





The Need for Better Crime Diagnostics

The Uses of International Crime Statistics

Reliable cross-national information on crime patterns allows governments to see how their domestic crime problems compare with other relevant countries (e.g., neighbors) and regional and global averages. Such objective diagnosis can provide a useful antidote to prevailing conceptualizations of crime and criminal justice based on sensationalist, media-led notions. If comparative crime statistics are used properly, they can help to inform countercrime policies. Specifically, they provide a benchmark of crime control policies to identify which policies do better than others and areas that can be improved.

In our global village, crime problems are no longer a domestic concern. Many types of crime have international dimensions, and trends in crime and justice in different countries are increasingly interdependent. The international nature of markets for drugs, sexual services, and illicit firearms is generally recognized. Less well understood is the international nature of many other criminal markets such as that for stolen cars with an estimated half million stolen cars transported from developed to less developed countries annually. More and more criminal groups operate internationally through loose networks of partners in crime. Similar to legitimate businesses, criminal organizations tend to operate from an established home base. Criminal groups that are able to operate with near impunity in their home countries show a tendency to branch out internationally. The United States, for example, is confronted with violent gangs from the former Soviet Union and the Caribbean (International Crime Threat Assessment, 2000). Countries in the Caribbean are coping with serious criminality committed by career criminals deported by the United States and the United Kingdom in large numbers. The European Union is confronted with influxes of criminality from Eastern Europe, for example, human traffickers from Albania, Bulgaria, and Kosovo

(EUROPOL, 2004). Southern Africa is struggling with an ongoing influx of Nigerian criminal networks (Shaw, 2003). At the global level, countries with dysfunctional justice systems provide safe havens for criminals to launder money, execute computer-facilitated scams, otherwise expand their criminal business, or plan terrorist attacks. In order to build lines of defense in appropriate places, national crime prevention requires reliable international intelligence on domestic crime across the world.

Information on the risk of crime and corruption must be considered by the international corporate world when deciding on where to invest and deploy human resources for profit. Information on governance is also key for policies aimed at sustainable development and poverty reduction. In the absence of reliable information on crime, decision makers of large corporations and funding agencies may make fundamentally wrong decisions. They may invest in countries where resources are covertly but systematically looted by well-camouflaged criminal elites. Or they may, conversely, abstain from investing in certain foreign countries or regions that have a bad reputation on false grounds.

At a more private level, international crime information is eminently relevant for all those who travel abroad for either business or pleasure. Travelers are especially vulnerable to all sorts of crime. Key considerations of potential travelers in selecting destinations are prices, cleanliness of accommodation, and safety. Just as foreign travelers are duly informed in travel guides about the threat of contagious diseases or the quality of swimming water, they would like to know more about the state of local crime. In the current situation, no reliable information on crime risks abroad is available to the common traveler (Pelton & Young, 2003).

International crime statistics serve several important public functions for governments, corporations, and individual citizens alike. In addition, such information provides the evidence base for testing assumptions on the macro causes of crime and on the macro long-term impact of countercrime policies. International statistical indicators belong to the empirical foundations of most modern sciences. A solid and broad knowledge base on the global epidemiology of crime would contribute greatly to criminological theory formation. For example, it would allow American criminologists to understand the recent drops in violent crime in the United States from an international perspective, rather than from a purely domestic one. It would allow criminologists to better understand which features of domestic crime are unique to their country and which are driven by forces that are universal. There can be no doubt about the scientific importance of more and better international crime information.

International Crime Statistics: The Sorry State of the Art

In recent years, the international community has seen a rapid growth in the production of international statistics. International organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) publish annually a wealth of detailed indicators of economic and financial activity (World Bank, 2005). Specialized agencies such as the World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Development Program (UNDP), and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) regularly release comparative statistics on a wide range of topics such as diseases, infant mortality, educational

attainment, and agricultural issues (WHO, 2005; UNDP, 2002b). There are also comparative statistics on the consumption of illegal drugs (UNODC, 2005), forced labor (ILO, 2005), and many other global social issues. It is not an overstatement to say that the world is experiencing an “information explosion” on cross-national issues.

