CRIMINOLOGICAL THEORIES

UNDERSTANDING CRIME IN AMERICA

SECOND EDITION

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of
Jerald C. Burns who was my teacher, mentor, and friend.

Contents

PREFACE

This book has been written for several purposes. The first is to present plausible explanation of crime causation. The second is to foster a greater appreciation of criminological theory. The third is to get students to think critically about the social reality we call crime. To this end, the second edition of *Criminological Theories: Understanding Crime in America* is an updated version of the original book that was published in the summer of 2002. It contains current research findings as well as updated statistics on the crime rate and new developments in criminological theory to clarify and strengthen arguments made throughout the book.

This edition features major revisions while maintaining its vital core from the previous version. The organization of the work will guide students through criminological theory in a historically correct manner. For example, in the first edition of the text, the first section focused on Chapters 1, 2, and 3. These chapters have been rewritten to include contemporary illustrations of crime, research findings, and updated statistical data. The second section of the book, which included Chapters 4 and 5, addressed Classical Theory and Positivistic Criminology, respectively. Substantial revisions were also made to these chapters with discussions on the reemergence of choice theory, general deterrence theory, specific deterrence theory, and profiles of noted criminologists who contributed to the development and expansion of these criminological traditions. Moreover, Chapter 5 formerly titled, "Positivistic Criminology," has been renamed "Trait Theories" to reflect its new content.

In the first edition of the book, the third section was devoted to social structural theories. Each theory in this criminological tradition was given special attention within individual chapters. Consequently, there were separate chapters devoted to the Chicago School, Anomie, Strain, and Cultural Deviance Theories. However, in the second edition, all structural theories are presented in one chapter. Chapter 6 is titled, "Social Structural Theories: Emphasis on the Social Structure." In this chapter, several additions have been made that include discussions of the size and growth of the underclass, child

poverty, and minority groups and poverty, as well as an examination of Steven Messner and Richard Rosenfeld's Institutional Anomie Theory. This chapter includes James W. Messerschmidt's Structured Action Theory and how social settings and one's place in the social structure influences behavior. This chapter also contains several profiles of noted criminologists who contributed to the development and growth of this criminological tradition.

Extensive changes were also made to Chapter 7. In the first edition, the fourth section presented social processing theories with each theory in this tradition given special attention by appearing as a single chapter. As such, separate chapters were devoted to social learning theories, social control theories, and labeling theories. In the second edition, all social processing theories are combined and presented in one chapter. Chapter 7 is titled, "Social Processing Theories: Emphasis on Socialization." It provides several additions that include discussions of family relations, peer relationships, educational experiences, and religion. Moreover, this chapter explores life course theory as well as theory integration and its variations.

Chapter 8 has also been revised and restructured. In the first edition, the fifth section of the book addressed social conflict theories and theory integration with each theory given special treatment. However, in the second edition, these theories are preceded by a discussion of the newly emerged Occupy Movement followed by several fundamental changes to the first edition. First, the section on theory integration has been substantially revised, shortened, and moved to Chapter 7. Second, several relatively new conflict theories have been analyzed and added to the discussion. Some of the new theories include: cultural criminology, green criminology, power threat theory, as well as the latest developments in power–control theory.

In closing, the book predicts what criminological theory will likely address in the future. Predictions range from placing more emphasis on preventing domestic terrorism to implementing restorative justice models to addressing cyber-crime, and the influence that grant awarding agencies have on setting the research agendas in both criminology and criminal justice, especially with respect to how they may invariably determine what is important to research. Nevertheless, while the criminological theories in this book are presented in a historically correct manner, instructors may choose to present chapters to reflect their teaching needs.

James F. Anderson

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I am grateful to those students and colleagues who communicated with me about their reactions to *Criminological Theories: Understanding Crime in America* and to the reviewers who provided invaluable criticisms about the first edition and clear instructions on improving the second. In response to their suggestions, extensive efforts were placed on updating and expanding, as well as sharpening the focus of many arguments presented throughout the book. Some of those who provided insightful comments, suggestions, and encouragement to the second manuscript were Adam Langsam, Northeastern State University; Francis P. Reddington, University of Central Missouri; David Spinner, University of Maryland-Eastern Shores; and Vic Bumphus, University of Tennessee-Chattanooga. Among those who were instrumental in the second edition, I would like to offer my deepest appreciation to the faculty, staff, and students in the Department of Criminal Justice at East Carolina University. Without their support, this book would not have been completed. I would also like to express appreciation to Gregg Barak, Eastern Michigan University, and Christina J. Johns (retired), Florida A&M University who introduced me to criminological theory.

