FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jenn Macy
California State University
Dominguez Hills

Happy Fall, WSC members! I hope the season is already treating you well. For me this means a return to campus, classes, meetings galore and – well - commuting. Those Southern California freeways are no joke. It also means that we’re months closer to our 50th anniversary conference in Long Beach, CA where, I assure you, you will have everything at your fingertips and won’t be required to brave the freeways (unless you choose to). Disneyland will require some braving of traffic, though, as will a jaunt over to Los Angeles. But, in the spirit of access and connection, all conference activities, walks on the beach, and a wide variety of delicious food will be decidedly local.

For now, some conference logistics: I’d like to remind you that the abstract submission portal is open. We are currently accepting submissions through the deadline of October 8th. We had a record turnout in Vancouver last February and expect conference attendance to be high again next year. Our Long Beach conference is routinely well attended as it promises to bring sun during the winter, high student participation due to the large number of local Universities, and much to do for fun. This conference will also include some “extras” because we’re celebrating our 50th anniversary! While the conference program is not yet finalized, we expect to include some opportunities to reconnect with key WSC figures from years past, who will help us reflect upon our past, present, and future as a regional association of practitioners, scholars, and students.

There also remains time to submit student paper and travel award applications (due November 10th). These are great opportunities for students to be recognized for their work while obtaining funding to support conference costs. As usual, the conference will include a student-centered social event to provide a space for informal networking beyond the meeting rooms.

Thanks goes to our institutional sponsors and newsletter contributors. In this issue, we have pieces written by past WSC president, Dr. Matt Hickman and current Executive Board member Dr. Amin Asfari each calling for shifts in criminological research. Related, I encourage WSC members and their colleagues to continue to submit their research for publication in the association’s open-access journal Criminology, Criminal Justice, and Law & Society, under new Editor Dr. Jennifer Lanterman. Finally, don’t forget to submit your nominations for the Executive Board by October 1st. We have several open positions to fill and it’s an exciting time to get involved.

You may recall I concluded my Spring message with a commitment to access and connection. In this spirit, I am continually reminded (as I noted there) that the best work – in research, practice, and in pursuit of change – happens in connection to others. The WSC conference is a space to cultivate exactly that. Thus, I invite you to grab a colleague you haven’t seen in a while and submit an abstract for presentation. Join us in the sun, at the beach, and – most importantly, on panels and in shared meals – as we celebrate 50 years of WSC and get to work on kicking off the next 50!
FROM THE EDITOR

DR. VICTORIA TERRANOVA

University of Northern Colorado

Hope you all are having a great fall season and start to the new semester! I am excited to share this issue with you all including information about the upcoming board election, and our 2024 annual meeting in Long Beach, CA. This annual meeting is especially exciting as it will mark the our 50th anniversary! This year we will be electing a new Vice President, Treasurer (3-year term), Secretary (2-year term) and Editor for The Western Criminologist. I can say serving as Editor is a rewarding position promoting our association and meeting many new colleagues in the process. Executive board nominations are due by October 1st, 2023.

This issue also include member commentary from Amin Asfari PhD on the history and contemporary issues in criminological research on islamophobia, and from Matt Hickman PhD on the future of crime statistics focused on the monetization of crime. A very special thanks for the support from the WSC’s institutional sponsors!

AN INVITATION TO SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

I would like to invite both practitioners as well as academics in the field of criminology and criminal justice to consider contributing your thoughts on a topic that is of interest to you and the WSC readership to be included in the Spring 2024 issue of our newsletter. Please send your article, or any questions, to:

Dr. Victoria A. Terranova
Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, University of Northern Colorado
victoria.terranova@unco.edu
RUN FOR ELECTION TO THE WSC EXECUTIVE BOARD

Nominations due October 1st

Each year, the Western Society of Criminology elects two or three Executive Counselors to serve three-year terms.

Board Members:
- Form the policies of the WSC;
- Determine the date, location, and general program of the Annual Meeting;
- Ratify the budget for the WSC;
- Review the accounts and disbursements of the WSC;
- Act on resolutions submitted by the Resolution Committee;
- Coordinate a book exhibit to raise scholarship funds for students each year;
- Select editors for our journal, Criminology, Criminal Justice, Law & Society; and,
- Select award recipients from the slate of people nominated by the general membership of the Society.

