

ACJS TODAY

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ACADEMY OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SCIENCES

The Impact of COVID-19 and the Events of 2020 on Criminal Justice Students

ACJS Student Affairs Committee

The 2020–2021 ACJS Student Affairs Committee decided to survey criminal justice students on (1) the impact of COVID-19 on their education and related decisions, (2) their response to the protests of summer 2020 in the aftermath of the killing of George Floyd by a police officer, and (3) their thoughts on the November 2020 national election season. The aim was to hear from students how the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences might assist them in these unique times. Tusty ten Bensel at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock received Institutional Review Board approval for the study. We asked ACJS staff and Alpha Phi Sigma headquarters to distribute the survey to student members—in the latter case, through its advisers. The survey was via a Qualtrics link that was available fall 2020 to early spring 2021.

Two hundred and sixty-seven students responded to the survey (77% females; 22% males; 1% other). Of that group, 55% were White, 16% Black or African American, 21% Hispanic/Latino, and 3% Asian. Most were undergraduates (54%), 28% were master's students, and 5% were Ph.D. students. The remaining 13% were law students, postdocs, 2020 graduates, and 2% were international students. The responses to questions about the severity of COVID and concerns about health are shown in Table 1.

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Table 1: Perceptions of the regional severity of COVID-19 and health concerns

How severe is the COVID-19 pandemic in your area?	%	How concerned are you regarding your health during the pandemic?	%
Extremely severe	19.48 (45)	Extremely concerned	32.76 (76)
Very severe	38.1 (88)	Somewhat concerned	41.38 (96)
Moderately severe	31.6 (73)	Neither concerned nor unconcerned	19.4 (45)
Slightly severe	7.36 (17)	Slightly concerned	5.6 (13)
Not severe at all	3.46 (8%)	Not concerned	0.86% (2)

Some students mentioned having had COVID. Other common themes involved work hours being curtailed, loss of income from having to quarantine, a loss of internships, and reductions in hiring in the field, such as law enforcement. There was also frequent mention of worry and emotional stress given recent developments, including having to respond to family members who were impacted in some way. Descriptions of stress seemed more associated with financial impacts than with COVID itself.

More than 79% of respondents said their institution had gone to online instruction. A majority (62%) said COVID had not changed their educational plans. Those who had changed their plans indicated they were delaying graduation given their circumstances, delaying graduate school, and taking more courses or fewer courses given the more prevalent online offerings. In describing online instruction, there were frequent reports of this modality being stressful, noticing high absenteeism among their peers, paying too much to “teach themselves,” doing busy work, delaying

internships, and having trouble concentrating. Although some descriptions of the transition to online classes were positive, most of the comments were negative. The more positive comments were from persons who had previous exposure to online courses. They included remarks about enjoying online instruction but being discontent that the cost was the same as in person (as overall, some of these persons deemed online classes less effective).

From a list of potential concerns during COVID, the items identified as most distressing were maintaining personal health and well-being, paying bills (housing, food, tuition, and fees), and managing a full load of courses. The lack of ability to socialize was also unsettling, not surprisingly so, given the importance of peers to youth.

On BLM 2020: In response to the question of whether persons participated in any Black Lives Matter protests, 86% (169 respondents) said “no”; only 14% (27) said “yes.” The most common reason for participating was that Black lives matter. Regarding the impact of BLM on relationships with others, 54% said there was no impact on relations,

but for those impacted the modal response was that there were lots of disagreements with others. This suggests that the summer of 2020 may have caused some conflicts for a significant number of criminal justice students. One wonders what the lack of engagement in the protests of summer 2020 says about the state of criminal justice education. Is something missing that should not be missing?

In response to the question “What role should ACJS play in discussions regarding race?” most of the responses can be summarized as a desire to see that facts are related on both sides of issues. There were many other responses indicating being unsure, or that ACJS did not need to play a major role.

On politics in 2020: Regarding political engagement, only 52% said they planned to engage in fall 2020 political activities, and the most common way was an affirmation of having voted in the November elections. Overall, the students reported that both the protests and the pandemic had taken a major physical toll.

How ACJS might help: In response to the question “How might ACJS support students during the current crises?” the more common responses were fiscal: supporting affordable textbooks; providing scholarships or aid; and facilitating job postings and internships. A modal response, however, was “unsure or don’t know.” The student survey also indicated that 39% of respondents would like to see an ACJS student discussion board; 35% were interested in an ACJS student Zoom

meeting, and 26% would like an in-person student forum at the next ACJS conference. In other words, students seem to be longing for opportunities to connect/reconnect with peers.

The year 2020 was like no other. It offered many lessons on human nature, crime, protest, and politics under lockdown, given human adjustments and financial difficulties. Crises, however, represent both danger and opportunity. In criminal justice education, faculty, staff, and students were pushed into expanding virtually. It is now time to explore those positive sides of 2020 that we have survived. Nevertheless, while many in the United States expect a return to normal by fall 2021, COVID has yet to have its last word.

ACJS Student Affairs Committee Members 2020–2021: Chair: Meghan Novisky, Cleveland

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ACJS Board Liaison: Christine Nix, University of Mary Harden Baylor

ACJS 2022 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

“Avenues of Change: Integrating Research, Advocacy, and Education”

