



By Dr. Telly Kamelia

If you only need the buying answer, rental is the clear low-cost winner in the current snapshot. The new print copy still has a defensible case because it lands close to the used market and well below the broader new-print market, which matters if you expect this theory book to stay useful after the course ends.

Format	Seller	Current Price	Link
Rental	BookFinder marketplace	\$27.49	Check price
eTextbook 180 Days	VitalSource	\$56.99	Check price
Paperback Used	BookFinder marketplace	\$80.57	Check price
Paperback New	Merybook	\$83.77	Check price
Paperback New	BookFinder marketplace	\$129.99	Check price

This price table tells an honest mixed story. Rental is dramatically cheaper, so students optimizing only for semester cost already have their answer. At the same time, the current new paperback is close to the used market and much lower than the broader new-book market, which means ownership is not irrational. It just serves a different purpose from renting.

What this book actually teaches

Vold's Theoretical Criminology matters because it teaches comparison, not just recall. Students use it to work through how different criminological theories explain crime, where they conflict, how they developed historically, and how they connect to empirical evidence. That is why theory texts often stay relevant in later seminars, papers, and graduate preparation. Their value grows when students need to write with theory rather than just recognize names.

That continued usefulness is the only real argument for paying more than the rental route. If you only need the cheapest temporary path, rent it. If you expect to return to theory in upper-level criminology, criminal justice, sociology, or graduate work, the

current new print copy is not badly positioned for ownership.

Who should buy print and who should not

Rent if this is a one-course requirement and cost is the main decision factor. Buy print if you expect later theory writing, seminars, or graduate-bound use and want a clean copy you can keep marking up. In the current market, rental is the cheaper answer, while print is the longer-horizon answer.

Sources checked

- [Merybook listing search](#)
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