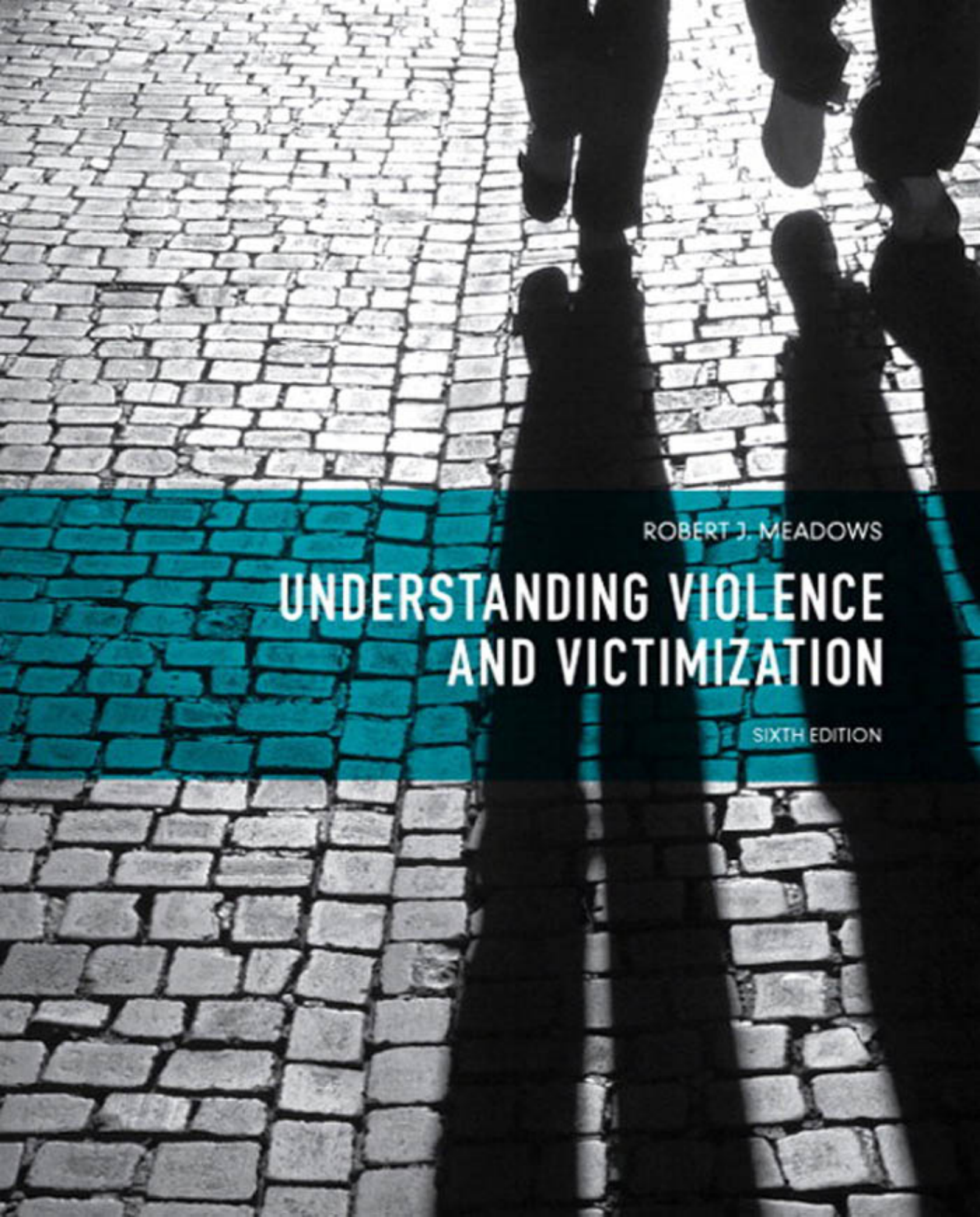

ROBERT J. MEADOWS

UNDERSTANDING VIOLENCE AND VICTIMIZATION

SIXTH EDITION

Sixth Edition

Understanding Violence and Victimization

Robert J. Meadows
California Lutheran University

PEARSON

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PREFACE

NEW TO THIS EDITION

- New! Chapter 8, "Human Trafficking and Victimization," covers child prostitution and human smuggling for labor purposes. This new chapter incorporates case studies, statistics, and legal and social responses to human trafficking and smuggling.
- Chapter 3 is now titled "Victims of Familiar Violence" and has been revised to include updated information on stalking and interpersonal violence.
- Chapter 4 is now titled "Nonfamilial Violence and Victimization." The chapter has been revised to incorporate stranger violence, terrorism, hate crimes, and other forms of nonfamiliar violence.
- In Chapter 9, a table is presented listing key federal victims' rights legislation from 1974 to 2010.
- All chapters include updated statistics and web sources.
- The art program has been streamlined, with outdated content deleted.
- The text design has been refreshed to make the text more reader-friendly.

Violence and the resulting victimization have a serious impact on individuals and society. It is difficult to predict when or where they will occur. In writing this book, I have been interested in exploring selected types of violence, particularly the types that capture media and public attention because of their seriousness, callousness, and, in some cases, randomness. Therefore, I choose not to write about nonviolent victimization, such as property crimes and frauds. It is not my intention to downplay the importance of these crimes, but to focus more on the crimes of violence that we fear most.

This book combines theories on violence and victimization with applied responses to victimization. It is written for the person studying victimization and violence, as well as for those employed in crime prevention and victim service programs. My purpose is to discuss offender–victim relationships, provide data, and explore situational factors and responses to victims. Also discussed are some precursors of violence such as stalking and harassment. Throughout the book are case studies called *Focuses* that enhance points and can be used to generate discussion. A constant theme in this book is that the experience of violence, whether at home, in the community, or as the result of personal assault or abuse, has a devastating effect. Many criminals who commit violence on others have mental disease or abusive or dysfunctional backgrounds, leading to targeting others for personal gain, thrill, recognition, or hate. Sometimes violence perpetrated by these predators is planned, committed in the course of completing other crimes, or simply a random act. Other forms of violence such as terrorism are the result of political or religious convictions.

