

BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by Jake Phillips & Anne Robinson

THERAPEUTIC CORRECTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS: THEORY, RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

Lewis, S. (2016) Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge. pp.190, £95.00 (hdbk), ISBN: 113889799

At its heart this book champions human relationships within the correctional field, in all their complexity and messiness. It also serves as an important reminder of the skilled work that is required to support an offender in desisting from crime.

In recent years, the probation service has undergone large-scale upheaval particularly with the introduction of Transforming Rehabilitation; this book raises important questions around how success can and should be measured in the Payments by Results (PbR) paradigm. One of its main strengths lies in the empirical work which provides rich accounts from both offender and practitioner perspectives, these are placed in relation to existing work on therapeutic relationships and this lens provides an original dimension from which to research probation work. This book therefore makes an important contribution to knowledge on therapeutic relationships, and in particular the under-theorised field of correctional relationships.

This book will be of interest to criminal justice practitioners working alongside offenders and ex-offenders, it will also resonate with those providing one-to-one, intensive support to people with multiple and complex needs across a range of social services. It is essential reading for those studying criminal justice particularly scholars of desistance and recovery; overall, a key text for those interested in the intricacies of probation work.

The book was accessible although some prior knowledge of the underpinning theoretical framework based on Bordin's work in Psychology was presumed. Familiarity with the correctional field is helpful but not a prerequisite as the author provides a brief history of probation from its inception and the shifts in practice and correctional relationships up to current practice and in light of the recent marketisation and privatisation of probation under Transforming Rehabilitation reforms in the UK context.

The author uses models to illustrate the full life course of the therapeutic relationship; while each relationship is unique, complex and messy, the models provide a useful basis from which to make sense of the ruptures and reconciliations present in probation relationships. A visual rendering brings to the fore the practitioner as one player and the

offender as another, a valuable reminder that both are responsible for relational currents. The models provide a way to grasp the dynamic nature of relationships, systemic forces and the therapeutic frame that encompasses all of these elements.

The book remains grounded in empirical work which took place immediately prior to the implementation of TR; using a participatory approach, including a mixture of focus groups, narrative inquiry, visual aids and reflective interviewing. The empirical work is based on doctoral research conducted with 17 practitioners and 18 offenders. It is therefore an important addition to the policy evidence base and may provide insight into some of the issues currently faced by Community Rehabilitation Companies.

Evidently, the book highlights the importance of not only the skills and experience of the practitioner but also the time required to work in a way which is responsive to each individual, not only to prevent ruptures but the time to work reflexively to mend a rupture and to improve practice. These are elements of probation which could not be replaced by an automated service. The book makes a strong case for the protection of the assistive side of the probation role, investment in staff and warns against de-professionalisation of skilled work, welcome respite for those haunted by the image of self-service electronic kiosks and biometric technology proposed by policymakers in recent years.

The author makes clear her position within the research and her background working with those who have offended. She researches from a practitioner perspective, and utilises her insider knowledge to reflexively examine the role of relationships. It does not provide a solely rosy picture of probation work but is uncomfortably honest.

In sum, this book provides a glimmer into a utopian, almost unimaginable alternative to the current trajectory of the criminal justice system under austerity, based on human relationships, emotions and sensitivity.

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REHABILITATION WORK: SUPPORTING DESISTANCE AND RECOVERY

Graham, H. (2016) Abingdon: Routledge. pp.226, £90.00 (hdbk), ISBN: 9781138888722

Hannah Graham has produced an excellent piece of scholarship in her review of the experiences and perceptions of alcohol and other drug (AOD) and criminal justice workers in Tasmania, Australia in a book based on 30 in-depth interviews with practitioners across the two fields. It is also critical as it addresses the question of the link between desistance from offending and recovery from substance use. However, much more than that she has produced an exceptionally thought-provoking and challenging work around what the role of the worker is in supporting positive changes in their clients, particularly when they may see their work as devalued and frequently undermined by the activities of managers, service commissioners and state systems who do not match their commitment and passion.

