Profit and Penalty: An Analysis of the Corrections-Commercial Complex

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The economics of imprisonment has been examined in a plethora of theoretical and empirical studies. As intriguing, stimulating, and policy-changing as these have been, they generally have not been connected to social contexts broader than prison overcrowding, legal issues, and conservative ideology. This article attempts to respond to this lack of attention by offering a descriptive analysis of one neglected topic of penalty. It examines some of the business-related aspects of the American penal system and concludes that because that system operates largely by purchasing goods and services, the connections among crime, punishment, and business must be considered.

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the economics of imprisonment in the United States and Britain has been examined in a plethora of theoretical and empirical studies, generated in large measure by prison overcrowding and the privatization ideology of former President Ronald Reagan and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, as well as their successors. These studies have been scholarly and administrative in orientation and have focused primarily on identifying the contemporary initiatives and developments of privatizing prisons, including the legal and social consequences of privatization for state-controlled corrections (see, for example, Bowditch and Everett 1987; Dilullo 1988a, 1988b; Logan 1990; Matthews 1989; McDonald 1990). Other discussions have addressed the historical development of the privatization of

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prisons (Borna 1986; Durham 1989; Ryan and Ward 1989) and the role of private punishment in relation to criminal justice policies in different countries (Durham 1986; Evans 1987; Porter 1990; Robbins 1988; Wecht 1987). Additional studies have centered on the presumed or expected advantages and disadvantages of privatized corrections (Cikins 1986; Ellison 1987; Field 1987; Gentry 1986; Holley 1988; Johnson and Ross 1990; Woolley 1985; Logan 1991; Shichor 1992, 1993).1

As intriguing, stimulating, and crucial for initiating policy as this renewed interest in privatization and prisons has been, it generally has not been connected to social contexts broader than prison overcrowding and conservative ideology, nor has it been related to theoretical discussions of the role of punishment in society and the “new penology” (e.g., Feeley and Simon 1992; Garland and Young 1983; Garland 1985, 1990; Christie 1994). Moreover, basic features of privatization, including its various intertwined correctional and noncorrectional financial structures, have not been tied to the broader political and economic contexts within which these developments have taken place.

It is also the case that little effort has been directed to teasing out the connections among the changes that have occurred in criminal justice and in the financial, commercial, business, and enterprise cultures of the worldwide security industry, the military-industrial complex, or both (Christie 1994; Lilly 1992; Lilly and Knepper 1993; Lilly and Ball 1993). Also, the impact of the shifting and realigning world economies has not been connected to the privatized and public policies and practices of the worldwide corrections industry. No effort has been made to determine if the national and international corrections industry has a “power elite” and “interlocked directorates” (see Dahl 1958; Domhoff 1983; Herman 1981; Jacobs 1988; Mills 1956; Mintz and Schwartz 1985; Mizruchi 1982, 1989, 1990, 1991; Mizruchi and Koenig 1988; Scott 1990).2

In this article, we respond to this lack of attention by offering a descriptive account of one neglected topic of penalty, namely the business-related aspects of the American penal system. We present unique and neglected data on the business aspects of American corrections, and thus respond to recent calls for a systematic analysis of the crime control industry (Lilly 1991; Lilly and Knepper 1991a, 1991b, 1992a, 1992b, 1993; Christie 1994). Further, we believe that our descriptive analysis offers directions for future research. In the discussion, we consider the globalization trends in punishment, and address implications of what we have observed for Europe.

In our view, it is essential to situate criminal justice, as an institution, within its wider economic and political environment (see Deflem 1994a, 1994b, 1995; Habermas 1984, 1987, 1988, 1992). The enforcement of criminal law by agents of social control should not be seen in isolation from the broader societal context in which it is imbedded. Criminal justice does not refer solely to legal arrangements which are specified in institutionalized law; rather, it must also be located in political and economic environments. Our conception of criminal justice seeks to situate the criminal justice system within the broader contours of state and economy, and has proven to be fruitful in identifying the commercial and power-related aspects of crime control (see, for example, Cohen 1985, 1989; Ewick 1993; O’Malley 1991, 1992). However, to date, this view has usually been framed either in neo-Marxist (e.g., Spitzer 1983, 1987) or in functionalist terms, the latter based largely on the theories of Talcott Parsons (1962, 1968, 1978) and developed further in relation to law by Niklas Luhmann (1985, 1989, 1992). Our perspective offers a middle ground because it acknowledges, on the one hand, the relative autonomy of the criminal justice system, as well as, on the other hand, its dependence on economy and state.

