

Among the recommendations: **SYSTEM**—institute crime specific planning, develop and make maximum use of data collected through criminal justice information systems, establish criminal justice education and training standards and curriculum, and revise criminal codes and procedures; **COMMUNITY CRIME PREVENTION**—dispense government services through neighborhood centers, coordinate youth services through Youth Service Bureaus independent of the juvenile justice system, create drug intervention and treatment programs at the community level, expand education and employment opportunities for disadvantaged youths, and implement designs for buildings and neighborhoods to reduce criminal opportunity; **POLICE**—formulate and publicize policies governing police functions, objectives, and priorities, including the use of discretion, establish geographic team policing and involve the public in neighborhood crime prevention efforts, establish crime laboratory certification standards, and upgrade entry-level educational and training requirements while offering incentives for police to seek higher education; **COURTS**—prohibit all plea bargaining in all courts by 1978, assure the period from arrest to trial does not exceed 60 days for felonies or 30 days for misdemeanors, formulate alternatives to the Exclusionary Rule, and select judges on merit only with mandatory retirement at age 65; **CORRECTIONS**—guarantee offenders' access to courts, legal assistance, and legal materials, establish rules of inmate conduct and grievance procedures, implement formal diversion programs, develop a comprehensive correctional classification system for institutions and community-based programs, develop a range of community-based alternatives to incarceration, and authorize police to divert juveniles from the criminal justice process.

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- See also Criminal Law Reform*

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## Crime, Definitions of

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"Crime" is a widely invoked and broadly familiar term. An aspiration to define crime in a single, formal manner—repudiating all other definitions as incorrect, or wrong—is futile. Rather, we have to accept that the term "crime" refers to different things, and then be clear about which meaning is being invoked in a particular context.

There are perhaps a dozen ways to define crime, but within criminology, the five most popular are the legalistic, humanistic, constructionist, political, and moralistic definitions.

The legalistic definition of crime has been dominant, and such a conception of crime is most readily embraced by a literate public. The simplest legalistic

definition of crime defines it as a violation of the criminal law, or conduct leading to criminal prosecution (Michael and Adler, 1933; Tappan, 1947). In legal terms, a crime involves both conduct (or action) and intent (*mens rea*). The action may be inchoate, or not fully realized (e.g., it is a crime to attempt to hire someone to kill a spouse, even if no further action occurs). Intent should not be confused with premeditation, or the specific intent to cause a grievous harm (e.g., a person who spontaneously punches another person, causing a fatal injury, can be charged with a degree of homicide, even though the fatal injury was neither planned nor anticipated). The proscribed action must be shown to have some causal relationship to the injurious outcome. An individual may be deemed incapable of forming criminal intent (e.g., because of being underage or mentally ill), and overall circumstances may be taken into account in determining whether or not a crime occurred.

The legalistic definition of crime differentiates forms of crime. An ancient distinction exists between crimes that are *mala in se*—or evil in themselves—and *mala prohibita*—or crimes because they are prohibited (Blackstone, 1979). More familiarly, the most serious crimes are designated as felonies; less serious crimes are designated as misdemeanors. The terms infractions or citation offenses are used for minor violations, such as jaywalking, prohibited by local ordinances.

If crime through most of history was thought of principally in terms of conventional, predatory offenses such as murder, rape, robbery, and burglary, Edwin H. Sutherland (1945) challenged this way of defining crime when he introduced the concept of white-collar crime. Such crime is committed by respectable members of society (often of high social status) in the context of a legitimate occupation. But Sutherland incorporated into this conception activities that are not defined as crime by the criminal law; rather, much of this activity evokes a response from regulatory or civil law.