New to this edition is a chapter on human trafficking and victimization (Chapter 8). In the first chapter some causes of violence as well as data on violent crime measures and the impact that fear of violence has on others are presented. Chapter 2 addresses theories of victimization. It introduces criminal victimization, discussing how and why some people are victimized. Chapter 3 covers intimate victimizations, such as domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, rape, dating violence, and stalking. My intent in this chapter is to address legal and social

issues of intimate violence as well as preventive measures. Chapter 4 addresses nonfamilial violence and victimization. Two of the most prevalent types of this violence are murder and robbery. The chapter focuses on the situations in which people become victims of violence by strangers, including terrorists, and what can be done to prevent these occurrences. There is also a discussion of serial killers, their motives, and their victims. Chapter 5 focuses on workplace violence and victimization, including the problem of harassment. These are important topics because of the stresses of the work environment and attacks on coworkers by disgruntled employees or by third parties. Research conducted on the sources of and responses to workplace violence is covered. The purpose is to offer suggestions on what can be done to reduce the potential for violence.

Chapter 6 addresses school violence and victimization. Because of recent acts of violence on our nation's campuses, I felt compelled to discuss some possible explanations and responses. After all, schools are microcosms of society, as are some workplaces and communities. Chapter 7 discusses how the criminal justice system, through its decision-making capacities, causes victimization, either intentionally or inadvertently. Why is it that the police overstep their authority, or why are some persons convicted of crimes they never committed? Are laws designed to address violent crime being applied fairly? Chapter 8 is the new chapter on human trafficking and victimization. In this chapter the differences between sex trafficking and labor trafficking are discussed. Various laws and responses on trafficking are also addressed. In Chapter 9 addresses the selective proactive and reactive crime response measures are addressed. The chapter concludes with a presentation of measures to aid victims through victim compensation programs and laws. In some instances, victims seek relief from the courts in the form of personal damages from property owners. Victims criminally assaulted at work or on private property, for instance, may have a civil case against a property owner or manager. Thus litigation has an impact on organizational business policy and operations.

I would like to offer a disclaimer. Throughout the book, I refer to a number of legal cases and crime response procedures. They are offered as a general guide. I recognize that laws, statistics, and procedures may change or may not apply in some situations. By the time this edition is published, new laws or amendments to existing ones may be instituted. To address this problem, I have included an appendix (Appendix A) with information on retrieving current information relative to victimization. The reader is also advised to consult with local law enforcement or other authorities for information on changes or new programs relevant to victimology.

