

Radical and Marxist Theories of Crime

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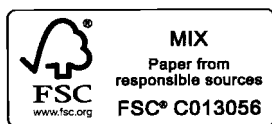
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Series Preface

Because of its pervasive nature in our mass mediated culture, many believe they are experts in understanding the reasons why offenders violate the law. Parents and schools come high on the public's list of who to blame for crime. Not far behind are governments and legal systems that are believed to be ineffective at deterring offenders – too many legal protections and too few serious sentences. Some learn how to behave inappropriately as children, while others are said to choose crime because of its apparent high reward/low cost opportunity structure. Yet others hang out with the wrong crowd, or live in the wrong neighborhood, or work for the wrong corporation, and may get their kicks from disobeying rules in the company of like-minded others. A few are seen as evil, insane or just plain stupid. While such popular representations of the causes of crime contain glimpses of the criminological reality, understanding why people commit crime is a much more complex matter. Indeed, for this reason the quest to establish the causes of crime has been one of the most elusive searches confronting humankind.

Since the mid-19th century, following the advent of Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species*, those who sought scientific knowledge to understand crime abandoned philosophical speculation and economic reductionism. In its place they founded the multifaceted interdisciplinary field of criminology. Unlike criminal law and legal theory that explored the logic of prohibitions against offensive behavior, and in contrast to criminal justice that examined the nature and extent of societies' responses to crime through systems of courts, police and penology, criminology's central focus is the systematic examination of the nature, extent and causes of crime. Criminological theory as a subset of criminology, comprises the cluster of explanation seeking to identify the causes or etiology of crime. This *Library of Essays in Theoretical Criminology* is designed to capture the range and depth of the key theoretical perspectives on crime causation.

While there are numerous criminological theories, most can be clustered into 10 or 12 theoretical perspectives. Moreover, each of these broad theoretical frameworks is, itself, rooted in a major academic discipline. The most predominant disciplines influencing criminological theory include: economics, anthropology, biology, psychology, geography, sociology, politics, history, philosophy, as well as the more recent multi-disciplinary fields such as gender studies, critical race studies and postmodernist social theory.

Criminological theories are rarely discrete. Although they often emphasize a particular disciplinary field, they also draw on aspects of other disciplines to strengthen their explanatory power. Indeed, since 1989 a major development in criminological theory has been the emergence of explicitly integrative theoretical approaches (See Gregg Barak, *Integrative Criminology*; Ashgate, 1998). Integrative/interdisciplinary approaches bring together several theories into a comprehensive explanation, usually to address different levels of analysis; these range from the micro-individual and relational approaches common in biology and psychology, to the meso-level institutional explanations that feature in sociological analysis, to the macro-level geographical, political, cultural and historical approaches that deal with

societal and global structures and patterns. Recent developments in criminological theory have seen an acceleration of this trend compared with that of single disciplinary explanations of crime (See Stuart Henry and Scott Lukas, *Recent Developments in Criminological Theory*; Ashgate, 2009).

Although there are now over 20 English-language criminological theory textbooks and numerous edited compilations, there is a need to make available to an international audience a series of books that brings together the best of the available theoretical contributions. The advantage of doing this as a series, rather than a single volume, is that the editors are able to mine the field for the most relevant essays that have influenced the present state of knowledge. Each contribution to the series thus contains many chapters, each on a different aspect of the same theoretical approach to crime causation.

In creating this series I have selected outstanding criminologists whose own theories are discussed as part of the literature and I have asked each of them to select a set of the best journal essays to represent the various facets of their theoretical framework. In doing so, I believe that you will receive the best selection of essays available together with an insightful and comparative overview placing each essay in the context of the history of ideas that comprises our search to better understand and explain crime and those who commit it.

