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CHAPTER 8

Radical and Critical Criminology's Treatment of Municipal Policing

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Municipal policing in advanced industrialized countries is searching for a new paradigm. Traditional methods of administration, investigation, and patrol are often criticized for being outdated and ineffective, and the latest of experiments, community policing and CompStat, are encountering strong skepticism and even opposition in policing circles and beyond.

This situation does not bode well for the current practice and future of policing and law enforcement. So, then, how do we improve policing? We could conduct a focus group or administer some sort of questionnaire like a Delphi study to police administrators or police scholars. Short of this option, among a variety of recommendations, perhaps the time is ripe to reexamine the ideological foundations[1] of policing research, writing, and commentary (hereafter research) to see if there are additional insights that can be gleaned in order make appropriate recommendations for changes in policing. Ideological biases, if left unchecked, produce poor or misguided policies and practices.

Policing is administered at different levels of government (e.g., federal, state/provincial), but since the majority of people live in urban locales, municipal (or urban) policing is probably the most important type of law enforcement. Moreover, numbers alone justify the focus on local police officers and departments. In sum, there are more municipal police forces/officers than state/provincial and federal forces in advanced industrialized countries. Hence, the lion's share of research focuses on municipal/urban policing[2] in advanced industrialized countries, especially in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Given the importance of this body of work for our understanding of law

enforcement, I briefly review the literature on municipal policing in these three Anglo-American democracies by arguing that it can be classified into three types; by reviewing and critiquing each of these approaches; and by suggesting how a radical/critical[3] interpretation of policing might be improved and how we might utilize this information to change policing.

THE THREE IDEOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO MUNICIPAL POLICING

Introduction

Because of its practitioner and applied nature, theories of policing are rare (Leo, 1996).[4] Certainly there are theories of police organization, behavior, and management (e.g., Bowker, 1980; Wilson, 1963, 1968; Worden, 1989; Worden and Brandl, 1990), but these are usually derived from the larger public administration/policy and organization theory literature.[5]

Those interested in ideological approaches to law enforcement must infer it from the broad corpus of research on policing. This literature may be divided into three categories: conservative/traditional, liberal/reformist, and radical/critical. To better understand this classification, I briefly review each subtype in terms of six factors: types of studies, their focus, where it has been disseminated, kinds of research methods utilized, their contribution to the literature, and difficulties with this approach.

Conservative/Traditional Literature

The majority of policing research is characterized primarily by its functionalistic and organizational behavior orientation (especially through its public administration and policy linkages). The conservative/traditional perspective basically argues that the way we currently practice policing is fine and/or suggests that the way we used do it is somewhat preferable. Unsurprisingly, this work was often written by current or retired police officers, trainers, or administrators.

Although a thorough content analysis of policing research has yet to be performed, with few exceptions, a healthy dose of the conservative/traditional approach can be found in the pro-police, practitioner-sponsored and oriented (and now defunct) *Journal of Police Science and Administration*, *Canadian Police College Journal*, the United Kingdom–based *Policing*, and (currently operating) magazines such as *Police Chief* and *Law and Order*.

Additionally, with few exceptions, the majority of introductory textbooks on policing, and at the current writing of this chapter, seven out of ten currently on the market (e.g., Doerner, 1992; LaGrange, 1993; Peak, 1993; Dempsey, 1994; Langworthy and Travis, 1994; Dantzger, 1995; Cox, 1996) reflect a conservative bias. Classic books, such as Vollmer's *The Police and Modern Society* and Wilson and McLaren's *Police Administration*, fit the conservative/traditional model. This type of literature was typical of pre-1960s policing research and continues in some contexts during the 1990s.

Even though understanding policing from this perspective is important, this approach suffers from a number of drawbacks. Much of this literature consists of descriptions of police activities, with occasional use of quantitative methods, in particular surveys, and leaves little room for analytical discussion. The conservative approach also tends to be either too narrow in focus, outdated, ethnocentric, or primarily concerned with maintaining the status quo (vis-à-vis the power of the police to identify problems) and/or improving the efficiency of policing. In short, the conservative approach also prevents students, practitioners, and scholars from thoroughly understanding and analyzing the police.