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Robert J. Meadows is Professor and Chair of Criminal Justice and Legal Studies at California Lutheran University. Dr. Meadows' research and teaching interests include legal issues in the criminal justice system, and violence and victimization. He authored a book on Saudi Arabian justice and a parent's guide for coping with difficult teenagers. He is also a co author of *Evil Minds: Understanding and Responding to Violent Predators*. Dr. Meadows is a member of the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. Dr. Meadows is currently conducting research on offender reentry programs.

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1

Measuring and Understanding Violence

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter, you will:

- Be able to explain the meaning of violent crime
- Learn about reported and unreported crime
- Understand the impact of violent crime
- Learn about the fear of crime
- Become familiar with some general reasons for violent behavior
- Understand the dynamics of violence

INTRODUCTION

Interpersonal violence is committed every day in our homes, schools, businesses, and on the streets. These nonsanctioned acts such as murder, assault, and robbery are committed for profit, revenge, jealousy, political or religious motives (terrorists), or simply for pleasure. There is no shortage of motives in explaining violence, and there certainly is an ample supply of candidates seeking to impose violence on others for whatever reason. A number of factors, such as dysfunctional families and communities, drug addiction, mental illness, learning disabilities, or other conditions, cause violent crime.

On the other hand, violent offenders are not always disenfranchised street criminals or predatory gang members. Numerous examples exist of violent criminals reared in so-called stable middle-class families, with no criminal history, and who have achieved high social status. Education and social status are no barriers to violence.

Consider the physician who kills his ex-wife to avoid expensive alimony payments, the stockbroker who kills his entire family and himself to save them embarrassment from poor investments, or the wealthy, privileged high school students who kill a

classmate just to experience the thrill of killing. This chapter begins with a discussion on the fear of crime, followed by an overview of crime data, and concludes with some general explanations of criminal violence in American society.

THE FEAR OF VIOLENT CRIME

> *We look forward to a world founded upon four essential freedoms. First is the freedom of speech and expression. The second is freedom of every person to worship God in his own way. The third is freedom from want. . . . The fourth is freedom from fear.*
>
> —Franklin D. Roosevelt, speech to Congress, January 6, 1941

During the early morning hours of April 16, 2007, a disgruntled mentally distraught Virginia Tech student entered a dormitory and classroom and killed 32 fellow students, faculty, and staff and left about 30 others injured in the deadliest shooting rampage in the nation's history. The shooter carried a 9 mm semiautomatic and a .22-caliber handgun. He later committed suicide. In 2010, in broad daylight in Tucson, Arizona, a crazed gunman, Jerald Lee Loughner, killed 6 and wounded 12 others when he opened fire in a mall parking lot. U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords was left in critical condition, and the dead included a federal judge and a nine-year-old girl. And in 2012 during the screening of *The Dark Night Rises* at a theater in Aurora, Colorado, a gunman James Holmes killed 12 people and injured 58 others. Why? Was it retaliation for some perceived victimization harm? Thrill? Mental illness?

The murdered victims in each of the preceding situations had no warning and in some cases did not know the killers. Who would expect this type of violence in a parking lot or on a college campus? We constantly read about gang and youth violence, racial and hate crimes, terrorism, and domestic violence, including child and elder abuse. As a nation, we rank first of all developed nations in the world in the number of homicides. The recent surge of school shootings, although rare, is not restricted to crime-ridden schools but also occurs in middle-class communities. And, we will never forget the sniper shootings in the Washington, D.C., area and the calculated attacks of September 11, 2001, when Islamic extremists killed thousands of innocent people. In addressing violent criminal acts, we need to understand the definition of violent crime. Violent crime, for the purposes of this book, is defined as those acts committed against another in violation of a prescribed law. Examples of these offenses are murder, sexual assault, robbery, weapons crimes, or crimes involving bodily harm.

Fear and Effect of Violent Crime

In many communities, the right to be free from fear has been replaced by the knowledge that most of us will be victims of violence at some time in our lives, or at least direct witnesses. The fear of violence results from past victimizations, media accounts of violent crime, and interactions with people who are knowledgeable about or have witnessed crime.

