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Preview:

Test 1 Revision Notes

Topic 1: Intro

- **The Dictionary Definition:** This definition states that crime is “an action or an instance of negligence that is deemed injurious to the public welfare or morals or to the interests of the state and that is legally prohibited; any offence, serious wrongdoing or sin”. So, this definition seems to cover both bases, the legal and the moral. But are they both the same? Is everything that is illegal also immoral or a sin? And is everything that is considered a sin also a crime?
- **The Legal Definition:** The legal definition of a crime says that “crime is what the law defines as crime” (Goldsmith, Israel and Daly 2006:5); if something is written into the criminal law, and it is subject to state sanction then that activity is a crime (White and Haines 2004:4). So this approach, is looking at things purely prescribed in the criminal code.
- **Human Rights Definition:** Crime occurs whenever a human right has been violated, regardless of the legality or otherwise of the action.
- **Social Harms Definition:** Crime should be extended to include the ‘power to create harm’ e.g. homelessness, neglect of health and safety, sexual harassment, actions of government agencies.
- **Social Process/Labelling Definition:** The result of social interaction; involves the person who broke the rule, and the reactions of others i.e. it is not the act itself, but the way it is perceived by others which makes it a crime.
- **Human Diversity Definition:** A normal response to an oppressive or unequal circumstance (power relations) e.g. repression of language, culture