**Criminal Justice and Corruption: State Power, Privatization and Legitimacy**

**Chapter One**

**Abstract**

*The Introduction ‘sets the scene’ and highlights the reach, breadth and depth of corruption in criminal justice systems around the world. It explains why such a book is needed and offers a brief synopsis of the following chapters in the book.*

*‘Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere’*

 *(Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from the Birmingham Jail, April16, 1963 in Brinks, 2008:1)*

**Introduction**

This book sets out to examine the impact of corruption *in* and o*n* criminal justice systems and the public acceptance and legitimacy, or lack of it, of the state’s power to punish, particularly once exposed as corrupt. The inspiration for this book comes from cases of corruption that regularly surface around the world that discredit criminal justice in democratic and non-democratic nations. Whilst corruption is perhaps expected under dictatorships and/or an absolute monarchy (Greitens, 2016, Yadav and Mukherrjee, 2016) for at least some of the population in these states, it is perhaps most disappointing if or when corruption occurs in democratic nations where there is the expectation that criminal justice and the law is impartial and objective.

Most of the international literature on criminal justice corruption examines law enforcement, or more specifically, the police (Punch, 2003, Del Pozo, 2005, Kutnjack, 2005, Ivkovic, 2005, Quirine, 2006, Alpert and Noble, 2009, Skolnick, 2010, Tankebe, 2010, Campbell and Campbell, 2010, Caldero and Crank, 2011, Kane, and White, 2013, Bacon, 2014, Stanford, 2015, Greitens, 2016, Miller, 2017, Beare, 2017). The police, however, are only one agency in any criminal justice system, and whilst powerful, with the discretion conferred upon them by the state, and some of the public, depending on the country and/or sections of it, they are not the only agency that is sometimes corrupt. Law enforcement is sometimes accused of institutional and cultural racial bias but the whole criminal justice system – law courts; prison and probation services- in democratic nations have also appeared to ‘accept’ such practice(s) (Brown and Frank, 2006, Barkaan and Cohn, 2007, Michelle, 2010, Rodriguez, 2010, Tonry, 2010, 2011 Tyler, 2014, Alicia, 2015, Spohn, 2015, Gottschalk, 2015).

A note of clarification is needed before reading this book, though. I use the term ‘criminal corruption’ (Brooks, 2016) to indicate that a criminal act has occurred rather than one that falls under some moral code. In addition I refer to law enforcement rather than the police. I make this distinction here because referring only to the police is a somewhat understated reach of a states’ law enforcement capacity. Border and immigration and revenue, customs and excise also ‘police’ both its borders, citizens and threats to state security, and can also be corrupt. Finally, I prefer to use narcotic(s) to describe the use of and/or manufacture of illegal substances in this book; the reason is to make a clear distinction, if possible, between proscriptive and prescriptive substances and illegal and legal consumption of some kind of medication and/or alcohol. Narcotics are associated with corrupt ‘narco’ states (Grillo, 2011) and corrupt criminal justice systems, which is the theme in the book.

However, where relevant I will explicitly state that different types of corruption also influence criminal justice, and sometimes lead to criminal corruption. These are:

*Unethical corruption* – an unethical but still legal act or one that is on the cusp of illegality but presented as an ‘error’ or mistake’ e.g. lawyers holding on to information in a case that clears a suspect of the crime (see Chap. 10)

*Corruption of process/procedure*- where ‘rules’ of policing are breached e.g. arrest suspect on limited evidence and/or fail to follow set process at arrest, interview, and charging stage(s) (see Chap.3 and 4)

*Corruption of an ideal* -the ideal of rehabilitation in probation is marginalized in favour of punishment in the community (see Chap. 8)

These often unethical acts lead to a criminal act(s) and individuals and organizations are victimized by the system that is there to protect them and offer redress as a victim of crime. Acts of corruption hit the poorest in our midst the hardest, but all of us, even those that are lucky enough to spend our life without any direct encounter or recourse to use criminal justice are still victims, particularly in democratic nations, if our system of ‘justice’ is built on corruption.

