

Introduction to Criminology

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List of Boxes

by Type and Chapter

GLOBAL VIEW

- The Criminals of Milan, Italy, Go On Vacation (1)
- Fear of Crime in Israel (2)
- Crime Statistics in the Federal Republic of Germany (3)
- The Swiss Approach to the Relationship Between Drugs and Crime (4)
- Violent Crime in Sweden (5)
- International Efforts to Stop Bribery (6)
- Theft in Sweden and Germany (7)
- Drug Trafficking from Columbia (8)
- Chinese Organized Crime (8)
- Iran's Criminal Justice System (9)
- Categorizing Criminal Offenders in New Zealand and The People's Republic of China (10)
- Singapore's Caning of Michael Fay (11)
- Three C's: China, Crime, Control (12)
- Socialism and Crime in Tanzania (13)
- Women Police in South India (14)
- Are the Poor Most Likely to Commit Homicide? (15)
- French Criminal Procedure Required Secrecy Prior To the French Revolution of 1789 (16)
- Punishment for Crime in Sweden (17)
- Ideology and the Cuban Boat People (18)

HISTORICAL SNAPSHOT

- Newspaper Coverage of Crime: One Day, One Newspaper, One Century Apart (2)
- The M'Naghten Case (2)
- Cesare Beccaria: Humanitarian Reformer and Reluctant Celebrity (9)
- Jeremy Bentham: Voice of Utilitarianism (9)
- Ten Significant Dates/Events in the Development of the American Police (14)
- Nineteenth-Century Imprisonment of Women (16)
- Big House Prisons and Violence (16)

LAW AND JUSTICE

- Seat Belt Laws (2)
- Developing and Implementing Anti-Stalking Laws (5)

Can Environmental Regulation Actually Promote More Environmental Crime? (6)

Pressures to Reform the CIA (6)

Stopping Motor Vehicle Theft Through Citizen Education (7)

Labels Can Make a Difference (12)

Responding to Corporate Crime (13)

Broken Windows, Computers, and Crime Control (14)

Primetime Television Police (14)

Race and Policing (14)

Key Players in the Criminal Trial Courtroom (15)

Sexism in the Courtroom (15)

Defense Attorneys in Death Penalty Cases Have Made National Headlines in Recent Years (15)

The Impact of "Three Strikes" Laws on the California State Prison System (17)

Types of Community Corrections Programs (17)

Race and Sex of Corrections Officers and Job Satisfaction (17)

CRIME IN AMERICA

Estimation of the Scope of Gang Crime from Law Enforcement Data (3)

Victims of Certain Offenses Are Often Blamed for Their Own Victimization (4)

Myths and Facts About Domestic Battery (5)

Myths and Facts About Rape (5)

Business Ethics and White-Collar Crime (6)

Is Marijuana Harmless? (8)

Danger in the Waste Industry (8)

Career Criminals (10)

"Wilding" in Central Park (11)

The Internet as a Crime Zone (11)

Hot Weather and Domestic Disputes (11)

Religion and Criminal Behavior (12)

Juvenile Violence and Demography (18)

READING BETWEEN THE LINES

There Are Many Reasons Why People Fail to Report Crime (3)

Some Crime Trends Differ from National Rates (4)

Statistical Trends Sometimes Hide Changes in Crime Categories (5)

Has Increased Use of Prisons Caused Property Crime to Decline? (7)

Criminals Are Not Always So Rational (9)

Should Adolescents Work? (12)

Preface

Everyone cares about crime. Not surprisingly, people have all sorts of ideas about crime and criminal justice. Some of these ideas are accurate, but many are misleading, incomplete, or just plain wrong. This is where criminology comes in. Criminology is the formal, systematic, and scientific study of crime. Criminologists have advanced numerous theories and findings about crime and criminal justice. In fact, criminology provides a useful storehouse of facts about crime. This book opens up that storehouse and we invite all students of crime to examine the contents. The chapters ahead present up-to-date information and statistical data on the nature and extent of crime, types of crime, theories of crime, and the American criminal justice system.

