

Guest Editors' Introduction

Editorial

Since its early days as an area of scholarly inquiry, criminal justice and criminology have focused largely on individuals and local communities. Scholars have long tried to advance understanding of why individuals commit crime, or why they do not commit crime, and why some communities and local contexts are associated with more crime and disorder than others. These questions remain of importance in the 21st Century but they are also far too limiting. The high technology information age of the global era moves issues of crime, justice and security beyond local and national borders and necessitates a truly international focus if we are to advance knowledge and inform policy and practice.

It was in this context that the oldest and founding academic programs in criminal justice and security in the United States and Slovenia entered into a cooperative partnership in 2009 to promote global and comparative research and education. Specifically, the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security at the University of Maribor and the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University are collaborating on a variety of activities including the generation of high-quality scholarship. The collaboration between these two faculties also reflects their leadership in examining a variety of emerging crime and security issues including: cybercrime and cyber-terrorism, the informal economy and illicit markets, transnational and financial crime, environmental crime, and similar areas of what might be termed “unconventional deviance.”

This volume reflects this commitment to advancing knowledge as the papers were selected among an outstanding group of papers presented at the Eighth Biennial Conference on Policing in Central and Eastern Europe hosted by the University of Maribor and held in Ljubljana, Slovenia in September 2010. Reflecting the international reach of the conference, in addition to the University of Maribor and Michigan State University the conference was sponsored by the European Group of Research into Norms, Guyancourt, France; the Department of Criminology, Leicester University, the United Kingdom; and the College of Justice and Safety, Eastern Kentucky University USA, and the Ministry of the Interior, Republic of Slovenia.

The first article in this volume reflects these issues as Michael Levi points to the need to move beyond a sole focus on the police when considering issues related to regulation and enforcement of financial crimes. Based on interviews with officials in both the public and private sector, Levi's findings suggest the need to think about webs of security that potentially could prevent financial crimes from occurring and increase the capacity for managing the risks associated with fraud and other forms of financial crime.

The need to shift focus in how we think about organized crime is also a theme that emerges from Petrus Van Duyne's article that challenges operating assumptions about the risks posed to global financial systems from organized crime. Similar to

the challenge a professor may make to a student, Van Duyne poses the question – “show me the data indicating that money laundering by organized crime creates such a risk to financial systems.”

Josip Kregar and Antonija Petričušić provide a similar challenge to our understanding of financial crimes by examining links between organized financial crime and the state. In particular, they focus on the role of governance in providing contexts for organized crime to flourish.

The next paper, by Ed McGarrell, Nick Corsaro, and Rod Brunson, examines a more traditional form of financially-motivated crime, illegal drug dealing, but from the perspective of an innovative approach to addressing community problems that emerge in drug dealing locations. Specifically, the authors present findings from several studies in U.S. cities that suggest that police and prosecutors, working with the community, can reduce the negative effects of overt illegal drug markets.

Just as globalization has generated new financial risks and new opportunities for transnational financial crime, so has the technology revolution created opportunities for new forms of crime. Maja Dimc and Bojan Dobovšek bring a new perspective on one form of technology based crime by examining public perceptions of cybercrime among the Slovenian population as well as law enforcement officials. Based on a small sample of in-depth interviews, the results reveal that certain forms of crime (e.g., theft) may be acceptable when conducted in cyberspace. The results also suggest that both the public and the police have very limited awareness of the nature and extent of crime occurring in cyberspace.

The focus shifts from what the police do to the issue of what best prepares a police officer for their duties in the paper by Jason Rydberg, Mahesh Nalla and Gorazd Meško. The authors demonstrate the value of international collaboration by drawing upon research conducted in the U.S. and applying it to the Slovenian context. Specifically, they examine the weight given by Slovenian police officers to the relative benefit of education compared to experience as preparation for their police roles. Although emphasis was placed on education, the research shows this also varies by experience, gender, and rank.

Ronald van Steden and Rick Sarre provide insight into another contemporary development, the expansion of private security globally as well as in within the former countries of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. One of the interesting findings is the variation in impact of private security as well as in the regulation of this form of private policing across nations. Understanding the interplay of public and private policing, their role in managing security risks and crime, and the interaction between governance and private policing is a theme of this article as well as several of the other articles.

Concluding the theme of examining unconventional deviance, Gorazd Meško and Aleksander Koporec Oberčkal turn the lens back on the Academy by examining the pressures toward deviance within the scientific community. Although scientists have long considered issues of integrity and ethics within the context of scientific inquiry, the insights provided by criminologists as to the interplay between the scientific process, academic structures and processes, and deviance promises to enrich the discussion.

The final section of the issue comprises book reviews and reports, insightful contributions of a junior staff of the Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security.

Fundamental to generating scholarship of the highest quality is the peer review process. Consequently, we are indebted to the commitment of our peer reviewers who represent some of the top criminal justice and security scholars in the world. Our thanks to the reviewers of this volume: Matevž Bren, University of Maribor, Chuck Fields, Eastern Kentucky University, Jack Greene, North Eastern University, Frank Hagan, Mercyhurst College, Želimir Kešetović, University of Belgrade, Peter Kraska, Eastern Kentucky University, Branko Lobnikar, University of Maribor, Marko Marhl, University of Maribor, Darko Maver, University of Maribor, Andrej Sotlar, University of Maribor, and Peter Umek, University of Maribor.

Gorazd Meško
Dean
Faculty of Criminal Justice and Security
University of Maribor
Republic of Slovenia

Edmund F. McGarrell
Director
School of Criminal Justice
Michigan State University
United States of America