March 15th – 19th, 2022

Rio All-Suites Hotel and Casino

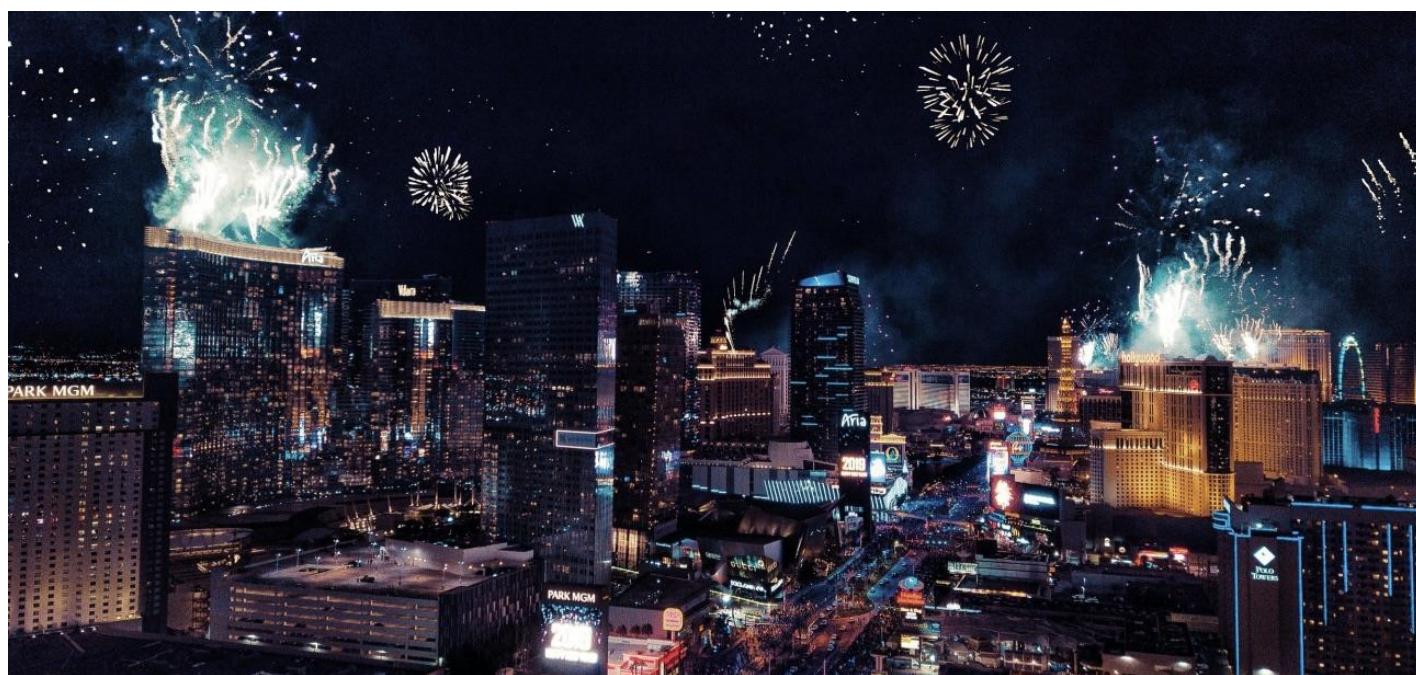
Las Vegas, Nevada

Host Hotel:

Rio All-Suite Hotel and Casino

Las Vegas, Nevada

(702) 252 – 7777



For more information, please visit:

<https://www.acjs.org/page/Overview2022AM>

Book Review: Mitchel P. Roth; *Fire in the Big House: America's Deadliest Prison Disaster*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press. ISBN: 9780821423837 (paperback). 278 Pages. \$29.95

Reviewed by Vidisha Barua Worley* and

Robert M. Worley**

In his book *Fire in the Big House*, criminal justice historian Mitchel P. Roth provides readers with an in-depth analysis of America's deadliest penal disaster. The book specifically examines a horrific fire that occurred at the Ohio State Penitentiary in Columbus, Ohio on April 21, 1930—Easter Monday. Even though 320 prisoners perished in this devastating event (plus two more inmates who died later of gunshots indirectly related to the fire), the author notes that there has never been a scholarly book devoted to this topic. Although this event caused only \$11,000 in damage to the Columbus institution, Roth contends that it still ranks as America's third-worst fire (excluding 9/11). The author points out this prison fire has a much higher body count than, say, the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist fire (in which 146 people perished); however, history has all but forgotten about this horrific tragedy. This is most likely due to the fact that the victims of the Ohio State Penitentiary fire were convicted felons, as opposed to innocent immigrant women working in a sweatshop with poor and illegal working conditions.

Given that the victims of the Ohio State Penitentiary fire were killers, rapists, and generally "society's castoffs," it is understandable that history has largely forgotten these victims in spite of the fact that there was such as high body count (p. 3). Interestingly, the fire occurred when there was a mass incarceration movement (much like there is today), which was marked by long prison sentences, the elimination of "good time," and the granting of fewer paroles.

In the opening pages of the book, the author describes the initial stages of the fire, which gives the reader a feeling of actually being at this horrific event. A convict prankster was one of the first people to let guards know there was a fire; however, since he was known to play jokes, his comments were disregarded by correctional officers. Later when smoke was detected by prison staff, this was mistakenly attributed to the belief that convicts were burning their mattresses to smoke out bedbugs, which was a fairly common practice. The fire also occurred between shifts, which more than likely contributed to the chaos and resulted in a delayed response. On top of this, the warden consistently refused to institute safety drills and focused instead on preventing escapes. He believed in keeping inmates in their cells, rather than preparing for emergencies such as large fires. To add to the problem, the outdated Ohio State Penitentiary, which had a wooden roof that had not been replaced

in 50 years, was also regarded as a “firetrap.” The warden also refused to use modern locking mechanisms (referred to as the *snap lock*), which would have undoubtedly saved lives. After this devastating event, an official inquiry would reveal that there was no apparatus for firefighting in the cell buildings. Sadly, as a result of bad timing and poor prison management, several inmates slit their own throats rather than being burned alive, and prisoners begged their captors to shoot them (even though guards were not permitted to carry firearms within the facility).

When guards began responding to the fire, the author writes that some convicts were given ropes, axes, hammers, as well as other equipment to assist in the rescue efforts. The divide between inmates and guards temporarily subsided. In an effort to help their fellow prisoners, a few inmates even grabbed hoses away from some of the city firefighters they thought were not responding quickly enough—though they were eventually persuaded to let the firemen do their work. Still, as the author illustrates, the firefighters were disorganized. For example, it took 15 minutes after their arrival for the fire officials to ascend to the top range of cells where most of the inmates would die from smoke inhalation. Roth writes there were up to 140 firemen on the scene at the height of the fire with 23 different streams of water being pumped

into the burning penitentiary. Each pumper had about a 1,000-gallon capacity, according to Roth.

