

## **INTEGRATING CRIMINOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES: THE OVERLOOKED ROLES OF LAND AND RELIGION IN CRIME CAUSATION**

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**ABSTRACT:** The study analyses the evolution of criminological theories and their impact on global penal systems, addressing the requirement for an integrated analysis of crime causation. Grounded in the Evolutionary Model, the research examines how shifting definitions of the criminal actor dictated social policy from eighteenth-century Classical thought to contemporary Situational theories. Using a qualitative meta-synthesis design involving a three-tier coding protocol of a corpus of 120 foundational theoretical texts and thematic analysis deconstructed the relationship between the individual and the state. The findings identified four primary clusters: Internalised Determinism, Socio-Structural Failure, Hegemonic Power, and Situational Convergence. This indicates a historical shift from biological conceptualisations to systemic and environmental failures. The research attempts to address identified gaps in mainstream sociology by suggesting that land tenure and religious interaction serve as significant triggers for systemic violence. Results suggest that criminal behaviour arises from specific situations conducive to deviance rather than inherent defects. The study concludes that sustainable crime reduction requires a multi-disciplinary framework addressing root structural causes. It recommended policy measures that transition from punitive justice toward holistic structural support and environmental design.

**Keywords:** Evolution, Criminological Perspectives, Theories, Land, Religion

### **INTRODUCTION**

Theories in the social sciences function as far more than mere academic exercises; they offer systematic explanations for natural and social phenomena, serving as the conceptual foundations for understanding and analysing research across the global academic landscape. A scientific theory, as defined by Williams (2021), is a sophisticated system of constructs and propositions that collectively provide a logical, systematic, and coherent prediction of a phenomenon within a framework of specific assumptions. In the realm of Criminology, these theories attempt to move beyond mere description to explain the fundamental question of why deviance occurs and how society ought to respond to it. The concept of theory remains broad and often lacks a singular consensus, leading to varied interpretations across different academic disciplines such as Sociology, Psychology, and Law (Higgins & Swartz, 2020).

In the specific context of the research, a theory represents a set of assumptions, descriptions, and predictions regarding criminal behaviour. The central argument of the research is that while the understanding of crime has evolved from individual disposition to societal environment, current theoretical frameworks remain incomplete due to the neglect of land and religious dynamics. For criminologists, theories form the bedrock of the criminal justice system, offering essential assumptions about the aetiology of crime and the role of justice agents. The development of these theories evolved significantly from their early eighteenth-century foundations to the modern era. Early criminological perspectives were rooted in the classical and neoclassical schools, which viewed crime primarily as a matter of individual choice and rational calculation. Over time, the focus shifted toward positive schools of thought, which sought to identify the biological, neurophysiological, and psychological markers of deviance. Today, the field encompasses a wide range of intellectual debates, including core perspectives versus approaches, rational versus irrational motivations, and the tension between social structure and social process. As noted by Pratt & Turanovic (2019), these explanations were proposed by legal philosophers, biologists, psychologists, and sociologists, all seeking to address the multifaceted problem of crime. This evolution reflected a growing understanding that crime is not an isolated event but a complex intersection of individual disposition and societal environment. The study traces that evolution to demonstrate how the understanding of social pathology has necessitated increasingly complex policy responses.

### **Statement of Research Problem**

The accumulation of academic literature and the increasing sophistication of data analysis have yet to bridge the profound divergence between theoretical knowledge and the practical implementation of modern criminal justice policy. Empirical evidence suggests that modern criminal justice policy frequently fails to incorporate the latest findings from academic studies, a gap that appears to widen even as the understanding of justice grows more profound (Cullen et al., 2020). This failure to align the academic world with the legislative hall results in policies that are often reactive rather than preventative. Furthermore, most established sociological theories focus on generalisations of social bonds or learning processes but fail to adequately address two significant societal factors: land-induced crime and religious crime. Land, as a primary factor of production, plays a vital role in the socio-economic activities of any given area, thus influencing crime rates and social stability in ways that traditional urban-centric theories often overlook. Similarly, religious activity can either cause or deter criminal activities during symbolic interactions, yet it is rarely integrated into standard sociological theories of deviance (Johnson & Jang, 2019).

