Contemporary Criminological Issues

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SECTION 4

REFLECTIONS ON CRIMINOLOGY
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CHAPTER 11

Using Criminological Evidence to Shift Policy: From a Punishment to a Prevention Agenda

Irvin Waller, Verónica Martínez, Audrey Monette, and Jeffrey Bradley

Critical criminologists make the flaws in the criminal justice system a dominant contemporary issue. They show that the poor get prison and the rich get richer. They draw attention to policing and sentencing, which disproportionately target racial and other vulnerable groups. They show the failures and injustices of incarceration, particularly its massive overuse in the United States, the disastrous outcomes in Canada from overcrowding, and its negative impacts on people and communities everywhere. In Canada, they remind others of the disproportionate numbers of Indigenous people incarcerated.

Irvin Waller was a full professor in the Department of Criminology at the University of Ottawa for thirty-six years before retiring in 2018. Throughout his career, he has not only agreed with these critiques but also worked to ensure solutions proposed by criminologists have been put into practice. He has used criminological evidence to activate solutions that prevent persons from committing the crimes that typically lead to arrest and incarceration. Engaging with the political machine in Canada and abroad, he has shared prevention and victimological knowledge to get politicians to support making necessary investments (Waller 2019). This chapter highlights some of what has been achieved during Waller’s career as a means of informing the work that future criminologists can engage in to advance a shift from the flawed punishment agenda to an upstream prevention agenda that saves lives.
and money while avoiding so many persons from being arrested and incarcerated. Waller’s work has championed both empirical and public criminology to reform criminal justice policy in Canada and abroad.

The first section of this chapter describes the shift in his thinking as one of the pioneers of early Canadian criminology, in the 1960s and 1970s. He came to Canada to solve the failure of prisons by studying them. The criminological evidence from his study of men released from prison (Waller 1974) led him to examine ways to solve the problems that lead to misuse of policing and prisons through preventing crime and meeting the needs of victims (Waller and Okihiro 1978). These two pioneering and evidence-based studies at the University of Toronto were the foundations for Waller’s career, influencing his role in the Canadian government from 1974 to 1980, where he headed the major criminological research section. This office provided evidence to justify the abolishment of the death penalty and a shift from retributive punishment to evidence-based ways to meet the needs of victims, including through gun control, prevention of violence against women, and investments in evidence on prevention and victim assistance.

The next two sections overview some major changes made after Waller joined the University of Ottawa in 1980 and became a full professor in 1982. The first of these focuses on major shifts in the United Nation’s (UN’s) stance on human rights in relation to criminal justice policies that were influenced by Waller. Both of these started with a basic pamphlet that bridged the criminological evidence to common sense solutions. The pamphlets illustrate an important tool that criminologists can use to influence changes to policy. The next section shows the major accumulation of scientific knowledge on victimization and effective prevention that was the work of other leading criminologists, which strengthened the evidence that Waller uses.

The final section turns to the decade starting from 2010. Waller continued his perspective on the importance of using evidence to influence policy with reason, focusing on prevention, protection of victims’ rights, and advocacy. His perspective built on the significant changes identified in previous sections. The combination underpins Waller’s four recent books, which have been translated into multiple languages. These books, like the pamphlets, are a significant instrument in explaining criminological evidence and its
implications to politicians and non-governmental organizations. The influence of his books is illustrated by two examples of practical efforts to shift policy from a punishment to a prevention agenda. The Mexico example illustrates how accumulated criminological evidence and policy recommendations were harnessed starting in 2010 and describes the lessons for successful implementation of prevention policies across Latin America. Progress was made through collaboration with governments and through public speeches and significant media interviews. The Canadian example presents the efforts—particularly from 2015 to 2018—to harness the accumulated criminological evidence to reduce crime, victimization, and costs in municipalities. The Canadian example illustrates the role of partnerships, which included drafting action briefs similar to the pamphlets used earlier in his career.

The chapter concludes with lessons for teaching criminology. Teaching must include a foundation in the evidence for crime prevention and the protection of victim rights, as well as ways for students to shape their world by using evidence to promote reason and justice in crime policy and in public criminological engagement.

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<td>Publication of the book <em>Men Released from Prison</em></td>
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<td>1978</td>
<td>Publication of the book <em>Burglary: The Victim and the Public</em> (co-written with Norman R. Okhiro)</td>
<td>Waller’s role as Director General, Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada</td>
<td>Peace and Security Package focus on substituting prevention for punishment</td>
<td>Abolition of the death penalty Gun control Investment in research and prevention</td>
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<td>1981</td>
<td>Publication of <em>Rights and Services for Crime Victims</em></td>
<td>Waller’s role as Secretary General, World Society of Victimology</td>
<td>UN General Assembly (UNGA) Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power</td>
<td>Recognition of harm to victims Expansion of victim assistance and rights, and prevention</td>
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<td>1986</td>
<td>Waller starts to advise policy-makers on victim rights across world</td>
<td>UNGA Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>Waller starts to advise policy-makers on crime prevention</td>
<td>ICPC and Crime Prevention Digest</td>
<td>UN Economic and Social Council guidelines on crime prevention and criminal justice in 1996 and 2002, UN Habitat program on Safer Cities</td>
<td>Governments and cities in Europe initiated comprehensive strategies. UN Office for Drugs and Crime and Habitat consensus on implementation essentials.</td>
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*Figure 1:* Timeline of Irvin Waller’s major contributions and their impact on policy.
More broadly, the chapter will follow a timeline of Waller’s major contributions (see figure 1), with a particular focus on how Waller’s contributions influenced outcomes and results.