One reason why conservative/traditional policing persists is because it is anathema to the typical undergraduate or current police officer/administrator, pursuing a degree at either the community college or the university level, to challenge prior beliefs they might have about the nature of policing. Concurrently, very often instructors in these environments are current or retired police personnel who have a vested interest in maintaining the real or imagined symbolic integrity of police departments and organizations.

Liberal/Reformist Literature

The liberal/reformist approach recognizes that the police have a difficult job to perform and hence are a "necessary evil."[6] Solutions are aimed at improving police performance by increasing efficiency and improving recruitment and training procedures through the hiring of more visible minorities and women, by requiring longer police academy training, and advanced education, including bachelor's degrees. Five constituencies have concerned themselves with reforming the police: researchers, policy makers, police administrators, segments of the public, and activists.

By far the greatest concentration of liberal/reformist research on municipal policing was disseminated through three academic journals: the American-based (but now defunct) *Police Studies: The International Review of Police Development* (established in 1978), *American Journal of Police* (established in 1985) now consolidated as *Policing: An International Journal of Police Strategies and Management*, and the British-based journal *Police & Society* (established in 1991).

Some of this literature has been reprinted, in whole or in part, as chapters in introductory readings books on the police (e.g., Klockars and Mastrofski, 1991; Kappeler, 1995; Dunham and Alpert, 1997). Occasionally some textbooks will have a liberal orientation (e.g., Berg, 1992; Alpert and Dunham, 1997; Walker, 1977; Roberg and Kuykendall, 1993).

Moreover, during the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s a number of academics

(e.g., Banton, 1964; Skolnick, 1966; Wilson, 1968; Niederhoffer, 1969; Bittner, 1970; Goldstein, 1977; Muir, 1977; Klockars, 1985; Brown, 1988) wrote what can now probably be considered the classic liberal/reformist books on the municipal police.[7] Additionally, we can probably characterize the reports produced by a litany of government inquiries, from the Lexow committee to the Mollen and Christopher commission findings as liberal/reformist tracts.

This research focused on police deviance, patrol, cynicism, organization, change, control, discretion, police–community relations, and police and their families. It utilized reviews of the literature, personal experience, field ethnography, thick description, formal and informal interviews, and questionnaires/surveys conducted with police officers and administrators. It was performed in a variety of municipalities but primarily in the United States.

This body of work reflects the social and economic turbulence of its time, which provided fertile ground for understanding the racial, ethnic, and social parameters of policing urban communities. Some of this work was descriptive (e.g., Wilson, 1966), others were loosely causal to explain why police behave as they do (Brown, 1988). Still other researchers ventured into the area of theory development (Muir, 1977). During its time, the liberal/reformist approach was an improvement upon the conservative/traditional literature.

The liberal/reformist approach has sensitized a broad constituency to the need to reform the law enforcement profession and organization. It also presented a less biased understanding of the policing enterprise than was produced by conservative policing writers.

However, by today's standards this work can be criticized on its limited methodological sophistication; some of the samples from which researchers generalized were extremely small (e.g., Niederhoffer, 1969), and some of the ethnographies were conducted over an extremely short time period (e.g., Skolnick, 1966). Additionally, liberal/reformist research rarely advocates the use of alternative mechanisms (e.g., reform of criminal laws) that can accomplish many of the same goals (i.e., formal social control) that police are established to perform. It suggests that with some minor tinkering the present system of law enforcement can be improved.

Frustration with both the conservative/traditional and liberal/reformist approaches generated a different ideological perspective.

Radical/Critical Literature

In essence, the radical/critical approach argues that modern-day policing has origins in private policing, which was established and continues to be the protection of upper-class or elite individuals and their property. Inevitably this mission included "maintaining order" and controlling the lower and so-called dangerous classes (especially the poor, the disenfranchised, and the working class).