Even though the warden had not taken adequate steps to prepare for the fire, Roth still points to some examples where prison officials helped to lessen the impact of this devastating event. For instance, the warden’s daughter took charge and was on the phone to make sure that every available doctor and nurse, as well as National Guard members and at least 600 soldiers from miles away, came to the scene of the fire in Columbus, Ohio. She incidentally carried a six-shooter pistol on her person while working in her father’s office. Besides manning the phones, the warden’s daughter assisted her father in placing guards and medical staff in key areas throughout the prison. The prison chaplain, a priest, was also a pivotal figure in this event. He noted that 85 inmates who were Catholic had all received Communion on Easter—the day before the fire. The day of the fire, he prayed with some of the critically injured inmates who he said “reached up their hands, and died as [he] imparted absolution” (p. 28).

One interesting aspect of the Ohio Penitentiary fire is that it was perhaps the first major American disaster to be covered “instantaneously by sound motion picture crews, radio stations, and newspaper reporters, the three major arms of the mainstream media” (p. 35). For this reason, Roth’s book contributes not only to the penological

literature but also to film and media studies. As he notes, airplanes rushed photographs and new articles to their home office within the first few hours of this disaster as it unfolded. Only 21 hours after the fire began, moviegoers in New York City, approximately 600 miles away, saw newsreels of this event at theatres. The year of the fire, 1930, is also when the sound newsreel “had come into its own...as a *talking newspaper*” (p. 35, italics added). On the night of the fire, an inmate also chronicled the events on WAIU, the prison radio station. This was later viewed by industry officials as “one of the epoch events in radio broadcasting,” and the CBS president gave this prisoner \$500 (roughly \$7,000 in today’s dollars) as a reward for his efforts. At times, the inmate broadcaster was only 30 feet from the blaze and could literally feel the flames as he told his listeners about the harrowing damage.

Prior to World War II, very little was known about treating burn victims, and as the author contends, opiates were the go-to drugs of choice. Most of the victims died from carbon monoxide poisoning. Enormous collaborative efforts were taken to dispose of more than 300 dead inmate bodies. Family members of inmate victims gathered around the prison gates to claim their loved ones’ bodies. One hundred embalmers and assistants, including an All-American Notre Dame football player, volunteered to help dispose of the corpses in a humane manner. Some of the bodies were so badly

burnt that no forensic tools could be used to identify their remains, and a process of elimination had to be used. Roth notes that the prison’s horticulture building was turned into a makeshift mortuary. Students of the Pi Kappa Alpha fraternity at Ohio State University helped provide security for this building.

While criminologists and legal scholars, such as Michelle Alexander (2012) and Todd Clear (2009), have written extensively about the current mass incarceration movement, *Fire in the Big House* points out that a similar anti-inmate sentiment permeated throughout the U.S. during the 1920s and 1930s. As the author contends, “The country’s prison population more than doubled, before quadrupling to 120,000 by 1930 (the year of the fire), when according to one noted penologist, there were as many Americans behind bars as in the military” (p. 87). Roth correctly attributes this high incarceration rate to the Great Depression and, more importantly, to Prohibition, which undoubtedly resulted in a higher crime rate and thus, a higher incarceration rate. Throughout this book, Roth examines issues that are pertinent not only to prisons and public policy but also to media and culture studies. He suggests, for example, that lurid crime reporting may have led the public to demand punitive action toward criminal defendants and inmates. Ohio’s Norwood Act (which was passed in 1921) gave judges the leeway to set the minimum

sentence only one day less than the maximum sentence. At the same time, pardons and paroles were drastically reduced, which contributed to overcrowded prisons. One year after the Ohio prison fire, the Norwood Act was repealed.

It is noteworthy that between the early 1920s and 1930, Ohio's prison population increased 120%, from 3,837 to 8,613 inmates. The Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus (where the fire occurred) was among the largest penal facilities in the U.S., housing more than 4,300 prisoners. One of the joys of reading this book is that the author always provides facts and figures that satisfy the reader's curiosity—especially with regard to money (and he always adjusts for inflation). For example, Roth writes that the unit warden of the Ohio Penitentiary earned approximately \$4,700 a year, which he notes is about \$63,000 in today's dollars. He also writes that the warden had free housing as well as an almost "unlimited opportunity to use inmate labor for personal assignments" (p. 100). The author observes that during the time of the Ohio Prison fire, the average income of the American family was around \$2,335 (which is roughly \$35,109 today). A brand new Pontiac Big Six car could be purchased for \$745 (around \$11,202). At the time of the fire, the average prison guard in Ohio only earned between \$535 and \$1,000 per year. This comes as no great surprise given that correctional officers continue to receive paltry wages (Worley & Worley,

2016). Much like today, there was also a high attrition rate among correctional staff members, with almost one-third of the guard workforce resigning after a year or two.

Throughout this book, the author delves into certain aspects of the prison culture that contributed to the fire. When the fire occurred, one officer's blind adherence to bureaucratic rituals caused him to refuse to turn over keys to his fellow officers for more than 5 minutes—until he was literally wrestled to the ground. One week after this devastating event, there was pure pandemonium with thousands of prisoners running loose throughout the yards. Perhaps not surprisingly, newspaper reporters embellished the confrontation between guards and inmates, and this understandably caused anxiety among those who lived in close proximity to the prison. As Roth observes, local residents were fearful that desperate prisoners with nothing to lose would scale the walls and break into their homes. Nearly 150 city policemen, as well as National Guardsmen, helped to quell the inmates from revolting. Machine guns were mounted on the walls of the prison, and inmate agitators were identified and placed in solitary confinement. This aspect of the book reminded us a bit of the response to the Attica prison uprising that occurred in New York more than 40 years later (though it fortunately had a much happier ending than Attica).

