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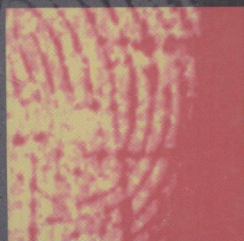


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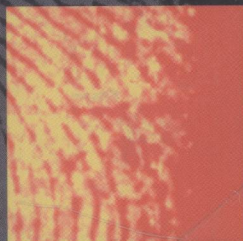
Crime *Types*: A Text/Reader

Dean A. Dabney

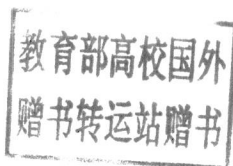
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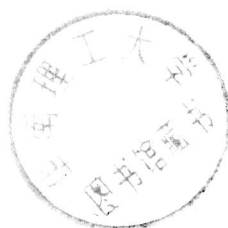


Crime Types

A Text/Reader

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Preface

Over the years, the content of student evaluations and personal reflections regarding my teaching experience has gradually convinced me that there exists a noticeable hole in the academic textbook market. At present, academics in search of text resources for their classes are forced to choose between traditional textbooks and anthologies/readers. In an effort to be all things to all people, contemporary textbooks have adopted an “everything but the kitchen sink” approach when it comes to content selection—each new edition packs in more information at the expense of readability and real-life flavor. This forces the instructor to make hard decisions about what materials to cover in a set 10- or 15-week term and leaves students both unstimulated and feeling like they wasted their money since some appreciable portion of the book’s content was never discussed in class. This state of affairs has led many to turn to readers as an alternative or supplement to traditional textbooks. When used as a primary text, readers generally stimulate student interest in the class, but force the instructor to do much more work in the way of filling in the substantive gaps in the material. When used as a supplemental text, anthologies arouse student interest but do so at the added financial expense of the student.

It is time for a change; namely, the academic book market is in need of a hybrid template: the text-reader. Structurally speaking, the present book seeks to bring together the comprehensive overview of a textbook with the real-life feel of a anthology/reader. Such a cost-effective alternative allows the instructor the flexibility to cover a wide range of material, both in an overview and application sense, while at the same time holding the students’ interest.

Substantively speaking, this book focuses on criminal behavior. The subject matter is divided into seven meaningful categories: homicide and assault, violent sex crimes, robbery, burglary, common property crime (i.e., larceny and auto theft), public order crime (i.e., drugs and prostitution), and crimes within complex organizations (i.e., employee, corporate, state, and governmental crime). Each of these seven chapters contains a concise overview discussion that reviews the existing data about patterns of offending, victimization, situations, and societal responses to the criminal event in question. Moreover, readers are presented with engaging research articles that report back from ground zero about the nature and dynamics of the players and their actions. Each article is preceded by a brief editor's note that touches upon its major conceptual highlights. Moreover, each chapter contains a series of discussion questions that serve to move student thinking and class conversations to a higher conceptual level. These questions force the reader to think about broader causal and prevention issues. There also is a companion website for this book. The website provides a host of supplemental readings and web-based resources for those who wish to see more data or discussion on a given form of crime. Such a resource is invaluable for those looking to write term papers or continue their discussion on a given type of crime.

The materials contained in this text/reader are a valuable resource for introductory criminology or deviance classes. It provides students with a comprehensive, yet engaging overview of what we know about crime and criminals. Students are exposed to the latest statistics and theory on a wide host of criminal behaviors. What is more, the book's twenty-one articles bring criminals, victims, situations and social control agents to life and show the reader how crime really plays itself out on a daily basis. There is simply no substitute for these rich descriptions when it comes to better appreciating life on the streets or in the suites; crime at ground zero.

