



Understanding Criminal Justice: Sociological Perspectives

Philip D Smith, Kristin Natalier

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'This book traverses an impressive array of topics and problems central to law and criminal justice. Its accessibility, contemporary themes and sensitivity to issues of inequality make it a perfect text for students and teachers of sociology, law, criminology, legal studies and other related areas. It is rare to find a book that takes the sociological imagination so successfully into fields that are often viewed as the domain for legal professionals only. The well-chosen examples also make it a valuable resource for scholars with experiences of different justice systems' - *Sharyn L Roach Anleu, Flinders University*

'Smith and Natalier have produced an accessible, wide-ranging and lucid text which sets the major questions of criminal justice within the broad framework of classical and contemporary sociological theory. It represents a significant step forward among teaching texts in the field, synthesising some difficult material without over-simplifying it, and providing a broad-overview without losing sight of the texture of discreet issues' - *Professor Nicola Lacey, London School of Economics*

Is there really an intrinsic link between the law and our criminal justice system? What exactly is it and can an understanding of wider sociological issues tell us anything about this relationship?

Understanding Criminal Justice addresses the fundamental relationship between law and the criminal justice system, and the ways in which both are intimately connected with wider social forces.

The book provides an essential introduction covering classic themes, debates and literatures to ground the student before moving on to contemporary themes such as globalisation, internet regulation and the media. The subject matter is contextualised within the wider social framework by calling into play the historical, political, community and cultural inputs that impact upon concrete policies and practice. The authors integrate theory with data and examples from the UK, USA and Australia.

Through the inclusion of the following pedagogical devices, the student is encouraged to more fully and independently develop their understanding of key questions and issues:

" review questions and exercises

" further reading lists

" suggested internet sites

" highlighted key terms

" bullets to summarise key points

" boxed sections on themes, definitions and case studies

This comprehensive overview is ideal for 1st and 2nd year undergraduates in Criminology, Criminal Justice Studies, Law, Legal Studies, Sociology, Social Work and Policing. Having used this text the reader will come to appreciate the myriad paths through which law and the criminal justice system play a vital, if contested, role in our society.

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