The core of the book is about the experiences of practitioners in the criminal justice system and the alcohol and drug field and addresses their experiences - and sense of secondary stigmatisation - that is involved in 'dirty work' for which many feel that they are not adequately acknowledged or supported. That frustration is directed not at colleagues or clients (and the book does an excellent job of conveying the commitment and dedication of the workforce) but more at managers, commissioners and the state who make their work more difficult and less rewarding than it needs to be.

At least from a recovery perspective, this is a problem. Because recovery is not considered to be an internalised quality but an interpersonal and societal process (Best, 2014), the wellbeing of the person in recovery and the wellbeing of the client are intrinsically linked. President Obama used the South African word 'ubuntu' to convey this sense that my wellbeing [the client's] rests on your wellbeing [in this case the worker] and that the same is true in reverse. In recent work with 206 drug and alcohol workers in Victoria in Australia, Best et al. (2016) reported very variable levels of stress, burnout and emotional wellbeing. Not surprisingly, those with poorer psychological health also reported poorer therapeutic optimism for their clients.

So the message is clear for policy makers. If we are to bring a brave new world of desistance and recovery to fruition, the transition needs to be systemic and not individually focused under a guise of personal 'responsibilisation'. Issues of short-term contracts, frequent re-commissioning and poor working environments are all symptomatic of a mistrust in a workforce whose commitment to their own professional growth is clearly spelled out by Graham in reporting the levels of CPD being undertaken by her sample and by their commitment and dedication both to their colleagues and to their clients.

And if we accept the strengths-based approach that underpins both recovery and desistance (as Graham reviews in Chapter 2) then we have to recognise that the wellbeing, growth and development of all participants is essential to creating what William White referred to as a Recovery-Oriented System of Care (ROSC). The questionable

accuracy of assumptions that addiction is a chronic relapsing brain disorder and that the most effective model of intervention with offenders is based on risk also fails to recognise the impact on workers in implementing something that reduces the human and the therapeutic in the exchanges with their clients. Although perhaps not explored in depth by Graham, there is very clear evidence that 'treatment effectiveness' rests much more on the quality of the therapeutic alliance (i.e. what is interpersonally important and fulfilling) than on the specifics of CBT or motivational interviewing.

In the recovery world much more than in desistance the notion of social capital has been translated into a broader concept of 'recovery capital' (Granfield and Cloud, 1998). Within this approach social capital is generally supplemented by personal and community capital to characterise the impact of network support on personal wellbeing and the importance of the broader community acceptance and acceptability of the rehabilitation endeavour. It is in this sphere that exclusion, stigmatisation and blocked opportunities for reintegration (Braithwaite, 1989) can be seen as negative recovery capital and where the impact is jointly experienced by the client and the worker - in other words, the importance of the therapy and its underpinning alliance does not exist on an island but rests on a sea of jobs, friends and houses.

In tackling the overlap between desistance and recovery, Graham is advancing a major omission in academic writing. In doing so through the experiences and beliefs of a key population of helpers and guides she has provided an innovative and unique approach that emphasises the shared, social and contextualised nature of rehabilitation, recovery and desistance.

Professor David Best, Professor of Criminology, Sheffield Hallam University

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VANDALISM AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Long, M. and Hopkins Burke, R. (2015) *Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan*. pp.258, £65.00 (hdbk), ISBN: 978-0-230-58085-5

Anti-social behaviour and acts of vandalism remain prominent issues within today's society and they often evoke a large amount of public interest and media attention across England and Wales. Where society has developed and political agendas have drastically changed in response to these issues, criminological understandings have seemingly remained unchanged from earlier theoretical understandings. Early perspectives and typologies used to conceptualise these areas, largely those of Stanley Cohen, still direct criminological theorising, arguably failing to address important societal changes. *Vandalism and Anti-Social Behaviour*, part of the Critical Criminological Perspectives series, presents an alternative cultural criminological perspective which questions the relevance of earlier understandings and sheds new light on understanding these behaviours in relation to current society. The author's, Matt Long and Roger Hopkins Burke, cultural standpoint highlights the influential factors upon individual criminal behaviour and the need to take a cultural perspective in theorising the complex interplay between individual and society.