This text/reader serves a broader substantive role. The first chapter maps out a typologies approach to crime. This perspective suggests that one consider moving away from thinking about crime as a generic conceptual entity and become more sensitive to the subtle differences that exist across types of crime. For example, the offender, victim, and situational aspect of homicide are very different from those observed for the crime of burglary. Chapter 1 of the present text provides brief overview of the typologies approach to crime and then maps out four part conceptual framework that allows students to better appreciate the nature and dynamics of a criminal event. Discussion centers on the behavioral, cognitive, and cultural dimensions of crime as well as the resulting societal reaction. Each of the subsequent seven chapters expound upon the behavioral, cognitive, cultural, and societal reactions germane to the type of crime in question. In this regard, the present text exposes readers to a more hands-on approach to crime, one that considers the idiosyncracies and similarities that exist across and within different types of crime. The final chapter of the text seeks to illustrate similarities and differences that exist within and between crime types, thus tying the discussion together. It is hoped that readers will better appreciate the criminological enterprise and emerge more ready and willing to think critically and respond to broad and/or specific crime problems.

Crime Types

A Text/Reader



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A Typology Approach to Crime

Criminal behavior is a topic that captures the attention of the average American. There is simply something about the darker side of human behavior that peaks our interest. Consider the familiarity of the following scenarios.

While involved in a manic run of high-speed channel surfing, an image of Charles Manson or Osama bin Laden suddenly flashes across the television screen. The image is gone as fast as it arrived and your eyes adjust to the next channel. Almost instinctively, you find yourself flipping back to the previous channel and you proceed to fixate upon what is being said about these monsters of modern time.

You are sitting alone in a public place. Suddenly, you hear a nearby voice telling a friend how he broke the law the past weekend but presumes that he was lucky enough to evade suspicion. . . . perhaps the person is describing how he filed a false tax return or got into fisticuffs at the local pub the night before. Your ears quickly perk up as you anxiously eavesdrop on the crime-related confessional.

These anecdotes speak to the armchair criminologist that seems to exist in all of us. When we see or hear about criminal behavior, we want to know more. When the topic comes up in conversation, we are always willing to add our proverbial two cents.

Americans clearly have a healthy appetite for crime. Day in and day out, television viewers have a long list of reality-based network television shows (e.g., *Cops*, *America's Most Wanted*, *Judge Judy*), crime dramas (e.g., *CSI*, *Law & Order*),

or cable station documentaries (e.g., Court TV, The Discovery Channel, A&E) from which to choose, as network executives scramble to quench our thirst for crime-related subject matter. What is more, it is rare to find a front page of a newspaper or popular magazine that does not flaunt a crime-related story prominently in the headlines. Even mainstream lifestyle magazines, such as women's *Cosmopolitan* and *Glamour* or their male equivalents, *GQ* and *Maxim*, now include regular features on "true crime."

Having established that crime sells, the obvious question becomes, Why? The answer is simple—we are feverishly attracted to that which we do not fully understand. Like a puppy chasing its tail, we spin around and around searching for the ever-elusive answers. The average citizen is not alone in this ongoing quest for enlightenment. Year in and year out, legions of scholars, criminal justice practitioners, and politicians spend billions of dollars, kill millions of trees, and exhaust countless hours trying to understand, explain, and prevent the exorbitant amount of criminal behavior that exists in today's society. Just think about how much written and spoken commentary has been directed toward understanding the behavior and mindset of modern terrorists such as Timothy McVeigh or Osama bin Laden!

Efforts to describe and explain crime and criminality overload shelves with books, journals, and reports that detail various theoretical and policy initiatives. What is the net gain of this sustained investigation? Or, have we made any substantial progress toward solving this problem? The harsh reality is that we as "learned professionals" have not made nearly as much progress as we would like; and we certainly have not made anywhere near as much progress as the general public *expects*.

This textbook represents a necessary first step toward remedying this situation. The remainder of this first chapter introduces the reader to an organizational approach that can be used to better structure one's learning and appreciation of crime and criminal behavior. Chapters 2 through 8 go about applying this conceptual framework to a host of conceptually meaningful categories of crime, instilling the reader with up-to-date data and research on the behavioral, cognitive, and contextual (i.e., societal reactions) aspects of the actions and actors in question.