STUART HENRY

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Introduction

Radical or Marxist criminology (hereafter RMC), also identified by other labels – for example socialist, neo-Marxist, leftist, criminologies of the left (Lynch and Michalowski, 2006) – emerged as a criminological area of interest during the late 1960s and early 1970s, although its roots can be traced back to some classic works, particularly Engels' *The Condition of the Working Class in England* (1845), Bonger's *Criminality and Economic Conditions* (1905) and Rusche and Kirchheimer's *Punishment and Social Structure* (1939). This introduction provides a brief description of RMC and its important theoretical and empirical developments.

At the heart of modern Marxist political economic theory is a concern for the causes and consequences of class structure and formation (Wright, 1997). As Wright notes, '[t]he concept of class figures as an explanatory principle ... in virtually all substantive problems addressed within Marxist theory' (1997, p. 27). As such, RMC focuses on the relationship between crime, class structure and class formation and has examined the ways in which social class shapes (1) the definition of crime (Schwendinger and Schwendinger, 1970, 1972 and Chapter 1 in this volume); (2) the formation and content of law (Tigar, 1977); (3) criminal justice processes (Chambliss and Seidman, 1982; Chambliss, 1999; Quinney, 1974; Reiman, 2006), including policing (Hall *et al.*, 1978; Harring, 1983; Platt *et al.*, 1982), imprisonment (Reiman, 2006) and courts (Hay *et al.*, 1975); and (4) how class inequalities relate to the causes of various crimes such as serious juvenile delinquency (Colvin and Pauly, Chapter 15 in this volume), corporate crime (Box, 1984) and crime more generally (Taylor *et al.*, 1973). Given the wide range of RMC we broadly define it as an approach that employs *class analysis* and *Marxist political economic theory* to address an array of concerns relevant to the study of crime, including law, justice and social control (Spitzer, Chapter 6 in this volume).

The first section of this introduction elaborates the RMC perspective and its emphasis on class relations. Next, we review several early studies of crime and law that shaped the development of contemporary RMC. Finally we examine research in four important areas: (1) definitions and background of crime; (2) varieties of radical/Marxist criminology; (3) explanations of crime; and (4) social control: studies of policing and punishment. We conclude with some general observations about the importance of RMC theory and the recent decline in RMC scholarship.

The RMC Perspective and the Importance of Class

At the most general level RMC is 'a way of doing criminology that frames the problem of crime in terms of the sociological forces of class, race, gender and culture' (Lynch and Michalowski, 2006, p. 1). Because other volumes in this series examine criminological perspectives that focus on race, gender and culture, we focus on class as opposed to 'non-asset' social criteria such as race and gender (Wright, 1997). We note, as does Wright (1997), that while racial oppression

often accompanies class oppression it can also occur independently of class oppression. By class we mean class relations (both within and between), which emphasizes the idea of class as a power structure that is defined by the productive process. This is a decidedly Marxist definition of class with the following primary classes or relations to production: (1) *bourgeois* or the *owners of the means of production* (about 1 per cent of the US population); (2) the *petty bourgeois* or the managers of capital, small business owners and private independent practices (for example medical and legal practices; in all this class comprises about 15 per cent of the US population); and (3) the *working class*, or those who ordinarily labour for others to earn wages (about 84 per cent of the US population). The working class has multiple segments that include lower level white-collar and skilled crafts-persons and organized service workers (24 per cent), mid-level blue-collar workers (24 per cent), low level blue-collar and service workers (18 per cent) and those who form the ranks of the surplus and marginal labour force of seasonally employed, day labourers, those with sporadic employment and the unemployed and unemployable (18 per cent; see Beeghley, 2004; Gilbert, 2002; Thompson and Hickey, 2005; on contradictory class locations, see Wright, 1997). Class division indicates the relationship of individuals to the *means of production* or the means for producing wealth and ownership of those means. In other words, class is not simply a reflection of one's economic position as indicated by wealth and income, nor does it correspond to the common assumption among Americans of a simple division into upper, middle and lower classes. Rather, it describes the relationship or class location of whole categories of people to the ownership and control of a society's means of producing its goods and services. The particular configuration of these relationships in a particular historical era constitutes the class structure of a society. Equally important is the observation that class location translates into political power, meaning that the highest social classes are able to translate their economic power into political power and can therefore influence the system of law and governance.