Legalistic definitions of crime have been challenged as ideologically biased in some way, with calls for adopting criteria other than criminal, civil, or regulatory law to define crime (Friedrichs, 1992). Conflict theorists, radical criminologists, and critical criminologists emphasize that crime is an ideological construct, and the conventional adoption of legalistic definitions of crime as inherently biased. A *humanistic definition of crime* has been advanced by Herman and Julia Schwendinger (1970), who called for a definition that would focus on objectively identifiable harm to human beings and violations of human rights as the criteria for labeling an activity a crime. By such criteria imperialism, racism, sexism, and other such oppressive

conditions should be viewed as crimes. The Schwendingers argued that criminologists should not defer to the vested interests in society the exclusive right to define crime. In a similar vein, Larry Tifft and Dennis Sullivan (1980) have argued that we should define crime in terms of needs-based social harms inflicted by the powerful on less powerful people, independent of formal legal institutions; accordingly, actions that contribute to the denial of food, clothing, and shelter—and the realization of human potential—should be recognized as crime. Further, Ronald C. Kramer (1985) has specifically called for a humanistic definition of crime as willful social harm. Raymond Michalowski and Ronald Kramer (1987) have called for recognition that in an increasingly globalized world transnational corporations engage in demonstrably harmful activities that fall in “the space between the laws,” but that ought to be recognized as crime. And David Kauzlarich, Ronald Kramer, and Brian Smith (1992) are among those who have called for extending the definition of crime more broadly to the harmful activities engaged in by states, especially those governmental actions that violate international human rights.

Another way to define crime is via the *constructionist* or labeling perspective, which holds that crimes are distinguished from other acts precisely because they have been defined as crimes by people whose reactions matter. Pursuing this reasoning, what makes behavior distinctive are the kinds of reactions it calls forth. The labeling perspective views crime as status rather than as behavior, and would define crime as a label that is attached to behavior and events by those who exercise power (Barlow and Kauzlarich, 2001).

The fourth major way to define crime is *moralistically*. Pro-life activists, for example, embrace a definition of crime that emphasizes moralistic criteria. Accordingly, abortion is characterized as a crime and, indeed, a crime of the first magnitude: willful murder of fetuses. Its criminal status is rooted in the view that abortion is fundamentally at odds with the law of God and is accordingly both immoral and criminal.

Finally, if legalistic definitions of crime emanate out of a political system, some definitions of crime may be regarded as purely political, formulated and applied quite independently of the legal system. In this sense, a *political definition of crime* encompasses the brute exercise of political power. In totalitarian political systems in particular, those whose actions (or attributes) are fundamentally offensive or threatening to the political elite are defined and treated as guilty of serious crimes, and are dealt with accordingly. As a classic illustrative case, the Jews in Nazi Germany (and in countries occupied by Nazi Germany) were ultimately defined as guilty of the crime of being Jewish, and

millions of Jews were accordingly systematically exterminated. Although a series of laws in Nazi Germany stripped Jews of their rights as citizens, no law was ever passed declaring it a crime to simply be of Jewish extraction, and legal proceedings were not the means used to identify, seize, transport, and ultimately to exterminate Jews. Here, then, is a case where brute political power was used to impose the label criminal on a whole people.

In conclusion, the term "crime" means different things in different contexts. Rather than imagining that crime can be defined in one way we should be sensitive to the fact that crime is a construct, defined differently for different purposes.

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- See also Elements of Crime; Sutherland, Edwin E.; Typologies of Crime and Criminal Behavior; White-Collar Crimes, Definitions of**

## Crime Laboratories *See* Police: Forensic Evidence

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## Crime Mapping

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A geographic information system (GIS) is a set of computer-based tools that allow a person to modify, visualize, query, and analyze geographic and tabular data. Crime analysis in the law enforcement setting is the systematic study of criminal activity along with sociodemographic, temporal, and spatial factors in order to inform crime prevention and decision making. Consequently, computerized crime mapping is the process of using a geographic information system in combination with crime analysis techniques to focus on the spatial context of criminal and other law enforcement activity. Examples of analysis range from examining the number of crimes per patrol area for resource allocation, to determining travel patterns of a serial offender for apprehension purposes.

Although computerized crime mapping has become a standard practice among many law enforcement agencies, the mapping of crime has not always been conducted with the aid of computers. The placement of hand drawn dots on a map to indicate the locations of crime incidents or shading areas to indicate crime characteristics of an area has been practiced since the early 1800s. In fact, one of the first maps analyzing crime was created in France in the 1820s. The map depicted areas of France shaded to show a comparison of national data on education to national data on crimes committed against property and persons.

The use of crime mapping in the U.S. began some time later, primarily because the country itself was relatively new which meant that reliable maps, especially