**Early Criminology in Canada Focused on Evidence and Policy Reform**

In 1966, Waller came to Canada from England to join the new Centre of Criminology at the University of Toronto. He had just completed a graduate degree at the Institute of Criminology at the University of Cambridge, where he had acquired knowledge about how to do criminological research that is evidence-based and therefore likely to influence policy. He was hired to work on a large Ford Foundation grant focused on evaluation of prisons and parole in Ontario. The study was to include parole decision making, the impact of prison on offenders, and evaluation of the rehabilitative effects of prison and parole.

**Incarceration Is Not the Solution**

Several criminological pioneers in the 1950s and 1960s had influenced Canadian policy to reduce the impact of the punishment agenda on offenders. Reforms had been made to reduce the number of offenders being sentenced to prison by developing alternatives such as probation and getting prisoners released early on parole. As the major part of the Ford Foundation grant, Waller became the architect and principal investigator of the pioneering empirical study of the background, prison experience, and post-release lives of 423 men exiting federal penitentiaries in Ontario. It included access to fingerprint section files on all arrests and convictions of the men both before incarceration, including as juveniles, and for five years after release.

The book that reported on the study, *Men Released from Prison* (Waller 1974), concluded that the main determinants of the high rates of post-release offending were the adverse life experiences of the men before they arrived at the prison door. While prisoners improved their grade levels and health while behind bars, the prison programs of job training, Alcoholics Anonymous, counselling, and so on, could not change their life chances or reduce their likelihood of reoffending. It confirmed the often insurmountable gap and difficulties of transition from prison to community. After release, the assistance from a halfway house or parole officer made little difference to
further offending. Getting a job and a sustained family relationship made a small, but positive difference, while misuse of alcohol, delinquent associates, and fighting made a negative difference. The study concluded that it was remarkable that a few men were actually able to beat the odds and not reoffend. In sum, neither prison nor parole were significant ways of reducing future offending.

Along with the main study, Waller and Janet Chan (1974) did a quick study of comparative incarceration rates to provide evidence on how Canada compared with other countries. It pioneered the indicator for comparing incarceration use as the number of persons behind bars per 100,000 total population. It showed that in 1970, with a rate of 205 persons behind bars per 100,000, the United States was much more punitive than other Western countries, such as Canada, Germany, and United Kingdom, which had rates of less than 100 persons behind bars per 100,000. It also showed that the higher the incarceration rate across different jurisdictions in the United States, the higher the rate of homicide and recorded violent crime. They concluded that incarceration is not a significant deterrent to violent crime, but rather a reaction to crime. It showed how incarceration was correlated with race and Indigenous indicators. By 2010, the United States rate of incarceration had skyrocketed to over 700 per 100,000, while rates of violent crime rose, thus confirming again the limits of the deterrent effect (Waller 2014). Studies later showed a small incapacitation effect, but at a huge cost to taxpayers and the communities where prisoners tend to come from and go to (Waller 2019).

The development of evidence about reoffending after release and after parole contributed to Waller’s role on the Hugessen Task Force (1972), which reorganized parole to function how it does today in Canada. This role on a task force was an important way for a criminologist to influence policy. Unfortunately, the recommendations—to create an institute on parole to provide evidence and accountability in terms of reoffending after parole—were never implemented. Corrections agencies in Canada are able to claim low recidivism rates because Canada does not publish the data that shows the high rates of failure after parole. If they did, politicians would be more aware of the failure of incarceration.

The Public Wants Prevention, Victims Want Reparation

In reaction to the conclusions about the limits of prison and parole in contributing positive benefits, Waller’s next study looked at whether
prisons and parole were a rational option given what the public and crime victims wanted, and how those needs could be met in more effective ways. It used burglary for the study as the offence of break-and-enter was the conviction for which many men were still sentenced to the penitentiary in 1970. The study mapped police-recorded burglary across census tracts in Toronto and conducted Canada’s pioneering victimization survey looking at public attitudes, rates of victimization, impact of burglary on victims, precautions taken by citizens, and demographic data. The survey methodology later influenced the British Crime Survey (n.d.).

The book that came out of the study, *Burglary: The Victim and the Public* (Waller and Okihiro 1978), showed the risk of burglary to be highest in areas close to a concentration of poor young men living alone and where victims had more stealable property. The presence of a guardian, such as a concierge in an apartment building, reduced risk. Importantly, it showed that the public and victims are much less punitive than is commonly believed, that victims were more traumatized by vandalism than by property stolen, and that they wanted restitution more than punishment.

**The Abolition of the Death Penalty and Prevention Initiatives**

When Waller was hired to be the first director general of research for the public safety ministry (then called the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada), he used criminological evidence to advocate for a package of initiatives that could be leveraged in the abolition of the death penalty that would meet the needs of victims by tackling the causes of homicide and violence. Three causes identified at that time were guns, domestic disputes, and dangerous offenders. Therefore, the package included a major initiative for gun control, investments in tackling violence against women, and dangerous offender legislation. All three were to be evaluated based on evidence. It was projected that these would reduce rates of violence and, thereby, penalties would be reduced later. He also demonstrated that public attitudes were much more positive toward the prevention agenda than many politicians believed they would be.

The evaluation of the gun control package showed that it contributed to reductions in violence as well as to a decline in homicides. The evaluation of the dangerous-offender law showed that it was used much more moderately than previous laws. Unfortunately, the funds for tackling violence against women were mostly used for other
purposes. The research funded significant criminological research at the universities of Montreal, Toronto, and Simon Fraser with the aim of influencing policy with criminological evidence. The research group published a booklet for policy-makers called *Selected Trends* (Waller and Touchette 1982). A video was also produced for briefing politicians, to bridge the gulf between criminological evidence and public policy. Violent crime declined, but the visionary politicians of the 1970s—keen to reduce the use of incarceration, based on evidence—were not to be seen in subsequent years. In fact, the government diminished the resources and clout of the research group about five years after Waller left.