This social phenomenon can be described as the “iron triangle” of criminal justice, the “corrections-commercial complex,” or “the penal-industrial complex” (Lilly and Knepper 1991a, 1991b, 1993; Lilly 1992; Lilly and Ball 1993; McDonald 1994; BBC Radio 1993; National Public Radio 1994; Wall Street Journal 1994; Bronstein 1994).3 By focusing on the commercial aspects of American penalty, our perspective emphasizes the “monetary colonization” and the market-driven dimensions of criminal justice as crucial features of the punishment industry. Also, it makes possible an analysis of the American penal system with a particular focus on its relationships with the economic system. It suggests a criminologically relevant outline of the commercial interests that are involved with American punishment. We demonstrate that it makes good criminological sense to conceive of criminal justice as, at least in part, an industry of punishment, and we suggest the fruitfulness of analyses that include examinations of the political and power-related aspects of penalty.

**THE PUNISHMENT INDUSTRY**

There are several good reasons why the American penal system should be seen as a punishment industry. First, in the United States, the sheer volume of people incarcerated in a multitude of prisons at the federal, state, county, and city level is by all standards staggering (more than 1.4 million in 1994; see New York Times 1994a). Second, there are enormous pressures on American prison systems because of overcrowding. Finally, in the United States, free-market enterprise and a liberal and privatization ideology go hand in
hand (Knepper 1991; Lilly and Knepper 1991b; Lilly 1991). In combination, these factors make a potent mix for a penal system highly influenced by and responsive to market interests. A closer look at the money side of American penalty makes clear why this case study is so relevant. The total costs of corrections in the United States are enormous. The evidence indicates that:

- Spending for corrections alone increased 115% between 1960 and 1980.
- Since 1979, state government expenditures for prison construction increased 612% in actual dollars—almost twice as fast as spending to operate correctional institutions, which rose 328% (U.S. Department of Justice 1992, p. 2).
- In 1980, state and local government correctional employees numbered 260,722 at a monthly payroll of $338,325,000.
- By 1988, the nation’s correctional system employed about 482,600 persons with an October payroll of more than $1 billion (Maguire and Flanagan 1991, p. 6).
- By 1990, state and local correctional employees numbered 525,029 with an October payroll of $1,223,891,000 (Maguire, Pastore, and Flanagan 1993, p. 23).
- Total expenditures for state corrections in 1980 amounted to more than $4 billion. By 1986, this had increased to $9.8 billion.
- In 1986, the justice system spent $33.5 billion (U.S. Department of Justice 1991).

These indicators support our argument that the commercial and financial dimensions of the corrections industry have been underanalyzed. These figures, derived from government-sponsored sources, indicate that the cost of corrections is discussed primarily in terms of demand and only then in terms of tax dollars spent on corrections employees and operations expenditures. Although these numbers are revealing and helpful for charting personnel and budget development, they are silent on the various private and corporate interests which comprise the supply or commercial side of punishment. There remain many unanswered questions about the socioeconomic and political features of this aspect of punishment.

How many corporations sell goods and services to government-owned and government-operated prisons and jails in the United States and other countries? How many of these corporations sell goods and services to the civilian police and military worldwide? Of the goods and services purchased by government-owned and government-operated prisons and jails, what portion comes from military manufacturers and suppliers? To what extent is the corrections business an international industry? Is the corrections industry connected to the world’s defense contractors and, if so, how and with what impact on corrections and corrections policies? At this point we have few answers to these questions, but we have the beginnings of answers.

**METHOD**

One indication of the commercial interests in the American punishment complex comes from the number and types of companies involved in selling goods and services to jails and prisons. A major source for this information is the American Correctional Association (ACA) and its various publications, especially its annual *Buyer’s Guide*. For this research, the *Buyer’s Guide* published by the ACA in 1990 was used (American Correctional Association 1990; hereafter ACA *Buyer’s Guide*). It identifies companies that had purchased advertising space, touting their products and services for sale in the correctional/security fields. An outgrowth of an 1870 meeting of the National Congress on Penitentiary and Reformatory Discipline sponsored by the American Prison Association, the American Correctional Association has grown from a relatively small organization with little direct impact on corrections to an organization with worldwide recognition and authority on a variety of subjects, especially jail and prison standards. With a 1995 budget exceeding $10.5 million, a membership of more than 20,000, and an advertising and marketing creed that “corrections is an industry” and “big business,” the ACA plays a central role in facilitating the buying and selling of goods and services found in today’s prison and jails, that is, the security and punishment industry.

