

Criminal Typology

Name

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Date

1. Define the concept of criminal typology, including its four most basic elements.

Criminologists usually use different means of classifying crimes to understand their nature. The main aim of doing so is to ensure that people understand the circumstances that surround a certain crime. Through this classification, one can tell the difference between one crime and another or a cluster of crimes (Miethe, McCorkle, & Listwan, 2006, pg.2). The classification also helps in putting together different types of crimes that have the same attributes. It is through this classification that people understand the various shared features of crimes. For instance, a crime described as a robbery is different from kidnapping. For that reason, the two crimes can be said to be of different kinds through classification. It is also important to state that the classification of crimes has made it easier for people to test the different crime prevention strategies that are available. For that reason, the classification of crimes is a step towards minimizing their occurrences in the future as individuals gain more understanding of the same.

Crime typologies can be simple or complex, depending on the nature of the crime in context (Miethe, McCorkle, & Listwan, 2006, pg.3). Four basic elements can be used to describe a crime. These are; the criminal behavior, offender attributes, victim characteristics, and the situational context. Crime can be classified according to the legal definitions of criminal behavior. In this typology, more classifications can be done regarding criminal behavior. One of the classifications distinguishes between a felony and a misdemeanor offense. The two kinds of offenses are treated equally. However, they vary significantly in many aspects, such as the offender's motivation (Miethe, McCorkle, & Listwan, 2006, pg.3). Crimes can also be classified according to the attributes of the offenders. There are classified as "born criminals," said to have

certain physical attributes that other criminals and non-criminals do not possess. These are traits like long arms, large jaws, and large ears (Miethe, McCorkle, & Listwan, 2006, pg.6).

“Born criminals” is just one of the typologies used to describe criminals according to their physical attributes. In describing crime according to victim characteristics, there are normally several categories of victim groupings. These include; innocent victims, having minor guilt, as guilty as offenders, guilty than offenders, and more guilty than offenders. These categories are made depending on the encounters that occur between an offender and a victim during a crime (Miethe, McCorkle, & Listwan, 2006, pg.7). Situational context-based typologies try to explain the characteristics that made it easier for a crime to happen. For instance, some situations, like being at dangerous hot spots, can increase the chances of a crime happening. It is, therefore, important to state that some crimes are highly likely to occur due to the situations that surround their environment.

2. List and discuss the three general classes of crimes derived from legal-based typologies.

There are three general classes of crime that are classified according to the source of victimization. The three classes are; crimes against a person, crimes against property, and crimes against public order. Comparing this kind of classification and that of felony-misdemeanor distinction brings a few differences. The main difference is that the three-group legal classification shows more similarities between crimes of the same group as compared to their differences. This is so because crimes against a person are of the same nature and related to each other more than any other crime in the other two classification groups (Miethe, McCorkle, & Listwan, 2006, pg.4). Crimes against a person are those that happen to an individual and mainly affects them. Examples of such crimes are murder, robbery, and sexual assault.

The nature of all the crimes stated above can be classified together since they all happen to a person. Crimes against property are those that happen to affect property more than individuals. Some include forgery, embezzlement, and burglary. The nature of these crimes is common in that they all affect the property. For instance, when a person commits murder, the crime is different from that of stealing a car. The main difference is that the former crime is committed against a person while the later against the property. This classification is important in ensuring that justice prevails through making the right judgment when prosecuting offenders. Crimes against public order are those that tend to disrupt the set order or any rules that have been made to maintain law and order in a community. Examples of such crimes are drunkenness, disturbing public peace, prostitution, drug use, and trespassing (Miethe, McCorkle, & Listwan, 2006, pg.3). Looking at the nature of this class of crimes, one can tell that they significantly vary from those in the other two classes in different ways. Although drinking may seem normal for anyone, drunkenness to the extent of disturbing the peace of others is classified as a crime. Understanding these differences is important in formulating strategies to cope with crimes.

Reference

Miethe, T. D., McCorkle, R. C., & Listwan, S. J. (2006). *Crime profiles: The anatomy of dangerous persons, places, and situations*. Los Angeles: Roxbury Pub.



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