In contrast, international statistics on crime and criminal justice are few and far between. As rightly observed by Kaufmann (2005), the leading researcher on governance issues at the World Bank Institute, metrics play hardly any role in the international discourse on security and justice. For many of the largest developing countries, no comparative statistical information on either crime or justice is available at all. Since 1987, an international poll has been conducted among the public of more than 70 countries about their recent experiences of crime (the International Crime Victim Survey [ICVS]). Based on results of this survey, new information has become available on experiences of the public of common crime in many developed countries and some cities in developing countries. In many parts of the world, ICVS results are the only source of reliable and up-to-date information on crime (for Southern Africa, see, for example, Naudé & Prinsloo, 2003; Naudé, Prinsloo, & Ladikos, 2006). But reliable crime information on some of the largest developing countries including Brazil, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Russia is still conspicuously missing. Surprisingly, there are no signs that this situation is likely to improve in the near future.

In 1999, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna, Austria, published the Global Report on Crime and Justice, which contained data that were at the time 5 years old (Newman, 1999). The publication was launched almost stealthily, without press releases or any other communication strategy, and has not become widely known in government circles. This pioneering report has not been followed up with any subsequent comprehensive UN reports on crime since. In fact, at the 14th session of the United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Vienna, Austria, in 2005, Antonio Maria Costa, the current executive director of UNODC, stressed in his opening speech the need for quantitative research as a foundation for policymaking on crime.

The international community has considerable respect for the annual World Economic Report, World Development Report, World Trade Report, and World Drug Report . . . and similar publications. But here is the real question: Is the Crime Commission ready to deliberate policy on the basis of a World Crime Report?

The commission’s short answer to this invitation was a firm no. The delegate from the United States was the first to express reservations about the production of such reports. Crime, in the view of his delegation, was a “more subtle” issue than drug trafficking. Production of and trafficking in drugs involves only a handful of countries, while each and every country has to struggle with domestic and international crime problems. Without further debate, the commission adopted a resolution requesting expert consultations on the feasibility and desirability of such a report rather than on the development of a report. No UN report on global crime and justice issues has since appeared or is likely to appear in the foreseeable future.

Since the 1950s, the international police organization (Interpol) has published biannually comparative police statistics on crime based on data provided mainly by its worldwide network of national liaison officers. In more recent years, these statistics were also available on their public Web site. Although frequently consulted and widely cited, the series has met with increasingly fierce methodological criticism (Rubin, 2006). In 2006, Interpol removed all crime statistics from their public Web site, and it is far from certain that an upgraded version of the series will ever be relaunched.

At the regional level, the situation is not much better. A UN-affiliated research institute in Finland (HEUNI) has published a series of high-quality reports on crime and justice in Europe and North America from a comparative perspective. In the fifth issue of the series, the authors admit that available data sources do not permit any firm conclusions about trends or correlates of crime. The project seems to have run out of steam (Aromaa et al., 2003). In the framework of the European Council's Permanent Committee on Crime Problems,¹ comparable data on crime and justice on its 46 member states have been collected twice (*European Sourcebook*, 2003). A third report was prepared with sponsoring of the Ministry of Justice of the Netherlands (*European Sourcebook*, 2006). Surprisingly, no funds for subsequent work have been made available by the Council of Europe itself. In fact, the Council of Europe, for decades a premier meeting place for young European and Canadian criminologists, seems bound to shelve its comparative criminological research program altogether.

The Eurostat Division of the European Commission, producing comparative statistics on a wide range of topics, once piloted a small "Eurobarometer of crime" (Van Dijk & Toornvliet, 1996). This survey among the public modeled after the ICVS was conducted a few times but failed to develop into a full-fledged crime survey. More recently, the European Commission has, within the framework of its research program, allocated ad hoc funds for the conducting of the International Crime Victim Survey among the 15 old member states of the European Union in 2005 (Van Dijk, Manchin, Van Kesteren, & Hideg, 2007). The development of a regular and comprehensive set of Eurostatistics on crime and justice has been under consideration in Brussels for some time. Several committees have been established to consider the feasibility and contents of such data-gathering instruments, but the issue is politically contentious. Building on the work done by the European Council, Eurostat has recently taken some initial steps toward the development of full-fledged European crime statistics, including an ICVS-type European crime survey. In the summer of 2007, the legality of these efforts under EU law was reportedly contested by at least one of the member states. The future fate of plans for standardized European crime statistics remains uncertain.