Marxist political economy is based on two primary assumptions. First, each economic system develops a unique class structure, and that class structure and political, economic and social power are interrelated through that structure (Wright, 1997, pp. 96–98). In addition, class structure defines not only the roles of classes and the individuals who occupy those classes as well as their access to power, but also their life chances for success and economic advancement. In other words, material success is closely tied to the social class into which a person is born (Smith, 1981).

Second, Marxist political economy is a theory of how capitalism works. It begins with the assumption that social relationships and social organization are shaped and ordered by economic arrangements. Political economic explanations begin with the economic system and its structure, and examine how the political economy influences the organization of the rest of society. In Marxian terms, economic structure or the infrastructure is the frame upon which the remainder of society's social relations and institutions (the superstructure) are built. As a result, the form the superstructure acquires is constrained by the design and scope of the infrastructure. Marx developed this theory in his writings, which cover thousands of manuscript pages, and in conjunction with his theory of history called historical materialism.

As an economic system, capitalism is deeply rooted in structural inequality between classes. These economic inequities will tend to be replicated in the social institutions that are designed within a capitalist nation, and will also tend to reinforce economic inequality associated with

a variety of social problems. Thus, RMC theorists often demonstrate a commitment to praxis or the proposition that deeply rooted economic, political and social change is an important policy for remedying social problems (Ward, 1979). This commitment goes hand-in-hand with efforts to improve the conditions of life for the majority, and especially for those who occupy the lowest social classes (Ward, 1979).

The Early Roots of RMC Theory

The earliest effort to explain crime that incorporated a radical perspective was published by Frederick Engels in his book *The Condition of the Working Class in England* ([1845] 1973) (hereafter *Condition*). This work predates the long collaborative effort between Engels and Marx devoted to analysing class conflict and the economic, social and political structure of capitalism.

In *Condition*, Engels argued that processes inherent within capitalist economic relations had numerous detrimental effects for the working class. He explored a wide range of these effects in *Condition*, where his firsthand observations of working-class lifestyles and conditions of life are recorded. Engels observed that under capitalism workers were treated poorly and received subsistence-level wages for working long hours. Long work days of up to 16 hours for as many as six days each week, coupled with economic impoverishment, high levels of pollution and environmental hazards, unrewarding and unsafe working conditions, and a complete lack of personal economic security created severe demoralization among the working class (see Clark and Foster, 2006). Under these circumstances the working class suffered from 'want and wretchedness' and together these conditions (demoralization, want and wretchedness) produced the milieu for the production of crime.

Engels argued that there are two ways that capitalism produced crime among the working class. Both explanations examine how crime among the British working class could be understood as a logical response to the strain of widespread poverty, pollution and working-class existence.

First, Engels argued that some workers engaged in acts that could be understood as expressions of dissatisfaction with their conditions of life, producing crimes against employers and capital. For example, rioting workers might destroy factories and machinery in acts of sabotage. These offenders possessed a potentially revolutionary character that reflected some level of class consciousness or awareness of their position in the class structure.

Second, since many workers faced starvation, they often turned to ordinary street crime. This second type of crime represented an effort to survive within the existing social and economic order, and involved property and violent crimes directed against other members of the working class (crime later identified as crime of resistance and crimes of accommodation by Quinney, 1980). In Engels' view, these 'street' crimes were much more widely observed among the working class and illustrated the broad lack of class consciousness among them.

Willem Bongers is known for his early efforts at empirically testing the capitalism–crime relationship in his book *Criminality and Economic Conditions* ([1905] 1916). Bongers employed a diverse array of crime and economic data from several nations to investigate his hypothesis linking capitalism and crime. Bongers argued that by encouraging competition,

capitalism gave rise to egoistic as opposed to altruistic social relationships, which promoted individual greed, selfishness and fervent excitement, all the conditions that favoured acting out 'the criminal thought', that would result in higher rates of crime in capitalist societies. Bonger also recognized that the law tended to reinforce the rights of property holders, meaning that the law would be biased and over-represent the lower classes among criminal populations. Bonger provided extensive empirical support for his propositions and his work has had a lasting impact on RMC theory (for example, see Antonaccio and Tittle, Chapter 12 in this volume).

