

CHAPTER TWO

THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF CRIME

Learning Objectives

1. Be able to discuss how crime is defined.
2. Define and discuss some of the different types of crime.
3. Be familiar with the methods used to measure crime.
4. Discuss the development of the NIBRS program.
5. Be able to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of various measures of crime.
6. Recognize the trends in the crime rate.
7. Comment on the factors that influence crime rates.
8. Be familiar with trends in crime in other cultures.
9. Know the various crime patterns.
10. Understand the concept of the criminal career.

Key Terms

career criminals (p. 74) – persistent repeat offenders who organize their lifestyle around criminality.

consensus view of crime (p. 41) – the view that the great majority of citizens agree that certain behaviors must be outlawed or controlled, and that criminal law is designed to protect citizens from social harm.

conflict view of crime (p. 41) – the view that criminal law is created and enforced by those who hold political and economic power and is a tool used by the ruling class to control dissatisfied have-not members of society.

crime (p. 42) – a violation of social rules of conduct, interpreted and expressed by a written criminal code, created by people holding social and political power; its content may be influenced by prevailing public sentiments, historically developed moral beliefs, and the need to protect public safety.

chronic offenders (p. 74) – as defined by Marvin Wolfgang, Robert Figlio, and Thorsten Sellin: delinquents arrested five or more times before the age of eighteen, who commit a disproportionate amount of all criminal offenses.

cleared (p. 49) – an offense is cleared by arrest or solved when at least one person is arrested or charged with the commission of the offense and is turned over to the court for prosecution.

corporate crime (p. 47) – crime committed by a corporation, or by individuals who control the corporation or other business entity, for such purposes as illegally increasing market share, avoiding taxes, or thwarting competition.

early onset (p. 75) – the principle or fact that kids who have been exposed to a variety of personal and social problems at an early age are the most at risk to repeat offending.

expressive violence (p. 44) – violent behavior motivated by rage, anger, or frustration.

hate crimes (bias crimes) (p. 45) – criminal acts directed toward a particular person or members of a group because they share a discernible racial, ethnic, religious, or gender characteristic.

instrumental violence (p. 44) – violent behavior that results from criminal activity designed to improve the financial status of the culprit, such as shooting someone during a bank robbery.

interactionist view of crime (p. 41) – the view that criminal law reflects the perspectives and opinions of people who hold social power in the society and use their influence to impose their own values and moral code on the rest of the population.

liberal feminist theory (p. 72) – an ideology holding that women suffer oppression, discrimination, and disadvantage as a result of their sex and calling for gender equality in pay, opportunity, child care, and education.

mass murderer (p. 44) – type of multiple killer who kills many victims in a single violent outburst.

moral entrepreneur (p. 41) – people who wage campaigns to control behaviors they view as immoral or wrong.

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS) (p. 52) – the ongoing victimization study conducted by the Justice Department and the U.S. Census Bureau that surveys victims about their experiences with law violation.

National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) (p. 52) – a form of crime data collection created by the FBI requiring local police agencies to provide at least a brief account of each incident and arrest within twenty-two crime patterns, including the incident, victim, and offender information.

Part I crimes (p. 49) – those crimes used by the FBI to gauge fluctuations in the overall volume and rate of crime. The offenses included were the violent crimes of murder and non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, robbery, and aggravated assault and the property crimes of burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson.

Part II crimes (p. 49) – all other crimes reported to the FBI; these are less serious crimes and misdemeanors, excluding traffic violations.

public order crimes (p. 45) – behaviors that are illegal because they run counter to existing moral standards. Obscenity and prostitution are considered public order crimes.

racial threat hypothesis (p. 73) – the view that young minority males are subject to greater police control – for example, formal arrest – when their numbers increase within the population.

self-report survey (p. 55) – a research approach that questions large groups of subjects, such as high school students, about their own participation in delinquent or criminal acts.

serial killer (p. 44) – type of multiple killer who kills over a long period of time but typically assumes a “normal” identity between murders.

spree killer (p. 44) – type of multiple killer who spreads their murderous outburst over a few days or weeks.

three-strikes laws (p. 76) – sentencing codes that require that an offender receive a life sentence after conviction for a third felony. Some states allow parole after a lengthy prison stay—for example, twenty-five years.

truth-in-sentencing laws (p. 76) – laws requiring convicted felons to spend a significant portion of their sentence behind bars.