Of 119 black Atlantic City residents aged 65 years and over, 76% considered their neighborhoods to be "bad," and only 24% felt that their neighborhoods were safe. Fifty-one percent knew someone who had been victimized during the last year, and 27% had been victims of crime during that period (Joseph, 1997).

In 2006, 60% of Gallup Poll respondents reported that they believed there was more crime than a year ago (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006). In the poll, 54% of blacks and 47% of whites worried frequently or occasionally about their home being burglarized when they are not there. In addition, 43% of male respondents and 55% of female respondents avoided going to certain

places or neighborhoods they might otherwise want to go because of their fear of crime (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006).

According to polls, Americans' fear of crime victimization relates strongly to two distinct factors: household income and sex. Adults living in low-income households are roughly twice as likely as those living in high-income households to be afraid, 48% versus 23%. Women are more than twice as likely as men to say they are afraid to walk alone at night near their home, 50% versus 22%. Additionally, women are more fearful than men at every income level. This confirms that the higher fear among women is not solely a function of their somewhat lower socioeconomic status compared with that of men (Saad, 2010).

It is common to find acts of violence, such as gang attacks and robberies, reported in the news. These reports fuel the notion that crime is pervasive and thus ignite fears in the public. Part of the reason for increased fear is the expansion of the middle-aged population. As a group, they are more likely to own a gun, install burglar alarms or special locks, and practice security procedures. Thus older citizens are concerned about their families' safety, a concern that is driven by media reports of violent crime. Those who are more fearful tend to be more likely to carry self-protection devices or participate in self-defense classes. However, many people who are fearful of violent crime really have no reason to be. Yet perceptions are powerful indicators of behavior. Studies have concluded that residents who witnessed what they thought were drug and gang behaviors were more likely to believe that all types of criminal and disorderly activity were present. In other words, residents who saw such activity believed crime, as well as moral decay, was higher in their community. These perceptions also affected their feelings of personal safety (Crank, Giacomazzi, and Heck, 2003).

Although studies have found that women and the elderly report higher levels of fear of crime than do men and younger people, these two groups are much less likely to be victimized by crime. Those who are most fearful actually report the fewest victimizations. The concept of who is fearful and who should be fearful of victimization is referred to as the **fear–victimization paradox**.

The effects of crime have had consequences on mental health and sociability, such as depression and anxiety resulting from living in a high crime area. According to an English study by Stafford, Chandola, and Marmot (2007), longitudinal data from 2002 to 2004 of more than 10,000 London civil servants aged 35–55 years revealed the negative effects of crime. The study found that the fear of crime was associated with "poorer mental health, reduced physical functioning and lower quality of life." Participants reporting greater fear were more likely to suffer from depression than those reporting lower fear of crime. Those fearful exercised less and participated in fewer social activities. The study concluded that fear of crime may be a "barrier to participation in health-promoting physical and social activities" (Strafford, Chandola, and Marmot). But what are the reasons for violence and how does one become violent? We examine here some reasons for violence.

CRIME DATA

Sources of Data on Victimization

Information on violent and nonviolent crime is available from two major sources: the Federal Bureau of Investigation's *Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)* and the Bureau of Justice Statistics' *National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)*, both published by the Department of Justice.

The focus of this discussion is on the *UCR* and *NCVS*. Additional sources are listed in Appendix A.

THE UNIFORM CRIME REPORTS (UCR). Begun in 1930 and published annually, the ***Uniform Crime Reports (UCR)*** includes offenses reported to law enforcement agencies at the city, county, and state levels. State universities and colleges are required to report in the *UCR* offenses

committed on their campuses. The purpose of the *UCR* is to enable law enforcement agencies to exchange information about reported crime and to assist in future crime planning and control.

The *UCR* is a nationwide reporting program, a cooperative effort of more than 16,000 city, county, and state law enforcement agencies voluntarily reporting data on crime and arrests. Indexed crimes are categorized as property and personal offenses and include murder, forcible rape, arson, burglary, robbery, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, and aggravated assault.

The *UCR* is valuable to law enforcement, but it has some limitations. First, it details only reported crime. Thus the so-called **dark figure of crime**, or unreported crime, is not included. Second, the *UCR* primarily concerns arrests and offender demographics; it does not include information on victims. It is also subject to manipulation of information, or false reporting, by an agency. That is, some law enforcement agencies alter reports to reduce the negative image that may accompany high crime activity in their communities (McCleary, Nienstedt, and Erven, 1982).

