ose of his students, Ferri and Garofalo, to be discussed shortly. Beginning in the late 1960s, particularly in the writings of economist Gary Becker (1968), James Q. Wilson (1983a, 1983b), and Ernest Van den Haag (1966), a resurgence in neoclassical doctrine can be noted. Becker advocated a cost-benefit analysis of crime, reminiscent of hedonistic doctrine. Becker argued that individuals freely choose crime based on their estimate of their likelihood of being caught. Disappointed with criminology's overconcern with the search for basic causes of crime, Wilson (1975) proposed a policy analysis approach, applied research that is less concerned with finding causes and more concerned with what works. These writers sparked an interest in the abandonment of treatment and rehabilitation and in a return to the classical punishment model. Often ignored by devotees of such theories are the very limited categories of crime such theorists, in fact, address. Wilson (1975), for instance, quite clearly indicates that this call for incapacitation of offenders (criminals in jail can no longer victimize) is applicable to what we have described as conventional property offenders or common burglars and thieves. Although a more practical, policy-oriented approach is needed, what is disturbing in such theories is the relatively conservative ignorance of criminogenic, social structural conditions, as well as an often cavalier disregard for theoretical approaches to crime causation. Neoclassicists argue that less theory and more action are needed but at times ignore the fact that the basic theoretical underpinnings of their own theories are rooted in assumptions of 18th-century hedonism, utilitarianism, and free will. On balance, however, they make a key point: that one need not have a basic explanation of cause to meet pressing policy needs that cannot wait for a final explanation.

Neoclassical theory

new classical theories that view crime as influenced by criminal opportunities to commit crime.

Rational Choice Theory

In another neoclassical theory, Cornish and Clarke's (1986) *rational choice theory* proposes that offenders weigh the opportunities, costs, and benefits of particular crimes. The argument by rational choice theorists is not that individuals are purely rational in their decision making but rather that they do consider the costs and benefits. A number of factors may constrain choice, such as social factors, individual traits, and attitudes toward crime. Rational choice theorists also argue for a crime-specific approach to crime; that is, the circumstances involved in the typical burglary may differ from robbery or domestic assault. Offender characteristics are seen as combining with offense types in shaping offender choices. Rational choice theorists admit that much behavior is only partly rational but that most offenders know quite well what they are doing. The criminal justice system must make crime less rewarding by increasing the certainty and severity of punishment. Crime is viewed as a matter of situational choice, a combination

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of costs, benefits, and opportunities associated with a particular crime. Increasing prevention or decreasing the opportunity to commit crime is viewed as an important means of deterring crime. Situational crime control could include target hardening (securing of entries, doors, and locks), access control, entry screening, surveillance, better lighting, property identification, and other means of reducing criminal opportunity.

Research support has been mixed for rational choice theory. Consideration is given for the cost and benefit of crime, but many criminals do not carefully plan their crimes. Changing such opportunity structures (e.g., creating defensible space and target hardening) may discourage potential offenders. Analyses of offenders' motivations, however, have shown that many act impulsively and fail to fully consider negative possibilities (Piliavin, Gartner, Thornton, & Matsueda, 1986; Tunnell, 1991). Crime File 5.1 presents an application of rational choice theory to controlling gang violence in Los Angeles. Recent work examining "near repeat" burglary suggests that some offending may in fact be at least in part rational. A near repeat burglary occurs when a target is burglarized initially, but then a nearby property is burglarized afterward (Johnson et al., 2007). The second burglary would be considered a near repeat burglary. The initial target may not be burglarized because the owners took precautions after the event; thus, the target has been "hardened." The offender choosing a nearby target rather than the one that has been hardened indicates some level of rationality.

Deterrence Theory

Other expressions of neoclassical theory can be found in the deterrence literature. Themes such as "just deserts," "three strikes and you're out," and mandatory sentencing policies all reflect the assumption that the criminal is a rational actor and will be deterred by more severe and certain punishment. The just-deserts concept assumes that individuals must pay for their wrongdoing and that they deserve or "have it (the punishment) coming." Reflected in the biblical *lex talionis* (law of the talons), an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, proper retribution is to be exacted for the wrongdoing. Deterrence policy assumes rationality on the part of the actor, wherein specific deterrence serves to discourage a particular individual from repeating a crime and general deterrence targets others. Legislation such as "three strikes and you're out," in which third-time offenders receive very severe punishment, has been found not to work because juries are often reluctant to convict a third-time offender and judges oppose such limitations on their discretion.