**Major Changes at the UN to Justice for Victims and Prevention of Victimization Initiatives**

What is now the UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) had had a long-term interest, between the 1950s and 1970s, in promoting rights for suspects and offenders, and better humane conditions and rehabilitation for offenders. Its meetings were dominated by corrections experts and penologists. Waller was a pioneer of expanding these human rights to include justice for victims and prevention of victimization. Indeed by 2000, UNODC had prevention as one of its permanent three priorities, and showed significant interest in protecting the rights of victims, within the context of its priorities, for criminal justice and organized crime. This section touches on some of Waller’s key actions in contributing to these changes.

“*Victim Magna Carta*” Makes Justice for Victims a Human Right

In 1976, Waller was invited to chair the research section of the pioneering meeting of those interested in victim research, assistance, and rights (Waller 1976). In 1979, he contributed two papers to the meeting of victimologists that led to the founding of the World Society of Victimology, where he was elected to the executive committee (Waller 1982a, 1982b).

In 1979, Waller was invited to join the board of the influential US National Organization for Victim Assistance (NOVA). He learned about the wave of state legislation to promote services, compensation, restitution, and civil remedies for victims, as well as amendments to state constitutions that was crowned by the national *Victims of Crime Act* in 1984 (NOVA 1984). He was later to be identified as one of the
pioneers of victim services and rights in the United States (Waller 2017), but it was the advocacy at NOVA that inspired his pioneering push for the UN General Assembly Magna Carta for victims.

Waller’s first steps at the University of Ottawa were to engage a graduate student to research a pamphlet eventually titled Rights and Services for Crime Victims (CCSD 1981), as well as organize a major international conference on victim assistance and rights in Toronto. The pamphlet focused on the evidence about the harm from victimization in Canada and proposed rights to prevention, reparation and services, and respect. This short booklet was written to explain criminological evidence to politicians and advocacy groups who began to promote its framework. This led to the resolution from the UN General Assembly, dubbed the Magna Carta for victims (UNGA 1985). The resolution adopts prevention and makes the “Declaration of Basic Principles of Justice for Victims of Crime and Abuse of Power”:

Recognizing that victims of crime are unjustly subjected to loss, damage or injury and that they may, in addition, suffer hardship when assisting in the prosecution of offenders, countries around the world agreed on the necessity of adopting measures to secure universal and effective recognition of—and respect for—the rights of victims and multiple other actions that aimed to alleviate the plight of victims and to prevent victimization from occurring. (UNGA 1985, 1)

When an individual is a victim of a criminal act, they experience shock, trauma, and anger, as well as frequent financial loss and sometimes injury. If they report the victimization to the police, they may suddenly be propelled into the criminal justice system, whose main interest in the victim is as a mere witness. Already affected by the incident, victims often feel frustrated and oppressed by a justice system that is complex and often insensitive to them and which, in turn, adds to the burden of the victims, rather than lightening it. (Waller 2011)

Yet, the Canadian criminal justice system is built on a model that is predominantly focused around justice for the criminal by the state. It is rare that this system asks: What about the victim? All too often, when criminologists or criminal justice policy-makers talk about crime and justice, they fail to mention the victim or, if they do,
they focus on the anger rather than ways to meet the needs of victims and constructively deal with that anger. Often, the victim’s animosity is about the operation of criminal justice, as well as their victimization.

The “victim Magna Carta” has gradually influenced policy reforms in Canada, which started with a series of victim-service laws in most provinces, as well as a victim rights law in Ontario. These have fostered a modest increase in information and services for victims, and thus reduced the frustration and the anger that can drive punishment solutions. In 2007, the federal government established the Office of the Ombudsman for Victims of Crime. Subsequently, the Canadian Victims’ Bill of Rights was enacted in 2015. Its objective was to recognize that criminal acts have a detrimental impact on victims and society, and thus to emphasize the importance of taking the rights of victims into consideration throughout the criminal justice process (Waller 2020). The Canadian Victims’ Bill of Rights “guarantees” four statutory rights for victims: (1) the right to information; (2) the right to protection; (3) the right to participation; and (4) the right to seek restitution. However, the rights under the Canadian Victims’ Bill of Rights remain to be implemented. Specific measures must still be developed to ensure the uniform application of victims’ rights, as well as an annual assessment of these enforcement measures with the victims. In short, it is imperative to ensure that victims’ rights are not just rights on paper, but rather that they are connected to concrete and universal actions. As this happens the frustration of victims with criminal justice will be reduced and the potential for restorative justice will become greater.

Waller, together with other international experts, proposed a draft “Model Law for Victims of Crime” in 2006 based on commitments by all world governments to implement the Magna Carta for victims. It points to the harm caused to victims of crime, the lack of effective strategies to reduce victimization, and the need to minimize harm when victims collaborate with law enforcement and criminal justice systems (Waller 2011, 163). This focuses on support, justice, and protection, as well as the use of surveys to assess progress.

Canadian criminology is lagging behind international developments. Nonetheless, in 2010, Rick Linden, the editor of the most widely used textbook on criminology, added a chapter on victim services and rights (Waller 2020). Undergraduates are therefore
exposed to some of the basic notions. For most undergraduates, this chapter is the only part of their curriculum that looks at evidence on the needs of victims and how those needs are better met through rights and services than through the state’s role in punishment in criminal justice.