Uniform Crime Report (UCR) (p. 48) – the official crime data collected by the FBI from local police departments.

white collar crime (p. 47) – involve the violation of rules that control business enterprise. They include employee pilferage, bribery, commodities law violations, mail fraud, computer fraud, environmental law violations, embezzlement, Internet scams, extortion, forgery, insurance fraud, price fixing, and environmental pollution.

Chapter Outline

I. How is crime defined? [LO 1]

- There are three views of how and why some behaviors are illegal and others remain noncriminal.

A. Consensus view

- 1) Behaviours that become crimes are essentially harmful to a majority of citizens living in society

- 2) As a result these behaviors have been controlled or prohibited by the existing criminal law.
 - 3) There is general agreement about which behaviors society needs to control by law
 - 4) The criminal law is a set of rules that expresses the norms, goals, and values of the vast majority of society and thus represents the consensus of public opinion
 - 5) Consensus view rests on the assumption that criminal law has a social control function.
- B. Conflict view
- 1) There is an ongoing class struggle between the rich and poor
 - 2) Criminal law is created and enforced by the ruling class as a mechanism for controlling dissatisfied, have-not members of society.
 - 3) The law is the instrument that enables the wealthy to maintain their position of power and control the behaviours of those who oppose their ideas and values or who might rebel against the unequal distribution of wealth.
- C. Interactionist view
- 1) Falls between the consensus and conflict views.
 - 2) Suggests that criminal law is structured to reflect the preferences and opinions of people who hold social power in a particular legal jurisdiction.
 - 3) Focuses on the role of people who dedicate themselves to shaping the legal process, called moral entrepreneurs.
 - 4) Those who wage campaigns to control behaviors they view as immoral or wrong
- D. All three definitions agree that
- 1) Criminal law defines crime;
 - 2) The definition of crime is constantly changing;
 - 3) Social forces mold the definitions of crime; and
 - 4) Criminal law has a social control function.

II. What are the different categories of crime? [LO2]

- Millions of crimes occur each year
- Crimes range in seriousness from shoplifting to serial murder

A. Violent crime

- 1) Rates of violent crime have declined significantly over the past decade.
- 2) Most Americans still worry about being victimized by a violent crime as we are bombarded with media accounts of various crimes.
- 3) Some acts are expressive violence in that they are motivated by rage, anger, or frustration.
- 4) Other acts are instrumental in that they are designed to improve the financial status of the culprit.

B. Gang violence

- 1) There are more than 29,000 gangs active in the U.S., with approximately 760,000 members who are involved in drug distribution, extortion, and violence.

