

# Charting a Path Forward for Criminology

We are delighted to edit this inaugural volume of the *Annual Review of Criminology*. We believe that this new series sends a strong signal about the importance of criminology and a vote of confidence in its maturity. Although young, the field of criminology is broad in scope, and the issues it addresses are both urgent and complex. Our goal is to move the field forward by generating cumulative knowledge about the causes of crime and its control, the behavior of those working in the justice system, and the empirical effects of new policies and programs. To do so, we must first understand the past by rigorously assessing the existing evidence and evaluating the theoretical frameworks that have guided criminology to date. The essential idea is to make the *Annual Review of Criminology* the leading source for reflecting on the past while pushing forward on the most crucial research agendas. Not every area will be covered in each volume, but over time we will cover them all, with greater coverage for those topics with increased research evidence or public interest.

## Our Mission and Topics Covered

The *Annual Review of Criminology* provides comprehensive reviews of significant developments in the multidisciplinary field of criminology, which we define as the study of both the nature of criminal behavior and societal reactions to crime. It is international in scope and examines variations in crime across time (e.g., why crime increases or decreases) and among individuals, communities, and societies (e.g., why certain individuals, groups, or nations are more likely than others to have high crime or victimization rates). A different set of questions concerns the effect of crime on society and why certain individuals or groups are more likely to be arrested, convicted, and sentenced to prison. The *Annual Review of Criminology* therefore also publishes comprehensive reviews on the functioning of criminal justice agencies (e.g., police, courts, and corrections) and criminal law as well more philosophical assessments of the justification for particular laws and practices (e.g., the extent to which previous convictions should influence sentencing decisions).

We thus envision the scope of the *Annual Review of Criminology* as covering two main areas. The first, and what many consider the core of criminology, is the nature of crime. Very generally, this includes individual-, group-, and macro-level causes of crime. The former focuses on why certain individuals are more or less likely than others to offend or to become victims of crime. Individual-level explanations include characteristics such as self-control, the strength of one's bond with society, social learning, and genetic traits. The latter approaches focus on why certain groups (e.g., demographics), areas

(e.g., neighborhoods, cities), societies, or times (e.g., the high violence rate era of the early 1990s relative to recent years with historically low violence rates) exhibit higher or lower crime rates than others. Potential explanations include characteristics such as social organization, economic conditions, policy, and culture. In recent years, there has been growth in explanations that integrate individual- group-, and macro-level characteristics. The nature of crime also includes the important question of how crime affects societies, communities, and individuals: for example, the study of criminal victimization and the effects of violence on child development or urban decline.

The second main area covered by the *Annual Review of Criminology* is the process of societal reactions to crime, or what many would think of as the domain of criminal justice and punishment. This area of research focuses on—as often quaintly summarized by criminologists—cops, courts, and corrections, encompassing research on individual actors (e.g., police officers, judges, and correctional officers), the administrative and social organization of criminal justice agencies, the interaction of criminal justice agencies with the overall population and its myriad subgroups, and the efficacy of criminal justice policies from the federal level to local agencies. Theories of punishment are relevant as well. A major issue of concern in criminal justice in recent years is mass incarceration and the effect of serving time or being arrested on life chances. Other major topics are so-called “broken windows” policing and the legitimacy of criminal justice institutions, particularly in minority communities.

Criminology also sits at the intersection of the social sciences and harm reduction, and thus the *Annual Review of Criminology* covers systematic reviews of criminal justice policy evaluations and advances in the translation of criminological evidence into policy and practice. Criminology is interdisciplinary and covers traditional disciplines as diverse as psychology, law, public health, political science, economics, and sociology. Finally, the *Annual Review of Criminology* reviews areas of emerging interest to the field of criminology like terrorism, hate crimes, human trafficking, transnational crime, and cyber-crime.