While the inmates who revolted in Columbus, Ohio were eventually subdued by prison administrators with a “combination of coaxing and quantities of coffee,” two prisoners were killed and another was seriously wounded when a guardsman accidentally fired his machine gun while working on it (p. 165). This, again, speaks volumes about the level of disorganization and chaos surrounding the management of this event. Amazingly, only one inmate escaped in the tumultuous aftermath of the fire. The inmate disguised himself as a doctor and walked out of the prison in plain sight. After the inmate was apprehended two weeks later, the warden “laughed it off,” saying that the inmate escapee was a *good convict*. While the prison administration tried to restrict the flow of information to inmates (e.g., by refusing to allow convicts to have newspapers), it is most interesting that they continued to allow WAIU, the inmate radio station, to broadcast behind the prison walls. This, again, is one of the many ways in which this book examines issues related to media studies. Even though Roth is a historical criminologist, we think he could easily publish an academic paper that would be of interest to scholars in the fine arts.

Toward the end of the book, Roth discusses the inquiry after the fire, during which city officials testified that all of the prisoners who lost their lives in this event could have been spared had it not been for a lax and negligent prison administration. The

author also examines the causes of the fire and discusses how there were strong indications early on that it was caused deliberately by an incendiary device. He notes that even though arson investigation was still in its early stages of development in the 1930s, and it was therefore difficult to determine definitively whether this tragedy could be traced to the actions of a pyromaniac, officials nevertheless caught a break during the investigation. The true cause of the fire came to light on August 19, 1930, when an inmate, James Raymond, revealed to Warden Thomas and Deputy Fire Marshal Clear that he and his fellow conspirators, Hugh Gibbons and Clinton Grate, started the fire using candles in order to escape. Although he requested protective confinement during the investigation, Raymond killed himself in the hole on August 21, 1930.

In order to get confessions from the remaining two conspirators, the warden and the fire marshal came up with a brilliant plan, which demonstrates the psychology of the inmates and the effect the prison environment had on them. They put Gibbons and Grate in solitary confinement. Gibbons, known to have a weaker mind than Grate, was placed in the same cell where Raymond took his life, with everything in the room left the way Raymond had improvised to commit suicide. Grate was placed in the cell directly above Gibbons. It was hoped that Grate would coax Gibbons to commit

suicide. That way, with Gibbons gone, Grate would have nobody to identify him as a conspirator. A guard was placed right next to Grate's cell to abort any kind of suicide attempt. The plan worked like a miracle. Grate did persuade Gibbons to commit suicide. He would have succeeded on his third attempt if the guard had not intervened.

In March 1931, another inmate, Jimmy Maloney, came forward and confessed to prison officials that he had given two of the candles stolen from the Catholic chapel and used in the fire to Grate and Gibbons for a soldering project. Maloney was now afraid because Grate had made several attempts to kill him. While Grate and Gibbons admitted to setting the fire to cover up an escape, they added that they objected to the mass incarceration movement, revealed by the building of new cells. As it states in the book, "All they wanted to do...was prevent the construction of L block and the addition of forty-eight new solitary confinement cells" (p. 187). Finally, on April 1, 1931, after the grand jury concluded its investigation, Grate and Gibbons were charged with first degree murder and, if convicted, would be given the death penalty. Even though the inmates said they preferred death to serving a life sentence, both men were sentenced to life in prison. Grate would later hang himself in his cell and Gibbon died decades later in 1973 as a "broken and haunted old man" (p. 187).

Even though the Ohio prison fire meant death for 322 inmates, Roth insinuates that it might have indirectly resulted in significant criminal justice reforms (though some historians may argue that these would have happened anyway). Nevertheless, within a year after the fire, the Ohio state legislature passed a series of laws that attempted to alleviate rampant overcrowding and lengthy prison sentences. One piece of legislation, in particular, doubled the state parole board from two to four members and gave the board authority to increase the number of inmates released from correctional facilities. Additionally, indeterminate sentencing was reinstituted, which effectively prevented judges from fixing minimum sentences. As a result of new legislation (which, again, was passed almost immediately after the fire), inmates were awarded "good time," and many would be eligible to finish their sentence in a year or less. Interestingly, legislators who supported these laws stated that these were passed due to the "alarming increase in the number of inmates and consequent unrest in practically every penal institution in the state" (p. 194).

It is evident from this book that during the late 1920s and well into the 1930s, there was a mass incarceration movement much like there is today. Roth notes, however, that by 1940 conditions at the Ohio Penitentiary began to dramatically improve.

For example, the warden hired three full-time physicians as well as a psychiatrist, and inmates were also given dental care, which likely rivaled that which was available to the general population. The facility had six dental chairs. An inmate classification board was also assembled in order to provide inmates with tools, such as job training, in their quest toward rehabilitation. At the same time, a new prison school system with a curriculum approved by the State Department of Education helped inmates reduce their sentences by getting their GEDs. These significant advances marked the beginning of a new movement in penology—which is often referred to as the *treatment era* in the history of U.S. prisons.

According to Roth, by 1972, the Ohio Penitentiary ceased to function as a maximum security prison, and for the next 12 years, this facility was primarily used as a prisoner hospital and reception center. The institution would officially close its doors in 1984, and 14 years later, all of the penitentiary buildings were demolished and removed. As the author notes, some of the local

residents were able to bring home enough bricks from the fallen institution to build fireplaces and patios. Today, the site of the prison is a stadium parking lot for the National Arena, home of the Columbus Blue Jackets hockey team. As Roth notes, there are no memorials or plaques to remind visitors about what happened on Easter Monday in 1930.

Throughout the pages of *Fire in the Big House*, the reader gets a sense of the inmate-guard divide, which has been written about extensively by many—including us (see Worley, Worley, & Lambert, in press). At the same time, however, the book demonstrates that there is, at times, an uneasy and unspoken alliance between prisoners and their captors. We strongly encourage scholars who are interested in correctional culture, as well as the history of incarceration, to buy a copy of *Fire in the Big House*. It is a pleasure to read, and there are plenty of interesting twists, historical facts, and surprises along the way.



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Note:

This book review is forthcoming in *Theory in Action* and permission was granted to publish it in *ACJS Today*.

ACJS Quality Standards for Academic Programs: An Update

ACJS Academic Review Committee

The ACJS voted to adopt quality standards for criminal justice higher education programs in 2005. Many programs at colleges and universities have used these standards as benchmarks for program reviews. Every academic program must undergo periodic external review as required by either the state and/or accrediting-agency standards (every 5, 7, or 10 years). Rather than having external parties conduct reviews according to unknown standards, ACJS stepped into this space in 2005. The Standards themselves remain quite relevant, and a periodic review of them recently occurred, when the ACJS Academic Review Committee completed an update to the standards, focusing primarily on online course delivery and evolving library standards.

