizes the continuation of criminal behaviour rather than its origin. Therefore, as theory, it is more concerned with the delinquent career than predicting

the onset of individual delinquent behaviour (compare Siegel & Senna, 2000:210 & 220, Conklin, 1995:314). The labelling theory is of value for this research project as it provides a mode whereby chronic offending and recidivism can be better comprehended.

A label can be defined as "...a definition of a person, applied to that person by an audience who creates the definition based on the person" (www.nwmissouri.edu/nwcourses/martin). This definition emphasizes the fact that a person is labelled and not his/her behaviour. Formal as well as informal systems within society play a role in creating labels. Taking this into consideration it can be stated that a label has the ability to transform a person who has done something bad into a "bad" person. A label further has the tendency to be associated with a person throughout his/her life course (Siegel & Senna, 2001:213).

People violate the law for various reasons, among others, poor family relations, peer pressure, socio-economic influences and delinquent socialization (Siegel & Senna, 2001:210 and Barlow, 1996:476). Regardless of these reasons, when delinquent behaviour is detected, the offender, not the deed or his/her circumstances will be labelled negatively. Being a criminal then becomes a person's master status which control the way he/she is perceived by society. Additional statuses, such as being a spouse, parent, and career person are not taken into consideration. The emphasis is first, and foremost placed on

the fact that the person is a criminal (Labeling theories in criminology, 2001). Tannenbaum describes this process as the dramatization of evil and state: "(T)he process of making the criminal, therefore, is a process of tagging, defining, identifying, segregating, describing, emphasizing, making conscious and self-conscious; it becomes a way of stimulating, suggesting, emphasizing, and evoking the very traits that are complained of" (Bartollas, 1997:184).

The outcome of this process is that a person associates and acts according to the label that is ascribed to him/her. This transforms the offender's identity from a doer of evil to an evil person (compare Siegel & Senna, 2001:215, Moyer, 2001:165 and Labeling theories in criminology, 2001).

From a labelling theoretical perspective crime and delinquency as concepts, are not absolute or permanent, but vary in accordance with social norms, customs and the perceived power structure thereof (Siegel & Senna, 2001:211 and Bartollas, 1997:183). Howard Becker argues that moral entrepreneurs are the creators of legal and social rules (Moyer, 2001:173). Moral entrepreneurs refer to interest groups that attempt to control social life through the legalizing and promotion of personal moral values (Siegel & Senna, 2001:212). Deviant behaviour therefore is behaviour that people label as such. A label can therefore be viewed as being based on subjective perceptions of persons or groups of persons, within a given society, within a given time period.

Triplett and Jarjoura distinguish labelling as formal and informal (Bartollas, 1997:186). Formal labelling is the reaction of the judicial system to illegal behaviour. The actions of the judicial system can be viewed as degradation ceremonies. These ceremonies constitute that a transgressor of the law's public identity is transformed into "something looked on as lower in the social scheme of society" (Siegel & Senna, 2001:217). A criminal record is an example of a formal label that is associated with a person through life course notwithstanding whether the offender has rehabilitated or not.

Informal labelling, in contrast, is the process whereby society's members such as parents, peers, educators and community members attempt to characterize or classify a person as a given "type" (Bartollas, 1997:186). Informal labelling is often based on a brief first impression. During these social contacts a person is carefully scrutinized for any unfavourable characteristics or attributes. If these interactions give way to perceptions of possible deviance the person is negatively labelled, cautiously handled or outright shunned. The label is maintained by members in society through continued suspicion of/or further confirmation of the initial perceptions (compare Siegel & Senna, 2001: 212; Bartollas, 1997:186 and Barlow, 1996:476).

Edwin Lemmert in Bartollas (1997:184) emphasizes the role that society as well as official systems plays in the labelling

process through the concepts primary and secondary deviance. *Primary deviance* constitutes the offender's behaviour and *secondary deviance* the society's response to the deviant behaviour (compare Bartollas, 1997:184 and Hester & Eglin, 1992:111). *Primary deviance* describes a deviant act that does not redefine the offender's self- or public image. This constitutes that an offender is not perceived as being a criminal either by himself or by society. This happens when a criminal act, for instance shoplifting, was committed, but is undetected. The result thereof is that no negative self- or public labelling takes place. The act of theft therefore has a limited impact on the perpetrator's current or future status (Siegel & Senna, 2001:214; Bartollas, 1997:184; Barlow, 1996:477).