Crime as a Social Construct

Given the evident utility of reliable and comparative information on international crime patterns, how are we to explain that so few data are available or will soon become available? Some criminologists will be inclined to reply that comparative crime information is not produced because intrinsic technical-methodological problems render such production impossible. In their view, international crime statistics are a chimera, because universal definitions of crime do not exist. Crime, they assert,

is a dynamic social construct reflecting the unique characteristics of societies, their cultures, and their histories.

It cannot be denied that legal definitions of criminal offenses show significant variation across countries and across time. One needs to think only of such culture-bound crimes as blasphemy and adultery. Behavior seen as offensive or reproachable in one country may constitute a serious offense across the border. Antinarcotics laws are also known to show great international variation. However, the cultural relativity of crime definitions should not be exaggerated. The criminal codes of most countries include similar definitions of core crimes such as murder, rape, burglary, or robbery. In fact, the majority of countries across the world adopted either the British common-law system or one of the existing criminal codes of other European countries in the 19th or 20th century. The common-law and civil law systems prevail in most regions of the world. More recently, member states of the United Nations have adopted several criminal law treaties that oblige state parties to introduce well-defined crimes in their domestic criminal laws such as money laundering, trafficking in persons for exploitation, or the offering and acceptance of bribes. There is considerable uniformity in definitions of both common and emerging crime in national legislations across the world.

Parallel to the process of legal harmonization, the general public's perception of crime has also become increasingly universal because of globalization. More and more people are exposed to the same international media messages of crime, spend considerable time abroad every year, and make use of the same cyberspace. Personal experiences of crime are rapidly becoming more uniform across countries. For example, hundreds of millions of people across the world are exposed on an almost daily basis to the same "advance fee" scams emanating from Nigeria or elsewhere.

In the "global village," the common ground of citizens' experiences and perceptions of crime is substantial and rapidly expanding. This is especially true of inhabitants of large cities, which now make up more than half of the world population. Shared public perceptions of crime and justice across countries can be harnessed for the production of international crime statistics through survey research among the general public or special target groups of crime.

Although the production of comparative crime statistics is admittedly difficult and will never be easy, there seems to be sufficient communality in legal definitions and public perceptions to allow for the production of a core set of credible international crime statistics based on survey research such as the ICVS-based rates of victimization by common crime. There are, in my view, no a priori methodological reasons why this would not be possible, if serious and sustained efforts are made. It should also not be forgotten that many other topics about which widely used international statistics are collected suffer from a similar lack of universally recognized definitions, including, for example, unemployment, GDP, or educational attainment. There are many "best practices" in the development of international statistical indicators on social issues that can be transferred to the domain of crime.

International Crime Statistics as Controversial Knowledge

Committed criminologists can find ways to overcome the methodological reservations that some of their colleagues harbor concerning the production and use of international

crime statistics. Yet there are powerful external forces restricting the international criminal justice community from actually producing uniform crime statistics. In my view, the single most important impediment is simply that governments do not want to be exposed to statistics that may show their countries in an unfavorable light in this extremely sensitive domain. Crime statistics are generally seen by governments as their nation's "dirty laundry," something not to be flaunted in the public arena. They are also seen as a threat to the sovereignty of the country in matters of crime and criminal justice as is apparent in the opposition to the development of EU-based statistics on crime.