For the past thirty-five years, leaders from the field of victimology, criminology, and criminal justice have been coming together to offer the postgraduate course on Victimology, Victim Assistance, and Criminal Justice in Dubrovnik, Croatia. This course, held in cooperation with the World Society of Victimology, is being replicated in other regions around the world. It aims to inspire students across the globe to keep fighting for victim rights in the years to come and to address victims’ needs through services and supports, rather than through incarceration. The course covers the areas of history of victimology, relevant UN declarations, restorative justice, victim compensation and restitution, crisis intervention, assistance to rape victims, standing in court, and much more. Many of the pioneers of prison abolition, such as Louk Hulsman and Nils Christie, were a regular part of the course, discussing solutions for victims as an alternative to the state playing a role in incarceration and punishment. This course, though popular, is often the only exposure for criminology graduate students at the University of Ottawa or elsewhere to understand the needs, services, and rights for victims and the potential for sustained reductions in punishment.

*International Centre for the Prevention of Crime Makes Prevention Part of the UN*

In 1983, another graduate student helped Waller write a pamphlet on crime prevention through social development (CCSD 1984) that led to a UN centre that focused on prevention and shifts towards prevention in Europe, Canada, Mexico, and elsewhere. This pamphlet too was written to explain criminological evidence to politicians and non-governmental groups and offered common sense ways of achieving significant reductions in crime through prevention.

Waller was the scientific advisor for two major conferences of mayors and national leaders, in Montreal in 1989 and Paris in 1991. These events sparked a new commitment to make cities safer by going beyond police, courts, and corrections to invest in actions by sectors such as schools, housing, youth, social services, and health in order to tackle the causes of crime through social prevention.
In 1993, the Standing Committee on Justice and the Solicitor General recommended that the Canadian federal government, in cooperation with the provinces and municipalities, take on a national leadership role in crime prevention (Horner 1993). Following the recommendations made by the standing committee, governments in Canada and France, and the provincial government in Quebec signed a declaration on the creation of the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime (ICPC) in Montreal.

This has also brought significant change. The work of the ICPC created an international movement that led UNODC and the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) to adopt the UN crime prevention guidelines (UN ECOSOC 2002). Essentially these stress that implementation requires a permanent crime-prevention board, the use of crime-prevention science, a plan from diagnosis to evaluation that mobilizes entities able to tackle causes, and the development of the human talent to make it happen—in other words, basic empirical criminology. It also requires adequate and sustained funding, and public engagement—in other words, public criminology.

At the international level, intergovernmental agencies have held a series of congresses, and produced documents and declarations that have transformed some national agendas on the best ways to tackle crime. Many governments across the world are starting to consider violence as a public health issue—which really means a criminological issue—and are seeking to develop effective frameworks to better prevent crime and violence. The most recent include the UNODC quinquennial Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in 2015. In 2017, the World Health Organization (WHO) held its milestone meeting on violence prevention in Ottawa and, the year after, UN-Habitat agreed on guidelines on safer cities. Each of these meetings raised awareness and moved the prevention agenda slowly but steadily forward. In 2018, the UK Youth Violence Commission made its report endorsing these models and investments (Youth Violence Commission 2018). This commission was a partnership between parliamentarians and the University of Warwick—a government-university pairing similar to other commissions on which Waller worked earlier (Waller 2017). These examples again illustrate key ways to influence policy in Canada and abroad through the UN system, but also through major conferences.
Significant Change in Data and Criminological Evidence Internationally

While Waller was focused on using evidence to advance crime prevention and victim protection, there was a sea change, from 1980 to 2017, in relevant data available. Notable areas where knowledge dramatically expanded includes the prevalence and impact of crime on victims, the risk factors that correlate with persons known to commit common and interpersonal crime, the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of interventions to tackle those risk factors, and services and rights for victims.

Data Shows Prevalence of Crime and Harm from Victimization

The United States has had an annual national crime-victim survey since 1972 (US Bureau of Justice Statistics n.d.). England and Wales have had the sophisticated British Crime Survey since the early 1980s (British Crime Survey n.d.).

Canadian data from government statistical agencies generally lags behind other countries. Canada restarted its victimization surveys in 1989, but these have been implemented only every four years and are much less sophisticated than other leading countries. The most recent Canadian victimization survey shows that 2.2 million Canadians aged fifteen and older were still victimized by a violent crime in 2014 (Perreault 2015). Moreover, there was one property crime for every seven adult Canadians, and one violent crime for every fifteen adult Canadians in 2014 (Perreault 2015). It is estimated that 650 persons will be murdered in any given year—of whom a quarter will be Indigenous—and close to a quarter will be with a handgun. The total harm to Canadians from interpersonal crime is estimated at a staggering $55 billion a year (CMNCP 2016a; Zhang 2011). Canada does not have a current survey on intimate partner and sexual violence, but it is likely that 100,000 women will be raped each year if our rates are proportionately the same as Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) shows for the United States (CDC 2018; Waller 2019). While gains have been made elsewhere, Canada needs to catch up on its collection of victimization data to better inform public policy as it relates to prevention and meeting the needs of victims.
Expenditures on Criminal Justice Spike

The evidence on harm to victims and related costs has been used to argue that crime policy should focus on prevention because it saves lives, losses, and taxes. Canada is spending $22 billion on cops, courts, and corrections to react to the $55 billion in harm (Zhang 2011). From 2000 to 2016, Canada doubled its expenditures on policing from $6 billion to $14 billion today (CMNCP 2016a; Greenland and Alam 2017). During this time, police were recording less crime, in part, because the proportion of victims of crime—particularly against property—reporting to police was dropping and clearance rates for homicide were dropping. Municipalities, who pay two thirds of these expenditures, cried foul. The unsustainable growth in public safety expenditures is crowding out expenditures on early intervention and prevention (CMNCP 2016b), but municipalities are apparently powerless to change it.

While Canada’s expenditures per capita on policing are not cheap, the United States spends similar amounts on policing with some of their cities spending much more. A comparison between Toronto and Chicago is particularly striking, as they have the same population size. Toronto has 5,500 police for about CDN$1 billion and an average of sixty murders a year. Chicago has 13,000 police for CDN$2 billion and an average of 600 murders a year (Waller 2019).