In the early 1900s a number of critiques and theories of law based in Marxist analysis emerged, most notably among Russian scholars such as M.A. Reisner (see Kelsen, 1955) who expanded Petrazhitskii's intuitive theory of law (see Vucinich, 1970) to argue that the Russian proletariat could derive a revolutionary form of law from an understanding of its class position. The most widely regarded among these early works was presented by P.I. Stuckha in 1921 (see Sharlet *et al.*, 1988), who argued that law was a reflection of social interests and, more specifically, the interests of the dominant economic class.

Stuckha's work became the basis for Evgeny Pashukanis' seminal work, *The General Theory of Law and Marxism* (1925). Pashukanis built on Stuckha's observation to develop the commodity exchange theory of law, noting that only capitalist society 'creates all the conditions necessary for the legal element in social relationships to achieve its full potential' (1925, p. 5). Moreover, the law also develops an elaborate framework that hides from view the relationship between the commodity form and law (see Milovanovic, 1981 for contemporary extension). According to Pashukanis, law is a system of social relationships that captures and reflects the material conditions of society – its economic and value arrangements – and it must do so, not because these legal relationships are chosen by those in society, but because they are necessary as a means to reinforce economic and social relations. In Pashukanis' words, 'capital began to colour or give its form to another social relation' (1925, p. 17) – in this case, law. More specifically, law takes on the form of relationships expressed by private interest or commodity relationships and not, as bourgeois legal philosophers claim, as a result of social norms developed according to natural human relationships that are then expressed and codified by the state. Law is, in other words, part of the capitalist superstructure.

Elaborations of Marx's ideas about law also appeared in the US. Charles Beard (1913) employed a Marxist approach in his analysis of the economic basis of the US Constitution, and crafted his argument as a response to historical research that asserted that law emanates from a consensus of the people. Beard (1913, p. 12) believed that because prior legal scholars had taken up a consensus view of law, they had ignored and distorted the role of power and privilege in shaping the Constitution. Beard suggested that those in charge of creating laws will tend to promote their economic and class interests. This proposition, Beard asserted, could be assessed empirically by examining the economic holdings of the law-makers who created and supported the Constitution. Reviewing an extensive array of available records pertinent to this issue, Beard argued that the framers of the Constitution and their allies represented what is today referred to as the 'power elite' (Domhoff, [1967] 2009; Mills, 1956). Similar views on the making of law remain persistent features of contemporary RMC (Chambliss and Zatz, 1993).

Georg Rusche and Otto Kirchheimer's 1939 work, *Punishment and Social Structure*, also stands out as a significant contribution to early RMC. Employing political economic theory and historical materialism as guides, Rusche and Kirchheimer argued that punishments are historically specific and emerge under prevailing economic conditions with which they correspond. In contrast to other explanations of punishment, Rusche and Kirchheimer's perspective establishes not only a connection between punishment and economy, but reveals the basis for changes in punishment over time. This idea is captured in their well-known hypothesis that 'every system of production tends to discover punishments which correspond to its productive relationships' (Rusche and Kirchheimer, [1939] 1968, p. 5). Given this connection between punishment and economic relations, the significance of punishment is extracted from its economic functions. This view stands in contrast to the traditional criminological view which interprets punishment in relation to its crime control function or to philosophies of punishment (Newman, 2008). On this point, Rusche and Kirchheimer argued

the bond ... that is supposed to exist between crime and punishment prevents any insight into the independent significance of the history of penal systems ... Punishment is neither a simple consequence of crime, nor the reverse side of crime, nor the mere means which is determined by the end to be achieved. Punishment must be understood as a social phenomenon freed from both its juristic concept and its social ends. ([1939] 1968, p. 5)

Finally, Rusche and Kirchheimer argued that the economic origins of punishment required that it not only fit with economic goals, but that it served a class control and class struggle containment function by lowering those punished to a status below that occupied by the lowest free social class, a position known as *the principle of least eligibility* (see Garland, 1990, pp. 85–110; Lynch and Michalowski, 2006).