This year, we also will be electing a new Vice President, a Treasurer (3-year term), a Secretary (2-year term), and an Editor for the Western Criminologist (3-year term). In addition to serving as a member of the Board, duties include:

Vice President
- Presides over the meetings of the WSC in the absence of the President and shall be empowered to conduct all necessary business of the WSC in the event that a vacancy exists in the office of the President.
- Automatically assumes the office of President when the one-year term of the President has expired, unless they decline to serve as President.

Secretary
- Records the minutes of all meetings of the WSC.
- Maintains an accurate membership roster, indicating whether each member has paid his/her dues, and providing a record of each member’s contact information.
- Responds to email inquiries from members, conference attendees, and vendors.
- Please note, the Secretary position must be held by a CA resident.

Treasurer:
- Invoices, receives, and safeguards all WSC funds.
- Manages the WSC’s income and disbursements.
- Draws all warrants of the WSC and signs them for payment of the Society’s expenses.
- Prepares an annual account of the organization’s income, disbursements, and account balances.
- Otherwise oversees the financial accounts of the Society.
- Please note, the Treasurer position must be held by a CA resident.

Western Criminologist Editor:
- Solicits submissions, prepares, and distributes newsletter twice a year (Spring and Fall).
- Edits and manages the newsletter.

We hope that you will choose to get more involved with the WSC by running for election to the Board!
Nominations, including self-nominations, are welcome.

If you would like more information about the positions, please contact Veronica Herrera, Chair of the Nominations Committee at veherrera@fullerton.edu
CALL FOR WSC STUDENT AWARD APPLICATIONS

**Miki Vohryzek-Bolden Student Paper Competition:** Students are invited to compete in the Miki Vohryzek-Bolden Student Paper Competition sponsored by WSC each year. Appropriate types of papers include, but are not limited to, policy analyses, original research, literature reviews, position papers, theoretical papers, and scholarly commentaries. Please note that papers co-authored by faculty will not be considered.

- **Eligibility:** Any student currently enrolled full-time or part-time in an academic degree program at either the undergraduate or graduate level is eligible to submit a paper. Students from all majors are eligible, however, all entries must be related to criminology, criminal justice, or criminal law and society. Papers must not exceed 30 pages, including abstract, text, references, tables and figures, notes, et cetera. Papers exceeding this limit will not be considered. Papers must be double-spaced, typed in 12-point font on pages using one-inch margins, and conform to a standard format for the organization of papers and citation (e.g. APA, ASA, Bluebook). The WSC Awards Committee is responsible for evaluating papers meeting the guidelines described above.

- **Award Prize:** Students selected for this award will be recognized at the WSC’s annual conference; will receive a reimbursement of student conference fees (less membership dues); and will receive a cash award of between $125 and $250 for first place, depending on whether the paper was sole-authored or co-authored. Additionally, if the award recipient desires, the best paper will be submitted for review to the journal of *Criminology, Criminal Justice, Law & Society*. In rare circumstances, a cash award of up to $100 may be awarded to a second place paper. Please note that the cash award must be used to fund travel or hotel expenses for the award recipient to attend the WSC conference. An award winner who does not attend the conference will not receive the cash stipend.

- **Please Note:** The paper that students submit to compete in Miki Vohryzek-Bolden Student Paper Competition need not be the same paper that they present at the conference. We recognize that conference presentations may be works in progress or may be a result of joint efforts with faculty mentors. In contrast, papers submitted for the Student Paper Competition must be completed papers that were written by a student (or co-authored by two or more students) without the assistance of faculty. Papers are welcome from students matriculated at any college or university anywhere in the world.

**Email the information to Dr. Alyssa Chamberlain**

Alyssa.Chamberlain@asu.edu

by 5:00 p.m. PST on Friday, November 10, 2023.

Winners will be notified in writing by December 8, 2023.
CALL FOR WSC STUDENT AWARD APPLICATIONS

June Morrison Scholarship Fund: Using money raised from the Book Exhibit, the June Morrison Scholarship Fund provides supplemental funds to help defray the cost of student members’ participation at the annual meeting, provided that they are presenting papers at the conference. Typically, one or two awards are made to students attending the annual meeting of the WSC. The amount of the awards varies by year (usually between $200 and $300), depending on the sales of books at the Book Exhibit the prior year. Please note that this scholarship is not related to the Student Paper Competition. All students attending the annual meeting are encouraged to apply.

