Twelfth Edition

CRIMINAL BEHAVIOR
A Psychological Approach

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Criminal Behavior

A Psychological Approach

TWELFTH EDITION

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Preface

In this text we focus on criminal behavior and antisocial behavior (because antisocial behavior is not always criminal) from a psychological perspective. More specifically, adults and juveniles who violate the law or who act antisocially are embedded in and continually influenced by multiple systems within their psychosocial environment. This includes the individuals, their families, peers, friends, schools, neighborhoods, community, culture, and society as a whole. Meaningful theory, well-executed research, and skillful application of knowledge to the "crime problem" require an understanding of these many levels that influence a person's life course.

The psychological study of crime has taken a decidedly developmental approach, while retaining its interest in cognitive-based explanations for antisocial behavior. In recent years, neuropsychologists have offered many new insights. Scholars from various academic disciplines have engaged in pathways-to-crime research, and these pathways may include biological and neuropsychological factors. A very common conclusion is that there are multiple developmental pathways to criminal offending; some people begin to offend very early, while others begin offending in adulthood. In addition, a variety of risk factors that enable antisocial behavior have been identified, and many protective factors that insulate the individual from such behavior have been discovered. We have listed the various risk and protective factors early in the book and refer to them throughout.

We do not consider all offenders psychologically flawed, and only some have diagnosable mental illnesses or disorders. Persons with serious mental disorders sometimes commit crimes, but most do not, and crimes that are committed by people with mental illness are typically minor offenses. Many offenders do have substance abuse problems, and these may co-occur with mental disorders. In addition, emotionally healthy people break the law, and sometimes emotionally healthy people end up on probation or in jails and prisons. Like earlier editions of this text, the twelfth edition views the criminal offender as existing on a continuum, ranging from the occasional offender who offends at some point during the life course, usually during adolescence, to the serious, repetitive offender who usually begins a criminal career at a very early age, or the one-time, serious offender.

The book reviews contemporary research, theory, and practice concerning the psychology of crime as completely and accurately as possible. The very long list of references at the end of the book should attest to its comprehensive nature. Nevertheless, it is impossible to do justice to the wide swath of behavior that is defined as crime, nor to the many models and approaches used in studying it. We have selected representative crimes and representative research. If your favorite crime, theory, model, or prevention or treatment program is not found here, we hope you will still appreciate what is offered.

An early chapter sets the stage by defining crime and describing how it is measured. It is important to stress that crime rates in the United States have gone down for most serious offenses, something that rarely comes to public attention. However, crime rates do go up in some areas. Furthermore, some crimes are never reported by victims for many reasons. In addition, crimes committed by those in powerful positions in society rarely are included in the various statistics intended to measure crime.

The book is organized from broad to specific content. Early chapters discuss individual and social risk factors, developmental principles, and the psychology of aggression, including its neurobiological basis. We include a complete chapter on psychopathy, because it remains arguably one of the most heavily researched topics in the psychology of crime. Not all psychopaths commit crime, however, a point that is often not understood. The specific crimes covered in the latter part of the book are both very common ones and crimes that are rare but attract media and research attention because of their serious nature.

New to this Edition

The twelfth edition was completed with the help of extensive reviews of the previous edition by professionals in this field. Some changes reflect new theories and models as well as ongoing recent psychological research on specific topics and offenses. Other changes reflect contemporary concerns, such as rises in hate crimes and domestic terrorism, cyberattacks, and mass killings across a wide spectrum of situations. Every chapter includes updated citations and illustrations. Many topics have been expanded, and some have been deleted.

- Chapter 16 has been deleted, and substance abuse issues have been integrated at various points throughout the book (e.g., juvenile and mental illness chapters).
- There is more focus on bias or hate crimes, political crimes, and human trafficking.
- There is increased coverage of contemporary issues relating to sexual assault, such as investigation of campus incidents, assaults in immigration detention centers, changes in statutes of limitations for victims filing civil suits.
- There is more focus on the objectification of women, such as via sexual violence portrayed in media.
- There is expanded coverage of intimate partner violence, including within law enforcement and military families.
- An expanded section on cyberbullying includes research on bullies, a dominant model for prediction, and approaches to prevention.
- There is more focus on gun violence, gun control, and related laws and court decisions.
- There is also more attention directed at mass killings and active shooter incidents, and increased attention to threat assessment.
- We have emphasized the importance of copycat violence, such as school shooting and mass killings.
- Recent and upcoming court decisions on death penalty, along with the role of psychologists in examining competency for execution are highlighted.
- There is continued but expanded focus on adolescent and young adult development.
- We have introduced the concept of emerging adulthood as it relates to youthful offenders and young adults.
- Economic and violent crimes against older adults are covered in more detail.
- Racial justice and ethnic issues are addressed, particularly in sections on crime and victimization data, service to victims, law enforcement responses, jury selection, and death penalty material.
- There is more attention to cybercrimes, including growth of ransomware attacks.
- New theories, models, and treatment programs are highlighted as relevant (e.g., Theory of Mind; psychopathy TriPM model and dark triad model; BGCM cyberbullying model; anger management treatment for juveniles; gender-responsive programs). Some of these are covered in pedagogical boxes as well as in text.
- In general, there are more contemporary issues, research, and treatment boxes. All boxes include questions for discussion.
- Terrorism chapter is substantially revised to include more attention to domestic terrorism.
- Immigration-related issues (e.g., victimization, government policies) are integrated into various chapters.
- More attention is directed at neuropsychological factors, especially self-regulation, executive function, and neuroplasticity. There is also more emphasis on protective factors that shield

children from serious antisocial behavior (community safety, parental monitoring, quality education and health care) and risk factors that promote it (peer rejection, faulty parenting, community violence, lack of social programs and safety net).

- There is more focus on mental health in corrections along with safety in jails and prisons.
- There is extended coverage of psychological concepts such as resilience, moral disengagement, and tactics like "nerve management" (e.g., in burglary) and neutralization (white collar and political crime).

Criminal Behavior is designed to be a core text in undergraduate and graduate courses in criminal behavior, criminology, the psychology of crime, crime and delinquency, and forensic psychology. The material contained in this book was classroom-tested for over 30 years. Its strong emphasis on psychological theory, concepts, and research distinguishes it from other fine textbooks on crime. Although we focus on psychology's contributions to the study of crime, we are respectful of contributions from other disciplines. Theory and research from political scientists, sociologists, economists, and legal and criminal justice scholars are recognized in many chapters.

The book's major goal is to encourage an appreciation of the many complex issues surrounding criminal behavior by citing relevant, contemporary research. However, we hope also that readers will be encouraged to consider and act on social problems that co-occur with crime and antisocial behavior. These include but are not limited to inadequate support for educational programs in many communities; inattention to health hazards, particularly for young children and adolescents; the spreading of bias and hate, often by public figures; sexual exploitation of minors; malfeasance by various political and corporate figures; and the lack of adequate mental health services. Though we have touched on these and similar topics in various chapters throughout the book, we hope readers are committed to making our world a better place and will continue to be.

Once again, we have benefited from the encouragement and help of many individuals in completing this very long project. And once again we cherish our main sources of emotional support—Gina, Ian, Soraya, Jim, Kai, Madeleine, Darya, and Shannon. They are always there for us, and we continue to be awed by their goodness, their wit, their fun-loving spirit, the love they display, and their many accomplishments in so many different realms.

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Introduction to Criminal Behavior

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Emphasize that such behavior has multiple causes, manifestations, and developmental pathways.
- Identify the different perspectives of human nature that underlie the theoretical development and research of criminal behavior.
- Introduce various theories that may help explain crime.
- Describe the three major disciplinary approaches in criminology: sociological, psychological, and psychiatric.
- Point out that the study of criminal behavior and delinquency, from a psychological perspective, has shifted from a personality toward a more cognitive and developmental focus.
- Define criminal behavior and juvenile delinquency.
- Introduce the reader to the various ways of measuring crime.

Crime intrigues people. Sometimes it attracts us, sometimes it repels us, and occasionally, it does both at once. It can amuse, as is evident from the popularity of humorous crime podcasts. Many people chuckled, also, at a YouTube video several years back that featured a burglar sprawled and napping on a bed in the victims' home, next to a bag containing the jewelry he had stolen. Presumably, no one was seriously injured by the burglar's conduct, but the homeowners likely suffered emotional distress and faced inconveniences that accompany being victims of a crime. Although readers will cite some exceptions, you are likely to agree that most crimes leave victims in its wake; most crimes harm psychologically.

Crime can frighten, especially if we believe that what happened to one victim might happen to us or those we love. News of a child abduction or even an attempted one places parents at heightened alert. Crime can also anger, as when an inebriated driver is responsible for a pedestrian death, or when people are deprived of their life savings by fraudulent schemes. Crime angers when someone who holds the public trust embezzles money or a person in power commits sexual assaults.

Crime that is politically motivated can terrify and outrage. Pipe bombs sent by mail to public officials, shots fired at politicians practicing for a softball game, and cyberattacks on voting systems have been among the politically motivated crimes in the news in recent years. Also in recent years, the public has become sensitized

to crimes committed *by* high-ranking political figures and their associates: perjury, money laundering, fraud, bribe-taking, and illegal campaign activities are examples.

What is crime? For the moment (and only for the moment) we put aside the reality that some behaviors that are crimes probably should not be, and some behaviors that are not crimes probably should be. We put aside, also, the reality that many people who commit crime are never caught, some who are caught are not truly guilty, and those who are caught are not all treated equally. We return to this point at the end of the chapter.

Legally, crime is defined as a conduct or failure to act in violation of the law forbidding or commanding it, and for which a range of possible penalties exist upon conviction. Criminal behavior, then, is behavior in violation of the criminal code. To be convicted of crime, a person must have acted intentionally and without justification or excuse. For example, even an intentional killing may be justified under certain circumstances, as in defense of one's life. Although there is a very narrow range of offenses that do not require criminal intent (called strict liability offenses), the vast majority of crimes require it. Obviously, this legal definition encompasses a great variety of acts, ranging from murder to petty offenses.

While interest in crime has always been high, understanding why it occurs and what to do about it has always been a problem. Public officials, politicians, various experts, and many people in the general public continue to offer simple and incomplete solutions for obliterating crime, particularly violent and street crime: more police officers, video cameras and state-of-the-art surveillance equipment, armed teachers and more guns, sturdy locks, self-defense classes, stiff penalties, speedy imprisonment, or capital punishment. Some of these approaches may be effective in the short term, but the overall problem of crime persists, despite the fact that crime rates run in cycles, rising during some years, falling in others. Solutions that attack what are believed to be root causes of crime—such as reducing economic inequality, improving educational opportunities, or offering substance abuse treatment—have considerable merit, but they require public commitment, energy, and financial resources.

Our inability to prevent crime is also partly because we have trouble understanding criminal behavior and identifying and agreeing upon its multiple causes. Because crime is complex, explanations of crime require complicated, involved answers. Psychological research indicates that most people have limited tolerance for complexity and ambiguity. We apparently want simple, straightforward answers, no matter how complex the issue. Parents become impatient when psychologists answer questions about child rearing by saying, "It depends—on the situation, on the parents' reactions to it, on any number of possible influences." Today, the preference for simplicity is aided by the vast array of information available in the media, including the Internet and social media. Search engines provide instant access to a multitude of both reputable and questionable sources. Discerning students are well served by this information explosion; they can find up-to-date research on virtually all topics covered in this book, for example. However, many people acquire information—but not necessarily knowledge—by clicking links, entering chat rooms, reading blogs and accompanying comments, and following friends and "friends" and friends of friends who may or may not be providing legitimate data. Today, it is fair to say that many people get news almost exclusively from social media platforms, which may be appropriated by unknown sources. Thus, the selective and careful use of information technology is a crucial skill for all students to acquire.

Criminal behavior may be seen as a vastly complex, sometimes difficult-to-understand phenomenon. Our focus is the *psychological* perspective, although other viewpoints are also described. However, it is important to stress that there is no all-encompassing psychological explanation for crime, any more than there is a sociological, anthropological, psychiatric, economic, or historic one. In fact, it is unlikely that sociology, psychology, or any other discipline can formulate basic "truths" about crime without help from other disciplines and

well-designed research. Criminology—the scientific study of crime—needs all the interdisciplinary help it can get to explain and control criminal behavior. To review accurately and adequately the plethora of studies and theories from each relevant discipline is far beyond the scope of this text, however. Our primary goal is to review and integrate recent scholarship and research in the psychology of crime, compare it with traditional approaches, and discuss strategies that have been offered to prevent and modify criminal behavior. We cannot begin to accomplish this task without first calling attention to theoretical questions that underlie any study of human behavior, including criminal behavior.

THEORIES OF CRIME

In everyday conversation, the term "theory" is used loosely. It may refer to personal experiences, observations, traditional beliefs, a set of opinions, or a collection of abstract thoughts. Almost everyone has personal theories about human behavior, and these extend to criminal behavior. "If his parents had raised him right, he wouldn't be in jail." Some people have a personal theory that the world is a just place, where one gets what one deserves. "Just-worlders," as these individuals are called, believe that things do not happen to people without a reason that is closely related to their own actions; for example, individuals who experience financial difficulties probably brought these on themselves. In 2008–2009, when many homeowners in the United States were facing foreclosure because they could not afford high mortgage payments, a just-worlder would be likely to say this was more their own fault than the fault of bank officers who enticed them into paying high interest rates.

In reference to crime, just-worlders may believe both that a burglar deserved a severe penalty and that the victims did not protect their property sufficiently. Again, just world is the belief that the world is just and that people get what they deserve. Because the world is a just place, the battered spouse must have provoked a beating. The man who sent in a $500 deposit to claim his million-dollar prize should have known better: if it's too good to be true, it isn't.

The above beliefs represent individual "theories" or assumptions about how the world works. However, psychologists have also developed a somewhat more elaborate *scientific theory* based on just-world ideas, and they have developed scales to measure one's just-world orientation (Lerner, 1980; Lerner & Miller, 1978). A variety of hypotheses—sometimes discussed under the umbrella term **just-world hypothesis**—have been proposed and tested. For example, people identified as just-worlders on the basis of their scores on the scales have been shown to favor capital punishment and to be nonsupportive of many social programs intended to reduce economic disparity between social groups (Sutton & Douglas, 2005).