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INTRODUCTION

The Crime Problem in America

Despite the release of recent statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice (2013) indicating that the number of violent crimes, including murder, rape, and robbery, have fallen for the fifth consecutive year, the general public still harbors fear of crime. As such, crime is still among the top concerns in America. This insecurity is largely influenced by nearly everyone in America knowing someone who has been the victim of some type of violence or suffered an economic victimization, such as theft and burglary. Because crime and violence are so pervasive in America, no one truly enjoys immunity or is completely safe from crime. This concern is revealed by the number of neighborhood crime watch programs, gun purchases, people enrolled in self-defense training, and citizens willing to work hand-in-hand with law enforcement to keep their neighborhoods crime-free (Masters et al., 2011). Despite this reality, much fear of crime might be unfounded and artificially manipulated by the mass media and politicians (Surette, 2007; Barak, 1994; Elias, 1986). For example, media critics argue that newspapers, television, and movies glorify and sensationalize personal tragedies to sell papers, boost ratings, or generate huge profits. They also claim that the more controversial the act of violence, the better. For example, critics contend that crime stories with a class or racial element tend to attract more interest, ignite greater social passion, and have a polarizing effect on the public (Surette, 2007). Moreover, politicians typically campaign on issues such as law and order, reducing the crime problem, and "getting tough" on violent offenders. In fact, politicians are particularly known for exaggerating crime statistics during election season to show the public that the incumbent has been ineffective at keeping the community safe, and thus advance their own political ambitions. This often occurs even if no crime problem exists. Therefore, the fear of crime is very likely to be greater than the actual threat.

An irony about crime and victimization is that those who fear crime the most are those least likely to be victimized, while those who fear crime the least are those who

disproportionately appear in crime victimization statistics (Siegel, 2012). For example, consider elderly citizens. They make up a very small segment of the population, but yet they are the most fearful of crime. They account for the smallest number of victimizations with respect to violent crime. In contrast, consider teenagers and young adults who seemingly enjoy a carefree existence, yet they are those who are most likely to be the victims and perpetrators of violent crime. In fact, statistics reveal that teenagers between the ages of 13 and 17 make up 6% of the U.S. population, but account for 30% of index crime arrests. Some criminologists believe that the victimization and offending disparity that exists between the elderly and young adults is because of the lifestyles of younger versus older Americans (Siegel, 2012). Teenagers in the United States, unlike their counterparts in other nations, live in a culture that encourages permissiveness, self-expression, and experimentation, and glorifies violence while discouraging moral values, such as marriage, religion, honesty, and being drug-free. Some contend that this is why America has the dubious distinction of having the highest prison incarceration rates in the civilized world and arguably the most violent and troubled children (Bennett, Dilulio, and Walters, 1996).

Young Americans have open access to computers, the Internet, and social networking. They frequent places where the criminal element congregates (i.e., online chat rooms, bars, parks, schools, and parking lots). They drink (some even experiment with drugs) and associate with others who are usually in the same age category who might also drink and possibly engage in drug use. Some carry firearms for intimidation, crime, or self-protection. Some young adults even associate with others who have violent and troubled histories. Again, consider the elderly, who have very different lifestyles. They do not typically frequent public places where younger Americans congregate (i.e., online chat rooms, bars, parks, schools, and parking lots). They do not associate with high-risk peers who engage in intimidation or commit violent crime. Perhaps the factor that best explains why the elderly face fewer victimization risks is that they tend to stay inside at night (Siegel, 2012). Statistics reveal that crime peak hours are from 6:00 p.m. to 6:00 a.m. While this does not affect the number of elderly people who are burglarized, it does mean that their chances of being robbed, assaulted, or killed are greatly reduced. The difference between the victimization rates of younger and older Americans can be attributed to the fact that younger people have lifestyles that are conducive to violence and crime.

