

f the crime (property crime), or the method of criminal activity (organized crime). Such definitions usually cover one or more of the standard legal definitions. For example, organized crime may include fraud, extortion, assault, or homicide.

What is considered criminal by society changes over time.

Some types of events, such as murder, robbery, and burglary, have been defined as crimes for centuries. Such crimes are part of the common law definition of crime. Other types of conduct traditionally have not been viewed as crimes. As social values and mores change, society has codified some conduct as criminal while decriminalizing other conduct. The recent movement toward increased “criminalization” of drunk driving is an example of such change.

New technology also results in new types of conduct not anticipated by the law. Changes in the law may be needed to define and sanction these types of conduct. For example, the introduction of computers has added to the criminal codes in many states so that acts such as the destruction of programs or data could be defined as crimes.

How do violent crimes differ from property crimes?

The outcome of a criminal event determines whether it is a property crime or a violent crime. *Violent crime* refers to events such as homicide, rape, and assault that may result in injury to a person. Robbery is also considered a violent crime because it involves the use or threat of force against a person.

Property crimes are unlawful acts with the intent of gaining property not involving the use or threat of force against an individual. Larceny and motor vehicle theft are examples of property crimes.

In the National Crime Survey (NCS), a distinction is also made between crimes against persons (violent crimes and personal larceny) and crimes against households (property crimes, including household larceny).

How do felonies differ from misdemeanors?

Criminal offenses are also classified according to how they are handled by the criminal justice system. Most jurisdictions recognize two classes of offenses: felonies and

misdemeanors.

Felonies are not distinguished from misdemeanors in the same way in all jurisdictions, but most states define felonies as offenses punishable by a year or more in a state prison. The most serious crimes are never misdemeanors, and the most minor offenses are never felonies.

For Further Thought

1. Visit <http://www.uscourts.gov/statistics-reports> and explore some of the data they present. What perspective on the criminal law have you gained by visiting this site?

Sources: Bureau of Justice Statistics, *BJS Dictionary of Criminal Justice Data Terminology*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1981); Bureau of Justice Statistics, *BJS Criminal Victimization in the U.S.* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1985); FBI, *Crime in the United States 1985* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1985); Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Report to the Nation on Crime and Justice*, 2nd ed. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, March 1988), pp. 2–3.

The National Center for Victims of Crime (2011) gives the following estimates for the cost of crime in the United States: for 2008 (latest available at the time), \$1.19 billion for violent crime and \$16.2 billion for property crime; for 2010, \$456 million for robbery, \$6.1 billion for larceny theft, and \$4.6 billion for burglaries.

→ Crime & the Media 1.1

Publicized Trials

The trial of Bruno Hauptmann for the murder of Charles Lindbergh Jr. in 1935 was a media circus and perhaps forecast the future of media involvement in other famous cases such as the O. J. Simpson case. It was broadcast live on the radio, which was incidentally heard by the jurors. Over 20,000 spectators filled the space outside of the courtroom and 200 people jammed the courtroom that was designed for 80. Video footage, although forbidden until after the trial, was ignored. Federal courtrooms still ban cameras. What do you think are some of the pros and cons of this policy?

Although recent estimates rank the sale of illegal narcotics as the criminal world's greatest source of income, there is a problem with such assessments. These estimates do not even begin to measure the full impact of corporate price fixing and other criminal activities. Added to these costs are economic costs incurred by victims of crime and the costs of running the criminal justice system. Not considered at all in these economic estimates are the social and

psychological costs to society and to crime victims (e.g., loss in productivity, medical and mental health care costs, and pain and suffering). Fear, mistrust, a curtailing of public activity, and a decline in the quality of life are but a few of the inestimable impacts of crime on society. Horror stories abound of the impact of crime on the forgotten figure in the criminal justice equation—the crime victim. As stated earlier, the costly Los Angeles riots of 1992 were dwarfed by the cost of the collapse of the nation's savings and loans.

SUMMARY

Criminology is the science or discipline that studies crime and criminal behavior. Major areas of investigation include criminal behavior, etiology (theories of crime causation), and the sociology of law and societal reaction; related areas include juvenile delinquency and victimology. Criminology also shares with the field of criminal justice the areas of policing, the courts, and corrections.

Knowledge is defined as one's understanding of reality. This understanding is made possible through the creation of symbols or abstractions. Comte identified three stages in the progression of knowledge: the theological, metaphysical (philosophical), and scientific. *Science* combines the spirit of rationality of philosophy with the scientific method, which is characterized by the search for empirical proof. Criminology and sociology are more recent applicants for the scientific credentials already enjoyed by the physical sciences. Having its origins in the 18th century in Europe, particularly in the writing of Beccaria, who was influential in codifying modern law, criminology has largely become a 20th-century U.S. discipline. This is particularly reflected in the work of Sutherland, who has been identified as "the dean of criminology."

Deviant behavior refers to activities that fall outside the range of normal societal toleration. Definitions of such activities are relative to time, place, and persons. *Values* are practices or beliefs that are prized in society and that are protected by *norms*, which are rules or prescribed modes of conduct. Sumner, in his classic work *Folkways*, identifies three types of norms: folkways, mores, and laws. While folkways are less serious customs or traditions, *mores* are serious norms that contain moral evaluations as well as penal sanctions. Both folkways and mores are examples of informal modes of control. *Laws*—codified rules of behavior—represent formal methods of attempting to ensure social control.

Acts *mala prohibita* are ones that are bad because they are prohibited, such as vagrancy and gambling; acts *mala in se* refer to those that are bad in themselves, such as murder, rape, and the like. Although not all criminal acts are viewed as deviant, neither are all deviant acts criminal. *Undercriminalization* involves the failure of the law to cover acts *mala in se*, and *overcriminalization* entails overextension of the law to cover acts that may more effectively be enforced through the mores. As societies undergo transition from *Gemeinschaft* (communal, sacred societies) to *Gesellschaft* (associational, secular societies), they must rely more on formal agencies of control. In order to be effective, laws require the support of the mores.



Photo 1.5 At the August 16, 2014, Ferguson protests in Missouri, demonstrators held signs to protest the shooting death of 18-year-old Michael Brown by Ferguson police officer Darren Wilson on August 9, 2014.

Joe Raedle/Getty Images News/Getty Images

Manifest functions are intended or planned consequences of social arrangements, whereas *latent functions* refer to unintended or unanticipated consequences. Although the manifest function of Prohibition was to eliminate alcohol abuse, its latent functions were to encourage corruption, organized crime, and public disrespect. Durkheim viewed crime as a normal condition in soc