A second and more revealing indication of the corporate interests involved in the American corrections-commercial complex is found in the Standard & Poor’s (S&P) Register of Corporations, Directors and Executives, and its Corporate Descriptions, published in 1991 (Standard & Poor’s 1991; hereafter S&P *Registers*). Established in 1906, S&P is recognized as the authority on public-held corporations. Together, these two sources provide access to financial information on more than 55,000 leading companies, including 45,000 private, subsidiary, and affiliate companies and more than 10,000 publicly held corporations. Biographical and business-related information was also available through these sources on more than 470,000 executives.

Here, corporations which had advertised in the ACA *Buyer’s Guide* were located and analyzed further. This research procedure served not only to confirm that a corporation sold goods and services to corrections/security, but it also identified if a corporation had additional corporate interests. This
strategy yielded information which included the corporation’s primary business interest and SIC number, the date of its founding, latest sales figures (in millions), the number of its employees, and its market territory (international, national, or regional). Thus a comprehensive record of corporate interests beyond goods and services for corrections/security was created and analyzed.

Although a complete list of companies involved in the corrections industry cannot be identified from one source, the ACA Buyer’s Guide was a good place to begin. Its “Index to Advertisers” contained 168 entries, four of which were the American Correctional Association itself. It also contained a guide identifying 89 different categories of services and products sold to prisons, jails, or both (e.g., “Architecture, Engineering & Design” and “Sportswear & Equipment”). Twenty-seven, or 21%, of the advertisers specialized in more than one product or service. Sixteen of these 27 companies specialized in only two products, whereas one company specialized in eight products or services.

The 168 companies identified in the ACA Buyer’s Guide were entered into a database, followed by a search for each company in the 1991 S&P Registers. This procedure yielded the names of 61 company chief executive officers and members of boards of directors. The remaining 107 companies were not included in the analysis because public information on their sales and number of employees was not available. The S&P Registers also identified 144 additional companies in which these same executives held executive positions, and these companies were added to the 61 companies that were found in the S&P Registers. Further examination of the S&P information determined whether these additional 144 corporations were primarily or marginally committed to producing goods and services in the corrections/security industry. An example of the latter would be law books produced by a publisher of a wide range of trade books and textbooks. Together, the ACA Buyer’s Guide and the S&P Registers yielded 312 corrections and corrections-connected companies.

FINDINGS

Company Classification

Table 1 presents information on the 312 companies. The category “ACA and corrections” means that 21 companies that advertised in the ACA Buyer’s Guide were identified in S&P sources as having primarily correction-oriented concerns. The category “ACA but not corrections” means that 147 of the total 168 companies advertising in the ACA Buyer’s Guide were not identified in the S&P sources as primarily corrections/security-related companies. These two ACA-based categories represent 54% of our list of companies in the corrections industry. The “Not ACA and not corrections” category involves 134 companies identified through the S&P Registers that did not advertise in the ACA Buyer’s Guide, or did not identify themselves as a corrections business, but had executives identified with corrections-oriented corporations. The last category, “Not ACA but corrections,” contains 10 companies that did not advertise in the ACA Buyer’s Guide but that were identified in S&P sources as having corrections concerns. The last two categories combine to account for 144, or 46%, of the 312 companies.

These data show that approximately 47%, or 147, of the 312 corrections corporations advertised in the ACA Buyer’s Guide, but were not identified in S&P sources as corrections companies. Although selling goods and services not directly or exclusively related to the administration of criminal justice (clothing, food, furniture, security technology), they nevertheless loom large in the supply and commercial side of American penalty. Their inclusion provides a more complete picture of the business interests involved in the commercial-corrections complex. It is striking that a number of companies (although only 3.2% of our list) did not identify as corrections oriented, yet did not advertise in the ACA Buyer’s Guide. It would be instructive to know where and how these companies try to market products, or if their absence from the ACA Buyer’s Guide was an error or due to shifting marketing interests. Finally, it is important to understand that 147 of 312 companies were not identified as primarily concerned with corrections. This is the first systematic empirical indication that corrections-oriented businesses have executives with formalized business ties and interests with noncorrections businesses.

