

## Crime and Control in the Culture of Late Modernity

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David Garland, *The Culture of Control: Crime and Social Order in Contemporary Society*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001. Pp. vii + 307 pages. \$30.00 cloth.

Evi Girling, Ian Loader, and Richard Sparks, *Crime and Social Change in Middle England: Questions of Order in an English Town*. New York: Routledge, 2000. Pp. xi + 211 pages. \$27.99 paper.

### I. Introduction

**A**lthough crime, disorder, and other threats to security often generate widespread concern, these problems have become more central to the political, social, and cultural life of many industrialized nations. At the same time, many Western governments—especially that of the United States—have adopted more punitive and explicitly retributive crime control policies. Both of these developments have had important consequences for the study of crime and control, as enhanced funding opportunities for research and increased student interest in crime and punishment fuel the growth of criminology and criminal justice studies. Although typically housed within social science units, the proliferation of free-standing criminology and criminal justice programs separates, at least at the institutional level, the study of crime and control from the more established social sciences. While quite diverse, these programs often define

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their subject matter fairly narrowly and prioritize a specialized body of criminological theory over more general social theory and research.

By contrast, the two books under consideration here locate the study of crime and control at the center of social scientific and historical analysis, and, in so doing, demonstrate in profound and insightful ways that these subjects are central to the social life of “late modern” societies. Both books are particularly concerned with the “cultural sensibilities” concerning crime, order, and security; that is the structures of feeling and ways of thinking and talking about these subjects. Both highlight the ways in which these cultural sensibilities are influenced by and have an influence on a wide range of social phenomena. In short, both studies bring historical, sociological, and cultural awareness to the study of crime and control, and, by illuminating how concerns about perceived threats to security are bound up with larger social issues, make a persuasive case for integrating the study of these topics with disciplines such as history, geography, sociology, law and society, and cultural studies.

Despite this similar framework, the two books approach their subject matter in very different ways. On one hand, Garland seeks to identify the broad themes, trends, and unifying principles of what he, drawing on Bourdieu, refers to as the *crime control field*. Having identified the key features of this field in the United Kingdom and the United States before and after the 1970s, he offers a comprehensive account of its transformation, arguing that “the patterns of risk, insecurities and control problems to which American and British governments, corporations and citizens have been responding are those typically generated by the social, economic, and cultural arrangements of late modernity” (2001:7). Given the broad sweep of his study, Garland relies primarily on secondary sources and published materials to map these developments and to construct his explanatory framework. By contrast, Girling, Loader, and Sparks (2000) provide a very detailed account of the cultural sensibilities of people living in a single town in ‘Middle England,’ Macclesfield. The authors demonstrate that the complexity and variability of these sensibilities complicate the broad generalizations made by more macro-sociologically inclined analysts, as well as those that emerge from the survey-based “fear of crime” literature. Their close, detailed examination of Macclesfield residents’ “crime-talk” is based on primary research generated through multiple methods, including interviews, focus group discussions, observations, ride-alongs, and analyses of official documents, all aimed at capturing the complexity and nuance of residents’ sensibilities regarding crime and control.

In addition, although both books situate their analysis historically—in the context of late modernity—they highlight very dif-

ferent aspects of late modern social life. For Garland, late modernity is “an historical phase in the process of modernization,” one that “shows no sign of letting up.”<sup>1</sup> The changes in social organization associated with late modernity, he argues, have had important consequences for crime, welfare, and the experience of daily life, all of which undermined support for the penal-welfare state. In particular, these changes increased criminal behavior, weakened the state’s response to it, and gave rise to what Garland, drawing on Giddens (1990), refers to as a widespread and diffuse “ontological insecurity.”<sup>2</sup> These developments, in turn, significantly altered the framework in which criminal justice policies are formulated and implemented, creating practical and ideological dilemmas for actors located in this institutional arena. According to Garland, these actors’ response to this predicament is the proximate cause of the transformation of the crime control field; the social conditions associated with late modernity are the more fundamental cause of this transformation.

Garland does not emphasize globalization as a key aspect of late modernity, but contrasts his more internalist account with those that emphasize the importance of policy export or political imitation across national boundaries (2001:ix). For Girling, Loader, and Sparks, however, the key central theoretical and substantive issue is globalization, its impact on people’s relation to places and on how they think and talk about crime. Against those who argue that place is of diminishing importance in an increasingly global era, they argue that “place awareness nowadays tends to be relational and comparative” (2000:11). Growing awareness of other places (and the problematic people who inhabit them), they suggest, figures centrally in people’s assessment of and reactions to local crime problems, and may give rise to “a fretful awareness of the fragility of the relative peace and order of one’s own place and hence the (sometimes literal) patrolling of its boundaries” (11). Indeed, as they point out, much “crime-talk” is about the protection of places against incursion from outsiders. Thus, for Girling et al., the awareness of other places wrought by globalization fundamentally alters one’s relationship to the place in which one resides, and has the potential to enhance anxiety about order and security. It is for this reason that they pay particular attention to the contextual nature of sensibilities about crime and find that residents’ crime-talk is replete with references to and assumptions about place.

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<sup>1</sup> This point is, presumably, an implicit critique of accounts that characterize contemporary penal practices and discourses as “post-modern,” a critique that Garland develops in greater detail elsewhere (see Garland 1995).

<sup>2</sup> Although Garland endorses Giddens’s claim that people living in late modern societies experience this sense of “ontological insecurity,” he does not share Giddens’s emphasis on globalization—and the separation of time from space and loss of control over decisionmaking to which this trend gives rise—as the source of this insecurity.

Despite their common interest in cultural sensibilities about crime and order, then, the contrasting methodological and theoretical orientations of these books lead their authors to tell us very different things about cultural sensibilities about crime. Garland's focus is on the emergence of "cultures of control" in the United Kingdom and the United States (and, by implication, other late modern societies), and the impact of these cultural sensibilities on the crime control field. What is of most interest to Garland is the pervasive nature of a particular emotional experience (fear and anxiety about crime and other threats to security) and the process by which the two main responses to it (punitiveness and pragmatism) have come to dominate the crime control field. By contrast, for Girling, Loader, and Sparks, it is the complexity of and variation in cultural sensibilities about crime, how they relate to people's perceptions and experience of place, and the implications of this variation for theory and for policy that is of most interest.

Both books offer thoughtful, well-crafted, and theoretically sophisticated accounts of the role and meaning of crime and control in contemporary social life, and hence make a significant contribution to the study of crime and control. Of the two, Garland's is the more expansive, attempting to provide a comprehensive framework for understanding the contemporary crime control field in two "late modern" societies. His account is strongest when seen as a theoretical contribution: an assertion of the importance of structural change and its cultural consequences, and of the relative durability and embeddedness of the cultural practices, discourses, and social policies that comprise the crime control field. Revealing the inevitably place-bound nature of popular consciousness about crime and analyzing resident's crime-talk in great depth, Girling et al. make a very different kind of contribution, one that in some ways problematizes generalizations regarding popular consciousness that are inevitably a component of more macro-sociological endeavors such as Garland's.

The two books, then, provide compelling but quite different examples of what it means to study crime and control in sociologically sensitive and interesting ways. Unfortunately, neither book sheds much light on how the experiential bases of cultural sensibilities (emphasized in both accounts) interact with political and cultural discourses to produce and mediate cultural sensibilities, or on the role of race in these processes—a very difficult and challenging undertaking, no doubt. In what follows, I further analyze each of the two books, expand this critique, and, by way of conclusion, discuss the nature of their contribution to the sociological and cultural study of crime and control.

