

Foreword

According to my colleagues at the University of Montreal, criminology “is the multidisciplinary study of the criminal phenomenon”. It makes use of the humanities and social sciences (psychology, sociology, law, etc.) to understand the crime, the criminal, the victim, criminality, and society’s reaction to crime.

Although everyone is aware of the criminal phenomenon, particularly through media exposure, the public understanding is often anecdotal and fragmentary. The criminologist looks beyond the headlines and takes a rigorously analytical and critical approach to criminality. He begins by analyzing the crime, before examining the type of intervention employed.

Criminology is also an applied discipline. The criminologist is trained, for example, to decide whether a prisoner should be granted conditional release, or to propose a strategy for tackling an explosion of vehicle theft in a parking lot. He thus develops risk prevention and risk management strategies that take into account the dynamics of crime and the ethical and political stakes surrounding it.

There are many journals covering criminal law, the criminal sciences and sociology, but very few international criminology reviews. We therefore aim to provide a space for open-minded dialogue, comparison, and criticism, which takes into account diverse approaches while avoiding sterile arguments about the nature of the discipline itself.

A crime is the unique combination of a perpetrator, a victim, and a set of circumstances. Its individual and quantitative analysis requires scientific methods and specific intellectual and technical abilities.

In *The Rules of Sociological Method* (1895), Emile Durkheim emphasizes that “[...] A number of acts can be observed, all with the external characteristic that once accomplished, they provoke this particular reaction from society known as punishment. We make of them a group *sui generis*, on which we impose a common rubric. We call any punished act a crime and make crime thus defined the focus of a dedicated science: criminology.”

Such is the scope of this review.

Alain Bauer

French National Conservatory for Arts and Crafts, Paris
John Jay College of Criminal Justice. New York