

White Collar Crime and Organized Crime

by Sophia Tutorial



WHAT'S COVERED

This tutorial will cover three different forms of crime, through the definition and discussion of:

1. White-Collar Crime
2. Corporate Crime
3. Organized Crime

1. WHITE-COLLAR CRIME

There are different forms of crime and deviance, all of which can be viewed through sociological lenses and perspectives. **White-collar crimes** are business- or occupation-related crimes of the elite. They're often highly educated, sophisticated schemes for crime that are somewhat opaque to anybody outside of these professions.



DID YOU KNOW

The term "white-collar" versus "blue collar" came about in the early 1900s, when people in professional and managerial jobs wore white-collars to work, as opposed to people who worked in manual-service jobs and wore cover-ups or uniforms that were darker and more blue--hence, blue collar.

Examples of white-collar crimes include:

- Insider trading
- Ponzi or pyramid schemes, which are business deals without an actual solid foundation. Everybody pays in yet only a few people get paid out, so that the person running the scheme can collect all the profits.
- Business embezzlement and business fraud--what is called "cooking the books"-- which is when people hide their business losses, so that their stock value appears much higher than it actually is.

White-collar crimes are often punished less severely than other types of crime, because they are crimes of the elite, a concept derived from the social conflict approach to deviance.



TERM TO KNOW

White-Collar Crime

Profession-based crimes of the elite that are often highly sophisticated.

2. CORPORATE CRIME

Corporate crime is illegal or socially adverse (socially negative) actions on behalf of corporations, or people who work for/represent corporations.

IN CONTEXT

If a corporation knows that their products are harmful, lead-contaminated products, but sells them to the public anyway in order to make a profit, they are committing a corporate crime. In addition, they might pollute or damage the environment in the production process.

There are laws against this now, but this wasn't always the case. These laws have gotten more severe, which has caused some corporations to move to areas of the world where there are less regulations on safety and pollution, to avoid being found in violation of the laws and therefore deviant, or criminal.

Lastly, a big part of corporate crime has to do with the safety of the workers or employees of the corporation. Is the corporation complying with all of the government safety regulations in place to protect workers, or not? If they're not, they might be subject to corporate crime.



TERM TO KNOW

Corporate Crime

Actions on behalf of corporations that are illegal and socially adverse in their effects.

3. ORGANIZED CRIME

Organized crime is a form of crime that may be more familiar to you. **Organized crime** is a complex or businesslike provision of illegal, black-market goods and services.



EXAMPLE The Mob, gangs, or drug cartels are examples of complex, hierarchical, 'business' black-market organizations.

Often, these organizations use violence and manipulation for their purposes. They can sell and purvey sex and drugs, and operate illegal gambling rings. They are the subject of movies and Hollywood lore--especially the Mob. There is currently a very active drug cartel in North America.



TERM TO KNOW

Organized Crime

The complex and businesslike provision of illegal goods and services such as sex, drugs, and guns.



SUMMARY

Today you learned about three forms of crime: **white-collar crime**, **corporate crime**, and **organized crime**.

Source: This work is adapted from Sophia author Zach Lamb.



TERMS TO KNOW

Corporate Crime

Actions on behalf of corporations that are illegal and socially adverse in their effects.

Organized Crime

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White Collar Crime

Profession-based crimes of the elite that are often highly sophisticated.