PARAMETERS OF THE DISCUSSION AND APPROACH

Part of the problem with the criminological enterprise is that it is difficult to come to grips with the parameters of our substantive discussion and approach. First, one must address two fundamental questions: (1) *What is the subject matter that we should be studying?* (2) *What is the best way to study it?* Let us start with the first question. Surely, coming up with an acceptable definition of crime

should be simple enough. After all, crime is a routine topic in our daily conversations, it is a mainstay in media reports, and serves as a popular topic for books. However, upon closer examination, we see that “crime” is a relatively slippery concept. By crime do we mean all those acts or omissions of acts that are defined by the criminal law? Many sociologists consider this sort of legally bound definition of crime to be overly constraining. Becker (1963) points out that the “collective conscience” of society can be far more offended by non-criminal acts of deviance (i.e., social norm transgressions) than it is by some violations of the law. For example, although it may not be illegal to shout racial slurs in public, there tends to be a much more resounding public outcry against this form of behavior than there is when a minor law violation such as speeding or littering takes place.

Many scholars acknowledge this point, but opt instead to pursue the path of least resistance—they contend that the subject matter in question should include only violations of the criminal law. This definitional parameter is convenient because it immediately limits the discussion to a much more identifiable and manageable set of behaviors. More importantly, violations of the criminal law (i.e., **criminal acts**) are subject to formal, state-imposed sanctions, while violations of customs or norms (i.e., **deviant acts**) are subject to informal, peer-imposed reprimands. This difference in the nature and process of social control efforts has long been seen as a critical issue that separates crime from deviance.

The laws of the land are passed by a legislative body and recorded for dexterity purposes in a document known as the **criminal code**. This is the document that police officers and prosecutors use to guide their daily activities. One must recognize, however, that a definition of “crime” that is based solely on existing criminal codes will still produce an *exceedingly* long list of offenses. At the most basic level, one must contend with the fact that there exists no single, definitive criminal code. Instead, each jurisdiction, ranging from the federal to the state to the thousands of local jurisdictions, has in place a slightly different criminal code that it calls its own. As such, an effort to compile an exhaustive list of every law violation that is currently “on the books” would result in a truly massive, unmanageable, and often conflicting list of criminal statutes.

So let us assume that you could settle on a single criminal code, one from the federal, state, or local jurisdiction of your choice. Such a code would include high-profile offenses such as murder, rape, robbery, and theft. However, the complete list would be far more expansive, including thousands of law violations—everything from jaywalking to murder. In addition, criminal codes routinely contain a host of obscure, outdated, and rarely enforced statutes. Seuling (1975) provides a long list of the more ridiculous examples, including:

In Kansas City, Missouri, it is illegal for children to buy cap pistols, but not shotguns.

Killing an animal with “malicious intent” can result in first-degree murder charges in Oklahoma.

It is illegal to have a bathtub in your house in Virginia.

Few people are willing to afford equal weight to all of the behaviors detailed in a given criminal code. Instead, one is inclined to set aside the “petty” and “outdated” offenses and focus the discussion on the more “serious” categories of crime. Most scholars follow suit. Some turn to the Federal Bureau of Investigation’s **Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)** (FBI, 2002) for direction. The UCR is an annual effort to document the number of reported and cleared (i.e., a perpetrator has been identified) cases (and arrests) of murder, sexual assault, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, larceny, auto theft, and arson that are encountered by the various law enforcement agencies across the United States. These eight offense types are called Part I offenses. The FBI asks all law enforcement agencies to provide a host of offense and offender data that are then used to generate descriptive crime statistics (e.g., demographic profiles and crime rates).