- 2) Modern gangs are motivated by the quest for drug profits and street power.
 - 3) There has been an increase in the number of gangs recently because of the emergence of gangs in rural and suburban areas.
- C. Multiple murder
- 1) There are three different types of multiple killers:
 - 2) Mass murderers – kill many victims in a single violent outburst
 - 3) Spree killers – spread their murderous outburst over a few days or weeks
 - 4) Serial killers – kill over a long period of time but typically assume a “normal” identity between murders.
- D. Intimate violence
- 1) Americans are at greater risk of physical danger from people close to them than from strangers.
 - 2) This includes spouses, other relatives, and dating partners.
 - 3) Child abuse is another concern.
 - 4) Approximately 700,000 victims of child abuse.
 - 5) Effects of child abuse can be devastating.
- E. Hate crimes
- 1) Criminal acts directed toward a particular person or members of a group because they share a certain racial, ethnic, religious, or gender trait.
 - 2) The FBI reports about 7,600 hate crimes each year.
 - 3) Most hate crimes involve racial attacks against African Americans.
- F. Public order crimes
- 1) Acts that are criminalized because they run counter to existing moral standards.
 - 2) Also referred to as victimless crimes, though this term is misleading.
 - a. Prostitution
 - i. About 60,000 prostitution arrests are made annually, with the gender ratio 2 to 1 female to male.
 - ii. Arrests are beginning to trend downward for various reasons.
 - iii. Fewer people are seeking the services of prostitutes
 - iv. Police are reluctant to make arrests
 - v. More sophisticated prostitutes using the internet to avoid detection
 - 3) Substance abuse
 - a. Despite the “war on drugs” millions of Americans still use drugs
 - b. Recent drug use by youth has stabilized or declined.
 - c. The use of marijuana has been increasing.
 - d. Alcohol is the most commonly used substance and is involved in many murders, suicides, and accidental deaths.
 - e. The relationship between drug use and crime remains uncertain.
- G. Economic crimes
- 1) Millions of property and theft-related crimes occur each year, and are mostly the work of amateur or occasional criminals.
 - 2) Many thefts are committed by school-age youth who are unlikely to enter into a criminal career.

- 3) There are few professional thieves but their crimes result in greater losses to society.
- H. White collar crime
 - 1) Criminal activities that are intended to profit through illegal business transactions.
 - 2) May include bribery, mail fraud, computer fraud, environmental law violations, embezzlement, insurance fraud, price fixing, environmental pollution, etc.
 - 3) Difficult to estimate the influence and costs of these types of crimes.
 - 4) Some white collar crimes involve criminal conspiracies designed to improve the market share or profitability of corporations and are termed corporate crime.
- I. Organized crime
 - a. The criminal activity of those whose purpose is to gain economically through illegal enterprise.
 - b. Federal and state agencies have been dedicated to wiping out organized crime and there have been some high-profile arrests.

III. Sources of crime data [LO 3]

- Primary sources are surveys and official records collected, compiled, and analyzed by government agencies.
 - Questions emerge as to how data is collected and the validity of the findings.
- A. The Uniform Crime Report (UCR)
 - 1) UCR involves data collection by more than 17,000 police departments regarding Part I and Part II crimes.
 - 2) Part I crimes include murder/non-negligent manslaughter, forcible rape, aggravated assault, robbery, burglary, larceny, arson, and motor vehicle theft.
 - 3) Part II crimes are all other crimes reported to the FBI which are usually less serious crimes.
 - 4) Includes crimes reported to local law enforcement and the number of arrests made by police agencies.
 - B. Compiling the Uniform Crime Report
 - 1) Data collection includes all crimes reported to the police, with false complaints eliminated.
 - 2) The data is expressed in various ways.
 - 3) Raw figures (i.e. – 14,748 people were murdered in 2010).
 - 4) Crimes per 100,000 people are computed to get a crime rate (i.e. – the murder rate is 4.8 in 2010).
 - 5) Changes in the rate of crime over time (i.e. – decrease in murders by 5.7% between 2010 and 2011).
 - C. Clearance rates
 - 1) Crimes are cleared when at least one person is arrested, charged, and turned over to the court for prosecution, or when the physical arrest of an offender is precluded.

