Punishment in Indian Country: Ironies of Federal Punishment of Native Americans

Native Americans are U.S. citizens, but they are also tribal nationals who are subject to complex and unique criminal jurisdiction arrangements over Indian lands. Tribal nations typically have tribal court jurisdiction over less serious crimes, but for serious crimes the federal justice system often supersedes tribal authority, exposing Native Americans to more severe punishments. In addition, recent federal programs have attempted to foster greater tribal/federal criminal justice coupling. This study examines the punishment of Native American defendants in federal courts. Using U.S. Sentencing Commission data, as well as contextual data from the Census, Bureau of Indian Affairs, and tribal courts, we focus on between-district differences in the federal sentencing of Native American defendants, and how these differences are conditioned by indicators of tribal-federal criminal justice coupling.

Jeffery T. Ulmer is Professor and Associate Head of Sociology and Criminology at Penn State University. His work spans topics such as courts and sentencing, criminological theory, symbolic interactionism, religion and crime, and race/ethnicity and violent crime rates. He has been awarded the 2001 Distinguished New Scholar Award, the 2012 Distinguished Scholar Award from the American Society of Criminology’s Division on Corrections and Sentencing. Among Dr. Ulmer’s current project are a long-term study of racial/ethnic disparity in the death penalty in Pennsylvania, and a study examining crime victimizations of religious congregations.

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Husted Hall, Room 106A
UAlbany Downtown Campus, 135 Western Avenue

This event is free and open to the public.