In contrast, secondary labelling redefines the person's self and public image. Lemmert's (in Siegel & Senna, 2000:215) process of secondary labelling can be depicted as follow:

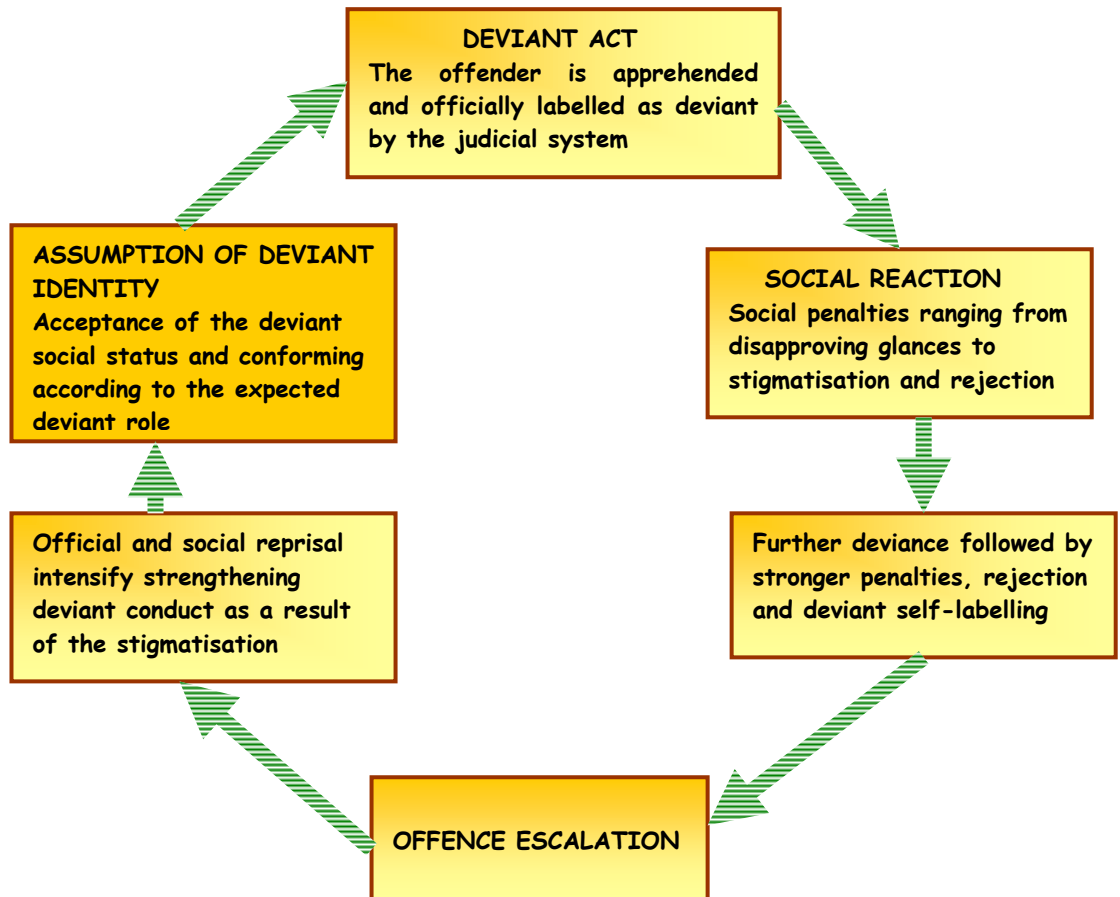


Figure 7: The secondary labelling process according to Lemmert

(Source: Siegel & Senna, 2000:215; Bartolla, 1997:185 and Barlow, 1996:477 as adapted by the researcher).

It is apparent that *secondary deviancy* is a circular process whereby the offender's acquired deviant identity is constantly reinforced. This new identity has an influence on all levels of the labelled offender's social functioning. It becomes a means of defence, attack and adaptation against society's stigmatisation and rejection (Labeling theories in criminology, 2001). Whether an offender moves from primary to secondary deviancy will depend on whether the offence is identified and punished. Stigmatisation from formal and informal systems

within society as well as the offender's acceptance of a deviant identity will further determine the impact of the label.