Interestingly, research on just-world theory has identified two tracks: belief in a general just-world—described above—and belief in a personal just-world (Dalbert, 1999; Sutton & Douglas, 2005). Belief in a personal just-world ("I usually get what I deserve") is considered adaptive and helpful in coping with dire circumstances in one's life. For example, Dalbert and Filke (2007) found that prisoners with a high personal just-world orientation evaluated their prison experiences more positively and reported better overall well-being than those without such an orientation. Belief in a general just-world, however, seems to be far more problematic because it is associated with less compassion for others and even a derogation of victims of crime.

Scientific theories like those just described are based on logic and research, but they vary widely in complexity. A **scientific theory** is "a set of interrelated constructs (concepts), definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena by specifying relations among variables, with the purpose of explaining and predicting the phenomena" (Kerlinger, 1973, p. 9). A scientific theory of crime, therefore, should provide

Scientific theory
A set of interrelated concepts, definitions, and propositions that present a systematic view of phenomena.

a general explanation that encompasses and *systematically* connects many different social, economic, and psychological variables to criminal behavior, and it should be supported by well-executed, methodologically sound research. Moreover, the terms in any scientific theory must be as precise as possible, and their meaning and usage clear and unambiguous, so that it can be meaningfully tested by observation and analysis. The process of theory testing is called **theory verification**. If the theory is not verified—indeed, if any of its propositions is not verified—the end result is **falsification** (Popper, 1968).

The primary purpose of theories of crime is to identify the causes or precursors of criminal behavior, so that criminal behavior can be reduced, or at least controlled. Some theories are broad and encompassing, whereas others are narrow and specific. Basically, theories of criminal behavior are summary statements of a collection of research findings. Perhaps more importantly, they provide direction for further research. If one component of a theory is falsified or not supported, the theory is not necessarily rejected outright, however. It can be modified and retested. In addition, each theory of crime has implications for policy or decisions made by society to prevent crime.

Over the past few decades, many researchers have been interested in proposing models to accompany various theories. A **model** is a graphic representation of a theory or a concept, designed to enhance its understanding. Throughout the text you will encounter different models pertaining to criminal and delinquent behavior.

Models are relatively new, but theories of crime have been around for centuries. During the 18th century, the Italian philosopher Cesare Beccaria (1738–1794) developed a theory that human behavior is fundamentally driven by a choice made by weighing the amount of pleasure gained against the amount of pain or punishment expected. Beccaria argued that in order to reduce or stop criminal offending in any given society, the punishment should be swift, certain, and severe enough to deter people from the criminal (pleasure-seeking) act. If people realized in advance that severe punishment would be forthcoming, and coming soon, regardless of their social status or privileges, they would choose not to engage in illegal behavior. This theoretical thinking, which emphasizes free will as the hallmark of human behavior, has become known as **classical theory**. Both criminal and civil law are rooted in the belief that individuals are masters of their fate, the possessors of free will and freedom of choice. Many of today's approaches to crime prevention are consistent with classical theory, which in its modern form is also known as **deterrence theory** (Nagin, 2007). For example, surveillance cameras that are ubiquitous on public streets and places of business assume that individuals choose to commit crime but may be persuaded not to by the threat of being discovered. Likewise, a harsh sentence given to someone who has committed a political crime might discourage someone else from doing the same thing. However, even if people are not deterred by the prospect of getting caught or receiving a long sentence, they must still be punished, because crime was an expression of their free will.

Another thread of theoretical thought originated with **positivist theory**, which is closely aligned with the idea of determinism. From that view, free will cannot be the major explanation for our behavior. Antecedents—prior experiences or influences—*determine* how we will act. The earliest positive theories of crime considered biological antecedents, such as one's sex, race, or even the size of the brain. An early theorist from the positivist perspective, Cesare Lombroso (1876), conducted elaborate measurements on the skulls of both dead and live prisoners and drew conclusions about their criminal tendencies. Later, positivists saw social antecedents, such as negative early life experiences or lack of educational opportunity, as the culprits. According to the positivist school, human behavior is governed by causal laws, and free will is undermined. Many contemporary theories of criminology are positivist because they search for causes beyond free will. Furthermore, many approaches to crime prevention are consistent with a positivist orientation: they try to

Theory verification
A process whereby a scientific theory is tested through observation and analysis. If the process falsifies the theory, the theory must be revised to account for the observed events.

Falsification
The end result if any proposition of a theory is not verified.

Model
A graphic representation of a theory or a concept.

Classical theory
Theory of human behavior that emphasizes free will as a core concept.

Deterrence theory
Modern version of classical theory, it proposes that people will avoid committing crime if the possibility of punishment is great enough.

Positivist theory
Theory that argues prior experiences or influences determine present behavior.

"fix" the antecedents of criminal activity, such as by providing support services for youth believed to be at risk of engaging in crime.

In summary, the classical view of crime holds that the decision to violate the law is largely a result of free will. The positivist or deterministic perspective argues that most criminal behavior is a result of social, psychological, and even biological influences. It does not deny the importance of free will, and it does not suggest that individuals should not be held responsible for their actions. However, it maintains that these actions can be explained by more than "free will." This latter perspective, then, seeks to identify causes, predict and prevent criminal behavior, and rehabilitate (or habilitate) offenders.

Theoretical Perspectives on Human Nature

All theories of crime have underlying assumptions about or perspectives on human nature. Three major ones can be identified. The **conformity perspective** views humans as creatures of conformity who want to do the "right" thing. To a large extent, this assumption represents the foundation of the humanistic perspectives in psychology. Human beings are basically "good" people trying to live to their fullest potential. Similarly, the branch of psychology called "positive psychology" focuses on studying the individual characteristics that make life worth living, such as contentment and intimacy (Peterson, 2006; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Thus, positive psychology is very much in tune with a conformity perspective.

An excellent example of the conformity perspective in criminology is **strain theory**, which originated in the work of sociologist Robert K. Merton (1957) and continues today in the theory of Robert Agnew (1992, 2006) and his followers. Merton's original strain theory argued that humans are fundamentally conforming beings who are strongly influenced by the values and attitudes of the society in which they live. In short, most members of a given society desire what the other members of the society desire. In many societies and cultures, the accumulation of wealth or status is all-important, representing symbols that all members should strive for. Unfortunately, access to these goals is not equally available. While some have the education, social network, personal contacts, and family influence to attain them, others are deprived of the opportunity. Thus, Merton's strain theory predicted that crime and delinquency would occur when there is a perceived discrepancy between the materialistic values and goals cherished and held in high esteem by a society and the availability of the legitimate means for reaching these goals. Under these conditions, a strain between the goals of wealth and power and the means for reaching them develops. Groups and individuals experiencing a high level of this strain are forced to decide whether to violate norms and laws to attain some of this sought-after wealth or power or give up on their dream and go through the motions, withdraw, or rebel. Note that although the original strain theory was formulated on American society, it can be applied on a global basis.

Following Merton's seminal work, other strain theorists emphasized that crimes of the rich and powerful also can be explained by strain theory. Even though these individuals have greater access to the legitimate means of reaching goals, they have a continuing need to accumulate even greater wealth and power and maintain their privileged status in society (Messner & Rosenfeld, 1994). Thus, an already wealthy person might enter into illegal schemes to hide income or evade taxes to accomplish this objective.

In developing his General Strain Theory (1992), Agnew used the word *strain* in a slightly different way, seeing strains as events and conditions that are disliked by individuals. The inability to achieve one's goals was only one such condition; others were losing something of value or being treated negatively by others (2006). General Strain Theory, which has attracted much research and commentary, is continually being tested and evaluated.

Conformity perspective

The theoretical position that humans are born basically good and generally try to do the right and just thing.

Strain theory

A prominent sociological explanation for crime based on Robert Merton's theory that crime and delinquency occur when there is a perceived discrepancy between the materialistic values and goals cherished and held in high esteem by a society and the availability of the legitimate means for reaching these goals.

Nonconformist perspective
The theoretical perspective that humans will naturally try to get away with anything they can, including illegal conduct, unless social controls are imposed.

Social control theory
A theory proposed by Travis Hirschi that contends that crime and delinquency occur when an individual's ties to the conventional order or normative standards are weak or largely nonexistent.

General Theory of Crime
Proposes that crime and delinquency can be explained largely by deficits in self-control and self-regulation. Also referred to as self-control theory.

Learning perspective
The theoretical position that humans are born basically neutral and behaviorally a blank slate. What they become as individuals depends on their learning experiences rather than innate predispositions.

Social learning theory
A theory of human behavior based on learning from watching others in the social environment. This leads to an individual's development of his or her own perceptions, thoughts, expectancies, competencies, and values.

Differential association theory
Formulated by Sutherland, a theory of crime that states that criminal behavior is primarily due to obtaining values or messages from others, including but not limited to those who engage in crime. The critical factors include with whom a person associates, how early, for how long, how frequently, and how personally meaningful the associations are.

Emerging adulthood
Period between adolescence and adulthood when individuals may not have reached the psychological maturity associated by society with adulthood.

A second perspective—the **nonconformist perspective**—assumes that human beings are basically undisciplined creatures who, without the constraints of the rules and regulations of a given society, would flout society's conventions and commit crime indiscriminately. This perspective sees humans as fundamentally unruly, needing to be held in check. For example, the biological and neurobiological theories discussed in Chapter 3 identify genetic or other biological features or deficiencies in some individuals that predispose them to antisocial behavior like aggressive or violent actions. In recent years, some criminologists have emphasized the importance of biological influences on behavior, not as exclusive determinants of behavior but rather as factors that should be taken into consideration (DeLisi, 2009). They may be present at birth or appear during one's early formative years. It is important to point out that a nonconformity perspective does not blame people for their imperfection. As readers will learn in Chapter 3, many theorists now believe that certain behaviors, such as aggressive behavior, have their genesis in malnutrition and exposure to harmful elements in the environment. Importantly, though, deficiencies can be prevented, corrected, or overcome.

Another good illustration of the nonconformist perspective is Travis Hirschi's (1969) social control theory, which is discussed in several chapters. **Social control theory** contends that crime and delinquency occur when an individual's ties to the conventional order or normative standards are weak or largely nonexistent. In other words, the socialization that usually holds one's basic human nature in check is incomplete or faulty. This position perceives human nature as fundamentally "bad," "antisocial," or at least "imperfect." These innate tendencies must be *controlled* by society. Years after developing social control theory, Hirschi teamed with Michael Gottfredson to develop a **General Theory of Crime** (GTC; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990), also referred to as **self-control theory (SCT)**. It suggests that a deficit of self-control or self-regulation is the key factor in explaining crime and delinquency. One controversial aspect of the theory is its contention that self-control is a stable trait that is fully in place in childhood, usually by the age of 8, and is not likely to change thereafter. Many researchers have tested this aspect of SCT and have found that self-control can develop at later ages (e.g., Arnett, 2000; Burt, Sweeten, & Simons, 2014; Zimmermann & Iwanski, 2014).

The third perspective—the **learning perspective**—sees human beings as born neutral (neither inherently conforming nor unruly) and subject to developmental changes throughout the life course. This perspective argues that humans learn virtually all their behavior, beliefs, and tendencies from the social environment. The learning perspective is exemplified most comprehensively by **social learning theory**, a main topic in Chapter 4, and the **differential association theory** of sociologist Edwin H. Sutherland (1947). Social learning theory emphasizes such concepts as imitation of models and reinforcements one gains from one's behavior. According to differential association theory, criminal behavior is learned, as is all social behavior, through social interactions with other people. It is not the result of emotional disturbance, mental illness, or innate qualities of "goodness" or "badness." Rather, people learn to be criminal as a result of the many examples and messages they get from others who were also taught to be criminal. The conventional wisdom that bad company promotes bad behavior, therefore, finds validity in this theory.

From the mid-20th century to the present, many criminologists have embraced a developmental approach, viewing crime and other antisocial activity as behavior that begins in early childhood and proceeds to and sometimes through one's adult years. Developmental psychologists as a group identify periods in human development across the life course, sometimes conceived of as stages. Those interested in the study of antisocial behavior often examine these stages as they relate to crime. Over the past decade, **emerging adulthood** has been identified as a period covering the time between adolescence and adulthood—roughly ages 18 to the late 20s, with a particular focus on 18–25 (Arnett, 2000, 2014). Emerging

TABLE 1–1   Perspectives of Human Nature

Perspective of Behavior	Theory Examples	Humans are...
Conformity perspective	Strain Theory (Merton) General Strain (Agnew)	Basically good; strongly influenced by the values and attitudes of society
Nonconformist perspective	Social Control Theory (Hirschi) Biological Theories of Crime General Theory of Crime (Hirschi and Gottfredson)	Basically undisciplined; individual's ties to social order are weak; innate tendencies must be controlled by society; individual lack of self-control; individual is not at fault
Learning perspective	Differential Association Theory (Sutherland) Social Learning Theory (Rotter, Bandura)	Born neutral; behavior is learned through social interactions with other people; changes over the life span affect behavior; risk and protective factors affect one's life progression

adulthood is a time when people are generally expected to be independent from parental and other institutional controls but are still searching for self-identity. Thus, they may be carefree and exploring their options but also may be struggling to achieve adult status. As we discuss later in the book, emerging adulthood has prompted considerable research relating to antisocial behavior.

The learning perspective is also exemplified in the work of developmental criminologists, who study the life paths or "pathways" people take that lead to criminal behavior. For example, some begin antisocial activity at very early ages, while others begin in adolescence or later. Developmental criminologists identify risk factors to be addressed and protective factors to be encouraged. Some have learned that girls and women, as a group, take pathways that are quite different from those taken by boys and men, as a group, though researchers differ on the extent to which these differences occur.

Table 1–1 summarizes the three perspectives—conformity, nonconformist, and learning—and provides illustrations of each. Developmental criminology cannot be placed exclusively in any of the three categories, although it would seem to be most at home in the learning perspective as we suggest. Nevertheless, aspects of each perspective can be detected in the research and writing of developmental criminologists (e.g., Le Blanc & Loeber, 1998; Farrington, Ttofi, & Coid, 2009; Moffitt, 1993a, b; Odgers, Moffitt et al., 2008; Patterson, 1982).

DISCIPLINARY PERSPECTIVES IN CRIMINOLOGY

Criminology is the multidisciplinary study of crime. As noted above, several theories we cited were framed by sociologists. Over the years, the study of crime has been dominated by sociology, psychology, and psychiatry, but in recent years more disciplines and subdisciplines have been involved. These include, but are not limited to, anthropology, biology, neurology, political science, and economics.