Crime File 5.1

"Designing Out" Gang Homicides and Street Assaults: Situational Crime Prevention

One of the leading theories of criminal opportunity is situational crime prevention. Developed by criminologist Ronald V. Clarke, the theory is based on the assumption that crime can be reduced by pinpointing and blocking the forces that facilitate would-be offenders' criminal acts. Would-be offenders, the theory proposes, make rational

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choices in planning their criminal acts. For example, gangs may choose a particular street on which to commit a crime because they rationally determine that the way the street is situated provides them with ready access and exit, thereby creating an opportunity to more easily elude arrest.

Applying the model to gangs, the LAPD (Los Angeles Police Department) assumed that gangs did in fact make a rational choice about whether to engage in a particular act of criminal violence and whether to do so in a particular neighborhood setting. Evidence to support the theory has come from studies of residential burglary, shoplifting, and other crimes, but OCDS (discussed shortly) was an initial attempt to apply situational crime prevention to gang violence.

Issues and Findings

Discussed in This Brief. The use of a deceptively simple tactic, traffic barriers, to block automobile access to streets as a way of reducing gang violence. The tactic was used in a crime-plagued area of Los Angeles that had experienced the city's highest level of drive-by shootings, gang homicides, and street assaults. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ)–sponsored evaluation of Operation Cul de Sac (OCDS), as the program was called, examined whether the tactic could reduce gang crime.

Key Issues. OCDS was based on the theory of situational crime prevention, which postulates that crime occurs partly as the result of opportunity and can be reduced by first identifying and then blocking these opportunities rather than attempting to eliminate root causes. The LAPD noted that in the OCDS target area, gang crime clustered on the periphery of neighborhoods linked to major roadways; police set up traffic barriers as a way to block the opportunities for crime the roadways created. The evaluation sought to determine whether these street closures could help to "design out" gang crime.

Key Findings. In its 2 years of operation, 1990 and 1991, OCDS appeared to reduce violent crime.

- The number of homicides and street assaults fell significantly in both years and rose after the program ended.
- Property crime decreased substantially during the first year of the program, but it also decreased in the comparison area where there was no OCDS, indicating that some factors other than the traffic barriers were responsible for the reduction in the OCDS site.
- In the second year of the program, property crime rose, suggesting the street closures affected only violent crime.

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- Crime was not displaced to other areas. Violent crime fell, not only in the OCDS area, but also in contiguous areas. This may be because the areas of potential displacement are the turf of rival gangs. As such, they would be off-limits to gangs that might want to enter new territory when the traffic barriers reduced their opportunities to commit crime on their own turf.
- Traffic barriers can be used as part of an approach to maximize neighborhood residents' defensible space by increasing their span of control. Zones configured with the barriers heighten the visibility of suspect activities. They can be particularly effective when combined with "natural guardians"—people who serve as informal sources of surveillance and social control.
- Although these findings indicate traffic barriers may work to reduce violent crime, it should be kept in mind that the experiment was conducted at only one site. Replications of OCDS and further evaluations are needed to fully test the effectiveness of the tactic.

Target Audience. Police chiefs, sheriffs, urban designers and planners, crime prevention organizers.

For Further Thought

1. Use a search engine such as Google Scholar to locate recent developments on "designing out" crime.

Source: James Lasley (1998). "Designing Out" Gang Homicides and Street Assaults. *National Institute of Justice Research in Brief,* November.

Criminology in Context 5.3

Justifications for Punishment

The punishment of criminals has at least four justifications: retribution, deterrence (including incapacitation), rehabilitation, and protection and upholding the solidarity of society (Sutherland & Cressey, 1974).

Retribution

Retribution is the societal counterpart of individual revenge. When criminal laws were formulated, the state assumed responsibility for punishing offenders and forbade victimized parties from taking the law into their own hands. Criminals had to pay their debt to society, not to the harmed party. Beginning as early as *lex talionis,* "an eye for an

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eye and a tooth for a tooth," criminals have been viewed as having to suffer in some way for justice to be served. Retribution is a moral motive for punishment, not simply a utilitarian one. Nazi hunters who are still searching for war criminals decades after World War II, when asked, "What good does it do?" reply, "It does justice." So public sentiment and outrage are the guideposts for enforcement, rather than any direct effect on future crime commission.