Siegel and Senna (2001:213) postulates that negative labelling and the acceptance of a deviant identity further create a self-fulfilling prophecy. This is based on the assumption that an individual that is subjected to constant negative feedback from influential systems will eventually internalise the message. This message is then accepted and then viewed as accurate and self-defining. It is the researcher's experience that once an offender has experienced being labelled as a criminal, and accepted this identity, it easily becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Another consequence of labelling is self-rejection (Siegel & Senna, 2001:213). Individuals exposed to social stigmatisation and rejection experience self-rejection which is linked to feelings of worthlessness. This in turn may lead to social isolation, weakened commitment to conventional values and the acquisition of motives to deviate from social norms (Siegel & Senna, 2001:213). Due to the rejection by conventional society, the labelled offenders will seek out other similarly labelled and stigmatised individuals. Association with these similarly labelled individuals can result in the formation of a group with a shared deviant identity. These groups often have the shared objective of opposing the "rejecters". In turn, society's negative perceptions are reinforced due to the individual association with a "negative" group. These factors strengthen the impact

of the negative label as well as the influence of the group on the individual (Siegel & Senna, 2001:213). The social control theory, as discussed previously in this chapter, concurs with the labelling theory in this regard.

Other consequences of labelling associated with chronic offending were mentioned in Chapter 2, namely that once a offender is labelled there is a higher probability of re-arrest. This can be ascribed to the police's perception that labelled offenders has a good chance to continue with a criminal career (Siegel & Senna, 2001:21).

Even though the labelling theory was influential in the 1970's it received mixed responses based on specific strengths and critique. Bartollas (1997:187) identified the following strong points associated with the theory:

- The theory provides an explanation for why juveniles become involved in crime and continued with a criminal career;
- The importance of rule making and power in the creation of a deviant label are emphasized;
- The role of self-fulfilling prophesies in the development of a criminal career is explained; and
- The role that a perceived and internalised deviant identity plays in the process of becoming a chronic and career offender is highlighted.

From the mentioned strengths it is clear that the labelling theory succeeds in explaining the link between the causation of crime and the process whereby the offender becomes a chronic and career offender.

Siegel and Senna (2001:219) identified four major criticisms against the labelling theory, namely:

- The labelling theory fails to explain the reason for the onset of the first primary deviation;
- Not all studies support a deviance amplification effect of official labelling as some individuals who are labelled as "being deviant" may not be as deeply effected as others; and
- The perception that the label creates the crime is seen as naïve as some crimes such as rape and murder are universally deemed as being criminal.

In conclusion it can be stated that even though the labelling theory fails to explain the onset of a criminal career it assists in explaining the maintenance of a career path. Labelling theory is relevant for this research study since recidivism is characterized by repeat offending.

4.5 THE COPING AND RELAPSE THEORY

The coping and relapse theory originated from two studies where first, everyday coping skills in relation to criminal behaviour were explored and secondly, the process of a relapse into previous behavioural patterns was analysed. Combining these two aspects, the theory focuses on the offender's ability

to cope in society and the behaviour patterns associated with the relapse process (Zamble & Quinsey, 1997:10). The theory is of importance for this study as recidivism can be viewed as a process whereby the offender repeatedly falls back into old criminal habits. Zamble & Quinsey (1997) furthermore used the theory to develop a model of the criminal recidivism process. For the purpose of the research the coping and relapse theory as well as the criminal recidivism process will be discussed.

Zamble and Quinsey (1997:10) defines *coping* as a person's attempt to deal with problem situations. In this regard Zeidner & Endler (1996:45) distinguishes between coping and adapting. According to them *coping* can be defined as a person's attempts to deal with stressful problem situations. *Adapting*, on the other hand, is a broader concept inclusive of everyday routine tasks which is automatically done. *Coping* can therefore be associated with stressful situations.

When exploring coping mechanisms in relation to criminal behaviour, Zamble & Quinsey (1997:10) found that "...there was no evidence that problems encountered outside of prison were distinctive in kind or severity from the ordinary challenges that most people encounter. However, their ways of dealing with these situations were at best ineffective and often exacerbated the original problem". In this respect Zeidner & Endler (1996:47) postulate that psychopathology develop when coping becomes a means of ordinary, everyday adapting. The offender's everyday life therefore becomes a stressful battle

to cope with. Both stress and coping is associated with anxiety, depression and impaired functioning. These symptoms can be associated with psychopathology. The difference between stress and psychopathology, as described above, is that stress is a response towards external provocation whereas psychopathology reflects personal inadequacies (Zeidner & Endler, 1996:47).

