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Preface

A general theory of crime is an ambitious undertaking. While the theory in this book purports to be general, it is at the same time modestly partial. It is partial firstly because I am conscious of the need for theories of particular types of crime to complement the general theory.

The book does not proceed by systematically demolishing competing theories in order to show the superiority of the theory of reintegrative shaming. For example, the theory provides an account of why women engage in less crime than men. There are some who are persuaded that the explanation for this association is genetic. I have not seen it as my task to attack this competing explanation, but only to argue for the plausibility and consistency with such evidence as exists of the explanation provided by the theory. Prior to a theory having been systematically tested, it is not the time for contentions that earlier theories which have been more satisfactorily evaluated should be jettisoned in favor of the new theory. That may well be appropriate when the evidence is in to show that any variance explained by an older theory, and more, can be explained by the new one. More likely, we would hope ultimately to be in a position to argue that the new partial theory explains a substantial amount of variance not accounted for by pre-existing partial theories.

Happily, I do not need to lay waste existing theories in order to make way for an alternative because the existing theories explain fairly low proportions of variance in crime. Indeed, my strategy is in part to integrate the modest explanatory successes of existing sociological theories of crime into a theory which aspires to be both more general and of greater explanatory power.

Peter Grabosky, Donald Cressey, David Bayley, Marshall Clinard, Gilbert Geis, Dan Glaser, Henry Pontell, Sat Mukherjee, Carl Klock-

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ars, Dave Ermann, Grant Wardlaw, Philip Pettit, Jacek Kurczewski, Ivan Potas, Stephen Mugford, Anita Mak, Frank Jones and other participants at seminars at the University of Delaware, the University of California, Irvine and The Australian National University gave extremely helpful advice on improving the manuscript. Robin Dericourt of Cambridge University Press assisted in countless other ways as well as in improving the manuscript. I am also indebted to my subeditor, Shirley Purchase, in this regard.

My thanks go to Michele Robertson for endless trips to the library to retrieve works cited in the book and Beverley Bullpitt for dedicated assistance with typing. Most importantly, I want to thank Brent Fisse for inspiring my interest in shame as a crime control mechanism through many discussions we had during the years we worked on *The Impact of Publicity on Corporate Offenders*.

The present book is about a concept which was at the height of its popularity in the Victorian era – shame. Lynd (1958) directs us to Victorian novels like Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* to remind us of how the concept of shame, which plays a more limited role in contemporary literature and conversation, was once a commanding concept. Since Freud, guilt has been a more popular construct than shame. Yet in the New Testament the word *guilt* does not appear, while *shame* is repeatedly referred to; Shakespeare uses shame about nine times as often as guilt (Lynd, 1958: 25). An old-fashioned concept like shame is perhaps uncomfortable for contemporary scholars to use in thinking about crime, though when we discuss white collar crime, terms which connote moral indignation are not quite so passé. In a sense it is the white collar crime literature which leads us into a decidedly Victorian analysis of crime in this book.