- 2) Slightly more than 20 percent of all reported Part I crimes are cleared by arrest each year.
 - 3) More serious crimes like murder have a higher clearance rate than less serious property crimes.
- D. Validity of the Uniform Crime Report
- 1) There are concerns regarding the accuracy of UCR data.
 - a. Reporting practices
 - i. Crimes not reported to the police, for whatever reason, are not counted as part of the UCR; therefore critics argue that the UCR is an underestimation of many crimes.
 - b. Law enforcement practices
 - i. Departments may record and report crimes differently, which seriously impacts the validity of the UCR.
 - ii. If more than one crime is committed simultaneously by an offender, only the most serious offense is counted.
 - c. Methodological issues
 - i. The most frequent methodological concerns are that no federal crimes are reported, reports are voluntary, not all police submit reports, and incomplete acts are lumped together with complete acts.
- E. National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) [LO4]
- 1) A redesign of the UCR resulted in NIBRS, which has expanded crime categories and requires police agencies to provide a brief account of each incident and arrest, including information about the victim and the offender.
 - 2) There are links in NIBRS between arrests and clearances to specific incidents or offenses, all offenses are included rather than just the most serious, and there exists the ability to distinguish between attempted and completed crimes.
 - 3) Can also examine interrelationships between victim and offender.
 - 4) Half the states have implemented their NIBRS programs.
- F. National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)
- 1) Sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Statistics
 - 2) Data is collected regarding frequency, characteristics, and consequences of criminal victimization by a variety of crimes, many of which many not have been reported to law enforcement.
 - 3) Used because more than half of all victims do not report their experiences to law enforcement.
 - 4) Conducted on a yearly basis of about 42,000 households.
- G. NCVS: Advantages
- 1) The greatest advantage is that it can estimate the total amount of annual crimes and not only those that are reported to the police.
- H. NCVS: Problems
- 1) Overreporting due to victims' misinterpretation of events.

- 2) Underreporting of crimes for multiple reasons: embarrassment, fear of getting in trouble, forgetting the incident.
- 3) Sampling errors.
- I. Self-report surveys
 - 1) Individuals are questioned regarding their own involvement as perpetrators of delinquent or criminal acts, which may or may not have been previously brought to the attention of law enforcement.
 - 2) Many such studies have focused on juvenile delinquency or drug use.
- J. Monitoring the Future
 - 1) Considered the national standard to measure substance abuse trends among American teens.
 - 2) Usually involves 2500 high school seniors
 - 3) Indicates that the number of people who break the law is far greater than the number projected by official statistics.
- K. Validity of self-reports
 - 1) Some people question that people will actually admit to illegal acts.
 - 2) Self-reports may measure only non-serious, occasional delinquents while ignoring hardcore chronic offenders who may be institutionalized and unavailable for self-reports.
 - 3) Reporting accuracy differs among racial, ethnic, and gender groups.
- L. Evaluating sources of crime data [LO 5]
 - 1) The trends in crime indicated by the various crime data sources indicate similarities, and generally agree on the personal characteristics of serious criminals and the location and timing of crime.
 - 2) They are reliable indicators of changes and fluctuations in yearly crime rates despite the concerns.
- IV. Crime trends [LO 6]**
 - A. There was a gradual increase in crime, especially violent crime, from 1830 to 1860.
 - B. From 1880 to WWI, crime decreased, followed by a steady decline until the Depression when another crime wave was recorded.
 - C. Crime rates increased gradually following the 1930s until the 1960s, when the growth rate became much greater.
 - D. The number of crimes has been in decline since 1991 when there were 14.6 million crimes recorded.
 - E. In 2011 there were about 10 million crimes reported.
 - 1) Trends in violent crime and property crime
 - a. U.S. violent crime rates have been in decline for approximately twenty years.
 - b. About 1.3 million violent crimes are now reported to the police each year, which is about 1 million fewer than in 1991.
 - c. Property crime has dropped more than 30% during the past two decades.

- d. Currently about 9 million property crimes are reported each year to the police, resulting in \$15 billion in losses.
- 2) Trends in victimization
 - a. About 18 million households experience one or more property crimes or violent crimes.
 - b. Criminal victimization has declined significantly over the past 30 years.
- 3) Trends in self-reporting
 - a. Self-report results appear to be more stable than the UCR.
 - b. There has not been a reduction in self-reported criminality in terms of theft, violence, and damage-related crimes.
 - c. Data reveals that the crime problem is much greater than official statistics would lead us to believe.

V. What the future holds

- A. Risky to speculate the future of crime trends.
- B. Researchers speculate an increase in crime in the future, due to a large population of children currently under the age of ten who will soon be reaching their crime-prone years.
- C. At the same time this may be offset by the aging of the population.

