

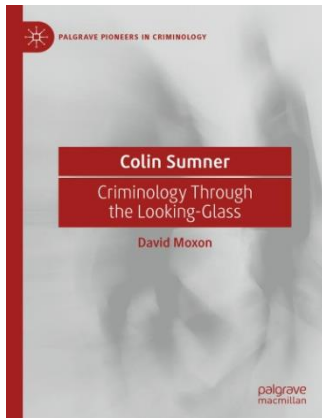
BOOK REVIEW

David Moxon (2020). *Colin Sumner: Criminology through the looking-glass*. Switzerland: Palgrave.159p

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The book "Colin Sumner: criminology through a looking glass" by David Moxon published in 2020 organized under a series of "Palgrave pioneers in criminology" reviews the work of the criminologist Colin Sumner, a leading figure in the theory's development of "censure" in the sociology of deviance and who did not have his right in sociology of crime despite the finesse of his views that are combined in the sociological law study and the orthodox criminology and revolves around a major concept of ideological censure through which he tried to replace the deviance.

Colin Sumner is a retired researcher professor of criminology, he took a law degree in 1970 at the University of Birmingham, and a Phd in 1976 entitled "Ideology and deviance" supervised by Ian

Taylor at the Sheffield University.

He wrote and edited many books as "reading ideology 1979" and "The Blackwell Companion to Criminology 2004", also some article about law, social control and Marxism and the theory of deviance. He is the founder of crime Talk, a global educational resource and a publisher of crime Talk books.

Sumner was known by his main book entitled: "The sociology of Deviance: An obituary" published in 1994, the work exposes the crisis of sociology and the usage decline of deviance as a fundamental term in the field. Because the theory's failure to face social reality and to comprehend the word, Sumner try to demonstrate the problem of legal definition of crime and deviance in an ambivalence of power and censure referring to Marxist theory of ideology which has been ignored by criminologist.

The author divides the work of Sumner in three essential ideas:1/ The ideological censure as a substitute of deviance, concept linked to modern democratic society,2/neglected crime, justice and underdevelopment and 3/the death of deviance because the marginalization of the sociology of deviance which he proposes to replace it by the sociology of censure.

The work contained an introduction and six chapters with 159 p resume the principal works of Sumner, his career as a scientist and the nature and significance of his efforts after him.

Sumner argued in his writings that human being objects have embedded ideologies. In this point of view, the social relation and construction of deviance was a common part of power produced within ideology, so he announced the death of deviance because of failed of sociology and its related theory. The author shows through the work of Sumner In his critique of Taylor, Yong and Walton's book "The new criminology", the weakness of the concept of deviance because a misunderstanding of the act by attributing the rationality to deviant behavior. "It was clear that the notion of the death of deviance was always implied as the counterpart of censure,"(p68). So the deviant behavior cannot be seen as deliberate, nor a result of simple label through a symbolic meaning, but a social practice of negative ideology which censoring practice by their unacceptance of it."So-called deviant behavior is composed of social practices censored

in the dominant ideology"(p29). However, the censure like as pointed out by Sumner is developed from clash practical interest; through legal system, communication, and media, some dominant groups allow this censure.

The author exposes a most important review of Sumner's work about law and its function related to Marxian analysis; On his writing about social control, Sumner critique censure as an act against riot or any other violence, "Because he took place against the backdrop of a fracturing and increasingly censorious late modernity" (p116). He argued that authority must win respect and provokes a motivation of auto-discipline. In this point of view, the concept of censure is doubly interpreted, and it is very important to practice it, insofar that we can control some cultural opportunity. Sumner borrows the phrase the "Measure for Measure" to explain how law and order must be adjusted with the freedom to get wrong, because it is easy to blame, hard to repair, easy to judge others, and hard to achieve justice. Sumner tries to locate the Measure for Measure in a historical context of legal thinking, as in the period of his writings, law was a means to achieve social control.

In his critique of criminology, Sumner renews the Marxist tradition, seeing that criminologists have positioned themselves as defenders of policy needs and obtain rewards for that, rather than focusing on causation. He thus shares the opinions of many scholars, such as Bonger, Reiman, and Chambliss about crime, which is defined by the state in its legislation and committed by the poor. Here we adopt Reiman's idea from his book "The rich get richer, and the poor get prison 2017. Many of the ways in which the well-off harm their fellows (deadly pollution, unsafe working conditions, and some of the harmful practices that have led to financial crises) are not even defined as crimes, though they do more damage to life and limb or take more money from people's pockets than the acts that are treated as crimes" (p15). Furthermore, Sumner believes that the meaning of crime loses its integrity, unless it is studied in the context of certain historical contexts that look at social control over crime and social harm.

The last chapter resumes the cumulative Sumner's work and his position on ideology through the word of censure, and his critic of late modernity. His commitment to the theory and criminology is based that crime and deviance are problematic and lead to ideological censure.

The influence of Sumner's work in the field of criminology was weak because of his radical position on crime and deviance and his concern on ideology and censure. The writhing of Sumner since his earlier book the Reading Ideologies (1979) was a consistent and homogeneity work about a new vision on criminology through a systematic critic of law, ideology, and other forms of social control. In 1994 Sumner, announcing the "death" of any scientific confidence in the sociology of deviance, or liberal ideas on the rule of law, as pointed out by Morrison "If criminology was to be scientific it would have to study sociology of moral censure" (1995: 456).

The book of David Moxon is not just a Sumner's biography, but an original work which retraces a path of scientific activism, a career full of struggle by combative criminologist for a new discipline free from narrowly political interests.

Through the looking glass Sumner reverse the conventional image of criminology and invokes a new look over reality.

References:

1. Morrison, W. (1995). *Theoretical criminology: From modernity to post-modernism*. Great Britain: Cavendish publishing.
2. Reiman, J and Paul, L. (2017). *The rich get richer and the poor get prison* (11th ed). USA: Routledge.