second edition

Fundamentals of CRIMINOLOGY

Henry W. Mannle J. David Hi<u>rschel</u>

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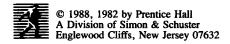
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Preface

Crime is a complex, multifaceted problem with seemingly more issues than answers. Acquiring a mastery of the subject requires a firm grasp of statistical procedures, research methodology, and theoretical constructs. Because of time restraints or insufficient preparation, this presents a formidable task for the beginning student or interested layperson. Unfortunately, many current textbooks confuse rather than clarify the issues by attempting to cover all of the bases.

This text is not designed to provide a complete exploration of criminology. It is, as the title indicates, an attempt to present the fundamentals. Statistics are used to illustrate relatively stable and broad trends, not as narrow or immutable facts in and of themselves. Research findings are sparingly selected for their capacity to enrich a given topic rather than to supply the introductory student with a working bibliography. Theoretical discussions are geared to providing readers with a general overview of past and present explanations of crime with a minimal use of abstract jargon. Finally, substantive areas dealing with offenses, offenders, the law, police, courts, corrections, and crime control are written to be informative through a concise, not exhaustive, coverage of subjects.

The book's format is also intended to facilitate comprehension. Each chapter outlines learning objectives, subdivides material at appropriate points, and provides learning checks. Instructors should encourage students to complete the chapter quizzes and reread troublesome material before advancing to the next chapter.

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Henry W. Mannle and J. David Hirschel

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1

Definition of Crime, Criminals, and Criminology

OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, the student should be able to:

- State a social definition, a strict legal definition, and a less rigid legal definition of crime.
- Define corpus delicti as well as the two major elements that form the corpus delicti of a crime.
- Compare common law and statutory law.
- Distinguish between crimes which are felonies or misdemeanors and crimes which are mala in se or mala prohibita.
- Define crime, criminal, and criminology according to the concepts that will be used in this book.

On a Friday evening, a man enters a "singles bar" and introduces himself to an attractive woman who has just seated herself at an adjoining table. After some drinks, an occasional dance, and much small talk, the conversation assumes sexual overtones. Both parties seem to be mutually interested in one another, and both appear to be free to discontinue their interaction at will. Responding to perceived cues, the man propositions the woman. The woman smiles and they leave, hand in hand, for the man's apartment.

During the same evening, another man walks into a lounge and strikes up a conversation with a woman seated next to him at the bar. After some drinks, occasional dances, and much small talk, the man's remarks begin to have sexual implications. As

in the first instance, both individuals seem to be mutually interested in one another, and both appear to be free to part company at will. Responding to perceived cues, the man propositions the woman. The woman, however, frowns, announces that she is a vice officer, and that he is under arrest for soliciting for purposes of prostitution. This couple leaves, "hand in hand," for the nearest police precinct station.

In both cases we have two parties who are not acting under duress or force. In both cases we have an exchange of favors (dancing, buying of drinks, and so on). In both cases there is an apparent mutual interest in a potential sexual encounter. Nevertheless, in the latter case we might assume that the proposition included a more direct financial condition. This second episode also included an exchange involving a party with sworn arrest powers whose intention, unbeknownst to the man, was not to generate a sexual relationship.

Why is one situation possibly considered part of the "dating game" while the other may be dealt with as criminal behavior? Is it simply because the latter case involved money in exchange for sexual favors? If sex for money is the distinguishing feature, one could conceivably argue that some marriages between rich elderly men and young women should be classified as crimes.

Frequently what seems to be very clear and straightforward is, in fact, quite complicated. Arriving at a definition of crime is a difficult task. Defining a criminal act is much easier on an impersonal or abstract level than on a personal, case-by-case basis. For example, most of us would agree that the unjustifiable or inexcusable killing of a human being is a crime, that is, criminal homicide. Suppose, however, that the following circumstances have occurred:

A recently divorced man meets his former wife who is pregnant by another man with whom she is currently living. The ex-husband says, "I hear you're pregnant. If you are, you had better stay away from the girls [their children] and from here." Upon a closer look at his wife, the former husband becomes angry and says, "You sure are [pregnant]. I'm going to stomp it out of you." He then kicks her in the abdomen and strikes her face several times. The unborn child is delivered by Caesarian section and is dead.

Physicians later testify that the fetus [a girl]: (1) weighed 5 pounds and was 18 inches in length, (2) was 31½ to 36 weeks old [the average full-term pregnancy is approximately 40 weeks], (3) would have had a 75 percent to 96 percent chance of survival had it been prematurely born under normal conditions at the time of the alleged offense, and (4) died of a skull fracture with consequent cerebral hemorrhaging likely as a result of force applied to the mother's abdomen by her ex-husband.

Given the circumstances described, has a criminal homicide taken place? What do you think?

This incident actually occurred some years ago in California. The prosecutor filed a charge of murder against the defendant, stating that the defendant did "unlawfully kill a human being . . . with malice aforethought." However, based on a writ of prohibition, the California court subsequently ruled that the petitioner could not be charged with murder because he had not killed a human being. At the time of the

alleged offense, California law stated that a fetus must be in the process of being born before it is considered a human being and is thus subject to the homicide statute. In this case, the fetus was not in the process of being born when attacked by the exhusband.

DEFINITION OF CRIME

Before any problem can be systematically studied, it must be adequately defined. The criminologist's major concern over the definition of "crime" is the extent to which that definition affects the specific field of inquiry. If "crime" is too narrowly defined, then one's research will omit much of what should be studied. On the other hand, if "crime" is too broadly defined, then the term may become meaningless and lost in a sea of conflicting or overlapping concepts.

The Relative Nature of Crime

Crime is not absolute. Crime is relative. That is, what is a crime varies with time and place. There was a period when crime was not officially defined and criminal acts were handled through private vengeance. Justice was left to the concerned individuals. Punishment was intended to satisfy revenge. No outside parties acted as referees. Reactions to crime eventually passed from those of private vengeance to the kinship or blood revenge.

Blood feuds involved the administration of unspecified punishments by the victim's family or tribe against the offender's kinship group. Crimes as well as punishments were not typically codified under this system. The concept of crime and criminal law developed with the beginning of the state or monarchy.

At first, only acts against the monarch were considered crimes by the state. In the due course of events, the notion of collective state responsibility and financial compensation acted to eliminate private vengeance and blood feuds. Consequently, the state through the ruler's authority assumed the administration of justice by defining crimes, codifying laws, establishing fines, and implementing the jury system. The development of law in Western society is more fully explored in Section 6.

Today we have specific laws that pertain to income tax evasion and skyjacking. At the turn of the century such laws were nonexistent because there was no federal income tax and air piracy was not a problem for a nation that lacked a commercial airline industry. Likewise, our drug laws that make the possession or sale of certain substances a crime were unheard of prior to World War I.

In the past there have been laws making it a crime to teach blacks to read, to sell firearms to American Indians, and to teach the biological theory of evolution. Some rather curious, outdated laws still remain on the books in some states even though they are rarely enforced. According to Hyman's investigation, it is illegal (or was so until recently) to hunt or shoot camels in Arizona, to use a beanshooter in Arkansas, to slap