

LO4: UNDERSTAND CAUSES OF POLICY CHANGE		
Assessment Criterion	Content	Amplification
AC4.1 The use of criminological theories in informing policy development	Criminological Theories • individualistic • biological • sociological Policy Development • informal policy making/populism • formal policy making: ○ crime control policies ○ state punishment policies	Learners should be able to apply their knowledge of each of the theories and assess their use in informing policy on crime. This could include, for example: ○ Penal Populism/Zero Tolerance ○ CCTV/Restorative Justice ○ Multi-Agency Approaches. ○ Brain Surgery/Compulsory Sterilisation

How are biological approaches related to policy? - Crime control policies based on biological approaches assume that criminal behaviour is influenced by genetics, brain structure, or hormonal imbalances. Interventions such as chemical castration for sex offenders, methadone treatment for addiction, and neurosurgical procedures aim to reduce criminal tendencies by altering biological functions. Advances in genetic screening and neuroimaging also allow for early identification of at-risk individuals. While some policies have shown effectiveness, they raise ethical concerns about human rights, consent, and potential misuse. Despite these issues, biological approaches continue to shape crime prevention through forensic psychology, neuroimmunology, and medical rehabilitation programs.

POLICY TYPE	DESCRIPTION & PURPOSE	DOES IT WORK?	PROBLEMS WITH THIS POLICY
Compulsory Sterilisation	Compulsory sterilisation was once used as a crime control policy in some countries, based on the false belief that criminal behaviour was inherited. Supporters claimed that stopping certain people—especially criminals, the poor, and the disabled—from having children would reduce crime. In the early to mid-20th century, countries like the United States, Sweden, and Nazi Germany sterilised people without consent, often targeting marginalised groups rather than actual criminals.	There is no scientific evidence that sterilisation reduces crime. Criminal behaviour is shaped by social, economic, and environmental factors , not genetics. Many sterilised individuals were not criminals at all, just from disadvantaged backgrounds. Even for those who had offended, sterilisation did nothing to change their behaviour or prevent reoffending. Today, crime prevention focuses on rehabilitation, mental health treatment, education, and social support , which have been far more effective.	Compulsory sterilisation is now considered a human rights violation . Many victims were misled or forced into the procedure, and the policy was often used to discriminate against certain groups rather than control crime. Instead of tackling the root causes of offending , it punished the powerless and reinforced inequality. While widely condemned today, concerns remain about coercive sterilisation in some medical and legal systems , particularly affecting prisoners, people with disabilities, and ethnic minorities. Crime prevention should focus on justice and reform, not unethical medical practices .
Brain Surgery (Lobotomy)	A lobotomy is a type of brain surgery that cuts connections in the prefrontal cortex , the part of the brain that controls emotions, decision-making, and impulse control. In the mid-20th century, some governments and doctors promoted lobotomies as a way to control violent or antisocial behaviour , including in criminals. The aim was to make aggressive or disruptive individuals calmer and less prone to violence. In some cases, prisoners and young offenders were lobotomised, not due to mental illness, but as a way to control their behaviour and prevent future crimes.	While lobotomies sometimes made individuals more passive, they were not a reliable or effective crime control method . The procedure often left people emotionally numb, confused, or unable to function properly . Though it could reduce aggression, it also damaged rational thinking and decision-making , sometimes making behaviour worse. Unlike modern approaches that address the root causes of crime , such as mental health support and rehabilitation, lobotomies were a crude, irreversible attempt to control people without understanding the real reasons behind their actions.	From an ethical perspective , using lobotomies for crime control was a serious human rights violation . Many patients were not properly informed or forced into the procedure , often against their will. Instead of offering fair trials and rehabilitation , authorities used lobotomies to silence and subdue people. Some individuals who were not even criminals , such as rebellious teenagers or people with disabilities, were lobotomised simply for being “difficult.” Today, lobotomies are seen as an example of pseudoscience and unethical medical practices used to oppress vulnerable people rather than help them .