This book is an attempt to address this issue. This is not a criticism of the corruption literature of which there are excellent texts available. I am unable to name them all here but I recommend (Rose-Ackermann, 1978, Johnston, 2005, Rothstein, 2011, Graycar and Prenzler, 2013, Heywood, 2015, Miller, 2017, Banks, 2017). This book is a contribution to the debates regarding corruption but primarily criminal justice systems and the impact this can have on the public and ultimately legitimacy of power exercised by a state (Bottoms and Tankebe, 2012). Criminal justice on a national and international scale is open to substantial corruption be it a public agency or private sector or a combination of both and this is a threat to local, national and international criminal justice.

Furthermore, and still under-researched in sociology and criminology is the unethical and criminal corruption that is part of awarding criminal justice contracts to the private sector. There is excellent literature on private sector involvement in criminal justice but the majority of this literature tends to consider the impact of privatization on provision of police services (South, 1988, White, 2014, 2015, Diphoorn, 2016), prison systems (Burkhardt, 2014, Gottschalk, 2015, Eisen, 2017) and probation services (Fitzgibbon and 2014, Fitzgibbon, 2016), instead of the private sectors attempts to secure public legitimacy (Fitzgibbon and Lea, 2017) in the field of criminal justice. This is understandable but the reach of corruption is such that it can occur before a contract is awarded. A contract can be awarded to a private company by a public body due to aggressive lobbying, ‘sponsorship’ of events, or employing ex-public sector employees with contacts working in the criminal justice system or simple straightforward bribery to secure a contract. Before a contract is signed, a brick is laid as a foundation for a prison, immigration centre, or probation offices, and/or computer systems installed in law enforcement offices there is the potential for corruption. It is here as well as the end result of providing services in criminal justice that is in need of more attention from criminology.

There is literature on state power (Foucault, 1977), or abuse of it, privatization of criminal justice services (Fitzgibbon, 2016) and legitimacy (Beetham, 1991, Coicaud, 2002, Bottoms and Tankebe, 2012) and trying to prevent and reduce acts of fraud and corruption (Brooks, 2016) but little on business practices where criminal justice contracts are secured via corruption. A contract secured by corruption can lead to the corruption of services provided to the police e.g. manipulation of emergency telephone calls data to reach a contracted threshold of emergency calls (White, 2015, Fitzgibbon and Lea, 2017). This is a corruption of criminal justice and one that affects us all.

Such corruption though this is no different to any type of business, but criminal justice systems and those that work in them are vested with power to alter the shape of an individual’s and family current and future life. As a victim of fraud or some type of corruption, which we sometimes not might be aware (e.g. price fixing a product or service we purchase) we still maintain our liberty and have no criminal record. Once defined and labelled as a ‘criminal’ ex-offender our employment prospects often narrow (Schmitt and Warner, 2011, Flake, 2015) as do our relationships with others. This is not an attempt to excuse individual or organizational criminal acts; this, in fact, is my concern here. Corruption of criminal justice is and should be about more than miscarriages of justice. I highlight here how criminal justice is itself a victim and purported notions of justice are sometimes a sham, a system that is rigged and abused by those working in it, but also the private sector to secure criminal justice contracts.

The numbers of criminal justice services involved in putting individuals – innocent or suspected – under surveillance, and/or transporting innocent or suspected offenders to a court or prison, processing cases in a court, analysis of police data, management of police call centres, building or managing a prison, providing inmates with clothes, food, healthcare, education, telephone calls to and from prison, and probation services and surveillance in the community are only a few potential avenues open to manipulation and corruption. In the USA alone (as of 2017) there are 4.65 million people under some sort of ‘correctional control’ (Eisen, 2017) with ‘correctional’ institutions worth an estimated $80 billion. “A set of bureaucratic, political and economic interests” (Schlosser, 1998:51-77) expanding the reach of criminal justice, regardless of need leads to a prison industrial complex. With this expansion it is inevitable that some criminal justice services will encounter some form of corruption in state and private sectors.

