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Book Reviews

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BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by
Bernard Cohen

KEY ISSUES IN CRIMINOLOGY. By *Roger Hood* and *Richard Sparks*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1970. Pp. 256. \$2.45.

As the authors note at the outset of their work, *Key Issues in Criminology* is meant to be neither a textbook nor a comprehensive survey of the literature in criminology. Rather, its purpose is to review eight of the more important issues or topics within the field in more detail than is ordinarily found in the textbooks. In general, one can say that Hood and Sparks have achieved their purpose.

The eight key issues they chose to review concern: attempts at estimating the "dark figure" of crime; the practical and theoretical implications of self-reported delinquency; subcultural and gang delinquency; problems in the development of typologies; the decision-making process in sentencing; the efficacy of various treatment modalities; the interaction between type of treatment and type of offender; and, finally, the sociology of the prison. Each of these topics is dealt with in essentially the same fashion—the relevant literature is summarized and appropriate conclusions drawn, a brief methodological critique is presented, and the questions that remain to be answered in future research are delimited.

As a series of literature reviews, *Key Issues in Criminology* seems to me to be quite good. Most, if not all, of the major works in each area are reviewed, the methodological critiques are brief and accurate, and the summary statements give the reader a good idea of what we know, and the limitations of that knowledge, for each area.

But one important caveat should be made for the experienced reader. It is that this book must be taken at face value. It is what the authors intended it to be: a discussion of eight key issues that will be informative for "students . . . as well as the general reader and persons involved in the administration of criminal justice and the treatment of offenders . . ." (p. 6). Readers familiar with the topics discussed will find the literature reviews and the methodological critiques to be neither novel nor highly informative. However, they will find them to be thorough and accurate, and thus quite valuable on a different level.

This last comment is least applicable to the chapters dealing with (a) typological construction and (b) the interaction between type of treatment and type of offender. Perhaps this is due to the developing nature of these topics. Since the materials in these areas are relatively scarce and recent, a literature review that "pulls them together" becomes an original and informative piece. These chapters are definitely unlike the chapter on the inmate subculture which seems to me nothing more than another summary of that body of literature.

The only major critical point to be made concerns the selection of the key issues that are included in the book. The problem is not with the topics included, for, with the possible exception of the sociology of the prisons, they are important issues. But there are a number of key issues, at least in my mind, that are ignored or treated only peripherally. To name a few: violence and collective violence, police-community relations, drug usage, and labeling theory, the authors' disclaimers on the latter topic notwithstanding. This is not to suggest that all of criminology should have been included, but only that the inclusion of a few more important topics would have made the book that much stronger.

As it is, the book is quite good and will be very useful to teachers as a source of material which falls between the detail of the "reader" and the generality of the textbook.

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INTRODUCTION TO CORRECTIONS. By *Vernon Fox*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1972. Pp. xv, 400. \$10.50.

There are many good reasons for a serious study of corrections. The proliferation of university courses addressed to the subject is understandable and welcome, for surely widespread knowledge is essential to the constructive changes which are needed but which are not necessarily in the making. Not only prospective correctional workers, but also judges, lawyers, and police officials need

instruction, which exceedingly few of them have ever received, about the realities within the correctional apparatus.

An introductory course is usually thought to require a text book, and this is the obvious need which Professor Fox has attempted to fill. His qualifications are impressive. He is an experienced teacher with a solid base in practice which so many of his academic peers lack. His career as a correctional psychologist was distinguished by a courageous and professionally effective intervention in a desperately serious prison riot. This introduction should be authoritative and valuable. It is neither. A consideration of its deficiencies will give pause to scholars attempting to succeed at the deceptively difficult task which Fox has set himself.

Anyone setting about the organization of materials for an introductory course in corrections will soon discover the need for an impossible versatility. The diversity of knowledge which he must command in depth will chasten the most confident scholar. Moral philosophy, jurisprudence, the history of ideas, statistics, sociology, and the principles of public administration are only some of the subject matter areas which must become familiar territory. He will need a foundation in all these fields, and then must turn to the description of corrections, no easy task in itself.

Somehow he must find out enough about what is going on to determine what is significant and why. From the squalid inhumanity of our county jails to the altruistic attempts to create meaningful treatment programs there is a continuity which has to be placed in perspective for the student. Professor Fox knows this range as well as most observers and attempts to describe it. Where words fail him, photographs are sprinkled into the text. The pictures of kitchens, cell-blocks, and training programs possess the appearance of well-posed unreality so prevalent in correctional public relations. There is, however, nothing artificial in the electrocution scenes which accompany an unequivocal denunciation of capital punishment.