One of the first statisticians to compare crime statistics across countries was the 19th-century French geographer André-Michel Guerry. He saw national crime figures as reflections of the moral state of a country, which he called "moral statistics." As is now generally understood, crime figures say much more about the demographic, social, and economic conditions in a society and perhaps about the performance of its police forces or crime-prevention systems than about the morality of its people. But public opinion still tends to agree with Guerry that high crime rates reflect badly on the moral state of a country and, more specifically, on the moral standing or leadership of those in power. Politicians always want to look good, of course, which means that their party and their country have to look good. "There are plenty of guides that talk about price and quality," says Robert Pelton in the fifth edition of *The World's Most Dangerous Places* (2003), "but how come they never talk about safety?" His blunt answer was, "Well, stupid . . . publicizing that information is bad for tourism." One could add that in the eyes of many governments, it is not only bad for tourism but, much worse, for the reputation of the country generally and the party in office.

In the late 1990s, domestic and international media reported on the extraordinary high level of violent crime in the new South Africa, dramatically labeled the "murder capital of the world." In response to this media hype, the government of South Africa decided to shoot the messenger. It imposed a total ban on the publication of crime statistics in 2000 that lasted for several years. Although crime statistics on South Africa have now reappeared in official publications, they are less detailed and available at longer intervals.

Many governments clearly have a vested interest in not disseminating reliable international crime information. Even though such knowledge could be used to perform several important public and private functions, especially for high-crime countries, a World Crime Report will probably never be welcomed by countries struggling to get their domestic crime and criminal justice problems under control. The messengers of such information cannot expect to be popular with governments, not even, as has surfaced at the meeting of the UN Crime Prevention Commission in 2005, with governments of the most open and democratic ones such as the United States.

Twenty Years of Thwarted Efforts

Are there grounds to believe in an international "conspiracy of silence" of governments to repress knowledge on crime? This seems to be a preposterous idea, but in my view, the historical facts point to an affirmative answer. First of all, corroborating evidence can be found in the history of the United Nations Crime Prevention Programme's efforts to collect global statistics on crimes recorded by the police. The opposition to a World Crime

Report that surfaced at the UN Crime Commission in Vienna in 2005 is far from unprecedented. In 1977, the UN started to collect official crime statistics from its member states. Ever since the UN launched its Survey on Crime and the Operation of Criminal Justice, member states have been suspicious of the objectives of the survey and reluctant to share their crime- and justice-related statistics. To encourage countries to share their crime figures, the UN initially promised to report on only regional aggregates and not to publish data on individual countries.² National crime statistics were at the time deemed to be too sensitive for consumption by the international community. To put this taboo in perspective, it should be remembered that in countries belonging to the Soviet bloc, crime statistics were regarded as state secrets—not to be published even for domestic consumption (Reichel, 1994). Countries such as China and most Arab countries are still reluctant to make statistical information on crime available to their own people. Such countries can be expected to be even more suspicious of attempts to develop internationally comparable crime statistics.

In 1983, American criminologist Freda Adler, one of the early protagonists of the UN efforts to collect official crime statistics, published her pioneering comparative book *Nations Not Obsessed With Crime*. It describes and compares the crime situation of seven *low-crime* countries such as Switzerland (Adler, 1983). It is worth noting here that her original draft included a description of seven *high-crime* countries as well. This darker flipside of the study had to be dropped because of political opposition of the countries involved. Another, more recent example of repressed knowledge on crime in a comparative perspective is a UNDP-sponsored book on the illegal drugs industry in Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia. In order not to embarrass the new, cooperative administrations of these countries with references to illegal drugs industries and drugs-related corruption in the past, the UNDP's head office stopped the publication of the planned publication (Thoumi, 2002).

In the United Nations Global Report on Crime and Justice of 1999, the editors, Graeme Newman and Gregory Howard, have the following to say about crime statistics:

One need only to observe the ways in which countries behave internationally as entities—the ritual and care with which they make statements in the international arena—to realize that a country's open announcement in the international arena of its crime problems and its processing of offenders through the justice system is a major political event. (p. 8)

Their global report contained crime statistics of about 90 individual countries, but these were largely hidden in appendices. Some fragmentary information on crime at the country level was also reported about the years 1998 to 2000 in a UN-based journal (Shaw, Van Dijk, & Rhomberg, 2003). Otherwise, full-fledged global crime statistics have never been officially released by the United Nations in printed form.