In their research Zamble and Quinsey (1997:75) found that recidivists or chronic offenders have inadequate coping responses and are unable to successfully recognize and resolve their problems. This inability can lead to acquiring a self-fulfilling prophecy where the recidivists believe that they are unable to cope. The question can be asked why the offender then reverts to criminal and not another form of maladaptive behaviour?

In order to answer this question it is first necessary to understand the natural problem-management process. Yankelovick as quoted by Egan (1994:20) outlines the problem-management process as follows:

Tabel 5: The problem management process

The natural problem management process	
STEP 1:	A person becomes aware of an issue or a set of issues that leads to feelings of dissatisfaction.
STEP 2:	A sense of urgency develops as the feeling of unease escalates. Steps 1 and 2 is the phase where a person consciously becomes aware of a problem.
STEP 3:	Various remedies or solutions for the problem situation are explored.
STEP 4:	The cost of pursuing these solutions are contemplated often, leading to retreating, as there are no cost-free or painless ways of dealing with problem situations.
STEP 5:	Due to the contemplation of the cost attached to problem solution serious weighing of identified choices takes place.
STEP 6:	An intellectual decision is made to accept a choice and pursue a certain cause of action.
STEP 7:	The choice is internalised.

(Source: Egan, 1994:20)

Even though the natural problem-management process can be associated with chronological steps it must be taken into consideration that problem solving is still an individualized process. This implies that the process could be derailed at any point in time. Chronic offenders were found to be prone to follow a head on attack in problem resolution as opposed to following a problem-management process. Their way of problem resolution is impulsive and self centred and focussed on immediate problem alleviation (Zamble & Quinicy, 1997:41). They are therefore more focused on short-term than long-term problem solution. Zamble and Quinicy (1997:41) could find no evidence that the chronic offender analysed the problem situation, weighed possible alternatives or anticipated the consequences of their choices, and thus followed the natural problem management process. A lack of proper problem management often results in maladaptive and frequently

criminal coping- efforts (compare; Kuperminc & Allen, 2001:601 and Zamble & Quinsy, 1997:10, 41).

Self-centeredness as well as low frustration toleration refers to personality characteristics. Zeidner & Endler (1996:48) states that coping is related to a person's personality traits. It can therefore be derived that a person's coping mechanisms are pre-disposed. The decision to choose criminal behaviour as a problem-solving tool stems from generalized behaviour that is common among chronic offenders. Combined with a distinct criminal cognitive process and other external factors, this choice paves the way for renewed criminal activities (Zamble & Quinsy, 1997:15-41). In summary, it is apparent that ineffective coping skills contribute to recurring criminal behaviour.

The second part of the coping and relapse theory focuses on what happens after the offender's coping resources fail. Marlet and Gordon refer to this process as a " ...relapse in addictive behavior" (Zamble & Quinsy, 1997:11). Harm and Phillips (2001:8) concur with Marlet and Gordon and elaborate that recidivism should be viewed as a process due to the reciprocal intertwined relationship which exists between recidivism and relapse. From this perspective "relapse" refers to: "...failure to maintain behavior change, rather than a failure to initiate change" (Zamble & Quinsy, 1997:11). It can therefore be concluded that the relapse theory focuses on factors associated with the failure to maintain behavioural change, as well as causes of failure that result in relapse.

The rationale behind the relapse theory is that coping skills will determine if a person enters into a high-risk situation (Zamble & Quinicy, 1997:11). The researcher views a high-risk situation as a challenging situation that requires the offender to make use of his/her coping skills. When a person is confronted with such a situation, thoughts and cognitions play an important role, as it will determine the individual's perception regarding his/her ability to cope with the situation (Kuperminc & Allan, 2001:615).

Cronje (1982:570), in this context, is of the opinion that a person's attitude towards life is to a large extent reflected in their self-image and self-concept. A poor self-concept generally develops within the boundaries of an unfavourable life context. A person with a poor self-concept will be unable to view him-/herself as being self-efficient. These negative cognitions can result in feelings of being unable to cope as well as hopelessness. Hopelessness in turn can greatly magnify the chances of relapse. In contrast with a person experiencing negative cognitions, the person who views him-/herself as being able to cope through positive cognitions has a greater chance to cope successfully with difficult situations (compare Kuperminc & Allen, 2001:601-602 and Zamble & Quinicy, 1997:11).