The book is split into five sequential parts which make up the book's 10 chapters, which provides the reader with a sense of direction allowing the text to flow from contextual and theoretical origins right through to conclusive future developments within the area and in the wider field of criminology. The book introduces itself through providing a comprehensive synopsis of Stanley Cohen's famous work and typology of vandalism, addressing the crucial and influential impact that these earlier ideas have upon modern criminology. This provides contextual knowledge of the area and where the authors have developed their understandings before questioning why Cohen's early typologies are yet to be surpassed and still dominate criminological understandings of vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

In Chapter 1 the authors present their argument for developing a cultural criminological view of vandalism by exploring the political contexts. The first part of this chapter explores the cultural origins of both vandalism and anti-social behaviour before moving on to the rationales which underpin current political responses and agendas surrounding vandalism. The authors address where vandalism and anti-social behaviour have become entwined within understandings as anti-social behaviour has more frequently been used as a "generic term which encompasses both criminal and non-criminal behaviour" (p22). The second part of Chapter 1 delves deeper into understanding criminal behaviour as a cultural entity relative to when and where it occurs. The authors focus in particular on understanding vandalism as its own distinguished set of crimes detached from the umbrella term of anti-social behaviour, to address the complexities and differing types of vandalism within a diverse society. This chapter leads into the book's subsequent chapter which explores the different forms of vandalism and the cultural motivations behind these.

Chapters 2, 3 and 4 explore the differing forms of vandalism, primarily focusing on those typically associated with young people. Chapter 2 provides an exploration of the different forms of youth vandalism typologies in particular with a focus on the exploratory and drift vandalism target and context vandalism. Within Chapter 3 the authors suggest the perpetrators of certain forms of vandalism, such as target vandalism are primarily committed by young people for instance with car crime and damage. Chapter 4 expands upon the previous chapters understanding of youth perpetrators of vandalism exploring where certain behaviours become normalised and embedded in youth culture and the anti-social foundations which both target and context vandalism develop from. At this stage of the book the author's depiction of vandalism in young people as predictable and based on cultural surroundings and as a response to their place within society, largely rejects previous notions that youth vandalism is sporadic and random, giving new light to the causes of youth crime and anti-social acts.

Chapters 5 and 6 move away from the focus on young people, looking at both vandalism and anti-social behaviour within wider society and the motivations and causes of collateral and hate vandalism. Chapter 5 provides a thought-provoking look into the motivations behind collateral vandalism within current social settings such as London riots. This chapter uses existing theoretical knowledge of the 'risk' vs 'gain' analysis of criminal behaviour to analyse how the current social contexts of deliberating economic conditions and relative material deprivation trigger acts of vandalism and crime for a personal or financial gain. Within Chapter 8 the authors take the discussion in an interesting direction, arguing that there are possible pro-social elements of vandalism committed by collective groups and systematic thought process as a means of challenging the anti-social responses and actions of the governing state.

Chapter 9 reiterates the book's purpose: that of bringing criminological theorising of vandalism and antisocial behaviour into an era of cultural criminological understanding. It also addresses the changes in society and the impact vandalism has not only on geographical communities but the virtual communities which dominate individual's lives in a late modern world. Chapter 10 looks forward at the future of this area and provides an insight into what cultural criminology can predict about future society. The author's conclusive chapters depict where earlier works, such as that of Cohen, have dominated understandings and somewhat prohibited alternative theorising and typologies. That being said, the authors clearly do not dispute the important influence of earlier scholarly works but strive to provide a more holistic and culturally appropriate criminological view for other theorists to build upon.

The book, *Vandalism and Anti-social Behaviour*, provides an engaging, relevant and convincing argument for cultural criminological perspectives. The authors have provided a well-developed and defined discussion of the different types of vandalism which questions and deliberates theoretical earlier ideas and understandings. The book's chapter structure is difficult to follow at times with each section divided into parts and then subsequent smaller parts or chapters, thus making it difficult to distinguish and review each chapter separately. The authors' theoretical positioning is clear throughout the book, providing a distinctive direction for their argument. However this strong perspective may prevent the reader from developing an impartial opinion on some of the issues covered. The book

concentrates on the different types of vandalism to the neglect of antisocial behaviour. This suggests there may be scope for a subsequent book more focused on anti-social behaviour. Overall the book provides a valuable contribution in theorising vandalism and encourages theorists to move beyond existing perspective as society progresses.

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