Rusche and Kirchheimer illustrate these various points through the use of qualitative histories, exploring the fit between punishment and economic structures in different historical epochs and in specific applications (for example the use of corporal punishment in the Middle Ages; transportation; the emergence of fines; forced labour; under capitalist systems of production). Much contemporary work (see below) supports Rusche and Kirchheimer's various hypotheses through the use of empirical analysis.

Having reviewed some background and historical precursors to RMC, below we address several key areas of research that correspond with the parts of this book: (1) definitions and background; (2) varieties of radical/Marxist criminology; (3) explaining crime; and (4) social control: policing and punishment. These categories do not exhaust RMC research, and while we have endeavoured to present as broad a cross-section of RMC research as possible, it was not feasible in the short compass of this book to include all relevant literature (for extended discussions of RMC, see Cowling, 2008; Lynch and Michalowski, 2006; Michalowski, 1985; Quinney, 1980; Reiman, 2006; Russell, 2002; Taylor *et al.*, 1973).

Definitions and Background

One of the core contributions of RMC is its challenge to the orthodox or traditional criminological definition of crime. Debates concerning the definition of crime are long-standing within criminology and were highlighted in the well-known exchange between Edwin Sutherland (1945), a sociologist interested in explaining white-collar crime, and legal theorist Paul Tappan (1947). For his part, Tappan took up the traditional argument that crime is defined by the parameters of criminal law. In contrast, Sutherland suggested that the definition of crime by criminal law was too narrow and restrictive to be a useful focal point for defining crime. Specifically, Sutherland, like Bonger ([1905] 1916), was concerned that the criminal law contains a class bias. The assertion that the law reflects class interests that direct most of its regulatory power at lower class offenders is a central aspect of RMC.

As noted, Sutherland believed that class biases in law restricted the study of crime by omitting the wide variety of legal violations in which the upper class engage. Upper class individuals and corporate entities, for example, are able to draw upon their status and occupation to commit crimes inaccessible to individuals from other social classes (for example white-collar and corporate crimes). These 'white-collar' crimes, as Sutherland preferred to call them, were defined as illegal by a variety of laws including regulatory, administrative and civil laws that focused on corporate illegalities.

Sutherland notes that the orthodox definition of crime was problematic for criminology and the study of crime because it impacts (1) the study of crime, (2) the construction of crime theories, (3) the understanding and interpretation of the creation and structure of law, and (4) the operation of social control mechanisms. In short, if criminological knowledge is derived from a biased definition of crime, it is also likely to be biased. The concern that a biased definition of crime has led to distorted criminological knowledge remains a central concern in RMC.

It must be noted that orthodox criminologists who defend the definition of crime by criminal law often argue that this is an objective definition of crime because it accepts prevailing legal practices as the definitional criteria, a claim rejected by RMC. As noted by Pashukanis years earlier, the natural law approach attempts to appear objective by referring to an independent criterion (that is, criminal law that is formed by social norms) to identify crime. However, the selected criterion contains biases (class biases) that threaten the very validity of the definition.

The Sutherland–Tappan debate raises an important question: 'what behaviours should criminologists study?' In the orthodox or traditional view, the answer is 'behaviours that violate the criminal law'. In contrast, RMC argues that because the criminal law contains biases, criminologists should focus on harmful behaviours. In short, the criminal law is one way of identifying what criminologists should study, but it is not the only way.

Building on this argument, RMC scholars drew attention to non-criminal law violations and harms such as corporate crime (Frank and Lynch, 1992), environmental crime and justice (Burns *et al.*, 2008) and state-corporate crime (Michalowski and Kramer, 2005). Though widely recognized for drawing attention to these understudied harms, the RMC critique of the definition of crime was rejected on other grounds, and much early RMC research addressed these criticisms. One consequence of addressing these criticisms and building a defence against mainstream challenges to a more radical definition of crime was the failure among

radicals to develop explanations of criminal behaviour that fit orthodox criteria, including 'theory' testing (see Part III).