Organization

This book has four major substantive sections: the nature and extent of crime, types of crime, theories of crime, and the criminal justice system. Chapters 2 to 4 focus particularly on the nature and extent of crime in the United States. Chapter 2 offers an analysis of popular images and definitions of crime. Because crime is routinely defined in reference to the legal code, this chapter also discusses the leading models of law creation. Chapter 3 describes the various methods by which crime is measured and notes the strengths and weaknesses of each method. Chapter 4 rounds out this section by debunking twelve common beliefs (myths) about crime and criminal justice.

There are four chapters in the section on types of crime. Chapter 5 highlights violent interpersonal crimes, Chapter 6 examines crimes of the powerful, Chapter 7 addresses conventional property crime, and Chapter 8 considers public order crimes. Each of these chapters offers a detailed analysis of the specific type of crime under investigation. This includes a detailed discussion of the demographic characteristics (race, gender, and age) of the most frequent offenders and victims.

The section on criminological theory begins with an extended introduction, “Your Personal Guide to Theory,”

which is designed to help readers get the most out of the five theory chapters. Chapters 9 and 10 highlight individualistic causes of crime, while Chapters 11, 12, and 13 emphasize the social causes of crime. Each of the theory chapters follows a set format that includes background, core propositions, position on criminal responsibility, policy implications, subsequent developments, critique, and summary.

Finally, there are four chapters in the section on the criminal justice system. Chapter 14 focuses on the police, while Chapter 15 discusses the court system. Chapters 16 and 17 examine corrections. Theories of punishment and the history of corrections are the main topics of Chapter 16, and contemporary corrections and current patterns of incarceration are the primary subjects of Chapter 17.

Special Features

- **Accessible Writing Style.** This is an introduction to criminology text. Readers will not be expected to know sociological or criminological jargon. The book is written for a general audience.
- **Introductory Vignettes.** Many chapters open with a human interest account that relates directly to the content of the chapter. This helps students connect the readings to daily life.
- **Critical Thinking Theme.** A primary aim of this book is to prompt readers to think critically about crime and related topics. Frequently the chapters provide information and evidence that will challenge conventional beliefs. Moreover, students will be exposed to numerous debates within criminology. We hope that students will be actively engaged as they read, and that at the end of each chapter they have more answers about crime—and, perhaps, more questions!
- **Focus on Key Demographic Variables.** Crime is not a monolithic phenomenon in terms of commission or

victimization. With regard to offenders and victims, there are four specific demographic variables that require systematic discussion: gender, race/ethnicity, age, and class. We offer a targeted analysis for each of these variables—particularly in the types-of-crime section.

- **Uniform Format.** As much as is practical, the chapters within a section will follow a consistent outline. For example, in the types-of-crime section, each of the chapters includes a discussion of the nature, extent, and costs of each type of crime; consideration of offenders and victims; and a breakdown of specific types of crime. Additionally, all five chapters in the theory section follow a set format (background, core propositions, position on criminal responsibility, policy implications, subsequent developments, critique, and summary).
- **Myths and Facts Chapter.** Commonsense and popular beliefs about crime, criminals, and criminal justice abound. Chapter 4 offers an explicit examination of twelve crime/criminal justice myths. Students will see that views gained from personal experiences and media representations frequently conflict with established scientific evidence.
- **Theory Section Introduction.** Preceding the theory chapters is a detailed introduction to theory in general and crime theorizing in particular. Many students initially find crime theories uninteresting or too abstract to understand. This introduction shows how theories are used in everyday life.
- **Agency (Criminal Responsibility) Issue.** Is action in society individually chosen or determined by social structure? In sociology this question is called the “agency” problem. Most theories of crime stress one side of the equation to the relative neglect of the other. Each of the theory chapters addresses this issue. Students want to know who or what is responsible for crime, and this approach to examining theories offers answers to this fundamental question.
- **Policy Implications.** Every chapter contains an implicit or explicit discussion of historical or current policies regarding crime or criminal justice. We specifically identify the policy implications of each of the major theories considered, and policy matters also receive particularly close attention in the criminal justice chapters.
- **Boxes.** There are 60 boxes highlighted throughout the book. Each of the boxes relates to one of five themes:

1. Global View boxes are offered in every chapter. A world perspective on crime and criminal justice has become increasingly relevant and these boxes address that concern (e.g., violent crime in Sweden in Chapter 5; Iran’s criminal justice system in Chapter 9).
2. Historical Snapshot boxes feature noteworthy developments or patterns from the past (e.g., the case of Daniel McNaughtan, which laid the foundation for modern insanity defense standards in Chapter 2; historical imprisonment of women in Chapter 15).
3. Law and Justice boxes focus on policy matters (e.g., the surprising forces leading to the creation of state seat belt laws in Chapter 2; the impact of three-strike laws on California’s prison system in Chapter 17).
4. Crime in America boxes draw attention to current crime issues in the United States (e.g., the scope of gang crime in Chapter 3; the Internet as a crime zone in Chapter 11).
5. Reading Between the Lines boxes are examples of critical thinking in criminology (e.g., has the increased use of prisons resulted in a reduction of property crime? in Chapter 7; do adolescents who work part-time jobs have lower rates of crime and delinquency? in Chapter 12). The insights of these boxes might surprise readers.

Pedagogical Aids

Each chapter begins with an outline and a list of key terms. At the conclusion of each chapter, readers will find a set of “critical thinking” questions and a list of suggested readings. As noted above, the text offers dozens of special focus boxes, and, of course, where relevant and useful, there are tables, figures, and charts. Wadsworth Publishing also makes available a full array of course supplements including an instructor’s resource manual with test items, student study guide, video library, and a criminal justice web site that offers up-to-date information.

In Appreciation

We started this book at the invitation of Joseph Terry, formerly of West Publications. Joe, along with Sharon Adams Poore, also with West, were instrumental in guiding our early progress. Thank you, Joe and Sharon! We also appreciate the sound advice received from Francis Cullen and Richard Schaefer. Their insights and encouragement helped considerably. Carol Skiles, our department secre-

tary, has worked tirelessly on numerous drafts. Carol helped us make deadlines that would otherwise have been unattainable. We also thank Jeff Radosh, Carol Rowland Maguire, and Georgie Ann Weatherby, who offered advice and support throughout.

Sabra Horne and Dan Alpert of Wadsworth have been crucial to the completion of this project. They inherited a rough project with potential and guided it to the finish. Along the way, Sabra and Dan made numerous suggestions that made the book more interesting and accessible to its readers.

No textbook comes to fruition without the careful review of experts in the field. The following people lent their suggestions and support, for which we are grateful:

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Teaching a course on crime never gets old. After years of teaching criminology, it is clear to us that students typically have a keen interest in crime and criminal justice. This book responds to that interest by providing a scientifically informed examination of crime that offers up-to-date statistical data, theoretical insights, and policy research findings. The text does not provide any simple answers to crime questions, but each chapter offers insights intended to be eye-opening and provocative, and thus to prompt further interest in the study of crime.

Brendan Maguire
Polly F. Radosh

TO MY BROTHER

James L. Flannery

WHOSE LIFE WAS TRAGICALLY ENDED IN A RANDOM VIOLENT CRIME
DURING THE WRITING OF THIS BOOK.

P.F.R.

TO

Carol Rowland Maguire

B.K.M.

