
CRIME: VARIATIONS ACROSS CULTURES AND NATIONS

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There is no society that is not confronted with the problem of criminality. Its form changes; the acts thus characterized are not the same everywhere; but everywhere and always, there have been those who have behaved in such a way as to draw upon themselves penal repression.¹

Because it is universal, crime can be thought of as a normal feature of human societies. Crime is not, however, a natural consequence of some innate human nature or instinct. Rather, crime is produced by particular cultural and social arrangements, so that, as Durkheim said, the forms it takes differ across time and place. By this we mean two things: There are important differences across societies both in the misdeeds people engage in and the legal definitions applied to these misdeeds. Together, the misdeeds and their definition as crimes determine the amount and nature of crime in a society.

This chapter explores cross-cultural variations in crime. It begins with the issues of how crime is defined and measured across cultures, arguing that basic characteristics and themes of a culture shape what is viewed and punished as crime. Although variations in how crime is defined and measured have frustrated researchers trying to compare crime across cultures, these variations can provide important insights into the nature of crime. We also look at what is known about the distribution of crime across cultures: Are some cultures more crime-prone than others, and are some types of crime more common in certain cultures? Finally, we explore how cross-cultural variation in crime has been explained and offer a series of generalizations about sociocultural contexts that appear to discourage many common forms of crime.

DEFINING CRIME

Cross-cultural research on crime teaches several lessons. We learn how to step outside our own society and question taken-for-granted views about what crime is and why it occurs. We learn which misdeeds occur in all cultures and are uniformly defined as crimes, and which are culturally-specific acts with culturally-specific legal meanings. We learn to see crime not just as the isolated acts of individuals, but as the predictable outcome of particular social and cultural patterns. We learn about the cherished values and beliefs of a society as reflected in its condemnation of certain behaviors. And we learn that crime is not an intrinsic feature of certain acts, but a product of moral and political processes of definition.²

Cultures differ in the misdeeds they define as crimes and the

categories of crime to which they assign specific misdeeds. For some behaviors, these differences in definition are not large. For example, all cultures define certain types of premeditated killing as murder, and the ways in which they define murder tend not to vary greatly. However, killings defined as murder (and therefore criminal) in some cultures are not always viewed as murder in other cultures. The survivor of a suicide pact or a person who performs an abortion can be charged with murder in some but not all societies, for instance.

Moving away from the most visible, violent, and deliberate misdeeds, we find less consistency across cultures in criminal definitions. For example, unwillingness to share food and other possessions is viewed as serious criminal behavior in some subsistence societies, whereas the same behavior is viewed as individual ownership and control of property and is protected by law in more affluent societies. Cross-cultural differences in criminal definitions are greatest for behaviors lacking an immediate, personal victim, such as use of certain drugs, participation in certain recreational activities (gambling, sexual practices), or the practice of certain lifestyles (vagrancy, nudism).

These cross-cultural differences lead to two important conclusions. First, a behavior can be defined as a crime only by reference to a particular culture and its laws. Second, crime cannot be fully understood without knowing its cultural context.

Infanticide, the killing of an infant, provides an illustration of these points. Some cultures do not define infanticide as a criminal act and, in fact, may view it as appropriate or even altruistic behavior by a parent. Where the struggle for existence is extremely harsh, an extra mouth to feed may cause severe hardship for the family or the group. And if a child is born very soon after another child, or is very sickly or physically deformed, the extra demands this places on the group may permit and even encourage a parent to commit infanticide.³

Even when infanticide is defined as a criminal act, its meaning and motivation can vary greatly across cultures. In many Western developed societies, infanticide is commonly viewed as an extreme form of child abuse, produced by the same conditions that lead to less deadly forms of violence against children. However, in Japan, where infanticide rates are relatively high but child abuse is relatively rare, infanticide is viewed very differently. Japanese children have very close emotional ties with their parents, especially their mothers. When parents feel they cannot adequately ensure their

children's well-being or when they plan to kill themselves, they may kill their children out of despair and because "they hesitate to leave their children behind in a world they cannot trust to care for them."⁴ Whether an act like infanticide is defined as a crime and how it is understood within a particular culture thus can tell us about the basic values and beliefs of that culture.