Conklin (1995) links the influence of negative cognitions emphasising personality traits associated with criminal behaviour, namely a lack of self-control and an inability to

tolerate frustrating situations. It seems that due to negative cognitions the offender, confronted with a high-risk situation, often feels that "things" just happens to them and that they have no control over life's situations. The researcher, from her experience in working with recidivists, concurs with this assumption as most chronic offenders are of the opinion that they committed crime due to factors out of their control. At the time of the crime, they regarded the crime as the only solution to their problem.

In conclusion, the coping and relapse theory postulates that inadequate coping mechanisms and skills lead to the offender's inability to deal with what he/she perceives as problem situations. The researcher is of the opinion that this inability, together with the presence of negative cognitions and thoughts, is a sure way of setting the offender up for failure and relapse. The constant repetition of this behaviour creates a pattern that becomes part of an ongoing process. Viewed from this perspective the researcher concurs with Zamble and Quinicy (1997:13) that recidivism is a relapse process where the offender falls back into a habitual criminal behaviour pattern.

Just as the coping and relapse theory is part of the recidivism process, criminal offence is likewise part of the recidivistic behaviour process. The difference between the two is that the coping and relapse theory refers to a behavioural process that has an influence on the offender system. The influence of the criminal processes on the other hand, extends to various other

systems, namely the offender, victim and community. In this respect Zamble and Quinicy (1997:61) state that the "...occurrence of the offence (that) represents a breaking point and triggers the consequences, not the sequence of events leading up to it". It is therefore clear that there is a link between events prior to the offence and the offence itself. It seems that the offender's inadequate coping skills, impulsivity as well as a developed habitual offending behavioural pattern creates a predisposition for re-offending. Furthermore Zamble and Quinicy (1997:63) emphasize the recidivist's lack of rational advances, consideration of the offence and the consequences thereof for the victim and the perpetrator.

The offence is an enactment of the dangerous aspect of the recidivism process. The danger lies in the acting out of the built-up delinquent emotions whereby the victim and community system is either directly or indirectly harmed. In this respect Zamble and Quinicy (1997:67) postulates that the

" ... re-initiation of offending may not be spontaneous, but once begun the process is often so quick that it is effectively autonomous. Often once the offender has thought of an offence as an available option in his situation, its commission is perhaps already inevitable, and successful intervention is already precluded".

Based on the impulsive behaviour, and the lack of rational advance consideration regarding the impact and consequences of the offence, the researcher is of the opinion that the rehabilitation prognosis of the recidivist is in question.

Derived from the coping and relapse theory and offence process Zamble and Quinsy (1997) developed a model on the recidivism process. The model is embedded in the assumption that within life's journey a person is confronted with potential problematic situations that he/she must react upon. These situations are often external in origin, labile and unpredictable and challenge a person's coping mechanisms.

The individual's initial response to the stimuli of a potential problematic situation is on an emotional and cognitive level. The perceived problem is appraised and the consequences thereof evaluated. The individual's response to the situation and the way it is perceived is guided by the person's temperament, personality and available problem resolution responses. The available responses are based on previous cognitions, for instance how a person has learned to cope with certain behaviours or situations. Factors that could influence these responses are, for instance, the effect of habitual substance abuse, prior criminal experience, criminal associations and patterns of socialization. The response to the perceived problem situation will be guided by all of the above-mentioned factors and will determine the individual's behaviour reaction (Zamble & Quincy, 1997:143).

In conclusion it is apparent that the offender's behaviour is governed by past cognitions and experiences as well as available coping mechanisms.

4.6 INTEGRATED MODEL FOR THE RECIDIVISM BEHAVIOURAL PROCESS

4.6.1 Introduction

As stated earlier, the researcher is of the opinion that a hiatus exists insofar that recidivism is not addressed holistically. The discussed theories respectively emphasizes singular aspects in the causation of crime and recidivism. This results in a narrowed perspective of the causation of crime and recidivism. The focus is furthermore generally placed on criminal offending and the offence process as concurred by Farrington (in Maguire *et al.*, 1997:399): "(O)ffending is one element of a larger syndrome of anti-social behaviour that arises in childhood and tends to persist into adulthood, with numerous different behavioural manifestations".