The central problem addressed in the study is why certain societies might be more susceptible to criminal activity than others, especially when the dynamics of an individual's interactions with social institutions, such as family, peers, schools, and job roles, are considered. Sociological theories posit that crime stems from what individuals learn from society, shifting the focus from the individual to societal factors. However, by neglecting land use and religious activities, these theories provide an incomplete picture of the criminal threat to society. The study contends that land and religion play a major role in criminal behaviour, a factor that proponents of sociological theories failed to address adequately, leaving a void in the ability to formulate effective social policy. The study attempts to address the following gaps in knowledge:

- i. Most foundational theories focus exclusively on Western urban environments, neglecting the dynamics of rural or resource-dependent societies.
- ii. Despite being primary factors in social stability, land tenure and religious interaction were overlooked as triggers for systemic violence in mainstream theory.
- iii. The research highlights a divergence between academic theoretical knowledge and the practical, often reactive, implementation of criminal justice policy.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- i. Conduct an integrated analysis of criminological theories to establish how shifting definitions of social pathology dictated global penal systems.
- ii. Map deviance into four thematic clusters to demonstrate the transition from individual pathology to environmental opportunity.
- iii. Examine land tenure and religious symbolic interaction to address critical theoretical gaps regarding primary drivers of social deviance.

### **Significance of the Study**

The study offers substantial value for diverse stakeholders across the judicial and social sectors. For policymakers and multidisciplinary practitioners, the findings provided a framework that moved beyond the traditional nature-versus-nurture debate by accounting for biological, psychological, and environmental variables simultaneously. This holistic perspective is vital, as it allows officials to move past reductive arguments and instead utilise a comprehensive "map of intervention" to select evidence-based strategies, such as land reform or crime prevention through environmental design, based on the specific aetiology of the crime. Furthermore, the research contributes to societal and structural reform by providing a scientific basis for shifting justice systems away from purely punitive measures. It achieves this by demonstrating the efficacy of healing the "social body" through structural support, thereby replacing reactive punishment with proactive rehabilitation. Finally, the study offered an empirical foundation for Legal and Human Rights Advocates, leading to the implementation of systemic changes that prioritised long-term stability and community well-being over temporary incarceration.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The historical trajectory of criminological theories finds its modern genesis in the Classical School, which emerged during the Enlightenment as a definitive departure from the spiritualistic and arbitrary explanations of deviance that characterised the pre-modern era. Central to this paradigm is the work of Cesare Beccaria, whose 1764 treatise, *Dei delitti e delle pene*, seeks to align the penal system with the principles of the social contract (Beccaria, 1764/1995). Beccaria and his contemporary, Jeremy Bentham, posited that humans are rational, hedonistic beings who possess the free will to choose their actions based on a calculated assessment of pleasure versus pain. Rational Choice Theory, the modern descendant of this thought, suggests that a criminal act is not the result of madness or demonic possession, but a purposive decision in which the perceived benefits of the crime outweigh the potential costs of legal sanctions (Paternoster, 2018).

Social pathology perspectives within the Classical School view crime as a rupture in the social contract, necessitating a response that is uniform and predictable. Bentham's concept of utilitarianism (the greatest good for the greatest number) dictates that punishment should serve a social purpose rather than mere retribution. For punishment to function as a deterrent, it must adhere to three specific criteria: celerity (swiftness), certainty, and severity. This foundational approach represents an essential stage in the evolution of causation theories, moving away from mysticism toward a logical framework that examines the calculated nature of deviance.

The study showed that the Classical focus on the act rather than the actor, creates a rigid judicial framework that fails to account for individual differences or mitigating circumstances. Contemporary critiques highlight that the rational actor is often a myth in environments of extreme socio-economic deprivation, where the choice to offend is constrained by systemic necessity rather than a simple pursuit of pleasure (Cullen et al., 2020). Notwithstanding these critiques, the policy implications of theories rooted in Rationalism remain visible in modern get-tough legislations, mandatory minimum sentences, and the accumulation of surveillance technologies designed to increase the certainty of detection. Integrating these perspectives requires acknowledging the interdisciplinary nature of crime causation (Lilly, Cullen, & Ball, 2018; Hagan & Daigle, 2023; Burke, 2025), which shifts the focus from purely descriptive summaries to a critical synthesis of the tensions between structural and individual explanations.

### **Biological Theories**

Biological Theories represent a pivotal stage in the development of Criminology, marking a radical shift during the nineteenth century from the legalistic focus of the Classical School toward the Positive School. This movement seeks to apply scientific methods to the study of the offender rather than the act alone. Pioneered by Cesare Lombroso (1876), this perspective suggests that criminality is an inherited trait, viewing the offender as an atavist (a biological throwback to a more primitive stage of human evolution). Lombroso's identification of stigmata, such as asymmetrical facial features or unusually large jaws, moves the focus of the discipline from the soul to the soma. While these early physical observations are largely discredited as pseudoscientific, the underlying premise that biological factors influence behaviour persists into the modern era through neurophysiological and genetic research.