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TYPOLOGIES SCHOLARS

Some scholars applaud the persistent data collection efforts of the FBI, but nonetheless see the Part I offense classification scheme as too restrictive. Such a parameter is said to exclude a number of prevalent and pressing forms of criminal behavior (e.g., white-collar crime, public order crime). These criminologists contend that the parameters for our “crime” discussion are best set somewhere between the all-inclusive criminal code and the narrow list of the UCR’s Part I offenses. They seek a middle ground, one that yields an efficient categorization scheme capable of providing scholars and practitioners alike with a focused understanding of how and why people commit different varieties of criminal behavior. This tact also provides insight into what can be done to remedy the situation. It is commonly said that these scholars adopt a **crime typology** or **criminal behavior system** approach to crime.¹

Typology scholars rely on logic-based conceptual frameworks to categorize and theorize about crime. There are two mutually dependent facets to a viable typology of crime. First, the scholar must organize the subject matter into a clearly delineated set of conceptual categories. In short, they must answer question 1 above (What is the subject matter that we should be studying?) by generating a list of **crime types**, detailing which offenses fit in each conceptual category. These categories, however, must be based on some requisite logic. This means that the scholar must engage in a second task wherein he or she articulates a set of **underlying dimensions** or **framework**, descriptive criteria that guide his or her offense categorization scheme. This clearly stated set of definitions and descriptions then addresses question 2 (What is the best way to study our agreed upon subject matter?) and provides the reader with a full understanding of the logic behind the classification scheme. More important, these underlying dimensions represent those factors that the scholar sees as the proverbial “ground zero” of criminal behavior systems. They are the core behavioral and motivational aspects of criminal behavior that serve to organize our understanding of this complex subject matter.

The classification scheme and the underlying dimensions work hand in hand for the typologies scholar. In effect, he or she constructs and defines a set of underlying dimensions that allows him or her to justify and substantiate a given typology of crime. Keep in mind that the differences or similarities on any or all of the theoretical dimensions need not be complete. Instead, it is tacitly implied that partial or conditional similarities or differences can exist across or within the framework of the typology. It is argued that this more focused approach to the study of criminal behavior affords us a fuller understanding of the patterns and dynamics of criminal behavior. It allows us to speak to the unique factors associated with a given category of crime. At the same time, we can identify similarities that exist between homicide and aggravated assault, rape, or even burglary.

Building upon the tenets of the crime typology tradition, this textbook employs a dual-level analysis of the crime problem. On the surface, the discussion centers on grouping the criminal into a series of meaningful categories. Just beneath the surface, however, there exists the requisite, multitrait conceptual framework that serves as the basis and/or justification (the glue, if you will) for this ordered classification scheme. To this end, the goal of this textbook is to provide readers with a broad yet deep appreciation for the social phenomenon that we know as criminal behavior.

A MANAGEABLE AND MEANINGFUL LIST OF CRIME TYPES

This textbook will showcase the following seven categories of criminal behavior.

- Homicide and assault
- Violent sex crimes
- Robbery
- Burglary
- Common property crime
- Public order crime
- Crime within complex organizations

A V R B C P C

Some of these categories are less complex than others. For example, most would agree that robbery includes a streamlined set of behaviors and motivations. On the other hand, public order crime includes a far more diverse set of criminal activities (e.g., drug use, drug dealing, prostitution, vagrancy, gambling). Even with this broad conceptual focus, this textbook will expose the reader to only a fraction of what is known about each of these variants of public order crime. Nonetheless, by applying the underlying dimensions of the typology framework, this textbook occupies an important pedagogical space as

it highlights the differences and similarities in offenders, victims, and situational elements that exist across this genre of crime.

THE CRIMINAL EVENT AND ITS UNDERLYING DIMENSIONS

When speaking of criminal behavior systems, it is useful to adopt the **criminal event** as the unit of analysis. The criminal event is the social context in which the crime occurs, with every criminal event being comprised of an offender, a victim (or target), and a setting. By way of example, the average date rape involves a male offender and a female victim, and takes place in a leisure setting such as the offender's house. Too often, typology scholars focus exclusively on the offender (criminal) or offense (crime) and lose sight of the meaningful roles that the victim and/or contextual norms of a given setting play in the criminal outcome. This textbook adopts a more inclusive orientation that is sensitive to all three.