From the literature study as reflected in Chapters 2-4, the researcher concluded that offending and recidivism is rooted in the offender's genetic composition, personality, socialization and general interaction with primary and secondary systems in everyday life. Farrington concurs as follows: "... criminal behaviour results from the interaction between an individual (with a certain degree of underlying anti-social tendency) and the environment (which provides criminal opportunities) (Maguire *et al.*, 1997:394). The difference between first offenders and recidivists lies in the repeat offending that recidivists make themselves guilty of. It can therefore be

concluded that for the recidivist, criminal behaviour is a lifestyle, not just an action.

The complexity of recidivism as behavioural pattern necessitates a multi-dimensional and integrated analyses of predispositioning and causative criminal risk factors. It should be taken into consideration that these risk factors are inter-related and often co-occurring. Hence, in order to develop an integrated model for the recidivism behavioural process the dynamic predisposition and causative factors should be taken into consideration. In addition the interactional processes associated with these recidivistic behaviour patterns should be taken into consideration. In relation to the creation of a model that is inclusive of all the mentioned aspects, the researcher concurs with Farrington (in Maguire *et al.*, 1997:395) that the nature and relation of criminal risk factors make any theory or model on offending inevitably speculative. However, the researcher's aim with the proposed model is to holistically assimilate and integrate causative as well as behavioural patterns associated with the recidivism behavioural process.

4.6.2 **Conceptualisation of the model**

The point of departure for the proposed model was twofold, namely

- Each person's personality and behavioural repertoire is rooted in genetically established hereditary factors and moulded by environmental influences and general socialization within various systems in society.

- A person establishes behavioural patterns in order to deal with everyday mundane and stressful situations. These behavioural patterns are based on genetically predispositions, environmental influences and personal cognitions.

Even though the mentioned points of departure will be discussed separately, it is important to keep in mind that they are actually part of, and form the basis of, various everyday behavioural patterns.

In order to explain this interactional process between the mentioned points of departure the researcher came to the conclusion that from before birth onwards, and through life course, a person develops certain cognitions regarding themselves and the environment they live in. The cognitions are based on hereditary predispositions and are affected by past and present experiences and the emotions associated with these experiences as well as their socialization. These cognitions help a person to understand his/her living environment. In order to function within this environment a person develops behavioural patterns. These behavioural patterns are rooted in existing cognitions and can be either reinforced or suppressed by means of punishment or reinforcement. The more frequently a cognition and behavioural pattern is reinforced the more likely it is to become conditioned behaviour and thus, form a physical and emotional habitual reaction that could be linked to specific circumstances. Environmental influences play an important role in this process

as they often determine the nature of the cognitions that behavioural patterns are based on. It is therefore clear that there is a constant interaction between personal predispositions and environmental influences.

Regarding environmental influences, causative factors that can act as risk predictors for delinquency and criminal behaviour can often be found in the offender's immediate environment. In relation to environmental influences Farrington in Maguire *et al.* (1997:384) not only recognises adverse environmental factors but also emphasises the role that environmental protective factors can play in the prevention of criminal behaviour. This author is of the opinion that a low probability for offending can be associated with protective factors. Examples of protective factors can be amongst others, high intelligence and affectionate ties with caregivers (Maguire *et al.*, 1997:384). Within both these factors lies the probability of criminal but also pro-social behavioural patterns. The question can therefore be asked: what causes a person to choose criminal behaviour instead of pro-social behaviour? The researcher is of the opinion that the answer lies in the interactional process between predisposing factors and environmental protective and adverse influences.

As stated previously (Chapter 3, point 3.1), predisposing factors, amongst others hereditary transmitted traits and past family history, are stable risk indicators that cannot be changed. The researcher is of the opinion that the impact of

these stable factors lies in the emotional cognitions and behavioural pattern that originated from these hereditary traits and past family history. She furthermore hypothesizes that a person's personality, capabilities and decision making is rooted within these formulated cognitions. This foundation upon which a person's social functioning is based will determine and influence the choice of either a pro-social or pro-criminal lifestyle. The researcher postulates that the inter-actional process can be depicted as follows:

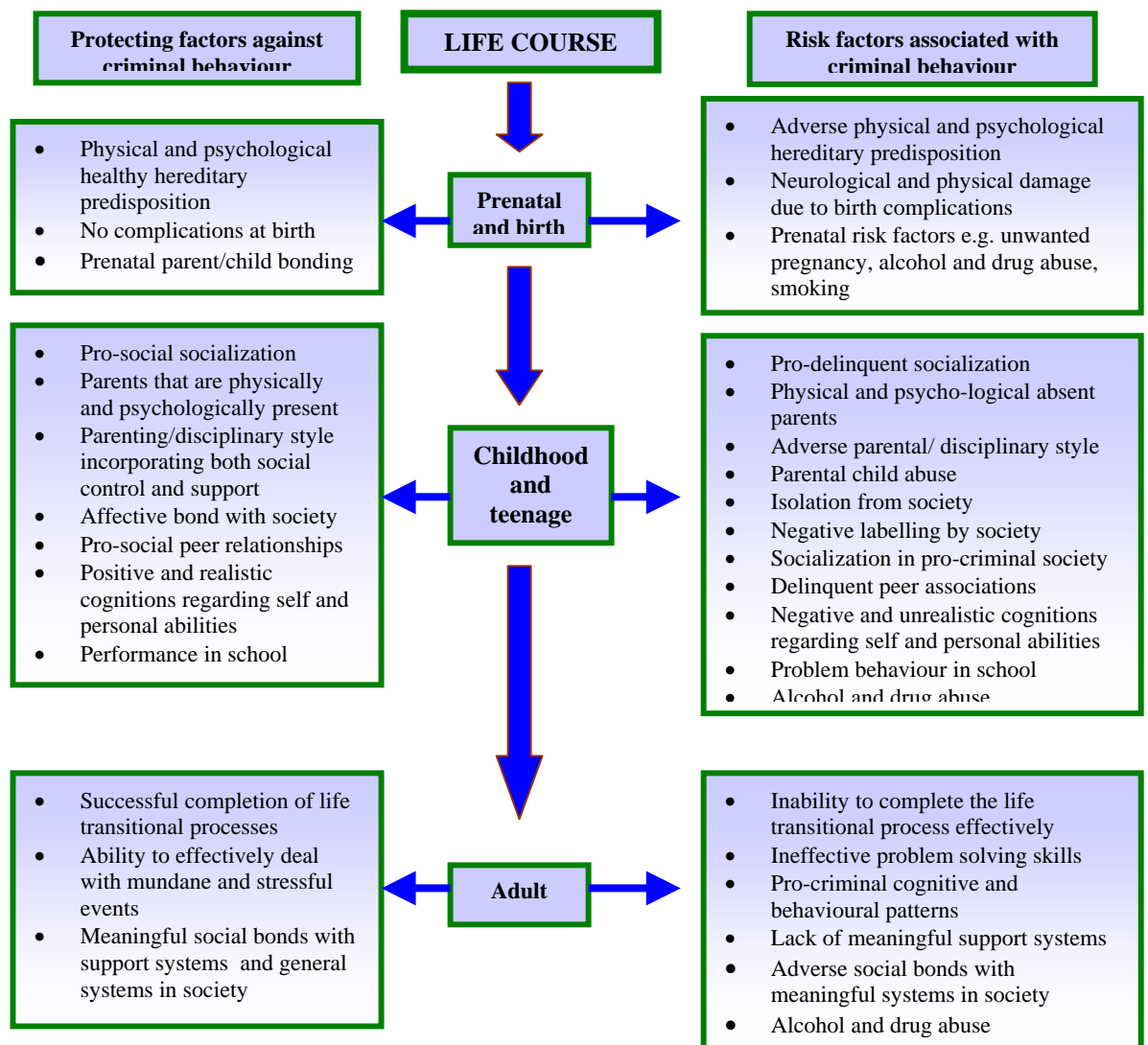


Figure 8: Criminal risk and protective factors from a life course perspective

From the Figure it is clear that an interactional process exists between protective and adverse factors in society. It can therefore be stated that every individual will, through his/her life course, be influenced by both adverse and protective factors. In relation to criminal risk prediction no one factor could be singled out as being the sole cause of criminal behaviour. McGuire (1995:52) concurs stating that the interaction between various criminal risk factors contributed to criminal behaviour. This is also the case with hereditary adverse factors such as physical and psychological hereditary attributes associated with criminal risk. Hereditary factors act as criminal predisposition while environmental influences act as the trigger for these predispositions. Criminal behaviour therefore becomes an enactment of hereditary predispositions and environmental influences.