National Youth Survey—An important instrument used to collect data on adolescents. It allows researchers to test integrated sociological and psychological theory.

While self-report surveys or studies can be conducted by independent researchers, there is one major self-report survey: the **National Youth Survey (NYS)**. The survey was started in 1976. It is a single formal entity that is cited in reference to juvenile delinquency and juvenile crime. It uses a national sample of youth between the ages of 11 and 17. Researchers use self-report surveys or studies to measure adult offending.

Also interesting is the way that rates vary for men and women. All sources of crime data—including the Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), and self-report surveys (SRSs)—report that men commit more crimes than their female counterparts, but the rate of women offending has been on the rise in recent

years (Brown, Esbensen, and Geis, 2007; Siegel, 2012). This includes crimes of violence and crimes related to property and drugs. (Drug-related crime now accounts for 45% of arrests for women.) Statistics reveal that the number of women in prison is growing faster than that of any other demographic group. Still, women account for only 15% of violent crime and 28% of property crime. Some criminologists argue that women's lesser participation in crime can be explained by the way they are socialized and their lack of access to opportunities to commit crime. In fact, some feminist scholars contend that when women are provided complete equality in the economic market, their participation in crime will almost equal that of their male counterparts. Neither has yet been realized. Statistics also reveal that women are victimized less frequently than men, but are more likely to be injured during violent encounters. After being victimized, women are more likely to change their lifestyles to prevent continued or future victimizations. This is not the case with men, since they face greater amounts of victimization and commit more crime than their female counterparts. After victimizations, men rarely make changes to their routines and are very difficult to treat because many refuse to accept or attend counseling to help them cope with the aftermath of being victimized (Siegel, 2012; Stanko and Hobdell, 1993).

Unlike women who have been the victims of crime, male victims are more likely to blame their attacker, question their masculinity, and sometimes refuse to discuss how they feel about being a crime victim. Criminal justice experts argue that men may have lifestyles that actually increase their victimization risk. Research reveals that men are more likely to be victimized by a stranger, while women are likely to be hurt, injured, or even killed by someone they know or with whom they share an intimate relationship. Women typically face violence at the hands of a relative, ex-boyfriend, spouse, estranged husband, or acquaintance. Women are victimized in a number of ways that include, but are not limited to, date rape, spouse abuse, domestic violence, prostitution, pornography, and deception over the Internet and through social media networks. Despite this, some scholars argue that women are reluctant to participate in the criminal justice process, because they could face a second victimization at the hands of the justice machinery by police, lawyers on cross-examination, or judge and jury.

Those who study criminology examine a number of areas that range from crime, to victims, to causes, and how society responds to offenders who inflict harm on other members of society. Students interested in criminology must be able to understand the social reality we refer to as crime as well as legal definitions of crime (Barkan, 2012; Anderson and Slate, 2011). Hence, crime is defined as any act of commission or omission of a law forbidding or commanding such behavior. This refers to two categories of behaviors. First, the law requires that people abstain from committing behaviors such as stealing, raping, and killing others. Second, the law demands that people participate in behaviors such as paying one's annual income tax and getting one's driving license renewed.

A crime of omission stems from a failure to take action where there is a legal or contractual obligation to do so. For example, lifeguards, parents, spouses, and doctors have a legal obligation to assist others even when they have feelings of indifference. Consider

the lifeguard who witnesses a drowning swimmer fighting for his or her life, but does nothing. He can be charged with failing to help, because of his legal obligation to assist swimmers and save lives. Similarly, a parent can be charged and punished in cases stemming from neglect of a child. Furthermore, because marriage is contractual, a spouse who does not assist the other in a life-threatening situation can be charged with failure to assist if it is determined that death occurred because of the omission of indifference. Doctors can also be sued or imprisoned if they fail to treat patients with serious medical needs. A failure to abstain from some acts or engage in others will mean that one is legally responsible for either course of action. Notwithstanding, when a crime is committed, the offender is punished by the state and not the victim.

mala in se—Crimes that are inherently evil by their nature, such as murder, rape, and robbery.

mala prohibita—Crimes that offend the sensibility of some people's morality. They are crimes because statutes are in place to prevent them. Such crimes include prostitution, drug sales, drug use, and gambling.