• Eligibility: Any student currently enrolled full-time or part-time in an academic degree program at either the undergraduate or graduate level is eligible to apply for this award, provided that they are presenting a paper at the annual conference. Conference registration and student membership dues must be paid prior to the scholarship being awarded.

• Submission Requirements:
  o A résumé or curriculum vitae
  o A cover letter, indicating your intent to apply for the award, including the following information:
    1. Your full contact information, including your name, address, phone number, and email address;
    2. the name of your school, department, and whether you are a graduate or undergraduate student;
    3. the title of your paper presentation;
    4. a summary of other funding sources available to you, if any;
    5. a brief explanation of how conference attendance will be valuable to your career development (including how it will relate to future career plans); and,
    6. a brief summary of how your presentation fits into your larger research trajectory (i.e., what, if any, are your plans for the project you plan to present at the conference, such as use in project, thesis, or dissertation; submission for publication to a specific journal; etc.).

Email the information to Dr. Alyssa Chamberlain
Alyssa.Chamberlain@asu.edu

by 5:00 p.m. PST on Friday, November 10, 2023.

Winners will be notified in writing by December 8, 2023.
People wishing to present at the conference will be able to submit proposals through our online abstract submission system between August 8, 2023 and October 8, 2023. We encourage the submission of complete panels of three (3) to four (4) papers.

Panel Topics

- **Courts and Judicial Processes** *(Including Sentencing)*
- **Corrections*
- **Crime Analysis** *(Including Geography & Crime and Social Networks & Crime)*
- **Criminological Theory*
- **Cybercrime*
- **Drugs/Substance Abuse & Crime*
- **Forensic Science*
- **Sex, Gender, Sexuality, & Crime*
- **Juvenile Justice*
- **Legal Issues in Criminal Justice** *(Criminal Law, Criminal Procedure, & Evidence)*
- **Organized Crime & Gangs*
- **Peacemaking Criminology*
- **Policing*
- **Sex Crimes*
- **Teaching & Assessment in Justice Education*
- **Terrorism*
- **White Collar Crime*


The portal will close on October 8, 2023, the deadline for submissions.

In deciding the most appropriate topic area for your abstract, think about the main focus of your paper or presentation and how it might fit within a panel organized around a larger topical theme. For example, if your paper examines both race and juvenile issues, think about whether you would like to be placed on a panel with other papers discussing race issues or other papers dealing with juvenile issues and then submit it to the topic area in which you think it fits best.

All presenters are asked to submit an abstract of 1,100 characters or fewer to only one of the panel topics listed above. In addition to the abstract, please include the name, mailing address, email address, and phone number for all authors on the submission for the participant directory.
2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE
HOTEL INFORMATION

Hilton Long Beach
701 West Ocean Boulevard
Long Beach, CA 90831

Dates: February 8, 2024 through February 10, 2024

Room Rate: $249 - $274 per night, plus taxes and fees

Reservations: The conference rate is available from Wednesday, February 7 through Saturday February 10. Here is the reservation link.

For additional membership or conference information, visit us online at: http://westerncriminology.org/

Submission Deadline for Abstracts – October 8, 2023
THANKS TO OUR CONFERENCE SPONSORS

The WSC is deeply indebted to its 2023 institutional sponsors:

**Platinum Sponsor:** A contribution of 1,000 to $2,499.

- Arizona State University
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- Sam Houston State University
- University of Northern Colorado

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- University of Nevada – Reno
- University of North Texas
From the WSC members…

Islamophobia as a Criminological Pursuit.

Amin Asfari, PhD.†
Regis University
Department of Criminology

Dr. Amin Asfari is an Associate Professor and Program Chair for the Undergraduate and Graduate Criminology programs at Regis University. His research and publications are interdisciplinary and currently include journal articles, book chapters, edited and co-authored books on topics such as Muslims and police, Muslim assimilation, white supremacists mass shooters and conspiracism (Routledge, 2023), as well victimization and Islamophobia in correctional institutions among others. His current book (under contract, Lynne Rienner) is an integrated theory of Islamophobia. He is a frequent presenter at the American Society of Criminology, the Concerned Philosophers for Peace, Western Society of Criminology, as well as an invited speaker at Universities, community organizations, as well as various media outlets.