As noted previously, the use of incarceration in the United States exploded from a punitive 215 persons in prison per 100,000 total population in 1965, to over 700 per 100,000 in 2015 (Waller 2019). From 1965 to 2015, the incarceration rate in Canada has vacillated around 100 per 100,000 (Correctional Services Program 2015). The United States outpaces any other country on its per capita use of incarceration, as well as expenditures on policing and imprisonment. If it reduced its massive overuse of incarceration to our level, they would save more than $60 USD billion a year, and the savings would be even higher if they reduced its use to the German level (Waller 2019, 209–10).

These massive increases in spending and use of incarceration have not brought the homicide rate in the United States close to Canada’s, let alone Germany’s (Waller 2019, xxv, 209). The spike in American incarceration can be read as the largest single criminological experiment ever and demonstrates the failure of incarceration to deter or even to provide significant incapacitation (Waller 2019, 38–46). The states with the highest incarceration rates have the
highest homicide and violent crime rates—thus demonstrating that incarceration is no silver bullet. While studies done for the National Academy of Sciences show some decrease in violent crime by incapacitating such massive numbers of poor young men, the effect is not large and the cost to taxpayers and disadvantaged communities is massive (Waller 2019).

**Upstream Prevention Proven as Smart Solution**

What are the programs and practices that have been shown to prevent crime and victimization? What are the strategies that help offenders and avoid over-policing and over-incarceration? Knowledge on these issues has changed dramatically in the last fifty years, which constitutes a substantial change on what we know about the causes of personal crime and its prevention.

Some of the causes include lack of jobs, limited access to education, negative parenting and family breakdown, poverty, and racial discrimination. The risk factors include being born into situations of relative poverty, inconsistent parenting and child abuse, being identified in primary school as troublesome, dropping out of school, having anger issues, abusing substances (including alcohol), and being incarcerated (Waller 2014; WHO 2016). Reducing the number of children growing up with these causes and risk factors has been proven to reduce crime (Waller 2014, 19).

Historically, the milestone study that brought together multiple criminological evaluations of what prevents crime—what works, what is promising, and what does not work—was undertaken by Lawrence Sherman and other criminologists at the University of Maryland (Sherman et al. 1998; see also Sherman et al. 2006). This was the first step toward today’s CrimeSolutions.gov website which is the major repository maintained by criminologists at the National Institute of Justice of the United States Department of Justice. This repertory has become the single most important source of criminological evaluations and is so essential to core criminology. It includes empirical evaluations of more than 500 different types of programs and 100 practices that have been evaluated—often in random control trials—in terms of their proven or non-proven effectiveness in preventing crime (Waller 2019, 26–32).

This repertory shows more than 60 percent of effective solutions were delivered by services such as those for youth, families, early childhood, education, and health. In sum, the solutions to
crime are upstream prevention, not cops, courts, or corrections. A modest number of programs based on proactive law enforcement and diversion have also reduced policing costs and prevented victimization (CMNCP 2016b, 2; Waller 2019, 20–32). Many of the best-known programs of youth outreach, parenting, and school curricula, such as life skills, result in a 50 percent reduction in offending compared to criminal justice interventions, without the negative consequences for young people in the criminal justice system (Waller 2019, 59–78).

While familiarity with CrimeSolutions.gov should be mandatory for every policy-maker and criminologist, the website does not bridge the evidence to policy actions. One of Waller’s missions has been to make this bridge to policy-makers (CMNCP 2016b; Waller 2014, 2019). He has identified the specific policy investments in social and crime prevention programs for politician, and has shown the benefits in reduced crime and taxes (i.e., through less policing and prisons) (Waller 2014). He has presented the ways that these programs must be implemented and how advocates can influence the politicians to invest in them (CMNCP 2018; Waller 2019).

Today, several other major organizations provide similar access to yet more criminological evidence on the impressive actions that have reduced crime—mostly away from policing and certainly not involving incarceration. The access is on websites sponsored by national and international agencies such as Public Safety Canada, the International Centre for the Prevention of Crime, the UK College of Policing, and the World Health Organization (CMNCP 2016b; Waller 2019, 23–36). The Public Safety Canada repertory was based on more than 200 programs in 2018. The University of Ottawa Crime Prevention Team, including two of the authors of this article, has brought this knowledge together so that mayors, journalists, and students in Canada can grasp it easily (CMNCP 2016c).

Many of the evaluations demonstrate a return of $7 for every $1 invested. The Washington State Institute for Public Policy is a non-partisan research institute that informs the legislature of the State of Washington in education, criminal justice, social services, and health care. Its website is the go-to source for policy-makers as it systematically reviews evidence on the cost-benefit of programs that tackle crime, using important work of criminologists (Washington State 2018). The summaries of their findings demonstrate clearly that investing in prevention programs not only reduces harm to
victims, but also reduces the cost of crime to the state and taxpayers. Nowhere does it show that more spending on reactive police or incarceration reduces crime. In fact, one study showed how much would be saved to taxpayers by investing in prevention and so avoiding prison construction. Public Safety Canada has published its “Tyler” story that shows the massive savings from investment in youth inclusion, thinking twice to avoid violence, and in family support (Waller 2019, 23–36).

At the international level, the World Health Organization has developed multiple useful resources on the prevention of violence—again using criminological evidence. The role of law enforcement is very limited, restricted only for the enforcement of rules (e.g., around the abuse of alcohol or guns). The WHO’s portfolio of effective strategies includes:

- focus on at-risk youth by teaching life skills and establishing meaningful relationships;
- early childhood education and parenting programs;
- reducing access to alcohol and guns;
- improving respect for gender norms; and
- providing support and assistance for victims.