VI. Crime patterns [LO 7 and 9]

- A. The ecology of crime
 - 1) Patterns in the crime rate seem to be linked to temporal and ecological factors.
 - 2) Day, season, and climate
 - a. Most crimes that are reported occur in July and August.
 - b. Exceptions to this trend are murders and robberies, which occur frequently in December and January.
 - c. Crime rates may be higher in the first day of the month.
 - d. Crime rates increase with rising temperatures and then begin to decline at about 85 degrees.
 - 3) Regional differences
 - a. Large urban areas have the highest violence rates and rural areas have the lower crime rates (exceptions are large transient or seasonal population areas).
 - b. Western and Southern states have higher crime rates than Midwest or Northeast states.
 - c. Most believe that regional differences can be explained by economic differences.
- B. Social class, socio-economic conditions, and crime
 - 1) UCR data indicates that crime rates are higher in inner-city, high-poverty areas.
 - 2) It is unclear whether the relationship between class and crime is due to more crime in these areas or more targeted law enforcement in these areas.

- 3) Those living in poverty are believed to engage in disproportionately amounts of expressive crimes, such as rape and assault, as a result of their rage, frustration, and anger against society.
 - 4) Others believe that those in poverty are more likely to suffer psychological abnormalities.
 - 5) The class-crime association may become more acute as manufacturing moves overseas and less educated, untrained males are frozen out of the job market.
- D. Age and crime
- 1) Age is inversely related to crime.
 - 2) Younger people commit more crime than older people and are arrested at a disproportionate rate.
 - 3) The peak age for property crime is 16, and for violent crime age 18.
 - 4) Kids who are persistent offenders begin committing crime in their childhood, increase their offending activities in late adolescence, and then begin a slowdown in adulthood.
 - 5) Early starters tend to commit more crime and are more likely to continue to be involved in criminality over a longer period of time.
 - 6) In adulthood, people become better able to delay gratification and forgo the immediate gains that law violations bring.
 - 7) Hormone levels, like testosterone, decline over the life cycle and thus may explain why violence diminishes over time.
- E. Gender and crime
- 1) Male crime rates are much higher than those for women.
 - 2) Victims report that their assailant was male in 80 percent of all violent personal crimes.
 - 3) Over the past decade male arrest rates have declined by 10% and female arrest rates have increased by 7%.
- F. Explaining gender differences in the crime rate
- 1) Early criminologists pointed to emotional, physical, and psychological differences between males and females to explain the differences in the crime rates.
 - 2) Also female criminality was often masked because criminal justice authorities were reluctant to take action against a woman.
 - 3) Traits
 - a. Some experts believe that gender based traits are a key determinant of crime rate differences.
 - b. Physical strength and hormonal differences are some of the suspected influences.
- G. Socialization and development
- 1) Some suggest that girls, unlike boys, are socialized to avoid violence and are more closely supervised by parents, thereby preventing their involvement in extensive delinquency.
 - 2) Cognitive differences
 - a. The superior verbal skills of girls may allow them to talk rather than fight.

- 3) Feminist views
 - a. Self-report studies indicate that the pattern of female criminality is similar to that of male criminality and the factors that predispose men to crime are the same for women.
- 4) Is convergence likely?
 - a. Previous views are being challenged by the rapid rise in the female crime rate.
 - b. Police may be abandoning their traditional deference toward women in an effort to be “gender neutral.”
- H. Race and crime
 - 1) African Americans comprise 12 percent of the population, but 38 percent of violent crime arrests and 29 percent of property crime arrests.
 - 2) Large national samples of youth indicate there is very little evidence that African Americans commit more crime than Whites, leading researchers to wonder about discriminatory police practices.
 - 3) For some serious offenses, African American youth do in fact admit to more offending than White youth.
- I. System bias
 - 1) Some argue that race based differences in the crime rate can be explained by unequal treatment by the justice system.
 - 2) Racial threat hypothesis suggests that as the percentage of minorities in the population increases, so too does the amount of social control that police direct at minority group members.
- J. Cultural bias
 - 1) This explanation suggests that racial differences in the crime rate rests on the legacy of racial discrimination on personality and behavior.
 - 2) The idea is that black crime in the United States is a function of socialization in a society where the black family was torn apart and black culture destroyed in such a way that recovery has proven impossible.
- K. Structural bias
 - 1) Racial differences in the crime rate are a function of disparity in the social and economic structure of society.
 - 2) African Americans are disproportionately represented among the nation’s poor, and this economic inequality may increase the incentive to engage in criminal activity.
 - 3) Is convergence possible?
 - a. If economic conditions improve in the minority community, then differences in crime rates will eventually disappear.
 - b. If America’s racial divide can be breached and overcome, so too will racial differences in the crime and delinquency rate.
- L. Chronic offending and crime [LO 10]
 - 1) Most offenders commit a single crime and once arrested, they will discontinue their involvement in crime.

