

BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by Marian Duggan

REOFFENDING: A PRACTITIONER'S GUIDE TO WORKING WITH OFFENDERS AND OFFENDING BEHAVIOUR IN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Jonathan Hussey (2012) Bennion Kearney, 204pp. (pbk) £14.99, ISBN 978-095705114 - 0

Jonathan Hussey has taken on a challenging task. He wants to introduce people at the start of their careers in working with offenders, to the complexities of offender management. Laudable though this enterprise is, the result is unsatisfactory.

He does write in an accessible, conversational style. Also, some of the right ideas are put before us - there is much that is sensible and necessary for practitioners in the first two chapters. The chapter on 'The Working Relationship' contains a great deal of useful material, extending from the cycle of change and motivational approaches to issues such as body language and pro-social modelling. There are though a number of substantive problems with his approach.

First of all, the offender is presented to us as though (s)he is waiting for the offender manager to come up with an assessment and a change plan. The professional makes an assessment, comes up with a plan and this is then 'put down on paper and presented to the offender.' (pg 18) The offender you would think is the problem and the professional the answer. Mr Hussey then has to look at how to 'sell' the plan to the offender, which to me suggests he is already in the wrong place to support a change process owned by the person facing change.

The material on assessment is not clear about the complex nature of 'risk', with the terms 'risk assessment' and 'needs assessment' often seeming interchangeable. People coming new to this work need to be able to analyse risks with more precision than this, especially if risks that are easily overlooked are to be incorporated into assessments. It is unfortunate that risk to children gets no mention in the section on assessment, and has no clear profile in his discussion of domestic violence.

Asset-based approaches to assessment - identifying the personal and social capital on which desistance from offending can be built - receive no attention. Offenders are described as if they are an assemblage of needs, criminogenic or otherwise.

In an understandable effort to set some boundaries to his areas of discussion, Mr Hussey oversimplifies the realities of working with offenders. It may be easier for the purposes of the discussion to say you are only going to focus on 'rehabilitation', but the requirement on those working with offenders simultaneously to attend to punishment, public protection, reduced reoffending as well as rehabilitation / reform is an inextricable feature of the professional task. What is more, punishment, reparation, public protection etc can be vital components of an offender's rehabilitative journey.

Mr Hussey understands that change is a process involving all kinds of hurdles, and that a positive working relationship between worker and offender is crucial for success. What does not come across is the importance of the case manager role as itself a dynamic factor in the change process – it is written as if the relationship with the case manager is merely a route to delivering the 'interventions' that are thought to be the drivers of change. Chapters 1 and 2 should be the heart and focus of the book but read like a preamble to what follows.

Subsequent chapters explore the main areas of difficulty that offenders exhibit: substance misuse, domestic violence, violence, sex offending and emotional problems. Useful material is presented but over-emphasis on 'interventions' as the drivers of change continues to undermine the usefulness of this book. In the chapter on domestic violence, Mr Hussey says that should an offender completely deny their behaviour throughout an assessment, 'it is unlikely that the client will be suitable for treatment'. Assistance to the new professional, who in practice is much more likely to be supervising the client in denial, than delivering perpetrator treatment programmes, ends there.

The chapter on substance misuse is weak. You would hope that operating in partnership with specialist treatment services would be the norm, but this gets little attention. Any review of substance misuse treatment must present current thinking about recovery oriented approaches, as well as discussion of methadone prescribing, blood borne viruses (BBV) services and differences between stimulant and opiate use. The need for the 'client' to be a partner in recovery not merely a service recipient, the importance of building personal and social capital, and the growing understanding that people do not recover from addiction as lone patients receiving a professional intervention but by building peer support and starting to make a positive contribution to the well being of others; these factors get little attention in this chapter. New practitioners would be better equipped by becoming familiar with the excellent materials now available through the National Skills Consortium²³ and the Findings service²⁴.

This is a book that takes on a difficult and important challenge. De-mystifying work with offenders and providing introductory reading for those undertaking this work are

²³ <http://www.skillsconsortium.org.uk/default.aspx>

²⁴ <http://findings.org.uk/>

necessary endeavours. Sadly, however, despite presenting much valuable material, I do not think that Mr Hussey 'hits the spot'. The book suffers from an over-emphasis on interventions and insufficient attention to case management, an assumptive world that implies offenders are just recipients of the wisdom and techniques of professionals and not full partners in change, a splitting off of such dimensions as reparation and victim centred work, and a relative neglect of partnership with other community services.