Although our main concern in this text is with psychological principles, concepts, theory, and research relevant to criminal behavior, considerable attention is placed on the research knowledge of the other disciplines, particularly sociology, psychiatry, and biology. In fact, some psychologists today have extensive backgrounds in biology and the workings of the brain, and many specialize in the rapidly expanding fields of biopsychology and neuropsychology. It is not easy to make sharp demarcations between disciplines, because they often overlap in focus, theories, and practice. It is fair to say that all try to develop, examine, and evaluate strategies and interventions that have the potential to prevent or reduce criminal behavior.

In addition, what distinguishes a given theory as sociological, psychological, or psychiatric is sometimes simply the stated professional affiliation of its proponent. Furthermore,

Criminology
The multidisciplinary study of crime.

TABLE 1–2   The Three Major Disciplinary Perspectives in Criminology

Perspective	Disciplinary Influence	FOCUS
Sociological criminology	Sociology	Examines relationships of demographic and group variables to crime: focuses on the structure of society and the culture of groups and how these influence criminal behavior
Psychological criminology	Psychology	Focuses on individual criminal behavior; the science of the behavior, emotional, psychoneurological, and mental processes of the offender
Psychiatric criminology	Psychiatry	The contemporary perspective examines the interplay between psychoneurological determinants of behavior and the social environment; traditional perspectives look for the unconscious and biological determinants of criminal behavior

alignments are not clear cut, because theorists and researchers today often work hand in hand with those from other disciplines: they obtain grants together, conduct studies, teach together, form consulting agencies, and even write books together. In the relatively new and rapidly advancing subfield of cybercriminology, for example, scholars in psychology, sociology, computer science, and economics—among other fields—have amassed work on the many forms of cybercrime (Jaishankar, 2011; Stalans & Finn, 2016).

Finally, condensing any major discipline into a few pages hardly does it justice. To obtain a more adequate overview, the interested reader should consult texts and articles within those disciplines. Table 1–2 summarizes the three dominant disciplinary perspectives.

Sociological Criminology

Sociological criminology

The branch of criminology that examines the demographic, group, and societal variables related to crime.

Sociological criminology has a rich tradition in examining the relationships of demographic and group variables to crime. Variables such as age, race, gender, socioeconomic status, and ethnic-cultural affiliation have been shown to have significant relationships with certain categories and patterns of crimes, as well as victimization. Sociological criminology, for example, has allowed us to conclude that juveniles as a group are overrepresented in nonviolent property offenses. Young black males from disadvantaged backgrounds are overrepresented as both perpetrators and victims of homicide. White males are overrepresented in political and corporate crimes. The many reasons for these relationships are reflected in the various perspectives and research findings that are covered in the book. Sociological criminology also probes the situational or environmental factors that are most conducive to criminal action, such as the time, place, kind of weapons used, and the circumstances surrounding the crime. Scholars from this perspective often study how crimes, such as robbery and burglary, emerge in urban areas characterized by "social disorganization." Social disorganization refers to the extent to which unfavorable conditions—unemployment, deteriorating infrastructures, unoccupied housing, illegal activities—exist in a community.

Another major contribution of sociological criminology is the attention it directs to topics that reflect unequal distribution of power in society. This often takes the form of examining how crime is defined and how laws are enforced. The sale of "street" drugs has been monitored more closely than the sale of "suite" drugs, although they may be equally potent. The actions of corporate officials—for example, allowing environmental and workplace hazards that produce serious harm—are often not defined as crimes. Political crime, such as corruption, bribery, and abuse of power, is studied by sociologists much more than by other disciplines, although psychologists have begun to explore this area more in recent years. Sociological criminology also has a stronger tradition of addressing the underlying social conditions that may encourage criminal behavior, such as inequities in educational

and employment opportunities. Conflict theories in sociology are particularly influential in questioning how crime is defined, who is subject to punishment, and in attempting to draw attention to the crimes of the rich and powerful.

Psychological Criminology

Psychology is the science of behavior and mental processes. **Psychological criminology**, then, is the science of the behavior and mental processes of the person who commits crime. While sociological criminology focuses primarily on groups and society as a whole, and how they influence criminal activity, psychological criminology focuses on individual criminal behavior—how it is acquired, evoked, maintained, and modified.

In the psychology of crime, both social and personality influences on criminal behavior are considered, along with the mental processes that mediate that behavior. Personality refers to all the biological/neurological influences, psychological traits, and cognitive features of the human being that psychologists have identified as important in the mediation and control of behavior. Recently, although interest in personality differences among offenders continues, psychological criminology has shifted its focus in several ways. First, it has taken a more cognitive approach to studying criminal behavior. Second, it has paid more attention to biological/neurological factors. Third, it has adopted a developmental approach to studying criminal behavior among both individuals and groups.

Psychological criminology
The branch of criminology that focuses primarily on how individual factors lead to the acquisition and maintenance of criminal and other antisocial behavior.

Cognitive Approach
Cognitions refer to the attitudes, beliefs, values, and thoughts that people hold about the social environment, interrelations, human nature, and themselves. In serious criminal offenders, these cognitions are often distorted. Beliefs that children must be severely physically disciplined or that victims are not really hurt by fraud or burglary are good examples of cognitions that may lead to criminal activity. Prejudice is also a cognition that involves distortions of social reality. It includes erroneous generalizations and oversimplification about others. Hate or bias crimes—highlighted in Box 1–1—are generally rooted in prejudice and cognitive distortions held by perpetrators. Many serial rapists also distort social reality to the point where they may assault only victims who they perceive "deserve it." Some child sex offenders even persuade themselves that they are not harming their victims, and white-collar offenders sometimes justify their crimes as what they have to do in order to stay in business. The importance of offender cognitions in understanding criminal behavior will be stressed throughout the book.

Cognitions
The internal processes that enable humans to imagine, to gain knowledge, to reason, and to evaluate. The attitudes, beliefs, values, and thoughts that a person holds about the environment, relationships, and him- or herself.

Biological/Neurological Approach
Many criminologists are recognizing that advances in the broad biological and neurological sciences are finding significant links between biology (including neuropsychology) and human behavior (Barnes, Beaver, & Boutwell, 2011; Bush, 2017; Raine, 2013; Wright & Boisvert, 2009). The biological/neurological study of criminal behavior often focuses on aggression and violent behavior. For example, some researchers find that biological, genetic, or neuropsychological factors make a significant contribution to aggression and violence. A traumatic brain injury (TBI), such as one that might occur in a war zone or a traffic accident, may produce personality changes, including increased aggressive behavior (Gurley & Marcus, 2008). In later chapters, we will learn that antisocial behavior can be reduced by practices and programs designed to improve neuropsychological functioning after a TBI has happened as well as prevent neuropsychological impairment early in life.

Developmental approach
Examines the changes and influences (risk factors) across a person's lifetime that contribute to the formation of antisocial and criminal behavior or, alternately, that protect individuals with many risk factors in their lives.

Developmental Approach
Learning how criminal behavior begins and progresses is extremely important. A **developmental approach** examines the changes and influences across a person's lifetime that may contribute to the formation of antisocial and criminal

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

BOX 1–1 HATE OR BIAS CRIMES

Crimes committed against individuals out of bias, hatred, or racial and ethnic prejudice are nothing new; they are well documented in the history of virtually every nation. What is relatively new in the United States is the effort to keep track of such crimes and impose harsh penalties on those who commit them. This has been done with varying degrees of success. Bias crimes are widely underreported, not often prosecuted, and seldom punished.

Nevertheless, toward the end of the 20th century, Congress and many states began to address the crucial problem of crimes—especially violent crimes—committed out of hatred, prejudice, or bias against someone because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. Eventually, characteristics such as gender, physical or mental disability, advanced age, or military status were added to the list of protected categories. Laws were passed requiring the gathering of statistics on these offenses and/or allowing enhanced sentences for someone convicted of a hate or bias crime. The first such federal law, the **Hate Crime Statistics Act** of 1990, required the collection of data on violent attacks, intimidation, arson, or property damage that are directed at people because of their race, religion, sexual orientation, or ethnicity. The law was amended in 1994 to include crimes motivated by bias against persons with disabilities, and in late 2009 to include crimes of prejudice based on gender or gender identity (Langton & Planty, 2011).

The statistics themselves only touch the surface of the problem. In 2016, for example, 88% of the agencies required to report bias or hate crimes said that zero such crimes occurred in their jurisdiction. In the following year, however, an additional 1,000 agencies reported such crimes, suggesting that hate crimes were on the increase or that officials were more attuned to compiling such crime data, or likely both.

Altogether, law enforcement reported 7,175 bias crimes in 2017, which was up from 6,121 the previous year (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018a). Also noteworthy is the fact that these crimes increased 30% from 2015 to the end of 2017. Most common bias crime categories were motivated by bias against race/ethnicity/ancestry, religion, and sexual orientation. (See Figure 1–1.) The majority (about 5,000) were crimes against persons.

Relatedly, the Southern Poverty Law Center (SPLC) has reported significant increases in hate groups in the United States. The SPLC identified 602 hate groups in the year 2000; in 2018, the number was placed at 953 (www.splcenter.org). Known hate groups include neo-Nazis, Klansmen, white nationalists, white supremacists, neo-Confederates, racist skinheads, black separatists, and border vigilantes, among others. Names of groups such as the Proud Boys, Patriot Prayer, Rise Above Movement (RAM), and Identity Evropa appear in scholarly literature as well as online.

Hate groups are those whose beliefs or practices attack or malign an entire class of people, such as immigrants or members of a given race, ethnicity, or sexual orientation or gender identity. The activities of hate groups are not necessarily criminal; in fact, they are more likely to involve rallies, marches, meetings, and distributing leaflets rather than perpetrating violence directly.

However, people who commit hate crimes are sympathetic to hate messages even though they may not belong to an organized group. The man who murdered 77 people and wounded hundreds of others in Norway in 2011 saw himself as a leader of a far-right group that seeks to preserve the dominance of the white race, though the group denied that he was a leader or a member. The one who killed nine people at a prayer meeting at the historic Mother Emmanuel AME church in Charleston, South Carolina, in 2015 had made comments about wanting to start a race war. The gunman who killed 11 people and wounded four at a Jewish temple in Pittsburgh in October of 2018 told arresting officers that all Jews should be killed. The person who sent pipe bombs to political figures and prominent supporters of liberal causes, also in October 2018, owned a van plastered with violent, racist, and misogynist images. The shooter who killed 50 people in New Zealand in 2019 was an avowed white supremacist, as was the man who in 2017 rammed his car into crowds of peaceful protestors in Charlottesville, Virginia, killing a young woman.

Readers can undoubtedly cite other examples. Psychological concepts that might help us to understand why individuals would perpetrate these offenses are discussed in Chapter 4.

Questions for Discussion

1. The terms bias crime and hate crime are used interchangeably in the literature, as we often do here. Legal terminology is now more likely to use the term bias crime. Groups are invariably referred to as hate groups, not bias groups. What are the subtle differences between these terms? Is one or the other preferable?

2. What might account for the fact that 88% of agencies reported zero hate crimes in 2016?

3. Victims of hate crime, such as assaults, do not often report their victimization to law enforcement. Discuss reasons for this.

4. Are there both pros and cons of naming specific "hate groups," as we do here?

5. Obtain the FBI's most recent hate or bias crime statistics and discuss what you learn about the distinctions within categories. For example, which race, which religion, which sexual orientation is most victimized?

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behavior. These are usually called "risk factors." Examples are poor nutrition, the loss of a parent, early school failure, or substandard housing. However, the developmental approach also searches for "protective factors," or influences that provide individuals with a buffer against the risk factors. A caring adult mentor and good social skills are examples of protective factors. Another protective factor is a person's own resilience, a characteristic that enables her or him to bounce back or to survive in the face of what may seem to be insurmountable odds. If we are able to identify the changes and influences that occur across the developmental pathways of life that divert a person from becoming caring, sensitive, and prosocial, as well as those that steer a person away from a life of persistent and serious antisocial behavior, we gain invaluable information about how to prevent and change delinquent and criminal behavior.

Trait Approach   In the past, psychologists assumed that they could best understand human behavior by searching for stable, consistent personality dispositions or traits that exerted widely generalized effects on behavior. A **trait** or **disposition** is a relatively stable and enduring tendency to behave in a particular way, and it distinguishes one person from another. For example, one person may be extrovert and have a consistent tendency to socialize and meet others, while another may be shy and introvert and demonstrate a tendency to socialize only with very close friends. In recent years, researchers (e.g., Frick & White, 2008) have given considerable attention to some traits—collectively termed callous-unemotional traits—that are often associated with psychopaths, individuals to be discussed in Chapter 7. Callous-unemotional traits are characterized by a lack of empathy and concern for the welfare of others, and they often lead to a persistent and aggressive pattern of antisocial behavior. As noted above, self-control is another trait that has received considerable attention in the criminological world.

Trait theories hold that people show consistent behavior across time and place, and that these behaviors characterize personality. Many psychologists studying crime, therefore, assumed they should search for the personality traits or variables underlying criminal behavior. They paid less attention to the person's environment or situation. Presumably, once personality variables were identified, it would be possible to determine and predict which individual was most likely to engage in criminal behavior.

The search for any *single* personality type of the murderer, rapist, abuser, or burglar has not been fruitful, however. Contemporary perspectives in the psychology of crime still include personality or behavior traits in their explanations of crime, as we will see in our discussion of callous-unemotional traits, but they also include cognitions and neuropsychological and developmental factors in these explanations. Thus, while trait psychology standing alone has lost favor, some aspects of this approach have survived.

Hate Crime Statistics Act
A 1990 federal statute that directs the FBI to collect data on all crimes motivated by hatred of or bias against victims based on their racial, ethnic, religious, or sexual orientation. Other characteristics (e.g., physical or mental disability) were later added.

Trait
Relatively stable and enduring tendency to behave in a particular way across time and place. Traits are believed by some psychologists to be the basic building blocks of personality.

Disposition
In personality theory, a term that signifies internal or personality determinants of human behavior. Dispositional theorists look to inner conflicts, beliefs, drives, personal needs, traits, or attitudes to explain behavior.