Richard Quinney was among the first to devote considerable attention to identifying how power relations shape the study of crime. In *The Social Reality of Crime*, he argued that 'crime is a definition ... created by authorized agents in a politically organized society' (1970, p.16) and that, as a result, the process of defining crime will tend to reflect existing power relations and structural inequalities that reinforce existing social arrangements. Quinney's view stands in sharp contrast to orthodox criminology where crime is interpreted as the legal representation of inherently harmful behaviours that reflects widely shared and agreed upon definitions of criminal behaviour (that is, the consensus view), or that crime is a behaviour that is *mala in se* or bad in itself. Quinney's position implies that the definition of crime results from political processes, and consequently is shaped by the interests of the powerful. In RMC, this view is used to support the contention that economic interests, which are translated into political power through political mechanisms (for example lobbying and funding of political candidates), shape definitions of crime and that this is the process through which class bias becomes incorporated into criminal law.

The contemporary RMC view of crime was also shaped by Herman and Julia Schwendinger (1970, 1972) who defined crime in a series of influential essays, one of which is reproduced here as Chapter 1. The Schwendingers challenged the traditional definition of crime, not only because of the class biases this view contained (for example the focus of criminal law on behaviours the economically powerless were more likely to commit), but also because this view did not address the objective nature of social harms and thereby excluded important harms from criminological investigation. Building on these arguments, RM-criminologists began to examine a wide range of harms that eclipsed the scope of criminal law. These 'socially injurious behaviours' included various outcomes such as violations of human rights and racism and sexism, but also were expanded to include unsafe working conditions, inadequate medical care and housing, the limits of welfare, welfare reforms and the collapse of the welfare safety net (Michalowski, 1985), crimes of economic domination and corporate crime (Pearce, 1976; Quinney, 1980; Reiman, 2006), and later state crime (Rothe and Freidrichs, Chapter 8 in this volume), state-corporate crime (Kramer *et al.*, 2002) and environmental harms such as pollution, and environmental justice (Lynch *et al.*, 2006; Lynch and Stretesky, 2001; Stretesky, 1996; Stretesky and Lynch, 1999).

In Chapter 2, Paddy Hillyard and Steve Tombs take up a more contemporary version of this argument in their social harms perspective, though they also note that '[c]riminology has largely failed to be self-reflective regarding the dominant, state-defined notion of, "crime"' (p. 15) and consequently treats crime as a basic, taken-for-granted, unproblematic concept. As noted, by defining crime as a violation of criminal law, orthodox criminologists have said nothing about the nature of acts that ought to be counted as crimes, while the legal approach reinforces the power structures that produce definitions of crime. In place of the legal definition and earlier radical propositions concerning the definition of crime, Hillyard and Tombs propose that criminologists use a social harms approach to study a variety of acts that are deleterious to people throughout their life course. This would require that criminologists move from defining the term 'crime' to defining the term 'harm'. A social harms approach

would also promote a connection to social justice, and maintenance of a commitment to eliminating class inequality as a key response to remedying social harms.

Raymond Michalowski, in Chapter 3, also extends the class argument laid out above and questions traditional definitions of crime while tracing the intellectual history of 'critical criminology'. 'Critical criminology' is a broader identifier than 'radial' or 'Marxist' criminology and includes a wide range of theories associated with 'the left'. Nevertheless, in tracing that history, Michalowski elucidates the origins and roots of RMC.