Additionally, police department policies and practices are not necessarily developed or sanctioned in consultation with the citizenry or street-level officers; but because police departments are hierarchical organizations, policy generally flows from the top management down and is left to the individual line officers to interpret. This means that police are too often forced to break the law in support of the organization's mission. To radical/critical criminologists, this is robustly evident in the policing of strikes, racial riots, student protests, street crimes, and street stops. In such situations, police officers must maintain order and control (Van Maanen, 1978). According to radical/critical criminologists, police utilize a liberal/reformist interpretation of "reasonable use of force," and probable cause to accomplish this goal.

It should be acknowledged that the radical/critical approach is not monolithic. In other words, there is a considerable degree of diversity not only within the radical/critical area but among its subcomponents. Marxists, for example, may be categorized into instrumentalists, structuralists, and so on.[8] Today a variety of interesting perspectives can be subsumed under this domain including, but not limited to postmodernism, left realism, feminism, and peacemaking criminology.

It is not easy distinguishing among literature which is written from a radical/critical perspective, research which others perceive to be aligned with a radical/critical perspective, and literature which is of interest to radical/critical criminologists. To be critical of the police or of the conservative and liberal/reform literature and law enforcement practices does not necessarily mean that an individual and/or his/her work endorse radical/critical criminology. Many of the liberal/reformist analysts of the police are clearly critical of police practice, but their work falls short of using radical/critical criminological methods of analysis. For instance, Williams and Murphy (1990) suggest that Kelling and Moore's (1988) liberal reading of police history is "disturbingly incomplete. It fails to take account of how slavery, segregation, discrimination, and racism have affected the development of American police departments—and how these factors have affected the quality of policing in the nation's minority communities" (p. x).

Often there is the misperception that analyzing policing from a symbolic interactionist or social-action perspective amounts to taking a radical/critical perspective. This direction, tracing its roots to the "social construction of reality" approach (Berger and Luckmann, 1966), using ethnographic methods, has been used to understand police interactions with citizens, among themselves (Ericson, 1982; Manning, 1978) with police dispatchers (Manning, 1988), with the media (Ericson, Baranek, and Chan, 1989: ch. 3), and police undercover work (Marx, 1980, 1981).

Although a small body of research has been conducted using this approach (e.g., Manning, Ericson), it is a research method, much as Liseral is a tool to measure the causal direction of effect. Additionally, examining

policing from a journalistic or muckraking perspective, while important, does not provide the necessary analytic framework that would be characterized by the radical/critical perspective.

A piece of research is from the radical/critical perspective if it either uses, advocates, or tests a class analysis of policing; uses or tests the notion that policing is a manifestation of extreme power differentials; draws heavily on other radical/critical authors to support its argument or approach; recommends other forms of social control, formal or informal, to supplant law enforcement's intended mission (e.g., Black, 1980: ch. 6); and/or suggests the abolishment of law enforcement.

Since the late 1960s, there has been a steady production of radical/critical criminological treatments of urban policing. More often than not, radical/critical analyses of the police are found in journal articles (especially *Crime and Social Justice* and *Social Problems*) and chapters in edited books. Entire monographs devoted to a radical/critical analysis of the police are rare. The radical/critical pursuit has primarily been an American enterprise and it is only occasionally that British and Canadian researchers take this approach. Nevertheless, this body of work can be organized into two categories of topics: overviews and specific studies.

Overviews

A number of studies present a broad review of the radical/critical approach to policing and then make a handful of suggestions for improving research or policy. The purpose of this type of work, much like my chapter, is to take stock of what radical/critical criminologists understand about policing, synthesize and categorize this information, offer a cohesive picture of this approach, and suggest directions for future research. Three authors accomplish this goal (Marenin, 1982; Das, 1983; Manning, 1974, 1979, 1988).