The ACJS Executive Board voted in 2018 to discontinue its academic program “Certification” efforts, but individual academic programs at the Associates, Bachelors, and Masters levels continue to need external reviews. The ACJS Academic Review Committee maintains a list of certified academic reviewers from past ACJS trainings who can serve as external reviewers using the ACJS Standards as benchmarks for their site visit. There remains a significant need in our field to insure that criminal justice and criminology programs are able to distinguish themselves in the competitive landscape of higher education.

We encourage any ACJS member who is anticipating the need for an external review to contact the chair of the ACJS Academic Review Committee for additional information.

ACJS is the only national organization with a specific focus on criminal justice education. More than ever, criminal justice programs need to differentiate themselves from the growing crop of weak, adjunct-laden, and for-profit programs around the country taught by under-qualified faculty. The current situation is important to consider when some of the degree programs with which you now compete spend more money on marketing than they do on instruction. Academic quality standards is what distinguishes your program from theirs, and an external review should point to that distinction.

Once ACJS resumes its in-person annual meetings, it is our hope that there will be an annual panel or event on program reviews and the ACJS standards. Many ACJS members are not well informed about program reviews until they face one, so a recurring annual session will be useful to those facing the pressures of a pending external review.

We encourage you to review the ACJS Quality Standards (posted on the ACJS website) and note that they emphasize that criminal justice is a broad-spectrum field with specific substantive specialties and cognates important for all graduates to understand. The

scope and importance of the field is sometimes not recognized by university administrators. The ACJS Standards offer guideposts around teaching, faculty, students, and administration that make it clear that programs that are over enrolled and under resourced cannot meet the standards set by your peers in the field (as reflected in the ACJS Standards). Therefore, the Standards can be useful in defending resource requests and in responding to calls for external reviews.

Please direct any inquiries about the Standards or external reviews to the chair of the ACJS Academic Review Committee, Jay Albanese, at jsalbane@vcu.edu.

We Want You to Participate!

ACJS Seeking Committee Volunteers for 2022-2023

Denise Paquette Boots, ACJS 1st Vice President, is actively seeking Committee volunteers to serve during her presidency, March 2022 – March 2023. If you are interested in learning more about how to be actively involved in service to ACJS, contact Denise Paquette Boots at 2023acjs@gmail.com to volunteer. Every attempt will be made to place ACJS members who volunteer on a standing or *ad hoc* Committee.

Committee membership is limited to ACJS members. The composition of all committees will be as diverse as possible with regard to gender, race, region, and length of Academy membership.

Every year, ACJS needs volunteers for the Academy's Standing Committees. Committee volunteers usually serve for one year, beginning with the Friday of the Annual Meeting after the Executive Board meets. Appointments to the following ACJS Standing Committees are for one year, unless otherwise stated:

- ☐ **Academic Review** (Members serve three-year terms)
- ☐ **Affirmative Action** (Open membership)
- ☐ **Assessment** (Open to three new members who serve three-year terms)
- ☐ **Awards** (Open membership)
- ☐ **Business, Finance, and Audit** (Open to one person from the ACJS membership selected by the 2nd Vice President)
- ☐ **Committee on National Criminal Justice Month** (Open membership)
- ☐ **Constitution and By-Laws** (Open to three new members selected by the 2nd Vice President and serve three-year terms)
- ☐ **Doctoral Summit** (Open membership)
- ☐ **Employment Exchange** (Open membership)
- ☐ **Ethics** (Members are nominated by the Trustees-At-Large and appointed by the ACJS Executive Board and serve three-year terms)
- ☐ **Membership** (Open membership)
- ☐ **Nominations and Elections** (Members are appointed by the Immediate Past President)
- ☐ **Program**
- ☐ **Public Policy** (Open membership)
- ☐ **Student Affairs** (Open membership)
- ☐ **Crime and Justice Research Alliance (CJRA)** (Open to two members at large appointed by the 1st Vice President)

The success of ACJS depends on having a dedicated cadre of volunteers.

Committee membership is an excellent way to make a difference in the future of ACJS.



CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

The ACJS Nominations and Elections Committee is soliciting nominations for the following Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences offices: **Second Vice President, Secretary, Trustee-At-Large, Region One Trustee and Region Five Trustee.** All candidates for office must be Regular ACJS members in good standing. The individuals who are elected will take office at the Friday 2022 ACJS Executive Board Meeting.

The person elected to the office of Second Vice President will have a four-year term of office on the ACJS Executive Board and will hold the offices of Second Vice President, First Vice President, President, and Immediate Past President in turn. The persons elected to the office of Trustee-at-Large will have a three-year term. The person elected to a Regional Trustee position will have a three-year term. Only current ACJS Regular members holding professional employment affiliation in the Region and having been a member of the respective regional association for at least one full year immediately prior to being nominated or petitioning may run for the respective Trustee position. Region Five includes the states: Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming, Alberta and British Columbia (Canada) and Pacific Territories and Possessions.

Individuals seeking ACJS office may achieve candidacy by either petition or nomination. Individuals who use the petition process automatically secure candidacy, as long as the petitions are deemed to meet the minimum number of signatures required. Individuals who are nominated for office shall compete for placement on the slate via review by the Nominations and Elections Committee, which will make a recommendation to the ACJS Executive Board regarding the final slate of candidates.

Those nominating individuals for ACJS office are expected to contact the nominee to ensure that the nominee is willing to run for the office in question. An ACJS member seeking an office via petition must **obtain seventy-five (75) signatures of Regular ACJS members in good standing**; Student members are not eligible. **To confirm if all 75 signatures are for Regular ACJS members, please check the online ACJS Membership Directory under the "Membership" tab on the website.** The directory is visible only when you are signed in on the ACJS website.

