

## **Book Review:**

L. Cao, I.Y. Sun, and B. Heberton (eds.). (2014)

### **The Routledge Handbook on Chinese Criminology**

Oxan, UK: Routledge. pp. 352 (HB). \$317.16 (Indigo); \$180.42 e-version on Amazon

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Routledge has produced a number of international handbooks and this book is the latest in the series. To date, the other international handbooks (i.e., International Criminology and European Criminology) are deemed valuable resource texts for anyone who is interested in subject areas. Chapter 45 in the Handbook on International Criminology, is the only chapter that focuses on the state of criminology on China. The authors, Xiu and Tingyao, point out that criminology in China is only about 30-years old but that it has evolved and there is a growing body of research and scholars who are now engaged in criminological research.

The three editors of the Handbook on Chinese Criminology are well qualified to have prepared this reference book. They each have impressive academic publication records and have engaged in a varied number of research involving China and the greater China region. Together, the editors have continued the tradition of organizing and producing a quality and informative overview of their subject matter - Chinese criminology.

The book is logically divided into five equally balanced sections averaging five chapters per section. Section I offers a sweeping, yet comprehensive overview of the historical development of criminology in China while Section II includes seven chapters which offer an insightful overview of not only the Chinese criminal justice system covering such elements as the death penalty (Ch. 11) and the various key elements of the criminal justice system. For example, Chapter 6 focuses on policing in China while Chapter 5 covers the complexity of the Chinese legal system, and Chapter 9 addresses participatory model of juvenile justice in China, among other key themes. The shortest section is Section III which only includes three chapters. Nevertheless, they each address the various issues and challenges in relation to 'Methods of Inquiry'. For example, in Chapter 12, He discusses the politics behind crime statistics in China, while Zhang, in Chapter 14, offers insight into criminological research in contemporary China.

Section IV, 'Forms of crime and criminality', I suspect was arguably the most challenging section to compile because of the range of topics that could/should have

been included. Five types of crime/criminality are covered – drugs, prostitution, the critical topic of urbanization and migration and associated crime, domestic violence, and finally white-collar and corporate crime. While each of the topics has considerable merit, a separate chapter or some other pedagogical feature could have been used to touch on such issues as human and organ trafficking, counterfeiting, computer crimes, censorship, and the general concern of human rights violations.

The final section of the book, Section V covered 'Greater China: Taiwan, Hong Kong, and Macao.' Although perhaps somewhat cursory in their coverage, each of the five chapters addresses a particular and contemporary aspect crime and/or criminality in the three states. For example, in Chapter 21, Huang and Sun, present an interesting accounting of Taiwan's official response to crime. Meanwhile, in Chapter 23, Cheung and Zhong discuss the official reactions to crime and drugs in Hong Kong and in Chapter 24, Li presents an insightful examination of the problem of crime and gambling in Macao - the mecca for Asian gambling. Perhaps what is most appealing about Section V is, as the editors' acknowledge, is that collectively the 25 chapters serve to hi-lite the need for "even greater understanding of the processes of criminological 'hybridization' that has taken place and is occurring as East meets West" (p. 343).

Collectively, the handbook is readily accessible to the reader and the chapters sufficiently comprehensive without being exhaustive in providing the reader with a valued insight into crime and criminal justice, and criminological research in the world's second largest economy and in a non-Western part of the world. To this end, the editors are to be commended for not only lending their expertise to the book but in pulling together established scholars, many who are authorities on the various themes and/or topics covered but somewhat unfortunately few are from mainland China. However, given the language barriers and potential socio-political challenges, this may have been a factor in recruiting mainland Chinese contributors. Each of the chapters adheres to a standardized format for presenting their topic, however, the editors might have considered including a few pedagogical features to enliven the handbook beyond simply offering descriptive accounts of the various topics. For example, as can be found in other handbooks, any future rendition of the book might consider adding such pedagogical features as useful internet links, additional recommended readings, and perhaps a few critically reflective questions that could encourage new and established scholars with ideas and/or suggestions for further inquiry.

As valuable as the handbook is, the surreal cost of the book will most likely limit its sales to but the most lucrative libraries and academic enthusiasts who feel they must have this wonderful collection of chapters on Chinese criminology. Nevertheless, this seminal handbook should remain a valued resource to students, scholars, and even those curious about 'what goes on over there' for years to come.