In recent years, the number of member states participating in the UN crime surveys has declined rather than increased. In 2004–2005, only about 50 of the 190 member states of the UN shared comprehensive sets of their crime statistics with UNODC, with a clear overrepresentation of countries from the industrialized world. In a period of growing transparency on many issues, the willingness to “announce domestic crime problems in the international arena,” in the words of Newman and Howard (1999), has apparently dwindled rather than grown.

The comparison of police-recorded crime data is fraught with methodological difficulties, as mentioned before and as will be amply discussed later in Chapter 2. Arguably, governments in the past had sound reasons to be cautious about comparative statistics on crime. However, in recent years, more reliable sources of information on various types of crime, based on independent research, such as the ICVS, have become available. This new generation of survey-based crime information has not been met with a more welcoming reception by governments either. The suspicious and often negative responses to this new generation of crime statistics reveal even more clearly the entrenched opposition to the gathering and dissemination of such sensitive knowledge.

Since 1998, Transparency International, the Berlin-based NGO (nongovernmental organization), has published a Corruption Perception Index (CPI), reflecting levels of corruption in the public sector as perceived by businesspeople, country analysts, and ordinary citizens. The CPI is a composite index, using data from over 15 different sources. In 2004, ratings were given for 146 countries. The results of this “poll of polls” have been met with fierce opposition from many governments featured at the bottom of the list (indicating rampant corruption). When South African president Mbeki in May 2005 dismissed the TI ranking of his country as “just based on perceptions,” in a response to journalists, he echoed what many other politicians of countries with bad scores on the TI index have said before (cited in *The Economist*, June 2, 2005). In 1999, for example, the then prime minister of Malaysia, Mahathir Mohamed, dismissed those who believed the bad corruption ratings of his country as people with a colonial mind-set (*The Straits Times*, June 5, 1999). As we will now discuss, the reception of the International Crime Victim Surveys has not been more welcoming.

ICVS: Bringing the Bad News

The International Crime Victims Survey, mentioned above, does measure actual experiences of crime and street-level corruption, independently of police records. Through my prolonged involvement in the work on this survey, I have had firsthand experience with the reluctant reception of international crime victimization rates across the world. A few case histories on countries’ responses to the ICVS will suffice to make the point.

The first release of the survey’s findings on 13 industrialized countries in 1989 created a moral panic in the Netherlands, my home country, which found itself unexpectedly at the top of the league for household burglary and some other property crimes. The Dutch Parliament initiated a full-fledged parliamentary debate that lasted for several hours. The survey was lambasted in the media for weeks by politicians and fellow criminologists alike as fundamentally flawed and biased against the Netherlands. The Prosecutors General of the country tried—to no avail, fortunately—to persuade the Minister of Justice to discredit and discontinue the study, which in their view served no other purpose than making the Netherlands look bad.

The reception of the survey was hardly more favorable in the other high-crime countries. In Spain, researchers who planned to publish the high crime rates of Barcelona were advised that legal action would be taken against them with possible serious consequences for their careers. The Spanish results were eventually published as part of the general report, but Spain abstained from the subsequent three rounds of

the survey. The government initiated its own crime survey of which the methodology was never shared with the academic community. The Minister for Police of New Zealand suggested at a press conference that the country's Maori minority was to blame for the country's comparatively high rates of violence. The ensuing public outcry forced him to resign, and New Zealand withdrew its support for the survey for the coming 10 years. It did not rejoin the ICVS until 2005.

In Canada and Australia, the first report resulted in a search by government officials and researchers for methodological shortcomings that could "explain away" the comparatively high national violence rates. Ironically, concern in the United States was focused on the unexpectedly low crime rates, which apparently did not match the American self-image of being the most dangerous country on earth. These rates were wrongly (as was later found) attributed by American experts to a possible undersampling of inner-city blacks. In all these instances, the ensuing debates were full of emotional undertones. Faced with crime rates of their countries in an international context, even some of the most critically minded and detached criminologists adopt the sort of nationalistic attitudes normally associated with sports commentators or war correspondents.