CRIMINOLOGY’S TAINTED ROOTS

Discussions of critical race theory (CRT) have had a significant impact on educational systems in the United States, ranging from kindergarten to post-secondary education, with many states banning its teaching (Ray & Gibbons, 2021). The controversy surrounding CRT does not stem from the theory’s fundamental assumptions. Rather, it arises from efforts to conceal systemically racist practices and policies. Politicians, right-wing activists, and parents have voiced support for banning certain books, eliminating college majors, and challenging diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) practices in colleges and universities, all in an attempt to reinforce existing hierarchies and racist social arrangements (Ray & Gibbons, 2021).

Criminology is often viewed as a neutral discipline, this is historically inaccurate, criminology was always deeply political (Phelps, Goodman, & Page, 2017). Many professors deliberately avoid discussing the problematic history of criminology, doing an injustice to future professionals by concealing the systemic ways in which oppression functions and permeates many of our criminal justice organizations today. Given that criminology is advertised to students as a "helping" discipline, it is essential to expose its tainted history from the outset, rather than misleading students until they enter the field.

The roots of criminology can be traced back to the 19th century in Europe before later moving to North America. While the discipline has evolved over time, its roots were highly problematic (Brown & Barganier, 2018). Criminological inquiry was originally based on religious explanations of crime, then moved towards reason during the European enlightenment, and eventually, in the 20th century, adopted a positivistic approach. Many of the assumptions underpinning criminology were problematic, from the idea that crime was linked to occult practices to the cloaking of bigotry in science, such as the theorizing that led to the eugenics movement. These problematic assumptions often targeted the poor or non-white populations, demonstrating a deeply troubling history that must be acknowledged and addressed.

† Amin Asfari is associate professor and chair of the Department of Criminology at Regis University, Denver, CO. Email: aasfari@regis.edu Tel: 303-458-3510.
During a recent decolonizing criminology conference, a colleague from Britain, who was working in Asia at the time, suggested that for a criminology conference in the global south to be successful, a member of the American Society of Criminology would need to serve as a keynote speaker. This suggestion was made in recognition of the fact that including American criminologists would lend legitimacy to the conference and the work being done in such spaces. However, this idea speaks to the inferiority complex that plagues the global south with regard to the validity of social sciences, and academia as a whole. The colonizing process, which is beyond the scope of this work, has led members of non-Western nations to internalize ideas that deeply permeate the social sciences—they (the non-Westerners) are the subjects of empirical inquiry, not the producers of it.

The onset of positivist criminological thought declared its racist overtones through assertions about criminal behavior being linked to physical appearance (e.g., phrenology). Such assertions were adorned with Darwinian logic and presented to the world as rigorous scientific inquiries. They emerged from a position of superiority in which quasi-scientific schema were deployed to ‘understand’ the inferior subjects. Indeed, western societies (and peoples) were deemed the pinnacle of human accomplishment (Williams III & McShane, 2018), rendering all others less evolved and worthy of criminological, anthropological, and sociological inquiry to better understand the causes of their inferiority. Beyond the social sciences, religion was deployed as a civilizing force and one that is intertwined in law-making (Durrant & Poppelwell, 2017), with missionaries and colonial administrators acting as conduits for the civilizing rationale that was needed to stabilize western hegemony.

A major critique of criminological inquiry is its failure to historicize and situate inquiry in a non-Western context. For example, a recent study by Blair et al. (2021) at the University of Pennsylvania found that community policing models, which were developed in the West, failed to show efficacy in six countries in the Southern Hemisphere. This is not surprising given the authoritarian post-colonial systems that exist in these countries. The idea that citizens of these countries would look favorably upon the police as partners in mitigating the crime issue is not based in reality. The Gotterdammerung of these regimes, as a result of colonial legacies and ongoing conflicts, has cemented authoritarian rule. Louis Althusser’s concept of the repressive state apparatus was prophetic in understanding how such regimes deploy the police and military to subjugate citizens to the will of the ruling class (Althusser, 2001). It is precisely these realities that render community policing programs ineffective in many non-Western nations. This is not to suggest, of course, that communities in the global south are more inclined to violence and other forms of predation due to strained relations with the police. In many of these countries, social control is largely informal and relies on strong communal bonds, thereby circumventing the mechanisms of formal social control (Farrall, 2021).