The core of RMC research focuses on explaining crime, law-making and law enforcement within the context of class struggle in a given political economic context. A number of explanations have focused attention on these concerns and several are widely cited and important to the development of RMC. In this volume we include two influential works written in the mid-1970s by William Chambliss and Steven Spitzer. Both essays trace the theoretical anchoring points of RMC in class and political economic analysis, and both illustrate why it is essential to describe law-breaking with reference to law-making and law enforcement and not simply in the traditional etiological language of criminology (for example what causes crime). These works explicitly describe the ways that orthodox definitions of crime create bias in the study of crime. In the RMC view, crime is 'produced', meaning it is not simply the result of how law is made, or how law is enforced, or of factors that cause crime. Rather, crime is produced by the intersection of each of these factors within a given economic context (Lynch and Michalowski, 2006). In Chapter 6 Spitzer, for example, following Marx, notes that capitalist systems ordinarily produce problem populations that consist of marginalized or surplus workers – the unemployed and unemployable populations of redundant workers who the system cannot incorporate and who serve the purpose of providing a reserve army of labour that promotes capitalist interests by keeping wages low. In this view, criminal laws and social control responses are interpreted as efforts to contain and control these classes of people by primarily focusing on the deviance they commit. For example, criminal justice is largely focused on drug use and sales, interpersonal violence, theft and vagrancy (on vagrancy, see Chambliss, 1964; see also Adler, 1989; Chambliss, 1989a) – offences RMC argues are produced by structural conditions (Bonger, [1905] 1916; Engels, [1845] 1973; Gordon, Chapter 11 in this volume; Quinney, 1980). As Spitzer notes, in the normal development of capitalism, the structural conditions that generate surplus populations and extend economic marginalization will tend to accelerate. Thus, as capitalism advances, the need for social control will expand (see Lynch *et al.*, Chapter 14 in this volume). In Chapter 4 Chambliss adds to these general ideas the proposition that as the economic gap between classes widens, the need for social control expands, promoting the development of an increasingly larger criminal justice network.

In Chapter 5 Steven Barkan addresses an issue that has long impacted the development of RMC – the role of quantitative analysis as a tool in radical inquiry (Groves, 1985; Lynch, 1987; Lynch *et al.*, 2006). Throughout much of its early development, quantitative analysis was rejected within RMC and by Marxists in a variety of disciplines during the 1960s–1980s, when it was largely interpreted as a tool of class oppression and as a class-linked method for performing scientific investigations (for example Dunne, 1991). As Barkan points out, many critical scholars have argued that quantitative analysis is anti-humanistic, superficial and arcane. However, Barkan reports that Marx often employed empirical data to understand and

address issues. Moreover, there is a significant body of empirical research by radical political economists that also addresses these issues (for example, see the journal *Review of Radical Political Economics*). Barkan believes that empirical analysis is critical within the discipline of criminology because it has been used to criticize RMC theory as non-scientific. In order to compete with orthodox criminologists on matters of public policy, RMC needs to do more than develop ideas about how things 'ought to be'. RM-criminologists also need to collect and analyse data to convince critics that the RMC perspectives on crime, law and justice provide valid alternatives to the empirical data that orthodox criminologists have mustered. Barkan uses several examples (for example the death penalty) to show how RM-criminologists can promote the legitimacy of their view using empirical studies. In the end Barkan argues that without empirical analysis, RMC fails as a critique of orthodox criminology.

The very nature of RMC *requires* it to accept, rather than reject, empirical analysis – though this is not the tactic once widely embraced by RM-criminologists. Because RMC is 'radical' and 'Marxist' it is often rejected as ideologically extreme. As can be easily noted by examining the other books in this series, one of the points that distinguishes RMC from other variants of critical criminology is that RMC embraces political economic and class analysis as well as empirical research.

Varieties of Radical/Marxist Criminology

Part II of this volume examines four varieties of RMC. One of the most influential is left realism, which Jock Young argues in Chapter 7 is both radical and realistic. Its realist orientations stem from its effort to describe the realities of crime as it is played out in working-class communities. The notion here is that while radical criminology emphasizes crime as a logical response to class relations, it has few practical solutions to intra-class street crime and the oppressive policies that orthodox criminology suggests to control such crime. In the end, this neglect has led to unchallenged state policies used to combat crime and further harm working-class communities. Thus, while left realism is critical of radical criminology, it is also simultaneously radical because it promotes the view of crime as an endemic characteristic of advanced capitalist society's structural organization and relationships. Thus, left realism's essential mission is to highlight the problem of crime in working-class communities and to develop progressive practical policies that address that problem by democratizing social control and limiting the extension of repressive social controls that are often called for in orthodox criminology.