## II. Crime and Social Change in Middle England

Between 1994 and 1996, Girling, Loader, and Sparks conducted an intensive study of public concerns about and responses to crime in a relatively prosperous town in Middle England. Toward this end, they analyzed official documents, observed meetings, went on ride-alongs, and conducted interviews and discussions with the town's residents and its criminal justice professionals. Two of the three authors lived in Macclesfield during this period in order to increase their opportunities for observation and conversation and to deepen their understanding of the town and its residents. A variety of methods were thus used to access the experiences and perspectives of the members of the assorted communities who reside or work in the town. Macclesfield, a relatively prosperous, homogeneous, and safe town, was chosen in order to extend existing work on public responses to crime to a more mundane place, the kind that the "social problems" approach to criminology often overlooks.

At the substantive level, the authors' objective was to "record these discussions about the town, their sense of its conflicts and divisions, their memories of its past and hopes and fears about its future" (2000:xi–xii). Rather than a narrow study of the fear of crime, then, the authors seek to provide a "place-sensitive sociology of public sensibilities toward crime" (12) and to construct a "detailed and nuanced account of the varying sensibilities toward crime and insecurity present in a fairly typical English community" (20). Implicit in this approach is the assumption, shared by Garland and borne out in both books' analyses, that crime-talk<sup>3</sup> can be treated as a window onto larger social relations—that it "reveals much about popular beliefs about justice, welfare, inclusion and exclusion, the proper role of government in social life," each of which, they argue, "lie at the heart of contemporary debates about crime control" (xii). This approach allows them to document not only "the place that crime occupies in people's everyday lives and consciousness, but in contemporary social relations more generally" (xii).

Girling et al. distinguish their approach from the largely survey-based "fear of crime" literature in other ways as well. The main concern in this literature, they contend, has been to compare rates of victimization with levels of fear, and the divergence between the two has often been treated as evidence of "irrationality." By contrast, they argue that their more contextual and detailed approach shows that lay perceptions of crime risks are more diverse, more nuanced, and more situationally intelligible than is typically supposed. They therefore seek to demonstrate

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<sup>3</sup> The phrase "crime-talk" was borrowed from Sasson's analysis of Boston residents' discussions of crime, policing, and punishment (and the ways in which social factors such as race, class, and gender shaped these) (1995).

how sensibilities about crime are bound up with residents' sense of place, as well as with age, gender, and class differences. Accomplishing this requires a deeper understanding and, indeed, a different methodological approach: "While it has long been asserted that talk of crime is dense with metaphorical association and pregnant with political imagery, such perspectives have too rarely been informed by patient empirical inquiry" (17).

Girling, Loader, and Sparks are also unwilling to rely upon the concept of fear. Research on the fear of crime, they argue, demonstrates that "it is not clear what fear is, and that whatever it is, it is multidimensional": it is an emotion, a judgment, and it involves meanings and abstractions (15). By using an alternative conceptual language—that of "sensibilities" and "crime-talk"—and by paying attention to the situated character of these, Girling, Loader, and Sparks provide a more inclusive approach, one that foregrounds the multidimensionality of public sensibilities and allows us to identify the moral commitments, beliefs, concerns, attachments, and identifications that inform them.

Girling et al. use their study to address the theoretical debates raised by processes of globalization, interpreting people's sensibilities toward crime found in this particular place/time in light of globalization (which they define in terms of the increased mobility of capital, information, and culture, as determined by decisions made elsewhere). Their study shows that, rather than receding, "place awareness" in the age of globalization is relational and comparative: awareness of the crime problems of other places (as they are represented by the mass media) shapes how residents' experience their own town and perceive local crime problems. They also argue that many remain quite attached to the place—and the image of the place—in which they reside and work, and that the nature of these attachments affects how people think, feel, and talk about crime and control. Girling et al. thus accept the notion that globalization is a significant trend, but at the same time they "seek to temper some of the more sweeping claims made by those emphasizing the novel nature of globalization by documenting the ways in which even people living in a mobile, wired world develop important material and emotional attachments to place" (xii).

Girling et al. begin, appropriately, by situating the place of their study. Prior to 1950, Macclesfield was a fairly homogeneous, working-class town in which people lived and worked. Since the 1960s, however, it has experienced significant economic and social restructuring, and now hosts a number of multinational pharmaceutical companies and an expanded service sector. As a result, it enjoys relative prosperity, high levels of employment, comparatively high property values, and moderate crime levels. Unlike many other former manufacturing towns, it has a sense of itself as a success story, a town with an enviable lifestyle. As a re-



sult, it is home to a significant number of newly arrived, middle-class professionals, living largely on the north side of town and commuting to nearby cities. Despite this influx, Macclesfield remains diverse in terms of socioeconomic class, with significant pockets of unemployment, poverty, and the problems typically associated with them concentrated in the southern and western parts of town.

When asked in focus groups of their feelings about the town, most residents characterized Macclesfield as a relatively benign “pleasant little town.” Many understood this “pleasantness” to result from a combination of the older “friendliness” combined with newer prosperity. Indeed, many residents felt that although crime is a problem everywhere, Macclesfield is relatively safe. These sentiments, the authors found, flow partially from the perception that the town is lacking many urban problems, such as pollution, serious drug problems, and racial tensions. Also central to the understanding of Macclesfield as a relatively safe place was the view that crime risks emanate largely from outside the town. Property offenses in particular are seen as the responsibility of (urban) outsiders. Yet residents also conveyed a clear sense that criminal threats do exist, and some felt that this threat was growing. The authors conclude that Macclesfield’s fragility seemed to residents to stem from the fact that it can no longer insulate itself from the wider world.

Although many of the adult residents did not think Macclesfield had a particularly serious crime problem, they did think it had a “youth problem.” (In fact, adults often treated questions about crime as questions about youth.) Together with concerns about drugs and children’s safety, concerns about teenage misbehavior were significant enough to diminish adult residents’ sense of Macclesfield as a “livable” place. Like their perceptions of the source of the town’s crime problem, local residents’ response to the town’s perceived “youth problem” reveals the importance of place and “place awareness” in a number of ways. On one hand, Girling, Loader, and Sparks argue that these concerns are filtered through a national (perhaps international) discourse concerning the “youth problem” that shapes people’s sense of what is happening in their communities. Contra Skogan and Maxfield (1981), who argues that residents see incivilities as signs of neighborhood decline, they contend that the environmental cues provided by disorderly youth are also seen as indicative of larger social changes. Thus, for some, the youth problem is seen as a manifestation of declining economic prospects; more often, it is seen as a consequence of a “crisis of the family.” Local crime-talk, they conclude, draws from and echoes larger political discourses, especially in its denunciations of permissiveness; discussions of youth incivility prompt discourse that accounts for “the problem” in larger, national terms. In this context, residents are

more likely to endorse comparatively punitive and exclusionary crime control policies.

But when the discussion is about the local crime problem and what to do about it, residents rarely evince the desire to banish or exclude teens. Instead, most identify local teenagers as “our kids” and talk about how they might be better incorporated into community life. Girling et al. thus identify some tension between the way people talk about “youth in general” (in rather punitive terms) and their tendency to acknowledge their obligations to and responsibility for local youths. This finding lends support to the argument that people are much more likely to embrace punitive and exclusionary solutions to crime problems when the source of those problems is perceived to emanate from “others” and “outsiders” (see also Ewick & Silbey 1998; Greenhouse et al. 1994; Merry 1981; Scheingold 1999).