In 2017, at the invitation of Health Canada, the WHO organized a major meeting in Ottawa on the topic of evidence on what stops violence. It launched an even more extensive website covering 3,000 different research studies on the prevalence, impact, causes, and solutions to violent crime (WHO 2016). Waller was instrumental in getting this meeting to Ottawa, and the resulting website must become a part of the knowledge base for any criminology student.

Preventive evidence and Waller’s work with WHO and the ICPC led to UN ECOSOC and UN-Habitat Guidelines on how to implement effective, comprehensive strategies (Waller 2019). In 2006, the City of Glasgow in Scotland took these steps to heart and, after completing the all-important diagnosis, it implemented a comprehensive strategy that reduced violence by 50 percent and sustained the reductions over the next ten years (Waller 2019, 159–82). The Glasgow strategy could serve as a model for more cities in Canada, the United States, and Latin America. The strategy was recently featured as the number one priority for reducing murders in England and Wales, as recommended
by the stellar Youth Violence Commission (2018) mentioned earlier. This in turn has led to the City of London in the United Kingdom to adopt the Glasgow strategy, which is expected to lead to many more replications across the world.

**Evidence, Books, and Collaboration Shift the Agenda**

Waller has now written four books that bring the evidence to advocacy for investments in effective prevention and victim rights in multiple languages. *Less Law, More Order* (2006), *Rights for Victims of Crime* (2011), and *Smarter Crime Control* (2014) have already made a difference. *Science and Secrets for Stopping Violent Crime* (2019a) goes one step further by showing how public criminology can be used successfully to get political buy-in, including how to work with governments and non-governmental advocacy groups.

The books are based on the combination of Waller’s evidence-based prevention and victim agenda developed prior to 1980, the major changes in both UN recognition of prevention and of victim rights, and the remarkable increase in data and criminological evidence. Essential tools for action are to communicate science in user-friendly ways to politicians and bureaucracies and to explain specific actions that they can take. If politicians are to guarantee rights for victims and stop victimization, they need help to understand what is known and the implications of this knowledge for policy. If criminologists are to make a difference, they must also get to know these easy-to-read books. The influence of these books will be illustrated by two examples of efforts to shift policy from a punishment to a prevention agenda.

*Collaboration Starts with a Shift in Agenda in Mexico and Latin America*

Waller’s books and expertise have contributed to a movement toward effective crime prevention and citizen safety in Latin America. It has been marked by multiple successes, some failures with lessons, and hope for more effective implementation in the future.

*General Law for the Social Prevention of Violence and Crime*

Waller’s work synergized with the concept of citizen safety. Instead of police and prisons acting only in the interest of the state, citizen safety gave greater importance to the reduction of feelings of insecurity, prevention of victimization and violence, and participation of citizens, as
well as policing that is community-oriented, and a respect for human rights (Waller and Martínez-Solares 2019).

The failure of traditional security policies to stem the rising tide of violence in Mexico helped political decisions to shift from a paradigm based on punishment and deterrence to a proactive and preventive one (Waller and Martínez-Solares 2019). In an unprecedented event in Latin America in 2008, convened by Mexico’s Party of the Democratic Revolution, Waller and other experts met in the Chamber of Deputies to lay the conceptual, legal, and evidential foundations of what would be established in the General Law of the National System of Public Safety. It focused on evidence about effective prevention and experiences developed in the European Union and in English-speaking countries.

Later in 2008, a second opportunity came, this time called by Mexico’s Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI). Once again with the support and advice of Waller, a report drawing on international experience and consensus was written to give support to a prevention law. Thus, in 2011, the General Law for the Social Prevention of Violence and Crime was proposed based on solid scientific evidence, but with a focus on smarter ways of dealing with violent crime (Waller and Martínez-Solares 2019). The law was adopted and received significant funding for several years, and was associated with several thousand fewer homicides for the first few years. Unfortunately, the funding was not sustained. As too often happens, upstream and holistic approaches that are effective and cost-effective wither because policing and security forces, which are more visible as “action,” take precedence.

The General Victims’ Law in Mexico: Solace Long Awaited

For issues of protection of victims, Mexico had lived through a disturbing spike in violence that started in 2006. Mass executions, disappearances, beheadings, and hangings were commonplace across the country, as was impunity for these and many other crimes. The “war on drugs” led to the escalation of conflict between official forces and drug cartels, resulting in significant increases in many thousands of civilian deaths (Taladrid 2016, 5).

In 2012, the General Victims’ Law (GVL) was enacted as an overdue recognition of the direct and indirect victims who had been affected by the wave of violent crime in Mexico (Amnesty International 2013). Prior to the GVL, no single legal instrument
guaranteed the protection of their rights. Victims had no access to restorative justice; their rights to truth, justice, and integral reparations were not satisfied. The GVL “aimed at guaranteeing the rights of victims of crime and human rights abuses in the ongoing violence resulting from the struggle against organized crime in Mexico” (Amnesty International 2013, 1). Compensation could be claimed by victims, including relatives of people who had been killed or forcibly disappeared and those who had been kidnapped or injured as a result of organized crime.

The GVL was a victory for the victims’ movement in Mexico, but it was a partial one. Unfortunately, the implementation of the GVL was marked by a series of delays and significant shortcomings, which in turn affected victims’ ability to claim the benefits and rights. The government lacked political will and tolerated poor leadership, corrupt bureaucracy, and unwillingness to harmonize state laws with the GVL (Taladrid 2016). Victims gained a little, but were let down in terms of what was promised.