## The Contribution of Annual Reviews

Founded in 1932, Annual Reviews is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide the worldwide scientific community with useful and intelligent syntheses of the primary research literature for a broad spectrum of scientific disciplines. *Annual Reviews* journals provide systematic, periodic examinations of scholarly advances in a number of fields of science through critical authoritative reviews. A comprehensive critical review not only summarizes a topic but also roots out errors of fact or concept and provokes discussion that can lead to new research activity. The critical review is an essential part of the scientific method and one that provides a gateway to the most significant literature within a topic.

Annual Reviews publications are among the most highly cited in scientific literature as indexed by the *Clarivate Analytics Journal Citation Reports*® (JCR). The *Annual Review of Sociology*, for example, has the second highest impact factor in the discipline. Annual Reviews articles are available online and on mobile devices to individuals, institutions, and consortia throughout the world. This inaugural volume of the *Annual Review of Criminology* will be fully and freely available to everyone online for the first six months

following publication. Thereafter, subscriptions will be competitively priced so that the *Annual Review of Criminology* will maintain a large and influential circulation around the world.

## **Our Editorial Committee and Process**

We are honored to serve as Co-Editors and a part of a superb editorial team. The inaugural *Annual Review of Criminology* Editorial Committee consists of David Garland (New York University), Candace Kruttschnitt (University of Toronto), John Laub (University of Maryland), Tracey Meares (Yale Law School), Daniel Nagin (Carnegie Mellon University), William Pridemore (State University of New York, Albany), and Michael Tonry (University of Minnesota).

Each year, the Editorial Committee meets to identify a set of potential article topics and authors. Our priority is to achieve a balance and diversity of topics. Volume 1 was planned at a meeting held in Palo Alto, California in February 2016.

Following the meeting, the prospective authors of each review received invitations, with manuscripts due for review by Editorial Committee members or external readers approximately one year later. We were pleased that virtually all invited authors accepted our invitations and completed manuscripts. Rejections of invited articles are infrequent, but all articles are reviewed and most are revised before publication. We encouraged authors to write in accessible language, be comprehensive and critical in their reviews, and share not only their expertise but also their point of view.

## **Volume 1**

The first volume of the *Annual Review of Criminology* adopts the tradition of many Annual Review volumes in honoring one of the field's most distinguished scholars with an invited autobiographical article. The Editorial Committee asked James F. Short Jr. to reflect on his most notable academic works and experiences. As you will read, Dr. Short has much sage advice to offer criminologists, but he also reveals the importance of his early life experiences in shaping his lifelong commitment to social justice.

The remaining reviews in this volume reflect the diversity of scholarship represented in our field. For example, there are reviews on crime trends, immigration and crime, victimization, the effects of violence, schools and crime, situational opportunity theories, gun markets, behavioral economics, and replication in criminology. There are also reviews that focus on policing, punishment policies, DNA typing, fatal police shootings, monetary sanctions, prosecutors, and the consequences of mass incarceration. Given the growth in the use of imprisonment, we devote separate reviews to solitary confinement and how inmates navigate confinement in the modern era. We also devote attention to advances in criminological theory, specifically recent evidence on desistance from offending and important turning points in criminal career development. We feature reviews that bridge the gap and link contributions from different disciplines. The authors in this volume represent the fields of law, psychology, criminology, philosophy, sociology, and economics. In future volumes, we hope to invite articles reflecting the increasingly comparative nature of crime and criminology, whether international or historical.

Finally, a heartfelt thank you goes out to all who helped make the journal a reality. In addition to our authors' efforts, we wish to thank William Pridemore. Dr. Pridemore had the initial idea to approach Annual Reviews about a new journal focused exclusively on criminology. A journal such as this also requires a great deal of support in the production process as well. We express our sincere thanks to the Annual Reviews Director of Production, Jennifer Jongsma, who helped shepherd this journal through its initial stages, and the current journal Production Editor, Absolom J. Hagg, for his help in producing this volume.

We welcome comments and suggestions from readers regarding the present and future volumes in the journal.

Joan Petersilia  
Robert J. Sampson  
Co-Editors



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**Errata**

An online log of corrections to *Annual Review of Criminology* articles may be found at  
<http://www.annualreviews.org/errata/criminol>