Constructing Crime: Contemporary Processes of Criminalization

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Description
Constructing Crime examines the central question: Why do we define and enforce particular behaviours as crimes and target particular individuals as criminals?

To answer this question, contributors interrogate notions of crime, processes of criminalization, and the deployment of the concept of crime in five radically different sites. Two studies of fraud against welfare recipients and physicians illustrate that uneven enforcement of the law can leave the privileged with a sense of entitlement and the marginalized with an imposed criminal self-concept. An examination of the enforcement of laws against Aboriginal harvesting practices offers yet another example of how the threat of prosecution can be used to criminalize cultural practices, while a study of public housing reveals that its form can influence how residents respond to disorder. Lastly, a case study on gambling reveals just how malleable the criminal law and definitions of crime can be.

By demonstrating that how crime is defined and enforced is connected to social location and status, these interdisciplinary cases and an afterword by Marie-Andrée Bertrand challenge us to consider just who is rendered criminal and why. This timely volume will appeal to policy makers and students and practitioners of law, criminology, and sociology.

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Constructing Crime: Contemporary Processes of Criminalization (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 1-16. Brockman, Joan. “Fraud Against the Public Purse by Health Care Professionals: The Privilege of Location” in Janet Mosher and Joan Brockman (eds.) Constructing Crime: Contemporary Processes of Criminalization (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2010), 53-86. Chunn, Dorothy E. and Joan Brockman. “Into the rough of things”: Women Lawyers in British Columbia 1912-1930” in Constance Backhouse and W. Wesley Pue, (eds.) Brockman, Joan. Review Essay of Elizabeth Comack and Gillian Balfour, The Power to Criminalize: Violence, Inequality and the Law (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 2004). (2005) 31(1) Queen’s Law Journal 402-412. CONTACT INFORMATION. This paper is a limited attempt to synthesize the older and newer trends in radical criminology — to integrate the issues of criminalization, decriminalization, and victimization. The object of our endeavor is homelessness and how society responds to it. In the paper, we first examine the dialectics of criminalization, homelessness, and economic crisis in relation to some of the general trends in the developing political economy of welfare capitalism. Second, we argue that criminologists should support and focus on effort to “criminalize” the condition of homelessness and, at the same time, to