There has been some sharp criticism in recent years of the *UCR* reporting process. Criminal justice experts warn that crime statistics are unreliable (Sherman, 1998). For example, the FBI dropped Philadelphia from its national crime-reporting program because of egregious errors in crime reporting. The city had to draw its crime figures from the *UCR* system for 1996, 1997, and at least the first half of 1998 because of underreporting and general sloppiness. The problems resulted when the police failed to take written reports of all crimes, downgraded reports to less serious offenses, or failed to take these reports very seriously (Butterfield, 1998). These errors in one city raise questions regarding the validity of the decrease in violent crime rates reported in other jurisdictions in recent years.

As mentioned, dark figure of crime exists because some people are reluctant to report crimes of violence to authorities because they fear retaliation or embarrassment or view the offenses as a private matter. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported in 2008, of the nearly 3 million personal crimes unreported, the most common reason given for not reporting was it was a private or personal matter (19%). Also, a number of victims may be crime participants who will not report their victimization for fear of arrest. Encounters with prostitutes or drug dealers may result in victimization of the client (robbery, assault, etc.), making it less likely that that person will file an official report. In addition, co-conspirators, such as drug dealers, robbers, and other criminal types, who disagree over the division of their illegal profits may victimize one another.

The decision to report a crime is a calculated one, often based on the seriousness of the offense, the probability of financial redress, the perception that the criminal justice system will take action to aid the victim, the degree of the victim's participation in the crime, the degree to which the victim is embarrassed by the crime, and the fear of personal harm if the crime is reported. The *UCR* does provide data on the nature and extent of reported crime rates in a given community. Without these reports, police are at a disadvantage in their efforts to control crime.

Crime rates relate the incidence of crime to the population. The **determination of crime rates** uses the following formula:

$$\text{Crime rate} = \left(\frac{\text{Number of reported crimes}}{\text{Population of a city}}\right) \times \text{Rate}$$

To determine the rate of robbery in a city with a population of less than 100,000, for example, the total number of reported robberies for a given year is divided by the population of the city or jurisdiction, which is then multiplied by 10,000. If the city's population is more than 100,000, multiply by 100,000. To compare the crime rate of two cities, one with a population of

more than 100,000 and the other less than 100,000 (e.g., 50,000), 10,000 is used. Likewise, when comparing two cities with populations of, for example, 25,000 and 6,000, multiply by 1,000.

The crime rate within a city can be determined using the same formula. Many cities are divided into geographical reporting districts or areas, and the police record reported crime in each district or area. A researcher can determine the crime rate of a specific area of a city versus another by using population and crime data. The type of crime and the crime rate of each district or area vary by such factors as population density and socioeconomic status.

The *UCR* publishes crime rates according to region, month, race, sex, and other variables. For example, the *UCR* provides data on murder and nonnegligent manslaughter, which it defines as the willful killing of one human being by another. Clearance rates—the number of crimes the police clear by arrest—are also reported. Clearance rates are higher for personal crimes (e.g., murder) than they are for property crimes (e.g., burglary). Obviously, clearance rates are driven by the chance of detection, crime scene evidence, witness and victim information, and so forth.

THE NATIONAL CRIME VICTIMIZATION SURVEY (NCVS). The ***National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS)*** is another source of victimization data. The *NCVS,* begun in 1972 to complement the *UCR,* recognizes incidents not reported to the police and includes a detailed report of crime incidents, victims involved, and trends affecting victims. Unlike the *UCR,* which collects data on the crime, the *NCVS* seeks detailed information on the victim. It tracks the crimes of rape, robbery, assault, burglary, personal and household larceny, and motor vehicle theft; it does not track murder, kidnapping, so-called victimless crimes, or commercial robbery and burglary.