Brief Contents

part 1

Crime and Criminal Justice 1

- 1** Introduction to Criminology 3

part 2

The Nature and Extent of Crime 11

- 2** Images and Definitions of Crime 13
- 3** Measures of Crime 29
- 4** Myths and Facts About Crime 43

part 3

Types of Crime 63

- 5** Violent Interpersonal Crimes 65
- 6** Crimes of the Powerful 91
- 7** Conventional Property Crime 113
- 8** Public Order Crimes 133

part 4

Theories of Crime 155

- Your Personal Guide to Theory 156
- 9** Crime as Individually Chosen Behavior 163
- 10** Theories of the Driven Offender 183
- 11** Micro Social Causes of Crime:
Social Ecology and Differential Association 205
- 12** Micro Social Causes of Crime:
Labeling and Social Control 223
- 13** Macro Social Causes of Crime:
Strain, Marxist, and Feminist Theories 241

part 5

The Criminal Justice System 261

- 14** Police 263
- 15** Courts 285
- 16** Corrections 313
- 17** Patterns of Incarceration 331

part 6

Conclusion 357

- 18** Current Themes in Criminology 359

name index 369

subject index 372

Contents

p r e f a c e **xix**

p a r t **1** ***Crime and Criminal Justice*** **1**

1 Introduction to Criminology **3**

- The Scientific Study of Crime 4
- Criminology and Alternative Perspectives 4
- Aims and Limitations of Criminology 4
 - Debunking Crime Myths 4
 - Policy Proposals 5
 - Evaluation Research 5
 - Limitations of Criminology 6
- Preview 7

p a r t **2** ***The Nature and Extent of Crime*** **11**

2 Images and Definitions of Crime **13**

- Popular Images of Crime and Criminals 14
 - Media Images 14
 - The "Crime Problem" 15
 - The "Typical Criminal" 16
- Three Definitions of Crime 17
 - Legalistic Definition 17
 - Intention 17
 - Knowledge 18
 - Freedom 18
 - Labeling Definition 18
 - Harms-Based Definition 20
 - Sutherland's Statement of White-Collar Crime 20
 - Crime as Behavior That Violates Human Rights 20
 - Analogous Forms of Social Injury 21
 - Rating the Definitions 22
- Models of Law Creation 23
 - Consensus Theory 23
 - Moral Entrepreneurship 23
 - Conflict Theory 24
 - Laws, Crime, and Actual Conditions 25
- Summary 25

3 Measures of Crime 29

History of Crime Reporting	30
Sources of Crime Data	31
Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)	31
Part I of the UCR	31
Part II of the UCR	32
Crimes "Cleared" by Arrest	33
Other Information in the UCR	33
Criticisms of the UCR	34
Crime Rates	35
National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)	35
Victimization Rates	35
Criticisms of the NCVS	35
Comparison of the NCVS and UCR Data	37
Self-Report Surveys	37
Benefits and Problems of Self-Report Research	38
Other Sources of Crime Data	39
Summary	40

4 Myths and Facts About Crime 43

Myth 1: Crime Is Increasing	45
Myth 2: Most Crime Is Violent	46
Myth 3: Crime Occurs Mainly in the Lower Classes	47
Myth 4: Crime Is Bad for Everyone	48
Myth 5: Most Criminals Are Hard-Core and Strangers to the Victim	49
Myth 6: Most Crimes Are Solved and Offenders Punished	51
Myth 7: Most Criminals Who Go to Trial "Get Off"	52
The Exclusionary Rule	52
Myth 8: There Is No Relationship Between Guns and Violence	53
Myth 9: Women Are Becoming "As Bad As" Men	54
Myth 10: The Way to Remedy Crime Is To Get Tough	56
Myth 11: Drugs Cause Crime	58
Myth 12: Nothing Can Be Done To Reduce Crime	59
Summary	60

part **3 Types of Crime 63**

5 Violent Interpersonal Crimes 65

Nature, Extent, and Costs	66
Common Misperceptions About Violent Crime	66
Patterns of Victimization	67
Costs of Violent Crime	68
Offenders and Victims	68
Index Offenses	69
Homicide	69
Felony-Murder Doctrine	69
Misdemeanor-Manslaughter Doctrine	69
Trends in Murder Rates	70
Demographic Patterns for Murder	70
Rape	71
Societal Stereotypes About Rape	72
Changes in Legal Codes and Court Proceedings	73