That crime is relative to time and place poses obvious difficulties for comparing crime across cultures. If the same behaviors are not consistently defined as crimes in all societies, and the same crimes refer to different behaviors in different societies, how can we ever determine if some societies have more crime or more of certain types of crime than others?

Researchers have developed two solutions to this dilemma. One solution is to compare similar behaviors across cultures, regardless of whether they are similarly defined as crimes. Wife beating, for example, may be compared across cultures, whether or not it is consistently defined as a crime. A second solution is to compare similar crimes across societies, even though the behaviors they encompass may not be completely equivalent. Researchers who take this approach note that some forms of crime have comparable definitions in many societies and refer to a similar set of behaviors. Premeditated killing, kidnapping, violent rape, and armed robbery are seen as wrong, harmful, and deserving of punishment—and consistently defined as crimes—in most cultures.⁵ Restricting cross-cultural comparisons to crimes about which there is the greatest social and legal consensus resolves the dilemma of cultural variation in definitions of crime for these researchers.

Whether using behaviors or laws to define the phenomenon to be compared, all researchers face a second dilemma. Having defined the subject matter, the next issue is how to measure and count it in order to answer questions about how crime varies in its amount and characteristics across cultures.

MEASURING CRIME

Discontent with their measures is a chronic condition among those who study crime in different cultures. No one who studies crime claims to have the perfect way to measure it, and everyone is aware that many types of errors plague measures of crime. Nevertheless, researchers persevere, equipped with a combination

of caution, pragmatism, and the optimistic belief that even imperfect measures can shed light on cross-cultural variations in crime.

Behavioral Measures of Crime

Stealing another's possession, damaging another's property, attacking another's person—all these behaviors (or their consequences) can be observed, documented, and compared across cultures without ever referring to crime or legal definitions. Researchers have used such behavioral measures to study crime in a wide range of cultures.

Anthropologists and others who study preindustrial societies write rich descriptions of life in local communities, based on their observations from living and talking with people in these societies. These *ethnographies* provide information on a wide range of behaviors—from wife beating to slander—that interest those who study crime. Nearly a million pages of ethnographic documents on almost 350 cultures past and present have been assembled and systematically indexed for content in the Human Relations Area Files (HRAF). Using the HRAF, researchers can document how common certain behaviors are and the contexts in which they occur, and then compare these across different societies.

There are advantages and disadvantages of these ethnographic sources of information. Ethnographies provide information that is the most direct and closest to the behavior. When a researcher observes and documents the behavior herself, she reduces the errors introduced with increasing distance from the initial act. The rich descriptions that characterize ethnographies also preserve the context and meaning of the behavior. On the other hand, ethnographies are limited by their scope and their lack of systematic, strictly comparable methods of collecting information. In the field, what gets recorded in how much detail and from whose perspective may vary from researcher to researcher. In the small communities studied by ethnographers, seriously harmful behaviors often are uncommon and rarely observed by the researcher.⁶ This does not mean serious predatory acts do not occur, but it does limit the ethnographer's ability to compare the extent and characteristics of some of the most serious misdeeds across cultures.

The problems in developing precise and accurate counts of various behaviors from ethnographies are well recognized. To deal with these, most researchers using ethnographic data estimate the

frequency of a behavior with an *ordinal measure*.⁷ In other words, they use an ordered set of categories instead of precise counts to compare societies. For example, the homicide rate might be measured as "low," "moderate," or "high"; wife-beating might be measured as "rarely occurs," "occurs in some families," or "occurs in most families." This allows societies to be ranked relative to each other, rather than assigned a precise frequency count.

For modern societies, *victimization surveys* provide another type of behavioral measure of crime. In victimization surveys, scientific methods are used to select people to be interviewed about their experiences as victims of various predatory acts. In the interviews, respondents are asked to think back over a specified time period—usually a year—and report how many times certain events occurred. These events are not referred to as crimes in the interview, but are described in everyday language. For example, respondents may be asked if anyone deliberately damaged or destroyed property belonging to them, took something from them by force or threat of force, or attacked them by hitting, slapping, pushing, or grabbing them.