Psychiatric Criminology

The terms *psychology* and *psychiatry* are often confused by the layperson and even by professionals and scholars in other disciplines. Many psychiatrists, like psychologists, work in a variety of settings that bring them into contact with persons accused of or convicted of crime. They assess defendants, provide expert testimony in court, and offer treatment in the community or in correctional facilities. Psychiatrists and psychologists who are closely associated with the courts and other legal arenas are often referred to as forensic psychiatrists or forensic psychologists.

Psychiatric concepts and theories are often believed to be accepted tenets in the field of psychology. However, the two professions often see things quite differently and approach explanations of criminal behavior along a different course. Part of this difference is due to the dissimilarity in the educational requirements for the two professions. Unlike psychologists, who have earned a PhD, a PsyD, or an EdD and who often complete specialized training in research and some area of psychology, psychiatrists first earn a medical degree (MD or a DO) and complete a medical internship, as other physicians do. Then, during an average four-year residency program in psychiatry, they receive specific training in psychiatry, often focusing on the diagnosis and treatment of individuals in forensic settings, such as court clinics or mental hospitals with special units for people with mental disorders who are accused of crime. Understandably, this medical training encourages a biochemical and neurological approach to explanations of human behavior, and this is often reflected in the psychiatric theories of criminal behavior.

By contrast, psychologists who are interested in being certified and licensed as a clinical or counseling psychologist receive a one-year internship focusing on clinical training, which includes methods and techniques for the diagnosis and treatment of various psychological disorders. This clinical training is sometimes followed by a one- to three-year postdoctoral program, and sometimes longer, focusing on both research and practice. The emphasis of this training is *usually* far more on the cognitive (thought processes), developmental, and learned behavior of human action and less on the biochemical or neurological influences. As we saw above, however, the biological/neuropsychological approach is receiving much more attention in the science of behavior, and increasingly more psychologists today pursue training that is more focused in that direction. Clinical neuropsychologists, for example, receive extensive training in the neurological and cognitive aspects of injury and disease.

Psychiatrists are medical doctors and, by definition, are able to prescribe drugs, most often psychoactive drugs. Psychoactive drugs represent a group of drugs that have significant effects on psychological processes, such as emotions and mental states of well-being. Currently, the great majority of states in the United States do not extend such prescription privileges to psychologists. Only five states do. In 2002, New Mexico became the first state to allow psychologists with specified training to prescribe psychoactive drugs (drugs designed to treat psychological problems). Louisiana became the second state, in 2004; those qualified to prescribe are called "medical psychologists." In 2014, Illinois became the third state to extend limited prescription privileges to authorized clinical psychologists with advanced specialized training, and Iowa and Idaho enacted similar laws in 2016 and 2017, respectively. Psychologists in the military and in some federal agencies also have prescription privileges. Twelve states have rejected such privileges, however, and at this point there appears to be a lull in additional efforts to gain them. The powerful medical establishment has often fought these prescription privileges, saying they would lead to abuse and would decrease the quality of patient care. Even psychologists themselves disagree on this issue, but surveys suggest that most are in favor of extending privileges to those who want them and are suitably trained, particularly because this would increase the availability of mental health services for individuals who might not otherwise access them (Ax et al., 2007;

Baird, 2007). Nevertheless, some worry that this could lead to a heavier reliance on medication for the treatment of mental or behavioral disorders than is warranted.

In past years, **psychiatric criminology** has *traditionally* followed the Freudian, psychoanalytic, or psychodynamic tradition. The father of the psychoanalytical theory of human behavior was the physician-neurologist Sigmund Freud (1856–1939), whose followers are called Freudians. Many contemporary psychoanalysts subscribe to a modified version of the orthodox Freudian position and are therefore called neo-Freudians. Still other psychoanalysts follow the tenets of Alfred Adler and Carl Jung, who broke away from Freud and developed different theories about the human condition. A very influential psychoanalyst in more recent times is Erik Erikson, who developed a theory of development that included eight sequential stages. According to Erikson, ego identity is gradually achieved by facing positive goals and negative risks during eight stages across the life span. The degree of achievement in ego identity—or the progress one has made in reaching the various stages—may influence the tendency to commit crime.

Contemporary psychiatrists interested in the study of criminal behavior are less likely to be psychoanalytic in orientation, however. Many are research based and work in teams with psychologists and other mental health professionals. Psychiatrists, with some exceptions (e.g., Szasz, 1961, and his followers), are heavily influenced by the medical model of mental illness. Most subscribe to diagnostic categories outlined in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th edition (*DSM-5*) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013) or a similar categorical scheme, the *International Classification of Disease* (*ICD*), published by the World Health Organization and now in its 11th edition. As we will discuss in later chapters, some diagnoses are associated with specific types of crimes, but it should not be presumed that persons with these mental disorders are more crime-prone than those not so diagnosed. Furthermore, when crime is committed by individuals with mental disorders, it is likely that—for most—other risk factors such as substance abuse or past violent behavior prior to mental disorder were present (Peterson, Skeem, Kennealy, Bray, & Zvonkovic, 2014). Researchers have estimated that less than 10% of the crime committed by individuals with mental disorders was a product of their illness (Peterson et al., 2014).

Psychiatric criminology
The branch of criminology that focuses on individual aspects of behavior, particularly internal forces and unconscious drives.

DEFINING AND MEASURING CRIME

As defined at the beginning of the chapter, crime is intentional behavior that violates a criminal code, intentional in that it did not occur accidentally or without justification or excuse. Since crime encompasses so many types of behavior, should we restrict ourselves to a legal definition and study only those individuals who have been convicted of behaviors legally defined as crime? Or should we include individuals who indulge in antisocial behaviors but have not been detected by the criminal justice system? Perhaps our study should include persons predisposed to be criminal—if such persons can be identified.

As a review of criminology textbooks and literature attests, there is no universal agreement as to what group or groups should be targeted for study. If we abide strictly by the legal definition of crime and base research and discussion only on those people who have committed crimes, do we consider only those who have been convicted and incarcerated or are serving a sentence in the community, or do we include those who may have broken the criminal law but were only arrested, not convicted? While some of these individuals are "truly criminal," an undetermined number of others were arrested but were not truly guilty. And, as is becoming more apparent in recent years, the innocent are sometimes convicted and sent to prison. On the basis of new DNA evidence, for example, as of early 2019, 365 prisoners have been exonerated after being wrongfully convicted (Innocence Project, 2019). Twenty of these individuals had been sentenced to death. And, how can we include

individuals who violate the law but escape detection or those who come to the attention of law enforcement officials but are never arrested or charged because they receive favorable treatment? Finally, many actions that qualify as crimes are not handled by the criminal justice system. As but one example, financial exploitation and even physical abuse of older adults are often referred to social service agencies rather than to police.

In sum, trying to study crime and criminal behavior presents many problems for social scientists. The subjects of study are most typically captive, such as prisoners or delinquents in institutions. They are not necessarily representative of the true criminal population. Likewise, the universe of crime itself defies any attempt at determining "how much" occurs. As we see below, although various methods have been used to do this, none provides sufficient information.

With respect to obtaining data on the incidence, prevalence, and characteristics of crime, there are many pitfalls. Crime is usually measured in one of three ways, and none is perfect:

1. Official police reports of reported crime and arrests, such as those tabulated and forwarded to the Federal Bureau of Investigation for publication in its annual national statistical report on crime, the **Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)** and its accompanying **National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)**.

2. Self-report studies, whereby members of a sample population are asked what offenses they have committed and how often.

3. National or regional victimization studies, which sample a population of households or businesses asking respondents how often they have been victims of specified crimes.

We provide a brief review of each of these methods, along with their strengths and shortcomings, below.

Uniform Crime Reporting System

Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)

The FBI's system of gathering data from law enforcement agencies on the crimes that come to their attention and on arrests. See also **NIBRS.**

National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)

The FBI's system of collecting *detailed* data from law enforcement agencies on known crimes and arrests.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) **Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)**, compiled since 1930, is the most-cited source of U.S. crime statistics. The UCR Program publishes an annual document containing accounts of crimes known to police and information on arrests received on a voluntary basis from local and state law enforcement agencies throughout the United States. Monthly reports also are available online. The UCR data are available on the FBI website (www.fbi.gov). The UCR program consists of four data collections: (1) the National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS); (2) the Summary Reporting System (SRS); (3) the Law Enforcement Officers Killed and Assaulted (LEOKA) Program; and (4) the Hate Crime Statistics Program. The UCR program also manages the new National Use-of-Force Data Collection. Federal law enforcement agencies do not report through the traditional UCR Program, but they do through the NIBRS, to be described below.

The UCR Program is the only major data source permitting a comparison of national data broken down by age, sex, race, and offense. Its main component is the SRS, which provides basic statistics on crimes that are of most concern. However, the UCR program is retiring the SRS and will transition those data to an NIBRS-only system by January 1, 2021. LEOKA, Hate Crime Statistics, and Use-of-Force Data will remain.

The UCR provides a variety of information relating to crimes that come to the attention of police, and the city and region where the crime was committed. Arrest data include the age, gender, and race of persons arrested. Crimes are divided into two major groups, which until recently were referred to as Part I and Part II crimes. Although that designation has been de-emphasized in the latest FBI reports, we continue to use it periodically, including in some tables, because it is a convenient way to distinguish the offenses and the data that are gathered for each group. The crimes in the first group are sometimes called index crimes.
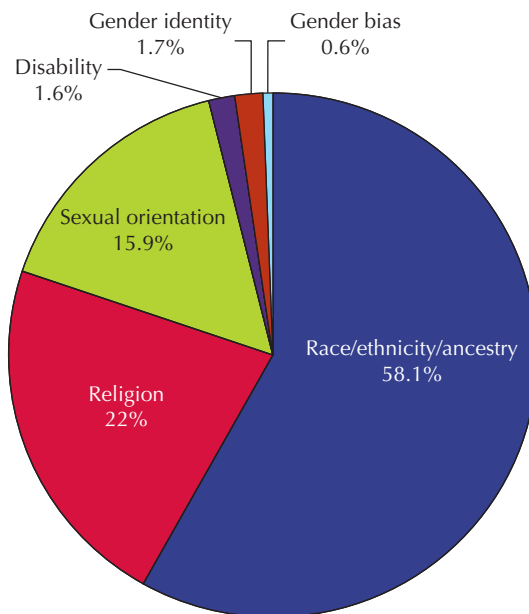
FIGURE 1–1

Gender identity
1.7%

Gender bias
0.6%

Disability
1.6%

Sexual orientation
15.9%

Race/ethnicity/ancestry
58.1%

Religion
22%

They are divided into violent and property offenses. (See Table 1–3 for definitions of these eight crimes as well as other common crimes.)

Violent crime comprises four offenses: murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, rape, robbery, and aggravated assault. As noted in Table 1–3, the definition of rape has been broadened to specify particular actions and to include males as victims. The former definition—called the "legacy definition"—referred to "forcible rape" (to distinguish it from statutory rape) and applied only when females were the victims. During the transition period, some law enforcement agencies still used the legacy definition in reporting crimes, but this practice was stopped in 2017. It is important to keep this in mind when assessing UCR data related to this crime, because rape statistics prior to 2017 give a limited view of that crime.

The property crimes are burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson. The primary objective of the offender in property crime is the taking or destruction of money or property. Arson is included in property crime because it involves the destruction of property, but it may result in the loss of life or serious injury. It should be noted that only arsons that were known to be willfully or maliciously set are included; fires of suspicious origins are not.

For these eight crimes, the UCR provides information on the crime known to police (reported crime or crimes they have observed in progress), as well as arrests. Only arrest data are provided for other crimes, such as those included in Table 1–3. In order to appear in the UCR as one of the eight, a crime must, at a minimum, meet the following requirements:

- Be experienced by the victim or observed by someone else
- Be defined as a crime by the victim or the observer
- In some way become known to a law enforcement agency as a crime
- Be defined by that law enforcement agency as a crime
- Be accurately recorded by the law enforcement agency
- Be reported to the FBI compilation center

It should be emphasized that the UCR provides *crime rate* data on only these eight crimes. The crime rate is the percentage of crime known to police per 100,000 population. For example, in 2017, the murder rate was 5.3, meaning there were 5.3 murders known to police for every 100,000 population. Because the UCR keeps track of trends in offending, the FBI was able to report that the 2017 murder figure represented a 2% decrease since 2008, but a 17% increase since 2013. The total violent crime rate, however, represented a

TABLE 1–3 Definitions of Violent and Various Common Crimes in the Uniform Crime Reports

Violent Crimes	Definitions
Murder and nonnegligent manslaughter	The willful (nonnegligent) killing of one human being by another
Rape[*]	Penetration, no matter how slight, of the vagina or anus with any body part or object, or oral penetration by a sex organ of another person, without the consent of the victim. This includes the offenses of rape, sodomy, and sexual assault with an object. Fondling, and statutory rape are included in a separate category, Crimes Against Persons, Other.
Robbery	The taking or attempting to take anything of value from the care, custody, or control of a person or persons by force or threat of force or violence and/or by putting the victim in fear
Aggravated assault	An unlawful attack by one person on another for the purpose of inflicting severe or aggravated bodily injury; attempts to inflict injury are also included

Property Crimes	Definitions
Burglary	The unlawful entry into any structure to commit a felony or theft
Larceny-theft	The unlawful taking, carrying, leading, or riding away with of property from the possession or constructive possession of another; includes crimes such as shoplifting, pocket picking, purse snatching, thefts from motor vehicles, and bicycle thefts
Arson	Any willful or malicious burning or attempt to burn, with or without intent to defraud, a dwelling house, public building, motor vehicle or aircraft, or personal property of another
Motor vehicle theft	Theft or attempted theft of a motor vehicle, defined as a self-propelled vehicle that runs on land surfaces, not rails. Includes sport utility vehicles, automobiles, trucks, buses, motorcycles, motor scooters, all-terrain vehicles, and snowmobiles.

