

# BOOK REVIEWS

**CJM**  
CRIMINAL JUSTICE MATTERS

## Traffickers: Drug Markets & Law Enforcement

N Dorn, K Murji, N South. Routledge, London (1992)

Having reached the end of the book any disappointment at not having learned extensively about drug trafficking is more than balanced by the wealth of information regarding law enforcement, and indeed the criminal justice process. For those interested in policing and criminal investigation this text is essential reading.

The book commences with a background discussion to drug trafficking and the changing picture of the crime. It is a confusing scene, although the authors' skilful writing style ensures that the confusion does not extend to the reader's mind. The attention to methodology in the early part of the book is both interesting and welcome.

The text documents the police response, or sometimes lack of response to drug trafficking. It evaluates police organisational structures and police methods and argues for a different type of response, not just of the police but of the criminal justice system. It is well written and the arguments are well supported, even if, at times, controversial.

by *Martin Gill*, Lecturer in Security & Risk Management, University of Leicester

## Backstreets: Prostitution, Money and Love

Cecilie Hoigard and Liv Finstad  
Polity Press 1992. First published in Norway, 1986 as Bakgater.

The writers tell us that the book is organised around one central aim - which is to 'understand the content of prostitution' (p8). By this they mean: what happens in the exchange between prostitute and punter; what do men want, expect and get; what are the relationships between pimps and prostitutes; what are the conditions of and for sexuality; and finally what are the possible connections or links between the 'participants' lives and concerns between men and women more generally (p9). Mostly ethnographic in scope, each of the seven chapters focuses upon a particular aspect of the 'content' of prostitution: the prostitution scene; the main participants; inside prostitution - views from prostitutes, pimps and punters; documenting women's emotional defence mechanisms, and some very interesting material focusing upon experiences and feelings of 'doing' prostitution; after prostitution - narratives and accounts about hopes, fantasies and

future possibilities; indoor and outdoor prostitution describes and explores differing types of prostitution; a chapter focusing upon pimps - who they are, what their role is, differences and similarities between non violent boyfriends, pimps, and stable pimps; and finally the fight against prostitution - opposition, assistance programmes and suggestions for criminal law reform.

The book however, is likely to disappoint those of us who are looking for a more theoretically informed and articulated study, particularly in the areas of: conditions of and for sexuality; connections and links between the men and women involved in prostitution and men and women more generally; and the ways that patriarchal, socio-economic structures mediate cultural practices. The book relates prostitution too uni-directionally with rape and incest, sidesteps the issue of exchange value for use value (prostitution as work) and albeit unintentionally reinforced what has been called the 'whore stigma'. The real problem for me with this book is that the wealth of ethnographic data raises some very interesting questions about conditions of and for sexuality and the relations between men and women more generally which are not followed up.

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## The Penal System: An Introduction.

M. Cavadino and J. Dignan.  
Sage Publications. 1992

This book is designed to serve as an introductory text to penology. There is clearly a large gap in the market and there are very few books available which are accessible introductions to the subject for both students and practitioners. This book, which begins with an examination of the current crisis in prisons, includes chapters on theories of punishment, sentencing, the development of alternatives to custody and the process of penal reform. It offers readers a good grounding in the issues currently associated with imprisonment.

Although the book deals with a number of controversial issues, the authors attempt to present a balanced and thoughtful account of these processes. They claim to write from a radical pluralist position which they see as a compromise between Marxism and the pluralist tradition in sociology.

Understandably critical of recent developments in penal reform the authors offer a range of short, medium and long term reforms which are designed to overcome the present crisis. These include an

amnesty for short term offenders, to the expansion of diversionary strategies, the appointment of a prison Ombudsman and the introduction of a Sentencing Council. These proposals, however, are far from radical and most have been on the political agenda for some time. Nevertheless, the strength and appeal of the book will probably not lie so much in its contribution to penal reform but rather in its ability to provide a much-needed introductory text in penology.

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## Permission and Regulation: Law and Morals in Post-War Britain.

Tim Newburn. Routledge. 1992

The term 'permissiveness' has had a great deal of political currency in recent years. Used as a term to point the dangers of adopting moral values which are held to be out of step with traditional mores it has been used consistently to defend or re-establish what are seen as declining moral standards. The usage of the term, however, Newburn argues, is largely rhetorical and is not based on any clear articulation of the concept itself or any real empirical evidence.

In contrast to the thesis that so-called permissiveness is the cause of declining moral standards and the subsequent fragmentation of the community, he argues that it has been the lessening of power inequalities in the post-war period which has allowed the less powerful sections of society to voice their wishes, aims and objectives. This in turn has encouraged different ways of living, the development of counter-cultures and ultimately a questioning of the 'moral consensus'. The simultaneous decline of traditional Christian values has, he argues, encouraged the development of a growing plurality of moral codes and cultural differentiation.

Using these developments as negative points of reference the Thatcher government has in particular employed the term 'permissiveness' to establish a new form of moral fundamentalism centred around what are presented as traditional family values. From this position all non-familial forms of social and sexual behaviour are sanctioned and the liberalising potential of the various movements which appeared in the 1960s is gradually being eroded. Nowhere, is this anti-permissive offensive clearer than in the area of HIV and AIDS, Newburn argues, in which themes of moral and sexual pollution have been effectively re-established and used to promote a new brand of moral absolutism.

*Roger Matthews*