

A (Working) Definition of Crime

Crime: An intentional violation of criminal law, committed without defense or excuse, and punishable by the state. (P.W. Tappan)

Elements of crime:

“intentional”: criminal intent; mens rea

“violation”: criminal act; actus reus

“criminal law”: *nullum crimen sine lege* (no crime without law)- statute(s) enacted by state authority defining behavior(s) deemed criminal (opposed to civil law)

“defense or excuse”: circumstances or conditions which justify or excuse the defendant’s behavior in the situation

“excuse defenses”: mistake of fact; insanity; intoxication; age

“justification defenses”: consent; self-defense; “stand your ground”; entrapment; duress; necessity

“punishable”: corrections- monetary fine; probation; incarceration; death

“state”: duly constituted governing agency in an area

FBI Uniform Crime Reports

Part I (Index) Crimes are considered “serious” and include:

- A) Violent crimes: Criminal Homicide, Forcible Rape/Legacy Rape, Robbery, Aggravated Assault.
- B) Property crimes: Burglary, Larceny/Theft, Motor Vehicle Theft, Arson.

Part II Crimes are “less serious” offenses and include: Simple Assaults, Forgery/Counterfeiting, Embezzlement/Fraud, Receiving Stolen Property, Weapon Violations, Prostitution, Sex Crimes, Crimes Against Family/Child, Narcotic Drug Laws, Liquor Laws, Drunkenness, Disturbing the Peace, Disorderly Conduct, Gambling, DUI and Moving Traffic Violations.

National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)

The **National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)**, administered by the Bureau of Justice Statistics, is a **national survey** of approximately 49,000 to 77,400 households twice a year in the United States, on the frequency of **crime victimization**, as well as characteristics and consequences of **victimization**.

The **UCR** includes, but the **NCVS** excludes, homicide, arson, commercial crimes, and crimes against children under age 12. The **UCR** captures crimes reported to law enforcement but collects only arrest data for simple assault and sex offenses other than forcible rape.

National Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS)

NIBRS captures 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. Unlike data reported through the UCR traditional reporting System—an aggregate monthly tally of crimes—NIBRS goes much deeper because of its ability to provide circumstances and context for crimes like location, time of day, and whether the incident was cleared.