Prostitution	142
Illegal Drugs	143
Gambling	144
Abortion	144
Pornography	144
Arguments About Decriminalization	146
Arguments To Decriminalize	146
Arguments for Maintaining Criminality	146
Organized Crime	147
Activities of Organized Crime	147
Gambling	149
Prostitution	149
Drug Trafficking	149
Organized Crime: Myth or Reality?	149
Summary	151

part 4 **Theories of Crime 155**

YOUR PERSONAL GUIDE TO THEORY 156

You Too Are a Theorist	156
Crime Theories Are Understandable	156
Ideal Components of a Good Theory	157
Plausibility	157
Real-Life Evidence	157
Falsifiability	157
What To Look For	158
Background	158
Core Propositions	158
Position on Agency (Responsibility)	158
Policy Implications	159
Critique	159
Final Caveats	159
No Theory Is Definitive	160
Understanding in Depth	160

9 Crime as Individually Chosen Behavior 163

Background	164
Intellectual Climate	164
Eighteenth-Century Criminal Justice	166
Core Propositions	168
Classical Criminology's Theory of Criminal Behavior	168
The Individual Is Self-Interested	168
The Individual Is Rational	168
Behavior Is Freely Chosen	168
Pleasure Seeking Often Results in Crime	169
Classical Criminology's Theory of Criminal Justice	170
Laws Shape Behavior	170
Punishment Should Be a Deterrent	170
Position on Agency (Responsibility)	172
The Individual Side of Agency	172
The Social/Structural Side of Agency	172
Policy Implications	172

Subsequent Developments	173
Becker's Economic Model of Crime	173
Gordon's Critique of Crime and Capitalism	174
Deterrence Theory	175
Rational Choice Theory	176
Critique	177
Adequacy	177
Comprehensive Nature	178
Current Appeal	178
Summary	179

10 Theories of the Driven Offender 183

Background	184
Positivism	184
Evolutionary Thought	185
Criminological Thought in the 19th Century	185
Core Propositions	186
Rejection of Classical Criminology	187
Scientific Study of Crime	187
The Born Criminal	188
Identification of Criminals	189
Position on Agency (Responsibility)	190
Policy Implications	190
Subsequent Developments	191
Genetic Influences	191
Body Type Theories	191
Crime and Human Nature	192
Adoption Studies	193
XYY Theory	193
Other Biological Factors Associated with Crime	194
Autonomic Nervous System Deficiency	194
Brain Dysfunctions	194
Sex Hormones	194
Dietary Conditions	195
Summary of Subsequent Biological Developments	196
Freudian Interpretations of Crime	197
Personality Development	197
The Unconscious	197
Using Freudian Thought To Explain Crime	197
Summary of Freudian Interpretations on Crime	199
Low Self-Control	199
Critique	200
Adequacy	200
Comprehensive Nature	200
Current Appeal	200
Summary	200

11 Micro Social Causes of Crime:

Social Ecology and Differential Association 205

Background	206
The Chicago School	206
The Search for Root Causes	208
Discipline Building	208
The Progressive Era	208

Core Propositions	208
The Social Ecology Theory of Crime	208
The City as a Natural Area	208
The Concentric Zone Model	209
Delinquency/Crime Varies by Zone	209
Neither Individuals Nor Groups Are Criminogenic	210
Differential Association Theory	211
Criminal Behavior Is Learned	211
Communication Within Intimate Personal Groups	212
Techniques and Rationalizations	212
Unfavorable Definition of the Legal Code	212
Definitions Favorable to Law Violation	212
Differential Association Varies	212
Summary	213
Position on Agency (Responsibility)	213
Policy Implications	214
Subsequent Developments	214
Routine Activities	214
Differential Identification	215
Critique	216
Adequacy	216
Comprehensive Nature	216
Current Appeal	218
Summary	219