Girling et al. also discover that residents’ connection to place shapes their perception of and response to the putative youth problem. Specifically, the people who speak most emphatically about groups of teenagers who “hang about” are those who have made the greatest emotional and material investment in their area: They are most tied to their homes, and tend to be long-standing residents. For such persons, place matters a great deal, and in emotionally significant ways. By contrast, “the relatively affluent areas are filled with socially and geographically mobile residents somewhat thinly attached to place. For them, the ‘youth problem’ is not particularly important or meaningful” (84). As a result, these residents speak about the issue in more abstract and dispassionate terms. The larger point, then, is that the extent to which people identify with the “fear of crime” discourse has to do not only with prior and actual victimization but also with people’s perceptions of who the troublemakers are and with their relationship to particular geographic communities (87) (see also Greenhouse et al. [1994]).

Girling et al.’s research in nearby Presbury, an affluent, village-suburb of Macclesfield, provides further insight into how people’s relationship to place impacts their sensibilities about crime. Although Presbury is highly valued for its quaint, pastoral image and “village life,” its residents are highly mobile and cosmopolitan. While conducting research in neighboring Presbury, Girling et al. discovered a high level of fear about invasion from outside and a widespread sense that the town needs to be defended from these threats. In particular, Presbury residents are anxious about burglary, an anxiety that is exacerbated by the fact that their homes are often unoccupied for long periods of time. But Girling, Loader, and Sparks argue that the intensity of these worries suggests that it is not just possessions, but people’s sense of what Presbury ought to be that is at stake; their expectations of quaintness, orderliness, and tranquility are endangered by the



prospect of crime and disorder. “The existence of incivility seems to threaten people’s ideals of the ‘English village’ and undermines the possibility that people can and have found—in the midst of a general moral decline—a safe and orderly place in which you know your children are going to mix with other decent children” (108). Girling, Loader, and Sparks also found widespread longing for the service and guardianship role embodied by the bobby (police officer), and conclude that the loss of the bobby, and his or her replacement by a faceless bureaucrat, also undermines this ideal.

Discussions about the police in Macclesfield also reveal the social and place-bound nature of crime-talk. As in Presbury, they found that most adults want a more visible police presence on the streets, not so much because they crave a more efficient system of fighting crime, but because they believe the police have become part of a distant bureaucracy and are no longer responsive to local feelings and concerns. As in Presbury, Macclesfield residents’ attachment to the English bobby reflects a longing for the service and guardianship roles traditionally attributed to the English police (124). This conclusion is buttressed by evidence that despite their dissatisfaction with the police and concern about youth, residents are reluctant to embrace privatized policing. Rather than welcoming a market in policing—and the implication that they should shoulder some of the responsibility for it—they continue to feel that policing is the state’s responsibility.

In their conclusion, Girling, Loader, and Sparks stress that place continues to matter to people, even—and perhaps precisely—under conditions of globalization, and that crime and order figure centrally in how these places are experienced. Their ability to show how sensibilities about crime and order affect assessments of and attachments to place, and how attachment to place, in turn, affects sensibilities about crime and order is a novel and important contribution, one that points not only to the continued centrality of place but also to the importance of using methods that place subjects in their social and geographic context. Indeed, Girling, Loader, and Sparks suggest that we pay a price for ignoring how crime and responses to it are constituted differently within particular places; we overlook significant variation in the extent to which changes in crime control field are accepted by members of the public.

For example, Girling et al.’s finding that most residents were uncomfortable with the idea of gated communities casts doubt on simplistic portrayals of a public gone mad with the fear of crime. Close, intensive analysis of lay responses to crime thus reminds us that popular consciousness is not uniformly punitive, and that fear of crime is complicated—and sometimes trumped by—other concerns and desires. A detailed and intensive analysis of popular sensibilities thus allow Girling et al. to identify areas

where popular support for penal practices and policies is ambivalent or even nonexistent. Ignoring or simplifying popular responses to crime may lead us to ignore the “legitimation deficits” that result from the tension between developments in the criminal justice field and cultural sensibilities around crime (165–66). Identifying these “legitimation deficits” sheds light on how advocates of penal reform might garner popular support for their agendas, and are therefore important politically as well as intellectually.

The authors also show how important social characteristics—especially age and class—shape the experience of place and thereby affect cultural sensibilities around crime. In a fairly bold conceptual move, the authors mainly address these social variables indirectly, that is, in terms of how they affect one’s relationship to and experience of place. For example, age matters largely because it shapes how people use and think about space: Limited recreational opportunities, freedom from familial obligations, and a relatively high degree of freedom contribute to teenagers’ desire to use and enjoy public spaces for social purposes. Although this conceptual move allows Girling et al. to clarify how age and class affect cultural sensibilities around crime (by shaping people’s relationship to place and space), it leaves them with little to say about gender and, given the racial composition of Macclesfield, even less to say about race. Of course, in more urban and heterogeneous environments, their place-oriented approach would probably not leave this latter gap. But as their references to the mass media and cultural images of urban “others” suggest, race matters, even in predominantly white communities such as Macclesfield. Greater attention to how the everyday experience of place interacts with these cultural discourses on crime and control might have helped to illuminate how this is so.

More sustained analysis of the mediating role of larger political and cultural discourses might also have helped to clarify one of their key findings regarding punitiveness, an important topic given current penal trends. The results of this study suggest that although embeddedness in one’s neighborhood and community may increase one’s concern about local crime problems, this sort of proximity also seems to mitigate the impulse to punish and segregate. Conversely, people are more likely to adopt punitive attitudes when they perceive the crime problem as caused by social “others” rather than by “their own.” Although it would have taken them a bit further away from their data, the authors might have used this finding to analyze how the frames and images mobilized in media, race, and political rhetoric enhance (or, possibly, diminish) popular punitiveness. Although the authors make reference to media imagery and political discourse, they do not offer a detailed analysis of how these influences interact with

more experiential, place-bound influences they rightly emphasize to produce (and further complicate) cultural sensibilities.

In sum, the findings from this intensive examination of popular responses to crime tell us much about the residents of that town, as well as about the continued importance of place in the global era, how it shapes the experience of people of different ages and classes, and, most profoundly, how it is bound up with concerns about crime and order. Perhaps even more significantly, though, they caution us to remember and analyze the complexity of the phenomena we tend to simplify in our efforts to map and explain the “master patterns.”

### III. The Culture of Control

Despite a common interest in the cultural meanings of crime and insecurity, the substantive, theoretical, and methodological orientation of Garland's *The Culture of Control* provides a striking contrast to that of *Crime and Social Change in Middle England*. Garland is as broad as Girling, Loader, and Sparks are deep, focusing on a wide range of social responses to crime in order to identify the “broad organizing principles that structure contemporary ways of thinking and acting in crime control and criminal justice,” as well as their historical, social, and cultural origins. In order to capture these largescale changes and their interconnections, Garland utilizes the Bourdian concept of a field, arguing that “shifts in policing, sentencing, punishment, criminological theory, penal politics, private security, crime prevention, treatment of victims, etc. are best grasped when viewed not in isolation, but as interactive elements in a structured field of crime control and criminal justice” (2001:x).

Garland is not unaware of the dangers of oversimplification and neglect of variation that often plague such attempts to generalize about complex and broad phenomena (such as the contemporary crime control field). He also acknowledges that racial division, economic inequality, and comparatively high levels of lethal violence have fueled exceptional penal developments in the United States. Nevertheless, he stresses the unity of “the crime control field” and the similarity between those of Britain and of the United States:

If one attends to the pattern of these social responses, and the recurring focal points of public concern, political debate, and policy development, and if one is willing to suspend, for the moment, questions of size and degree, it becomes apparent that there are important similarities in the problems to which actors in both nations appear to be responding. The same kinds of risks and insecurities, the same perceived problems of ineffective social control, the same critiques of traditional crim-

inal justice, and the same recurring anxieties about social change and social order—these now affect both nations. (ix)

Indeed, one of the most compelling aspects of *The Culture of Control* is Garland's capacity to reveal the ideological and rhetorical logics that inform the seemingly disconnected elements that, he persuasively argues, comprise the crime control "field." On the other hand, having grouped popular practices (such as locking one's door), cultural discourses, and government policies, Garland may overstate the congruence of cultural sensibilities and state policies and ignore the "legitimation deficits" to which Girling et al. call attention.