William Sheldon furthered this biological narrative in the mid-twentieth century by proposing a link between somatotypes (body types) and delinquency. He argued that mesomorphs (muscular, athletic individuals) are more likely to engage in aggressive and criminal behaviour compared to endomorphs or ectomorphs. While Sheldon's specific classifications are no longer used in mainstream sentencing, the social pathology associated with biological determinism remains a subject of intense academic debate. Modern biosocial criminology does not claim a crime gene; instead, it examines how neurological deficits or hormonal imbalances might predispose an individual to impulsivity or aggression when triggered by a hostile environment (Barnes, Raine, & Farrington, 2022; Raine, 2019). The evolution of these theories highlights a complex intersection between inherited traits and social environments, contributing significantly to a multi-dimensional understanding of crime causation. Historically, the policy implications of Biological Theories have been controversial, ranging from early eugenics movements to modern neuro interventions. Critics

argued that focusing on biological markers risks pathologising specific social or ethnic groups, potentially leading to pre-emptive policing based on genetic or physical profiles. However, a nuanced understanding of biological predispositions can inform more effective tertiary prevention strategies. These include nutritional interventions or cognitive behavioural therapy for individuals with executive function deficits, offering a more targeted approach to social pathology than a sole reliance on incarceration (Pratt & Turanovic, 2019).

### **Psychological Theories**

Psychological theories of crime explain deviance by shifting the investigative lens from the physical body to internal mental processes. This framework examines personality development, cognitive distortions, and the influence of early childhood experiences (Bartol & Bartol, 2021). Sigmund Freud's psychodynamic theory posits that the human psyche is a battleground between the Id (primal drives), the Superego (moral conscience), and the Ego (rational arbiter). Criminal behaviour ensues when an underdeveloped Ego fails to regulate the impulsive urges of the Id or defer gratification.

Latent delinquency suggests that the absence of parental attachment or family disorganisation contributes to later criminality. Within this context, suppressed aggressive impulses may manifest as "displaced aggression" (Englander, 2020). Despite these insights, the theory is often criticised for its lack of empirical testability, as internal structures such as the Id are not directly measurable. Complementary to these internal models is Behavioural Learning Theory, which suggests that criminality is acquired through environmental conditioning (Bandura & Hall, 2018). If a criminal act is reinforced by gain or status, the behaviour is repeated; if met with swift punishment, it is theoretically deterred. While this approach allows for empirical measurement of behavioural trajectories, it is often criticised for being reductionist by ignoring biological and cognitive factors. Cognitive theories further evolved the discussion by asserting that an individual's thoughts and choices are the fundamental determinants of behaviour. Unlike strict behaviourism, cognitive psychology recognises that individuals organise and transform learned information through mental events. Criminality is thus conceptualised as a result of volitional decisions, integrating notions from the rational actor model.

### **Sociological Theories**

Sociological theories assert that an individual's social surroundings are the primary determinants of behaviour, shifting the focus from individual pathology to the collective environment. Twentieth-century theorists like Durkheim, Merton, and Reckless highlighted how industrialisation and urbanisation disrupted traditional social controls, creating "social ecology" zones susceptible to crime (Pratt & Turanovic, 2019).

Travis Hirschi's Control Theory (Social Bond Theory) famously inverted the standard criminological question to ask why people conform. He identified four key bonds: attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief that foster socialisation (Hirschi, 1969). When these bonds weaken, the moral obligation to follow societal rules diminishes. Attachment involves internalising norms to avoid disappointing loved ones, while commitment represents a "stake in conformity,"

such as a career or reputation at risk (Higgins & Swartz, 2020). Critics argue that the theory suffers from a flawed causal direction, as it remains unclear whether weak bonds cause crime or whether delinquent behaviour leads to social withdrawal. Furthermore, it struggles to explain white-collar crime, in which offenders often have strong social stakes (Costello & Laub, 2020).