Perhaps the most important contribution of the *NCVS* is its data about the dark figure of crime, those crimes not reported to the police. Data published by the *NCVS* are gathered from household surveys conducted by trained U.S. Census Bureau interviewers. The *NCVS* reports the following information:

- Crime records
- Profiles of crime victims
- Methods that victims of violent crime use to protect themselves
- The relationship of the victim to the offender
- The amount of crime that occurs in schools
- The extent to which weapons are involved in crimes
- Data concerning whether crimes are reported to the police

Not all crimes are reported. The data for rape as reported by the *UCR* and the *NCVS* are quite different, suggesting that for various reasons, many rapes are not reported. The most common reason given by victims of violent crime (including rape) for not reporting a crime was that it was a private or personal matter. Nonreporting is also attributed to fear of reprisal, embarrassment, or the belief that the victim may not be believed.

Statistics on Violent Crime

Most murders were intraracial. From 1980 through 2008, 84% of white homicide victims were murdered by whites and 93% of black victims were murdered by blacks. During this same period, blacks were disproportionately represented among homicide victims and offenders. Blacks were six times more likely than whites to be homicide victims and seven times more likely than whites to commit homicide.

Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011

The above figure is frightening and raises the question of why this is occurring. Some possible explanations are discussed later, but suffice to say there are a number of reasons in explaining violence, as well as those who commit violence. Violent crime is more likely to occur in lower socioeconomic environments such as inner cities. In these communities, unemployed youth or street gangs are more likely to exist, and there is less social and familiar cohesion. There is also a competition for space and jobs as new ethnic groups immigrate into these communities. Violence can be directed toward an individual or group or take place between groups competing for community resources.

In addition to tracking and compiling violent crime statistics, the FBI assists local agencies in apprehending violent offenders by operating the Violent Criminal Apprehension Program (VICAP). **VICAP** is a nationwide data center designed to collect, collate, and analyze information about crimes of violence—specifically murder. It examines the following types of cases:

- Solved or unsolved homicides or attempted homicides, especially those that involve an abduction; that are apparently random, motiveless, or sexually oriented; or that are known or suspected to be part of a series
- Missing persons, especially when the circumstances indicate a strong possibility of foul play and the victim is still missing
- Unidentified dead bodies when the manner of death is known or suspected to be homicide

VICAP assists law enforcement agencies by coordinating a multiagency investigative force. Multiagency cooperation becomes especially important when the suspect or suspects have traveled between states and across jurisdictions. Especially valuable is the coordination of activities, such as obtaining search warrants, interviewing, and testing.

In most violent crimes, murder rates differ based on victim characteristics, but the relationship between victim characteristics and incidence of homicide tends to remain the same as in past years. Some demographic characteristics of homicide are presented here (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011):

- From 1980 to 2008, nearly a quarter of the victims (24%) of gang-related homicides were juveniles (under age 18). Juveniles were also a fifth (19%) of persons killed by family members and a fifth (18%) of persons killed during the commission of a sex-related crime.
- In 2008, two of every five female murder victims were killed by an intimate. Among female murder victims for whom the victim/offender relationships were known, 45.3% were killed by an intimate, whereas only 4.9% of male homicide victims were killed by an intimate.
- Overall, more than two-thirds of victims murdered by a spouse or ex-spouse were killed by a gun. Boyfriends were more likely than any other group of intimates (50%) to be killed by a knife, and girlfriends were more likely than any other group of intimates (15%) to be killed by force involving hands, fists, or feet.
- Most homicide victims under age five were killed by a parent. In 2008, 59% of young child homicide victims were killed by a parent, 10% were killed by some other family member, and 30% were murdered by a friend or acquaintance.

Understanding Violence

Crime statistics provide us with demographic factors associated with violence, but the underlying reasons are not included. There is no shortage of theories explaining the causes of human violence. However, it is not the intention of this book to critically examine all theories of violence, nor to advance any one theory or cause over another. Suffice to say, violence is often situational and difficult to predict or plan against it. Most theories addressing violence are grouped into trait

theories: biological, psychological, sociological, economic, and so forth (see generally: Ferrell, 2004; Ferri, 2003; Robbins, Monahan, and Silver, 2003; Williams, 2004; Wilson, 1985). In general, unsanctioned violence is the result of a number of personal and social factors, including mental illness, childhood abuse and neglect, brain injuries, retaliation (e.g., street gang warfare), drug use, jealousy, twisted political or religious beliefs, and so forth. Others take the approach that antisocial behavior results from a series of evolutionary stages. In other words, people become violent through a process called *violentization*, which involves four stages: brutalization and subjugation, belligerency, violent coaching, and criminal activity (virulency). First, this person is a victim of violence and feels powerless to avoid it. Then the victim is taught how and when to become violent and to profit from it. Then he acts on that. If a person from a violent environment does not become violent, it is because some part of the process is missing (Athens, 1992).