Other Common Offenses**	Definitions
Simple assault	Assault and attempted assault in which no weapon is used and which does not result in serious or aggravated injury to victim
Forgery and counterfeiting	Making, altering, uttering, or possessing, with intent to defraud, anything false in the semblance of that which is true
Fraud	Fraudulent conversion and obtaining money or property by false pretenses
Embezzlement	Misappropriation or misapplication of money entrusted to one's care, custody, or control
Stolen property	Buying, receiving, and possessing stolen property, including attempts to do so
Offenses against the family and children	Unlawful nonviolent acts by a family member that threaten the physical, mental, or economic well-being or morals of another family member; does not include assault or sex offenses
Sex offenses	Statutory rape, fondling, exhibitionism
Drug abuse violations	State and/or local offenses relating to the unlawful possession, sale, use, growing, and manufacture of drugs
Gambling	Promoting, permitting, or engaging in illegal gambling
Vandalism	Willful or malicious destruction, injury, disfigurement, or defacement of any public or private property, real or personal, without the consent of the owner or persons having custody or control

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (2018a). *Crime in the United States 2017*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice.

*This is the new definition of rape, which was gradually phased in beginning in 2012. The previous definition, which is now referred to as the "legacy definition," was called forcible rape (to distinguish it from statutory rape) and was limited to rape of females. The legacy definition is no longer in use as of 2017.

**This is not an inclusive list.

10% decrease since 2008, but a 6.8% increase since 2013. Although there have been up-ticks in recent years for some violent crimes, rates overall are going down. For example, the decrease in crime since 2004 is found for all major crimes, a fact that often does not come to public attention. The decrease in crime is even more noticeable when we compare recent data to statistics from the early 1990s, a high-crime period in the United States.

For all offenses other than the eight listed above, only arrest data are included in the UCR. For example, if a victim reports a simple assault but no perpetrator is located, that assault would not be included in the *crime rate*. However, the *arrest* of one or more individuals for that simple assault would appear in the UCR. Note that an *aggravated* assault would be included in the violent crime rate.

On a regular yearly basis, if we look at crimes known to police, the property crime of larceny-theft, which usually comprises approximately 60% of the Part I crimes, is the most frequently occurring of the eight offenses (see Figure 1–2). The violent crime of murder occurs the least frequently, accounting for only 0.1% of the total for these eight crimes. In addition, again looking at crimes known to police, recent data indicate that in 2017 both violent and property crimes were down compared to a decade ago.

These are, of course, national figures. If we examine UCR breakdowns for different regions or metropolitan areas, we see variations in crime rates and trends.

The UCR also reports the **clearance rate** of all eight major crime categories. An offense is cleared—one might say solved—when at least one person is arrested, charged with the commission of the offense, and turned over for prosecution. An offense may also be cleared by exceptional means when something happens to an offender outside the control of the reporting law enforcement agency, such as when a person about to be arrested commits suicide. In 2017, 45.6% of violent crimes in the United States and 17.6% of property offenses were cleared by arrest or exceptional means. Usually, murder has the highest clearance rate. In 2017, law enforcement agencies cleared about two-thirds of all murders; by contrast, burglary and motor vehicle theft have low clearance rates, usually less than 15%.

Finally, arrest data should be distinguished from reported crime and clearance data. One crime may result in the arrest of five individuals, for example, or the arrest of one individual may clear or solve many crimes. An arrest is recorded for each separate instance in which

Clearance rate

The proportion of reported crimes that have been "solved" through the arrest and turning over of at least one person for prosecution. Crimes also may be cleared through exceptional means such as the death of the person about to be arrested.
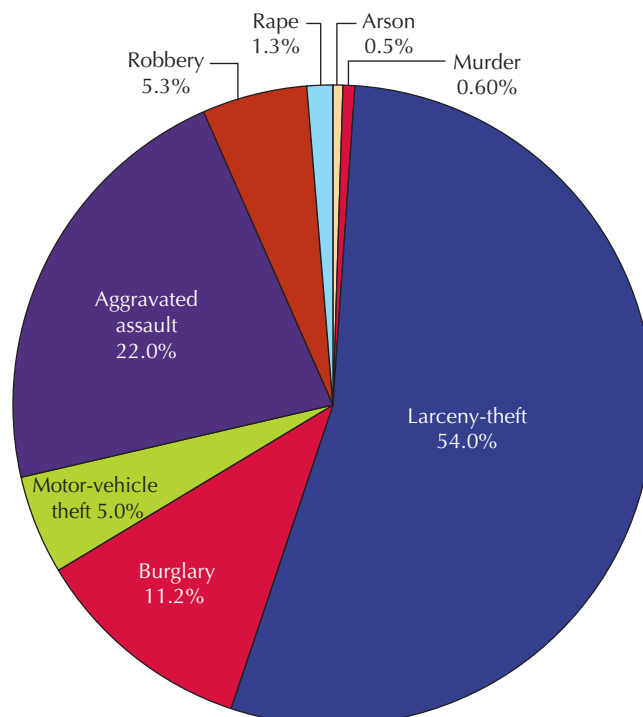
FIGURE 1–2

Percent Distribution of Violent and Property Crimes, 2017

Source: Federal Bureau of Investigation (2018a).

a person is arrested, cited, or summoned for an offense, meaning that an actual physical taking into custody is not required. If a person turns himself in to police, this is counted as an arrest. In recent years, the highest number of arrests was for drug abuse violations and larceny-theft. Like crime rates, recent arrest trends show decreases in arrests of both juveniles and adults for violent crime and property crime.

UCR Problems   Although it is not disputed that the crimes measured by the UCR have declined since the 1990s, it is also recognized that official statistics have always underestimated most criminal offenses. The overall number of criminal offenses that go undetected or are unknown by law enforcement agencies, known as the **dark figure**, is difficult to estimate. In addition, official data like the UCR program are routinely criticized for errors and omissions, so the data can be misleading. One of the most frequently mentioned problems is the **hierarchy rule**, which stipulates that when a number of offenses have been committed during a series, only the most serious offense is included in the UCR data. For example, if a person breaks into your apartment, steals money, kicks your cat, kills your roommate, and runs off in your car, only the murder will appear in the UCR. The exception to the hierarchy rule is arson, which is always reported even if accompanied by a violent offense (e.g., murder). If the person set the apartment house on fire before leaving, both the arson and the murder would be included in the crime rate.

The compilation center also relies on the accuracy and compliance of local and state agencies to report crime statistics. When definitions of crimes change—such as the definition of rape described above—there is bound to be at least some temporary confusion in reporting instances. UCR data also cannot take into account early discretionary decision making by law enforcement officers, such as a decision not to "found" a crime when it is reported by a member of the public or a decision not to arrest an individual. In addition, the major crime categories emphasize street crime to the neglect of the equally serious "white-collar" crime, which includes a wide variety of offenses such as corporate, political, and professional crimes. Fraud, bribery, and perjury, for example, are not Part I crimes. Very often they are federal offenses and thus would not appear in the UCR. They are not reported to, and not investigated by, local and state law enforcement agencies. Finally, many crimes that fall under the general category of cybercrime or Internet-facilitated crime (see Box 1–2) do not appear in the UCR, primarily because many are federal offenses but also because they simply are not detected by the law enforcement community.

Dark figure
The number of crimes that go unreported in official crime data reports.

Hierarchy rule
In the UCR program, the rule that requires that only the most serious crime in a series be reported in the crime statistics. The exception is arson, which is always reported.

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

BOX 1–2 THE PROBLEM OF INTERNET-FACILITATED CRIME

As noted in the text, the crime rate overall, including the violent crime rate, has declined since the mid-1990s. Some specific crimes, though, are on the increase. Included in this group are nontraditional crimes associated with technology, which often are not reflected in crime statistics. Attempts to obtain an accurate account of the crime picture are hampered by the limitations inherent in gathering information about these crimes. For example, authorities can only estimate the number of individuals whose credit card data have been compromised, or whose health data, including Social Security numbers, have been obtained illegally as a result of computer hacking.

Facilitated by the Internet, people across the globe have engaged in criminal activities across a wide range,

including terrorist threats, fraudulent schemes, hacking, cyberstalking, distribution of child pornography, and human trafficking, to name but a few. As noted in the chapter, criminologists representing different disciplinary perspectives have engaged in a new subfield to address the prevalence of these crimes as well as explain why and how they are committed. They also note that not all of these activities are defined as crimes or accepted as crime by the general population. Examples are some forms of hacking and trafficking in some illicit drugs.

Some of the crimes listed above (e.g., cyberstalking, distributing and accessing child pornography, hacking, and human trafficking) will be covered later in the book as we discuss psychological concepts that might help to explain them. Relevant to the measurement of crime covered in this chapter, however, it is important to be aware that these offenses are not adequately represented in crime statistics.

Questions for Discussion

1. Considering the global nature of the Internet, is it at all possible to "measure" Internet-facilitated crime with the methods covered in this chapter? Is one method more likely to obtain reliable results?

2. Considering the difficulty measuring Internet-facilitated crime, how do we know it is on the increase?

3. Obtain three different definitions of cyberhacking. Should all forms of cyberhacking be defined as crime?   ◾

The National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)   During the late 1970s, the law enforcement community called for the expanded use of the UCR and more detailed information on crime than the summary statistics offered in the UCR. In response, the NIBRS was initiated as a supplement to the UCR. Today, most states submit data through the NIBRS on a voluntary basis. Federal law enforcement agencies are required to report crime data through NIBRS.

The NIBRS has many advantages over a summary system, and as noted above it will shortly replace the SRS completely. It reports details on each single crime incident—as well as on separate offenses within the same incident—including information on victims, known offenders, relationships between victims and offenders, arrestees, and property involved in crimes. NIBRS also provides the circumstances and context for crimes, such as location, time of day, and whether the incident was cleared. The goal of the FBI is to enhance the NIBRS substantially before the beginning of the year 2021, when it will completely phase out the SRS. Thus, the NIBRS is set to become the national data source for crime in the United States at that time.

Currently, through NIBRS, the FBI collects data on two categories of offenses: Group A, which includes 46 serious offense categories such as arson, assault, homicide, fraud, embezzlement, larceny-theft, and sex offenses; and Group B, which includes 11 less serious offenses, such as passing bad checks, driving under the influence of alcohol, engaging in disorderly conduct, drunkenness, nonviolent family offenses, and liquor law violations (see Table 1–4 for a list of Group A offenses). There is always danger in labeling crimes as serious or not serious, however. Just from the above list, it is likely that readers may challenge some of the categorizations. The important thing to keep in mind is that the extent of the data gathered by the FBI differs according to the group in which the crime falls. In the *Group A Incident Report* information, a crime is viewed along with all its aspects. For example, the report of a crime includes information about the victim, weapon, location of the crime, alcohol/drug influence, type of criminal activity, relationship of victim to alleged offender, residence of victims and arrestees (if someone was arrested), and a description of property and its value. Presumably, this added information is an indispensable tool for law enforcement agencies and researchers because it provides them with detailed data about when and where specific types of crime take place, what forms they take, and the characteristics of their victims and perpetrators. Reporting for Group B offenses is less detailed, reflecting the lesser degree of seriousness of these crimes.

TABLE 1–4   National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) Group A Offenses

Arson	*Homicide offenses*
Assault offenses	• Murder/nonnegligent manslaughter
• Aggravated assault	• Negligent manslaughter
• Simple assault	• Justifiable homicide
Intimidation	*Kidnapping/abduction*
Bribery	*Larceny-theft offenses*
Burglary/breaking and entering	• Pocket picking
Counterfeiting/forgery	• Purse snatching
Destruction/damage/vandalism of property	• Shoplifting
Drug/narcotic offenses	• Theft from building
• Drug/narcotic violations	• Theft from coin-operated machines
• Drug/equipment violations	• Theft from motor vehicle
Embezzlement	• Theft of motor vehicle parts/accessories
Extortion/blackmail	*Motor vehicle theft*
Fraud offenses	*Pornography/obscene materials*
• False pretenses/swindle/confidence game	*Prostitution offenses*
• Credit card/ATM fraud	• Prostitution
• Impersonation	• Assisting or promoting prostitution
• Welfare fraud	*Robbery*
• Wire fraud	*Sex offenses, forcible*
Gambling offenses	• Rape
• Betting/wagering	• Sodomy
• Operating/promoting/assisting gambling	• Sexual assault with an object
• Gambling equipment violations	• Fondling
• Sports tampering	*Sex offenses, nonforcible*
	Stolen property offenses
	Weapon law violations

Source: Based on information from *The National Center for the Analysis of Violent Crime, Annual Report, 1992* (Quantico, VA: FBI Academy, 1992), p. 22.

Self-Report Studies

Many researchers believe that self-report (SR) studies provide a more accurate estimate of actual offenses than do UCR or NIBRS statistics, which are based on data provided by law enforcement. In self-report research, people report their own criminal or otherwise anti-social activity to researchers. Although respondents may inflate or deflate reports of their own criminal activity, proponents of this research strategy maintain that self-report offers a better approximation of criminal activity. Early SR surveys found that many people broke laws but were never caught. For example, Wallerstein and Wyle (1947) found that 91% of nearly 1,700 respondents admitted they had committed one or more offenses for which they might have received jail or prison sentences, with the average number of offenses for each person being 18. No one in the sample had served an actual prison sentence.

Short and Nye (1957) administered questionnaires to 3,000 high school students and found that, across all socioeconomic classes, they, too, reported high incidences of unlawful behavior, although most of it was minor and not all qualified as crime. One item included in their measure of delinquency was disobedience to parents; another referred to skipping school without a legitimate excuse. In the years since these earliest studies, researchers have added more serious items and generally have learned that violations of the law are common across all levels of society, though serious offending is less common.

Most SR investigations focus on delinquency rather than adult offending, however, and current studies focus primarily on risk-taking behaviors that are associated with physical or mental health. A study that is receiving extensive research attention is the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, which collected initial data on some 19,000 students in grades 7–12 at 132 schools. The self-reported information related to a variety of health issues, including those associated with criminal activity (e.g., illegal drug possession and use). A subgroup of the original participants, about 15,000, was recontacted as young adults. Several different studies were developed from the data obtained from this survey and will be discussed throughout the book under separate studies.

Another noteworthy example is the Pittsburgh Youth Study (Loeber, Farrington, et al., 1998) which began as a longitudinal study with a sample of approximately 1,500 boys who were first, fourth, and seventh graders. Over the years, researchers followed the boys as they entered adolescence and early adulthood. A companion study with a smaller sample of girls, the Pittsburgh Girls Study, also was conducted. Both longitudinal studies relied on self-report data as well as official records and amassed a large data bank that produced additional research. A similar study, the Project on Human Development in Chicago Neighborhoods (PHDCN), began in the 1990s (Sampson, 2012). Numerous studies have been published using data obtained from this project, which followed more than 6,000 children, adolescents, and young adults (e.g., Hawkins et al., 2009; Kirk & Hardy, 2014; Piquero et al., 2003). These projects will be discussed in more detail in later chapters.

