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Preface to the Special Issue: *Critical Criminology: Mass Incarceration, Prevention, and Immigration*

Special Issue Editors: Christine Curtis and Karen S. Glover

This volume of the *Western Criminology Review* is a special issue on critical criminology research and theory. Contributors look at how we conceive of and socially construct our views that become an embodiment of the state's power to perpetuate injustice. The topics range from the effects of mass incarceration, the importance of deconstruction of our criminal justice practices such as prevention services and the effect of racialized justice as a result of immigration policy, and the value of adding an anthropological perspective to critical theory.

As her keynote address at the 2010 meeting, Dr. Meda Chesney-Lind, University of Hawaii at Manoa, confronted the disturbing fact that spending on incarceration is now outstripping spending on higher education and she presented a new strategy to challenge mass imprisonment. Her article here, based on her keynote speech, discusses data showing that nationwide, incarceration rates have continued to increase, despite declining crime rates. Hawaii has followed a similar trend, with an increasing number of prisoners shipped to private correctional facilities on the mainland. In addition, around half of all new prison admissions in Hawaii are for parolee and probationer revocations. She advocates for improvements to the criminal justice system but also encourages reinvesting in social institutions particularly education, using money now spent on incarceration to increase opportunities and strengthen communities, as a preventative policy to reverse the community to prison pipeline.

Dr. Alan Mobley, San Diego State University, continues the discussion of mass incarceration in his article entitled "Decarceration Nation: Penal Downsizing and the Human Security Framework". Dr. Mobley also raises concerns regarding the increase in imprisonment and suggests that, as some jurisdictions consider downsizing prisons because of budget concerns, they also consider a new approach to re-entry and reintegration, including restorative justice. He presents the 1994 United Nations definition of human security on an international level and

challenges the reader to consider the relevance to the criminal justice system in the United States. He concludes "this call for human security is for a fundamental rethinking of the purpose and practice of justice. A shift toward holistic security would open up the justice system to include a deeper involvement of victims and other citizens, and it would set its sights upon improving the quality of community life. The isolation of the justice professions would be replaced by more interdependent relationships. Undoubtedly, a concerted pursuit of human security would precipitate changes in almost every aspect of today's justice traditions."

Addressing policy that reduces incarceration may not in itself provide sufficient opportunity for transformation of the negative spiral our criminal justice system finds itself in. In her contribution to this volume "Is Prevention Inherently Good? A Deconstructionist Approach to Prevention Literature, Policy and Practice," Lorinda Stoneman M.S., a doctoral student at the University of Victoria's School of Child and Youth Care, deconstructs long-held values related to prevention. Her premise is that we should assess the implications of routine practices that have been implemented with the goal of preventing juvenile crime and consider if what is being done under the auspices of care, rather than control, does harm or good. The issue of risk assessment has been seen as critical in determining those in need of prevention services, and Stoneman points out that our ability to measure risk is limited. She also argues that there is a potential downside to evidence-based programming which may perpetuate flawed programs based, not on quality research, but on bureaucratic interpretation of goals and success.

Dr. Jesse Díaz Jr., Texas A&M University also addresses the extent to which government policy creates or contributes to the criminalization process, potentially creating more harm than good. In his article, "Immigration Policy, Criminalization and the Growth of the Immigration Industrial Complex: Restriction, Expulsion, and Eradication of the Undocumented in the U.S." Dr. Díaz

explores stereotypes of immigrants as a 'criminal threat.' He argues that the "Immigration Industrial Complex" has marginalized Latino immigrants and limited the potential political and economic power of the Latino community. He presents an historical review of the impact of immigration policy and the involvement of immigrants in criminal activity during two time frames during the 19th and 20th centuries. He explores the impact of anti-immigrant sentiments on policy decisions over time as they relate to European, Asian and Latino immigrants. He concludes, despite research showing that immigrants are not disproportionately involved in criminal activity, the stereotype of the "criminal alien" persists and has a negative impact on policies and individuals. He suggests a number of areas for future research including: the nexus between immigration, crime and ethnicity in current and future generations; injustices carried out by the Prison Industrial Complex with the move to privatization; division of families as a result of immigration policies; and the potential exclusion of immigrants from the electoral process.

Finally, Dr. Avi Brisman, Emory University Department of Anthropology, suggests we expand our critical thinking about crime and criminal justice by taking account of the contributions made by anthropology. In his article entitled "Advancing Critical Criminology through Anthropology" Brisman argues that without diminishing

the contributions of early or current critical criminologists, anthropological theory can help move the discussion of defining crime beyond its legalistic boundaries and beyond the critique of domination to include the culturally specific and temporal aspects of crime. In support of his argument, Brisman discusses some of the rich ethnographic research in anthropology. His refreshing rethinking of our approach to crime and justice demonstrates that we are not destined to be locked into our own cultural patterns of crime and punishment.

Overall we hope that this second special issue of WCR on critical criminology provides the reader with stimulating original insights that enhance our understanding of the complexity of the issues we are facing in today's field of criminal justice studies.

Background: The articles in this volume are based on presentations from the 2009, 2010 and 2011 annual Critical Criminology and Justice Studies (CC&JS) Mini-Conferences held in February prior to the Western Society of Criminology meetings. The focus of the meetings has been on the ways discourse around issues of criminal justice frames, channels and contributes to the institutionalized practices that produce the ultimate disparities in the system.

About the Special Issue Editors:

Christine Curtis is a lecturer in criminal justice, in the School of Public Affairs at San Diego State University. She was formerly a lead criminal justice researcher for SANDAG, served as a past-president of the Western Society of Criminology and, in 2010, received the prestigious June Morrison-Tom Gitchoff Founders Award for significant improvement of the quality of justice.

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