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CRIME AND SOCIETY

Frances Heidensohn

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To my parents

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Preface

This book is intended to provide two things: first a guide to the major sociological contributions to the study of crime; and second suggestions as to how this work may be used in the rapidly changing world of today and tomorrow. I am, I suppose, a hardened criminologist, having taught the subject on many courses and to varied audiences over the years. From this experience, I have, I hope, learnt the kinds of approaches which can be most helpful to the study of criminology and I have tried to use them here.

The structure of the book is as follows: in Chapter 1 the questions of defining and measuring criminality are raised and accounts of crime today which suggest the key issues to be followed up in later chapters. Among these issues are the urban focus of much crime, the participation rates of young males from less privileged backgrounds and the growing public concern with law and order problems. Chapter 2 then deals with cities and crime, Chapter 3 with juvenile delinquency and social structure and Chapter 4 with new approaches to the study of crime with an emphasis on societal reactions. Sex and gender and crime are the topics covered in Chapter 5 and Chapter 6 deals with the contentious area of policing, while in Chapter 7 the newest issues in criminology, those of victims and of crime control, are considered. While there are major thematic links between them, each section stands reasonably discretely as an account of theories and substantive issues in that area. In Chapter 8, I propose ways in which this text can be used as an aid to future understanding and application in the study of crime by students, by professionals in the criminal justice system and by those growing numbers of the general public who are

concerned about crime. *Crime and Society* is thus meant to be a guide and companion to the terrain of crime and its sociological study; there are no guaranteed prescriptions for altering the territory or redrawing the maps, though they may be discerned here, too, by the adventurous traveller who is not averse to taking some risks. What social scientists can most confidently do in this and other fields is to pose and clarify questions and inform discussions. I hope this book will aid in those tasks.

Steven Kennedy and Roger King encouraged me to write this book, and I acknowledge their characteristic contributions to its editing and production. Many friends and colleagues in criminology have helped me with advice and suggestions and the loan of papers and texts still in draft; Paul Rock in particular was characteristically generous in this way and I am most grateful to him. David Downes, Mary Eaton and Betsy Stanko have all given me ideas and advice as well as a sense of criminological fellowship which has been most supportive. Martin Farrell, Director of the Institute for the Study and Treatment of Delinquency, answered questions patiently and guided me to sources, as did the staff of the Intermediate Treatment Fund and the Community Architecture Office of the Royal Institute of British Architects. Robert Harris and David Webb kindly allowed me to have a draft of their *Welfare, Power and Juvenile Justice* before it was published. In the Department of Social Science and Administration at Goldsmiths' College several people have contributed both moral and practical support to the completion of this book, especially Sue Balloch, Mike Levin, John Stone and Iris Swain. Lucy and Edmund Pereira once again prepared my manuscript for publication with great care and patience.

By a curious tradition whose origins I do not fully understand, families always come last in these lists of credits. Mine know, I hope, that they are certainly not least but most deserving in acknowledgement. They ensured that I had companionship and refreshment while I was writing and never allowed me to lose my sense of proportion or of humour by becoming too absorbed in the project. Their affectionate encouragement has been all-important to me. Everyone mentioned has been very helpful, as have many others, and I am most appreciative of their kindness. As it is, however, only proper to admit in a book about crime, I am solely responsible for the deeds committed here, all the others are innocent.

FRANCES HEIDENSOHN