Deterrence

Deterrence refers to the belief that perceived punishment will serve as a warning and inhibit individuals (*specific deterrence*) and groups (*general deterrence*) from involvement in criminal activity. Based on the classical school of criminology and the writings of Cesare Beccaria (discussed earlier), the deterrence model assumes that if the pain (clear, swift, and certain punishment) outweighs any pleasure to be derived from the criminal act, then crime will be prevented. *Incapacitation,* the prevention of crime by keeping criminals behind bars for longer periods, is an additional example of specific deterrence. In a revival of classical criminology, large and impressive bodies of literature have begun to accumulate on the issue of specific deterrence. Although inconclusive at this point, the research suggests the potentially positive impact of selective incapacitation of career criminals on lowering crime rates (S. H. Clarke, 1974; Greenberg, 1975).

Rehabilitation

Rehabilitation, which has been the watchword in the United States in the post–World War II period, assumes that the purpose of punishing criminals is to reform or resocialize them to conventional, law-abiding values. Even name changes indicate this philosophical shift: The field of penology is now called corrections, and prisons are correctional facilities. Nevertheless, there appears to be more talk about rehabilitation than programs to facilitate it. Martinson (1974), in "What Works?—Questions and Answers About Prison Reform," examined a large number of correctional programs and their claims of success in rehabilitation as well as their recidivism (repeating of crime) rates; he felt there was little evidence that any significant programs in corrections had an important impact on reducing recidivism. Only later ("Martinson Attacks His Own Earlier Work," 1978; Martinson, 1979) did he retract this devastating critique by admitting that he may have suffered from "methodological fanaticism," in which substance was overlooked in the name of method, and that some of the programs did have positive outcomes. With estimates of recidivism and reincarceration rates as high as 65% (Greenberg, 1975), there seemed to be a decline in liberal optimism about the success of the rehabilitation model (Bayer, 1981). However, in defense of rehabilitation, some feel that it has never been given a decent chance. Badillo and Haynes (1972) indicate that in the early 1970s, only about 5% of correctional budgets was used for rehabilitation programs and that rehabilitation was often more a matter of talk than action (see Cullen & Gilbert, 1982). Glaser (1994) identifies a variety of programs that

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use penalties, fines, community services, restitution, and intermediate punishments that do indeed work. In examining "what works" in crime prevention, a large number of programs have been identified as either working or promising (Sherman et al., 1997).

Protection

Protection and the upholding of social solidarity as a goal of punishment reflect Durkheim's (1950) point made in Chapter 1—that a society reaffirms its values in reacting to and punishing wrongdoers. In this justification, the purpose of punishment is not to obtain revenge or deter or change the criminal; rather, it is an attempt to protect society from criminals and, in so doing, to reinforce group solidarity.

For Further Thought

1. Search the concept of punishment and report on practices and their justification in various countries. Hint: search the term *Sharia*.

Criminology in Context 5.3 discusses the various justifications for punishment. The deterrence argument best represents the classical and neoclassical explanations. These arguments are also applicable to the death penalty debate.

LEARNING CHECK 5.1

Answer the following questions to check your learning thus far. Answers can be found on page 475.

1. **Fill in the Blank:** If you argue that people commit crime because they are possessed by the devil, you are using a ______ theory of crime.
2. **True or False?** Beccaria argued that the seriousness of a crime is determined by the harm it causes society.
3. **Fill in the Blank:** According to hedonism, we are motivated to act based on our desire to seek ______.
4. **True or False?** Rational choice theory proposes that people do not weigh the costs and benefits of their actions before engaging in them.

ECOLOGICAL THEORY

Whereas some would point to Cesare Beccaria and his writing as the beginning point of criminology, his primary interest was not so much the analysis of crime and criminals as the reform of criminal law and punishment. Others point to the writings of Cesare Lombroso, to be

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discussed shortly, and view the century between the works of the two Cesares as a criminological Dark Age. On the contrary, the writings and research of A. M. Guerry (1802–1866) of France and Adolphe Quetelet (1796–1874) of Belgium qualify them as the fathers of modern criminology (Gibbons, 1982; Vold et al., 2002). Thomas and Hepburn (1983) best reflect this writer's view:

> It is hard to understand why so many criminologists persist in their apparent conviction that scientific criminology was not to be found until Lombroso. . . . Nevertheless, the wealth of scientific analyses published by those we can classify as members of the statistical [ecological] school are commonly ignored while the often absurd and poorly executed work of Lombroso is considered to be the first true criminological analysis. (p. 138)

Another explanation for the popularity and widespread acceptance of the Lombrosians and the relative obscurity of the early ecological theorists might be the fact that the latter were not translated into English until much later (Thomas & Hepburn, 1983).

