

# Criminology & Criminal Justice.

## Special Collection of Articles on: Bourdieu and Criminology

### Foreword

#### **Bourdieu on the Block: Punishment, Policing and the Street**

**Fraser, A. and Sandberg, S (2020)**

This essay introduces the Special Issue 'Bourdieu on the Block: Punishment, Policing and the Street'. Although Bourdieu wrote comparatively little on criminological matters, references to Bourdieu's work have in the last decade gathered into a steady stream.

There is a sense in which criminology, though something of a late-adopter, may be beginning to undergo its own 'Bourdieuian moment'. Notably, several of the contributions to this emergent discussion have taken place in the pages of this journal.

Our intention in bringing them together is to take stock of the 'field of reception' into which Bourdieu's concepts have entered. We have selected articles that directly engage with Bourdieu, either embracing the framework or criticizing it, in something more than a throwaway reference. As represented in the papers, there are at least three tributaries that have pooled to form what we might term a putative Bourdieusian criminology: punishment, policing and the street.

In recognizing the mutually constitutive role of structure, culture and agency in the wellspring of social action, Bourdieu creates a vocabulary for a systematic sociology of crime and criminalisation that bears further development and debate. Taken together, we believe these papers demonstrate not only the important role that Bourdieu has played in criminological research but also the potential to expand further. In order to clarify and develop these approaches, we suggest two future directions for the development of a Bourdieusian criminology.

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# Punishment

## [Understanding 'quality' in probation practice: Frontline perspectives in England & Wales](#)

**Robinson, G. et al (2014) Volume 14, Issue 2**

In the context of 'ordinary' probation practice, quality is a contested concept, as well as an under-researched one. In this article we present the findings of a study which sought to capture, via interviews inspired by Appreciative Inquiry, the views of probation staff about the meaning(s) of 'quality' in probation practice. The interviews revealed a 'frontline' perspective on quality which has not previously been exposed or articulated as such. Drawing upon theoretical concepts developed by Bourdieu, it is argued that despite significant recent changes in the penal and probation fields in England & Wales, and some signs of adaptation in normative conceptions of probation work, there exists a culture or 'probation habitus' among frontline staff that is relatively cohesive and resilient.

## [\*\*Myopia and misrecognition: The impact of managerialism on the management of compliance\*\*](#)

**Phillips, J. (2016) Volume 16, Issue 1**

This article explores the construction of a particular form of compliance in probation practice during a period in which policy shifted from enforcement towards compliance. The article uses four concepts from Bourdieu's field theory (habitus, field, misrecognition and symbolic violence) to highlight the way in which the shift in policy was attuned to the subjective structure of probation practitioners' habitus but resulted in a form of compliance which was myopic in nature and thus did not adhere to what we know about habitus in probation from other research. The article explores this phenomenon through Bourdieu's notion of misrecognition, suggesting that whilst the policy change was regarded generally positively, it is an example of 'symbolic violence'. In turn, this tells us about practitioners' position in the field, which is useful in terms of future analyses of how changes to the delivery of community sanctions will manifest in the coming years.

## **'Let's talk about it': Why social class matters to restorative justice**

**Willis, R. (2020) Volume 20, Issue 2**

Communication is universal to human beings, regardless of gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, disability and so forth. But though communication is a shared capacity, individuals and groups communicate in diverse ways. This study investigates how specifically social class influences participation in scripted restorative justice by affecting how participants communicate. Data from an ethnographic study indicate that restorative justice implementation is not class-neutral because it appears to privilege middle-class forms of communication, and participants from middle-class backgrounds may therefore be more powerfully positioned in restorative justice processes than participants from less advantaged backgrounds. To show this, a comparative methodology is adopted, which involves ethnographic observation and critical discussion of two contrasting restorative justice conferences. The implications of class-based linguistic disadvantage for restorative justice theory are subsequently discussed. The author recommends that restorative justice commits itself to an equality of opportunity which allows stakeholders to participate fully irrespective of their class background. [Bourdieu in keywords]

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## **Policing**

### **Police race relations in the Big Society: Continuity and change**

**Holdaway, S. (2013) Volume 13, Issue 2**

In British politics, it is clear that the idea of the 'Big Society' encompasses many aspects of state activity and civil society, including the work of constabularies. Implications of ideas related to the Big Society implemented in police policy and practice, particularly in the area of police race relations, are considered in this article. No matter what changes that may take place, they will be mediated by the police occupational culture, which itself might be changed by Big Society ideas and concurrent, significant cuts to police budgets. The article begins with a consideration of whether we adequately understand how police organizations change. Janet Chan's use of Bourdieu's ideas on the relationship between 'field' and 'habitus' is criticized. In light of this discussion, the article considers aspects of police race

relations. In particular, the implications of 'seeing like a citizen' and 'participative policing', Big Society ideas identified by Martin Innes, are discussed.