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CONTRASTS IN PUNISHMENT: AN EXPLANATION OF
ANGLOPHONE EXCESS AND NORDIC EXCEPTIONALISM

Pratt, J. and Eriksson, A. (2013). Abingdon: Routledge. 272 pp. (hbk) £90.00, ISBN 978-0-415-52473-5

As academics and practitioners become increasingly frustrated at the punitive criminal justice policy and the condemnatory public discourse around offending in the UK, they are inclined to look to the *Scandinavian nations as examples of an alternative approach*. Pratt and Eriksson's excellent book provides a detailed account of these differences in approach to criminal justice, locating penal policy in a social and historical context. The book provides hope to Anglophone penal reformers in identifying a different approach but also highlights the scale of the task; the punitive penal policy in Anglophone countries has such strong social and historical roots that it is difficult to see how any significant change could come easily or quickly.

A refreshing aspect of 'Contrasts in Punishment' is how little attention is paid to American influences, with discussion of the Anglophone countries concentrating on England, New Zealand and Australia. This focus means that the material presented feels fresh, interesting and original and provides the authors with a structure to discuss penal approaches without simply highlighting the relative degrees of American influence on each nation. This starts in the introduction where a discussion of recent prison builds in two nations highlights their differences in penal policy. In Norway, a prison is built that has exercise facilities, space for family visits and that looks like the outside world. In New Zealand, every expense is spared as prisoners are required to build their own cells from shipping containers. The photographs, used in the introduction and then sparingly throughout the book, are welcome illustrations of the differences the authors describe. Chapter one sets out the differences in punishment between the Anglophone countries and the Nordic countries of Finland, Norway and Sweden. When set out in this clear and structured way, the extent of these differences is strikingly obvious; the Nordic countries have much lower rates of imprisonment and treat their prisoners very differently. Nordic countries utilise smaller prisons, promote a higher quality of prison life and provide greater opportunities for work and education. Prison officers in the Nordic countries are trained in a different way, relate to prisoners with greater courtesy and less professional distance, and even look different, in terms of the uniforms they wear. These observations of the prison systems are the result of the authors' meticulous research – they toured forty prisons – and are presented in an engaging way. The two contrasting weekly menus, with weights and quantities recorded on the New Zealand menu but not the Finnish version, strongly and visually illustrate much wider differences in philosophy and approach.

Although the description of the differences between Anglophone and Nordic countries is interesting and engaging, it is the authors' analysis of the reasons for this that sets this book apart. They accept the cultural and structural differences noted by other scholars but suggest that these present as many questions as answers: why did cultural and structural differences emerge? What is the link between differences in welfare provision and approaches to punishment? Pratt and Eriksson argue that it is the difference in long-

term values between the Anglophone countries and the Nordic countries that have led to the cultural and structural differences, including differences in welfare and penal policy. The Anglophone countries emphasise self-advancement and individual success, the Nordic countries value inclusion, cooperation and moderation. Nordic languages have two words, *likhet* and *lagom*, that are characteristic of Nordic society and carry strong moral power, but that do not even have direct translations in English – the closest equivalent phrases being equality and moderation. The respective values systems went on to influence the development of the welfare state in the Nordic and the Anglophone countries. The Nordic countries value social cohesion so provide universal, high-quality childcare health and education, as well as generous social assistance. Anglophone countries promote individual responsibility so only offer a low level of means-tested benefits to those most in need.

These differences in long-term values between Nordic and Anglophone countries led to differences in penal approaches and, again, the authors take a well-informed historical approach to the discussion of the differences. Both Anglophone and Nordic countries replaced the use of the death penalty with the introduction of custodial sanctions but the Nordic countries did so more quickly and, importantly, did so with the intention that prisons should be places of rehabilitation, not punishment, and that they should remain a part of the community, a place where community values could still be demonstrated. Anglophone countries used imprisonment to create division and separation, Nordic countries promote cohesion. These differences only increased over time to the extent that now in Nordic societies there are increasing links between prisoners and the wider community, while in the Anglophone countries prison numbers continue to increase as the conditions worsen.

Pratt and Eriksson make no secret of their preference for the Nordic approach and readers will be persuaded that that an approach to penal policy that promotes inclusion and moderation is more humane and more desirable than the exclusionary punitiveness promoted in the Anglophone nations. It is a cause for some hope and optimism that these inclusive values can still exist and prosper and, as the authors describe in the final pages, hold society together even following the most horrific of crimes. That said, it is no criticism of this outstanding book to say that it does make sometimes frustrating reading for those who live and work in the Anglophone countries described. If the differences in penal approaches are a reflection of differing values that are deeply held with long historical roots, is there any prospect of successfully campaigning for reform? Depressingly, division, intolerance and exclusion are embedded in Anglophone culture to the same extent as *likhet* and *lagom* are characteristic of the Nordic societies.