The first results of a pilot study in Seoul, South Korea, in 1992 showed comparatively high rates of sexual violence against women. The president of the country felt compelled to intervene, and the report was never officially released. Results of a UN-funded pilot study in Beijing in 1992 were duly published. The results of the subsequent full-fledged survey of 1996 were never released or even shared with the coordinators of the ICVS. Sadly, the People's Republic of China had to be added to the black list of countries that carried out the survey without ever publishing the apparently politically unwelcome results.

Many more examples could be given of the problematic reception of ICVS results over the years. In 2005, the republication of older ICVS results in UNDP's Human Development Report 2005 triggered a media hype in Scotland, which found itself topping "the world league table for violent crime." The validity of the findings were immediately put in doubt by the Scottish police (*Sunday Times*, September 18, 2005; BBC News, September 19, 2005).³

When the results of the European component of the ICVS 2005 were published in February 2007, Ireland and the United Kingdom appeared to have the highest rates of victimization by common crime in Europe. In Ireland, a politician of the leading party asserted on national television that the study was methodologically flawed and that the results should not be taken seriously. In the United Kingdom, the Minister of Police dismissed the results as being "three years out of date" (*The Times*, February 6, 2007). The latest British crime survey data available at that time related to 2005. The ICVS 2005 results cover experiences of the public during 2004 and were therefore less out of date than asserted.

After almost 20 years, criticism of the ICVS methodology has somewhat abated. Favorable reception of the results in some Western countries including the Netherlands, Poland, and Estonia has probably been aided by the downward trend in levels of burglary and other common crimes across the region. The ICVS is finally bringing some governments the long-awaited "good news" on crime, namely, that it is falling. Overall,

the brief history of the ICVS confirms that comparative crime statistics are politically explosive and provoke furious denials from governments whose crime-reduction policies are put into an unfavorable light. It confirms what the organizers of the original UN crime surveys on official crime statistics had found out before: Comparative crime statistics are not popular with the authorities, especially not in countries whose crime rates are comparatively high, rising or not falling as steeply as elsewhere. Those comparing unfavorably with others in terms of crime or justice will always try to obstruct the collection of such information and, if this strategy fails, to discredit the source.⁴

Breaking the Silence

Those convinced of the utility of collecting and analyzing comparative crime statistics for political and academic reasons find themselves in a quandary. Because of the intrinsic opposition of many governments, the production of international crime statistics is chronically underfunded. As a result, the case for such statistics must be made on the basis of fragmentary, dated, and, in some respects, imprecise statistics. Anyone publishing such data can count on close scrutiny of their methodological soundness and, if any flaws are detected, on stridently critical reviews. In this situation, many experts are inclined to stay on the scientifically safe side: The few available international crime statistics are presented to illustrate their methodological weakness rather than their potential to inform policy-making and advance grounded theories of crime. Looking back at his own involvement in analyzing official crime data of the United Nations Crime Surveys, Joutsen (2004) disqualifies it with hindsight as “comparing what shouldn’t be compared.”

From a scientific perspective, such a cautious approach might be commendable, and indeed, as we will argue in the next chapter, it is sometimes better to abstain from comparisons altogether. However, this does not warrant the attitude of smug negativism concerning international crime statistics so often encountered among criminologists. As Aebi, Killias, and Tavares (2001) rightly point out, such an attitude plays into the hands of those officials who prefer such information not to be, or ever become, available for self-serving, political reasons. It means capitulating to political forces that would prefer comparative criminology to remain “statistically challenged” forever. In the current era, criminology owes the world better international crime data. To quote Jeremy Travis, past director of the National Institute of Justice in Washington, D.C., and current dean of John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York: “In this global age the world needs an infrastructure for building knowledge about crime and justice” (Travis, 2000).

In our opinion, the availability of new sources of survey-based information on various types of crime has brought new and challenging opportunities for comparative criminology. The time has come for criminologists to break the politically inspired “conspiracy of silence” of politicians and policymakers concerning comparative crime and justice statistics. The new generation of criminologists is well traveled and intellectually more internationally oriented than their predecessors. They will hopefully revolt against the conspicuous absence of credible international statistics in their chosen field of study.