The decision to deemphasize "questions of scale" in favor of the more qualitative aspects of the crime control field also has both advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, this approach enables Garland to identify the less obvious dimensions of the crime control field and the shared ideas and principles that underpin them. Furthermore, as he points out, generalization is necessary for the development of explanations of change over time. On the other hand, this approach requires him to largely ignore the massive difference between the two countries' incarceration rates. At 125 per 100,000 adult population, Britain's incarceration rate is only slightly higher than those of other West European countries. By contrast, the United States now incarcerates over two million persons at a rate of 690 per 100,000—the highest in the world (Sentencing Project 2001). This disparity does suggest that there are significant differences between the two countries' responses to crime, and it would be interesting to think about the implications of these for the story Garland tells. Ignoring the difference in the two countries' propensities to incarcerate will also complicate efforts to evaluate Garland's argument in a more comparative framework, as most such analyses rely on—or at least include—incarceration rates as an indicator of punitiveness. Similarly, the decision to treat the two countries as exemplars of late modernity leads Garland to disregard their important political and institutional differences. It has been argued, for example, that the decentralized nature of the U.S. political system has important implications for the development and impact of public opinion (Savelsberg 1994:48; Scheingold 1986; 1991).

As Garland notes, treating the broad range of social responses to crime as a unified whole and emphasizing the similarities in the two countries' crime control fields' are not testable presuppositions. They are, however, necessary for his argument, according to which the conditions of late modernity served as the fundamental, structural cause of the transformation of the British and U.S. crime control fields. To develop this argument, Garland first identifies the historical conditions that facilitated the emergence of the modern penal-welfare state in the early 20th

century: worsening class conflict and problems of order, economic conditions favorable to welfare provision, the collective influence of key professional groups and active support of political and social elites, the ability of civil society to exercise relatively effective informal controls, high levels of confidence in the capacity of the state and its expert administrative staff, and, finally, the dominance of social democratic politics and a civic narrative of inclusion. In both Britain and the United States, he argues, these conditions favored the rise of the penal-welfare state, characterized by new, modernist forms of managing the problems associated with social marginality. These techniques were rooted in the ideology of rehabilitation and predicated on the assumption that the state could and should effectively manage social problems ranging from poverty to crime. The main source of support for the welfare state came from the professional middle classes who staffed it, but even conservatives, he suggests, accepted the welfare state as the price of social peace.

Just as he stresses the commonalities between the British and U.S. welfare states and the historical conditions in which they emerged, Garland identifies a number of common changes that are indicative of its transformation. These changes include the decline of the rehabilitative ideal, the reemergence of punitive sanctions and expressive justice, changes in the emotional tone of crime policy (fear of crime is now far more salient and gives rise to collective anger and righteous demand for retribution), the prioritization of the (imagined) victim rather than the (actual) offender and of the goal of public protection over other values such as due process, and the emergence of a more populist and politicized policymaking process. They also include the reinvention of the prison as an effective provider of incapacitation and retribution, the transformation of criminological thought (especially the rise of control theories and the “criminologies of everyday life”), the emergence of a new network of public-private partnerships aimed at prevention, the commercialization of crime control and rise of the private security industry, new management styles and working practices (especially concern with lowering expectations, shifting responsibility to the public, and reducing costs), and a perpetual sense of crisis resulting in the questioning of professional expertise.

Garland condenses this exhaustive list into two main categories: policies and discourses that evince “punitive expressiveness,” and new institutions and programs aimed at establishing “preventative partnerships” between state and non-state actors. While the former have transformed the social and cultural significance of the field, the latter involve the creation of a new apparatus of prevention and security, and hence represent the main source of institutional change in the crime control field. Indeed, the novelty of these preventative programs lies in their devolution of re-

sponsibility for crime control to private actors and their attempt to forge links between these actors and traditional criminal justice agencies, blurring the lines between private and public, state and non-state.

After thus describing the contemporary British and U.S. crime control fields, Garland turns to his main task: explaining how the social changes associated with late modernity facilitated its transformation, beginning in the 1970s. In both the United Kingdom and the United States, he argues, a distinctive pattern of social, economic, and cultural relations characteristic of late modernity created a number of risks, insecurities, and control problems. Specifically, these conditions encouraged criminal behavior, thereby making the enforcement of criminal law more difficult. They also generated a diffuse yet pervasive preoccupation with order and a sense of insecurity. Concern about high crime rates, a more permissive approach to minor forms of crime, and growing anxiety about disorder undermined faith in the state's capacity to provide adequate levels of security and confronted political actors and government agencies with a new set of practical and ideological problems.

Much hinges on Garland's identification of the changes associated with late modernity and his account of how they both increase crime and generate a diffuse sense of insecurity and craving for order. According to Garland, the key features of late modernity include the (ongoing) modernizing dynamic of capitalist production and market exchange, the entrance of growing numbers of women into the workforce and corresponding changes in family life and organization, changes in social ecology and demography (especially suburbanization and the increasing separation of home and work), the spread of electronic media, particularly television, and the democratization of social and cultural life (78–89). These changes, he argues, increased criminal behavior, reduced the state's capacity to respond to it, and intensified diffuse and inchoate anxieties about disorder and insecurity (already worsened by the state's growing tendency to ignore minor forms of disorder). As a result, the limitations of the penal-welfare state were revealed, and disenchantment with it, particularly among the professional middle classes, became widespread. Indeed, Garland focuses on this socioeconomic group because, he asserts, it was this group who formerly provided the main support for penal-welfarism, and it was the withdrawal of this groups' support that facilitated its decline.

Yet the emergence of these control problems and insecurities did not determine penal policy: Garland goes to great lengths to avoid making a structurally determinist argument, emphasizing that institutional actors served as key mediators between these social structural developments and penal policy. The changes associated with late modernity so eroded the myth that the sover-



eign state is capable of delivering law and order and controlling crime within its boundaries that the modernist approach to social problems was no longer seen as credible. This, in turn, created quite a predicament for actors within criminal justice institutions: They saw the need to withdraw their claim to be the primary and effective provider of security, but also saw that the political costs of such withdrawal are likely to be disastrous. Garland therefore attempts to “analyze how agents understood this predicament and invented strategies that allowed them to adapt to or evade the problem” (x).

This emphasis on the mediating effect of these institutional actors’ adaptations and the need to look at the problem from their perspective might lead one to expect that this analysis would be based on interview or other primary data, but Garland relies primarily on government publications and a kind of institutional theory to make this argument. His contention is that because administrators focus on the interests of a single organization (rather than political knowledge/public concern), are oriented toward a longer time frame, and operate at a greater distance from public and press scrutiny, they have “faced up” to the predicament of high crime rates and high levels of anxiety about disorder by developing pragmatic new strategies to deal with them. These adaptations include: attempting to redefine success by scaling back expectations, changing the criteria by which success is measured, focusing more on the consequences of crime than its causes, redefining government responsibilities, mobilizing non-state mechanisms (i.e., responsabilization), and adopting and utilizing the new “criminologies of everyday life” that take high crime rates as a given and shift the focus from the offender to the criminogenic situation. By contrast, Garland argues, elected officials, faced with electoral competition, tend to deny or ignore the predicament by reasserting the state’s capacities to reduce crime, or by simply expressing popular outrage. Some political actors—such as government ministers and secretaries of state—are caught in this contradiction between administrative and political imperatives. The coexistence of these institutional dynamics explains the volatile and ambivalent pattern of policy development in the crime control arena, now characterized primarily by (evasive) policies and discourses that express a desire for punitive segregation and (pragmatic) new programs aimed at the development of “preventative partnerships” between state and private actors.