- 2) A small group of criminal offenders account for a majority of all criminal offenses.
 - 3) Referred to as career criminals or chronic offenders or habitual offenders.
 - a. What causes chronicity?
 - i. Youths exposed to personal and social problems at a young age are at the greatest risk for continued involvement in crime.
 - ii. This is a concept referred to as early onset.
 - iii. Other predictive factors for chronicity include arrest before age 15, relatively low intellectual development, and parental drug involvement.
- M. Policy implications
- 1) Strategies such as three strikes laws and truth-in-sentencing laws have been designed to incapacitate chronic offenders for extended periods of time.
 - 2) Apprehension and punishment seem to have little impact on the offending behaviour of chronic offenders and most repeat their criminal acts after their correctional release.

Chapter Summary

Defining what crime is can be a challenge. There are three main views that attempt to explain how and why some behaviors become illegal and are considered crimes, while other behaviors remain noncriminal. The **consensus view** contends that criminal behaviour is defined by laws that reflect the values and morals of a majority of citizens. The **conflict view** holds that criminal behavior is defined by economically powerful groups as a means to retain their control over society. The **interactionist view** portrays criminal behavior as a relativistic, constantly changing concept that reflects society's current moral values.

Criminal acts are usually broken down into violent, public order and property/economic crimes. Violent crimes involve acts ranging from mass murder to child abuse. Public order crimes involve acts that interfere with how society operates and functions. Examples of public order crimes include prostitution and drug use. Some critics maintain that these crimes should be considered victimless crimes, or perhaps should not be considered crimes at all. The most frequent crimes are property crimes. Millions of property, economic and theft related crimes occur each year. These can range from petty theft to complex white-collar frauds and schemes.

There are multiple methods used to measure crime in this country. The most common and well known method is the Uniform Crime Report (UCR). This is compiled by the FBI and includes criminal acts reported to local police. The National Incident Based Reporting System (NIBRS) is an outgrowth of the UCR. Thus far, only 26 states have implemented the NIBRS systems. This system collects data on each reported crime incident, including a brief account of each incident and arrest as well as information about the victim and the offender. Another method used to measure crime is the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). The NCVS surveys people about their experiences with crime. Another crime measurement tool is self-report surveys, in which offenders report on their criminal behaviors.

There are strengths and weaknesses to each method of crime measurement. The validity of the UCR has been questioned because many people fail to report crime to police as a consequence of fear, apathy, or lack of respect for law enforcement. The NCVS can be used to measure unreported criminal activity, but estimates come from a small sample of the population, and the reports rely on memories of the respondent, which are known to sometimes be compromised. Self-report surveys also depend on the accuracy of respondents, who may have drug addiction and psychological issues, which naturally could impact the validity of their responses.

Throughout the years crime rates fluctuate. For example, crime rates were high in the 1930s, but steadily declined until the 1960s. Crime rates spiked in the 1960s and continued to rise until the early 1990s, at which point crime rates started declining again, and continued to decline for the next two decades. In particular, murder rates have declined significantly over the last two decades. Crime rates vary for many reasons. Many attribute shifting crime rates to social factors, including, for example, the age structure of society. Others believe crime rates are influenced by the economy, but evidence supporting this correlation is tenuous at best. What *is* certain is that criminal justice policy seems to influence crime rates.