**Regional Model for a Comprehensive Violence and Crime Prevention Policy**

Mexico was one of several Latin American governments that collaborated in the development of the *Regional Model for a Comprehensive Violence and Crime Prevention Policy* in 2015 (EUROsociAL 2015; Waller 2019, 147–48). The *Regional Model* was a new effort to prevent crime and victimization, learning from the successes and failures of the implementation of the crime-prevention and victim legislation in Mexico, but also from the failure to deal with growing violence and spending on reactions in other Latin American countries.

Veronica Martínez-Solares, with advice from Waller, was responsible for the work funded through the European Forum for Urban Security and the International Juvenile Justice Observatory and the European Union’s EUROsociAL II program. It focused on the UN crime-prevention guidelines from 2002 (UN ECOSOC 2002; Waller 2019, 115–38) discussed above. These stress some essentials for successful implementation, such as multi-sectoral approaches that diagnose the problems that cause violence and mobilize the sectors able to tackle the problems; significant and sustained investment; capacity development (human talent); quick wins; and measuring outcomes. By 2015, there was a realization that it must also focus on gender.
In partnership with representatives from ten Latin American governments, the project drafted a framework for comprehensive regional violence and crime-prevention policies. The model puts forward seven processes and two conditions whose purpose is to facilitate the identification of the circumstances, developments, and requirements specific to each country to contribute to the construction, as well as implementation, of comprehensive public violence- and crime-prevention policies (EUROsociAL 2015, 8; Waller 2019, 147–53). This model is the core of a non-binding declaration, known as the Cartagena Declaration, that reaffirms the political commitment of the region’s authorities to create policies using the model. It shows what is needed for the solid science of violence prevention to be implemented and sustained successfully. It reaffirms that policies will not succeed without strong political will, leadership, management, institutionalization, good governance, coordination and integration of criminological analysis, focus, inclusion, equity and dignity with a gender perspective, and ethics, as well as regional collaboration (EUROsociAL 2015; Waller 2019, 115–58). This model has led to significant implementation of crime prevention in several of the partner countries.

Collaboration Provides Basis to Shift Agenda in Canada

The movement toward investment in, and implementation of, effective crime prevention has been harnessed and championed in Canada by a group of key stakeholders from municipalities who are part of the Canadian Municipal Network on Crime Prevention (CMNCP).

Creation of CMNCP

In 2006, the Institute for the Prevention of Crime (IPC) of the University of Ottawa, originally launched and directed by Waller with financial support from the National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC), invited mayors from fourteen Canadian municipalities to nominate a city official—not a police officer—to become part of what is now the CMNCP. One outcome from the project was that the municipalities agreed on the importance of a clear, strong political will; ongoing funding; a centre of municipal responsibilities for crime prevention; a strategic plan; and the importance of public engagement. These were seen as essential to achieve tangible and permanent reductions in crime at the municipal level. All these essential
issues were later identified among the elements of the Latin America regional model.

After the end of this first phase of funding, the municipalities decided to continue in collaboration with Waller. In 2015, they secured funding for a second phase from Public Safety Canada and formed the CMNCP as a community of practice to build capacity and mobilize Canadian municipalities to prevent and reduce crime and to foster community safety and well-being. The funding aimed to increase investment in effective, evidence-based, and collaborative crime-prevention strategies in municipalities (CMNCP 2016a, 2016c, 2018). Members in 2019 represent most big cities and over thirty municipalities whose combined populations are more than 50 percent of the population of Canada.

**Main Contributions of CMNCP**

CMNCP shares good practice in successful evidence-based crime prevention and practical experiences of its members. Its focus is on strategies that go beyond the established reactive police and criminal justice activities. These upstream strategies include preventive measures that tackle the causes of, and risk factors for, crime through stronger actions and innovations in sectors such as schools, housing, social and youth services, health, and preventive policing. This requires the mobilization of stakeholders—such as mayors, city councillors, and city officials—in the municipalities and in these sectors. It also includes greater public engagement and strategies based on collaboration, evidence, planning, and results’ evaluation. CMNCP has presented examples, such as Glasgow, where cities have followed the essentials for successful implementation (UN ECOSOC 2002; Waller 2019, 115–82). These examples show there is potential for Canadian cities to end youth and handgun violence, while spending less on policing and significantly reducing overuse of incarceration.

These achievements were largely achieved by young criminologists who knew the scientific literature on violence prevention and wanted to make a difference to policy. With the leadership of Waller, a crime-prevention team of graduate students at the University of Ottawa, including Jeff Bradley and Audrey Monette, helped with the analysis and writing of nine action briefs between 2016 and 2018. The actions briefs are important tools that provide decision makers easy access to the evidence on crime prevention and related topics, as well as actions that the stakeholders can take. They are designed for
elected politicians, senior municipal officials, police executives, community safety coordinators, and citizens. They are also great for students. The messages of several of these action briefs have been recorded, TEDx-talk style, as videos in English and French (see also CMNCP 2017; Waller 2013).

In October 2017, the University of Ottawa team, in collaboration with CMNCP, organized a workshop called Advancing Investment in Effective Crime Prevention. The aim was to help members get more funding by exploring how evidence and systematic strategies can be implemented to advance cost-effective crime prevention in Canadian municipalities. In February 2018, the team collaborated again with the CMNCP on a three-day training on creating community safety strategies. The training provided skills and capacity development in comprehensive community safety strategies and upstream crime prevention. Both provided blueprints for future trainings and for students.

The bottom line is that CMNCP has provided easy access to decision makers and students to the criminological evidence on what prevents crime, the essentials of successful prevention implementation, and the convincing arguments for cities and governments to shift from the punitive agenda to a more caring and much more cost-effective way of making communities safer. The membership and interest in CMNCP from municipalities has grown in the last three years, in part because it is a community of practice on prevention, in part because municipalities are interested in evidence-based ways of investing in youth and they do not know what else to do to control police budgets. It also facilitates some networking with other levels of government who have funding.