ISLAMOPHOBIA AS A CRIMINOLOGICAL CONCERN

In this section, I provide a definition of Islamophobia, discuss its impact on Muslim communities, and advocate for reframing Islamophobia as a criminological concern. Islamophobia is not a recent phenomenon, but instead, represents the latest form of an age-old and insidious prejudice. At its core, Islamophobia is rooted in the notion of the foreign “other,” which Edward Said labeled as orientalism (Said, 1979). This view of the Middle East is more than a superficial perspective; it essentializes Arabs by attributing cultural traits to their genetics. Such a process of racialization serves as a precursor to the ‘othering’ of Arabs and Muslims (often conflated as one and the same). Post 9/11, Islamophobia has become more visible and virulent. This increase in intensity and frequency is a product of a complex interplay between public policy, mainstream and social media, education, individuals and groups, and, importantly, the criminal justice system. In 1997, the Runnymede Trust report gained attention for its definition of Islamophobia as the “dread or hatred of Islam—and, therefore, to fear or dislike of all or most Muslims,” moreover, “it also refers to the practical consequences of such hostility in unfair discrimination against Muslim individuals and communities, and the exclusion of Muslims from mainstream political and social
affairs” (Trust, 1997, p. 4). It is essential to reframe Islamophobia as a criminological issue and recognize its impact on Muslim communities to create meaningful change.

ISLAMOPHOBIA AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE

When criminologists undertake research, they examine the antecedent conditions that lead to criminal behavior. For instance, they question whether the crime is an isolated event or requires further empirical investigation. Based on these inquiries, it is suggested that Islamophobia, particularly in the form of hate crimes, arises from a milieu of hate that seeks to control and maintain positions of power and privilege. Scholars have identified a linear connection between negative public policies, media framing, and hate crimes against Muslims (see for example: Farrell & Lockwood, 2023; Wiedlitzka, Prati, Brown, Smith, & Walters, 2023). However, this process is iterative and reinforces negative perceptions of Muslims, leading to further isolation and discrimination.

Criminological discourse on labeling is crucial in understanding how the group reacts to Islamophobic rhetoric. Unfortunately, counterterrorism strategies and policing policies are frequently based on misconceptions, biases, and orientalist discourses. Such approaches are unlikely to reduce extremism and undermine efforts to address the root causes of terrorism.

The post-9/11 era saw the rise of institutionalized Islamophobia in law enforcement agencies at the state and federal levels. Cadets and law enforcement officers were exposed to training sessions by controversial figures, many of whom were self-professed experts on terrorism and Islam. The NYPD collaborated with federal agencies to surveil large swaths of New York City to infiltrate terrorist sleeper cells (Ali, 2016). Harsher sentences were given to Muslim defendants in courts (McConnell & Rasul, 2021), and those accused of terrorism were rarely given a fair hearing. Muslim defendants had high conviction rates, and law enforcement agencies engaged in unethical and illegal practices to entrap and arrest Muslim Americans (Ali, 2016).

Jails and prisons are also complicit in the marginalization of incarcerated Muslims (Spearlt, 2021). In a recent study, it was found that chaplaincy services favored non-Muslim faiths, and policies that curtailed religious expression in prisons disproportionately affected Muslim offenders (Gacek & Asfari, forthcoming). It is important to study the ways in which anti-Muslim biases present themselves throughout the criminal justice system. Muslims are increasingly interacting with members of the criminal justice community at all levels, both as victims and offenders, as well as professionals. Understanding the nuance of these interactions is an important undertaking for criminologists to ensure that American Muslims are not excluded from these systems, and that the legitimacy of the criminal justice system remains untarnished.

It is important for criminology to be an arbiter of rigorous scientific facts and not perpetuate institutionalized Islamophobia. Criminologists have played a significant role in perpetuating the 'terrorist' trope to public audiences, sometimes unwittingly through the hyper-focus on Muslim-related terrorism in homeland security courses. Research funding for anything related to Islamic terrorism or extremism was abundant, and dismantling the state's narrative of the Muslim terrorist was equated with propaganda or unpatriotic. However, non-Muslims, particularly right-wing fanatics, were more likely to cause harm on domestic soil, and their numbers were increasing.