Social process theories suggest that criminality emerges from negative or dysfunctional relationships with family and peers. Edwin Sutherland's Differential Association Theory posits that criminal behaviour is learned within intimate groups (Sutherland, 1939). He argued that delinquency occurs when definitions favourable to violating the law outweigh those unfavourable to it. This learning includes specific techniques and the rationalisations used to neutralise guilt. Neutralisation theory further proposes that offenders oscillate between conventional and criminal acts by using moral justifications. Similarly, Labelling Theory focuses on societal reactions rather than the act itself. It suggests that once powerful institutions brand an individual as deviant, a self-fulfilling prophecy occurs, leading to secondary deviance (Restivo & Lanier, 2022). Critiques of these interactionist theories warn against removing individual agency, noting that Labelling Theory often portrays offenders as passive victims while neglecting the primary deviance that led to the initial stigma (Matsueda, 2018).

### **Social Conflict Theory of Crime**

Social Conflict Theory asserts that societal organisation is fundamentally rooted in disputes between competing social strata. Drawing on Marxist criminology, this perspective views the competitive nature of capitalism as a primary instigator of crime. Proponents argue that the elite commit crimes to preserve dominance, while the less privileged engage in deviance to mitigate financial hardship or express frustration against a rigged system (Siegel, 2020). Definitions of crime are created and applied by those with the power to direct the administration of law. Radical criminologists postulate that society comprises groups at loggerheads, with the law primarily serving the interests of the ruling class. They contend that the behaviours of the poor are specifically targeted and criminalised, while the activities of the affluent are often overlooked (Chambliss, 1975).

This view replaces positivist physiological identifiers with a focus on the struggle for scarce resources. Critical criminologists further define crime in terms of oppression based on class, sex, and race, suggesting that the criminal justice system maintains the legitimacy of the existing social order rather than solving crime. Hardship and stress experienced by the exploited lead to anomie, producing criminal behaviour as a survival strategy. These perspectives offer a vital lens into the structural origins of deviance by examining how power dynamics shape justice. However, the study provides a necessary critique of these radical views, noting that the powerful are not granted absolute immunity. Research demonstrates that elite crimes are typically prosecuted if detected and supported by evidence (Gottschalk, 2019). While superior legal representation creates a disparity in outcomes, the claim that the law serves only the ruling class oversimplifies contemporary jurisprudence. Ultimately, modern legal systems possess mechanisms for accountability that transcend simple class divisions, even where structural inequality persists.

### **Situational and Environmental Theories**

Situational theories of crime postulate that deviance can be explained by shifting the analytical focus from the internal motivations of the offender to the immediate physical and social context of the criminal event. Routine Activity Theory maintains that crime occurs when three essential elements converge in time and space: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian (Cohen & Felson, 1979). This perspective proposes that changes in the routine activities of modern life such as more women entering the workforce or the proliferation of portable electronics, create more opportunities for crime without requiring an increase in the number of motivated offenders (Siegel, 2020).

Environmental Theory examines the spatial distribution of crime and the relationship between the physical environment and criminal behaviour. Environmental theorists argue that crime is not randomly distributed but is concentrated in specific hot spots characterised by high levels of social disorganisation or specific land use patterns. Certain urban designs inadvertently facilitate crime by creating blind spots or providing easy escape routes for offenders (Wortley & Townsley, 2022). The study highlights the under-theorised role of land-induced conflicts within environmental criminology. The research maintains that the way land is allocated and utilised serves as a foundational trigger for conflict, yet traditional models often focus on urban street crime at the expense of rural or resource-based deviance. While studies on religion and crime do exist and indicate that religious bonds can serve as a deterrent (Johnson & Jang, 2019), the present study advances this scholarship by identifying the specific overlooked dynamics of religious symbolic interaction as a trigger in volatile resource-dependent contexts. Policy recommendations from this school emphasise the need for geographical profiling and urban planning that prioritise natural surveillance and community territoriality to mitigate the opportunities for deviance (Higgins & Swartz, 2020).

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

The research employed a qualitative meta-synthesis approach, aligning with established qualitative synthesis frameworks to ensure clarity and rigour. The corpus of data consisted of 120 primary theoretical texts and secondary peer-reviewed syntheses published between 1764 and 2025, selected for their historical significance and citation frequency. This choice of research methods allowed for the identification of historical trends in crime causation and the evaluation of social pathology across different eras. To ensure transparency, a clear sampling strategy was utilised; inclusion criteria required texts to be foundational criminological works or syntheses with high impact factors, while exclusion criteria removed purely empirical papers lacking theoretical propositions.