As discussed previously in this chapter, a behavioural pattern is formulated in order to deal with different situations during life course. The researcher further posits that behaviour patterns also originate in order to meet a variety of human needs. Maslow's self-actualisation hierarchy is an example thereof. As stated previously the needs which Maslow identified can be divided into *driven* and *being* needs. Fulfilment of needs is often evident in the offender's motive for committing crimes. Research quoted in Maguire *et al.* (1997:380) indicated that the most common motive given for property offences were utilitarian, rational or economic ones with the aim of acquiring

material gain (*driven need*). The next most popular motive was hedonistic, whereby offences were committed for excitement or to relieve boredom (*being need*). In the first instance physical needs were fulfilled and in the second, emotional needs. The fact that the mentioned needs were met through offending can be ascribed to the offender making use of pro-criminal cognitions and behavioural patterns.

Bush as quoted in McGuire (1995: 142 - 147) gave a good example of a criminal behavioural pattern based on pro-criminal cognitions and the fulfilment of personal needs. His research focussed on violent offenders. He posits that repeat violent offending is often a learned behavioural pattern that is used to cope with stressful events. The profile of these offenders also indicated that they found violence rewarding. Bush (in McGuire, 1995:140) hypothesises that this behaviour pattern is embedded in habits of thinking, thus a pro-criminal cognition. By an enactment of the cognition, violent behaviour fulfils an unmet need, therefore reinforcing the behaviour pattern. Further reinforcement takes place from experiencing feelings of emotional reward. Constant reinforcement contributes to maintaining the mentioned behaviour pattern.

In relation to Bush's study, the researcher is of the opinion that violent behaviour is a good example of a behavioural action that becomes a behavioural pattern. Reinforcement of the behavioural pattern is due to the instant gratification gained from the fulfilment of the desired need. Bush's findings that

some of the violent offenders found the violence rewarding could be ascribed to personal psychological attributes, in this instance anti-social personality disorder. As discussed in Chapter 3, anti-social personality disorder was strongly linked to violent behaviour and re-offending.

In conclusion the researcher posits that the recidivism behavioural process is rooted in pro-criminal cognitions which is acted out and becomes behavioural patterns associated with criminality. Within this process hereditary attributes and environmental influences play a determining role in the formation of these behavioural patterns. Behavioural patterns are formed to deal with mundane and stressful situations through life course as well as to fulfil personal needs. These criminal behavioural patterns are reinforced due to the fact that it often offers instant gratification, fulfil needs and alleviate stress which result from unresolved problems throughout life course.

4.7 CONCLUSION

By utilising various theories the researcher aimed to explore and explain the causation of recidivism from various perspectives. The behaviourism theory was used as point of departure and focused on cause-and-effect relationships between environmental and behavioural conditions. The influence of the environment as possible causative factor of crime and recidivism were explored.

The social process theories, comprising of the learning, control and development theories, explain the causation of crime from various angles. These theories have an interconnected relationship with the behaviourism theory. The learning theory regards criminal behaviour as learned behaviour acquired through interaction with various groups in society. The control theory places emphasis on the role that social ties play in relation to criminal conduct. This theory postulates that people who have a lack of social ties with conventional social order have a higher probability to become involved in criminal acts. The developmental perspective studies the development of criminal conduct through life course. The social process theories reason that crime can be prevented through the strengthening of relationships between the offender and society.

The labelling theory places emphasis on the delinquent career rather than the onset of delinquent behaviour. This theory explains why offenders persist with criminal conduct and elaborates on the role that an internalised deviant identity plays in the establishment of self-fulfilling prophecies.

The coping and relapse theory focused on the role that coping mechanisms as well as the relapse process play in relation to recidivism. The theory postulates that the offender's inadequate coping mechanisms together with negative personal cognitions inevitably lead to relapse into crime. The relapse

process was discussed within the criminal recidivism process model.

Lastly, based on the explored theories and the researcher's experience in working with recidivists, the researcher compiled an integrated model on recidivism. This model is embedded in the hypothesis that the recidivism behavioural process is rooted in predispositioned and acquired pro-criminal cognitions that are acted out and becomes behavioural patterns associated with criminality. The researcher is of the opinion that through this proposed integrated model crime, and more specifically recidivism, can be theoretically grounded and better conceptualised.