Usually Fox seems unable to make up his mind. He moves uneasily from one hand to the other as though a consideration of the merits of most cases might be presumptuous. Programs, procedures and routines are mentioned but seldom with the author's views about their value and consequences or with reference to the comments of others. Thus a seventeen page chapter on probation makes the conventional comparisons of service costs to in-

carceration costs and deploras excessive caseloads. We learn that probation is the most successful phase of the correctional process, but neither data nor case studies are presented to prove the success. The iconoclastic suspicion that suspended sentences would succeed as well as probation receives no attention from this author.

Clearly, Fox feels more at home with the problems of the prison. The entire range of custodial and treatment operations is described in enough detail to make possible a lively class discussion by an imaginative instructor, but Fox modestly withholds his own interpretation of values and consequences. The practice of isolation as punishment is accurately described, down to the optimal calorie count of the special diet loaf, but nothing is said of the psychological impact of segregation. Seven sentences are devoted to the therapeutic community movement, but none of them deal with the problems this treatment approach creates for the staff or the inmates involved. Various classification schemes are described uncritically and without consideration of their justifying rationales.

It is strange to read an analysis of the effects of institutionalization which omits reference to the work of Clemmer, Goffman, Sykes, Studt, and Wheeler. The prison community's existence is acknowledged, but the tools for understanding it are withheld. In view of the large influence which prison community research has exerted on correctional change, the gap is inexcusable. It is an especially puzzling omission when it is remembered how easily these studies capture the interest of the fledgling social scientist.

Still, the pedestrian account of corrections might be tolerable, though tedious, to the instructor and student alike, if the requirement for comprehensiveness had not compelled Fox to attempt a review of the historical and theoretical foundations of corrections. Unfortunately, the historical chapter begins the book. Even if Fox had got his facts and definitions right, the account of punishment through the ages would have been painfully superficial. But the chapter abounds in errors and misinterpretations from which Fox could have been easily protected by colleagues specializing in the fields into which he has rushed pell-mell. It really isn't particularly important that the author of the Justinian Code was Justinian, not Justin, nor that the English borstal is not a school, or even that anomie is incomprehensibly defined. What does matter is that the significance of this history

is not stated nor can it be inferred from the selection of the materials presented. Due reference is made to Beccaria and the classical school of criminology, (although the essence of Beccaria's thought is misstated), and in proper sequence mention is made of the positivists, too. The meaning of the two schools for criminal justice as a whole and for corrections in particular is obvious and important, but it would never be guessed from the author's exposition.

Published in the year after Attica, this book conveys the general impression that little is wrong in corrections that money and more training cannot remedy. Written by a veteran of one of the most serious riots in correctional history, it scarcely mentions the subject. The author's cup of euphoria runs over in the final sentence: "The future of corrections has emerged in the 1970's more optimistic than ever before."

In an introductory text, style and presentation assume more importance than in any other form of scholarly publication. Here is the student's first exposure to the subject matter. If it beguiles him into reflection and further study, the text will contribute to his excellence. If it bores him or, worse, shakes his confidence because of obvious errors in fact or superficiality of thought, a candidate for serious involvement in the field is lost. It is in this respect that the faults of Fox's presentation are especially objectionable. His sentences are poorly constructed and often impenetrably opaque. There is much evidence of hasty writing and insufficient editing, as though both writer and publisher had faced a deadline of implacable urgency. The results put both the academic and the publishing worlds in an unattractive light.

A conscientious instructor cannot assign this text. He will be better off with the conventional criminology texts. Best of all, if he is up to the task, will be the use of original work, the historical, philosophical and scientific volumes which introduce the student to creativity rather than indigestible descriptions.

JOHN P. CONRAD

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GAMBLING: HAZARD AND REWARD. By *Ollo Newman*. London: Athlone Press, University of London, 1972. Pp. vi, 266. \$12.00

Newman, utilizing a rigorous triangular methodology (statistical reports, research survey materials, census reports, official documents, formal

and informal interviews, and participant observation) reminiscent of William F. Whyte's studies, describes and analyzes commercial gambling in Great Britain as a legal, economic, and sociological phenomenon. The major topics are: (1) Legislation and the major forms of gambling; (2) Gambling and economic resources; (3) Patterns of gambling, *i.e.*, how many people bet on what, where, how and when? Who are they, and how do they bet? (4) Ecology of betting shops in Greater London; (5) Gambling interactional standard behavior patterns; (6) A typology of gamblers.

The cardinal sociological thesis is that gambling, particularly gambling in betting shops by lower-class working men, operates as a structurally positively functional component of the social system—based primarily on an in-depth study of several betting shops in three separate districts of the East End of London during 1967-68. Newman observed gamblers as they gambled; participated with gamblers as an associate and co-gambler; and worked in a betting shop. Additionally, he interviewed a cross section of those working and living in each district and talked informally with various social types at betting shops, dog tracks, gambling clubs, pubs, cafes, and street corners. Finally, he interviewed a series of gamblers, including operators as well as bettors.