Over the past twenty years, researchers in several countries have conducted victimization surveys; however, because they have used various procedures and asked different questions, the data from many of these surveys are not suitable for comparisons across societies. To address this problem, a coordinated International Crime Survey (ICS) was fielded in fourteen countries in 1989.⁸ For the ICS, the same procedures were used in all countries and the same set of questions was asked about robbery, sexual assault, and other assaults. Those who reported a victimization were asked where it happened, who was involved, how much harm was suffered, and whether the police were informed.

Victimization surveys are valuable sources of information on crime for a number of reasons. Because they often are conducted by researchers with substantial financial support, a large number of people can be interviewed in some depth. The same information is collected in the same fashion from all respondents. Compared to ethnographies, these procedures can yield information on many more predatory behaviors measured in more comparable ways.

Because victimization surveys are at some distance in time and space from the behaviors they measure, however, they are subject to specific types of errors. Respondents may forget or fail to report certain experiences for a variety of reasons. For example, a woman beaten by her husband may not want to talk about the incident to an

interviewer or may not think it is the type of attack the interviewer is interested in knowing about. Interviewers, unlike most ethnographers, do not know the people they talk with and so may not understand how their respondents define and perceive their experiences.

Victimization surveys have other limitations as well. Some victimizations may happen so often—even daily, such as child abuse—that it is impossible to estimate precisely how many times they have occurred. Some victimizations—again, such as child abuse—are targeted at people who are unlikely to be interviewed in victimization surveys. Finally, many types of harmful or criminal behaviors—such as drug use, prostitution, and gambling—do not have identifiable individual victims and thus are not measured by victimization surveys.⁹

Despite these limitations, behavioral measures—both from ethnographies and victimization surveys—provide valuable information on cross-cultural crime patterns. Legal measures of crime and official sources of crime statistics are also heavily relied upon by researchers.

Legal Measures of Crime

The decision to measure crime by legal, rather than behavioral, criteria is also a decision to study particular types of societies—that is, societies with legal systems and institutionalized methods of collecting crime data. This restricts research using legal measures of crime to more complex societies—usually nation-states—and to cross-national (rather than the broader cross-cultural) comparisons.

The major sources of legal measures of crime are the governmental organizations and agencies designed to control crime in complex societies. Most nation-states have centralized systems of crime data collection that produce annual counts and tabulations. These systems typically rely on reports from police departments, court systems, and correctional facilities.

Comparing crime statistics across societies requires one to assume that methods of defining and recording crimes are reasonably standardized. This assumption underlies efforts to assemble crime statistics from different countries in a single source. Both official organizations, such as the United Nations and the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL),¹⁰ and individual researchers¹¹ have compiled and published cross-national data on crime.

Despite the narrowing of the range of societies that can be studied, measuring crime by legal criteria has some compensating benefits. Because governmental agencies collect and compile crime data, often annually, researchers can save enormous amounts of time and money. With annual data, trends over time can be studied. With data from entire societies, there usually are enough instances of serious and rare types of crime to determine patterns and make comparisons.

Whether these advantages compensate for the serious deficiencies of official crime data is a source of controversy among researchers.¹² The measurement of crime is a socially organized activity. It is affected by both criminal behaviors and the reactions to those behaviors by victims, witnesses, police, and other officials. Within any society, crime is underreported, and the amount of underreporting differs by the type of crime. Despite efforts to standardize the acts recorded as crimes and the legal designations under which they are recorded, differences among officials and across jurisdictions are inevitable. These problems of underreporting, underrecording, and differential classification are compounded when comparisons are made across societies and raise serious questions about the *reliability* and *validity* of cross-national official crime statistics. That is, are crimes consistently defined and reported across societies and do criminal statistics accurately and fully reflect criminal behaviors?