Violent acts may be reactionary or planned or committed in the furtherance of other crimes such as robbery, or they may be committed to advance a particular cause (**terrorism**) or to conceal the commission of other crimes. Some turn to violence because of sudden changes in lifestyle (e.g., divorce, sudden loss of employment), thrill, or the need for instant gratification. And, we cannot ignore the fact that the infliction of violence in some cases is a matter of rational choice (Earls and Reiss, 1994). Despite the seductions or other influences of crime, crime is rewarding, and if the probability of getting away with crime outweighs the chances of apprehension, then crime may be the choice.

INFLUENCES OF VIOLENCE

For the purposes of this discussion, the study of violence encompasses a three-level social-ecological model. This model (Figure 1–1) considers the interplay between **individual**, **familial**, and **community influences** experienced by a person. In addressing the sources of violence, we can look to these three influences, although the individual and familial influences are viewed as the most prominent contributors. According to the office of Juvenile Justice Programs (Loeber, 2003), the most important risk factors for delinquency and violence stem from individual and family influences, which include genetics and the child's environment. This is not to dismiss community influences; however, having quality individual characteristics and positive familial relationships will compensate for harmful community influences. This chapter focuses on individual

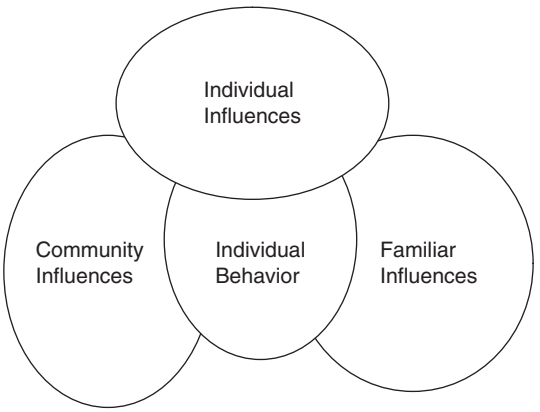

FIGURE 1–1 Influences of Violence

FOCUS 1–1
Explaining Violence: Aileen Wuornos

Aileen Wuornos was born in 1959. Her mother married her father when she was 15. Wuornos's parents divorced within 2 years of the troubled marriage, before Aileen was born. Her biological father was a convicted child molester and sociopath who was strangled in prison. Her mother was unwilling to care for her children, resulting in Aileen and her brother being adopted by their maternal grandparents. Her grandmother drank heavily and was strict with the children; her grandfather physically and sexually abused Aileen as a child. Reportedly, she was often whipped with a belt by her grandfather. Her grandparents raised her and her brother with their own children. They did not reveal that they were, in fact, the children's grandparents. At the age of 12, Aileen and her brother discovered that their grandparents were not their biological parents. When they discovered their true parentage, they became more incorrigible. Aileen claimed to have had sex with multiple partners, including her own brother, at a young age. Aileen became pregnant at the age of 14. The father was unknown. Upon giving birth, the baby was put up for adoption; she was banished from her grandparents' home and disowned by the small community in which she lived. Aileen subsequently dropped out of school, left the area, and took up hitchhiking and prostitution. In 1974, she was jailed for drunk driving and firing a pistol from a moving vehicle. In 1976, Wuornos hitchhiked to Florida, where she met a 76-year-old yacht club president. They married that same year. However, Wuornos continually involved herself in confrontations at their local bar and was eventually sent to jail for assault. She also hit her elderly husband with his own cane, leading him to get a restraining order against her. She returned to prostitution and eventually murdered seven men she met while hitchhiking and soliciting truck drivers at truck stops. In 1992, Aileen was executed for the murders in Florida.

violence as opposed to political or religious violence (terrorism), which is addressed in Chapter 8. A case study of a violent person is addressed in Focus 1–1.