### **Field, Capital and the Policing Habitus: Understanding NYPD Post-9/11 Counterterrorism Practices Through Bourdieusian Theory**

**Quinlan, T. (2019) Online First**

This article extends existing criminology literature by applying sociologist Pierre Bourdieu's theories to examine the practices of the New York City Police Department in the post-9/11 counterterrorism field. Long a subordinate faction to the FBI, the NYPD received a post-9/11 infusion of funds allowing it to pursue greater power, recognition and capital in the field through a broad array of practices. Using its entrenched policing habitus, the NYPD engaged in aggressive counterterrorism practices to seek a dominant position in the field, creating strain with the FBI and local communities. This article expands the growing body of Bourdieusian criminology to explore the resilience of the NYPD's aggressive policing habitus and the challenges created by its application in the counterterrorism field in the first decade of the 'War on Terror'. While drawing insights from empirical criminological research, Bourdieu's theories provide greater understanding of the social, political and structural dimensions that shaped the NYPD's habitus and its application in the post-9/11 counterterrorism field.

### **The Security Field: Forming and Expanding a Bourdieusian Criminology**

**Bowden, M. (2019) Online First**

Recent scholarly contributions have sought to integrate Bourdieusian sociology with criminology, centring for example, on the 'street' field as a symbolic and narrative space occupied by players within criminal justice. This article complements this broad objective by focusing on the changes in contemporary police and security governance that are pointing towards an emerging security field. Such a change can be read from the literature on plural policing and crime control, and involves the morphology of policing into nodes or assemblages of security producers. While there

has been some attention to the formation of security networks, further empirical work is required to map the field dynamics using a Bourdieusian toolkit. This article explores the concept of the security field, presents some observations from current field research, and identifies some remaining questions and challenges for further conceptualisation and empirical research.

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## **Street Culture**

### **Habitus, capital, and conflict: Bringing Bourdieusian field theory to criminology**

**Shammas, V. and Sandberg, S. (2016) Volume 16, Issue 2**

Bourdieu's key conceptual tools, including the forms of capital and habitus, have recently come to be deployed with greater frequency in criminological research. Less attention has been paid to the concept of the field, which plays a crucial role in Bourdieu's vision of how the social world operates. We develop the concept of the "street field" as a tool for scholars of crime and deviance. The concept serves as a guide for research and an instrument of vigilance, drawing attention to the agonistic nature of social relations and the role of domination, the importance of contextual factors in shaping the objects we study, the skillfulness of agents, and the transformative effects of remaining within semi-enclosed domains of social action over extended periods of time.

### **Street talk and Bourdieusian criminology: Bringing narrative to field theory**

**Sandberg, S. and Fleetwood, J. (2017) Volume 17, Issue 4**

The work of Bourdieu has increasingly gained interest in criminology. His theoretical framework is rich and arguably the most sophisticated approach to social inequality and difference in sociology. It has however, been criticized for bias towards the structural aspects of social life, and for leaving little space for the constitutive, and creative role of language. We argue for the inclusion of narrative for understanding street fields. Based on qualitative interviews with 40 incarcerated drug dealers in Norway, we describe the narrative repertoire of the street field, including stories of crime business, violence, drugs and the 'hard life'. The narrative repertoire is

constituted by street capital, but also upholds and produces this form of capital. Street talk is embedded in objective social and economic structures and displayed in the actors' habitus. Narratives bind the street field together: producing social practices and social structure.

**Towards a criminology of atmospheres: law, affect and the codes of the street**

**Fraser, A. and Matthews, D. (2019) Online First**

The street has a long and distinguished pedigree in criminology as a site of human sociability, transgression and spontaneity. Recent scholarship in legal studies, conversely, has explored the role that non-human actors play in the normative ordering of urban life. In this paper we seek to bring these traditions into dialogue through engagement with the concept of 'atmosphere' – a place-based mood or spatialised feeling that blends human and non-human elements, and has the capacity to act in a quasi-agentic manner. Drawing on an experiment in 'atmospheric methods' conducted during Hong Kong's pro-democracy Umbrella Movement, in which some of the city's central streets were occupied for 79 days, we argue that through the analytics of 'atmosphere' we can attend to the complex dynamics of law and street culture in contemporary urban space.

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**Book Review**

**[Book review: Habitus and Drug Using Environments: Health, Place and Lived Experience](#)**

**Monaghan, M. Stephen Harkin (2014) Volume 14, Issue 5**

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# Afterword

## Bourdieu and Criminology: Afterword

**Fowler, B. (2020)**

In bringing together such a wide-ranging set of articles from the journal *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, the editors have assisted in extending Bourdieu's genetic constructivism to criminology, including his conceptual instruments for exploring actors' "regulated improvisation", both inside and outside the law. The contributions gathered here provide an excellent forum for discussing new studies in this area, showing the fertility of his theoretical approach. Despite the many references in Bourdieu's writings to Kafka's *The Trial* - and indeed to lawyers, codification and the legal field - this is a social space which Bourdieu himself only fleetingly illuminates. It is suggested in this afterword that his approach allows us to theorise the social transformation following from a split habitus, not just the social reproduction to which most social scientists refer. Moreover, it is argued that aspects of his theory - unreferenced in the articles above - might also be usefully developed in further research, namely, his studies of gift exchange, of the "revaluing of values" in certain cultural fields, and his analysis - in *On the State* - of the legal and administrative fields.