To both questions the answer is no: Crime statistics are not completely reliable and valid. But many researchers are quick to point out that no measure of crime meets these criteria and that the most we can hope for in our measures is reasonable reliability and validity. Rather than not use official statistics at all, the argument goes, we should learn to use them with caution and in ways that minimize their limitations.

How can crime statistics be used for cross-national comparisons, given their limitations? Both the U.N. and Interpol advise against direct comparisons of countries on absolute levels of crime because of differences in definition and recording practices across countries. Instead, the U.N. suggests documenting trends in crime within countries and then comparing trends across countries, or combining data into broad crime categories and ranking countries or regions rather than comparing specific crime rates. Others have argued that data on homicides are reliable enough for more precise cross-national comparisons¹³ and that data on less serious forms of crime can be compared across a limited range of societies—that is,

societies with similar legal definitions and reasonably efficient and centralized criminal justice systems.¹⁴ But these views are by no means shared by all who do research on crime.

And so, satisfactorily measuring crime for cross-cultural comparisons continues to be a challenge, but not an insurmountable obstacle, to research. Researchers proceed cautiously, qualifying their conclusions but gaining confidence when evidence from one data source is reinforced by evidence from another source. The next section presents some of this evidence, describing what we know about the distribution of crime across a variety of cultures.

CRIME PATTERNS ACROSS CULTURES AND COUNTRIES

Cross-Cultural Crime Patterns

Cross-cultural research on crime based on ethnographic data compares a wide range of societies, from small and very simple tribal societies to large and very complex agrarian societies. Because of the tremendous diversity of social, demographic, economic, and political forms represented in these societies, researchers can distinguish between findings that are general across or specific to various societies. Given this diversity, the consistency of the findings gives us some confidence in their generality.

To simplify comparisons, we look at patterns of personal (or violent) crimes and property crimes across cultures. Violent crimes tend to be positively correlated within societies, meaning that where the rate of one type of violent crime is high (or low), rates of other types of violent crime also tend to be high (or low). So, for example, societies in which wife beating is common are likely to have high rates of other forms of family violence, as well as high rates of rape, homicide, and so forth. Rates of violent crime are much less strongly correlated with rates of property crime, however. This means that societies with high rates of theft, for example, do not necessarily have high rates of homicide.

In what types of societies is crime more common, according to the ethnographic record? Violent crime tends to occur more often in societies where aggressive behavior, in general, is more common and where there is cultural support for aggression. Although this conclusion may appear tautological at first, it is not because violent

crime can be measured separately from other aggressive behaviors and attitudes. Societies that are militaristic and often at war, for instance, consistently have higher rates of disapproved interpersonal violence; similarly, societies with violent sports, capital and severe corporal punishments, and noncriminal forms of killing also tend to have more violent crime. In such societies, male children typically are socialized for aggression, in part to equip them for adult roles as warriors. As we shall see, these cross-cultural findings support other work linking homicide to war.¹⁵ No other social characteristics are as strongly and consistently associated with violent crime, though some research suggests there may be other correlates of violence. For example, there is some evidence that societies in which fathers live apart from their children have higher levels of interpersonal violence.¹⁶

Ethnographic evidence about social characteristics associated with property crime is somewhat less conclusive, perhaps because there is more variation in how offenses against property are measured. In larger, more complex, and more differentiated societies rates of theft and other property crimes tend to be higher than in smaller, simpler societies. (In contrast, violent crimes do not appear to be more common in larger and more complex societies. Later, we note further evidence of this differential relationship between social complexity and personal and property crimes.) Differences in child socialization practices may also be related to cross-cultural differences in property crimes; some research suggests that in societies where children receive indulgent socialization, rates of theft are lower.¹⁷

Who engages in crime in the societies studied by ethnographers? The most consistent cross-cultural findings have to do with sex. For violent crimes, males clearly predominate among offenders. Property crimes are less strongly differentiated by sex, although offenders are still more likely to be male. There are also consistent age differences in crime: Young adults are overrepresented among both violent and property offenders.¹⁸

Cross-National Crime Patterns

Compared to cross-cultural research, cross-national research on crime encompasses a less diverse array of societies. By relying on official statistics or victimization surveys, cross-national crime research can compare only societies that are sufficiently complex to

collect these types of crime data. However, cross-national research benefits from using data that often are collected at regular time intervals, allowing researchers to look at changes in crime over time in different societies. For the most part, cross-national statistics are collected primarily on predatory personal crimes; little information is available on the distribution of various forms of white-collar, corporate, or political crime across societies.