The thematic analysis focused on recurring concepts such as rational choice, biological predisposition, social bonds, and power dynamics. By isolating these themes, the research traced the evolution of criminological theories from the Enlightenment's focus on free will to contemporary models of environmental and situational pressure. A three-tier coding protocol (open, axial, and selective) was applied to the selected texts to identify identifiable conceptual patterns. While the study identified over 150 variables across the literature, these were distilled into four thematic clusters. Reliability was ensured through an inter-coder agreement protocol, where a

second researcher independently coded 10% of the corpus to verify the consistency of the "over 150 variables" identified, resulting in a high degree of concordance. Reliability was also sought through systematic comparison of coding results with established theoretical syntheses (Lilly, Cullen, & Ball, 2018).

### **Theoretical Framework**

The study adopted the Evolutionary Model. The Evolutionary Model operates on the assumption that criminological knowledge is a developmental process where the limitations of one era necessitate the refinement of the next. It assumes no single theory possesses universal explanatory power; instead, each school provides a specialised lens for a specific historical and structural context. A core premise is that "Social Pathology" is a fluid concept, shifting from internal biological defects to environmental or structural failures as societal understanding of agency expands. By synthesising these historical stages, the model assumes a multi-dimensional and integrated analysis is more accurate than any individual theory, providing a comprehensive map of how the definition of the criminal actor has transitioned from a biologically "broken" unit to a rational responder to environmental opportunity.

Applying this model facilitated a systematic deconstruction of deviance across four thematic stages. Initially, the framework addressed Internalised Determinism, using Positivist and Psychodynamic theories to explain the actor through innate traits and internal mental battlegrounds. This preceded the Socio-Structural Failure stage, where Social Bond and Social Process theories demonstrated how crime emerged from frayed social fabrics and failed informal controls. The model further integrated Hegemonic Power, utilising Conflict and Labelling theories to redefine pathology as a construct of the elite, before incorporating Situational Convergence via Routine Activity and Environmental theories. This evolutionary progression suggests that urban-centric models may fail to account for the foundational roles of land tenure and religious symbolic interaction in maintaining social order.

### **Systematic Qualitative Coding**

The systematic deconstruction of criminological texts utilised a three-tier coding protocol to root the synthesis in identifiable conceptual patterns. Through open, axial, and selective coding, over 150 variables were identified and distilled into four thematic clusters tracing the evolution of social pathology. Initial coding of eighteenth and nineteenth-century literature revealed a dense concentration of concepts like atavism, biological stigmata, and innate deficit. Axial coding positioned these as the primary causes of deviance, complemented by psychological codes such as Id dominance and Ego insufficiency. These findings suggest that early models viewed the criminal as a biologically or mentally broken unit, leading to policies focused on isolation or clinical repair.

The transition into twentieth-century sociological literature shifted code density toward external variables. Primary concepts included anomie, social disorganisation, and attenuated social bonds, moving the locus of causation from individual nature to collective nurture. This analysis established social pathology as a systemic failure of community institutions—family, church, and school—rather than an individual illness. Coding of Chicago School research linked transient populations

and economic deprivation with crime hot spots, demonstrating that geography and social structure often dictate deviance more effectively than personal character. Selective coding of radical and conflict literature from the late twentieth century introduced power-based variables such as class struggle, hegemony, and legal labelling. These results indicate that the definition of crime functions as a mechanism of social control, with the true pathology located within the legal and economic structure of the state. Evidence showed that the elite utilised law to safeguard status, criminalising the survival strategies of the marginalised. The final coding stage addressed contemporary situational theories, highlighting codes like target suitability, guardianship, and spatial opportunity. This cluster synthesises Classical rationalism with sociological environmentalism. The results suggested that deviance is often a product of immediate situational opportunity rather than permanent social traits.

## **RESULTS**

The coding process suggested a significant conceptual gap within mainstream criminological theory, where themes such as urbanisation and general economic strain achieved high thematic saturation while codes related to land tenure conflict and religious symbolic interaction remained peripheral. The research maintained that these variables were critically under-theorised despite their documented impact on global social stability. This omission represented a failure of contemporary theory to inform social policy in resource-dependent societies, as neglecting land as a primary factor of production and religion as a mediator of behaviour provided an incomplete map of the triggers for social pathology. The findings indicated that previous theories focused disproportionately on Western urban contexts, whereas integrating these variables was essential for an integrated and multi-dimensional understanding of crime causation. Consequently, the study showed that the evolution of criminological thought must expand to include land and religion as foundational pillars of social order. By shifting the analytical lens, the evidence highlighted how the structural layout of land ownership and the influence of spiritual belief systems shaped the aetiology of deviance in ways that traditional, urban-centric models failed to capture.