The **ecological school** of criminological theory is also referred to as the statistical, geographic, or cartographic school. *Ecology* is that branch of biology that deals with the interrelationships between organisms and their environment. Human ecology deals with the interrelationship between human organisms and the physical environment. This school was called *statistical* because it was the first to attempt to apply official data and statistics to the problem of explaining criminality. The labels *geographical* and *cartographic* have been assigned because writers in this group tended to rely on maps and aerial data in their investigations.

Ecological school

school of thought that posits that crime is caused by environmental or geographic forces.

Using Crime Statistics: Andre M. Guerry and Adolphe Quetelet

Sometime after 1825, Andre M. Guerry (1833) published what many regard as the first book in scientific criminology, *An Essay on Moral Statistics* (Vold, 1979, p. 167). Guerry was more cartographic in his approach, relying exclusively on shaded areas of maps to describe and analyze variations in French official crime statistics. Because he employed these sections of maps and used them as his principal units of analysis, he is often viewed as the founder of the ecological or cartographic school of criminology (Thomas & Hepburn, 1983). Comparing poverty with crime, Guerry found that the wealthier areas of France had higher property crime. Urban, industrial, northern regions had more property crime than rural, southern regions (Courtright & Mutchnick, 1999). He concluded that the higher rates were due to greater opportunity. Thus, burglary and theft occurred where more goods were available. Violent and

personal crimes were higher in rural areas and southern regions. These rates were consistent annually.

Guerry was also credited with being a pioneer in comparative crime statistics in comparing English and French rates. Schafer (1969) indicated that Guerry was the first to use “moral statistics” in that he applied cartographic methods to the state of morals in terms of crime (Courtright & Mutchnick, 1999, p. 3). Another adherent of this school was Henry Mayhew (1862), who, in his *London Labour and the London Poor,* made extensive use of official statistics and aerial maps.

Lambert Adolphe Jacques Quetelet was the first to take advantage of the criminal statistics that were beginning to become available in the 1820s (Beirne, 1987; Radzinowicz & King, 1977). He was the first scientific criminologist, employing an approach to his subject matter that was very similar to that of modern criminologists, and is the father of modern sociological and psychological statistics (Mannheim, 1965; Schafer, 1969; Thomas & Hepburn, 1983). Challenging the classical school’s view that individuals exercise free will in deciding their actions, Quetelet insisted on the impact of group factors and characteristics. In his *Treatise on Man and the Development of His Faculties* (1842/1969), written in 1835 and translated into English in 1842, Quetelet noted that there was a remarkable consistency with which crimes appeared annually and varied with respect to age, sex, economic conditions, and other sociological variables. This consistency in group behavior, in crime rates, and the like speaks against crime being solely a matter of individual choice. He argues,

> We can count in advance how many individuals will soil their hands with the blood of their fellows, how many will be swindlers, how many prisoners, almost as we can number in advance the births and deaths that will take place. . . . Society carries within itself, in some sense, the seeds of all the crimes which are going to be committed, together with the facilities necessary for their development. (pp. 299–308)

He described this constancy of crime as the annual “budget” of crime, which must be paid by society with remarkable consistency. In a sense, the stage and script are provided by society, and only the faces playing the individual characters change.

In his *Research on the Propensity for Crime at Different Ages* (1831/1984), Quetelet viewed age as the greatest predictor of crime, with crime peaking at age 25. Courtright and Mutchnick (1999) point out that, in examining poverty, relative economic inequality was the critical variable. According to Quetelet, crime increases when an individual “passes in an abrupt way from a state of ease to misery and to insufficiency in satisfying all the needs which he has created” (p. 67). Schafer (1969) even claims that, due to his extensive use of crime statistics and statistical predictions, Quetelet was recognized by some as the father of statistics.

Some of Quetelet’s findings included the propensity for crime among younger adults and males and the tendency of crimes against persons to increase in summer and property crimes to predominate in winter. In what is called his **thermic law of crime**, he claimed that crimes

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against persons increase in equatorial climates, and property crimes are most prevalent in colder climates (cited in V. Fox, 1976). Social conditions such as heterogeneity of population tended to be associated with increased crime, as did poverty, although the latter not in the manner usually supposed. Noting that some of the poorest provinces of France also had very low crime rates, Quetelet (1842/1969) anticipated the concept of relative deprivation by suggesting not absolute poverty but a gap between status and expectation as a variable in crime causation.

Thermic law of crime

Quetelet's theory that violent crime increases toward the equator.