Criminal events are best understood when viewed in light of four organizing principles or sensitizing concepts: *behavioral aspects*, *cognitive aspects*, *cultural aspects*, and *societal reactions*. These sensitizing concepts specifically direct the readers' attention toward common themes or criteria by which he or she can compare and contrast offender, victim, and setting roles across different types of crime and thus serve as the underlying dimensions of the present seven-part classification scheme. In other words, these organizing principles stress the multifaceted aspects of the criminal event (i.e., the offender, victim, situation, and legal distinctions) and allow for a more complete appreciation for the category or type of crime in question.

Behavioral Aspects of the Criminal Event

Human beings have a knack for patterning and regimenting their behavior over time. Crime is no different. Much like the common behavioral components to swimming, there are common behavioral aspects to homicide. Swimming involves the act of propelling one's self through water, whereas a homicide manifests itself as the unlawful killing of a human being. Likewise, there are different techniques, patterns, and skills that delineate the various swimming strokes (e.g., breaststroke, backstroke). There are also different techniques, patterns, and skills associated with different subtypes of homicide (e.g., stranger homicide, intimate homicide, serial homicide).

The concepts of crime and criminal behavior have their humble beginnings in the **legal definitions**, or necessary conditions that are set forth by the criminal code. Most fundamentally, a crime is defined as an act committed or omitted in violation of a law or statute that expressly forbids or commands it and is accompanied by some form of state-sanctioned punishment. In order for the state to establish that said crime has occurred, it must be shown that the event in question satisfies the *actus reus* (guilty act) and the *mens reus*

(guilty mind) aspects of a particular criminal statute. These two critical components detail the behavioral and mental states required for an event to be defined as criminal. For example, most jurisdictions define burglary as the unlawful entry of a structure (actus reus) with the intent to commit a felony or theft (mens reus). Each subsequent chapter will present the legal definition for the crimes under consideration. These concepts are then reinforced in the multiple articles provided in each chapter. For example, Chapter 3 contains an article by Bergen that reviews the legal intricacies of wife rape. Similarly, a selection in Chapter 8 by Matthews and Kauzlarich uses the events of the crash of ValuJet flight 592 as a vehicle for discussion on the criminal statutes for fraud and homicide as they apply to corporate entities.

The behavioral aspects of a given type of crime also encompass the **skills and techniques** that are used by offenders. In the case of homicide, this means that one must speak to the manner in which the offender brings about the death of the victim (e.g., strangulation, blunt-force trauma, gunshot wound). Many crimes oblige or even require the offender to master the use of various mechanisms or tools that serve to assist in the commission of the offense. The “tools of the trade” for a murderer might include a wide variety of weapons (e.g., guns, knives, toxins, bare hands). This fact will be stressed in detail as it applies to hired hitmen in the Levi article that appears in Chapter 2. Conversely, the article in Chapter 5 by Decker, Wright, Redfern, and Smith will describe how burglars are often obliged to use deception or disguises, enlist the assistance of various power tools, or simply peer through windows en route to gaining entry into a targeted residence. Collectively, the patterned skills, techniques, and tools of the trade make up the “nuts and bolts” of how offenders effectively yet efficiently perpetrate their criminal acts.

A thorough discussion of the behavioral aspects of a crime should also take into account the patterned aspects of the **criminal transaction**. Recall the previous assertion that all criminal events are comprised of an offender, a victim, and a setting. Criminal events do not occur when these three elements spontaneously combust. Instead, they occur in a transactional manner whereby the offender, victim, and audience members negotiate the criminal outcome. This point will be stressed in a reading in Chapter 2, in which Luckenbill conceives of homicide events as “situated transactions” in which the pressure, volatility, and eventual lethal violence progresses through a series of interactional stages that are collectively negotiated by the offender, victim, and audience members.

Criminal transactions often take on a given “form.” For example, some transactions involve a lone offender and a lone victim in an isolated environment. This solitary existence is captured well in Scully and Marolla’s article on stranger rapists that appears in Chapter 3. Others transactions involve multiple offenders, multiple victims, and interactive audience members. Examples of more complex transactional forms are shown in the Decker article on gang violence that appears in Chapter 2. A full understanding of the patterned form of the criminal transaction is necessary if one is to comprehend the behavioral aspects of a given offense type.

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