The Blackwell Companion to Criminology

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The Blackwell Companion to Criminology
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Preface

This has been a mammoth enterprise and I am grateful to the contributors for making it feasible with their support, good spirit, and responsiveness to my editing. Considering they are a distinguished bunch, and therefore very busy, their commitment and patience reflect the altruism for which academics rarely get credit. Of course, some were not able to join us, in fact a whole contingent who were to write on ethnicity, but this Companion intends to be around for a while so there will be future opportunities for growth. Sadly, Rosa del Olmo and Sue Lees died during the early stages of the book and we miss their respective contributions on Latin America and the delinquency of girls. A project like this is a labor of love, so I am grateful to Susan Rabinowitz at Blackwell USA for inviting me to pull the collection together, my old friend Bill Chambliss for assistance with US matters, my wife, Pat, for her constant encouragement, and, especially, Ken Provencher, Blackwell’s manager for this project, for his unfailing understanding and good cheer.

The shape of this collection of essays reflects some choices. Criminology is far too vast to be compressed, however selectively, into one volume. From the outset, I have aimed primarily at high quality and a cutting edge with a global standpoint. The most fundamental feature of the volume is an international range of expert contributors, around a base of essays from North America, who tackle their subject matter from a global perspective, either in the sense of reviewing their fields or locating crime issues within international debates and historical parameters. My intention was not to be comprehensive but to deliver a volume that would stimulate development within criminology across the globe. The book therefore contains predominantly sociological criminology, to reflect contemporary thinking and current key issues. For the same reasons, it also combines established authorities in the field with some outstanding younger scholars. I have attempted to edit the volume actively to provide a collection that would, for several years to come, serve undergraduates everywhere
in their appreciation of both fundamental issues and areas of growth within criminology.

With these aims in mind, the volume had to combine theoretical or general insights with explorations of specific empirical areas. A broad theoretical overview section is a must for any international volume, apart from its inherent value as a binding thread for the book and for criminology as a whole; hence Part I. I then decided to select two standard areas within criminology which had a global significance and two areas which were at the forefront of recent criminological thinking. The first criterion produced Part II, “Juvenile Delinquency and Justice for Youth,” and Part III, “Punishment and its Alternatives”; the second accounts for Part IV, “Gender and the Masculinity of Crime” and Part V, “Capital, Power and Crime.” I sought essays for Parts II and III which were innovative and fresh; for Parts IV and V which were summative yet moved things further forward. Finally, for the last section, I wanted a topic which might capture a global criminological imagination and mark this volume as international and contemporary. This led to Part VI, “Globalization, Crime, and Information,” which looks at topics specifically reflecting the globalization of crime issues and the huge role of information in today’s criminal justice systems.

The first part of the volume focuses on a key theoretical issue within the international study of crime and society: the relation between the nation-state, criminal justice, and social control. My own essay explores the historical and current meanings of the criminological axiom that crime and deviance are social constructions, with a view to sharpening our use of the word “social” in an age of globalization and sustained divisions within and between populations. The following essay by Dario Melossi traces the history and meaning of the concept of social control, comparing its American origins to its current European forms. Both these essays provide readers with a critical background in sociological theories of crime, law, and deviance, while pointing to the importance today of issues relating to communications, culture, and globalization for understanding the possibility of social control. They also evidence the displacement of jurisprudence and law by sociology and social control, a theme that is taken further in Markus Dubber’s essay. Dubber uses offenses of possession to illustrate the extent to which the legal or due-process model for dealing with crime has been suffused with the politically defined “war on crime.” He poses the question of justice within a war setting. The blurred and neglected relation between war and crime underlies Wayne Morrison's essay on genocide. Outlining the significance of criminology’s neglect of genocide, Morrison argues that any criminology which remains bound to the nation-state is unsustainable as an intellectual enterprise in postmodernity. All four essays in this section pose fundamental questions for criminology in the twenty-first century and open up themes which are explored in the rest of the volume.

Part II, on juvenile delinquency, begins with another challenge to fundamental notion within criminology. Jack Katz and Curtis Jackson-Jacobs present a sustained interrogation of the meaning and value of “the gang” in US criminological research on juvenile delinquency. Through a close analysis of the methodology and analysis of gang research, the authors show that the causal claims for the role of gangs in promoting criminal violence are simply not sustained by the evidence or the methodology. In the next essay, Mark Fenwick examines the
traditional idea in criminology that Japan’s low official rates of crime are an exceptional case warranting a special explanation based on culture. He questions the success of “reintegrative shaming” (Braithwaite) in Japan, pointing to high recidivism rates, the prevalence of punitive crime-talk in civil society, low public confidence in policing, poor treatment regimes, and low investment in the criminal justice system. Both Katz and Fenwick would support the idea in Hayward’s essay that criminology needs to pay more detailed attention to the relationships between consumer culture and crime. Drawing on advances in cultural theory, Hayward shows how the relationships between commoditization and crime can be understood in more depth. His essay draws attention to the youthful accomplishment of identity through material means, the need to emphasize the new subjectivities of the consumer age in revising Mertonian cultural strain theory, and the value of more sophisticated ideas about the impulsivity and sensation-seeking involved in juvenile crime. The final essay in this section, by Elrena Van der Spuy, Wilfried Schärf, and Jeffrey Lever looks at successive legal attempts to “tame” South Africa’s youth in the context of the moves away from apartheid. Youth crime and violence remain high in South Africa: this fact and the lack of success in establishing a youth justice system are placed within the context of the structural imperatives of underdevelopment and the need to advance a “criminology of the South.” All the essays in this part testify to the importance of placing juvenile crime and its definition within more precisely defined and researched historical and sociological contexts.