Although these works provide quick introductions to this body of work, primarily because of their brevity, these pieces do not capture the entire corpus of radical/critical research on policing. Additionally, none of these overviews tries to make cogent recommendations to policy audiences. Finally, these pieces are now dated.

Specific Topics

More common is research, which focuses on a specific issue relevant to police that uses a radical or critical criminological perspective. This literature clusters into four areas, listed here in increasing order of scholarly output: the coercive capacity of the police, working conditions of police, police violence, and police history.

Coercive Capacity of the Police. The growth in the number of police officers per capita, increased law enforcement expenditures, and sustained public attention concerning police use of deadly force have been interpreted by many radical/critical scholars as indicators of the nature and extent of the coerciveness of law enforcement officers. The bulk of studies examining the relations among these factors derive their hypotheses from conflict theory, and use sophisticated inferential statistical techniques. Five studies fall under this heading (Jacobs, 1979; Jackson and Carrol, 1981; Nalla, Lynch, and Leiber, 1996; Jacobs and Helms, 1997; Jacobs and O'Brien, 1998).

The majority of this research is limited to the United States. Unfortunately, there is nothing in the literature to suggest that states and cities as the unit of analysis are an important indicator of inequality. Perhaps smaller jurisdictions (e.g., neighborhoods) are more relevant in terms of looking at inequality and police coerciveness.

Working Conditions of Police. Radical/critical analysts have examined the increasing routinization of police work, reactions to the introduction of women in police departments, the deradicalization of policing, and the class position of the police in the context of trade unionism. Five works fall under this categorization (Harring, 1981b; Hunt, 1990; Robinson, 1978; Reiner, 1978a, 1978b). This research has used archival materials, patrol observation, interviews, review of personnel files, and a critical analysis of extant literature.

Much of this research depicts a profession with worsening working conditions and hostile to women entering and staying in the field. It also documents "the contradictory place of the police in the class structure" (Reiner, 1978b). If radical change in policing is going to take place, some of these authors argue it will be over "bread and butter" issues and not any sort of class consciousness. Unfortunately, this work suffers from arrested development. Some of it is two decades old. It is also limited to a handful of police departments or countries.

Police Violence. Police violence and police paramilitarism have also been a focus of attention for radical/critical analysts of the police.[9] Several independent variables have been examined as correlates of police violence, including violent crime rates, number of riots, change in population, inequality at the state level, racial and economic composition at the state level, and the rise of paramilitary policing both in the United Kingdom and United States.

Seven separate pieces of research fall under this rubric (Jacobs and Britt, 1979; Chamlin, 1989; Jefferson, 1987; Chambliss, 1994; Kraska, 1996; Kraska and Cubelis, 1997; Kraska and Kappeler, 1997). Much like radical critical research on the coercive capacity of police, the lion's share of this research uses sophisticated quantitative techniques, some relying on official statistics, while others use surveys, with occasional case study analysis.

Police History. By far the most dominant types of studies from a radical/critical perspective are historical descriptive analyses. This body of work is generally country-specific and either is general in subject matter or focuses on municipal policing in the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United

States. Some of the historical material test the four theories to explain the development and growth of police departments (i.e., disorder, crime control, urban dispersion, and class control) (Roberg and Kuykendall, 1993: 57–58). Other work is more descriptive of early policing from a radical/critical perspective. All of this research depends on the use of extant written documents, including archival materials (e.g., newspapers). This approach can be divided into two categories: general historical overviews and country/city specific research in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

First, several authors have supplied general historical overviews. A considerable amount of scholarship on the early development of policing in general (e.g., Philips, 1980) or in particular counties and cities (e.g., Lowe, 1984; Sharpe, 1980) has been produced. The majority of it documents the class nature of policing, but does not use per se a radical/critical analysis of law enforcement during this time period. Three exceptions to this state of affairs exist, which can be characterized as general historical overviews that document the rise of policing using a radical/critical analysis (Spitzer, 1993; Robinson and Scaglion, 1987; Robinson, Scaglion, and Olivero, 1994).