The petition must state the name and complete address of the candidate, e-mail address, home and office phone numbers, and the office the candidate is seeking. To facilitate verification, the petition must also include the clearly printed name, signature, and institutional affiliation or address of each ACJS member signing it and the signature date. More than one petition form may be submitted on behalf of a specific candidate.

Nomination Forms Must Be **Postmarked** By July 1, 2021. The Nomination Form can be found on the ACJS website at: <http://www.acjs.org/page/FormsPolicyManual>

Petition Forms Must Be **Received** No Later Than June 14, 2021. The Petition Form can be found on the ACJS website at: <http://www.acjs.org/page/FormsPolicyManual>

Ways to Submit Nomination Forms and Petitions:

- 1) Email Nomination Forms to Cassia Spohn at Cassia.Spohn@asu.edu
- 2) Scan as a PDF and email petitions to the ACJS National Office at manager@acjs.org or,

3) Mail all nominations and petitions to:

Cassia Spohn, Chair
ACJS Nominations and Elections Committee
Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences
7339 Hanover Parkway, Suite A
Greenbelt, MD 20770

Address any questions to the Committee by contacting Dr. Spohn at Cassia.Spohn@asu.edu

As per ACJS Policy 303.01, the following rank-ordered criteria will be used by the Nominations and Elections Committee in making recommendations to the ACJS Executive Board regarding the final slate of candidates.

1. *Dependability, demonstrated experience, record of accomplishments.*
2. *Demonstrable service to the Academy.*
3. *Demonstrable record of scholarship or contributions to the field of criminal justice.*

ACJS Policy 104.01 states its goal of inclusivity. ACJS seeks to provide opportunities for all its members to participate in the business of the Academy, including policy and decision-making.

NOTE: The final slate of candidates approved by the ACJS Executive Board will be asked to complete a Candidate's Information Form. This document will include length of ACJS membership, previous service for ACJS, previous service to other criminal justice organizations, major publications, and a candidate's statement.

Book Review: David Skarbek. *The Puzzle of Prison Order: Why Life Behind Bars Varies Around the World*. Oxford University Press. ISBN: 978-0190672508 (Paperback). 240 Pages. \$21.24

Reviewed by Rajub Bhowmik*

In his book, *The Puzzle of Prison Order: Why Life Behind Bars Varies Around the World*, author David Skarbek evaluates and explores the culture and social order in prison systems all over the world. In doing so, Skarbek challenges the common perception that once inmates enter the system, they remain until their eventual release from the system in the same way, no matter where in the world. A classic picture of an inmate is assumed everywhere: prisoners spend most of their day in a small prison cell, either alone or with other inmates. This common perception dictates that prisoners get very few hours out of prison under strict supervision and are often forced to work as part of their punishment. Skarbek argues throughout his book, using extensive examples from real-world prisons that the whole governance system of prisons can vary to extreme levels from one country to another. Throughout the book, Skarbek makes an active effort to evaluate, both quantitatively and qualitatively, to understand the underlying factors that impact the relationship inside the prisons.

The first point that Skarbek tackles is the issue of the social order in the prison system, which

represents the social structure of any prison. This factor suggests the order and balance of social groups of inmates and the relationship between the inmates and the correctional officers. In the first part, Skarbek establishes that the social order of the prison system varies significantly from one location to another, and with this assumption, he starts to suggest the difference between social orders across states and nationalities. He argues that the policy structure and cultural factors make a significant difference in the type of social order developed in any prison. With these factors constantly changing worldwide based on local factors, the social order of the prison system also changes accordingly.

These findings of Skarbek are also supported by the finding presented by Ricciardelli and Sit (2015), who studied different prison systems to understand that the administrative controls and measures that the correctional officers and prison administration impose have a high level of impact on the way the prison social order is developed. According to their research findings, weak and low enforcement of control by the administrative team leads to the inmates generating a sense of lowered safety, and it is this feeling of not being safe that creates more violence in the prison system (Ricciardelli & Sit, 2016).

Hence, there are external factors that contribute to the level of social order and its specific characteristics. Toman (2017) further researched the case of social order and found that internal factors

can contribute to the difference in social order inside a prison. According to his research study, gender difference also plays an influential role in defining the prison social order, and the particular social order that gets established in a prison system might very well get defined based on women in the administration or as inmates (Toman, 2017). Hence, there is other scholarly evidence that supports the arguments raised by Skarbek that the social order in a prison system can vary significantly from one place to another as a result of both internal and external factors.

According to Skarbek, the social order is just an equilibrium of power and authority developed in a prison system. In every prison system, some order must be established, and therefore, the social order gets developed sooner or later, likely after an initial period of struggle and force. Skarbek argues that social order is natural in prison by stating that "most prisoners must live and interact with other prisoners; they have no voluntary exit option" (p. 149). According to the book, this creates an order that can be achieved by combining four different ways, which is dependent on the principal actor who is in charge of the prison system. First of all, the effort of the officials to create a specific type of order can ultimately fail as it is common for the prison officials not to achieve their initial goals set in terms of the social order placed. This mostly happens when the officials expect an ideal situation; hence, the prison officials must work under the

assumption of getting poor conditions in prison in terms of the relations between inmates, if not an all-out war between the inmate groups.

In the second type of order, the prisoners can govern the prison social order. This is most notably the case in prisons where the prison population is substantial compared to the number of officials in authority positions, and it is difficult to enforce the norms and policies of the officials. In this system of the social order of prisons, some level of order is to be expected for the prison officials; however, there would be a dominance of one of the inmate groups in prison along with occasional violence and gang wars within the prison system. In the third approach, the officials might create a specific kind of social order that they have a vision for in the prison system. In the case of prison systems with good conditions and hygiene for the inmates, the probability of the inmates complying with the policies and control measures of the officials also increases significantly. This is the case in Norway and other Nordic prison systems as the condition of prisons are excellent, and the prisoners are also relatively safer than in other countries. As Skarbek states, "in Nordic prison systems, there are as many members of the prison staff as there are prisoners" (p. 4). This represents the ability of the officials to impose and control governance inside the prison. The success of such an approach and social order makes it necessary that the conditions of the prison are also suitable for the inmates, with proper safety

and hygiene (de Viggiani, 2012). Finally, the fourth case might be of a social order in which the prison officials and inmates share the governance of the prison. This situation occurs when the officials accept or recognize the limitations of the resources to fully control the prison and allow some degree of control to be managed by the inmates while the prison officials implement the more considerable extent of the control policies.