Political and administrative actors’ adaptations to the changing social field, along with the measures taken by private citizens in the course of their everyday activities, are thus the proximate cause of the transformation of the crime control field, but the social and cultural conditions associated with late modernity that forced them to adapt are their more fundamental source. The

policy adaptations he describes have only been successful (i.e., institutionalized) because they correspond to the emerging popular, professional, and political cultures. In fact, Garland suggests, the crime control field's twin orientations (i.e., pragmatic acceptance and expressive punitiveness) give expression to the range of popular responses to growing insecurity. Thus, although the crime control field has been shaped by the adaptations of institutional actors, these adaptations were triggered by social structural and corresponding cultural changes. Their success or failure has also been conditioned by the cultural conditions of late modernity. Thus, despite Garland's emphasis on the mediating impact of institutional and political actors' adaptations, it is not clear that these institutional actors could have acted differently, or that, if they had, their actions would have impacted the crime control field in any significant way.

When evaluated as a theoretical model, Garland's argument is brilliant. He offers an elegant, comprehensive, complex, and often intuitively appealing account of the transformation of the British and U.S. crime control fields that gives causal weight to social structural change, cultural developments, institutional context, and human agency. His approach highlights the experiential and emotional bases of cultural sensibilities, and thus offers an important corrective to superficial "constructionist" accounts that, by focusing exclusively on the efforts of elites to construct "moral panics" around crime, may overlook these (see also Hacking 1999). Garland also challenges simplistic accounts of penal trends by painting a more complex picture of what these developments are and by revealing their "path dependent" nature. Garland's exhaustive account will thus serve as a compelling reference point in the field.

On the other hand, Garland's emphasis on the emotional and experiential bases of cultural sensibilities and their impact on penal developments lead him to neglect the role of political and cultural discourses in the formation of cultural sensibilities and as sources of penal change. In addition, in making his case for social structural change and its cultural—i.e., experiential and emotional—consequences, Garland neglects several important bodies of evidence that cast doubt on his interpretation of recent developments that, if considered, suggest that politics played a greater role in the transformation of the crime control field than Garland allows. In what follows, I further develop this critique. Because I am more familiar with the United States, my comments will focus upon it.

Much of Garland's argument hinges on his claim that "the growth of crime in this period is a massive and incontestable social fact" and that "the correlation between late modern social change and increased crime rates was no mere coincidence . . . the evidence strongly suggests a causal link between the coming

of late modernity and society's increased susceptibility to crime" (90). Although he acknowledges that crime has not increased in all late modern societies, he maintains that "the initial impact of late modernity was to make high rates of crime much more probable" (90).<sup>4</sup> But the evidence regarding U.S. crime rates, at least, is far more mixed than Garland allows. For most of the 20th century, the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) served as the main source of information about crime, and it is upon these data that Garland relies. The UCR data are based on the number of crimes known to the police and reported by the police to the FBI, and, consistent with Garland's argument, suggest that after World War II, rates of crime in the United States began an upward trend that continued into the early 1990s.

However, there is evidence that at least some of this reported increase was the result of heightened public awareness of the crime problem and enhanced police efforts to keep accurate records of it. Widespread recognition of these problems led to the creation of the National Crime Survey (now called the National Crime Victimization Survey, or NCVS) in 1973. The results of the NCVS are based on interviews with a random sample of 100,000 non-institutionalized U.S. residents aged 12 and over. Unlike the UCR data, the NCVS results (not mentioned by Garland) suggest that rates of violent crime have not increased in recent decades, but have fluctuated over the past 25 years, and that violent crime was less common in 1997 than it was in 1973. The NCVS data also suggest that rates of property crime declined sharply during this period.

Some of the difference between the UCR and NCVS stems from the fact that the two sources do not measure exactly the same crimes or cover the same time period. But most researchers analyzing the difference between the two data sources conclude that the increase in crime reported in the UCR since the early 1970s is largely a consequence of two main developments: members of the public have become more likely to report their victimization to the police (McCord 1997),<sup>5</sup> and the police have become more likely to record these reports and to share their records with the FBI, the agency responsible for compiling the UCR (Bogges & Bound 1993; O'Brien 1996). In fact, although

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<sup>4</sup> Garland relies on the "criminologies of everyday life" and the neo-conservative criminology he deconstructs elsewhere to explain the putative relationship between late modernity and crime: increased opportunities, especially for theft and burglary, reduced situational controls, an increase in the size of the "at-risk" population (more teenage males with more freedom and more demand for immediate gratification), reduced self and social controls as a result of shifts in social ecology (social space is more stretched out, less supervision and informal social control), and changing cultural norms (more questioning of traditional authorities, more permissive child-rearing, relaxed norms governing sexual and other conduct), he argues, all contributed to increasing levels of crime (90–91).

<sup>5</sup> McCord (1997) estimates that the percentage of victims of violent crime who reported their victimization to the police increased from 44.2% in 1978 to 49.8% in 1992.

the number of victimizations reported to the police decreased 5% between 1973 and 1995, the number of crimes recorded by police during this period grew by 116% (Rand & Cantor 1997). In 1973 about half of all reports of aggravated assaults were recorded by the police; in 1988, an estimated 97% of all such reports were recorded by local law enforcement (Jenks 1991:101). As one crime-trend analyst concluded, "The 20 year period from 1973 and 1992 was not a period of ever-increasing rates of violent crime. Instead it was a period of increasing police productivity in terms of the recording of crimes that occurred" (O'Brien 1996:204). As a result of these and other similar findings, many criminologists see the NCVS data—which show an overall decline in crime rates over the past three decades—as more accurate than the UCR data (Donahue 1997; Miller 1996:27). Although the NCVS began in the 1970s, the problems they reveal force us to recognize the possibility that the increase in crime reported in the UCR data during that time was also affected by public reporting and police recording practices. We simply do not know what the actual incidence of crime during this period was. This is not a trivial problem: To a significant extent, Garland's argument rests on the claim that late modern social conditions are criminogenic and that, in the absence of countervailing pressures, crime increased dramatically in postwar Britain and the United States. The alleged increase in crime is, for Garland, not only an important basis of growing anxiety about disorder, but is also the cause of rising caseloads, both of which, he argues, forced institutional actors to change course.

Actually, crime rates need not have been rising for caseloads to have increased: The pressures of population growth and more assertive law enforcement might also increase the numbers of people being processed in the criminal justice system and trigger many of the same sorts of ideological and practical problems Garland identifies (Sasson 2000). But Garland argues the opposite: That the criminal justice system adapted to high crime rates in the 1960s and 70s by becoming more tolerant of disorder—"defining deviance down"—and that this adaptation further intensified middle-class anxiety. His contention is that, along with rising crime rates, the problem of underenforcement contributed significantly to the widespread collapse of faith in correctionalism and, more broadly, in the state's capacity to provide security. Despite the fact that criminal justice institutions' caseloads are increasing, he argues, they have been reducing the extent to which they actually process and penalize minor offense behavior (118–19). The popularity of zero tolerance policing is a very public exception to this, he suggests, public precisely because it runs counter to the long-term trend.