Second, country/city specific historical research has been conducted. With respect to historical studies of the rise of policing in Canada[10] in general, the underlying current in the historical analyses of processes in Canadian urban police forces seems to be evenly divided between examinations of the class control and disorder control theses (Marquis, 1987; Boritch and Hagan, 1987). One of the pieces depends on a careful analysis of archival police records. The other uses police arrest practices and analysis of vice bylaws as categories of public order arrests. Most Canadian research that examines the class control thesis focuses on Toronto, which has one of the oldest police forces in Canada but also is a location where the greatest concentration of academics live and work.

Third, we have historical studies of the rise of policing in the United Kingdom. Three articles have been written from a radical/critical perspective (Silver, 1966; Robinson, 1979; Cohen, 1979). They discuss the class underpinnings of the emergence of police. Much of this is descriptive, depending on a careful reading of books, reports and articles over a century old. Most English research on the rise of class-based policing focuses on London. Unfortunately, nothing on this topic has been published over the past two decades.

Fourth, the historical study of the rise of policing in the United States is divided between broad overviews and case studies of particular cities. A handful of sophisticated case studies from a radical/critical perspective on the rise of class control policing in selected cities in the United States have been produced (e.g., Harring and McMullin, 1975; Harring, 1982). The majority of these integrate an analysis of the urban power structure, the class backgrounds of the police forces, and social histories—particularly of

labor unrest, vagrancy, drunkenness, and workers' communities—within the particular cities.

Four broad overviews of the rise of municipal policing have been written (Harring, 1976; Stretcher, 1991; CRCJ, 1977/1982; Harring, 1981a). Most lament the "ahistorical nature of most police history" (Harring, 1976). These authors present convincing evidence supporting the view that the police are and have always been a branch of government whose mission is to enforce the dominant power agenda. They suggest that the rise in the number of police departments and increase in the number of officers in existing forces in the United States was a product of class struggle.

Class bias usually manifests itself in six areas: controlling strikes; keeping public order; policing working-class recreational activities (chiefly drink related); controlling tramps and vagrants and unemployed members of the working class; controlling vice, chiefly gambling and prostitution; and controlling most common types of felony crimes, the so-called "street crimes" (p. 557). Harring buttresses his arguments through analysis of the activities of the Buffalo, Chicago, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and Milwaukee police departments. Despite the considerable productivity in this area, the historical work does not look at policing cross-culturally or cross-nationally. Nevertheless, the historical approach best lends itself to a class analysis of policing.

Summary. Radical/critical approaches to municipal policing have advanced our thinking about the proper role of this publicly funded institution and provided an alternative conceptualization of law enforcement and the control of illegality. They have used a plethora of methods, from quantitative to qualitative, ranging from sophisticated interpretive statistics to field ethnographies to archival research.

However, radical/critical analyses of the police have a number of shortcomings, which include ignoring psychological factors, failing adequately to account for policing minority communities and policing by minorities, ignoring the radical/critical potential of community policing, failing to separate public from private policing, not examining the resource base of police departments, and failing to address the suitability of a class analysis for contemporary policing.

Quite understandably, the radical/critical perspective of policing is frequently criticized on its theoretical/ideological assumptions (Klockars, 1993). To begin with, psychological (i.e., individual-level mental processes) and structural (i.e., the economy, race/class, and gender) factors play a major role in the organization of policing. By focusing almost entirely on the structural factors, radical/critical analysts of the police take a narrow approach to their subject. For instance, structural factors, such as who is hired (particularly lower-class and lower-middle-class males) might be appropriate background reasons to explain how law enforcement agencies

function. They do not, however, touch on the more subtle and intricate reasons of how decisions are made and implemented.

Additionally, a radical/critical interpretation of minority (visible or not) and female recruitment is lacking. This issue is inextricably linked to the examination of why certain types of individuals stay on police forces and why others leave. Noticeably absent, in this context, are feminist approaches to studying the police. Moreover, one of the more common questions periodically proposed is whether community policing is or can be a radical/critical approach. With the current trend of paying lip service to communities, this question should have some appeal for conservatives, liberals, and radicals alike.