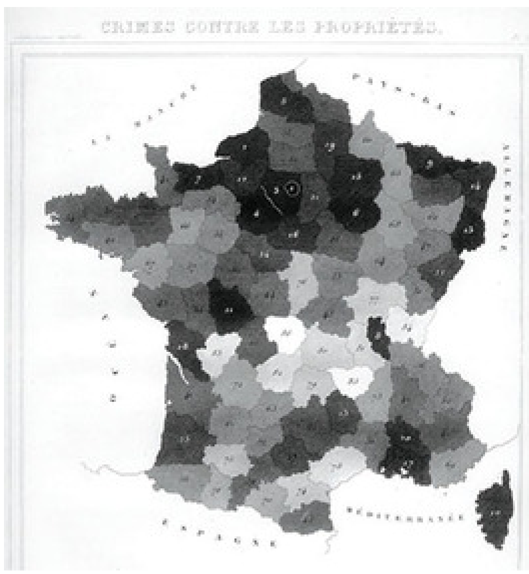

Photo 5.4 Andre M. Guerry used the criminal statistics that were beginning to become available in the 1820s to create early crime maps.

André-Michel Guerry (1802–1866)

Critique of Ecological Theory

The work of Guerry and Quetelet was done nearly half a century before the writings of Lombroso, to be discussed shortly, who is often viewed ("the Lombrosian myth") as the father of criminology (Lindesmith & Levin, 1937). Lombroso's (1911a) principal work, *L'Uomo Delinquente* (*The Criminal Man*), first published in 1876, emphasized the notion of "born criminality." Rather than representing progress in criminological investigation, the dominance of the early positivists such as Lombroso may have set the field on a half-century (plus) journey guided by arcane and ultimately useless concepts. The superordination of the early positivists may have represented an ideological coup d'état in which medical concepts and psychologism (a reduction of analysis solely to the individual level) temporarily impeded the early mainstream sociological efforts of the ecologists. Pointing the finger at the individual,

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rather than social conditions, as had Guerry and Quetelet, was intellectually acceptable to the wealthy, who preferred to view criminality as an individual failing of the dangerous classes rather than as a societal shortcoming (Lindesmith & Levin, 1937; Radzinowicz, 1966; Vold et al., 2002).

On this point, Radzinowicz (1966) states,

> This way of looking at crime [the ecological school's approach] as the product of society was hardly likely to be welcome, however, at a time when a major concern was to hold down the "dangerous classes" . . . who had so miserable a share in the accumulating wealth of the industrial revolution that they might at any time break out in revolt in France. . . .
>
> It served the interests and relieved the conscience of those at the top to look upon the dangerous classes as an independent category, detached from the prevailing social conditions . . . a race apart, morally depraved and vicious. (pp. 38–39)

The social statisticians with their emphasis on social facts, statistics, the use of official data, and external social factors were perhaps ahead of their time. Shortcomings in their analysis, such as lack of full awareness of the inadequacies of official statistics and appropriate use of statistics themselves, are excusable given their pioneering efforts and the state of knowledge of the time. The ecological school represented a critical transition from the philosophical and purely theoretical approach of Beccaria to the more scientific criminological approaches of the 20th century.

Other Geographical Theories

The ancient origin of human interest in astrology and the assumed effect of astrological bodies on human behavior represent just one of many attempts to predict human emotion and activity on the basis of outside physical forces: the moon, the weather, climate, and the like. The word *lunatic,* from the Latin word *luna,* or moon, indicates the belief that human minds can be affected by phases of the moon. This is illustrated by legends and myths such as those about *les lupins* (werewolves) in French folklore. These creatures supposedly appeared on moonlit nights (D. Cohen, 1979) and were dramatically presented in fiction in the opening lines of the popular 1943 Universal Pictures film *The Wolf Man:*

> *Even a man who is pure in heart*
>
> *And says his prayers by night*
>
> *Can become a wolf when the wolfbane blooms*
>
> *And the moon is full and bright.*

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Daniel Cohen (1979) cites studies of mental hospital records that claim more admissions of mental patients during new and full moons, as well as a study by a suicide prevention center and one by a coroner's office, both indicating more successful attempts at suicides around the full-moon period. The most frequently cited study of this type is Lieber and Sherin's (1972) research on lunar cycles and homicides. They note that synodic cycles (phases of the moon) influence physical variables such as gravitation and atmospheric pressure that, in turn, influence human behavior. For instance, tidal periodicity is greatest during the new and full moon because of stronger gravitational influences. Assuming such forces may also affect human behavior, Lieber and Sherin analyzed homicide statistics for Dade County (Miami), Florida, and Cuyahoga County (Cleveland), Ohio, and found a statistically sign

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