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| **Criminal Behaviour: KEY CONCEPTS**  **Problems with Defining and Measuring Crime** | |
| A simple way of defining crime is ‘any behaviour that breaks the law.’  However:   * Some researchers argue that a crime really occurs when someone intends to break the law. * Others argue that a behaviour is only criminal it is intended and actually causes damage or harm to another person or their property. | |
| 1. *The Effect of Time and Culture on Crime* | 1. *Problems with Official Crime Statistics* |
| Time   * Certain behaviours have become more or less acceptable than in the past. * http://02varvara.files.wordpress.com/2013/07/00-vixen-fox-cartoon-21-07-13.jpgE.G. Male homosexual behaviour was illegal in the UK up until 40 years ago, but now homosexual people have the same rights as heterosexual people. * E.G. Fox hunting was legal at the end of the last century but since then it has been made illegal.   Culture   * Certain behaviours are acceptable in some countries or states that are not in others. * E.G. Euthanasia is against the law in the UK and many other countries but has been legalised in countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland. * E.G. Abortion is legal in the UK but still illegal in nearby countries such as the Republic of Ireland and Malta. | * http://4.bp.blogspot.com/-drgt-_8L0Dk/TaxFfowXAMI/AAAAAAAABAc/smepyL2V5pE/s200/statistics.jpgStatistics count the number of criminal acts rather than the number of criminals. * People may not be aware that they have been a victim of a crime and therefore cannot report it. * Victims of crime do not always want to report the crime for a variety or reasons. E.g. embarrassment or fear. |
| 1. *The Criminal Personality* | |
| http://t3.gstatic.com/images?q=tbn:ANd9GcQi5Oo3MdPcYFYEnYPcLEHw3kV5yAc-3dqtlbDud33p_5BtrRhUNWRCauc:youhavemorethanyouthink.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/08/burglar-cartoon1.jpgAnother major issue with defining crime as any act against the law is that this would make most people criminals. Confidential surveys show that nearly every adult has broken the law at some point in their lives. In most cases these are minor offences such a breaking speed limits or paying the wrong fare on public transport. However, it is not minor offenders that Psychologists are interested in. Psychologists focus mainly on offenders who commit serious crimes. This is the minority of people in society. On this basis, psychologists believe they have a different type of personality from ‘normal’ people.  Common Characteristics Include:   * Impulsiveness * Lack of feelings of guilt * Pleasure-seeking * Being over-optimistic * Self-Importance. | |