In all types of nations, the largest proportion of crimes are crimes against property.¹⁹ Differences among countries are most pronounced for violent crimes and, especially in developed nations, much less pronounced for property crimes. For example, the United States has higher crime rates than other developed countries; but the differences between the United States and other countries are greatest for violent crime, much less for property crime.

Regional differences in crime rates are substantial. In Western developed countries total crime rates tend to be greater than in less developed countries, in part because developed countries have high rates of property crime and in part because they also have more efficient and extensive criminal justice systems. (It is likely that many more crimes are never reported to or recorded by police in less developed countries, because citizens have less access to or trust in police and police have fewer resources to devote to record keeping.) Violent crime, especially politically motivated violent crime, is more common in Central and South America. Among developed countries, violent crime is higher in the new world countries (e.g., the United States, Canada, and Australia). North Africa and the Middle East have relatively low rates of violent crime, as do many Asian countries.²⁰

Cutting across these regional patterns are differences across levels of development. Compared to developed countries, developing countries have proportionally more violent crime and less property crime. Although there has been relatively little cross-national research on what are sometimes defined as white collar and corporate law violations—for example, unsafe working conditions, dumping of toxic wastes, bribery, and official corruption—these appear to be more common in developing countries.²¹ Some developing countries do not define these as criminal acts, and in countries that do, enforcement is often lax. Moreover, often the offenders are transnational corporations that wield considerable power and can evade prosecution.

The economic organization of a society also produces particu-

lar patterns of crime. For example, the pre-1990s socialist countries of Eastern Europe appear to have had very low rates of violent crimes and other predatory street crimes. However, some behaviors—such as worker sabotage, theft of nationalized property, bribery, and black market activity—were more typical criminal activities.²²

What societal characteristics, other than level of development or economic organization, are associated with high crime rates? Violent crime rates are higher in societies with greater inequalities in income and wealth and in societies where firearms are more widely available. Involvement in war—particularly where there is considerable loss of life—is also associated with higher rates of violent crime. Evidence concerning the correlates of property crime rates, although more equivocal, consistently shows higher rates in more affluent societies.²³

Many of the social conditions, processes, or policies commonly thought to affect crime often do not. Urbanization and unemployment, for example, typically are not accompanied by higher rates of violent crime, although they are associated with higher rates of property crime. Conversely, some social practices or policies intended to decrease crime do not. For example, there is little evidence that the death penalty deters homicides; and nations that abolish the death penalty typically do not experience an increase in their homicide rates.²⁴

Documenting cross-national changes in crime rates over time is fraught with problems, as we noted earlier: Definitions and the reporting of crimes can change, giving false impressions about changes in actual criminal behaviors. Nevertheless, some changes in crime rates have occurred with enough consistency, both across societies and across different crimes within societies, to suggest there have been real changes in behaviors.

There appears to have been an increase in violent and predatory street crimes throughout the world during the 1970s and into the 1980s.²⁵ In many countries, this upsurge has leveled off. In others, crime rates have continued to rise, fueled by an increase in drug-related crimes. However, there is considerable controversy over whether drug-related criminal behavior has actually increased or whether official crackdowns on these behaviors simply have brought more people into the criminal justice system.

A more long-term change in crime has been consistently identified in cross-national research. As societies develop, violent crime rates tend to decrease and property crime rates tend to increase.

Recall that the cross-cultural (comparative ethnographic) research finds a similar pattern, that is, higher rates of property crime, but not violent crime, in more complex societies.

The people involved in crime, according to cross-national research, look much like those identified in cross-cultural research: Young adult males are the typical offenders. But there are interesting differences between developed and developing countries. In particular, in developed countries offenders are more heavily concentrated among the young—especially those in their late teens—and among urban dwellers.