A federally funded study on dating behavior (Mumford & Taylor, 2014) also used self-report methodology. A nationwide sample of 667 youths aged 12–18 who dated during the past year responded online to questions about their relationships. The researchers found high levels of violence as well as psychological abuse in dating relationships, with a majority of both boys and girls describing themselves as both victims and perpetrators of abusive behavior. The abuse was primarily psychological—such as insults—but nearly 20% of the respondents said they were victims of physical and sexual abuse in their relationships.

Studies of self-reported criminal activity are often conducted with adults who are incarcerated. Researchers ask inmates about the extent of their past offending, and some of these studies will be cited throughout the book. Not all respondents are convicted individuals, however. In an early study of employee theft, for example, researchers found that about one-third of employees who returned surveys admitted to stealing from their employers (Hollinger, 1986). An early self-report survey of income tax evasion found 10% of the respondents admitting to cheating on their taxes (Tittle, 1980). College students also are often queried about their criminal behavior, including drug use and sexual assaults. These studies will be discussed later in the book as well.

Self-report data are gathered either through interviews (personal or telephone) or questionnaires. Increasingly more are now collected online, which raises additional questions about validity. Although a larger sample of respondents can be obtained, online responding presents challenges to quality control or, in research terminology, reliability and validity. Nevertheless, some online survey services have achieved sufficient respectability that they are commonly used by contemporary scholars.

Although we must be careful about drawing far-reaching conclusions based on the information from SR research, the most reputable studies, like the PYS and the PHDCN, acknowledge their limitations and include reliability checks in their methodology—such as by cross-checking the information against other sources. At this point, SR studies do suggest that minor criminal activity is not unusual among youth, but that the number of individuals involved in serious crimes is relatively small. However, those who do engage in serious criminal activity commit many crimes. Moreover, persistent, repetitive offenders do not specialize in any one crime (such as larceny) but show considerable versatility, committing a wide variety of offenses, violent as well as nonviolent.

Drug Use Self-Report Surveys   Several nationwide self-report surveys collect data specifically on drug use and abuse in the United States. The major surveys are the National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), formerly called the *National Household Survey on Drug Abuse (NHSDA)*; **Monitoring the Future (MTF)**; and the *Arrestees Drug Abuse Monitoring Program (ADAM and ADAM II)*.

Monitoring the Future (MTF)

A self-report survey administered to high school students nationwide focusing on drug use and abuse.

NSDUH is an ongoing survey of a random sample of the noninstitutionalized population of the United States, 12 years old or older. The survey, sponsored by the federal government, is conducted by a private research firm that collects and analyzes the data and issues annual reports. Approximately 70,000 individuals across the United States are asked about their use of tobacco, alcohol, illicit drugs, and their mental health. Mental health questions are included in recognition that substance use and mental health are often related. Visited in their homes, those surveyed enter responses into a computer, and the answers are coded and amassed with other data shortly thereafter. Confidentiality is assured and is guaranteed by federal law. The survey is intended to provide accurate data, track trends in drug and substance use, assess their consequences, and identify groups at risk for use and abuse. Data from the NSDUH are available on the Internet and are used extensively by academic researchers, journalists, and government agencies as well as organizations dedicated to the prevention of substance abuse. The 2013 survey, for example, found that about 24.6 million people were current illicit drug users, including 2.2 million adolescents aged 12–17. One in 10 adolescents reported a major depressive episode in the past year, and 1 in 5 adults said they had a mental illness.

MTF is a nationwide survey of high school students in the United States conducted at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Michigan and sponsored by research grants from the National Institute of Drug Abuse. Each year, since 1991, about 50,000 students in the 8th, 10th, and 12th grades are surveyed. MTF also conducts a follow-up survey of a sample of each graduating class for a number of years after their initial participation, so that college students and young adults are represented in the data. The mission of MTF is to predict future trends of drug abuse based on current youth drug use. Current data indicated that 1 in 20 college students reported that they got high or near high daily on marijuana, indicating that marijuana remains the second-highest substance used by young people besides alcohol (Johnston, O'Malley, Miech, Bachman, & Schulenberg, 2015).

The ADAM II is a continuation of a National Institute of Justice program—ADAM—that collected data from adult males and females who were arrested in 35 sites in the United States between 2000 and 2003, when it was terminated for lack of funding. In 2007, ADAM II, sponsored by the federal Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), took up the data collection, focusing on 10 sites. The ADAM II utilizes both urinalysis and self-report data to identify the level of recent drug use by the arrestees. The individuals arrested provide information about the types of drugs they use as well as how they obtained them. The urinalysis provides a validity check on the openness of the arrestees in providing information about their drug abuse. Urine specimens are analyzed for the presence of 10 drugs. The ADAM projects, both ADAM and ADAM II, offer invaluable insight into drug use of persons arrested in representative areas of the country.

Victimization Surveys

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)

A government-sponsored survey of victims of crime, intended to collect data from the victim's perspective on crimes both reported and not reported to police.

Additional sources of data on offending are victimization surveys, in which victims provide information on the crimes committed against them. The main source of victimization data on crime is the **National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)**, originally called the National Crime Survey (NCS). Workers for the Bureau of the Census interview a large national sample of households (145,508 in 2017). In 2017, 239,541 persons completed an

interview. First interviews are typically in person, while subsequent interviews are in person or by phone. The same households are interviewed every 6 months for a period of 3 years, and during each session they are asked about crime they have experienced over the past 6 months. Persons living in group quarters such as dormitories, rooming houses, and religious group dwellings are included, but persons in institutions or in military barracks are not. Crimes committed against children below age 12 are not counted for privacy reasons and because the designers of the survey believe that younger respondents, compared with adults, are not as likely to provide accurate information. Additionally, because young children may be victims of crime within their own households, the topic would be too sensitive to broach. The NCVS provides the largest national forum for victims to describe the impact of crime and characteristics of violent offenders. Its reports, including detailed information about the methodology used to conduct the interviews and analyze the data, are available on the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) website, www.bjs.gov. (See also Morgan & Truman, 2018.)

The survey is designed to measure the extent to which households and individuals are victims of violent crimes like rape and other sexual assaults, robbery, aggravated assault, and simple assault as well as property crimes like household burglary, motor vehicle theft, and theft. It also provides many details about the victims (such as age, race, sex, marital status, education, income, and whether the victim and the offender were related to each other) and about the crimes themselves. Recent versions of the NCVS also ask respondents whether they perceived they were victims of a hate crime. Among other things, the NCVS interviewer wants to know the following about all victimization:

- Exactly what happened
- When and where the offense occurred
- Whether any injury or loss was suffered
- Whether the crime was reported to the police and if not, why
- The victim's perception of the offender's gender, race, and age

According to the latest NCVS (Morgan & Truman, 2018), violent victimization decreased substantially (74%) between 1993 and 2017, but violent victimization incidents over the 2-year-period 2015–2017 increased. The increase was attributed primarily to a rise in simple assault. Property crime victimizations have decreased over the same 2-year period. The number of persons age 12 or over who were victims of violent crime was 3.1 million, which was up 17% from 2015. The portions of persons who were victims of violent crime also increased, up from 0.98% in 2015 to 1.14% in 2017.

Almost half of violent victimizations (45%) and slightly over one-third of property victimizations (36%) were reported to police. Interestingly, although most rapes or sexual assaults were not reported to police, the percentage that were reported rose from 23% in 2016 to 40% in 2017. Criminologists have long observed that victims do not report crimes to police for many different reasons. The significant increase in sexual assault reporting is notable and could be attributed to increasing attention given to widespread problems of sexual assault and increasing support for victims. Nevertheless, many victims of all crimes, both violent and property, remain reluctant to reveal their victimization. (See Box 1–3 for more on this issue.)

The NCVS data over the years consistently show demographic differences in victimization rates. Race and ethnicity differences are stark. Blacks and American Indians or Alaskan Natives are victims of violent crime at rates greater than those of whites and persons of other races (Rennison & Rand, 2003; Morgan & Truman, 2018; Truman, 2011). Males and females have similar rates of violent and property victimization, though females are more likely to report sexual assaults. Persons age 12–24 sustain violent victimization at rates higher than individuals of all other ages, with the 18–25 age group being especially

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES

BOX 1–3 IMMIGRANTS AND VICTIMIZATION: SHOULD THEY TRUST THE GOVERNMENT?

- Tanya arrived in the United States in 2010 under a work visa that has since expired. She has worked steadily in the food industry in the years she has been in the country, has no criminal record, and does not associate with anyone who has. Yesterday, when she arrived from work she found that her apartment had been burglarized and cash and personal possessions had been taken. Tanya does not report the crime to police.

- Hans was brought to the United States at age 10 by his parents, who crossed the Northern border in a nonauthorized spot. The small family lived with relatives who were legal residents and worked for subsistence wages. Though Hans went to school, neither he nor his parents became U.S. citizens. Now, at age 20, Hans has been sexually assaulted by his boss, who told him he would be fired if he told anyone. His parents want him to report the crime, but he refuses to do so, fearful that he and his parents will be deported.

- Lucia received asylum in the United States after fleeing a repressive regime in her native country along with her two young children. She applied for citizenship and has been studying to pass her citizenship exam. The man she is living with has assaulted her for several months, but she feels unable to leave or to report him to police.

It has long been recognized that most crimes do not come to the attention of police. Victimization data—both government sponsored and gathered by independent researchers—have helped to uncover some of that hidden crime. Nevertheless, many victims do not want to reveal their victimization to anyone. There are many reasons for this, ranging from fear of the offender to self-blame for the victimization.

In recent years it is widely believed that immigrants, both documented and undocumented, are particularly reluctant to report crime victimization. Although some of

their reasons are the same as those of nonimmigrant victims, other factors are at work as well. They include the fear of being deported, concerns about being separated from their children or other loved ones, mistrust of government or organized social services, and language barriers.

Questions for Discussion

1. In 2018, the Trump administration planned to include a citizenship question to the 2020 census. Federal district courts blocked this attempt. In February 2019 the U.S. Supreme Court "fast-tracked" the case and disallowed the question, noting that the administration did not adequately explain its reasons. How would adding such a question have affected the data obtained in the census?

2. It is notable that in natural disasters, such as hurricanes and floods, authorities often tell people seeking shelter that they will not be asked about their citizenship status or turned over to authorities if they are found to be in the country illegally. Should there be similar guarantees when it comes to crime victimization?

3. Compare and contrast the three hypothetical situations outlined above. What are Tanya, Hans, and Lucia likely to encounter if they report their victimization to police? Go beyond answering, "It depends," in discussing the question. Are they more likely to report to someone interviewing for the NCVS? To a private researcher?

4. To whom are crime victims most likely to report their victimization? ■

vulnerable. However, we also know that much abuse suffered by certain populations—such as younger children, older adults, transgender individuals, undocumented immigrants, persons with intellectual disabilities—is hidden. Interestingly, the latest NCVS found that persons with disabilities as a group experienced more violent victimization than those without, and persons with cognitive disability experienced the highest rate among all with disabilities (Morgan & Truman, 2018).

The latest NCVS provides a wealth of information of use to researchers, students, policymakers, and the general public. Although we include only a few of its highlights here, we refer to it again in later chapters as specific offenses are discussed.

Relationship patterns are also important in understanding victimization, particularly violent victimization. Females are most often victimized by someone they know, while males are more likely to be victimized by strangers (Rennison & Rand, 2003; Morgan & Truman, 2018; Truman, 2011). Female victims report that most offenders are friends and acquaintances, followed by intimate partners or former intimates (Catalano, 2013). By contrast, male victims report that strangers are the most likely perpetrators, followed by friends or acquaintances. Very few males report being victimized by intimate partners. These patterns have been consistent, varying slightly from survey to survey.

As suggested above, a good amount of victimization occurs at the hands of intimate partners. In 2000, Rennison and Welchans noted that every year about one million violent crimes are committed against persons by their current or former spouses, boyfriends, or girlfriends. This **intimate partner violence (IPV)** is committed primarily against women. Black women are subject to intimate partner violence at a rate 35% higher than white women and approximately 2.5 times higher than the rate for women of other races. However, women in many ethnic groups are reluctant to report such violence, as we will learn in Chapter 9. In addition, spouses or partners of abusers who work in law enforcement or professional sports or are otherwise in the public eye may resist bringing attention to their victimization.

The NCVS, similar to all national surveys, has its problems in accurately portraying victimization data. In addition to reluctance to reveal being victimized, some individuals may not be truthful or may recall incidents that occurred outside the time period being studied. Other people are not represented in the data because they are homeless or live in institutional settings that may not be reached by the researchers (Rennison & Welchans, 2000).

Despite their shortcomings, victimization surveys are considered a good source of information about crime incidents, independent of data collected by law enforcement agencies throughout the country. Often the offending trends reported through NCVS data procedures differ substantially from those found in police data (Ohlin & Tonry, 1989). Although we have focused on the government-conducted NCVS to illustrate victimization data, be aware that independent researchers also survey victims of crime, often with grants from government agencies or private foundations. One noteworthy example is the National Violence Against Women Survey, conducted by the Center for Policy Research (Tjaden, 1997), which included an examination of the extent and nature of violence and stalking in American society. That survey and updated versions will be covered later in the text.

Intimate partner violence (IPV)
Crimes committed against persons by their current or former spouses, boyfriends, or girlfriends.

JUVENILE DELINQUENCY

The definitions of crime and the methods of gathering crime data discussed above relate to both adults and juveniles. Like adult crime, juvenile crime overall has decreased since the 1990s. As we will learn in Chapter 6, which is devoted exclusively to juvenile delinquency, juveniles do commit a disproportionate amount of crime, but it is not necessarily the most serious offenses. The school shootings by juveniles that are depicted in the media are tragic, but they are atypical. Furthermore, crimes committed by juveniles may be treated very differently from those committed by adults. In addition to the focus on delinquency in Chapter 6, we include special sections devoted to juvenile offenders and victims in other chapters. At this point, however, it is important to mention a few other preliminary distinctions.