In the section on “Race, Gender, and Culture in Criminal Justice,” students will become familiar with trends in crime in other cultures. Generally, crime rates are higher in the United States than abroad. However, recent years have seen an inverse in this trend, with crime rates increasing internationally while declining in the U.S.

When analysing crime data it is interesting to observe the patterns of crime that emerge. For example, crime occurs more often in large cities, in southern and western states, during the summer and at night. Arrest data also indicates that males, minorities, the poor, and the young have relatively high rates of criminality in comparison with other demographics. Victims of crime tend to be demographically similar to offenders.

Some individuals continue to commit crimes over the span of their lives. These individuals are known as “career criminals.” Career criminals begin offending early in life and continue their criminal behaviour into adulthood. Repeat career criminals represent a significant portion of all law violations.

Discussion Questions

1. Compare and contrast the UCR and NCVS. How does each method collect their data? Is the data of these measures reliable? Explain the strengths and weakness of each method. [LO 3]
2. Discuss the trends in crime rates over the past century. What are some of the causes of crime rate fluctuation? [LO 6]
3. What temporal and ecological factors affect patterns in the crime rates? [LO 7]
4. What is the relationship between social class and crime? [LO 7]
5. What policies have been implemented by the criminal justice system to deal with career criminals and chronic offenders? Do you think these attempts have been successful? Explain your answer. [LO 10]

Assignments

1. Review the UCR crime data for two specific states at <http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/cjis/ucr/crime-in-the-u.s/2011/crime-in-the-u.s.-2011>. Discuss the similarities and differences between the two selected states in terms of both violent offenses and property offenses. [LO 2, 3]
2. Pick a country other than the United States and research their crime rates? How do these

rates compare to the United States' crime rates? What are the factors that may make comparing crime rates internationally difficult? [LO 8]

3. <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/cv111.pdf> is a link to the 2011 Criminal Victimization report compiled by the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Review the results of the report. If you were police chief of a jurisdiction, what policies would you implement in order to address the results of this report? What are the potential flaws of the data collected in this National Crime Victimization Survey? [LO 2, 3, 5, 6]
4. Students should discuss the three views on how crime is defined and explain each perspective as they relate to the issue of "victimless crimes," like prostitution and drug use. [LO 1]
5. Have students make a collage of local crime stories in their cities. Students should discuss the types of crimes that are reported on. [LO 1] What are the factors in their city that they may think influence crime rates? [LO 7]

Media Tools

1. <http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/OTUS/colorado-washington-states-legalize-recreational-marijuana/story?id=17652774> is an article about how the states of Colorado and Washington voted to legalize marijuana for recreational purposes. Students should debate the pros and cons of marijuana legalization and discuss criminal marijuana laws from the perspective of the consensus view, the conflict view, and the interactionist view. [LO 1]
2. Have students watch the documentary at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/poor-kids/> which discusses the issue of poverty in the United States and its impact on children. Students should discuss how poverty, and ultimately social class, can influence crime rates. [LO 7]
3. http://www.jrsa.org/ibrcc/background-status/nibrs_states.shtml is a link to the status of the implementation of NIBRS in the states. Students should review whether their state utilizes the NIBRS data collection method. [LO 4]
4. <http://www.flsenate.gov/laws/statutes/2011/775.084> is Florida State's Statute pertaining to violent career criminals. Students should review the law and be able to define who in Florida would qualify as a violent career criminal. If students do not live in Florida, have them also research the habitual offender laws in their state [LO 10]
5. <http://www.cnn.com/JUSTICE/> discusses all the recent crime stories across the country. What types of crimes are being reported? Are they mostly violent or property offenses? This website also categorizes each crime story by region of the country. Do the crime

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reports reflect the research that southern and western states have a more serious crime problem? [LO 1, 6]