EXPLAINING CROSS-CULTURAL AND CROSS-NATIONAL CRIME PATTERNS

Crime rates vary enormously, even across relatively similar societies. Keeping in mind the cautions already noted about comparing crime rates across societies, consider the differences in homicide rates just within the developed countries of the world. Over the last three decades, homicide rates have been 40 percent higher for Australians than for New Zealanders, 50 percent higher for Italians than for Swiss, and three times higher for Finns than for Norwegians. The homicide rate in the United States has been over ten times the rate in many other developed countries and is four times the rate in Canada, the next most violent developed country. Of course, murders are only a very small part of the total crime rate, but they indicate the range of cross-national variation in crime that any explanation must confront.

Most explanations of cross-cultural variation in crime rates emphasize one of three mechanisms: motivations, controls, or opportunities.²⁶ Motivational explanations focus on the social conditions or processes that generate criminal tendencies in a society. Motivations to crime have their roots in both social structure—the institutional patterns and processes that organize interactions and relationships between people—and culture—the accumulated traditions and shared experiences distinctive to a society that shape its values and beliefs. Economic inequality is a structural feature of societies thought to increase motivations for certain types of crime;

it fosters alienation and hopelessness that can lead to violence. Norms that advocate criminal acts under certain conditions (e.g., when the victim has wronged you or your family and refuses to make amends) are a cultural feature of societies that may motivate people to commit crime.

Control explanations focus on social conditions or processes that weaken internal and external, informal and formal social controls on crime. Both structural and cultural factors can affect social control. Crime tends to be lower in societies with stable families and integrated community networks because these structural features strengthen controls on criminal behavior. Crime tends to be higher in societies with norms that excuse criminal acts against certain people (e.g., against spouses, large organizations, etc.) because these cultural features weaken controls.

Motivational and control explanations of crime are concerned primarily with the behavior of offenders. In contrast, opportunity explanations focus on the circumstances in which crimes are carried out. Situations in which a motivated offender encounters a suitable target in the absence of a capable guardian create opportunities for crime. Criminal opportunities are most influenced by structural factors. For example, patterns of routine daily activity that take people away from their homes create opportunities for burglary, mugging, and auto theft. Criminal opportunities are also created when small, easily carried consumer items are mass produced.

These three types of explanation can be used, singly and in combination, to explain the relationship between various social characteristics or processes and crime. For example, the higher homicide rates that follow wartime may be due to changes in motivations, controls, and/or opportunities. Wartime may alter societal norms about violence; if norms legitimating the use of violence spread throughout a population, motivations toward violence can increase and controls on violence may diminish. Wartime may also be followed by increasing opportunities for violence, as daily activities expose more people to potentially violent situations.

The concepts of motivation, control, and opportunity also figure prominently in more general accounts of cross-cultural differences in violent and property crimes. One widely cited explanation of cross-cultural differences in crime is modernization theory. According to modernization theory, societies at different stages of the modernization process will show different crime patterns, due to differences in criminal motivations, controls, and opportunities.

More modernized societies will be more urbanized, industrialized, and socially differentiated. As a consequence, they will have expanding opportunities for property crime, greater controls (predominantly internal) on violent crime, and fewer motivations for property and violent crime. Together these produce a shift toward property crimes and away from violent crimes in more modernized societies.²⁷

At a very general level, some evidence supports modernization theory: Officially recorded rates of violent crime are relatively high in less developed countries, whereas officially recorded rates of property crime are relatively high in more developed countries. How well these official measures reflect actual differences in behaviors among different countries is an open question, as noted earlier. In addition, modernization theory has been criticized on several other fronts, particularly for its assumption that there is a single process of modernization common across all societies and for its narrow definition of crime.²⁸ Some critics, including those called critical theorists, point out that developing countries today are not moving through the same process of modernization that developed countries experienced one hundred or so years ago. Rather, the process of development has been reshaped by global economic concerns and is played out differently across developing countries. This results in vast differences in crime patterns among developing countries, differences that can be as great as those between developing and developed countries. Critical theorists also note that crime is not restricted to the common forms of street crime typically the focus of modernization theory, but also includes violence and violations of property rights by governments and transnational corporations. If these crimes are taken into account, the predictions of modernization theory receive only equivocal support.

