

Criminology and Penology Abstracts

Analysis prepared by Joyce L. Ogburn June 1990

A. ISSUES REVIEWED:

Vol.1-8, 1961-1968 titled Excerpta Criminologica, published by Excerpta Criminologica Foundation.

Vol. 9-19, 1969-1979 titled Abstracts on Criminology and Penology, published by Kluwer.

Vol. 20-, 1980- published as Criminology and Penology Abstracts by Kugler Publications.

B. FREQUENCY:

Bimonthly.

C. INTRODUCTION:

GENERAL DESCRIPTION: Criminology and Penology Abstracts is "An international abstracting service covering the etiology of crime and juvenile delinquency, the control and treatment of offenders, criminal procedure, and the administration of justice."

USABILITY: This abstract service is not difficult to use, although it would be improved by the addition of a five year cumulative index or an index for each of the first two titles. The existing annual indexes are extensive and detailed, requiring the scanning of each index entry for effective use. The subdivisions of the main sections of the abstracts are quite specific and helpful in getting to the right section. There are no instructions to the user.

D. SCOPE:

Criminology and Penology Abstracts contains no scope statement; however, its scope is implicit in the statement on its cover, quoted under the general description. The service fulfills this intention. It is meant also to be international in scope, but the titles abstracted are all American, Canadian, or European.

E. COVERAGE:

SUBJECTS COVERED: The subjects covered are evident from the table of contents: 1. General; 2. Biology; psychology; 3. Psychopathology; psychiatry; 4. Anthropology; sociology; social work; 5. Special groups; 6. Special offenses and non-criminal anti-

social behavior; 7. Prediction; longitudinal studies; 8. The victim; 9. Prevention; 10. Penology; 11. Resocialization; 12. Penal law; 13. Criminal procedures and administration of justice. This list comes from the most current volumes; it has changed a bit over time.

GEOGRAPHICAL AREAS COVERED: It abstracts publications from the Western World, but other parts of the world may be covered by a particular article or monograph. On the whole, there is a distinctly Western emphasis to its coverage. If Criminology and Penology Abstracts indexed more anthropological publications, it might have more citations on Third World countries, tribal law, and so forth.

TYPES OF PUBLICATIONS ABSTRACTED: Criminology and Penology Abstracts indexes primarily English language journals, books, and reports. It includes more journals of sociology than of anthropology, which is understandable, given its slant toward western criminology and penology. Occasionally it publishes special articles on specific aspects of criminology and penology. In 1988 the title contained 2943 abstracts from 240 journals.

F. FORMAT:

INDEXES AND CUMULATIONS: Criminology and Penology Abstracts is issued in paper with cumulation of the subject and author indexes in the last issue of the year, in addition to a list of the journals received for abstracting. Each issue contains a separate index for subjects and authors.

ARRANGEMENT OF ENTRIES: The contents of the abstracts are organized under thirteen broad headings. The arrangement would be familiar to users of legal sources: a topic is subdivided by multiple, numbered subheadings. For example, 5. SPECIAL GROUPS is subdivided by 5.2 Sex, which in turn is divided by 5.2.1. females and 5.2.2. males.

CITATION STYLE: The citation order includes title first, followed by author, and author affiliation. It then varies depending on whether the work is an article or monograph, but includes publisher, date, number of pages, ISBN, journal title, year, volume and issue, pages, and sometimes the ISSN of the journal. Abstracts are not signed.

PRINT AND BINDING: Both are good.

G. SUBJECT ACCESS:

SUBJECT INDEX: The subject index contains broad terms followed by very specific terms which describe a particular citation. For example, one index contained the term burglary, and underneath cited "ecology, urban area, India, spatial structure" followed by a citation number. Each volume appears to use the same basic vocabulary for the broadest index terms and then varies the specific terms to provide a detailed description of the citation. The specific terms appear to be keywords, but then are not necessarily in the

abstracts. The first terms assigned to any citation are in alphabetical order, but I can ascertain no particular order to the terms within a citation description, i.e., broad to narrow, alphabetical, etc. The terms are fairly straightforward, not loaded with jargon, and are topical. Terminology tends more to the sociological than to the legal. For example, the index uses terms such as euthanasia and terrorism, and Nazi; standard legal terminology, such as torts, liability, and negligence is employed when appropriate. Indexing includes geographic areas and minority groups.

Cross references are used sparingly, but seem appropriate.

TABLE OF CONTENTS: If a user wishes to browse broad subject areas, the contents page provides enough detail to assist.

H. TIME LAG:

Coverage ranges from recent publications to those several years old, although the lag seems to have improved recently. The abstracts arrive about six months after the stated date of the bimonthly issue.

I. EDITING:

Editing appears to be good.

J. DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY:

Criminology and Penology Abstracts would be useful in the academic and law libraries, and any other library where research is conducted in the areas of social work, penology, administration of justice, and the like. It makes no mention of the availability of titles abstracted or document delivery services. If a citation also can be found in Criminal Justice Periodical Index, then its document delivery service can be employed.

K. COST:

Its cost is \$280.00 a year.

L. COMPARISON WITH RELATED TITLES:

Criminology and Penology Abstracts (CPA) is more detailed, yet broader in coverage than Criminal Justice Abstracts (CJA) or Criminal Justice Periodical Index (CJPI). A comparison of the volumes for 1987 and 1988 of all three titles illustrates the difference.

1987	1988
Citations Journals	Citations Journals

CPA	2943	240	2943	240
CJA	1681	253	1600	225
CJPI	?(*)	98	?(*)	98

The 240 journals covered by Criminology and Penology Abstracts in 1988 were not the same 240 covered in 1987. Comparing the three services, CPA covers more foreign publications than the other two and makes more use of legal terminology. CPA offers the advantage of the most detailed contents page of the three. To the users disadvantage, however, Criminology and Penology Abstracts is not available online through standard services like BRS or DIALOG, although Kugler maintains its own machine-readable data files. Of the three CPA is the more expensive title.

M. SUMMARY OF POSITIVE ASPECTS:

Criminology and Penology Abstracts is very broad in its coverage and fairly easy to use. The abstracts are lengthy and give a good overview of the work cited. Its timeliness of coverage has improved. The indexing is extensive, although a little difficult to use because of the number of specific terms that can be used to describe a citation. On the other hand, the use of very specific terms allows one to form some sort of judgment of the contents of a work without having to turn to the abstract. The publishers of Criminology and Penology Abstracts are to be commended for their breadth and depth of coverage.

N. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:

Some sort of cumulative indexes (every five years and/or per title change) would make this abstracting service more useful. Instruction for users, would be helpful. Instructions could include a sample citation with the data elements described and a description of the focus on sociological terminology. The addition of this title to traditional online search services would expand access to the literature of criminology and penology.

* The arrangement of Criminal Justice Periodical Index makes it difficult to determine the exact number of citations.