First, not all offenses committed by juveniles are technically crimes. Some behaviors— referred to as juvenile **status offenses**—are forbidden only to juveniles because of their age. The prime examples are running away from home, curfew violations, underage drinking,

Status offenses
A class of illegal behavior that only persons with certain characteristics or status can commit. Used almost exclusively to refer to the behavior of juveniles. Examples include running away from home, violating curfew, buying alcohol, or skipping school.

skipping school on a regular basis (truancy), and—in some states—"incorrigibility." Many criminologists argue that juvenile status offenses should not be criminalized in the same way that true crimes are for various reasons. For example, status offenses label children delinquents for behavior that is not harmful to others, and they are often indicative of problems in the child's environment (e.g., the runaway child may be running away from victimization). Other criminologists argue that it is important to keep track of status offenders in order to provide them with help that they may need; additionally, some, though not all, status offenders commit "real crimes" like burglary and theft. What to do with status offenders is a controversial area, as we will see in Chapter 6.

Another distinction between adult and juvenile criminal behavior is that data gathering on juvenile offending is even more imperfect than data gathering on adult crime. The nature and extent of delinquent behavior—both what is reported and what is unreported to law enforcement agencies—is essentially an unknown area (Krisberg, 1995). Nonetheless, information from a variety of sources, including the UCR, self-report studies, court records, and data from juvenile corrections, provides us some insight into the nature and extent of juvenile offending.

Third, much of the crime (and status offenses) committed by juveniles may be regarded as a "rite of passage" to adulthood. Self-report data indicate that offending among juveniles is more widespread than among adults but—as with adult offending—most people eventually stop. In the case of juveniles, most stop committing crime once they reach adulthood and have a stake in prosocial behavior. Juveniles may act out in high school or slightly beyond, but then they get full-time jobs, go to college, enter into significant relationships, get married, or join the military. It is common to assert, then, that most juveniles age out of crime. From a psychological perspective, however, we need to be particularly concerned with two groups of juveniles: those who continue offending, particularly serious offending, well into their adult years; and those who commit a very serious crime during their juvenile years. The former group typically demonstrated problem behavior very early in their lives. The latter group—those who commit a one-time, very serious offense—receives extensive media attention (e.g., juvenile school shooters or juvenile murderers), but this type of one-time offending is rare. Continued serious offending, though, is more problematic. Many if not most theories of crime describe antisocial behavior as having its origins in childhood. Over the past few decades, developmental psychologists in particular have conducted extensive research on children and adolescents who begin offending early and continue into adulthood. This is the main topic of Chapter 2.

Recap: Defining Crime and Delinquency

A major challenge faced by the authors in preparing this book has been striking the balance between antisocial behavior and criminal behavior, or between antisocial individuals and legally defined criminals. Some scholars have long argued (e.g., Sellin, 1970; Tappan, 1947)—and the law agrees—that one who engages in undetected criminal activity is not a criminal in the strictest or operational sense, because a criminal is by definition one who has been detected, arrested, and convicted. From a psychological point of view, however, we encounter problems when we limit ourselves to studying persons legally defined as criminals or behavior legally defined as crime. Legal classifications are determined by that which society, at some point in time, considers socially harmful. It may or may not also be considered morally wrong. Therefore, because each society has a different and changing set of values, what may be judged a criminal act in one may not meet the criteria in another, or even in the same society at a later time. Many states in the United States differ significantly in their criminal codes and are continually revising them. This is illustrated

by the patchwork of marijuana legislation: some states allow the drug for medicinal purposes, some have decriminalized its possession in small amounts, and increasingly more are allowing it to be purchased legally for recreational use. Federal law, though, does not acknowledge any legalization of marijuana, so people can be prosecuted for offenses involving marijuana under federal statutes. As an example, a person transporting the drug in even small amounts across state lines can be charged with a federal offense, even if both of those states decriminalized its possession.

Illegal gambling, prostitution, and dissemination of obscene material are examples of other activities that generate ever-changing statutes. In recent years, use of handheld cell phones or text messaging while driving has been banned in some jurisdictions, often under distracted driving laws. Criminal penalties, usually in the form of fines, are sometimes prescribed. Although we do not condone text messaging while driving, we are not interested in focusing on the psychology of the text messager. The more serious crimes, those we are most concerned with in this text, are more likely to be universally recognized as unacceptable. Nevertheless, we also pay attention to offenses that may not be seen as serious, but that can have psychological implications for offenders and victims. Shoplifting and minor fraud are examples.

Furthermore, members of every society (and consequently every society's legal system) perceive and process violators of the criminal code with some disparity, so that the offender's background, economic circumstances, social status, personality, motivation, sex, age, race, ethnicity, and legal counsel, as well as the circumstances surrounding the offense, may all affect the criminal justice process. Few of us would dispute the observation that selective enforcement of the law is a reality. It is highly likely that individuals who have been arrested, convicted, and punished represent a distinctly different sample from those who participate in illegal activity but avoid detection, arrest, conviction, or punishment.

Approximately one-fifth of those arrested go to trial, according to Sarbin (1979), who describes the legal process of becoming labeled a criminal. First, the agents of social control (usually the police) identify the individual as a suspect. Next, they may decide that the suspect should be arrested. Third, the arrested party may be charged with a crime, at which point he or she becomes a defendant. Fourth, the defendant may plead guilty or be tried and convicted, at which point he or she becomes an offender (a felon or a misdemeanant, depending on the seriousness of the crime). Finally, the offender may be incarcerated in a correctional facility and be labeled a convict, inmate, prisoner, or criminal. Alternatively, the offender may be placed on probation, effectively serving a sentence in the community. At each step in the process, there is a funneling effect that shows that fewer and fewer individuals reach each subsequent step in the criminal justice process. This funneling process is prominently displayed in numerous criminal justice texts to illustrate how the system operates.

It is generally acknowledged, therefore, that individuals sentenced to jail or prison are not representative of the "true" criminal population, because many true criminals go undetected and/or unpunished. Furthermore, as we have long suspected but only recently documented with the increasing availability of DNA evidence or reinvestigation of cases, convicted persons are not even necessarily true criminals. Yet, researchers studying the "criminal mind" often use as participants individuals who have reached the final stage of the legal process—inmates in correctional institutions or, less often, convicted offenders serving their sentences in the community. Consequently, if we discuss only legally determined criminals, we will be neglecting a considerable segment of the population that actually breaks the law. To some extent, we have little choice but to do just that. Because this book is based on research, the kinds and amounts of available empirical data dictate to a great extent what will be covered.

Additionally, if we discuss only behavior that is legally defined as crime, we omit a sizable segment of behavior that is clearly relevant to our concerns. For example, a vast body

of psychological research deals with topics like aggression and antisocial behavior. Because of their implications for the eventual development of behavior that is legally defined as crime, we will be covering these areas in the text.

The great majority of crime in the United States and other countries is not violent. In 2017, the highest numbers of arrests were for drug abuse violations, driving under the influence, and larceny-theft. The great majority of persons arrested are not serious offenders (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2018a). Psychological criminology, however, is most concerned about the minority. Therefore, the main focus of the book is the persistent, repetitive *offender*—or the persistent, repetitive antisocial *behavior*—whether detected or undetected by the criminal justice system. In other words, in this text, we concentrate on the individual who has frequently committed serious crimes or antisocial acts over an extended period of time (at least several years). Nevertheless, we also spend time on the one-time serious offender—the mass murderer, for example, or the juvenile offender who commits a heinous crime.

Antisocial behavior

Clinical term reserved for serious habitual behavior, especially that involving direct harm to others.

For all of the above reasons, many psychologists and other mental health professionals prefer the term *antisocial behavior* to *crime* or *criminal behavior* to refer to the more serious habitual actions that violate personal rights, laws, and/or widely held social norms. **Antisocial behavior** includes both the legal designation delinquency and criminal behavior, and the actions that violate standards of society but are undetected by law enforcement. Although arrest *may be* a valid indicator of antisocial behavior, it isn't enough. Many antisocial behaviors—probably most—go undetected or escape the attention of law enforcement. Consequently, we use antisocial behavior frequently throughout the text, especially when discussing the development of behavior that has not yet been legally designated delinquent or criminal behavior but is likely to lead to such designation. Many psychologists also use the term "externalizing behavior" to refer to antisocial behavior, but—depending on the context—the term often has surplus meaning. For example, when some psychologists use the term, they intend to include a spectrum of behaviors such as delinquency, hyperactivity, acting out, hostility, aggression, and attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. We prefer to use the more straightforward term "antisocial behavior" throughout the book. However, we will also cover—separately and in some detail—the other concepts often included in the term externalizing behavior.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Crime intrigues people, harms people, angers people, and sometimes amuses and entertains. Overall, despite media accounts of sensational crimes, crime in the United States has fallen in the early years of the 21st century. This is good news, but it does not imply that efforts to reduce it further are not needed, nor can crime rates of the future be predicted with confidence. There is a continuing need to study and prevent behavior that is defined as criminal, but this is a complex undertaking. It involves theorizing, data gathering, and the development of strategies for its prevention and control as well as treatment of individuals who engage in criminal activity.

This chapter introduces readers to the major theoretical viewpoints on crime and the dominant methods used to measure it. We have also discussed the difficulty in defining criminal behavior for purposes of examining it from a psychological perspective. Although criminology is an interdisciplinary enterprise, one that benefits from input from various disciplines, the approach in this text is predominantly psychological, with research and theory in that field emphasized throughout the book.

Theories of crime can be divided into classical and positivist schools. The classical school emphasizes free will as the primary cause of crime: unless they are robbed of their free will (as by having a serious mental disorder), people choose to commit criminal behavior. The positivist school looks for determinants or influences over and above free will. According to those who adopt a positivist approach, people still choose to commit crime, but their choice is influenced by numerous predetermining factors. These may be in the social environment, such as a crime-ridden neighborhood or a deviant peer group, or within the individual, such as lack of empathy. Psychologists studying criminal behavior have focused primarily on the learning and developmental experiences of people who commit crime, but in recent years some have focused on biological influences, including traumatic brain injuries or exposure to environmental contaminants. Developmental psychologists have studied the pathways various individuals take as they engage in and desist from antisocial behavior. All of these themes will be developed in the chapters ahead.

We reviewed the dominant methods of measuring crime, emphasizing that each has its strengths and weaknesses. The U.S. government's major measures—the summary system of the UCR and the NIBRS—are readily available in monthly reports, but the former will be phased out by early 2021. Data obtained through NIBRS are rich in details about criminal incidents, victims, persons arrested, property damaged, and much more.

Crime rates have decreased dramatically since the high-crime era of the early and mid-1990s, but this is no reason for complacency. Victimization rates, measured by the NCVS as well as by nongovernmental surveys, have decreased overall, but violent victimization has increased slightly, particularly attributed to a rise in simple assaults. Victimization data continually indicate, however, that most crimes are never reported to police. Likewise, self-report data, in which people report their own offending, indicate that much criminal behavior is never unearthed. Thus, the "dark figure" of crime remains a reality. Early self-report studies focused primarily on behavior of juveniles, but contemporary self-report research tends to focus heavily on substance use and, to a lesser extent, violence in interpersonal relationships. Official, victimization, and self-report data sources like the above will be revisited throughout the text as they relate to specific crimes.

Finally, we addressed briefly the topic of juvenile delinquency, which is given its own chapter later in the text. Antisocial behavior by juveniles is not unusual and has at times been exaggerated in media accounts. Though juveniles are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime, most of the crime they commit is nonviolent. Nevertheless, violent and other serious crime by juveniles remains a concern and will be addressed in later chapters.

KEY CONCEPTS

Antisocial behavior, 28

Classical theory, 4

Clearance rate, 17

Cognitions, 9

Conformity perspective, 5

Criminology, 7

Dark figure, 18

Deterrence theory, 4

Developmental approach, 9

Differential association theory, 6

Dispositions or traits, 10

Emerging adulthood, 6

Falsification, 4

General Theory of Crime, 6

Hate Crime Statistics Act, 10

Hierarchy rule, 18

Intimate partner violence (IPV), 25

Just-world hypothesis, 3

Learning perspective, 6

Monitoring the Future (MTF), 22

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), 22

National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS), 14

Nonconformist perspective, 6

Positivist theory, 4

Psychiatric criminology, 13

Psychological criminology, 9

Scientific theory, 3

Self-control theory (SCT), 6

Social control theory, 6

Social learning theory, 6

Sociological criminology, 8

Status offenses, 25

Strain theory, 5

Theory verification, 4

Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), 14

REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Briefly explain the difference between psychological criminology and sociological criminology. How do these differ from a psychiatric approach to the study of criminal behavior?

2. Provide examples of crime control or crime prevention policies—other than those mentioned in the chapter—that are consistent with (a) classical theories of crime and (b) positivist theories.

3. Define and provide examples of the conformity, nonconformist, and learning perspectives of human nature.

4. Identify and provide one example of each of the three predominant methods of measuring crime.

5. How does the NIBRS differ from the UCR's Summary Report Statistics (SRS)?

6. List the strengths and weaknesses of self-report surveys.

7. What are status offenses and how do they differ from other juvenile offenses?

8. Compare and contrast the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports and the National Crime Victimization Survey, focusing on (a) how the data are obtained and (b) what type of information is available from each.

2

Origins of Criminal Behavior: Developmental Risk and Protective Factors

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Introduce cumulative risk and developmental cascade models.
- Identify psychological, family, and social-environmental developmental risk factors that lead to delinquency and crime.
- Demonstrate how early preschool experiences can lead to future antisocial behavior.
- Emphasize the influence of peer rejection on child and youth behavior.
- Identify protective factors that help reduce or eliminate delinquency and crime.
- Discuss attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), conduct disorder (CD), and oppositional defiant disorder (ODD) as possible contributors to delinquent and criminal behavior.

As a preschooler, Trent was the child most known for shoving other children, stepping on their toes, and refusing to comply with the instructions of his teachers. In grade school, he became the classroom bully; at age 8, he began to steal—from other children, from storekeepers, from teachers, and from his parents. By middle school, he was experimenting with alcohol and other drugs. He was suspended from high school on four separate occasions, all related to violent behavior, and he dropped out at 16. Trent was convicted of robbery at age 19.

Antisocial behavior, including criminal behavior, in adults can often be traced to their childhoods. If we look back at the childhoods of chronic offenders, for example, we typically see signs portending problems in adulthood, although this is not invariably so. As noted in Chapter 1, many theories of criminology propose that the roots of serious criminal behavior appear in childhood or early adolescence. This highlights the importance of identifying both factors that put children at risk of becoming antisocial and those that might protect otherwise vulnerable children from this fate.