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Detox & Drug Substitution	Antabuse (disulfiram) and methadone are both used to treat addiction but work in very different ways. Antabuse is used for alcohol dependence and causes severe nausea, vomiting, and headaches if alcohol is consumed, acting as a deterrent. Methadone , used for opioid addiction, reduces cravings and withdrawal symptoms without producing a high, making it a substitution therapy rather than a deterrent. Unlike Antabuse, methadone helps stabilise users by preventing withdrawal, reducing drug-related crime.	Both medications can be effective , but their success depends on consistent use and supervision . Antabuse only works if taken regularly, as skipping doses removes its deterrent effect, and it does not reduce cravings. Methadone, meanwhile, allows opioid users to function normally, helping them avoid crime linked to drug use , but it can also be addictive if not carefully managed. Both treatments work best when combined with therapy, counselling, and long-term support .	There are ethical concerns about both drugs. Some argue that Antabuse is more of a punishment than a treatment , as it does not address the causes of addiction and can be dangerous if alcohol is accidentally consumed. Methadone is controversial because it replaces one addiction with another , and some users remain dependent on it for years. However, supporters argue that methadone prevents crime, overdose, and withdrawal cycles , while Antabuse can help those committed to quitting. Ultimately, both should be part of a broader approach that tackles addiction's social and psychological causes, not just its symptoms .
Chemical Castration	Chemical castration is a medical treatment that reduces testosterone levels using drugs like cyproterone acetate or leuprolide , significantly lowering sex drive and making sexual activity difficult or impossible. Unlike surgical castration , it is reversible if treatment stops. Some governments have used it as a crime control measure for sex offenders , believing that lowering testosterone reduces the risk of reoffending. In some countries, it is voluntary for offenders seeking reduced sentences, while in others, it is legally enforced .	Chemical castration can reduce sexual urges , which may help prevent some sex offenders from reoffending. However, it does not work for everyone , as not all sexual crimes are driven by testosterone alone. Psychological disorders, power dynamics, and violent tendencies can still lead to reoffending , even if sexual desire is suppressed. The treatment only works if offenders continue taking the medication , raising concerns about compliance and enforcement . Some studies suggest it can lower recidivism rates , but its effectiveness depends on combining it with therapy, supervision, and rehabilitation programmes .	The use of chemical castration raises serious ethical and human rights concerns . Critics argue that forcing medical treatment as a legal punishment violates bodily autonomy and could be considered cruel and inhumane . There are also risks of severe side effects , including depression, osteoporosis, and cardiovascular issues . Many question whether it truly addresses the root causes of sexual offending , as not all offences are purely hormonal. While some see it as a useful tool for high-risk offenders , others argue that long-term psychological treatment and rehabilitation are more effective than simply suppressing testosterone.
Eugenics & Genetic Interventions	Eugenics was once used as a crime control policy , based on the false belief that criminal behaviour is inherited . In the early 20th century, some governments claimed that people with mental illnesses, low intelligence, or criminal histories were genetically predisposed to crime. As a result, they introduced forced sterilisation programmes to stop these individuals from having children, aiming to "purify" the population and reduce crime over time. This approach was used in countries like the United States, Sweden, and Nazi Germany , often targeting poor communities, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities .	There is no scientific evidence that eugenics reduces crime. Criminal behaviour is shaped by social, economic, and psychological factors , not genetics. Many people who were sterilised were not criminals , but simply from disadvantaged backgrounds or had misunderstood conditions. Crime is more effectively reduced through education, social support, mental health treatment, and economic opportunities , rather than attempts to control reproduction. The idea that crime is "in the genes" has been debunked , and modern criminology recognises that environmental and social factors play a far bigger role in shaping behaviour.	Eugenics is now seen as a serious violation of human rights . It was based on discrimination, pseudoscience, and state control over reproduction . Many were forcibly sterilised without consent , and entire groups were labelled as "unfit" simply because of poverty, disability, or race . These policies ignored the real causes of crime and instead punished innocent people based on prejudice. While eugenics is widely condemned today , concerns remain over genetic profiling, biological theories of crime, and reproductive control in vulnerable communities .