Looking to the Future for Criminology

It seems unlikely that the prevalence and impact of interpersonal crime and victimization is going to disappear on its own or as a result of the punishment agenda of policing and prisons. Indeed, some projections suggest that advances in artificial intelligence are going to increase the gap between the rich and the poor by increasing unemployment for young unqualified and disadvantaged men, and so likely will increase violent crime. Unfortunately, shifting politicians’ focus from police expenditures—which in turn keep prisons overcrowded—will require more work.
The logic for Waller and other criminologists who want to stop the tragedies of violent crime while reducing the overuse of policing and the misuse of incarceration is set out in figure 2. It highlights four important ingredients. First, fundamental to success in reducing crime are the use of both the criminological knowledge on what prevents violent crime and the UN agreements on how to implement such knowledge successfully (Waller 2019, 23–182). Second, the science and results of such examples as Glasgow show that relatively small investments can achieve reductions in crime of 50 percent or more. Canada is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals (set out below), which require transformation from “more of the same” to strategic investments based on evidence (Waller 2019, 126–37). Third, it will require collaboration with initiatives able to bring about the policy changes (figure 2 lists collaborations in which Waller is involved). Finally, significant shifts have been achieved by many of the activities of public criminology (listed in figure 2) in which Waller has engaged. It is an ongoing challenge for a criminology that wants to contribute reasoned evidence and relevant advocacy to impact a shift from a punishment to a prevention agenda. Listed below are three areas where criminology and its students can make a mark.

The UN Sustainable Development Goals

In 2015, Canada along with the leaders of the global North agreed to achieve seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030 (UNGA 2015). The commitment to the SDGs is an engagement to achieve targets that include significant reductions of violence against women and girls (SDG 5), violence and homicides (SDG 16), and drug abuse (SDG 3), and ways of making cities safer (SDG 11) (Waller 2019, 132–37). Governments who support SDGs are committed to transforming their actions so that they achieve these targets through a significant shift in their strategies relating to investment, capacity development, partnerships, and evidence-based action set out in SDG 17.

The commitment of governments to the SDGs is creating new impetus to use evidence to reinforce the prevention agenda (CMNCP 2018; Waller 2019). It is expected that this momentum will accelerate in Canada and around the world, particularly as intergovernmental and international events raise awareness and commitment to share bold solutions for preventing and responding to
violence. The time frame for achieving the targets, by 2030, allows municipalities to change their investments, but also foster initiatives by other levels of government to support them. An essential step to achieving the targets is the use of indicators for a baseline
measure of violence rates, such as victimization surveys and associated costs. This baseline will enable progress to be measured over time and inform decision makers as to whether adjustments are needed to achieve the goals (Waller 2019, 126–37). All of this applies the work of criminology.

*Science and the Secrets of Ending Violent Crime*

Waller (2019) recently published a new book to empower politicians and the public to make the shift from misspending after the fact to smart investment upstream. It renews the focus on stopping the tragedies of violent crime by offering examples of effective solutions, essentials for implementation, and secrets of getting buy-in from collaborations such as that with Mexico and the CMNCP.

The book uses the positive experiences in Canada and Mexico, as well as the lessons from the failures of early adopters, to stress how the prevention agenda can be advanced. It is not just about what is wrong but what can and must put it right. It also shows how criminologists who want to make a difference in the overuse of policing or incarceration can get buy-in by using the cost-benefit arguments and the movements in many countries that want to stop victimization. It shows specific ways for students and criminologists to use social media and other marketing methods to influence policy. It provides practical ways for public criminology to make the policy difference (Waller 2019, 221–46).

Too many criminologists have reacted to the victim movement as being the cause for overuse of the punishment agenda, but reductions in crime in jurisdictions, from the Netherlands to New York City, have all been associated with large reductions in incarceration. For instance, 2018 saw the impact of Mothers Demand Action on Gun Violence and the students from Parkland in the United States—to name but a few—who want less violence, not more punishment (no surprise to Waller). In 2019, March for Our Lives (started by the students from Parkland) proposed a Peace Plan for a Safer America, which proposes standards for gun ownership, upstream violence prevention, and an office to implement the action among six actions for change—but none of them call for more punishment. These movements are succeeding in reforming policy toward the prevention agenda. Criminology students must get to know and get involved in these influential movements.
Teaching Criminology to Stop Violence and Misuse of Police and Prisons

Moving forward, it is imperative that criminologists understand that this is their world, and if they do not shape it, someone else will. No one studying health care, environmental chaos, or education would passively allow governments to continue the status quo. Therefore, criminologists must learn ways to be more influential.

Criminology must make the criminological evidence on prevention and protection of victims a core component of their education—much more than a chapter in an undergraduate textbook or an optional graduate course in Dubrovnik. Students must be encouraged to use evidence to reason and must be helped to use the tools they have to agitate for the prevention agenda.

It is time for policy-makers to deliver what the public wants—less crime and more caring for victims. It is time for policy-makers to use citizens’ taxes in the most sustainable and cost-effective manner (Waller 2019). This will only happen if people in the field of criminology engage in making the change happen. This chapter looks at some ways this has been done and some ways to do this in the future. Criminology that makes a difference must become basic learning, to leave our children with fewer scars from violence within the home and with safer streets, and with fewer young Canadians mangled by the nineteenth-century punishment agenda that persists today. For all this, we need a more sustainable and humane way to deal with crime, before it happens.

Notes

1 The Mexican War on Drugs is an ongoing war between the Mexican government and various drug trafficking syndicates. The Mexican government has asserted that their primary focus is on dismantling the powerful drug cartels, rather than on preventing drug trafficking (Etter and Lehmuth 2013).

Bibliography


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