Core Companies and Marketing Orientation

A search of the S&P sources identified the marketing orientation, volume of sales, and number of employees of the companies that advertised in the

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<th>TABLE 1: Company Classification</th>
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<td>Not ACA and not corrections</td>
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<td>Not ACA but corrections</td>
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a. N = 305
TABLE 2: Core Companies and Marketing Orientation

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<th></th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<td>ACA identified</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>59.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>S&amp;P identified</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>40.6</td>
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<td>N = 64</td>
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<tr>
<td>National</td>
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<td>37.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Regional</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>No data</td>
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a. N = 64

ACA Buyer’s Guide and were identified in S&P Registers. We termed these as core corrections corporations and 64 companies were identified. Because of completeness of the information on these companies in the S&P Registers, they were examined further. Of these 64 companies, 38 had been listed in the ACA Buyer’s Guide and 26 were identified from the S&P Registers (see Table 2). Self-identifying marketing information in the S&P Registers indicated whether the companies were international, national, or regional in orientation. Exactly half (32) of these companies self-identified their market as international, followed by 38% with a national market. Next, 6.3% of the companies identified themselves as regional, whereas no information was found on 4 (or 6.3%) of the companies.

These figures show that the sales orientations of 87% of these companies are geared to international (50%) or national (37.5%) markets, documenting the relevance and centrality of the American punishment industry for penalty and criminal justice in other countries.

Sales and Employees

Of the 64 core companies, 48 reported sales and employee information in 1990. The reported sales figures for these 48 companies alone amounted to $20,240,210,000. They also had 427,751 employees, only 40,000 fewer than the 464,882 who were employed in all of corrections in October 1988 (Maguire and Flanagan 1991, p. 6). These 48 corporations reported average sales in 1990 of $421,671,000.

International Companies and Sales

Four of the 32 international companies reported no sales information. The remaining 28 reported sales of $12,858,618,000, or nearly $13 billion. Thus 28 international companies represented 63.5% of the total sales in 1990 for the 48 companies that presented sales information.

However, further analysis of the S&P data indicates that only 4 of the 32 international companies that advertised in the ACA Buyer’s Guide also identified themselves primarily as corrections companies. Only 2 of the 4 reported information on sales, which amounted to $22,000,000. This figure represents only 1% of the $20 billion in total sales for the 48 companies reporting sales information.

Additional analysis of these S&P data revealed that 16 firms advertising in the ACA Buyer’s Guide were international corporations that did not consider corrections their primary interest. Sales figures for 10 of these companies (6 provided no sales data) in 1990 came to $10,758,899,000, or slightly more than 50% of the entire sales of the 48 companies.

Primary Business Interests

Some additional information on the 64 core corrections corporations is available. Only 4 of the 38 concerns that were identified from the ACA Buyer’s Guide indicated that corrections was their primary concern, whereas 34 companies identified in the same source indicated that corrections was not their primary business interest. However, 6 of the 26 companies not identified in the ACA Buyer’s Guide, but located through the S&P Registers, were identified as being primarily in the corrections business, whereas 20 companies were not so identified.

Our data on marketing orientation, sales, and primary business interests of companies demonstrate the enormous complexity of the commercial interests of the American punishment industry. Especially significant is the number of internationally oriented companies that sell goods and services to penal institutions but do not consider this to be their primary business and marketing interest. These companies and interests must be taken into account for a complete picture of the corrections-commercial complex.

DISCUSSION: CONCERNS FOR THE FUTURE

Although confined to the United States, this analysis has shown that a multitude of industrial firms is involved in the operation of criminal justice, especially corrections. The data on volume of company sales, market orientations, and number of employees identified indicate that financial and commercial factors deserve their place in the criminological study of penalty and criminal justice. That we have thus far managed to reveal only a tip of
the iceberg makes the matter even more poignant. We conclude by drawing attention to some socially significant implications and problems that should be explored further in research.

One view of the growth of the corrections industry is that national and international companies are simply responding to a market need. If so, we need not be concerned about the intertwining of industry, finance, and corrections, because should the demand decline the industries would seek markets for their products elsewhere. Perhaps, but the size and nature of the corrections industry should give rise to caution. There may be parallels to be drawn to the experiences from the U.S. defense industry and from commercial enterprises generally. As has recently been reported, military defense contractors have not simply acquiesced to the declining and increasingly regulated international arms market since 1989; instead, they have successfully lobbied for governmental concessions and support in the form of changes in the guidelines for selling arms to foreign customers. In the past, approval guidelines on arms sales were dependent on whether these sales supported American foreign policy goals and strengthened regional alliances. Currently, the guidelines for these same sales require that the U.S. government also consider their benefits to the nation’s military contractors. In effect, this requirement formalized practices that started in the Bush Administration, whereby the government plays an increasingly active role in lobbying foreign countries on behalf of cash strapped American contractors (New York Times 1994c). By the end of the first quarter of 1995, top military contractors were reporting improved earnings (New York Times 1995).