While Young called for a renewed focus on the working class, other RM-criminologists emphasized corporate and governmental crimes. Indeed, one of the chief contributions of RMC has been to call attention to the crimes of the powerful. When criminologists focus attention on criminal statistics, they often exclude the numerous offences that fall outside of criminal law statutes that have economic motives and implications – corporate, white-collar, state and environmental crimes. When these are included as crimes, most crimes can be seen to have an economic dimension. In addition, the exclusion of this latter set of acts from criminal law draws attention to the relationship between economic structures and power and class relations and the construction of law and social control responses. These latter crimes, which

we can group together and refer to as ‘crimes of the powerful’, are often treated under non-criminal statutes and through non-criminal forms of social control, and bring with them lesser penalties (for example fines rather than incarceration), a lower probability of penalties and reduced stigma. In recent years, the idea that RMC should focus on crimes of the powerful has been extended to state-corporate crime (Chambliss, 1989b; Kramer *et al.*, 2002; Michalowski and Kramer, 2005; Rothe and Friedrichs, Chapter 8 in this volume), an idea that expands upon the intersection of corporate (Kramer, 1989) and state crime (Kauzlarich and Kramer, 1998). RMC theorists, such as Dawn Rothe and David Friedrichs in Chapter 8, have focused almost exclusively on crimes of the powerful. Nevertheless, they argue, while a significant literature focused on state-corporate crime has emerged, this literature is still ‘very much in its infancy’ (p. 116) and requires clarification of key concepts and a theory of state-corporate crime. Rothe and Friedrichs draw upon the history of state and corporate crime to demonstrate how it can be incorporated into a RMC perspective (on environmental crimes and justice, see Lynch and Stretesky, 2001; Stretesky, 1996; Stretesky and Lynch, 1999).

RMC has drawn attention to other neglected corporate crimes including corporate violence against women, an issue addressed by Walter DeKeseredy and Colin Goff in Chapter 9. Specifically, DeKeseredy and Goff examined health and social issues surrounding the safety of silicone breast implants. One of the most important RMC positions that draws attention to female victims is the Schwendingers’ work on rape (1982, 1983), including the essay reproduced here as Chapter 10. In contrast to patriarchal theories that state that gender-based inequity is the source of violence against women (for example Messerschmidt, 1986, 1988, 1993), the Schwendingers draw upon RMC to argue that political economic arrangements facilitate sexual inequities in ways that promote violence against women, including rape. Consequently, remedying a problem such as rape requires addressing fundamental or basic economic inequities, and not simply gender inequities and differences.

Explaining Crime

As previously noted, Engels argued that poor economic conditions promoted crime among the working class, and in what is likely the oldest statement on the causes of crime consistent with RMC, stated that ‘[w]ant leaves the working-man the choice between starving slowly, killing himself speedily, or taking what he needs where he finds it – in plain English, stealing. And there is no cause for surprise that most of them prefer stealing to starvation and suicide’ ([1845] 1973, p. 154). While Engels’ observations are dated, and capitalism and class relations have changed since his day, the general sentiment expressed in this quotation remains relevant. Those arrested for crime in the US, for example, are primarily members of the working class, and are more likely to be among the lowest strata of that class – the surplus or marginal population or the portion of the working class that is unemployed or partially or seasonally employed. In short, their ‘choice’ is between ‘living’ life freely at the lowest end of society in poverty or taking control over what they seem to be able to control through becoming involved in crime. Even if the criminal world does not provide riches for those involved, it does produce alternative systems of evaluating self-worth (Grose and Groves, 1993; Groves, 1993; Jankowski, 1991).