Part III deals with punishment and looks closely at its less discussed and less fashionable alternatives. Pat O’Malley opens it up with an enquiry into the erosion of modernist penal reform and the reversion to expressive violence in punishment, placing this development within the contexts of postmodernity and globalization. O’Malley reviews contemporary penal theory and argues for a more exact explanation of the connections between social transformations and changes in penal policy, rejecting epochal theories of structural crisis in favor of accounts which fully encompass the details of the prevailing political ideologies, such as neo-liberalism, that produce policy change. The current “punitive turn” warrants our attention to the state of non-custodial sentences, and in the next essay, Barry Holman and Robert Brown trace the historical roots of alternatives to prison and provide a summary of the wide range of community-based sanctions available today in the USA. They argue that the evidence does not justify a “nothing works” philosophy but that too many non-custodial measures produce increased surveillance or net-widening rather than offender-specific treatment. This essay is followed by that of Mark Lipsey, Nana Landenburger and Gabrielle Lynn Chapman which provides a detailed assessment of the research evaluating the effectiveness of rehabilitation schemes. The authors identify the themes in a variety of approaches that produce greater effectiveness, rather than prizing any one approach, and emphasize the socially valuable outcomes of multi-modal schemes with certain types of offender. The final essay in Part III, by Laureen Snider, examines the roots of one particular and current wave of punitiveness, that aimed at female offenders. Documenting the increased incarceration of women internationally and the history of female incarceration, she explains why reformist movements within criminology, including feminisms, have not
stemmed this tide of punitiveness. Her detailed review locates the latter within contemporary changes in political economy.

Moving on from Snider’s essay, Meda Chesney-Lind’s opener to Part IV, which focuses on gender and crime, looks closely at criminological ideas about the female offender and locates her within broader social and historical contexts. She questions the apparently rising level of girls’ violence, arguing that there is an undergoing relabeling of girls’ offenses as criminal which produces this statistical effect. She also looks closely at the link between increased female incarceration and the mandatory sentences involved in “the war on drugs” as a war on “communities of color,” emphasizing that the mass incarceration of African American women in the USA has been a function of the failure to address issues of racial inequality. The second essay in this section, by Adrian Howe, calls for the maleness of violence to be unequivocally addressed by criminology. The essay critically reviews the “denial” within criminology of the issue of male violence, and argues that there is an effective discursive erasure of the maleness of violence. Criticizing work on masculinities for assisting this process, Howe demands that men’s violence be addressed head on as a “massive social problem.”

Richard Collier’s essay follows by providing an extensive assessment of the masculinity literature within contemporary criminology and the way masculinity has been problematized. Focusing on the ideas of hegemonic masculinity and diverse masculinities, the issue of specific male subjectivities is addressed through critiques of both socialist work on the dominant masculinity and psychoanalysis-inspired portraits of the male psyche. Collier emphasizes that there remain some very important questions about exactly what it is about masculinity that produces criminal behavior and about why “men arguably remain the unexplored, desexed norm of criminology.” In the next contribution to this contemporary debate, Mary Bernstein examines the roots of homophobia and the criminalization of same-sex erotic relations through the sodomy statutes in the USA. Stressing both the cultural and social-structural reasons for homophobia, she draws attention to the “homosocial” nature of societies at different points in history which works to oppose lesbian and gay rights. The final essay in Part IV is Elizabeth Comack’s study of the interplay between gender and race in the criminalization of the rejected Other. She uses the notion of law as an ideological gendering and racializing practice to interpret the legal processing of a sample of defendants, a high proportion of whom were Aboriginals charged with violent crime in Manitoba. Her research demonstrates the extent to which legal discourse and practice are infused with both gendered and racialized stereotypes.