12 Micro Social Causes of Crime:

Labeling and Social Control 223

Background	224
Societal Changes	224
Need for New Focus	224
Sociological Theory	225
Self-Report Studies	225
Core Propositions	225
Core Propositions of Labeling Theory	225
Etiology Left Unexplored	225
No Act Inherently Criminal	226
Behavior Becomes Criminal When So Labeled	226
A Label Has Consequences	227
Summary of Labeling Theory	228
Core Propositions of Social Control Theory	228
Powerful Inducements to Commit Crimes	228
Most Individuals Are Constrained	229
Summary of Social Control Theory	229
Position on Agency (Responsibility)	230
Policy Implications	231
Subsequent Developments	232
Shaming	232
Family Structure	232
Low Self-Control	234
Critique	234
Adequacy	234
Comprehensive Nature	235
Current Appeal	236
Summary	236

13	Macro Social Causes of Crime:	
	Strain, Marxist, and Feminist Theories	241
	Background	242
	Civil Rights Movement	242
	Anti-War Movement	242
	The "New" Sociology	243
	Core Propositions	244
	Merton's Strain Theory	244
	Cultural Goals and Social Structural Means	244
	Modes of Adaptation	244
	Crime Produced by Macro Social Forces	246
	Summary of Merton's Strain Theory	246
	Marxist Theory of Crime	246
	Capitalism Produces Crime	246
	Capitalist State Defines Crime, Controls Justice	247
	Ideology and False Consciousness Justify Existing Practices	248
	The Powerful Commit the Most Serious Crimes	248
	Social Justice Must Precede Criminal Justice	248
	Summary of Marxist Theory of Crime	249
	Feminist Theory of Crime	249
	Society Shaped by Patriarchal Relations	250
	Women Must Be Included	250
	Gender-Sensitive Explanations Required	250
	Unfair Treatment of Women in Justice System	251
	Summary of Feminist Theory of Crime	251
	Position on Agency (Responsibility)	251
	Policy Implications	252
	Subsequent Developments	255
	Extensions of Strain Theory	255
	Left Realism	255
	Peacemaking Criminology	256
	Postmodern Criminology	256
	Critique	256
	Adequacy	256
	Comprehensive Nature	257
	Current Appeal	257
	Summary	258

part **5** **The Criminal Justice System** 261

14	Police	263
	History of Policing	264
	Early English Society	264
	Colonial America	265
	The Professionalization of Policing: London's Constabulary	266
	American Police Expansion in Mid-Nineteenth Century	266
	Reforms of the 1930s to 1940s	267
	Costs	267
	Types of Police	268
	Federal Police	268
	State Law-Enforcement Agencies	268
	Local Police	269

Campus Police	269
Private Police	270
Current Issues and Trends	270
Functions of the Police	270
Police Recruitment	272
Community Policing	273
Women in Policing	275
Current Problems	276
Manning's "Mission Impossible" Thesis	276
Professionalism vs. Bureaucratization	277
Functional Awkwardness	277
Police Misconduct	277
Public Relations	279
Summary	280

15 Courts 285

Contemporary Issues Facing Courts	286
Cost	286
Types of Courts	287
Types of Law	287
Judicial Law	287
Administrative Law	287
Procedural Law	287
Constitutional Law	288
Civil Courts and Criminal Courts	289
Trial Courts and Appellate Courts	289
State Courts	290
Federal Courts	290
Issues and Trends	291
Judges	291
Qualifications of Judges	291
Judges' Salaries	291
Problems of Bias	291
Sentencing Strategies	294
Rehabilitation	294
Deterrence	294
Incapacitation	294
Retribution	294
Types of Sentences	295
Indeterminate Sentences	295
Determinate Sentencing	294
Mandatory Sentencing	296
Other Sentencing Trends	296
The Death Penalty	297
Appellate Review	299
Execution of Juveniles	299
Morality and the Death Penalty	299
Racial and Social Class Discrimination	300
Cost of Executions	301
Current Problems	302
Court Overload	302
Plea Bargaining	304