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highlighting Harcourt's underlying focus on methods. Harcourt does (and should be commended for doing) more than what is typically done with regard to methodological disclosure, offering how he coded his data and how "tricky" coding and analysis is when one is concerned with capturing the meanings that subjects hold for something rather than researcher imposed categories and constructions of subjects' meanings. Harcourt also provides a necessary and sophisticated discussion on method as an ethical choice, and thus recommends each research project involve "dirtying one's hands" in considering multiple methods and means to conducting thoughtful and impacting research. In short, *The Language of the Gun* is best considered as a methods text and pushes readers to think critically about the research process, the choices they make, and the necessary, yet unscientific guts of research.

Women Behind Bars: Gender and Race in U.S. Prisons, by **Vernetta D. Young** and **Rebecca Reviere**. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006. 219 pp. \$19.95 paper. ISBN: 1588263959.

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Women Behind Bars: Gender and Race in U.S. Prisons by Vernetta D. Young and Rebecca Reviere provides a very general overview of women's experience with the criminal justice system and imprisonment in the U.S. It compiles data gathered by government agencies, private institutions, and social scientists.

In chapter 1, the authors state the major assumptions guiding their work. They assert that "sexism, racism, and classism" (p. 7) and other systemic factors, such as war on drug policies and the passage of mandatory sentencing laws, have contributed to the disproportionate imprisonment of women of color in the U.S. Major influences they see leading women to commit crimes are: drug use; women's determination "to do everything men did" (p. 6); women's history of abuse; and the economic pressures faced by women living in "slums of despair" (p. 3).

Young and Reviere describe "the typical" women who end up behind bars as "dark-

skinned, poor, unskilled mothers who are incarcerated for low-level drug involvement" (p. 9). This contrasts sharply with the fact that most people who consume drugs in the U.S., as well as the majority of those arrested in 2004 for all types of crimes (except robbery and vagrancy), were classified as "white" by the Federal Bureau of Investigation's *Uniform Crime Reports*.

While there is much repetition throughout the text and it is unclear why Young and Reviere chose to highlight the particular subjects they did, the authors do offer information on women's overall experiences with various aspects of the criminal justice system. Chapters 2 and 3, provide data on the types of punishment historically accorded women who break the law, a brief history of the emergence and evolution of women's prisons, and the types of crimes for which women have been arrested and incarcerated. Chapter 4 highlights the impact of the war on drugs on women and the need to treat women's addiction. Chapters 5, 6, and 7, respectively, focus on physical and mental health care in women's prisons, the problems faced by imprisoned mothers and their children, and issues of death and dying in prison. Finally, while Chapter 8 examines some of the problems confronted by former prisoners, Chapter 9 summarizes the author's major points.

One of the most serious oversights of this book is that although it is subtitled *Gender and Race in U.S. Prisons*, the text centers primarily on gender and there are no in-depth references to the impact of racial factors or racism on the lives of imprisoned women. If one assumes, as Young and Reviere seem to do, that ethnicity is included within the general rubric of "race," the oversight is even more significant.

This neglect is puzzling given the fact that as of the mid-1990s there have been significant, albeit a few, studies that document the experiences of African-American, Latina, and Native-American women prisoners. Young and Reviere do write that, "We have almost nothing about Hispanic women (McQuaide and Ehrenich 1998) and even less about Native American and Asian women who are incarcerated" (p. 9). However, they fail to mention the existence of works by Ross (1998) and Diaz-Cotto (1996). As a result, they offer

little information to those interested in these topics.

It is also puzzling why Young and Reviere do not reference some of the major works on imprisoned African-American women. Thus, missing from their text are discussions of the findings provided by Collins (1997), Johnson (2003), and Richie (1996). The book also ignores the rich information provided by former African-American prisoners such as Shakur (1987) and Davis (1974).

Policing Gangs in America, by **Charles M. Katz** and **Vincent J. Webb**. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006. 310 pp. \$75.00 cloth. ISBN: 0521851106.

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The increase in gangs and gang members in U.S. cities during the past several decades has posed a serious challenge to communities and their law enforcement agencies. Many communities responded to that challenge, in part, by forming specialized gang units within their police departments. Such gang units were typically expected to play a major role in gathering intelligence and in preventing and controlling gang-related crime. Many communities expected that these gang units would be embedded in a community-oriented, problem-solving approach to policing—but that didn't often happen and, in the case of the Los Angeles Police Department's Rampart scandal, these units sometimes employed methods that were both illegal and unconstitutional.

To learn how police organizations respond to gang-related crime, how individual officers perceive their jobs, how gang units are managed, how they interact with the overall organizational culture of the police department, and what (if anything) all this has to do with community policing, Katz and Webb carried out an essentially ethnographic study of the specialized gang units that emerged in the police departments of four Southwestern U.S. cities—Albuquerque, Inglewood (part of metro Los Angeles), Las Vegas, and Phoenix—thus providing a sample of large, medium, and small departments as the organizational contexts for this study.

Policing Gangs in America reports on this, the most extensive study of police gang units to date, and represents a valuable contribution not only to our knowledge concerning social control and the law, but also to the extant literature concerning work and organizations.

The authors utilized extensive field observations, as well as in-depth interviews and analyses of hundreds of documents. Although this is the most extensive, carefully designed, and skillfully implemented study on this subject to date, its generalizability may be somewhat limited by: (1) the selection of police departments in four Southwestern cities where gang membership includes more Hispanics than in most other U.S. cities; (2) the fact that nearly all observations were carried out during summers, when gang-related crime tends to be significantly higher; and (3) the fact that field observations with gang officers were generally based on a convenience sample, rather than a random sample, of officers. To address the concerns that scholars generally have regarding observational studies, the authors employed several techniques to ensure both validity and reliability: (1) the use of multiple sources of data; (2) the use of repeated observations over time; and (3) the involvement of gang unit officers in many different phases of the project.

The reader is taken on a vicarious tour of these four cities to elucidate the historical development of gangs, going back to at least the 1960s. Then the authors summarize and analyze how both gang behavior and law enforcement behavior changed over time in a spiraling, interactive manner. Gang units that were initially designed with prevention and intelligence in mind often evolved into units focusing much more heavily on suppression as a goal. The authors posit that that evolution was typically driven by the need to maintain the public's respect and the department's legitimacy in the eyes of external stakeholders, such as the public and the media, along with the *beliefs and perceptions* (often inaccurate) of gang officers, as opposed to empirically-driven, systematic planning. Moreover, policymakers often relied too much on gang officers' opinions and beliefs, thus raising serious questions concerning the quality of public policy formulation and implementation.