This book expands on the corruption literature and helps broaden the discussion on why and how individuals, organizations and states commit corrupt acts in criminal justice systems and how they are captured (Dal Bo, 2006) by vested state and/or private interests. Whilst political science and economics analyse the measurement of corruption, and/or how to prevent it, and legal research on corruption is concerned with breaches of rules and laws such disciplines rarely directly examine criminal justice systems. Instead they assess political corruption, which influence criminal justice rather than a detailed examination of a criminal justice agency. Sociology and criminology, however, have examined criminal justice corruption but mostly with a view to explaining, understanding and preventing police corruption. One explanation of corruption emphasizes that criminality is learned in interaction with others in a process of communication and from observations of what are referred to as definitions favourable to violation of law(s) (Sutherland, 1939) which is relevant to corruption in law enforcement but could also refer to prison officers, state prosecutors and judges as a ‘culture of corruption’ is possible in all.

This book then reaches beyond the mostly police orientated literature on corruption and highlights how corruption can damage the credibility of a system of justice and legitimacy it needs to function. I consider criminal justice a flawed but necessary system in providing justice but offer a view that we should examine criminal justice as a business and the concomitant acts of corruption that this entails.

**A problem of definition**

As a discipline, criminology has a history of debating the usefulness and limitations of crime data and the problematic nature of recording crime and thus its measurement. The literature explains how crime is recorded and also why crime statistics substantially under-record crime. There is criticism of crime data but if we consider the data for what it is, an estimate of the level of crime, and are aware of the limitations, they serve a purpose and are of use to highlight the reach of crime and corruption in criminal justice systems. The problem here is that some types of corruption are not criminal, yet can damage the legitimacy of criminal justice, and some are criminal but difficult to unearth and expose. For all the limitations however, recorded crime is an antidote to wild inaccurate, sensational views of crime (Jones, 2006), and instead highlights how a criminal justice systems works.

Corruption, especially political corruption, is seen predominantly as a public sector issue. This, however, is slowly changing with recognition that the private sector is corrupt without any link to or involvement with the public sector (Hough, 2015; Heywood, 2015, Brooks, 2016). The delivery of public services in criminal justice in some jurisdictions has also changed with services transferred to private sector. The transformation in the delivery of services, however, engenders new risks for corruption with vested interests between the public and private sectors. An emphasis on public sector corruption is now disingenuous and misses the reach and extent of corruption and by whom it is committed. As noted by Heywood (2015) there needs to be a recalibration of how we conceptualize corruption, study it empirically and analyze it before we know how best to combat it.

Attempts to classify corruption are compounded by trying to review the social, cultural and legal attitudes towards corruption and define corruption across jurisdictions. Even with a clear definition, which would be difficult, if not impossible, the measurement (Anderson and Heywood, 2009; Foster, Horowitz and Mendez, 2009; Brooks et al. 2013) and secretive nature of corruption is difficult expose. Local variations on levels of corruption, attempts, if any, to reduce it, differ. This is more so at the cross-border international level as corruption is not anchored to a fix abode and has no respect for international borders. The complex natures of the differences in social, cultural and political developments only ‘muddy the waters’ of what corruption is, and who has jurisdictional control. It is perhaps best to view corruption as a continuum (Brooks 2016): it can range from legal act(s) that are morally condemned to highly illegal and criminal acts that involve the public and private sector alone or in concert with one another. Traditional roles, particularly in the west where the public sector had a monopoly on providing services has passed, with the ‘Balkanization’ of state apparatuses as new public management reforms (NPM) have colonized much of public sector service delivery and promoted the separation of policy decisions from policy delivery (Heywood and Wright, 1997:91), which has affected and changed the delivery of some criminal justice services, particularly in neo-liberal jurisdictions.

These reforms have created new openings for corruption in ‘western’ jurisdictions and increased conflicts of interest as public service employees move between highly paid public and private sector positions (Eisen, 2017) either after a few years employment or on retirement. The knowledge of the procedures and processes and contacts in a public sector body is invaluable to the private sector. These movements of people has raised some concern in different jurisdictions about the use of privileged information in the private sector, as one organization can secure privilege information and/or access, at the expense of others applying for public sector contracts (Heywood, 2015). The net result of this is a growing privatization of the state with an increase in abuse of office, lobbying ex-colleagues, inappropriate use of official information with kickbacks, bribes and embezzlement. The prospect of future corruption, perhaps beyond the reach of much of the criminal justice system is that it is committed by those *in* the criminal justice system or private sector working with it.