It is not unreasonable to expect a similar development in American corrections. The punishment industries contribute to the growth of corrections by introducing new technologies such as electronic monitoring, thus creating consumption desires among corrections officials. In turn, as company profits become increasingly contingent on corrections as a major growth industry in the United States for the foreseeable future, there is a strong economic interest in keeping corrections, especially imprisonment, large (see New York Times 1994b). At present, the market growth is being encouraged by politicians, as witnessed by congressional approval in 1994 of a $30 billion crime package containing funds for prison construction. According to some politicians, the problem is, in fact, caused by legislatures which continually demand longer sentences (New York Times 1994b). However, marketplaces and economic opportunities are fluid and subject to change for the worse. When they decrease, appear to be shrinking, or both, corporate pressures for maintaining profitable justice policies (and corruption) often expand, as does the need to find new markets. Again, the military defense contractors provide a model of what may develop within the corrections-commercial complex. One such trend is the expansion and internationalization of the punishment market.

The International Punishment Market

The products and services found in the international punishment market include, but are not limited to, the new technologies of communication, cross-border prison/jail construction and management, food and medical services, increased international police cooperation, cross-border activities of the security industry and the private police, and the increased use of internationally linked data networks. It is therefore relevant to consider the extent to which marketing strategies noted in the American industry of punishment are being or will be exported to other states, for instance to Europe, and to ask whether a form of “penal imperialism” is developing there (Lilly and Knepper 1991b). The United States has often set an example for the development of European penal systems (e.g., the American East Coast prisons in the early 1880s stood as a model for European correction facilities). Moreover, we would do well to remember the role of America in post-World War II world politics, especially its Marshall Plan for rebuilding Europe and its reorganization of the Japanese government. More recently, the fragile (im)balance following post-1989 European fragmentation has created another opportunity for the exportation of American culture. Finally, the free market, with companies unified in concerns and holdings, or organized as boundary-crossing multinationals, is by definition not limited to regional markets, but can operate over the borders of different nation-states. Therefore, our relatively limited study of the American punishment industry is not without significance for European criminal justice and penalty. Further research is needed to reveal whether and to what extent an internationally organized punishment industry is continuing to emerge. Evidence supporting this possibility has been increasingly reported in the world presses.

For example, recent British media reports indicate that U.S. firms have become increasingly involved in certain criminal justice reforms in Great Britain, including plans to internationally electronically monitor offenders in their English home from companies located in the United States, and British prison privatization and reorganization programs. In addition, recent investigative efforts by England’s Prison Reform Trust have documented several dimensions of previously secret contracts between England’s Home Office and a consortium behind some of Britain’s private prisons. By using U.S. Security and Exchange Commission records in Washington, D.C., the Prison Reform Trust obtained documents relating to U.K. prison contracts filed by
the Corrections Corporation of America and Wackenhut, two of the world’s leading private prison contractors. These records revealed that private prison profits made in the United Kingdom would go to a U.S. firm (Observer 1994). Additional sources indicate that one of the mechanisms by which profits would be generated for a private American company running a prison in England under the recent reintroduction of penal capitalism would be by permitting it an option to overcrowd of almost 50% (Independent 1994).

The Monetary Colonization of Criminal Justice

The major problem that may evolve out of the large-scale involvement of private trade and commerce in criminal justice is that the latter’s administration will no longer be under state-controlled supervision (Field 1987; Savas 1987; Wecht 1987). This danger can be termed the monetary colonization of criminal justice, which points to the fact that when the success-oriented mechanisms of the economic system enter into the corrections domain, concerns for profit, efficiency, competition, and money may radically alter the latter’s normative goals. In a democracy, justice issues are expected in large measure to rely on the legitimate consensus of the people whose actions are to be regulated (or at least to be subject to their critique through participation in democratic public bodies); thus it is no small concern when economic interests drive justice decisions. As the economic system intrudes even further into matters of law, justice, and punishment, the picture that may emerge may be one of the “business of law and order” being run by “merchants in justice and punishment” whose only interest lies in the law of the free market (profit). For example, those who run private prisons may try to maximize profits by skimping on expenditures for the feeding and care of prisoners. Although it is not inevitable that the future will look like this, such an outcome cannot be categorically denied in light of the evidence presented here.