In the United States, crimes are mostly viewed as either **mala in se** or **mala prohibita**. The distinctions between these crimes are glaring. For example, mala in se crimes are offenses that are inherently wrong, or evil in and of themselves. There is usually a consensus among people about the seriousness of these actions and a shared disdain for offenders who engage in them. These crimes offend the morality of the society. Mala in se crimes include such acts as murder, rape, child molestation, or forcibly taking someone's property. Conversely, mala prohibita crimes are actions that are not evil in and of themselves, but are considered criminal because state statutes have been passed to prohibit these actions. Mala prohibita crimes are often referred to as public order crimes (Anderson and Slate, 2011). They typically include acts of prostitution, pornography, drug use, and gambling. Such actions create controversy because there is not a consensus among people about the danger they pose to society. They are also commonly referred to as victimless crimes because willing participants engage in the behavior. (In most cases, a participant exchanges money for a desired commodity or service.) As such, some argue that there is no "real" victim. When these actions come to the attention of law enforcement and the court system, some people accuse the government of attempting to legislate public morality instead of enforce laws against "real" crime. The government counters that it is not legislating morality, but rather, it is regulating behavior that usually comes with adverse health consequences. Notwithstanding, a perpetrator's action is not a crime unless there is a law that prohibits the behavior. Therefore, it is possible for some actions (while morally disdainful), not to be considered a crime because they do not violate any existing law. Consider a contemporary and controversial argument that is instructive in this regard. Marijuana use is viewed by some as dangerous because they see it as a gateway drug that leads to the use of more serious drugs. However, some segments of the population openly condone smoking it for recreational use (Siegel, 2012). The issue is complicated by the fact that recently, some states have made it legal for individuals to use specified amounts of marijuana for medicinal purposes (Masters et al., 2011).

Criminology examines several types of crime that range from street crime to elite crime. Street crimes include actions such as murder, rape, theft, robbery, burglary, larceny, auto

theft, arson, and hate crimes. These are referred to as index crimes. Crime sources reveal that people who make up the poor underclass in society disproportionately commit these types of crime. In response to these acts, the criminal justice system spends billions of dollars annually on preventing, apprehending, and punishing the offenders who perpetrate these crimes (Siegel, 2012; Barkan, 2012). However, some criminologists argue that white-collar, organized, computer, corporate, political, governmental, medical, and healthcare offenders commit the most serious crimes. These crimes often require education and social status. These crimes are those committed by the criminal elite. Critical criminologists argue that they contribute to more widespread human suffering, injuries, and financial devastation than street crime. Unfortunately, these offenses typically go undetected and unreported (Barkan, 2012). In fact, crimes committed by the criminal elite are not addressed with the same seriousness and vigor as index crimes, but instead are typically left to the enforcement of regulatory agencies, special taskforces, and special prosecutors who rarely operate with the same degree of urgency. The efforts of these agencies pale in comparison to the thousands of police agencies charged with preventing index crime. As such, some critical scholars charge that society has a limited understanding of what constitutes real crime and victimization.

Figure 1 presents the big crime pie. The pie is a distribution of the totality of criminality that is committed annually in the United States. In addition to including the index crimes, it lists crimes that largely go undetected and unreported in many of the crime and victimization indexes. The big crime pie illustrates criminal behavior that includes white-collar, organized, corporate, political, computer, governmental, and medical crimes. This diagram does not attempt to justify, excuse, or diminish the seriousness of index crime. Instead, it seeks to reveal other types of crimes that are arguably more dangerous and cause greater human suffering both financially as well as physically. Yet, its perpetrators are not known to the general public or its victims since they rarely are held criminally responsible for their actions.