To support this argument for the United States, Garland cites the institutionalization of plea bargaining (which, some would

counter, often “defines deviance up”), the passage of legislation aimed at diverting juveniles passed in 1960s and 1970s, and a study of felony arrests in New York City in the 1970s (the findings of which are not described). His strongest evidence, taken from Skogan and Maxfield (1981) is that arrests for certain public order offenses (drunkenness, disorderly conduct, vagrancy, and suspicion) declined between 1960 and 1985 (Garland 2001:249). Overall, however, the evidence suggests a different pattern. Although arrests for these particular public order offenses did decrease, these declines were more than offset by increased arrests in other categories of less serious crimes, especially minor assaults, forgery and counterfeiting, fraud, minor property offenses, vandalism, prostitution, drug abuse violations, and driving under the influence of alcohol. In fact, between 1960 and 1979, the number of arrests for all non-index crimes increased from approximately 2.8 to 4.1 million (Flanagan et al. 1982, Table 4.3:341; Hindelang et al. 1976, Table 4.4:515). Even when population growth is taken into account, there was a significant net increase in arrests for non-index offenses.<sup>6</sup> By 1996, the arrest rate had increased even more sharply, and there were over 8 million arrests for these less serious crimes (Maguire & Pastore 1998, Table 4.6:333).<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the chances that an arrested person will end up in a U.S. jail or prison have grown steadily, while the likelihood that he or she will be funneled out of the system or placed on probation have declined (Boggess & Bound 1993; Langan 1991). For those who are sentenced to jail or prison, penalties have become more severe: The average sentence served for those sentenced to jail or prison has lengthened substantially for almost all offense types, and the number of juveniles tried and sentenced in the adult criminal justice system has sharply increased (Maguire & Pastore 1998).

Although Garland notes that the war on drugs runs counter to the trend he describes and has had a pronounced impact on the U.S. criminal justice system, he argues that it does not diminish his claim that deviance was “defined down” because it was “driven by a different dynamic” (2001:118–19). But this “different dynamic” seems to dwarf the one emphasized by Garland: In the United States, at least, any tendency toward defining deviance down that may have emerged on a local scale in the 1960s and 1970s was quickly and decisively overwhelmed by the national trend toward punitiveness, a trend that included but was not limited to drug offenders. Whatever diversionary programs

<sup>6</sup> The U.S. population grew from approximately 180 to 225 million between 1960 and 1979 (<http://www.census.gov/population/estimates/nation/popclockest.txt>), an increase of 25%. Arrests for non-index crime increased approximately 46% during this period.

<sup>7</sup> The arrest rate for index crimes also grew steadily throughout this period (see Hindelang et al. 1976; Maguire & Pastore 1997).

were adopted during these decades appear to have widened the criminal justice “net” (Cohen 1985), or, perhaps, they were simply overwhelmed by a conflicting tendency to “crack down” on minor offenders. In short, it is not at all clear that the U.S. criminal justice system defined deviance down in any systematic way since the 1960s, and it is therefore unlikely that growing middle-class anxiety can be explained in these terms.

Garland’s characterization of popular sensibilities around crime can also be challenged on empirical grounds. Although Garland describes the public as “ambivalent,” he treats fear of and anxiety about crime as nearly universal, despite the fact that survey questions aimed at assessing the fear of crime in the United States—crude as they are—indicate that fear of personal victimization has not fluctuated much in recent decades, and that most people are not especially fearful in going about their daily activities (Beckett & Sasson 2000:120–24). The ambivalence to which he refers is, instead, in the response to the now widespread fear of crime, which, he suggests, ranges from a highly emotional punitiveness to a pragmatic acceptance of the need to alter one’s behavior in order to lower the risk of personal victimization.

Although there is evidence to indicate that both punitiveness and pragmatism are prevalent, Garland ignores widespread evidence of ongoing support for the welfarist measures that are, he claims, so out of sync with the culture of late modernity. According to a large body of survey research, most Americans still prefer that money be spent on social programs—especially initiatives targeted at young people—rather than on law enforcement and prison construction. For example, in the 1995 National Opinion Survey on Criminal Justice, respondents were asked whether government, in its attempt to lower the crime rate, should spend money on “social and economic problems” or on “police, prisons and judges.” More than half of the sample preferred the former, while less than one-third chose the latter (Gerber & Engelhardt-Greer 1996:71). Similarly, in a 1989 Gallup survey, two-thirds of respondents endorsed spending more money on education and job training rather than more prisons, police, and judges (Gallup 1990). These findings are not a recent anomaly, but are quite common, and are indicative of high levels of support for the notion of “rehabilitation” (see also Cullen et al. 1990; Flanagan 1987; Roberts & Stalans 1992). Indeed, most Americans continue to support rehabilitative programs, especially for prisoners and young people (McCorckle 1993; Gerber & Engelhardt-Greer 1996; Roberts & Stalans 1997). For example, most survey respondents indicate that the most important goal of prison should be “rehabilitation” rather than either “punishment” or “crime prevention/deterrence” (Maguire & Pastore 1998).



In sum, there is considerable controversy over how much crime actually increased in the United States between 1960 and 1990, as well as substantial evidence that the U.S. criminal justice system did not become more tolerant of minor forms of disorder in the 1960s and 1970s. There is also evidence that the welfarist approaches to crime control that Garland suggests are incompatible with late modern culture continue to enjoy widespread support. All of this casts doubt upon Garland's claim that perpetually high crime rates and a weakened state response to disorder significantly undermined popular confidence in the penal-welfare state's capacity to provide security through welfarist measures. If accurate, the evidence presented here suggests that any increase in middle-class anxiety about crime and disorder may be fairly independent of crime rates and criminal justice practices.

Indeed, Garland stresses that non-crime related sources of anxiety have (also) generated support for new crime control practices, and perhaps these could bear the weight of his argument. But here, too, there is reason to be somewhat skeptical. His claim is that the changes in social organization characteristic of late modernity—especially suburbanization, the increasing separation of work and home, longer commutes, the entrance of greater numbers of women into the workforce, the rise of single parent households, and the outsourcing of child care—have rendered daily life increasingly harried and stressful, family life more precarious, and, as a result, have produced a deep sense of vulnerability and insecurity (Garland 2001:154). This claim rests on the idea that greater time pressures and more complicated logistics render daily life a “problem of management,” which in turn intensifies the psychic need to stave off chaos: “A new element of precariousness and insecurity” is “built into the fabric of everyday life” and gives rise to the felt need to establish control over risks and uncertainties (155). This ontological insecurity, he argues, is exacerbated by changes in the nature of professional careers, the shift away from state-provided social security programs, and widespread anxiety about collapsing social institutions, especially the family.

It is not obvious that a more harried daily existence intensifies the psychological need to establish control over the kinds of risks and insecurities with which Garland is concerned,<sup>8</sup> and it would be difficult to provide evidence to support this proposition. For this working- and commuting-mother of young children, this argument does not resonate at an intuitive level: Daily life certainly does generate stress, but leaves me worrying more about whether I packed enough lunch for my children than

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<sup>8</sup> Unless, of course, these new daily experiences make one more vulnerable to criminal victimization, which is precisely what Garland argues. Here, though, I am focusing on the claim that changes in daily life and experience that were largely independent of crime also gave rise to insecurity and cravings for order.

whether I locked the front door. On the other hand, there is evidence to support Garland's claim that concern about the family as an institution is bound up with beliefs about crime and punishment. For example, Sasson (1995) found that many believe that the family, and parental authority within it, have been weakened, and that this has undermined parents' capacity to respond properly to children's wrongdoing. Tyler and Boeckmann (1997) also found that support for punitive measures is more common among those who perceive that the weakening of the family (as well as growing diversity and a general moral decline) have made social cohesion more problematic (see also Scheingold 1986, 1991).<sup>9</sup> It is not clear from these studies, however, that this perception is spreading, or that it stems from the increasingly harried nature of daily life—or even from changes in the family structure such as the increased divorce rate. Indeed, Girling, Loader, and Sparks (2000) interpret such rhetoric as evidence that people draw from national political discourses regarding “permissiveness” and “moral decline” when interpreting crime problems (see chapter 4). Both interpretations, it seems to me, are plausible; more sustained analysis of “crime-talk” and the ways in which the family is implicated in it would help to clarify this issue.