Newman views gambling as a functional past-time that involves a moderate expenditure, subject to personal self-direction and control; yet, his findings clearly reveal that those participating in gambling activities are the least financially able to do so. The frequency, regularity, and amounts wagered on gambling (for each individual bet and stakes over a period of time) vary with social class. From the ranks of the lower-class married working men come the largest proportion of occasional, regular and habitual gamblers. One-third of the population do not bet commercially, one-third occasionally, and one-third regularly. The level of attendance and outlay in betting shops (accounting for an annual outlay of 57 percent of the entire gambling outlay) are six times as high for members of the lower, unskilled manual working class as they are for the average members of the upper and upper-middle classes. Gambling and gambling establishments flourish where incomes are relatively low, occupational training and skills slight, material possessions few, physical environments drab, social amenities meager, and access to cultural goals scarce. One questions the functional aspects of an activity

in a country where the annual outlay for gambling is equal to the total national expenditure on meat and bacon. In London alone there are four betting shops for each public library. Strangely enough, many gamblers bankroll their gambling activities with welfare checks.

To Newman, gambling makes sense within the situational reality of working men, *i.e.*, where the non-gambler is deviant and gambling is the social norm. Thrift, application, saving, career aspirations, and self denial mean little in a sordid, unpredictable environment where one is not going anywhere anyway. Gambling settings—dog tracks, bingo halls, and especially the betting shops—offer the lower-class working male a configuration of space and time that meets many needs and reinforces community and group values. Betting shops provide cheerful, optimistic, spontaneous, diverse, exciting, challenging, convivial, interactional stages where actors can display “social talents and skill.” Gambling activities permit actors to be resolute, cooperative, humorous, modest, and indifferent in the face of danger. Bettors experience a “we” feeling; revalidate self images; make decisions; communicate a shared knowledge; exercise self control. Operators are reported to enter into the camaraderie, and to join in the winners’ jubilations. Betting shops act as a shadow system, a retreat from external failure. Here, the “oppressed” can vent class revenge by defying the values of the middle class. Finally, the betting shop, which provides a necessary, diversionary fantasy world, is allegedly supplanting the disappearing neighborhood pub.

Actually, Newman’s data clearly demonstrate many offsettings to these postulates. The actors themselves (gamblers interviewed and observed) define their gambling activity in economic terms and not in non-pecuniary satisfactions. Increasingly, ethnomethodologists find social meanings as defined by actors more revealing than the researchers’ constructed meanings. The author finds many gambling settings marked by individualism, antagonism, braggadocio, insecurity, obscenity, greed, selfishness, competition, exploitation, misery, grief, inebrity; and, accompanied by destruction of property, frustration-aggression, physical altercation, and drinking coupled with gambling. Many non-gambling lower class working men in-

terviewed were upwardly mobile and defined gambling as dysfunctional. Moreover, reformed gamblers as well as some other social types interviewed considered gambling dysfunctional. Newman belies the operators’ jubilations shared with winning betters when he notes that operators react negatively to winnings when screened from bettors, *i.e.*, within their private offices. Newman witnessed what Erving Goffman calls “front,” a presentational identity. Finally, betting shops as well as pubs are operated increasingly by impersonal commercial chains.

Newman rationalizes gambling by drawing a distinction between turnover (the total amounts of monies staked *en masse*) and expenditures (the amounts retained for taxes, overheads, and promoter profits). The remainder is distributed in the form of bettors’ winnings that represent the overwhelming bulk of money originally staked, *e.g.*, 85 percent of the money staked on horse races returns to bettors as winnings. This necessary distinction, however, must be viewed in the light of other variables. The data show that winnings are not equally distributed *en masse*, since shrewd gamblers win more when they win, and lose less when they lose, than do their less adept counterparts; that crooked practices exist throughout most forms of gambling in Britain (especially in the case of horse racing and dog racing); that gambling winnings frequently are quickly “blown” on drinks, loans, and additional gambling activities; and that many current legal operators in the past were illegal operators—in short, the same old story that Virgil W. Peterson has told so well.

Newman’s book contains a plethora of hard, significant data on gambling and lower-class lifestyle in Britain; therefore, it is highly recommended to sociologists and students of deviant behavior. The data however do not support the author’s theoretical frame of reference. A phenomenological approach would have let the variables define themselves in the context of the research. Then, casual relations between these variables could have been examined on the basis of the social perception of the actors (gamblers) themselves.

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