

Case Cited

Johnstone v. Pedlar, 2 A.C. 294 (1921).

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Controlling Crime, Controlling Society: Thinking about Crime in Europe and America. By Dario Melossi. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2008. Pp. xii+310. \$24.95 paper.

Reviewed by Ryan D. King, University at Albany, SUNY

Although many books provide descriptive overviews of major criminological theories, few authors have endeavored to sociologically explain the emergence of influential schools of criminological thought. Why, for instance, does a given line of scholarship come into fruition at a particular time and place? What is the relationship between knowledge about crime, prevailing theories of social order, and the organization of the state? And in what ways are theoretical developments in the study of crime and deviance related to the practice of punishment and the larger public discourse about crime? In *Controlling Crime, Controlling Society: Thinking about Crime in Europe and America*, Dario Melossi takes a major step toward answering these and related questions while simultaneously providing instructive summaries of influential perspectives on deviance and social control that came to light in Europe and the United States during the past two centuries. Melossi refreshingly goes beyond textbook-style overviews of criminological theories and gives sustained attention to the sociopolitical context in which these theories arose. In this sense, his book contributes as much to the sociology of knowledge as to the study of crime and punishment.

Melossi's primary objective is to reconstruct the ways of thinking about crime and social control "in relation to the different modes of social organization and the prevailing concepts of 'deviance' and 'crime' therein" (p. xi). He posits that societies oscillate between two ideal-typical scenarios, each entailing very different views on crime and punishment. One is an inclusionary model in which criminals are viewed as products of social institutions, criminological scholarship tends to be sympathetic toward deviants and critical of the state, and imprisonment rates are low or declining. This climate of tolerance, exemplified by the 1960s and the prominence of labeling theory, often occurs during periods of prosperity and when society conceives of itself as a "plural and conflicted entity" (p. 8). By contrast, an exclusionary penal model emphasizes criminals as morally repugnant with fixed antisocial propensities. In this scenario the public and criminologists are highly critical of reform agendas, and imprisonment rates tend to be high. This

model, characteristic of society during the emergence of Beccaria's work on deterrence or Gottfredson and Hirschi's theory of low self-control, is more likely during periods of economic downturn and when elites deem it necessary to reestablish authority and hierarchy.

Melossi unpacks his argument about criminological knowledge and societal conditions by dividing his work into three sections. He first looks at the European tradition, with primary emphasis on the origins of the Classical School, the early positivists, and the contributions of Emile Durkheim, among others. Part II of the book puts quintessentially American schools of thought in sociological context. This section largely focuses on the Chicago School, Sutherland's contributions, labeling theory, and the subsequent emergence of a new critical criminology in the 1960s and 1970s. Finally, Melossi closes with a discussion of theories emphasizing social control and criminal propensities in relation to the post-1970 rise in imprisonment in the United States. In each section Melossi effectively advances the notion that the emergence of leading intellectual ideas, and indeed the wider public discourse on crime and punishment, is hardly idiosyncratic. Rather, knowledge about crime is "deeply rooted in the values, interests, conflicts, and struggles of [the] times" (p. 252).

All in all, Melossi makes a rich contribution to extant work on the history of criminological thought and the "sociology of criminology." Three aspects of the book are particularly noteworthy. First, Melossi's encyclopedic knowledge and the manner in which he weaves together strands of criminological and legal theory with political philosophy and historical context are impressive. Second, the book is unique in that it represents a genealogy of criminological thought as opposed to a simple survey of disparate theories. In this sense Melossi demystifies the emergence of and connections between several theoretical lineages. Third, the book is nicely written and well organized, and to that end his combination of content and style makes the book of interest to the seasoned scholar while remaining accessible and informative for a first-year graduate student interested in crime and social control.

At the same time, these admirable qualities are balanced by a few shortcomings. As a minor point, Melossi introduces the idea of long economic cycles and makes the inclusionary-exclusionary distinction early in the book and returns to these ideas more than 200 pages later, but makes only fleeting reference to these concepts in between. It might have been more instructive to explicitly revisit this set of points in the other chapters. More notable, his treatment of the various criminological perspectives is noticeably uneven. For example, Melossi eagerly refers to prior empirical research to demonstrate that harsh punishment has a brutalizing effect on

society, although equally rigorous empirical work in support of deterrence is curiously absent. In addition, logical and empirical criticisms of labeling theory are hard to find, yet Melossi quickly follows his summary of control theory with a raft of criticisms. On that note, he probably exaggerates the extent to which control theorists express “antipathy, even contempt” (p. 209) for their object of analysis or the extent to which these theories have influenced punitive policies. The didactic value of the book might have been enhanced by more evenhanded criticisms of the respective theories. In the end, however, these limitations hardly detract from what is an undeniably impressive piece of scholarship.

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Deportation Nation: Outsiders in American History. By Daniel Kanstroom. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007. Pp. 352. \$47.50 cloth.

Review by David Manuel Hernández, UCLA

Daniel Kanstroom’s *Deportation Nation* is a timely historical text that provides a context and framework to the existing campaigns of stepped-up federal and local immigration enforcement as well as for the Obama administration’s plans for comprehensive immigration reform. Whereas other migration scholars such as Ngai, Johnson, and De Genova have critically explicated the federal government’s role in generating decades of undocumented migration flows, Kanstroom provides a convincing correlate—the centuries-long consolidation of sovereign authority via immigration control and enforcement. According to the author, “Deportation is the ever-present companion to the nation of immigrants. It was always there” (p. ix).

Deportation Nation explores the authority to exclude and deport as a critical site of state power. “It is a history of the assertion, development, and refinement of centralized, well-focused, and often quite harsh government power subject to minimal judicial oversight” (p. x). The volume’s thorough historical frame underscores both the deep roots of this government authority and the massive scale of those vulnerable to it. Any noncitizen, for a variety of reasons, can become deportable. Because immigrants are apprehended by federal authorities via workplace raids, federal investigations, tips from the public, and contact with local law enforcement, or even for applying to adjust one’s status, deportation practices have fashioned a disastrous civic no-contact zone, in which tens of millions of persons are urged *not* to engage with civic society.