

The book is organized around a tight and effective chapter structure. After presenting the theoretical tensions of the protectionist and moralistic discourses that frame our responses to child pornography and grooming, Ost examines the research on these phenomena, the English laws to deal with them, the reasons behind the expanding criminalization in this area, the larger implications of the moral panic, and the laws elsewhere, concluding with a re-assessment of the question of harms.

If readers are concerned with the way our institutions increasingly commercialize and sexualize the child while vehemently condemning such exploitation by responding with swift, symbolic, and inadequate measures that fail to transform child exploitation, they will enjoy this book and even be patient with the sections that are somewhat legalistic. Those interested in how law, particularly English law, criminalizes child pornography and grooming will find a rich account of legal reasoning in this book. Ost's keen eye for legal developments in this area in Canadian, American, and international jurisdictions adds a significant comparative element to her English study. This book is a timely, rational antidote to the sex panic urging people to remove the naked body of a child from art galleries, photo albums, and the beach.

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*Public Opinion and Criminal Justice.* By Jane Wood and Theresa Gannon, eds. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing, 2009. Pp. 252. \$89.95 cloth; \$45.00 paper.

Reviewed by Eve M. Brank and Lori A. Hoetger, University of Nebraska

In this Internet media age that includes the spectrum from traditional network news to layperson blog sites (with comment sections on those and everything in between), how can one distinguish between true public opinion and the attitudes of a few select outspoken? If the criminal justice system follows frequently vacillating public opinion, is it deferring to public ignorance or respecting public concern? Jane Wood and Theresa Gannon have gathered an esteemed collection of international scholars who collectively contend in 10 chapters that it is possible, although not always simple, to accurately procure public opinion and understand its influence on criminal justice policy. After briefly summarizing the main premises of the chapters, this review highlights some of the book's strengths and weaknesses and its recommended audiences.

In the first half of the book, the chapter authors focus on the formation and function of public opinion. For instance, attitude and persuasion research demonstrates that people often support policies not because they have cognitively examined the policy, but because of increased exposure to the policy or because someone they admire supports the policy. In fact, experience (direct or indirect) with the criminal justice system, knowledge, personal characteristics, and media exposure all play roles in forming public opinion about criminal justice policies. Therefore, the government must differentiate between public opinion and public judgment (i.e., by using deliberative polls that involve giving the issue more thought). One chapter provides an example of the difference between public opinion and public judgment concerning the death penalty. A reductionism of public belief has historically dominated death penalty opinion research; such reductionism highlights the need for using appropriate methods to obtain accurate assessments of opinion.

In the second half of the book, the chapter authors examine specific public opinions toward victims and offenders. For instance, public attitudes and the media's overrepresentation of sensational crimes have influenced the way rape and other victims of violence interact with the criminal justice system, by affecting the victims' reluctance to report, how the cases are prosecuted, and how the victims are treated. Public opinion biases against certain types of offenders also influence criminal justice policies. Sex offender laws provide an example of the public's outcry based on impassioned misinformation and a desire for more punitive responses to offenders' actions. The public's conflicting retributive and rehabilitative goals are further complicated when ex-offenders attempt to reintegrate into society. For the mentally ill, who are incorrectly stigmatized as dangerous and unpredictable, this can make life particularly difficult.

Robinson and Darley (1995) argued that public opinion guides what is morally acceptable. When there is a discrepancy between the law and public opinion, it results in disrespect for the law and noncompliance with the law, and one risks vigilante justice. But should the law be changed every time there is a change in public opinion? The other side of that coin is that people study public opinion so that it, rather than the law, can be amended. One of the strengths of Gannon and Wood's chapter authors is their attention to rape myths, sexual offenders, and mentally ill offenders as examples of situations when attempting to change public opinion is arguably better than changing the law. Of course, this tactic places a heavy burden on researchers of public opinion, because with this mentality one has the "very real risk that 'bad science' will result in 'bad democracy'" (p. 75).

The main limitation of the book is a subtle incompatibility among the chapters. Edited volumes have the benefit of bringing different voices to an issue, but it is done at the risk of contradiction and repetition. The book also leaves the reader questioning why public opinion receives attention. After all, public opinion is capricious and difficult to measure. When researchers do measure it, whose opinions does one hear—the vocal minority or the advantaged majority? Although a number of questions are left unanswered, the text does remind readers to be careful consumers as assumptions about public opinion may have more influence than actual public opinion.

Wood and Gannon have collected a series of chapters that would be useful reading for graduate students in political science, criminology, criminal justice, and forensic psychology. Advanced undergraduate students in similar disciplines could also use the book, but with undergraduates it might be best used in conjunction with another text that provides a broad examination of public opinion. Legal researchers and policy makers may also find the chapters to be useful reading. In fact, Wood and Gannon's text would even be appropriate and relevant to a layperson wanting to be more informed about the forces that can influence criminal justice policy.

#### Reference

Robinson, Paul H., & John M. Darley (1995) *Justice, Liability and Blame: Community Views and the Criminal Law*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

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*Multicultural Jurisprudence: Comparative Perspectives on the Cultural Defense*. By Marie-Claire Foblets and Alison Dundes Renteln, eds. Oxford: Hart Publishing, 2009. Pp. 386. \$44.00 paper.

Reviewed by Jamie Rowen, University of California, Berkeley

This edited volume expands the literature on how cultural information is utilized in judicial decisions, and is an important contribution to the increasingly transnational law and society scholarship that reveals the dynamic relationships between law, politics, and culture. The contributors analyze the use of cultural information in law from a variety of disciplines and geographic locations, making the book relevant reading for law and society scholars as well as