SUMMARY POINTS/IN CONCLUSION

- This book seeks to break the vicious circle of political opposition and scientific caution regarding international crime information. It will present the “state of the art” of comparative crime and justice statistics, documenting not just their well-known weaknesses but their actual and potential strengths as well. A careful selection is made of the best international crime statistics available. These metrics will allow us to put domestic crime problems in an international perspective. They will also allow us to take a fresh look at different schools of thought on the macro causes of crime.

- Our overview of international crime statistics will hopefully also serve political purposes. Following the example set by Transparency International, the book will not shy away from ranking countries on several sensitive criteria regarding crime, corruption, and justice. It is clearly in the interest of the world community to enhance international transparency on these issues in order to improve domestic and international policies. It is also morally imperative that crime risk information available to intelligence agencies and major corporations should be disseminated to ordinary citizens traveling abroad for pleasure, business, or study or for selecting a retirement location. For several obvious reasons, the statistical truth about crime, terrorism, and justice should be put on the table in the public domain.

- The first, introductory part of this book, consisting of two chapters, introduces the reader to the problems and prospects of international crime statistics. The second and third parts of the book present and discuss the statistics themselves. Detailed overviews are given of the state of common crime and emerging global crimes, respectively. Using information from a wide range of survey-based, commercial, and official sources, more than 150 countries will be ranked according to their levels of property crime, violence, sexual violence, organized crime, trafficking in persons, grand and petty

corruption, and terrorism. Special chapters will analyze the main correlates of these types of crime across the world.

- In the fourth part, countries will be ranked according to the performance of their police forces, availability of special victim services, integrity of the courts, and use of imprisonment to punish offenders, again using a broad selection of sources, many of which have never been tapped by criminologists before.

- In the fifth and final part, composite indices of crime and justice will be presented that can be used to diagnose the state of crime and justice of individual countries comprehensively. In this final analysis, countries will be ranked according to their overall degree of lawfulness, based on indices of conventional crime, organized crime, corruption, police performance, and adherence to the rule of law. We will use these metrics to explore the overall impact of crime and justice on sustainable development and to underpin an agenda for global reform and action in the security and justice domain.

- Admittedly, the quality and comprehensiveness of the statistical data presented here is still far from ideal. Those who take issue or disagree with our findings are invited to be as fierce in their criticisms as we will be regarding conventional police figures of crime in the next chapter. However, be prepared to show concrete ways for improvement, preferably by bringing your own superior metrics to the debate. Our ultimate goal is to persuade democratic governments everywhere to step up their efforts to contribute to the collection of international crime information, so as to better inform their own and others’ countercrime policies and better serve the information needs of the public. We hope to give a push to the development and wider use of quantitative crime diagnostics. If that happens, this book will have achieved its strategic aim.

Notes

1. The Council of Europe is an international organization in Strasbourg, France, focusing on the promotion of human rights across Europe. It predates the European Union and includes former countries of the Soviet Union including Russia among its members.

2. Member states are increasingly recognizing the importance of comparative work for cross-national purposes but require reassurance that the data reported will not be used for any international numerical "ranking" (UN Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch, Vienna, Austria [A/CONF.144/6]).

3. Fife Chief Constable Peter Wilson, president of the Association of Chief Police Officers, questioned "whether useful comparisons could be drawn between various countries with different reporting practices." He had apparently missed the point that the ICVS circumvents the problem of differences in reporting by interviewing the general public about their experiences rather than consulting police administrations.

4. In 2003, researchers of UNODC presented preliminary findings of a database on documented cases of trafficking in persons sponsored by the governments of Norway and Belgium (Kangaspunta, 2003). Several of the most affluent, developed countries were listed among those cited most often as destination countries of human trafficking for sexual exploitation. Although such a listing only confirms the concentration of profitable sex markets in more-affluent countries, several of the governments involved made official objections to the listing of their country among the main destination countries. The ensuing debate has delayed publication of the full results by almost 3 years (UNODC, 2006).