Each person follows a **developmental pathway**, the characteristics of which often can be identified at a very early age. The developmental perspective views the life course of all humans as following a path (or trajectory) that may be littered with risk factors. "**Risk factors** are established predictors of undesirable outcomes,

Developmental pathways
In the study of criminal behavior, these are the various tracks individuals follow that lead to antisocial behavior. Researchers began by identifying two pathways but have now found evidence of more.

Risk factors
Characteristics or experiences that place children at risk of antisocial or criminal activity.

where there is evidence suggesting a higher-than-usual probability of a future problem" (Masten, 2014, p. 13). Some risk factors can be described as experiences that are common in the background of many repeat offenders, such as school failure, abuse of alcohol, antisocial peers, or childhood victimization. Some experts believe that the more risks a person is exposed to, the greater the probability that person will participate in antisocial behavior throughout his or her lifetime (Wasserman & Seracini, 2001). In studies of both adult and juvenile offenders, researchers have identified a number of distinct pathways, which we will cover in later chapters. For example, some children follow a pathway leading to serious delinquency and crime, while others follow one that may lead to only minor juvenile offending that stops as they approach adulthood. Some children display antisocial behavior early; others wait until adolescence. For some children, there is no offending at all.

Contemporary researchers also stress the value of a nurturing environment to protect children against the onslaught of potential risk factors in their lives (Biglan, Flay, Embry, & Sandler, 2012). They identify **protective factors**, which are characteristics or experiences that can shield children from serious antisocial behavior. Warm and caring parents or caretakers and a high-quality educational experience are examples. In general, a nurturing and healthy environment minimizes biologically and socially toxic conditions that influence healthy development (Biglan et al., 2012).

The risk factors we are most concerned with in this chapter are some of the more prominent family and psychological risk factors that play a key role in the early development of criminal behavior. *Family risk factors* include faulty or inadequate parenting, sibling influences, the effects of poverty, and child maltreatment or abuse. Examples of *psychological risk factors* are inadequate cognitive and language ability, lack of empathy, poor interpersonal and social skills, and behavioral disorders. Psychological risk factors that are more biologically based, such as a troublesome temperament or prenatal exposure to neurotoxins, will be discussed in Chapter 3. Note that a different category of risk factors, those associated with the social environment, are topics of later chapters in the book. *Social environmental factors* include inadequate schools, toxic environments, and natural disasters. (See Table 2–1 for many additional examples.) It is important that we learn about these risk factors and consider how they influence the developmental pathway, especially during the early stages of development. Early identification will help improve the effectiveness of prevention and intervention programs designed to eliminate or, at least, reduce delinquent and criminal behavior.

We must be careful not to imply that all criminal behavior has its origins in childhood, however. Researchers who study developmental pathways emphasize that some individuals begin their criminal offending in adulthood (Farrington, Ttofi, & Coid, 2009), and that this may or may not be precipitated by childhood experiences. For example, some researchers have documented a pathway consisting of adult-onset female offenders whose criminal careers began when they engaged in dysfunctional relationships with male offenders (Salisbury & Van Voorhis, 2009). Nonetheless, risk factors are so often present in the childhoods of both juvenile and adult offenders that we must give them careful attention. It should be emphasized, though, that *it is unlikely that any single risk factor, by itself, causes antisocial, aggressive, or violent behavior*. This leads us to a discussion of two main models used to explain how risk factors might operate.

Cumulative Risk Model

Researchers are beginning to understand that exposure to *multiple risk factors* is most likely to increase the probability that a child, adolescent, or adult develops antisocial behavior and other maladaptive behaviors (Evans, Li, & Whipple, 2013). "Probably the most

Protective factors
Personal characteristics or experiences that can shield children and adolescents from serious antisocial behavior.

TABLE 2–1   Developmental Risk Factors for Delinquent and Criminal Behavior

Psychological/Behavioral Risk Factors
- Academic failure
- Animal cruelty
- Association with antisocial or aggressive peers
- Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
- Cognitive and language deficiencies
- Early peer rejection
- Excessive aggression toward peers
- Inability to form meaningful, close, trusting relationships
- Inadequate interpersonal skills
- Lack of attachment and empathy
- Poor self-regulation or impulse control

Parental and Family Risk Factors
- Abusive or neglectful parenting
- Antisocial family members
- Divorce (accompanied by interparental conflict, financial strain, school changes)
- Domestic or intimate partner violence
- Parent–child conflict
- Parental drug and/or alcohol problems or addiction
- Parental psychopathology
- Permissive or lax parental style
- Parental incarceration
- Poverty and its effects

Social-Environmental Risk Factors[*]
- Exposure to toxic environment (contaminated air, water, etc.)
- Ineffective or inadequate schools (including preschool)
- Lack of adequate health coverage
- Mass violence
- Natural disasters
- Neighborhood violence
- School violence
- Terrorism
- War

Neurobiological and Prenatal Risk Factors[**]
- Brain development abnormalities
- Difficult temperament
- Exposure to nicotine, alcohol, and other drugs
- Exposure to toxic materials
- Genetic risks, such as being related to people with serious cognitive, psychological, or emotional disorders
- Low birth weight
- Prenatal and postnatal malnutrition
- Traumatic brain injury

[*]These factors are not discussed in this chapter, but topics will be covered in later chapters.
[**]To be discussed in Chapter 3.

important reason for the widespread use of multiple risk factor metrics in developmental psychology today is the robust finding that multiple relative to single risk exposures have worse developmental consequences" (Evans et al., 2013, p. 1343). For example, living in poverty is a recognized risk factor, but poverty alone does not "cause" antisocial behavior. Most poor children are not antisocial. However, living in poverty can encompass a spectrum of other risk factors ranging from environmental risk factors (e.g., substandard housing and education, exposure to chemical toxins, high-crime neighborhoods) to psychological and family risk factors, such as malnutrition, exposure to violence, parental substance

abuse, parental discord, and separation or divorce. Note that these factors also can occur in the lives of children from economically advantaged families. "All these factors affect a child's development and the confluence of risk factors has been shown to have higher explanatory power compared to individual risk factors considered in isolation" (Doan, Dich, & Evans, 2014, p. 1402).

Cumulative risk model

Suggests that an accumulation of risk factors and insufficient protective factors lead to antisocial and criminal activity in children and adolescents.

The **cumulative risk (CR) model** is favored by some developmental researchers, who believe that this accumulation of risk factors in the absence of sufficient protective factors results in negative behavioral, emotional, and cognitive outcomes (Doan, Fuller-Rowell, & Evans, 2012; Rutter, 1979). Furthermore, the CR model predicts that the greater the number of risks experienced by a child or adolescent, the greater the prevalence of mental health problems, cognitive deficits, and behavioral problems (Whitson, Bernard, & Kaufman, 2013). It is the number of different risk factors experienced that is important. As mentioned by Evans et al. (2013), "Because of its simplicity (simply count the number of risk factors), the CR metric is readily understood and easily communicated to laypersons and policymakers" (p. 1386). In addition, some researchers prefer to represent cumulative risk as an index. As noted by Wade and his associates (2016), for example, "*Cumulative risk indices* have been constructed to test the idea that development is affected by the accumulation of environmental risks rather than the level of a single and specific risk" (italics in original quote, p. 12). There is a good amount of empirical evidence that these indices are useful for identifying social risks that affect developmental patterns, including antisocial behavior (Wade et al., 2018). The total number of risks identified and added essentially forms the index. Because multiple risk exposure nearly always has greater impact than singular risk exposure, identification of children who encounter multiple risks during early development is likely to reveal those most in need of intervention services (Evans et al., 2013). As noted by Masten (2014), risk factors do not usually occur in isolation in the lives of children, but most often "occur in batches or pile up overtime" (p. 14).

As stated above, protective factors can dampen the effect of risk factors. For example, supportive caregivers and healthy school environments are protective factors. Many children raised in poverty or in high-crime neighborhoods, even when other risk factors are present, have become successful adults with the help of loving parents and encouraging teachers or other mentors. Consequently, researchers have focused on exploring the effectiveness of protective factors in mitigating or eliminating the negative influences of risk factors in recent years (Whitson et al., 2013). (Table 2–2 provides a list of protective factors.)

DEVELOPMENTAL CASCADE MODEL

Dynamic cascade model

Both the accumulation of risk factors and their interaction lead to criminal activity, in the absence of protective factors.

A similar but slightly more complicated model is the **developmental cascade model** (also known as the **dynamic cascade model**), which was first introduced by several developmental psychologists but perhaps most prominently by Kenneth Dodge et al. (2008) and Ann Masten (2006, 2014). Like the cumulative risk model, it has significantly changed the way researchers look at the causes of antisocial behavior, and most particularly aggression and violent behavior. Although the developmental cascade model could be considered a form of cumulative risk model because it also emphasizes the influence of multiple risks, it is distinct in that it underscores the importance of the *interaction* among risk factors and their effect on outcomes over the course of development (see Table 2–3). "Developmental cascades refer to the idea that function in one area or level of a system can spread to another level or domain as a result of the dynamic interplay across levels and functional domains" (Masten, 2014, p. 79). The developmental cascade model assumes that development in one domain will shape development in other domains—one problem leads to another. For example, developmental research has consistently shown that a pattern of disruptive or

TABLE 2–2 Developmental Protective Factors for Prevention and Treatment of Delinquent and Criminal Behavior

Psychological/Behavioral Protective Factors
- Close relationships with nonaggressive, prosocial friends
- Effective interpersonal and social skills
- Effective self-regulation and emotional control skills
- Healthy levels of self-esteem
- High capacity for optimism and hope
- Normal intelligence and problem-solving skills
- Perseverance
- Pride in ethnic and cultural identity
- School satisfaction
- Sense of meaning, purpose
- Spirituality
- Strong motivation to achieve

Family Protective Factors
- Authoritative parental style
- Close family relationships
- Loving, warm, supportive parenting
- Parental monitoring
- Prosocial siblings

Environmental Protective Factors
- Close relationships with capable adults (e.g., teachers, coaches, mentors)
- Community cohesion
- Clean environment (air, water, etc.)
- Effective and safe schools
- Effective neighborhood support systems

Neurobiological and Prenatal Protective Factors*
- Brain plasticity
- Easy temperament
- Healthy nutrition, especially during infancy and early childhood
- Healthy prenatal and postnatal environment

*To be discussed in Chapter 3.

TABLE 2–3 Key Aspects of Cumulative Risk and Developmental Cascade Models

Cumulative Risk Model	Developmental Cascade Model
Also called multiple risk model	Also called dynamic cascade model
Predicts negative emotional and mental health outcomes in the lifespan	Predicts negative behavioral outcomes in the lifespan but also predicts positive outcomes
Additive approach in assessing overall effects of risks in development	Interactive approach in assessing effects of risks in developmental pathways
Focuses on the harmful environmental, psychological, and social influences that heighten the risk of maladaptive development	Focuses on the development of competence and resilience to reduce maladaptive development
Emphasizes identification of children confronted by multiple risk factors and development of way to reduce those factors	Emphasizes well-timed and targeted interventions designed to promote positive cascades through development of competence and resilience

aggressive behavior in first grade often interferes with social competence and academic performance in later grades. The term domain in this context refers to specific aspects of developmental growth and change, such as language development, cognitive and intellectual growth, social-emotional regulation, and neurological maturation.

According to the cascade model, the person's developmental skills or deficits enhance, affect, or determine the next skill or deficit along a life-course trajectory. The term "snowballing" could also be used to describe the cascading effect. The cascade and the cumulative models both argue that early negative experiences can alter a child's developmental trajectory and interfere with the accomplishment of normal developmental milestones, such as the formation of peer relationships, interpersonal skills, academic achievement, and cognitive development (Lynne-Landsman, Bradshaw, & Ialongo, 2010). However, the developmental cascade model also focuses heavily on the development and enhancement of protective factors. While it is recognized that there may be an accumulation of risk factors in an individual's life, there also may be an accumulation or combination of protective factors. For example, effective parenting, combined with a safe, adequate school environment and the development of interpersonal skills can be especially effective in neutralizing a variety of risk factors.

Although the cascade model initially focused on children from low-income families, it now is applied across the economic spectrum. To illustrate, the model may start with children who are born into a family where parents are absent or uncaring or may lack parenting skills. In an effort to control their young children, they resort to harsh or inconsistent discipline. Harsh and inconsistent parental disciplinary strategies have a high risk of preventing the child from acquiring social and cognitive skills that are necessary for school social and academic success. "These skill deficits include vocabulary deficits, poor social problem solving, hostile attributional biases, and emotion recognition deficits" (Dodge et al., 2008, p. 1921). Note that the above can occur regardless of the parents' economic situation.

Lacking the necessary social and academic skills to achieve during the early school years, the child begins to show conduct problems soon after entry into school, signaling the early start of antisocial behavior across the life course. Next in the cascade is school social and academic failure as a result of disinterest in school, which may or may not be accompanied by conduct disorder, which we discuss later in the chapter. Rejection by prosocial peers—a factor also to be covered shortly—sets in during this time. As the youth approaches early adolescence, parental monitoring of his or her activities and whereabouts is virtually nonexistent, accelerating academic failure and poor relationships with nondelinquent peers. Consequently, deviant peer associates become important and highly influential, and this often leads to persistent antisocial and violent behavior.

The Dodge et al. research team was also able to determine that girls follow largely similar developmental pathways as boys. The researchers did recognize that males are more likely than females to become seriously violent due to biological and socialization differences. However, they found little evidence to support the view that females as a group, when they do engage in violent behavior, take a different developmental path from males. In other words, they did not find a gender-specific developmental pathway. The pathway was similar, but the type of antisocial behavior displayed was not.

After describing the dynamic cascade model, Dodge and his associates (2008) conclude with this crucial and cautionary statement:

> An important implication of the current findings is that it is premature to conclude that an early-starting antisocial 5-year-old is unequivocally destined for a life-persistent path toward violent outcomes. Although the risk is substantial, it is by no means certain. The findings reported here indicate that trajectories can be deflected at each subsequent era in development, through interactions with peers, school, and parents along the way (p. 1922).

Both the cumulative risk and developmental cascade models provide targets for intervention and prevention at specific periods in development, and both stress the importance of protective factors such as a supportive extended family. Teaching effective parenting skills or offering after-school drop-in centers are examples of intervention proposed by the