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The Criminological Study of Crimes Against Humanity

Hannah Madison and Daniel Maier-Katkin
Research Question: Has criminological ignored the study of crimes against humanity?

Abstract: This research covers how criminology as a discipline has contributed to the overall discussion and solution of various problems in human-rights related fields such as terrorism, human trafficking, torture, genocide, state crimes, as well as the role of criminology in confronting crimes against humanity. A database was created containing articles published between January 2000 to November 2015, which appeared in the top forty criminology journals. The data on each article includes subject, author, date published, and journal. Once complete, the database will constitute a map to the discussion of human rights in criminology, authors, the interests of specific journals, fluctuation in rates of publication over time, and a general overview of the human rights movement as reflected in criminology.

Conclusions: There was more research in criminology journals relating to human rights than originally expected. Proportionally, however, human rights as a subject is covered significantly less than other major topics such as law enforcement, crime, drugs, and intelligence. There were just over five-hundred and thirty articles in the entire database created, which is over a period of fifteen years and in over forty criminology journals. The research was broken down by subject, year, author, and journal, to reveal overall patterns in subject coverage since 2000.

Implications: With the knowledge of what subjects are being researched, which scholars are conducting research, and in which journals the research is being published, criminologists can develop insight into which topics should be covered more and which journals are most appropriate. As global attention focuses more on crimes against humanity, this area of criminology is likely to become increasingly important.

Hannah Madison   Dr. Daniel Maier-Katkin