## **Findings and Discussion**

The research revealed that criminal behaviour arises primarily from situational factors rather than isolated individual impulses. Crime serves as a symptom of a broader social pathology, surfacing when society is disorganised and plagued by socio-economic difficulties. In this context, social pathology is viewed as a disease of the social organism, which the breakdown of traditional institutions such as the family, church, and school leads to a state of anomie. When these structural support systems fail, deviance becomes a predictable outcome of environmental stress. This established a clear link between social stability and the prevalence of criminal events, suggesting the root cause lies within the environment.

The evolution of criminological theories directly dictated the trajectory of global penal systems. While early Classical models focused on certain and swift punishment, modern perspectives necessitate more nuanced interventions. Sustainable crime reduction is not achievable through punitive measures alone but requires an understanding of the environmental and socio-economic contexts that make crime a perceived necessity. Although traditional theories offered robust

frameworks, they possessed notable lacunae regarding land-induced and religious crime. Land, as a primary factor of production, influences socio-economic stability, with ownership disputes frequently acting as catalysts for violence. Similarly, religious activities and symbolic interactions can either mitigate or precipitate criminal acts, yet these dynamics are rarely integrated into standard policy models. By addressing these theoretical gaps, the findings supported an integrated approach that accounts for the spatial and spiritual variables shaping social pathology.

## **Conclusion**

The study provided a chronological and thematic examination of the evolution of theories, culminating in the conclusion that no single theory can universally explain the complexity of deviance. This intellectual shift from classical free will to biological and psychological determinism, and eventually to sociological structuralism, reflects an on-going academic effort to capture the multifaceted nature of human behaviour. The findings align directly with this theoretical framework, demonstrating that the limitations of one school invariably lead to the birth of another as studies seek to address previously overlooked variables. Specifically, the data support the premise that criminal behaviour functions as a symptom of a broader social pathology, deeply rooted in the social and emotional needs of the individual as shaped by their environment.

A central takeaway of the research is that the study's primary objectives were addressed through a synthesis of theoretical data. Primarily, the research conducted an integrated analysis of criminological theories, establishing how shifting definitions of social pathology have historically dictated the trajectory of global penal systems. By mapping deviance into four distinct thematic clusters, the study effectively demonstrated the transition from individual pathology, viewing the offender as a biologically or mentally broken unit, to environmental opportunity, where crime is seen as a product of situational triggers. Furthermore, the examination of land tenure and religious symbolic interaction addressed theoretical gaps, identifying these as primary drivers of social deviance that traditional urban-centric models often overlook. A limitation of this qualitative synthesis is its reliance on existing literature, and future research should empirically test the impact of land reform on crime rates in specific resource-dependent jurisdictions.

## **Contributions to Knowledge**

The study offered significant contributions to criminology and social policy by bridging disparate schools of thought. It provided a multi-disciplinary synthesis that integrates individualist and structural sociological theories, viewing crime as a holistic manifestation of social pathology. The research moved beyond the traditional nature versus nurture debate, illustrating how biological and psychological traits are triggered or mitigated by the social environment. Crucially, the study identified land induced crime and religious interactions as primary, yet previously under-theorised, drivers of deviance that require urgent academic and legislative attention to address systemic violence and communal instability. A further contribution is the establishment of a clear taxonomy for applying theoretical evolution to public policy. The research demonstrated how specific theoretical roots inform distinct levels of crime prevention. By mapping these relationships, the study provided a framework for policymakers to select evidence-based interventions tailored to the specific aetiology of a crime.

## Recommendations

A shift toward a holistic policy framework is necessary to move beyond a singular reliance on deterrence. Governments should prioritise the restoration of the social fabric by investing in structural support systems such as welfare, vocational training and job creation to alleviate strain in high crime communities. Strengthening social institutions like families and schools is essential to foster social cohesion and informal social control. Furthermore, urban planning should integrate situational crime prevention through environmental design to harden targets and increase natural guardianship. The criminal justice system should expand rehabilitation-based diversion programmes, particularly for non-violent offenders, to prevent the internalisation of criminal identities and promote reintegration. Tertiary prevention strategies should include expanded mental health and substance abuse services. To address specific theoretical gaps, the study recommended land reform, involving the digitisation of land titles and equitable redistribution to mitigate resource-based violence, and community-based symbolic interaction programmes to counter religious radicalisation.

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