Part V deals with crimes related to capital and the state, both global and national. Amedeo Cottino leads off with an assessment of criminological work on “white-collar” and corporate crime. He argues that criminology needs to transcend disciplinary boundaries if it is to make an effective job of studying white-collar crime and spelling out its huge implications. Observing how often the serious crimes in this area are excused by elites with no little interest in the matter, Cottino calls for a more structural analysis of violence and of the content of the penal law. The following contribution by Pearce and Tombs examines the links between multinational corporations (MNCs) and crime and the reasons why the routine criminal activities of the MNCs are unlikely to receive the
attention of the law. Their study draws upon the oil industry to illustrate the ways in which MNCs can ensure their wishes and rights transcend the social and legal considerations of either nations or the international community. Like Cottino, they too doubt that criminology is at present equipped or ready to deal with international crimes whilst it remains tied to nation-state-based notions of crime and crime control. In the next essay, Karen Joe Laidler documents the contemporary drug scene in Hong Kong, in both its global and local dimensions. Long positioned internationally as a colony with a thriving drug trade, Hong Kong’s illegal entrepreneurs have adapted to independence by furthering their local drugs trade. That trade has taken on the patterns evidenced elsewhere on the planet and has seen a big shift from heroin and opiate use toward psychotropic drug use, notably amphetamines such as ecstasy, marking a strong connection with the growth of a vibrant leisure industry geared to the youth culture. Laidler’s study illustrates the location of crime within a global market culture. The last essay of Part V, by Alexis Aronowitz and Monika Peruffo, shows that transnational market forces need not be politically legitimate yet can still evade the sanctions of international law. The authors look closely at human trafficking in West and Central Africa, documenting how it is now censured by the UN as “transnational organized crime” yet thriving as part of a clutch of serious criminal activities involving the economic and sexual exploitation of some of the poorest people on the planet. Aronowitz and Peruffo indicate the links between the old and new forms of slavery and how this illicit market thrives upon the internationally sustained if not condoned underdevelopment and poverty of Africa.

Last and certainly not least, Part VI contains a range of studies illustrating the importance of globalization and “the information society” to contemporary forms and patterns of crime. Maureen Cain’s opening essay shows how globalization can lead to the localization of acute economic problems related to policing and crime, through a case study of private security officers in the Caribbean. She demonstrates how taking an IMF loan influenced the economy and private policing of Trinidad and Tobago in recent years. It markedly affected both the range and amount of illegalities and the structure of private policing by opening the territory to the full blast of international market forces. Globalization is not necessarily the penetration of capital into “the periphery” but can be its export to “the center,” causing a “glocalization” of crime conditions in the periphery. The following essay by Thomas Mathiesen, in contrast, illustrates how the formation of a supranational economic and political bloc such as the EU can produce the growth of a massive level of surveillance activity, officially for the purpose of detecting and preventing serious cross-border organized crime. The concept of “Fortress Europe,” embodied most notably in the Schengen agreement, convention, and information system, has generated a high-technology super-state organization of information, yet organized cross-border crime, argues Mathiesen, is less under threat as a result than political freedoms, and we face a “new McCarthy era” with global dimensions.

The manipulability and misuse of information pertaining to crime has no better illustration than the interpretations of the official US crime statistics acutely observed in the essay by Bill Chambliss. He demonstrates in detail ways in which misleading numbers and misinterpretations of numbers can be
produced by both official agencies and independent criminologists. Chambliss argues that this massaging of information can create and sustain major myths within both criminology and society, such as the supposed magnitude of the US murder rate compared to that of other nations and the alleged recent rise in violent youth crime, and deplores the increasing politicization of crime statistics. The following contribution from Aaron Doyle and Richard Ericson turns our attention to the information networks and the role of the police within them. Its main purpose is to observe the ways in which the police are these days, first and foremost, knowledge producers who are increasingly driven by the knowledge needs of other institutions. As in the UK, the possibility of the Canadian police actually catching an offender is severely limited by the sheer volume of form-filling and data collection, meeting either the needs of accountability or the demand for information from other institutions such as insurance companies. Policing in the information age is very much knowledge production and networking within knowledge management systems. This “virtuality” of crime illustrated in the three preceding essays, and the inevitability of resistance to it, is developed in the final essay of the volume, by Paul Taylor. He points to the growth of internet hacking as a form of political resistance to the globalized information society. Taylor documents the growth of electronic civil disobedience and argues that it is an “imaginative and defensible attempt to reappropriate new information technologies for society’s benefit.” Observing the immateriality of contemporary capitalism, Taylor sees the new crime of computer hacking as a major challenge to and within globalization.

As I write, the growing possibility of war against Iraq and of more incidents of international “terrorism” highlight more than ever not only the political relevance of a global analysis of crime and justice but also the sheer necessity of international approaches within any criminology committed to both scientific and useful knowledge, using interdisciplinary methods and thinking, rising beyond conventional theory and the limiting parameters of nation-state-based criminology, and confronting the realities of the information age in a globalized market. Our Companion may be disconcerting at times but it is a companion for a disconcerting new century which requires us to see “the big picture” and its implications for smaller, more local, scenes of crime and injustice. We have tried to capture some key criminological snapshots of both big and small, and their interrelationship, which will help the contemporary student of criminology make sense of the world.

Colin Sumner
February 2003