Mark Findlay, The Globalisation of Crime. Understanding Transitional Relationships in Context, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (1999), ISNB 0521 62125 9.

The basic thesis of *The Globalisation of Crime* is that crime is a product of modernisation and the processes of globalisation. As a way of introduction to the ideas developed in this book it is important to understand the meaning of the various concepts which are utilised. According to the author, crime cannot be understood outside of context. Context itself is a preferable concept to notions of 'culture' or 'community'. Context is understood in a multitude of forms. It is social space, it is institutional processes, it is patterns of relationships, it is individuals. Context is also never static. It is shifting, ever changing, reformulating, or in the book's terminology, it is transitional. Crime itself assumes a variety of social functions which are dependent on context. Crime is culturally relative, but it is also global.

Globalisation is a feature of the contemporary social, economic and cultural condition. Globalisation is understood as a process, and crime, like other social entities, is part of this process of globalisation. Globalisation is also related to modernisation and development. By modernisation/development the author is not so much referring to a process but a *form* of relations which includes a capitalist mode of commodity production, industrialism (by which he presumably means the prioritisation of industrial development) and developed state surveillance techniques. The globalisation of this form of modernisation/development is one which is associated with the internationalisation of capital, with the generalisation of consumerism and the unification of economies. For 'developing' societies and cultures, modernisation may well constitute a force for destabilisation.

Understanding the links between modernisation, globalisation and crime can broaden our understanding of the causes of crime. For instance, crime may indeed arise as a consequence of modernisation and globalisation. In reality globalisation creates new and favourable contexts for a range of crime from commercial crime relationships to street crime. A theme which runs through the book is the paradoxes associated with globalisation, particularly the way in which it unifies and delineates; internationalises and localises. We can begin to understand these relationships through considering the effects, say, of World Bank and International Monetary Fund policies which require structural readjustments in developing economies. An outcome of these readjustments may be increasing levels of street crime and disorder as prices for basic commodities rise along with levels of unemployment. The international economic prescriptions of modernisation and development may be seen as legitimate within the world order. On the other hand, street crime might be considered as a local crime issue and as a symptom of pathology or dysfunction. Yet both are directly connected. Both arise through the globalisation of capitalist economic and social relations.

Globalisation is a context then in which crime may be understood – even in what is apparently 'local' crime. The usefulness of this approach should not be underestimated. Our work in Australia on the homicide of Filipino women is a case in point (Cunneen & Stubbs 1997). Although on the face of it, the murder of Filipino women in Australia appears as a local issue, an adequate explanation for these crimes requires an understanding of international economic and political relations which place Filipino women in a vulnerable position in relation to violence. The reasons why Filipino women leave the Philippines and come to Australia as the spouses of Australian men, and why Australian men seek out Filipino women can only be understood within global markets for labour, sex and marriage. Global markets themselves may be enhanced through new technologies. Electronic communication has facilitated e-commerce. It has also facilitated new forms of fraud and allowed other 'markets' to flourish from child sex tourism to the propagation of hate speech.

Globalisation does not imply that all relations will become 'Westernised', but it does imply that social relations will establish themselves in relation to the West. Globalisation and modernisation may also weaken existing cultural norms, and in these situations crime may emerge to strengthen particular cultural values. Findlay's case study analysis of the collapse of the Fiji National Bank demonstrates the point. While in one context the proliferation of unsecured loans to favoured families might be seen as corruption, in another light, it can be viewed as the power of customary obligation and authority reinterpreting relations in a new economic context.

The book's approach to the issue of crime causation is to see crime as choice within particular contexts. 'Crime presents another choice to individuals, communities and cultures marginalised through modernisation and responding to development politics. Crime is an essential result of modernisation and development, as much as socio-economic disparity and marginalisation' (p 58). Findlay is particularly critical of theorists who present causal explanations of crime simply based on the identification of various indices of social dysfunction such as drug abuse, family breakdown, etc, and social disjuncture such as unemployment and rapid urbanisation.

It is far too simplistic to see 'broken' families as a cause of crime, particularly where the notion of 'broken' (read: single parent) is replete with cultural and political assumptions about a correct familial structure. Extended family structures can provide the primary context for child socialisation, and the range of 'carer' relationships is varied and diverse, particularly in the case of non-western familial structures.

In relation to youth unemployment, Findlay notes that it is a consequence of specific economic strategies. If youth unemployment is a structural feature of advanced capitalist countries, what does the future hold for developing nations eagerly seeking capitalist economic development? Similarly, urbanisation in the context of developing countries may be the result of specific policies which prioritise forms of economic development. It is not urbanisation per se which causes crime but rather the attendant inequality, social disorganisation and dislocation which may be criminogenic.

The final sections of the book deal with crime control and it is one part of this discussion which I wish to focus on. Findlay looks at punishment in the context of the intersection between globalised forms of penalty and local contexts of control. In the first instance, he makes the important point that 'in most cultures crimes are dealt with informally, or through non-state instrumentalities' (p 194). In the formalised Western criminal justice system, penalty focuses on individual guilt. In many custom-based systems, penalty is attached to communal responsibility. In developing nations this conflict between penalty is played out in the justice system. However, pre-eminence is given to Western legal forms. Findlay notes that, indeed, western legal forms including penalty, are seen as being in the vanguard of policies 'designed to annex and over-rule indigenous cultures' (p 205).

The conceptualisation of 'customary law' adds weight to the pre-eminence of Western legal forms. 'Custom' becomes circumscribed within the framework of the 'formal' legal system. Custom might be recognised, it might be considered, it might be given a place, but it is always as Other and as inferior. As Findlay notes, 'the trend in postcolonial states has been to reduce custom to the realm of mitigation and sentence within the criminal jurisdiction ... this puts custom obligation outside central considerations of liability and legality' (p 209).

Western criminological discourse has been virtually silent on crime in the 'developing' world. The *Globalisation of Crime* provides an important contribution to understanding this largely neglected area. However, it does so within the context of a sophisticated theoretical argument that links the contemporary patterns of international capitalist relations and the forces of globalisation to what is happening in developing nations. It is not attempting to provide a simplistic interpretation of comparative criminology, rather the argument is that the interdependencies caused by globalisation and modernisation demand that we consider the nature of crime outside of the West. Colonialism and imperialism mean that there have been connections in law, justice and crime between the West and colonised nations for several hundred years. What is different now is the nature of globalisation in creating new structures and opportunities for crime.

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References

Cunneen, C & Stubbs, J (1997) *Gender, Race and Legal Relations. Violence Against Filipino Women in Australia*, Institute of Criminology Monograph Series, Sydney.