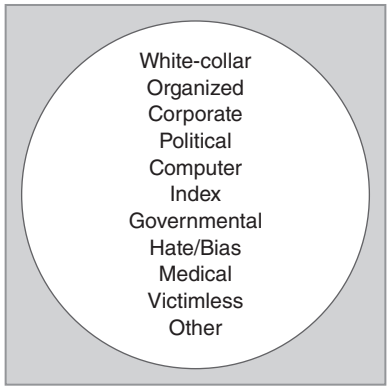

Figure 1 The Big Crime Pie

Criminology is the scientific study of the origin, causation, nature, and extent of crimes. The study of crime also entails an examination of how society reacts and responds to crime (Reid, 2012; Siegel, 2012; Barkan, 2012). For example, do public policies emerge from the efforts of criminologists? Do their research findings impact crime control and justice education policies? Criminologists are set apart from the lay public, because they are trained to use science to study deviant and criminal behavior. When criminologists undertake the study of crime, they do so using objectivity and the scientific method. Objectivity frees criminologists from biases. While conducting research, criminologists set aside personal assumptions about behavior and enter into a value-free exercise. When criminologists employ the scientific method, they generate hypotheses, engage in data collection, formulate theories, and test the validity of those theories. Criminologists rely on several methods of data gathering when engaging in research that includes, but is not limited to, attitudinal surveys, experimental designs, longitudinal designs, observational studies, use of existing data, and unobtrusive methods (Hagan, 2012). Sometimes criminologists may even use triangulated measures to examine a phenomenon, combining three or more forms of data collection (Hagan, 2012). Multiple methods serve to increase the validity and accuracy of the investigation. They allow criminologists to assert with confidence that they truly understand the social reality that we call crime. The scientific method is not an exercise known by all and is, in fact, quite esoteric. People in the lay public readily accept inaccurate views about crime causation. Some believe that offenders engage in crime because they are demonically possessed, born bad, poorly socialized, or simply morally depraved. By using the scientific method, criminologists are able to make accurate assertions about the nature of crime and its consequences, instead of relying on reports from the news media, popularly held views, or personal biases about the nature of crime and offenders who commit such behaviors.

An essential goal of criminology is to identify, describe, explain, predict, and control deviant and criminal behavior (Hagan, 2012). This must be the primary goal of the discipline so as to reduce human misery, suffering, and pain. By determining crime causation, criminologists can assist society in developing strategies to help at-risk individuals and possibly deter them and others from a life of crime. Criminologists can also be instrumental in influencing policies that are designed to react to those who have committed crimes and others who could potentially commit crime. This task is not as easy as some might think. For example, crime statistics are mainly collected by the UCR, NCVS, and SRS. These sources overwhelmingly agree on where crime and victimization occur. The patterns and trends are fairly consistent with respect to when, where, and who is more likely to commit index crime (not the other varieties of crime presented in Figure 1). Criminologists and criminal justice scholars should be able to make accurate predictions about the crime rate from year to year by examining the trends and patterns associated with crime (Siegel, 2012). However, crime is so complex that it is sometimes difficult to isolate where crime will occur next. Crime has a freakish nature and sometimes occurs randomly. Another troubling aspect about studying and explaining crime is the question

of why, with the human suffering and misery it causes, people freely engage in such behavior. Consider a few recent examples of crime that have intrigued social observers of criminal behavior.

On Valentine's Day 2008, Steven Phillip Kazmierczak, a former graduate sociology student at Northern Illinois University, entered a large lecture classroom and opened fire on more than 160 students. He murdered six students and wounded 20 others (Nizza, 2008). It was later discovered that he was an exceptional student who had received a dean's award for being an academic standout. In fact, former faculty, students, and staff later reported that on reflection, there were no indicators that he was troubled or disturbed. Later, the university president stated that Kazmierczak had a very good academic record and there were no signs or indicators of impending trouble.

December 14, 2012, marks what is considered the worst school massacre in American history, next to the Columbine High School shooting that occurred in Littleton, Colorado, in 1999. In Newtown, Connecticut, a troubled teenager, Adam Lanza, killed his mother that morning and subsequently entered an unsuspecting and unprotected elementary school, Sandy Hook Elementary, at approximately 9:40 a.m. with three guns, including a .223 caliber rifle, and shot indiscriminately, killing 20 children and six teachers who tried to shield them. This crime shocked the nation and reignited debates over mental health and gun control.

In 2013, it was discovered that Ariel Castro, a 52-year-old former school bus driver, had held Michelle Knight, Amanda Berry, and Gina DeJesus captive in the basement of his home for more than 10 years. He pled guilty to nearly 1,000 charges of rape, kidnapping, and sexual abuse, as well as aggravated murder charges under a fetal homicide law for causing one of the women to miscarry.