The Individual Influences

> *Literally speaking, bad brains lead to bad behavior. . . .One of the reasons why we have repeatedly failed to stop crime is because we have systematically ignored the biological and genetic contributions to crime causation.*
>
> —Adrain Raine, from "Unlocking Crime: The Biological Key," *BBC News*, December 2004

After watching the 2008 New York Giants super bowl victory over the New England Patriots, I began thinking about the athletic accomplishments of quarterback Eli Manning and his brother Payton Manning of the Indianapolis Colts. Their father, Archie Manning, was an NFL quarterback for the New Orleans Saints for many years. Is the success of the Manning brothers a matter of luck, environment, or genes? Maybe a little of each, but their success in football could not have happened if they were 5'7" and unable to throw a football more than 20 yards and lacked the ability to remember and successfully execute dozens of plays. What we inherit has an effect on who we are or what we become. As for violent behavior, are such persons the product of their biological makeup as well? We cannot discount the argument that biology or genetics plays a role in behavior, including violent behavior.

The individual influence identifies biological and personal traits that increase the likelihood of becoming a perpetrator of violence. Behavioral genetic research has shown that genes influence individual differences in a wide range of human behaviors—cognition, academic

achievement, personality and temperament (including such traits as aggression and hostility), psychopathology, and even vocational interests and social attitudes (Plomin, DeFries, and McClearn, 1989). More specifically, violent behavior and heritable factors have been implicated in the research (Moffitt, 2005). In other words, the way we behave may be related to the way we are wired. This is not to say that some are born violent and doomed to become sociopathic murderers, but there may be a tendency for some to be more aggressive and thus less likely to control emotions absent some type of positive interventions.

By analogy, medical studies have indicated that certain diseases such as cystic fibrosis, sickle cell anemia, and diabetes have genetic links. Generally, if a parent has the condition, it is possible that an offspring may develop the disease later in life. As for mental illnesses, there is evidence that certain mental conditions such as chronic depression and so-called bipolar disorders are present in families and may be transmitted especially if both parents have the same illness (Zandi, 2002). A history of antisocial personality disorder in a parent is the strongest predictor of persistence of conduct disorder from childhood into adolescence, and researchers have recognized that genetic factors contribute to conduct problems in children. In support of this position, studies have indicated that conduct disorder is significantly heritable, with estimates ranging from 27% to 78% (Scourfield, 2004).

Other conditions such as attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder (**ADHD**) have heritable links, with experts suggesting that ADHD has a strong genetic basis and is more common among people who have a close relative with the disorder. Current research is focusing on investigating genes and the brain chemical dopamine. In other words, people with ADHD seem to have lower levels of dopamine in the brain, which influences risk-taking behavior, leading to unacceptable social behavior and crime (Martin, 2007).

Untreated children with ADHD, and other related mental disorders, are likely to experience problems at school and difficulties getting along with parents and teachers, resulting in low self-esteem and rejection. As these children become adults, they may experience low employment, poor academic achievement, high rates of automobile accidents, family difficulties, antisocial behavior, and mood problems (Waschbusch et al., 2002). It is not surprising that ADHD is remarkably high among prison inmates. A study of 82 male prisoners convicted of murder, sexual offenses, and other violent acts also found a high prevalence of reading disability and personality disorders among prisoners associated with ADHD. Eighty-six percent of the prisoners qualified for a diagnosis of personality disorder, with a significant relationship seen between ADHD and personality disorders (Rasmussen, Almvik, and Levander, 2001).

Studies on twins and adopted children raised apart from the biological parents lend credence to the argument that individual differences in violent/antisocial behavior are heritable (Rhee and Waldman, 2002). The twin studies have been utilized to investigate the heritability of certain disorders such as oppositional defiant disorder. Several twin studies have found significant genetic influences in oppositional defiant disorder symptoms, with heritability estimates ranging from 14% to 65% (Coolidge, 2000).

As for adoptees, research has looked at the rate of criminal behavior in young adoptees whose birth mother was a criminal. Studies found that almost 50% of the adoptees whose mother had a criminal record had a record of criminal behavior themselves by age 18. In the control group, only 5% of adoptees had criminal records by age 18 if their birth mother was not a criminal (DiLalla, 1991). In another study of 199 male adoptees, it was discovered that 85.7% of males with a criminal or minor offenses record had a birth father with a criminal record. They further noted that young male adoptees without a criminal record had a criminal father 31.1% of the time (Burke, 2001). Although other factors may account for their crimes, there may be some biological connections.