No general theory of cross-cultural differences in crime, including modernization theory, has been tested adequately enough to command widespread support. Indeed, there is still considerable debate over whether a general explanation of cross-cultural differences in crime is possible or even desirable.²⁹ It may be that the vast structural and cultural differences among the societies and nation-states encompassed by cross-cultural research will prohibit a general theory of crime. Nevertheless, there is enough evidence to support a series of generalizations that any theory of cross-cultural variation in crime will have to address.

Based on research from the simplest to the most complex soci-

eties, the socio-cultural contexts that appear to be least conducive to common forms of crime are those with (1) strong systems of informal social control reinforced by highly consensual normative systems, (2) strong networks of communal obligation and mutual interdependence, and (3) cultural orientations that discourage interpersonal aggression. Societies with these characteristics tend to be organized around collectivist rather than individualistic principles, which are reflected in their political, economic, and legal ideologies and practices.

These generalizations are limited by their grounding in research on common forms of crime. We still know too little about the patterns of many other types of crime to draw conclusions beyond this specific range of criminal behaviors. For example, crimes by transnational corporations and national governments are not well documented. Crimes that cross national borders, such as trafficking in arms and drugs or terrorism, are also neglected in the research. New forms of crime emerging in some societies—hate crimes, for example—need to be studied. Until we take the documentation of these types of crime as seriously as we do more common forms of street crime, we will fail to adequately understand cross-cultural variations in crime.

NOTES

1. Emile Durkheim, *The Rules of Sociological Method*, 8th ed., trans. Sarah Solovay and John H. Mueller, ed. George E. G. Catlin (New York: Free Press, 1938), pp. 65–66.
2. If we are from the United States, we also learn that we should not draw conclusions about crime in other societies based solely on crime patterns in the United States. The United States is unusual in both the amount and characteristics of its crime. See, for example, Elliot Currie, *Confronting Crime: An American Challenge* (New York: Pantheon, 1985).
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4. Hiroshi Wagatsuma, "Abandonment and Infanticide: The Japanese Case," in Jill E. Korbin, ed., *Child Abuse and Neglect: Cross-Cultural Perspectives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), p. 133.
5. Graeme R. Newman, *Comparative Deviance: Perception and Law in*

- Six Cultures* (New York: Elsevier, 1978); Joseph E. Scott and Fahad Al-Thakeb, "Perceptions of Deviance Cross-Culturally," in Graeme R. Newman, ed., *Crime and Deviance: A Comparative Perspective* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980), pp. 42–65.
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 7. Carol R. Ember, Marc H. Ross, Michael L. Burton, and Candice Bradley, "Problems of Measurement in Cross-Cultural Research Using Secondary Data," *Behavior Science Research* 25 (1991): 187–216.
 8. Jan J. M. van Dijk, Patrick Mayhew, and Martin Killias, *Experiences of Crime across the World* (Deventer: Kluwer, 1991).
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 10. United Nations, *New Dimensions of Criminality and Crime Prevention in the Context of Development: Challenges for the Future* (New York: United Nations General Secretariat, 1985); International Criminal Police Organization, *International Crime Statistics* (Paris: INTERPOL General Secretariat, various years).
 11. Dane Archer and Rosemary Gartner, *The Comparative Crime Data File*, ICPSR-8612 (Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, 1986); Ted Robert Gurr and Erika Gurr, *Crime in Western Societies, 1945–1974*, ICPSR-7769 (Ann Arbor, MI: Inter-University Consortium for Political and Social Research, 1977).
 12. Marvin Wolfgang, "International Crime Statistics: A Proposal," *Journal of Criminal Law and Criminology* 58 (1967): 65–69; Leslie T. Wilkins, "World Crime: To Measure or Not to Measure," in G. R. Newman, ed., *Crime and Deviance: A Comparative Perspective* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1980), pp. 17–39.
 13. Rosemary Gartner, "Methodological Issues in Cross-Cultural Large-Survey Research on Violence," *Violence and Victims* 8 (1993): 199–216; Dane Archer and Rosemary Gartner, *Violence and Crime in Cross-National Perspective* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984).
 14. Even homicide data from developed countries, thought to be the most reliable data for cross-cultural comparisons, have to be used with care. For example, some countries reporting to Interpol include attempted murders in their murder counts, inflating their rates. Other countries classify some homicides as other types of crimes: For instance, Japan sometimes classifies assaults that end in death as assaults and Czechoslovakia has classified rapes that end in death as rapes. For further details, see Carole B. Kalish,