In 2011, Casey Anthony was acquitted by a Florida jury in the murder of her daughter, Caylee Marie Anthony, who had disappeared before she was eventually reported missing and found dead. The case was perplexing to many Americans because Casey never reported that Caylee was missing. However, she was convicted of lying to police officers. In the end, Florida lawmakers' efforts to strengthen laws on reporting missing children led to "Caylee's Law," which makes failing to report a missing child an act of reckless disregard for the child's safety.

On April 15, 2013, two bombs were set off near the finish line of the Boston Marathon, killing three people and injuring 260 others. Local, state, and federal law enforcement led a massive effort to apprehend two suspects, Dzhokar Tsarnaev and his brother, Tamerlan. Tamerlan was killed during a shootout with the police, but Dzhokar was arrested and accused of planting and setting off the pair of bombs. The prosecutor in this case claimed that Dzhokhar and his brother were also responsible for the death of Sean Collier, a police officer at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, during the manhunt. Despite knowing the crime was recorded on surveillance video and the police were able to track the offenders from the crime scene, Dzhokhar has pleaded not guilty. On January 30, 2014, Attorney General Eric Holder authorized Federal prosecutors in Boston to seek the

death penalty in the marathon bombing. Currently, it is unknown whether Dzhokhar's defense lawyers will attempt to negotiate a plea of no trial in exchange for a sentence of life in prison without the possibility of parole. The trial has been scheduled to start in November.

In 2011, it was discovered that Penn State's former assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky had been sexually abusing children for years. He was eventually sentenced to serve at least 30 years in prison. The university itself paid a heavy price after it was revealed that others were aware of Sandusky's behavior, including his supervisor, who failed to take immediate actions to have him questioned, arrested, or terminated from the Penn State football program. In fact, investigators reported that there may have been a massive cover-up by university officials to hide the abuse in order to avoid any possible embarrassment to the university and its sports program. Former head coach Joe Paterno was ultimately fired, and a class action lawsuit was filed against the university naming several officials (Paterno, former president Graham Spanier, and others) as parties, alleging that they are liable for endangering the welfare of children because they had knowledge of the sexual abuse allegations of Sandusky, but failed to take action against him. The National Collegiate Athletic Association also handed down several penalties against Penn State, including a $60 million fine (which will be used to fund educational programs in Pennsylvania on child abuse prevention) and the loss of football scholarships.

The untimely death of the "King of Pop," Michael Jackson, in 2009 also stunned the nation. What was more shocking was the manner in which he died. It was revealed that he had accidentally died at the hands of his personal physician, Dr. Conrad Murray, who told everyone during his criminal trial that because Michael Jackson was in a lot of pain and had difficulty sleeping, he had prescribed him painkillers and sleeping aids, but Michael had become addicted to pain medications. However, it was discovered that Dr. Murray had used the surgical anesthetic propofol, which is what ultimately led to Jackson's death. During the trial, medical experts testified that they had never heard of anyone using propofol outside of an operating room because of the danger it posed to a patient's respiratory system. They also indicated that when it is used by a surgeon, it requires the assistance of nurses, doctors, and heart and lung monitors. Before sentencing Dr. Murray, the judge claimed that because of greed and incompetence, Dr. Murray caused Jackson's death by giving him an overdose of a drug that caused cardiac arrest. He was subsequently sentenced to four years in jail. A wrongful death suit was initiated by Jackson's mother.

These crimes illustrate the types of issues that criminologists examine. Criminologists must ask hard questions, such as: Are some offenders merely pleasure seekers who have disregard for others? Are some offenders born criminals who lack moral and mental development? Do other offenders commit crime because they are economically disadvantaged? Do some offenders commit crime to support their lifestyle? Do some offenders commit crime to increase their wealth? Do some offenders learn criminal behavior from associates, a violent culture, or the media? Could the answer to the search for criminal motivation lie in a combination of these? This text attempts to make sense of these possibilities by

isolating crime causation and offers strategies to prevent crime and improve the human condition.