Furthermore, many writers merge both public and private police together or use broad definitions of the police in their analysis. Marenin (1982), for instance, suggests that "the police are the privately and publicly employed guardians of interest who are enlisted to use force to do whatever needs doing" (p. 252). Likewise, Spitzer (1993) argues that "policing will not be examined as a limited set of actions by a group of public (or even private) officials. It will be understood, rather, as a pattern of social development through which coercive regulation is established, decomposed, and recomposed in class societies" (p. 571). This makes the concept of the police and the practice of policing somewhat nebulous by minimizing conceptual clarity.

Also neglected is a radical/critical analysis of where and how police departments are funded. Understanding the resource base of law enforcement agencies is important to getting a sense of priorities concerning who is policed and why. Finally, although a class analysis may have been appropriate for nineteenth- and twentieth-century policing, it is perhaps irrelevant today. As policing has changed considerably since the 1920s, a more state-centric theory, as Marenin suggests, could be applied. Given these difficulties, no wonder the theoretical/ideological and policy relevance of the radical/critical perspective is rarely employed and often neglected or marginalized in policing research and practice.

CONCLUSION

Some criminologists have argued that not only policing in general, but the radical/critical analysis of law enforcement can benefit from understanding policing in other countries and cultural contexts, particularly if these states have low crime rates or are experimenting with interesting programs. Marenin (1982), for instance, argues that "[t]he most useful methodological impact of critical thought on positivist science has been the resurrection of comparative research" (p. 245).

Knowledge about comparative policing (i.e., what happens in other countries)[11] can deepen our understanding, appreciation, and criticism of

American and foreign police policies and practices. Comparative policing describes and (in many cases) explains the role of law enforcement in different cultural, economic, ideological, and political contexts (e.g., Bailey, 1985; Findlay and Zvekic, 1993). Understanding these differences is crucial if we are to present a nonethnocentric view of policing.[12] Part of the answer to improving policing can be derived from how the profession has evolved and is practiced in other countries and cultural contexts.

This pursuit also calls attention to important gaps in our knowledge. For example, few police scholars or administrators really know what policing is or was like in socialist or communist countries, places where we might suspect that a radical/critical approach to policing might take place. Efforts to design, implement, and practice policing in such places as postrevolutionary China, Cuba, and Nicaragua, where new models of humanistic concern were alleged to have developed and where new types of policing were said to flourish, are poorly understood by academics, policy makers, and police professionals of all ideological stripes.

This approach is gaining more urgent support as our population diversifies and we police people with diverse cultural, ethnic, national, and racial backgrounds. If, in fact, less coercive methods of policing have been implemented in other societies, then it is time they should be incorporated or at least experimented within the police departments of advanced industrialized democracies. Needless to say, this sentiment, however, is underscored by the understanding that comparative policing, while recognized as being important, is marginalized in typical American criminology/criminal justice departments (Ross, 1996).

During the 1990s and into the new century, policing will be affected by a number of current trends, including the so-called war on drugs, "hate crime," the increasing transnational character of policing, and the fiscal crisis of the state. With the state's greater attention toward the use and sale of drugs and the crime connected to that trade, police have found their roles change. This has led to an increase in the number of emergency-response SWAT teams and to the militarization of policing (Kraska, 1996; Kraska and Cubellis, 1997; Kraska and Kappeler, 1997). Although actions we now call hate crimes have existed since the dawn of time, since its criminalization, many big-city police departments have developed teams or organizational units that monitor, charge, and arrest individuals with hate crimes. Policing expertise has become another commodity that continues to be imported and exported. For example, the United States and the United Nations are sending police officers abroad in connection with multinational policing efforts to police troubled areas (e.g., Haiti, Somalia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina). Additionally, the United States, through the Department of Justice's International Criminal Investigative and Training Assistance Program (ICITAP), is training police in a variety of countries.