There are different social balances and orders established depending on the more prominent factors at play in the system, including the attitude of the officials, funding fulfilled, resources available, conditions in prison, safety perception, gender balance, supervising and monitoring, and management intensity. These claims of Skarbek are supported by existing research studies and literary sources as well in different contexts. Wolff and Shi (2008) evaluated the case of safety perception among the prisoners and the level of victimization feeling across both male and female inmates. Using a questionnaire method of data collection (male $n = 6,964$ and female $n = 564$), they found that there is victimization among inmates of different kinds ranging from the perpetrators including both the prisoners and officials. There was also a lesser degree of propensity among female victims to report and disclose sexual victimization in prison, despite getting subjected to it to a very significant degree (Wolff & Shi, 2011).

Furthermore, it was also recognized that most of the inmates suggested that they did feel safe inside the prison; however, a significant number of prisoners felt unsafe. The researchers also recognize that physical victimization is widespread among inmates as part of a constant struggle. A more comprehensive research study was conducted by Molleman and van der Broek (2014), who tried to establish a link between the prison staff and the perception of prison conditions while conducting a research study in the Dutch prison system. According to their research study, prison staff is among the essential parts of attaining the goal of reforming the system. Their study found that the staff members' work conditions and safety perception make a difference in how the officials treat the inmates in prison (Molleman & van der Broek, 2014). Their study found evidence of a positive correlation between the work conditions of staff members and how they treat the inmates. Hence, another factor of social order is evaluated and found faithful by literary sources and peer-reviewed studies.

In the first significant part of the book, Skarbek makes a powerful and unconventional argument regarding the governance of prison systems in different locations. The unconventional aspect that is addressed directly by the author is that in all cases, the governance of prison systems does not need to be in the hands of the administration and officials. He also gives an example of these cases by

stating that in the modern advanced and developed nations with less corrupt systems, officials are usually in the position to govern and establish the rules with the resources necessary to enforce the rules imposed. However, in the case of more corrupt nations where the prison administration might be more lax or willing to show flexibility, they show a higher propensity of allowing the inmates to have a degree of governance. For this purpose, Skarbek gives examples of Brazil and Bolivia as nations where the prisoners have much influence in the prison system and can be considered responsible for governance. He then compares this to the case of Nordic countries where the prisons are less strict but entirely in control of the prison officials.

The prominent underlying argument made by Skarbek is that the people who govern a prison system have a direct impact on the quality of life of the prisoners. This is not the only factor that makes a difference in the quality of life of the prisoners, but it is found to be one of the most significant ones. For instance, the funding and resources that the government puts in for the prison system management are suggested as one of the most significant factors of impact. The reasoning is relatively simple, i.e., the prison staff is able to govern better if they have more resources and are in a decent ratio compared to the prisoners. However, prisons are often low priority for funding in budgets, and most politicians think that the money that goes to prisons can be spent more effectively in other

areas of society. Hence, a dilemma is promoted and discussed by Skarbek that while the community overall wants a good and effective prison system, the willingness to invest in it is low as there are no fiscal returns. An example given by the author of this book is that English prisons are easier to manage because the inmates are close to their communities, and they feel more at ease in these prisons compared to a prison system in a place like California where the prisons are very densely populated. Therefore, the inmates often get placed in a distant prison from their home community. This aspect of the California prison system further makes it more challenging to establish order.

The issue of lack of resources in the prison system has been researched extensively by researchers worldwide. For instance, Barquin, Cano, and Calvo (2019) conducted their research study on the issue of treatment of prisoners, quality of life, and the prisoners' reintegration program based on the inmates' perception. Their research study found that in Spain, the perception of the inmates depends a lot on the quality of relationship that the workers have with the staff members in prison and the condition of the prison (Barquín et al., 2019). According to these researchers, a significant part of it depends on the level of resources and funding offered to the prison system as that plays a highly influential role in the quality of treatment that the staff gets. The case of funding and resource allocation is more broadly evaluated

by Neveu (2006), who found that the lack of resources creates a perception among prison staff members that their work is not essential and given no priority by the government. These factors are further emphasized by the low resource allocation and inadequate funding because it further creates low participation and exhaustion among the prison workers, which is linked to a high burnout rate among correctional officers. The side effects of low resources are also that the correctional officers are given too much work and are in charge of a higher number of inmates, further causing stress for the prison workers (Neveu, 2007). Hence, more resources and funding create a positive environment in conditions for the inmates and the correctional officers and staff members.

In most cases, the prison systems are run by the government and funded by the government. However, with the concept of privatization of prisons getting popular in the United States, the resource argument of Skarbek on prison conditions meets a new challenging paradigm, which is that the private prisons are inherently for-profit and are not likely to spend more money than needed to keep the prison running efficiently. Lundahl et al. (2009) performed a comprehensive meta-analysis of the prison privatization trend to find where the balance exists between the quality of prison and its cost. Their findings indicate that the cost savings are very low or even negligible for the government in the case of privatization of the prisons (Lundahl et al.,

2009). In addition to this, the quality of confinement is still either comparable or even lower than the government-run prison systems.

In the final part of his book, Skarbek takes a deeper evaluation of the gender differences with more diverse groups and prison populations by focusing on women's prisons in California and gay and transgender units of prisons. He has argued that since the 1960s, the women's prison system has not progressed in the same manner as the men's prison. While the social order in men's prisons is dominated by ethnic-based segregation, the same is not true in women's prisons (Haslam & Reicher, 2012). In similar regard, Steiner and Wooldredge (2009) found that the male prisons have a robust correlation of segregation and groups based on ethnicity, and it is often the case that these social, ethnic groups engage in gang violence and misconduct within the prison as a pack that is willing to establish dominance across the whole prison (Steiner & Wooldredge, 2009). However, their research study did not consider women prisoners and prisons due to insufficient data.