Therefore, because of these changes mentioned above I prefer to avoid the oft quoted Transparency International’s (2012) well-worn phrase of ‘the abuse of entrusted power for private gain’, which has its limitations. Attempting to fit an all-encompassing definition for wide-ranging acts across criminal justice systems excludes acts of corruption rather than includes them; criminology and sociology offer a far more nuanced approach and help place acts of corruption onto a continuum of corruption and help highlight and analyze all acts on the continuum of corruption that range from deviant, non-criminal to criminal acts that can help analyze the reach, depth and breadth of corruption in criminal justice systems.

**Outline of book**

Each chapter can be read chronologically or individually depending on the readers’ interests.

Chapter two *– What is Criminal Justice Corruption*? **–**briefly assesses the problem of trying to define criminal justice corruption. I then examine the reach of state power (Foucault, 1977) and criminal justice corruption and how this can affects the legitimacy of justice (Beetham, 1991, Coicaud, 2002, Bottoms and Tankebe, 2012). Furthermore, I highlight the reach of the privatization (Fitzgibbon, 2016) of criminal justice services that also seek legitimacy similar to that of the state to control (Fitzgibbon and Lea, 2017). Three themes – state power, legitimacy and privatization are reviewed here but surface to some extent in all the chapters as these are under threat or the cause of the threat to criminal justice, particularly in democratic nations.

Chapter 3 **-** *Extent of Corruption in Criminal Justice Systems* **–** reviewsthe problem of measuring and assessing the extent of corruption in criminal justice systems. This chapter reviews the ongoing challenges in developing an accurate understanding of the extent of corruption (Brooks et al. 2013) in law enforcement/policing, the manipulation of scientific data to secure a conviction and the problem of measuring corruption behind prison walls. All of the above is difficult but some understanding of the level of corruption is important; if we have some estimate of corruption we can potentially reduce its incidence and levels of victimization (Van Dijk, 2015). Measurement, regardless of how rough, is therefore critical in providing some benchmark of corruption and identifying what factors are effective in preventing and reducing corruption in criminal justice.

Chapter 4 - *Law Enforcement, Security and Corruption* – reflects on the substantial amount of literature on law enforcement and corruption. However, most of this is on national state law enforcement (Punch, 2000, Punch, 2003, Kutnjack, 2005, Quirine, 2006, Tankebe, 2010, Campbell and Campbell, 2010, Kane, and White, 2013, Bacon, 2014, Stanford, 2015) bodies or specific police units (e.g. narcotics and/or vice) that have engaged in corruption. This chapter will build on this work but also consider the problem of trying to define law enforcement corruption and discuss the causes of corruption. This chapter then considers corruption in law enforcement rather than the ‘police’ as all of the above can corrupt national and international criminal justice systems, the problem of policing undercover and development of private security/policing and routes into corruption. I use the term police in this book to denote a national mostly uniformed service of officers on the streets unless indicated otherwise and ‘policing’ to indicate a method of action and hence one that is used by all involved in law enforcement. All of these law enforcement bodies, however, share one common need; the need for legitimacy (Bottoms and Tankebe, 2012, Miller, 2017). In addition they also share a common threat to this legitimacy; internal and external corruption. This chapter then considers law enforcement reforms that have failed to prevent corruption.

Chapter 5 - *The Jury: An Open Invitation to Corruption?* –considers a contemporary issue: and this is the corruption of the jury, and individual members use of the internet. Whilst members of the jury show bias and prejudicial behaviour (Daftary-Kapur, Dumas and Penrod, 2010) that will impact on the outcome of a case I consider this more a corruption of the case rather than the jury system. Instead I review the impact technology has already had on corrupting the jury system (Browning, 2010, Kiernan and Colley, 2012, Harvey, 2014) and attempts to prevent and reduce this current and undoubted future problem.