Criminology must recognize Islamophobia as an institutionalized form of exclusion with geopolitical and historical interests that perpetuate white supremacist violence. It should be considered as an antecedent to hate crimes not only against Muslims but also against those individuals and groups mistaken for Muslims. Criminology has an obligation to pursue unbiased knowledge, and research funding should move away from complicity in the

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2 Askar and Asfari’s presentation, ‘Islamophobia by another name: How criminology courses perpetuate anti-Muslim sentiments,’ at the Western Society of Criminology conference in Vancouver, BC (2023) found that course syllabi from various subjects in the United States, including criminology, criminal justice, homeland security, and related fields, showed a bias towards terrorism related to Muslims.
Islamophobia industry and seek to understand and improve the outcomes of Muslims. This approach legitimizes the discipline as well as the mechanisms of social control important in our daily lives.

References


The future of crime statistics might be in futures:
A call for research on the monetization of crime and
development of crime derivatives

Matt Hickman, Ph.D.
Seattle University
Department of Criminal Justice, Criminology & Forensics

Matt Hickman is Professor and Department Chair for Criminal Justice,
Criminology & Forensics at Seattle University. He was previously a
statistician at the Bureau of Justice Statistics. He is also a past WSC President and enthusiastic supporter of all
things WSC.

The current state of crime statistics is making me anxious. While the benefits of the National Incident Based
Reporting System (NIBRS) as compared to the old summary system are well known, the final “pull-the-plug”
transition to NIBRS has demonstrated that some law enforcement agencies are just not going to play ball. This
includes some of the largest jurisdictions in the country. This is a problem, but it seems like hardly anyone
(outside of criminology) cares about it, and I find myself wondering, “Why aren’t more people upset about this?”

As I watch the Federal Reserve Board of Governors try to tackle inflation, it occurs to me that one of the
reasons why crime statistics receive relatively little national attention is because there is no clear connection
between crime and financial markets. Wall Street does not react to the crime statistics compiled by the FBI,
whereas monthly unemployment statistics, new housing starts, and overnight lending rates can have a dramatic
effect on markets. There are a broad range of financial derivative products based on movements in these types
of indicators (for example, interest rate futures). Criminal justice could benefit from a market-based approach to
managing the financial risk of crime, reducing crime, improving criminological theory, and improving crime
statistics.

What would be the benefits of a marketplace in which to exchange crime? Who would sell crime, who would
buy it, and why? The basic market functions are hedging, speculation, and surveillance, so we can try to
understand the likely participants within each of those roles.

First, there are those who may be interested in hedging their crime-related risk. Crime fluctuates, and it has
both tangible and intangible costs associated with it. A RAND corporation study estimated the average cost of
one homicide at more than $8 million in 2007 dollars (Heaton, 2010), maybe around $12 million in present-day
dollars. A small portion of the total cost of homicide is borne by the local governments that fund police
departments (as well as forensics labs, courts, and correctional systems) and whose budgets must absorb the
present volume of crime. But the marginal costs of additional crime are still significant. When crime increases,
we hire more police and implement policing strategies having a variety of mostly unknown benefit-cost ratios.
Perhaps these local governments would have an interest in hedging against future increases (or decreases) in
crime to ensure some stability in their crime-related expenditures. But of course, the costs of crime are also
borne by many other parties, such as real estate investors whose property values can be adversely affected by
increases in crime and who may wish to hedge that financial risk.

Next would be the crime speculators, individuals who wish to profit from fluctuations in the market price of
crime. While that probably sounds objectionable (and may stir memories of John Poindexter’s ill-fated Terrorism
Futures Market) these crime speculators would provide important liquidity to the marketplace. Detestable
though this function may be, in the absence of these speculators the market price of crime would theoretically
stall out (and undermine the risk hedging function) because there would be an insufficient number of
counterparties to support the exchange of crime-related positions. While it is difficult to envision something like
a crime “day-trader” there are certainly individuals who may by knowledgeable about crime trends and could profit from using this knowledge in long-term positions, just as there are individuals who know about agriculture and take speculative positions in those marketplaces. This brings us to the most important benefit of a hypothetical crime futures market: surveillance.

From a criminologist’s perspective, the surveillance function of the marketplace is most appealing. A marketplace for crime creates a financial incentive for individuals to use their privately held or otherwise specialized information and knowledge. The criminal justice system is dispersed and information is not centralized, making it very difficult to produce timely and accurate judgements about the future. The “efficient market” could aggregate this disperse information far faster than any government agency possibly could. Will a major federal investment in a particular policing strategy have any impact on crime? The marketplace would signal its belief in various crime control proposals through the market price of crime derivatives.

