

A German Perspective on the Criminology of State Crime

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What is criminology?

- Empirical analysis of crime, the criminal and crime control
- Or: study of deviance and its control

State crime research in criminology

- Paradigm shift of critical criminology (1960s)
- 1988: Chambliss' ASC presidential address
- 1989: Jäger „Makrokriminalität“
- 3 big questions:
 - Definition of state crime
 - Control of state crime
 - Theoretical explanation of state crime

Definition of State Crime

- Legalistic vs. Social harm perspective
- Human rights violations

Definition of state crime (II)

Kramer, Michalowski & Rothe (2005):

“State crime is any action that violates public international law, international criminal law, or domestic law when these actions are committed by individuals acting in official or covert capacity as agents of the state pursuant to expressed or implied orders of the state, or resulting from state failure to exercise due diligence over the actions of its agents.”

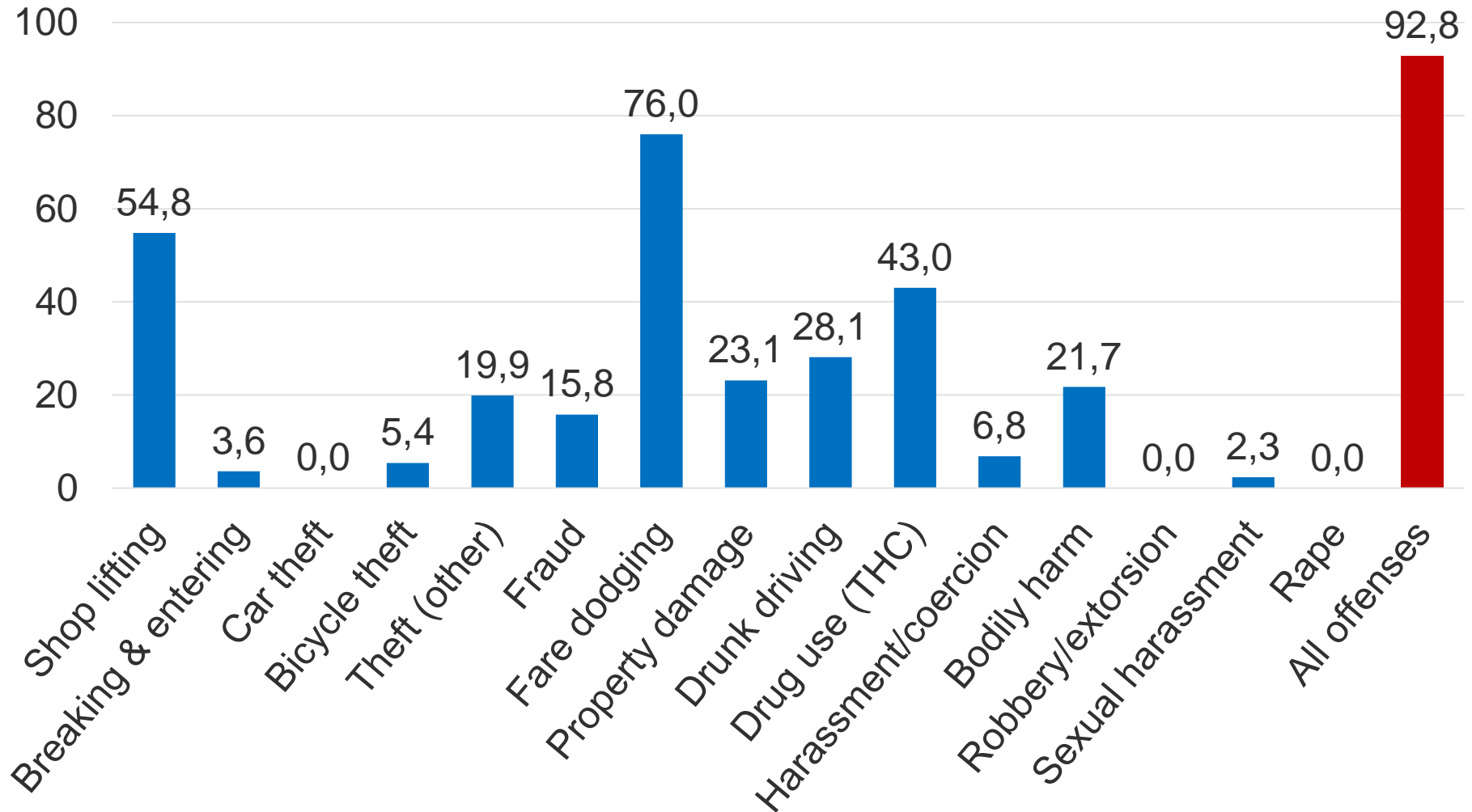
Definition of State Crime (III): similar terms

Makrokriminalität	
Staatsverstärkte Kriminalität	State-organized crime
Kriminalität der Mächtigen	Crimes of the Powerful
Regierungskriminalität	Government crime
Staatsverbrechen	State Crime

Theoretical Explanation of State Crime

- Pathological vs. normal individuals
- Focus on individual vs. social
- Ordinary people in extraordinary circumstances?
(Browning 1992)

Self-reported delinquency in students: life-time prevalence (%), University of Greifswald, fall 2008



Ordinary People in Criminology

- Life course criminology: youth crime with up to medium severity = wide-spread = normal
- Not normal: getting caught
- Norm conformity needs explanation! (Hirschi 1969)

Explanatory Models

- Micro level: e.g. typologies (Smeulers, Jäger)
- Macro-Micro level: social dynamics creating genocidal situations (Welzer, Hagan/Rymond Richmond)
- Macro level: Institutional Anomie Theory, Control Balance Theory (Messner/Rosenfeld, Tittle, Karstedt)
- Integrated Models (Kramer/Michalowski, Rothe)

	Motivation	Opportunity	Constraints	Controls
International Level	Political interests Economic interests Resources Ideological interests	International relations Economic supremacy Military supremacy Complementary legal systems	International reaction Political pressure Public opinion social movements NGOs and INGO Oversight/economic institutions	International law International sanctions
Macro Level	Structural transformations; Economic pressure or goals; Political goals; Ethnogenesis; Anomie	Availability of illegal means; Control of information; Propaganda Ideology/nationalism; Military capabilities	Political pressure; Media scrutiny; Public opinion; Social movements; Rebellion	Legal sanctions Domestic law
Meso Level	Organizational culture and goals; Authoritarian pressures; Reward structures	Communication structures; Means availability; Role specialization	Internal oversight; Communication structures; Traditional authority structures	Codes of conduct
Micro Level	Strain; Socialization; Individual goals and ideologies; Normalization of deviance; Definition of the situation	Obedience to authority Group think Diffusion of responsibility Perceived illegal means	Personal morality Socialization Obedience to authority Informal social controls	Legitimacy of law Perception of reality of law application