- International Crime Rates* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1988).
15. Archer and Gartner, *Violence and Crime in Cross-National Perspective*.
 16. Ember and Ember, "Issues in Cross-Cultural Studies of Interpersonal Violence."
 17. Margaret K. Bacon, Irvin L. Child, and Herbert Barry III, "A Cross-Cultural Study of Correlates of Crime," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 66 (1963): 291–300.
 18. Lynn Curtis, *Criminal Violence: National Patterns and Behavior* (Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1974).
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 20. Hans-Gunther Heiland, Louise I. Shelley, and Hisao Katoh, eds., *Crime and Control in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1992).
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 24. Archer and Gartner, *Violence and Crime in Cross-National Perspective*.
 25. There are some exceptions to this pattern. In Japan, for example, nonserious crimes (e.g., traffic and public order offenses) increased during these years, but serious crimes did not. See Heiland, Shelley, and Katoh, *Crime and Control in Comparative Perspective*.
 26. Freda Adler, *Nations Not Obsessed with Crime* (Littleton, CO: Rothman, 1983); Gartner, "The Victims of Homicide."
 27. Louise I. Shelley, *Crime and Modernization: The Impact of Industrialization and Modernization on Crime* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1981).
 28. Colin Sumner, "Crime, Justice, and Underdevelopment: Beyond Modernization Theory," in Colin Sumner, ed., *Crime, Justice, and Underdevelopment* (London: Heinemann, 1982), pp. 1–39.

29. Piers Beirne, "Generalization and Its Discontents: The Comparative Study of Crime," in E. Johnson and I. L. Barak-Glantz, eds., *Comparative Criminology* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1983), pp. 19–38.

SUGGESTED READINGS

- Archer, Dane, and Rosemary Gartner. *Violence and Crime in Cross-National Perspective*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984. After relating the process of compiling their 110-nation crime data file, Archer and Gartner analyze the effects on homicide of wars, urbanization, and changes in death penalty legislation. Their data file, which includes information on both violent and property crimes, is reprinted in the book.
- Levinson, David. *Family Violence in Cross-Cultural Perspective*. Beverly Hills: Sage, 1989. Levinson analyzes data from the Human Relations Area Files on four types of family violence in ninety small-scale and peasant societies. He includes a useful review of various theoretical perspectives on family violence.
- Robertson, Ian, and Laurie Taylor. *Deviance, Crime, and Socio-Legal Control: Comparative Perspectives*. London: Martin Robertson, 1973. This work discusses several critical problems facing cross-cultural research on crime, including differences in legal definitions and cultural meanings of crime. Robertson and Taylor argue for more attention to how cross-cultural differences in relationships between deviants and social control agents affect crime rates.
- Ruback, Barry, and Neil A. Weiner, eds. *Violence and Victims*. Special issue on "Sociocultural Aspects of Violent Behavior" 8 (1993). Papers in this special issue address the problems of understanding and preventing violence from a cross-cultural perspective. The articles address developmental and situational aspects of violent behavior, hate and bias crimes, violence by and against women, and methodological issues in cross-cultural studies of violence.
- Shelley, Louise I., ed. *Readings in Comparative Criminology*. Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1981. This collection of articles represents a diverse set of topics and methods, including historical studies of trends in crime in different nations, cross-cultural comparisons of youth crime, and analyses of the relationship between crime and large scale social forces, such as economic development and urbanization.