In addition to the efficient aggregation of disperse crime information, such a marketplace could also create substantial pressure for improvements in the frequency and accuracy of official crime statistics, an area that otherwise receives very little legislative priority. While there is clearly a chicken-and-egg problem here, the marketplace would both rely on and demand improvement in the accuracy and timeliness of statistics, and a trusted clearinghouse. These demands might require relocation of crime statistics from the FBI to a federal statistical agency such as the Bureau of Justice Statistics (Rosenfeld, 2007).

Scholars have already proposed prediction markets for crime (Henderson et al., 2008; Wolfers & Zitzewitz, 2004), and in 2011-2012, I ran an experimental market with a colleague (using a token economy) that relied on the positions staked by notable criminologists to estimate future crime outcomes. We called it CJmarkets.net and partnered with a company called Inkling Markets to host the prediction market. After ensuring the presence of some knowledgeable participants, we opened it up to a broader audience (Hickman and Rice, 2011). While we did not achieve price liquidity, the price associated with a binary option on the direction of victimization trends did correctly predict the eventual outcome. It was interesting and fun, but like many experimentalist activities it was hard to scale up.

Investors trade in weather, stock indices and interest rates, movie box office receipts, and even Presidential elections. And of course, there are the more traditional commodities. Maybe there is a crime equivalent of the Heating Degree Days (HDD) and Cooling Degree Days (CDD) that are traded on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange? Perhaps one day our media feeds reporting the Business news will list crime derivatives alongside the pork bellies and Brent crude. I hope that some young and enterprising criminologists will take up the challenges (theoretical, technical, and ethical) of research and development on the monetization of crime and development of crime derivatives.

References


Rosenfeld, R. (2007). Transfer the uniform crime reporting program from the FBI to the Bureau of Justice Statistics. Criminology & Public Policy, 6(4), 825-834.

CONTACT US

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CALL FOR PAPERS

Criminology, Criminal Justice, Law & Society (CCJLS) is the official journal of the Western Society of Criminology. This open-access, peer-reviewed journal builds on the mission of its predecessor, Western Criminology Review (WCR), by promoting understanding of the causes of crime; the methods used to prevent and control crime; the institutions, principles, and actors involved in the apprehension, prosecution, punishment, and reintegration of offenders; and the legal and political framework under which the justice system and its primary actors operate.

CCJLS invites all of the following:
- theoretical and empirical research on criminology, criminal justice, and criminal law and society;
- practice-oriented papers (including teaching/pedagogical issues);
- essays and commentary on crime, law, and justice policy;
- replies and comments to articles previously published in CCJLS or WCR;
- book, film reviews, and scholarly article reviews;
- historical and contemporary perspectives are encouraged, as are diverse theoretical and methodological approaches.

Manuscripts must be submitted electronically through the journal’s portal on Scholastica. Submissions should be formatted according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association, Sixth Edition (2009). All correspondence is conducted online to speed the review process. There are no page, color, or appendix restrictions, although a 30-page upper limit for the body of papers is recommended. Additionally, authors may, at their discretion, include images (in .jpg. or .gif formats), as well as hyperlinks to web pages, source documents, YouTube videos, and similar multimedia materials on the Internet to take full advantage of the digital nature of the journal. Our evaluation process involves an internal review by editorial staff, followed by a blind assessment by two external reviewers. Inquiries about CCJLS should be directed to the editors—Jennifer Lanterman and managing editor Nicholas Mantera—via email at CCJLS@WesternCriminology.org.

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<thead>
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<th>Outcome</th>
<th>Average Days to Decision</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
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Peter A. Hanink is an Assistant Professor of Sociology and Criminology at Cal Poly Pomona, where he teaches criminological theory, policing, research methods, and statistics. He received a PhD in Criminology, Law & Society from UC Irvine, a JD from Brooklyn Law School, and an MPA from New York University. His research focuses upon race and policing. A member of WSC since he was a first-year PhD student, Dr. Hanink is also a member of the Law & Society Association and the American Society of Criminology. In addition to publishing his research in academic journals and presenting at conferences, he has testified before the California State Assembly on police reform, has consulted on trials involving racial profiling, and has frequently been interviewed by newspaper and radio reporters about police use of force.

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