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Define the term crime and criminals. Explain the types of criminals in detail.

## Introduction:

Crime has existed in every society since the beginning of human history. It can be defined as <sup>any</sup> act or failure to act that goes against the law and is punishable by the state. The people who commit such acts are called criminals.

Criminology is the study of crime, its causes, and the behavior of criminals. It also classifies criminals into different types including professional, habituals, white-collar, organized, occasional, juvenile, political, cyber and many others, in order to understand them better and to suggest proper punishments or rehabilitation methods.

CRIME

CRIMINALS

TYPES OF  
CRIMINALS

Professional  
Criminals

Habitual  
Criminals

White-collar  
Criminals

Organized  
Criminals

Occasional  
Criminals

Juvenile  
Delinquents

Political  
Criminals

Cyber  
Criminals

Blue-collar  
Criminals

Sexual  
Criminals

## Crime:

Crime can be defined as a human act or omission that violates the criminal laws of a jurisdiction empowered to make such laws and for which an authorized sanction is prescribed.

It is an intentional act or ~~penalty~~ failure to act that contravenes statutory law and invites punishment or penalty.

In simple terms, crime is a behaviour prohibited by law, distinguished as a public wrong rather than a private one, and its violation is prosecuted by the state in judicial proceedings carried out in its own name.

## Criminals:

A criminal is a person who commits a crime by intentionally or negligently violating the law.

A criminal may act due to

personal motives such as greed, revenge, or survival, or may be influenced by social and psychological factors like poverty, peer pressure, or lack of moral guidance. The justice system categorizes criminals into various types to better understand their motives, methods, and the need for punishment or rehabilitation.

## Crime Typology:

### 1- Professional Criminals:

Professional criminals are individuals who adopt crime as their profession and primary source of livelihood. They develop specialized skills such as burglary, forgery, smuggling, or pickpocketing and often operate in organized groups. Their repeated involvement in unlawful

acts makes them difficult to reform. For instance, a professional bank robber or an expert jewel thief invests time and planning in crimes just like a regular worker invests in his profession.

## 2- Habitual Criminal:

A habitual criminal is a repeat offender who continues engaging in unlawful acts even after conviction, making them a danger to society. Also called recidivists, they often commit crimes due to addiction, psychopathic tendencies, lack of remorse, or deriving pleasure from crime. Although early identification could prevent serious offenses, it is difficult to create laws that clearly separate habitual criminals from occasional ones.

Since they show little remorse, stricter penal laws are applied to ensure deterrence and public safety.

### 3- White-collar Crime:

White-collar crime, first noted in the Carrier's ~~suite~~ case (1473) and later defined by Edwin Sutherland (1939), refers to financially motivated, non-violent offenses committed by individuals of high social or professional status. According to FBI, these include fraud, bribery, insider trading, Ponzi schemes, money laundering, copyright infringement, insurance fraud and cybercrimes. Often called "crimes in suits," they may lack physical violence but cause significant harm to society and the economy.

### 4- Organized Crime:

Organized crime, as defined by the UNODC, is a structured criminal enterprises of three or more individuals working together for financial or material gain. It operates through corruption,

intimidation, threats, or violence, and is characterized by hierarchy, teamwork, planning and strict internal control. Extending beyond illicit services into legitimate sectors, it poses a grave threat to governance and society. Examples include drug trafficking, gambling, prostitution, human trafficking and blackmailing.

## 5- Occasional Criminal:

An occasional criminal is a person who commits crimes only when opportunity or necessity arises in daily life. Unlike professional offenders, their acts are unskilled, unplanned, and influenced by situational factors like age, gender or social background. They are usually ordinary individuals with minor moral weaknesses and often feel remorse afterward. Examples include shoplifting, stealing a pen, or taking a mug from an aeroplane.

## 6- Juvenile delinquents:

Juvenile delinquents are often offenders under 18 who engage in unlawful activities due to factors like broken homes, poor upbringing, peer pressure, unemployment, and lack of guidance. Their crimes often involve theft, vandalism, gang fights, or substance abuse. As they are young, the justice system focuses more on reform and rehabilitation rather than strict punishment.

## 7- Political Criminals:

Political criminals are those who commit offenses against the states, its institutions, or leaders, driven mainly by ideological or political motives. Their crimes include treason, sedition, espionage, terrorism, and assassination attempts. Unlike ordinary criminals, they often justify their actions as

efforts for political change or justice. Examples include extremist groups carrying out attacks on government institutions.

## 8- Cyber Criminals:

Cyber criminals are modern offenders who use computers, networks, and the internet to carry out illegal activities. Their crimes include hacking, phishing, identity theft, online scams, and spreading malware. Since such acts often cross national borders, they are hard to trace and prosecute. Examples include hackers stealing bank information or conducting online frauds.

## 9- Sexual Criminals:

Sexual criminals are offenders who engage in unlawful sexual acts involving violence, exploitation, or coercion. Their crimes include

rape, sexual harassment, child abuse, and trafficking for sexual purposes. These offenses cause severe trauma to victims and undermine social morality. Examples include repeat sexual offenders or members of child exploitation networks.

#### 10- Blue-collar criminals:

Blue-collar criminals are individuals who commit street crimes, usually associated with lower social classes. These crimes are more visible, violent, and easier to detect, often causing fear among the public. Also called "Crimes in the streets", they include offenses such as murder, robbery at gunpoint, and car theft. Unlike white-collar crimes, blue-collar crimes draw immediate public and police

attention due to their direct threat to safety and security.

## Conclusion:

Crime is a universal problem that disturbs peace, order, and social security. Criminals vary in types - professional, habitual, white-collar, political, cyber, organized and others - but all cause harm to individuals, communities, and the state. Studying these types helps criminologists, policymakers, and law enforcement in designing prevention, punishment, and rehabilitation strategies. Therefore, reducing crime requires a balanced approach of strict law enforcement along with social and moral reforms to ensure a safer and just society.

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