In conclusion, most of the recent studies on penalty have paid scant attention to its broader social contexts. Whatever the reasons, whether the rise of a conservative ideology, the appeal and rewards of government research contracts, or private consulting or moral philosophy, little attention has been given to the influential connections that conventional penality has with trade and commerce. It is in part for this reason that we argue that an important portion of the political and economic context of penalty has been neglected.

Let us make clear that we are not arguing that recent work on penalty has been without merit, because quite the opposite is true. Garland’s (1985, 1990) broad treatment of penalty, and Logan’s (1991; Logan & Rausch 1985) analyses of privatization and prisons are important contributions, as is Christie’s (1994) general description of crime control as industry. However, although these and other important works on the “power to punish” have shifted attention from purely technical discussions to theoretical ones, they have nevertheless neglected the convergence of justice with money, business, commerce, and enterprise interests. Also, these works have not connected corrections to the study of political, economic, and financial power through empirical inquiry.

On this same general point, we argue that the more critically oriented literature has largely neglected the relationships between criminal justice and the business world that profits from it (Cohen 1985; Mathiesen 1990; Christie 1994). The preference for explanations that account for penalty/punishment practices through their legally defined ends, which Rusche and Kirchheimer argued against in 1939, is still powerful today. It would be well to remember that criminal justice is comprised of a variety of social control agencies—all financed and supported by massive accounts of public money. Accordingly, we can hardly avoid having to come to grips with the connections among crime, punishment, politics, and business. To do otherwise would misconfigure one of the most influential and basic explanatory factors of “penal phenomena.” Focusing theoretical and analytical attention on particular aspects of punishment, such as the lengthening of prison sentences, and prison construction requires that we attend to the financial and business elements contained therein. To ignore business in any form of analysis which seeks to explain general patterns in criminal justice, especially patterns of punishment capable of generating profit, is a serious error. To ignore, for example, the potential impact of $22 billion in annual sales, or the potential explanatory value of more than 300 U.S. corrections or corrections-connected companies (some with direct connections to the military-industrial complex), is to be analytically myopic and politically naïve.

NOTES

1. Numerous scholars have discussed the leasing of prisons to commercial companies in the United States during the 19th century (see Ayers 1984; Carleton 1971; Cody and Bennett 1987; Sellin 1976; Walker 1988).

2. The concept of the corrections-commercial complex, first developed and presented at the biannual meeting of the British Criminology Conference and the annual meetings of the American Society of Criminology and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, and later published in various forms in the United States and England, has been cited several times in scholarly and journalistic discussions about the finances of criminal justice to go beyond the narrow confines of privatization and overcrowding discussions. Similar ideas on the prison
industry, an iron triangle of interests, and a penal-industrial complex have also appeared, as efforts are made to identify and study the increasingly international aspects of corrections (see Lilly and Knapper 1991a, 1991b, 1992a, 1992b, 1993; Christie 1994; Criminal Justice Newsletter 1994; Wall Street Journal 1994; National Law Journal 1993; Bronstein 1994).

3. By suggesting the notion of a corrections-commercial complex, we do not imply that conspiracy is at the heart of the confluence of interests among criminal justice and the world of economic and political interests; nor do we deny that conspiracies could occur. The “point is not to deny that people have deliberate strategies but that the overall configuration . . . is itself ‘strategic’” (Feeley and Simon 1992, p. 450).


5. The American Correctional Association is not to be confused with the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) and its National Academy of Corrections (NAC). NIC and NAC are federally sponsored organizations concerned primarily with training correctional personnel. “NAC has been instrumental in the innovation of both program curriculum design and development, and technological advances in program delivery” (Johnson 1992, p. 3).

6. SIC is a U.S. Bureau of Labor identification number for its Standard Industrial Classification system. A corporation/company might be listed, for example, as manufacturing, real estate, or some other classification. This number is important because it makes it possible to decipher the percentage of corrections dollars that are in different industries throughout the United States.

7. The advertisement of this company reads: “Folger Adam Company is the premier manufacturer of security hardware and control systems. We offer the highest quality mechanical/electro-mechanical locks, door hardware and cell-door operating devices. In addition, we provide institutional furnishings and electronic control systems for total facility management. Folger Adam is your most qualified single source for security hardware and systems” (ACA Buyer’s Guide 1990, p. 202).

8. This methodology is being used to identify a network of interlocking companies with products and services sold to prisons and jails. These will include, among others, financial institutions and associations, manufacturing concerns, and real estate corporations.

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