Just as it is unclear that daily life in late modern social conditions necessarily generate an inchoate and diffuse sense of insecurity and craving for order, it seems possible that other kinds of social conflicts and tensions (such as world wars, mass genocide, and, in light of recent events, the threat of large-scale terrorist attacks) might give rise to such cravings. Thus, it is not obvious that the changes upon which Garland focuses most—the increasingly compressed and stressful nature of daily life—would necessarily create anxiety about disorder and insecurity *in the absence of political and cultural discourses that articulated and inflected them in ways that were conducive to this translation*. In his conclusion, and perhaps in recognition of this difficulty, Garland introduces a slightly different kind of argument: that societies tend to swing between periods of liberation and periods in which concern about order predominates. This argument implies that late modernity may be just one historical phase among many in which concern about order is relatively salient. Because other historical circumstances can surely engender such concern, this argument has greater resonance.

In sum, even if we accept the idea that people in late modern societies are relatively anxious, it is not obvious that this condition should be understood as the consequence of the social

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<sup>9</sup> Like other analyses of punitiveness, Tyler and Boeckmann (1997) also found no evidence that support for punitive measures was related to fear of crime or one's perceived risk of crime. These findings cast further doubt on Garland's claim that rising crime rates have driven fear and hence growing punitiveness.

changes specific to late modernity; a variety of historical conditions might engender such anxiety. Similarly, any trend toward punitiveness in the crime control fields of late modern societies may or may not be rooted in the conditions of late modernity. Evidence of any such trend might also be interpreted as evidence of U.S. efforts to promote and export its version of neoliberalism to other countries and the willingness of some political actors in those countries to oblige in their efforts to secure U.S. support and promote a conservative economic agenda (see Hall et al. 1978; Wacquant 1999; Ruggiero et al. 1995:49). Both interpretations are plausible, and comparative analysis will be useful in adjudicating between these. In sum, the empirical evidence for several of Garland's key claims is quite mixed, and, I think, casts doubt on his argument that consequences of late modern social organization—rising crime rates, official disregard of minor forms of disorder, and widespread loss of faith in correctionalism—triggered the transformation of the crime control field.

Garland's research design also makes evaluation of his key argument difficult. His study considered the United Kingdom and the United States together in an effort to show that "a distinctive pattern of social, economic, and cultural relations that emerged in America, Britain, and elsewhere in the developed world in the last third of the 20th century brings with it a cluster of risks, insecurities, and control problems that have played a crucial role in shaping our changing response to crime" (2001:ix). Garland claims that other late modern societies share a growing preoccupation with (worsening problems of) disorder and are moving in a more punitive policy direction. But he also acknowledges that there is significant variation in the extent to which this is happening (see also Ruggiero et al. 1995). Evidence of this variation does not disprove his argument, he argues, but is indicative of the fact that human actors mediate the effects of structural pressures. Given this plausible disclaimer, developments in other late modern societies cannot be used to "test" Garland's argument. It is interesting to note, though, that crime rates and the extent to which criminal justice systems are oriented around "preventative partnerships" and "punitive expressiveness" in late modern societies vary considerably, and that cross-national variation continues to dwarf any longitudinal trend toward greater punitiveness in "late modern" societies (Ruggiero et al. 1995). For example, in the year 2000, incarceration rates (arguably an important indicator of punitiveness) ranged from 40 in Japan to 690 in the United States. Also interesting is the fact that South Africa and Russia—less aptly characterized as "late modern"—have much higher levels of incarceration (at 400 and 675 per 100,000, respectively) than the "late modern" societies with which Garland is concerned (Sentencing Project 2001).

In my reading, Garland's emphasis on the social and cultural conditions of late modernity is, in part, a reaction against overly conspiratorial arguments that stress elite efforts to generate hysteria and moral panics, it would seem, in some of these accounts, out of thin air. In his laudatory effort to reveal the "there there" and to provide a corrective to work that has not sufficiently attended to the structural and experiential basis of cultural sensibilities, however, Garland underestimates the importance of public political and cultural discourses in the shaping of these sensibilities.

At one level, his account does not deny the role of politics, and at points, it emphasizes them a great deal. For example, he writes in the Preface that "my argument will be that our contemporary crime control arrangements have been shaped by two underlying social forces—the distinctive social organization of late modernity and the free market, socially conservative politics that came to dominate the USA and UK in the 1980s" (x). But Garland does not grant political discourse the power to *shape* beliefs, perceptions, and emotions; instead, it is important insofar as it gives expression to and, perhaps, reinforces preexisting perceptions of and anxieties about order (139).

Garland also departs from accounts that grant shaping power to the media. Although he acknowledges that an unmediated, direct experience of "reality" is not possible and he discusses the impact of reality-based television programs,<sup>10</sup> Garland sees perceptions and emotions largely as originating in daily life and the media as largely reinforcing rather than shaping popular fears and anxieties. He does not discuss the news media as a significant force in these processes, and, because it is here that we see the close connection between politicians and the media, this omission contributes to his underestimation of the impact of political discourse. Similarly, although Garland acknowledges the disparate impact of recent policy developments on racial minorities, his causal analysis does not emphasize race and racial meanings as an influence on popular consciousness. As a result, Garland ignores a wide body of evidence indicating that racial attitudes are bound up with beliefs and attitudes about crime, punishment, and welfare (Barkan & Cohn 1994; Bennett & Tuchfarber 1975; Cohn et al. 1991; Corbett 1981; Gilens 2000). In short, I would argue that, although Garland is right to emphasize the importance of everyday experience and its emotional consequences, we need to analyze how such experiences are given meaning, paying particular attention to the role of political and cultural discourses in this process.

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<sup>10</sup> Garland makes this point when discussing the impact of the media, especially television, on perceptions of and feelings about crime, which he acknowledges. But the media programs to which he refers in his text are largely "reality-based" crime shows.

Greater attention to the cognitive dimensions of cultural sensibilities may facilitate this task. Political and media discourse contain a complex mixture of cognitive (factual), emotional, and normative elements, and each dimension clearly has implications for the others. Thus, whereas Garland treats the rise in the percentage of poll respondents agreeing that “the courts are too lenient” as evidence of growing and widespread punitiveness,<sup>11</sup> there is evidence that this perception stems largely from the fact that most Americans believe sentences to be much more lenient than they actually are (Roberts & Stalans 1997). In fact, when asked to sentence hypothetical defendants, members of the public frequently recommend less-severe sentences than judges do (Roberts & Stalans 1997). The widespread belief that the courts are too lenient (and the anger this belief often engenders) thus appears to reflect the spread of a misperception regarding actual sentencing practices rather than heightened fear and punitiveness. Of course, why so many members of the public have accepted conservative claims that judges were failing to punish wrongdoers requires explanation, but the point I wish to stress is that political discourse and its cognitive or factual components can significantly impact cultural sensibilities around and emotional responses to crime. In what follows, I contrast Garland’s interpretation of the rise and fall of the British and U.S. welfare state with a more political interpretation of these events in order to further illustrate these points.

#### **IV. Race, Politics, and the Rise and Fall of the Penal-Welfare State**

Consistent with his larger argument, Garland stresses the common origins and similar nature of the British and U.S. welfare states, and argues that maturation and expansion of these institutional apparatuses led many to withdraw their support for them. But in treating Britain and the United States as exemplars of late modernity and by emphasizing the contradiction between the penal-welfare state and the social conditions of late modernity, Garland overstates their similarities and underestimates the impact of politics—especially racial politics—in the recent weakening of the U.S. welfare state.