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JUSTICE REINVESTMENT: CAN THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM DELIVER MORE FOR LESS?

Chris Fox, Kevin Albertson, and Kevin Wong (2013). Abingdon: Routledge. pp 241 (hbk)
£85.00 ISBN 9780415500340

This book is a timely examination of the Justice Reinvestment movement, with a concentration on the United States and the more recent adoption of it in the UK. It is impeccably researched, and although dense, the writing is concise and a delight to read. The authors open the text by defining JR: 'At its heart, Justice Reinvestment (JR) postulates that it is more economically efficient to prevent criminality in a neighbourhood than it is to try to live with crime and the consequences of crime' (p 1). The authors extend the literature by focusing on the holistic goals of JR and placing it within a framework of social justice, rather than a limited economic scope, which the UK and US criminal justice systems have narrowly focused on in their application. Fox *et al.* argue:

The current approach to crime is largely ineffective and inefficient, and has little evidence to support it (p 4) ... Our model suggests that an individual offender has the ability to make choices – albeit constrained ones – and has both rights and responsibilities in relation to the society or community within which they live (p 6) ... we suggest that the most efficient way to a just society is to reduce criminality at source though investment in social justice (p 7).

They use this framework to discuss, theorize, and critique current JR efforts, frequently guided by the work of Tucker and Cadora's (2003) work on community reinvestment strategies and Ward and Maruna's (2007) *Rehabilitation. Justice Reinvestment* is an outstanding resource for all players in the criminal justice system seeking to understand the implementation and implications of governmental reinvestment, and how this can be broadened to an effort to indeed incorporate 'justice' back into the system and into communities.

The book deconstructs JR – its definition(s), development, theoretical and philosophical foundations, and usage – and concludes with a 'where next' for this movement. Chapters 1 and 2 provide a thorough literature review and account of the current context and climate in which criminal justice services are being delivered and reconsidered. Chapter 3 describes the history and growth of JR, its roots in the USA and how it has been adopted in recent years within the UK. This section outlines the 'basics' of JR and identifies four main stages to the JR approach: the use of 'justice mapping' to identify the individuals and communities that are most impacted by criminality and incarceration; provision of options to policy-makers for the generation of savings and increases in public safety; implementation of options, quantification of savings and reinvestment in targeted high-risk communities; and measurement of impacts, evaluation and assurance of effective implementation (p 28). The authors remind the reader that 'Justice Reinvestment is not itself a policy, but rather an approach to public policy making' (p 34), whereby 'the distinguishing feature of JR is its reliance on economic theory for its validity' (p 29). Following this are three further factors which distinguish JR from other approaches to

rethinking criminal justice systems: it is a data-driven exercise; it is committed to the use of evidence in shaping services; and the concentration on efficiency. Chapters 5, 6, and 7 describe these three features in detail and illustrate with case studies.

It should be observed that there is a lack of moral language in these identified stages and distinctive features. What was absent, from this otherwise outstanding text, was the consideration of the justice-morality link when considering a model that is driven by economic austerity: can a criminal justice system can be socially just if driven by finance efficiency? Hegtvedt and Scheuerman (2010: 354) note that, 'Without consideration of "justice for all," issues of morality rarely arise'. It would seem that in order to achieve the authors' preferred application of JR – one that seeks to address social justice through greater equality and resource distribution, thus reducing criminal engagement and the need for criminal justice interventions – fiscal prudence and social ethics must somehow be rectified, beginning with the tone and language of policy making.

Perhaps the best aspect of this book is its contribution to the analysis and theorisation of JR. The final chapters highlight the implementation of programmes that capture the JR ethos: ones that promote the 'intrinsic rewards of building social capacity and tapping into community resources to prevent offending and re-offending' (p 173). Likewise, the book evaluates other schemes that may miss the mark, most notably the UK's current focus on Payment by Results (PbR): 'Notwithstanding, even if appropriate evaluation shows that PbR schemes may save money, they will do nothing to address community problems which give rise to offending in the first place' (199).

Despite some minor critiques, the book presents an unparalleled (and exceptionally written) examination of Justice Reinvestment, while perhaps providing a warning of 'doing without knowing' – implementing underdeveloped and under-researched schemes – guised as 'just'.

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Reference

Hegtvedt, K.A. and Scheuerman, H.L. (2010) 'The Justice/Morality Link: Implied, then Ignored, yet Inevitable', in Hitlin, S. and Vaisey, S. (eds), *The Handbook of the Sociology of Morality* (pp. 331-360), New York: Springer.