Introduction to Criminal Justice

Introduction to Criminal Justice

Exploring the Network

Fifth Edition

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For Hannah, Monica, Ryan and Lydia
SMC

For Trace and Macy
WPM

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About the Authors

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Preface

The field of criminal justice is constantly changing as new laws are passed, new technology is deployed, old social problems continue to fester and surface, and new social problems emerge. The police are accused of racial profiling, of charging innocent people with crimes they did not commit or that did not occur, and of allowing corruption to run rampant in big-city police departments. At the same time, community policing brings relief to neighborhoods plagued by crime and disorder for decades and the police have become guardians of public safety in the battle against terrorists. Overcrowding in the courts leads to a denial of justice for many defendants, but restorative justice offers alternatives to traditional court proceedings and holds out hope for both victim and offender. New supermax prisons are built to house society's most dangerous offenders while new and exciting alternatives to incarceration are explored. Helping students understand the nature and extent of such changes and the interrelationships among them is the goal of this text.

Approach

In this new edition, we again provide a comprehensive, practical view of criminal justice in the United States. We continue to believe that criminal justice can best be understood by viewing practitioners as being interrelated in a variety of both official and unofficial ways. These practitioners conduct business in various components of what is best viewed as a network of interacting individuals whose everyday decisions have consequences not only for others in their agencies, but for criminal justice practitioners in all components of the network, and for the public. Thus we discuss both day-to-day practical aspects of the network and the theoretical model on which the network is based. This approach involves an examination of the role of the public, the uses and abuses of discretion throughout the network, and the effects of political considerations on the day-to-day operations of the criminal justice network.

- Using the network approach instead of the more common systems (police, courts, corrections all pursuing identical goals) approach, we can examine the impact of politics, discretion, and differing goals on the actions of criminal justice practitioners.
- We recognize the public as a crucial player (though often neglected) in the criminal justice network. Without public cooperation, the police would be severely hampered, the courts would not be properly utilized, probation and parole would be totally unworkable, and the entire network would not be financed.
- Similarly, the importance of discretion cannot be underestimated. Discretion plays an important role at all levels of the network—from the use of discretion by citizens in deciding whether to call the police, to the use of discretion by police personnel in determining how to handle calls from the public, to the use of discretion by the prosecutor in deciding whether to prosecute a particular case, to the sentencing discretion of judges.
- Superimposed on the criminal justice network is the political structure of the society in which the network exists, and the influence of political decisions and considerations cannot be overlooked.

In the following pages, we discuss the various components, procedures, and bases of criminal justice in the United States. We define technical terms clearly when they are presented, and we have included numerous practical examples and highlights in an attempt to present the introductory student with a basic understanding of both the theoretical and practical aspects of the criminal justice network.

The Fifth Edition

In this edition not only is there a new co-author, but we have made numerous other changes which include:

- updated references
- discussion of recent cases which have attracted national attention
- coverage of recent trends and concerns in criminal justice

The Fifth edition also features:

- expanded discussion of ethics (Chapter 2)
- expanded discussion of some types of crimes (Chapters 3 and 4)
- discussion of federalism (Chapter 3)
- coverage of the rise in use of methamphetamines
- coverage of Internet crimes in our discussion of white collar offenses (Chapter 5)
- discussion of problem-oriented and community-oriented policing (Chapter 6)
- Coverage of new issues in corrections (Chapter 12) and victim/witness rights (Chapter 11), including the rebirth of restorative justice

Pedagogical Aids

To enhance learning, we have included the following devices in every chapter:

- chapter outlines to provide a road map to reading each chapter
- in-chapter "In the News" boxes to help students see the practical application of what they are reading
- end-of-chapter "Internet Activities" to encourage students to use the net as a research and learning tool
- end-of-chapter summaries and key terms lists to help students prepare for exams
- end-of-chapter "Critical Thinking Exercises" to encourage students to go beyond memorization of terms and concepts in their learning
- An instructor's manual, including testbank, is available
- Instructor Supplements

In Appreciation

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We welcome your comments concerning the text.

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