Chapter 6 - *Judicial Corruption: Magistrates, Judges and Prosecutors –* examines the corruption of the judiciary and state and private prosecutors. Due to the power often invested in such individuals and bodies investigation is often blocked (Chang and Liu, 2007), or thwarted by political collusion (Braimah, 2016), and/or an informal network of contacts that close ranks if corruption is suspected. This chapter reviews the types of judicial corruption that fall under political interference or administrative misconduct primarily but also considers how judicial independence can be a threat to ‘justice’ as well (Miller, 2004). In addition I consider how judges can extort and/or send signals that bribery is a possible route to a lenient, reduced and/or dismissed case. Finally I consider prosecutors power to stop an investigation into a case, direct law enforcement to find evidence (or lack of it) to discontinue the case, depending on the type of system – adversarial and prosecutorial - prevent witnesses being interviewed, and refuse to indict even if provided with overwhelming evidence of crime (Banks, 2017). Judicial and prosecutorial power and the power to be corrupt is thus a core theme of this chapter.

Chapter 7 - *An Archipelago of Profit: Custodial institutions and Corruption* –will consider the definition and range and types of corruption in custodial institutions committed by inmates and officials e.g. bribery of ‘correction/prison officers’ to ‘assist’ an inmate by smuggling weapons, narcotics, mobile/cell phones in exchange for financial benefit, and/or sexual acts (Souryal, 2009, Centre for the Advancement of Public Integrity, 2016) and the consequences of these actions. In addition I emphasize that some prison systems are under the control of inmates rather than prison officers, and this control of institutions reaches beyond a prison for some inmates in corrupt jurisdictions (Lessing, 2016) and can corrupt criminal justice systems instead. The chapter then assesses the impact privatization has had on the prison system, particularly in the USA.

Chapter 8 - *The Probation Service: Corruption in the Community* – highlights how a part of criminal justice system that is often seen as the most liberal part of the criminal justice system in democratic nations has the potential to be corrupt. This chapter offers a brief description of the types of corruption that can occur in probation services. This is followed by a reflection on the rise of shadow state (White, 2013, Cracknell, 2018), in both the form of the state and private sectors, and the reach and control of offenders in the community and the corruption of the rehabilitative ideal. This leads onto electronic monitoring (EM) (Bartels, and Martinovic, 2017, Graham and McIvor, 2017, Moss, 2018) and the reach of corrupt practice in the private sector*.*

Chapter 9 - *Vigilantes: The Corruption of the Justice System* -will highlight how some nations have lost control of the justice system, and conceded the role of punishment to terrorist and/or paramilitary groups and organized crime. This is particularly noticeable in Mexico (Ochoa and Tomas, 2016), Nigeria (Harnischfeger, 2003, Meagher, 2007) and Northern Ireland (Monaghan, 2004, 2008, Topping and Byrne, 2012, Mullins and Wither, 2016). This chapter therefore explores the need to contain victimization and maintain social order; however, such order is maintained outside the recognized legal order of justice. This chapter then is about extra-judicial punishment tacitly accepted by the police and committed by ‘militias’ outside the legal order and thus the contested notion of what criminal justice can and is able to do and the definition of ‘justice’.

Chapter 10 - *The Legal Profession: Professional Corruption* –chapter starts with a review of legal, professional ethics such as partisanship, neutrality, relationship with client(s), confidentiality and perjury (Banks, 2017). I then briefly review types of crime committed by lawyers for personal benefit and then as a conduit of corruption (Middleton, 2005, Middleton and Levi, 2004, 2015) and risk to the legitimacy and credibility of criminal justice. The next section assesses this threat, if viewed as one, where defence lawyers employ every tactic - legal, breaching rules and illegal conduct – in defence of a client in a court of law. This is then placed into a theoretical framework of white collar crime trying to explain why professionals engage in criminal acts alone or in concert with organized crime.

Chapter 11 - *Conclusion: Equality in Criminal Justice*: *An ideal we are still in Search Of?* In the final chapter I will highlight the reach and problem of corruption in criminal justice and conclude that while corruption is impossible to stop completely, vested interests, which are sometimes the state criminal justice systems, and private sector need to take the matter of corruption seriously to secure the legitimacy and integrity if criminal justice is seen to be impartial and maintain at least enough credibility that its citizens in democratic nations value its existence.

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