The definition of crime is found in the criminal law, or state penal code, created by legislative bodies (Anderson and Slate, 2011). One criticism of the law is that it is biased in favor of wealthy people. For example, some criminologists argue that the criminal law disproportionately targets behaviors that are common to people with little social, economic, or political power, while crimes committed by people in positions of power rarely come to the attention of the criminal justice system (Siegel, 2012; Barkan, 2012). For example, medical doctors, corporate offenders, politicians, government, and white-collar offenders rarely receive media attention, and if they do, they are seldom referred to as offenders, let alone prosecuted. Their crimes are policed by regulatory agencies, which are not noted for moving with the same speed as criminal justice actors. In a departure from this pattern, the tobacco industry came under increasing attention in the 1990s. This could not have been imagined decades earlier.

Though the study of crime emerged during the 18th century, the field of criminology continues to benefit greatly from the contributions that are currently being made. This is especially seen in the areas of processing, structural, and conflict theories and also from newly emerging feminist scholarship that has called for a "gender-aware" criminology that has embraced the use of masculinity to explain crime variations. As stated previously, while criminology is the scientific study of crime and criminal behavior, it also examines its nature and extent. In addition, it focuses on how society reacts and responds to crime and criminals. For example, when crime rates increase, does society respond by creating conservative policies that "get tough" on offenders by mandating severe punishment, such as long prison sentences, or does society seek alternatives to traditional incarceration by diverting less serious offenders from a career path in crime by offering community corrections or restorative justice programs?

While some people in the lay public (without benefit of scientific research) have argued that "demonic forces" have caused criminals to engage in criminal behavior, structural and conflict criminologists would argue that adverse life circumstances, such as poverty and feelings of hopelessness, may induce or entice some offenders into thinking their environment and economic situation is never going to get better, and therefore the only logical recourse is to commit a crime for economic gain. Conversely, others have argued that for some offenders, family structure or the way it functions is so dysfunctional that they cannot avoid a life of crime. Perhaps the lack of educational attainment almost guarantees participation in crime, or maybe poor judgment influences the selection of inappropriate peers. Conceivably, poverty and negative environmental forces provide some with abundant access to drugs and other mind-altering substances. While these views have been perpetuated by some customs and traditions, they also have a sociohistorical context. The mass media is also responsible for disseminating erroneous beliefs about the origins of criminal behavior. Only those who study crime can offer valid and informed assessments of crime causation and its nature.

In the United States, billions of dollars are spent each year to combat the crime problem. Resources are allocated separately to every component of the criminal justice system. These include police, courts, and corrections. In addition, money is spent on recruiting and training personnel in each of these areas. It is estimated that there are more than 17,000 police organizations in the United States (Masters et al., 2011). Money is spent on providing these agencies with the technology, manpower, and equipment needed to apprehend offenders and bring them to justice. The corrections system also commands overwhelming resources. For example, to date, there are more than two million offenders in places of confinement. At the same time, there are more than four million offenders under some form of community supervision, serving time on parole or probation.

In addition, the victims of crime endure a tremendous amount of pain and suffering after their initial victimization. Victimization surveys report that some victims spend years receiving physical and psychological therapy. Sometimes they need medication and medical devices after sustaining debilitating injuries. Many Americans lose money after having to stay home from work to heal from devastating injuries. The fear of crime is so acute that many Americans invest in home security devices to ensure their safety. Some with the financial resources move to gated communities.

Why study crime and criminal behavior? Crime is a social reality that all of us must confront. Nearly everyone knows someone who has committed or been the victim of a crime. Statistics indicate that all Americans, at some point in their lives, will be the victim of either a violent or a property crime. Therefore, we should study crime because it involves everyone. Perhaps some more important reasons are to: improve the human condition by creating crime-prevention strategies; eliminate or reduce crime-producing factors for criminals; learn how not to be a crime victim; learn how to identify, describe, explain, predict, and control criminal behavior; determine if crime prevention strategies are effective; and, if they are discovered to be ineffective, create new ones. The study of crime is critical because it reveals, through patterns and trends reported each year, if the crime rate is actually increasing or decreasing. Perhaps more important, it indicates whether crime-prevention strategies are meeting their goals of reducing crime. If, after examining crime rates for a reasonable amount of time, we discover that the rates are increasing, we would probably do well to focus our crime-prevention efforts and resources in another area. Therefore, criminologists should embrace the study of crime as an attempt to alleviate human suffering and to reduce the costs of crime. This can be achieved only when criminologists examine the totality of criminality committed by offenders in the lower class, as well as by criminal elites. This is the challenge that confronts criminologists and students of justice.

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