On the other hand, Kruttschnitt and Hussemann (2008) evaluated the case of race and ethnicity in the context of women's prison to better understand micropolitics. Their study found that minority status and racial identity of the inmates in women's prisons do not work as major factors in all political contexts but are a salient factor of groupism in political contexts (Kruttschnitt & Hussemann,

2008). Ethnic groupism and correlation are most prominent for the women inmates who are foreign nationals. Overall, these findings do not entirely support the findings and arguments by Skarbek; however, the underlying concepts and understanding remain largely the same.

By taking the approach of identifying the puzzling structure and power balance of the prison system across different parts of the world, Skarbek has taken the task that is often left untouched by many, most notably on such a large scale. The book, throughout its entirety, represents the underlying claims of the author very well, and by the example of different states and prison systems, the author is indeed able to support his arguments strongly. The book's structure is relatively unique and very effective as it follows a linear approach to storytelling. The events and the evaluation of the prison system framework are primarily offered in a hierarchical order, making it easier for the reader to understand comprehensively. Throughout the book's length, the author clearly makes the arguments and then provides evidence from different literary sources and government data points to ensure that the audience is convinced of the argument. Overall, Skarbek successfully conveys the message in the book, and these arguments are presented effectively in an academic sense. The only limitation of this book is that the author selects the examples of different prison systems worldwide without specific reasoning

provided within the book. Therefore, an argument can be made that the author has selected the examples in a biased manner and possibly cherry-picked the case studies to paint the picture of prison systems that the author wanted to present. However, any possibility of such a bias is low given the subject matter, and the number of different case studies of the prison system is high enough that the probability of cherry-picking remains extensively low. Therefore, the book is very effective in communicating its message to the readers very convincingly, and the language used by Skarbek is very persuasive. A significant part of the book allows the readers to make their conclusions based on the evidence and case studies presented, which further helps the book's persuasiveness and its message from the perspective of a reader.

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JQ Statement on Research Transparency

Marv Krohn & Bryanna Fox

Research transparency involves “providing a clear and reliable account of the sources and content of the ideas and information on which a scholar has drawn in conducting her research, as well as a clear and explicit account of how she has gone about the analysis to arrive at the inferences and conclusions presented—and supplying this account as part of (or directly linked to) any scholarly research publication” (Büthe & Jacobs, 2015, p. 2).

In support of this goal, we, as co-editors of *Justice Quarterly*, are pleased to announce our new policy intended to increase the transparency of research that is published in the journal. Early in our tenure as editors, we realized that there is a general lack of transparency in research methodology and procedures, which inhibits both a clear understanding of the methods/results and the ability to replicate the findings if necessary. We were later invited to participate in a symposium on data transparency sponsored by the Arnold Foundation, where we gained invaluable information on the protocols developed by other fields to increase transparency in research. Based upon this and input from scholars who use diverse research methodologies, we developed our own set of protocols for authors to (voluntarily, at the moment) provide essential information needed to increase research transparency and boost confidence in reported findings, without placing an unacceptable burden on authors submitting papers for consideration to *Justice Quarterly*. We submitted our transparency guideline recommendations to the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences Executive Board for approval, which was granted in 2020.

This effort toward research transparency at *Justice Quarterly* will unfold in a two-phase process. In Phase One, which is effective immediately, we ask authors to voluntarily submit a methodological appendix (ideally at the time of submission or upon acceptance), which will be published online as an appendix if a paper is selected for publication. This will enable authors to acclimate to the process of providing such information and enable us to evaluate the process and modify it as necessary.

If our evaluation of Phase One determines the procedures effectively serve the goal of enhancing research transparency, Phase Two will require authors to submit this transparency information before acceptance in *Justice Quarterly*, and the methodological appendices will be published as online supplements for all accepted articles.

We have prepared detailed Transparency Guidelines, which are available on the *Justice Quarterly* website, describing the information we are asking authors to provide in order to enhance transparency in the research and publication process. We recognize that the type of information provided will vary by research design and the idiosyncratic features of a particular study. However, all studies should describe, in detail, the data that were utilized for the study, sampling frame, study measures and their operationalization/coding, missingness, attrition and non-response bias, details of the analyses (ideally including code/syntax if possible), and where and how the data can be accessed.

Through these efforts, we hope to contribute to our field’s goal of producing high quality science and knowledge, which we can use to build our theories, understand criminological phenomena, and improve criminal justice policy and practice.

JQ Statement on the Failure to Recognize the Unique Contributions of a Study

Marv Krohn & Bryanna Fox

Recently we, as co-editors of *Justice Quarterly*, have received a number of submissions that share a similar omission. A number of manuscripts have been submitted by authors who have published papers using the same data set to investigate similar issues. There is nothing wrong with doing so as there may be very good reasons why all the issues could not be addressed in the same paper. However, authors should make sure that they not only cite their past research on the topic, but also clearly identify how the submitted research article is a contribution that goes sufficiently beyond their previous work to warrant publication in a major outlet such as *Justice Quarterly*. Discussing the author's prior work on the topic will enable the reviewers and editors to judge whether the submitted paper makes a sufficient contribution. Although potentially revealing one's identity is a valid concern, not engaging perhaps the most relevant literature on the topic and distinguishing how a study makes a unique and sizable contribution in light of prior work is of equal or greater concern. Failure to cite and describe recently accepted or published research is particularly problematic because reviewers and editors may not have had an opportunity to review the published article.

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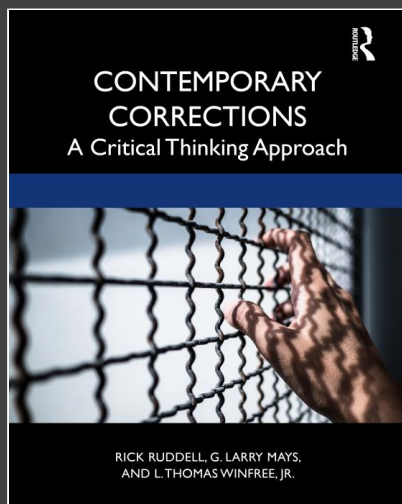
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