For example, Garland’s claim that the narrative of civic inclusion and social democracy dominated U.S. and British politics and helped to solidify support for an expansive welfare state does not apply well to the United States. Surely this narrative existed, but its existence was more fragile and contested in the United States than in Britain (and many other industrialized countries),

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<sup>11</sup> As we have seen, Garland treats punitiveness as one response to rising fear of and anxiety about crime. However, others have shown that punitiveness is largely unrelated to fear (see Beckett 1997; Stinchcombe et al. 1980; Tyler & Boeckmann 1997).

and its promise of inclusion was certainly not extended to most African Americans or other racial minorities. Indeed, the viability of the New Deal programs depended upon these and other exclusions for their success (Quadagno 1994), and the expansion of the U.S. welfare state was far more limited and precarious than in most Western European countries. The dominance of the political faction in favor of the U.S. welfare state was also fairly short-lived: The civil rights movement's attempt to widen and make more meaningful the promise of inclusion triggered a hearty backlash that has been on going since the 1950s. Garland downplays evidence of this early conflict, arguing instead that it was the limitations of the advanced welfare state, which became apparent in the 1980s and 1990s, that diminished support for it. "Changes in demography, in stratification and in political allegiance led important sections of the working and middle classes to change their attitudes toward many of these policies—to see them as being at odds with their actuarial interests and as benefiting groups that were undeserving and increasingly dangerous" (Garland 2001:76).

According to his account, this perception stems from the altered nature of social organization and daily life, as well as the obvious limitations of the penal and welfare systems. Specifically, Garland argues that as welfare institutions met more and more unmet need, the problems it was created to deal with appeared to become larger rather than smaller; that the prosperity that funded the welfare state also raised standards and led to "benefit levels that were far in excess of anything Beveridge or Roosevelt had envisioned"; "eventually expectations were raised to a point where it was all but impossible for state provision to meet them" (93). The problems of big government and the fact that the institutionalization of the welfare state concealed the economic and political problems that welfarism had been designed to address also undermined the late modern welfare state. As a result, key groups—especially the working and middle classes, who had formed the central constituency and tax base for the welfare state—began to view it as a drain on their taxes and to withdraw their support for it. Although Garland acknowledges that these perceptions and feelings were welcomed by the British and U.S. governments seeking to reverse welfarist social arrangements, he stresses that it was the expansion of the welfare state that undermined support for it.

From a comparative perspective, the claim that the British and U.S. welfare states have been undermined by their growth and maturity seems implausible. Other, far more expansive welfare states such as those of northern Europe, France, and Germany are comparatively large and comprehensive, and although they are more controversial than they were 20 years ago, they remain institutionally and politically strong. Garland's account



also ignores the fact that, especially in the United States, the comparatively paltry and limited nature of the welfare state meant that the constituency in favor of it was always comparatively small and politically vulnerable. Conservative attempts to mobilize opposition to the welfare state took advantage of this in their efforts to convince voters that the people who were currently the primary welfare beneficiaries were undeserving. From this perspective, it is the weakness of the U.S. welfare state rather than its expansion that most helps to explain the success of the political assault upon it.

This alternative account of declining support for welfare programs would therefore place greater emphasis on the role of political discourse in creating and reinforcing the perception that welfare recipients are dangerous and undeserving and greater emphasis on the role of race in this process (Beckett 1997; Gans 1995; Gilens 1999; Katz 1989; Quadagno 1994). According to this line of thinking, elected officials do not merely give expression to popular opinion, but attempt to shape and harness it in the pursuit of their own political agendas.<sup>12</sup> Both the diminution of popular support welfare programs aimed at the poor and the expansion of the state penal apparatus were influenced by political efforts to accomplish these goals (Beckett 1997). Recognizing the capacity of elites to shape (not determine) popular consciousness does not require a vision of the public as dupes: Political rhetoric must fit with lived experience, resonate with cultural themes and images, and provide compelling solutions to complex problems in order to be accepted. On the other hand, social conditions and daily experiences are sufficiently ambiguous as to require interpretation, and political discourse plays an important role in that process. In his effort to highlight the importance of the former, Garland underemphasizes the equally important role of these interpretive processes and of the centrality of race to them in the United States.

Even if they are on target, these criticisms do not diminish the significance of Garland's theoretical contribution, nor should they lead us to disregard one of Garland's central messages: Cultural practices, discourses, and policies have deep roots in the society in which they exist, and have important consequences for that society as well. *The Culture of Control* is unparalleled in its sophistication, breadth, and insight, and will undoubtedly serve as a reference point in the field—a field that Garland has done much to create. Indeed, the book will do much to revive and legitimate cultural analyses of punishment and to advance the case for the sociological study of crime and its control.

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<sup>12</sup> Politicians' well-known reliance upon public opinion polls does not necessarily reflect a slavish devotion to the popular will, but indicates that politicians use polls in order to develop culturally persuasive appeals designed to advance their political agenda (Jacobs & Shapiro 2000).

At a time when superficial analyses of “moral panics” abound, it provides a compelling reminder of the need to analyze the historical and structural origins of complex social phenomena and to understand rather than dismiss the cultural sources of support for policies in order to attempt to change them.

## V. Conclusion

The events of September 11, 2001, will have many unfortunate ramifications. Undoubtedly, the intensification of concern about threats to security and a heightened and pervasive sense of insecurity will be chief among these. In the aftermath of the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, most analysts will focus on the origins, nature, and future of transnational terrorism. Understanding how the attacks on New York and Washington affect how people think, feel, and talk about security, analyzing how these reactions are also shaped by cultural and political discourses and racial meanings, and assessing the relationship of this “security-talk” to the policies adopted in order to enhance it is an equally important, and no less daunting, task. Concern about what now appear to be more mundane sources of insecurity—panhandlers, young people hanging about, graffiti writers, drug users, and more—will, of course, continue to have important cultural and political meanings and consequences that are well worth exploring; indeed, concern about and reactions to these sources of insecurity may be influenced by the now-looming threat of terrorism, although in unpredictable ways.

The compelling and sophisticated analyses of cultural sensibilities offered in *Crime and Social Change in Middle England* and *The Culture of Control* provide us with many of the tools needed for these important tasks. Indeed, despite their significant differences, these books suggest how the study of crime, control, and punishment might proceed: with one eye on the broad impact of large-scale social developments (which now appear to include transnational terrorism) and another on the complex, situated, and variable nature of cultural sensibilities around crime, insecurity, and control. One can imagine, for example, a probing and careful analysis of the ways in which people’s crime-talk is bound up not just with images and experiences of place, but with the family, work, and lifestyle issues emphasized by Garland.

The differences between the two approaches will also be constructive for those interested in the cultural meanings of crime and control. One might imagine, for example, a lively debate between those, following Garland, who emphasize the congruence between the criminal justice field and cultural sensibilities, and others, following Girling, Loader, and Sparks, seeking to uncover cultural bases of both existing and alternative kinds of arrangements. The two books will also require us to think more carefully

about our methods, their presuppositions, advantages, and disadvantages. Certainly, researchers in the area will need to clarify their aims and justify their methodological approach in order to respond to the issues raised in these accounts. My personal hope is that future research will also do more to illuminate how cultural sensibilities around crime and control are influenced by everyday experiences emphasized in both *Crime and Social Change in Middle England* and *The Culture of Control* and the cultural and political discourses—with all their racial connotations—that help to interpret those experiences. There is a particular need, I think, to examine how these different cultural elements interact in the formation, reproduction, and transformation of cultural sensibilities. But these and other efforts to further illuminate the development of the complex social and cultural meanings of crime and control in contemporary Western societies will undoubtedly be enriched by their reference to both of the books considered here.

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