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CRIMINOLOGY AND  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE

General Editor: Michael Tonry

EDITED BY

BARRY C.

FELD

DONNA M.

BISHOP

≡ The Oxford Handbook of  
JUVENILE CRIME AND  
JUVENILE JUSTICE

THE OXFORD HANDBOOK OF

# JUVENILE CRIME AND JUVENILE JUSTICE

*Edited by*

BARRY C. FELD

*and*

DONNA M. BISHOP

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For Ari and Julia, who embody the promise  
and hope of the next generation.

BCF

I dedicate this book to my father, Joseph Francis Bishop,  
and to the precious memory of my mother,  
Dorothy Ann Bishop (1918–2010), with gratitude  
for their unending love and support.

DMB

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## PREFACE

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Over the past quarter century, media depictions, public perceptions, and political calculations have pushed juvenile crime and juvenile justice systems' responses to it to the center of policy agendas. A sharp increase in urban youth homicide and gun violence between the mid-1980s and mid-1990s precipitated a spasmodic reaction of policies to get tough and crack down on youth crime. Cumulatively, these changes have significantly shifted the focus of the juvenile justice system from an emphasis on treatment of offenders to punishment for their offenses. These policies have affected every aspect of juvenile justice administration, from police practices at the front end to correctional operations at the back end. American juvenile justice policies—especially those associated with the transfer and punishment of youths in criminal courts—are much harsher than in other Western countries.

In a rational world, people would want public officials to adopt juvenile crime policies based on the most reliable knowledge about the causes of delinquency and the likely impact of alternative responses to it. While social science research cannot provide an unambiguous guide to policy makers, it can generate propositions about the relationships between two or more phenomena, for example, poverty and crime or delinquent peers and individual offending. And yet, most law makers adopt policies based on emotional responses and sound-bite politics, rather than a sound evidence base. For example, policies of transferring youths to criminal court persist even though research consistently demonstrates that such policies may be counter-productive and actually increase, rather than decrease, subsequent offending by youths.

Public officials and informed citizens should have ready access to what we do know, as well as what we don't know, about the scope and causes of youth crime, the effectiveness of prevention and intervention strategies, and potentials and pitfalls of juvenile justice administration. This volume provides comprehensive reviews of knowledge about the causes of juvenile crime and justice system responses. We divide the volume into two parts—juvenile crime and juvenile justice. We asked contributors to discuss the policy implications of the research they review for juvenile justice administration.

The section on juvenile crime examines trends and patterns of juvenile offending and the individual-level, micro-contextual level—family, peers, gangs, and schools—and macro-structural variables that affect youth crime. It examines how much delinquency occurs, who commits it, what causes some youths to commit crimes, what factors distinguish youths who persist or desist from criminal activities, what theories of delinquency best explain the phenomena, and the

implications of criminological research for policies to prevent or reduce juvenile offending.

The section on juvenile justice administration examines the history of the juvenile court, the various stages of juvenile justice processing—police, intake, detention, adjudication, and disposition—the types of interventions employed—restorative justice, probation supervision, and institutional confinement—and the handling of special offender populations—girls and minority youths. It concludes by examining recent trends in juvenile justice administration and places the American practice in international perspective.

Books like this require a substantial commitment. Contributors worked to tight deadlines, prepared successive drafts to adhere to even tighter deadlines, and responded graciously to our numerous comments and requests. Even though, at times, we editors felt like we were “herding cats”—a consequence of soliciting the most esteemed and busy scholars—we are most grateful to them for their contributions, cooperation, and assistance in bring this volume to fruition.

We assembled an outstanding line-up of scholars to provide comprehensive overviews of every aspect of juvenile crime and juvenile justice administration. We asked contributors—each a leading authority on his or her topic—to present a readable and current review of the literature that would provide students, justice officials, interested citizens, and honest politicians with the best information available to make informed decisions. Each comprehensive chapter includes references and bibliographies to specialized literatures to enable readers to identify the most important sources and to further educate themselves. We asked contributors to provide accessible, nontechnical introductions to the subjects so that readers could quickly absorb the salient literature and the relationships among the topics. Readers will decide whether we have succeeded.

Barry C. Feld  
Effie, MN  
June 2010

Donna M. Bishop  
Boston, MA  
June 2010

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PART I

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NATURE AND PATTERNS  
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