Exploration of these areas will improve not only our general understand-

ing of policing but also the radical/critical pursuit. The lion's share of radical/critical research has been published in academic journals and rarely has been cited beyond radical/critical circles, a testimony to its marginalization in the field of policing, criminology/criminal justice, and beyond. As this chapter has argued, the radical/critical approach to policing is significant. Its place is central to any conceptualization of police and formal social control, and may actually help municipal policing reach the next paradigm.

NOTES

Special thanks to Natasha J. Cabrera and Michael Vaughn for comments on this chapter.

1. Although some would argue with me, for purposes of this analysis I do not separate theoretical from ideological interpretations.
2. All future references to policing will imply municipal or urban policing.
3. Although the author recognizes that there are subtle differences between radical and critical approaches, for ease of expression he amalgamates the two as radical/critical.
4. See Musheno (1997) for a critique of Leo's perspective.
5. Muir's (1977) statement on police use of coercion has been called a theory (e.g., Klockars, 1985: ch. 6), but I believe that it falls short of what many academics would classify as a theory. For an analysis of the paucity of theory in criminal justice see, for example, Hagan (1989).
6. A related position, advocated by Menzies (1995), is responsible humanism.
7. To date no reputational analysis of police monographs has been conducted. The author excludes reviewing books that focus on specific aspects of policing (e.g., detectives and patrol).
8. Rarely do radical or critical approaches to the police extend to anarchist interpretations. The only exception I could find was Tifft and Sullivan, who suggest that "Anarchist utopias envision a society in which policing is interested only in protection; where the state has yielded to the cooperative efforts of all which promote peaceful interactions and progress. Policing is neither required or if deviance occurs, its correction is the responsibility of all" (Tifft and Sullivan, 1980).
9. I would argue that radical and critical criminologists feel comfortable using the term *police violence*. Those with strong connections to state-funded agencies prefer to use the more neutral-sounding phrase "police use of excessive force."
10. For a review of the research on the history of municipal policing in Canada see, for example, Ross (1995a).
11. In general, research on comparative policing falls into two categories: descriptions and analyses of selected police departments outside of the United States, and theoretically based comparisons of two or more police systems selected according to some logical criteria. There is an abundance of the former type of research and a dearth of the latter. I argue for a greater emphasis on both approaches but with an emphasis on theoretically based comparisons.
12. For a discussion of the obstacles in teaching a course like this see, for example, Ross (1996).

CHAPTER 9

Critical Criminology, Social Control, and an Alternative View of Corrections

Michael Welch

It has been said that there are often more than two sides to every story. Yet within the current discourse on criminal justice, the general impression is that there are only two legitimate perspectives on crime, namely, the conservative view and its liberal counterpart. Indeed, this superficial dichotomy has become even more evident in matters pertaining to criminal justice policy and practice. The critical perspective is often greatly ignored, thereby marginalizing critical criminology and its view of crime, as well as its proposals for criminal justice policy and social reform. However, as neglected as they are, critical perspectives remain useful because they question popular perceptions about the social function of the criminal justice apparatus, especially the correctional enterprise.

The purpose of this chapter is to challenge dominant views of criminal justice and to present an alternative interpretation of corrections, especially in the context of a social control thesis. Similarly, a particular task of this chapter is to distinguish between the *text* and the *subtext* of American corrections. Whereas the text (or rhetoric) of American corrections includes policy-based directives and strategies aimed at crime control, the subtext (or underlying principle) is geared toward broader initiatives of social control.

Although corrections and social control remain the primary foci of this chapter, significant developments in critical criminology also are discussed, notably, the structural biases of American criminal justice and corrections, the incarceration industry as big business, unemployment and imprisonment, an emerging alliance among critical and liberal criminologists, a critique of critical criminology, and the conceptual evolution of social control and the new penology. In discussing these key aspects of critical criminol-