

## Book Review:

### **Emotional Labour in Criminal Justice and Criminology**

Edited by Phillips, J., Westaby, C., Fowler, A., and Waters, J.  
Publisher: Routledge (2021).  
ISBN: 9780367152017  
Price: £120.00

Philips et al's *Emotional Labour in Criminal Justice and Criminology* is an insightful and innovative book that examines emotional work seen throughout the criminal justice system. They address an array of experiences and circumstances that help to locate the aims of an organisation through the emotional labour of its workers, whilst also acknowledging how different workers experience their roles through emotional rules and techniques. This book presents a new lens to the study of criminal justice, offering observations of the emotional labour that workers provide within the service or institution. This goes beyond other writings on policing, the legal sector, prisons and probation. Indeed, this book presents discussion largely missing from writings in criminal justice and criminology, making it a welcome and necessary contribution.

This work makes an important contribution as it provides an alternative discussion of criminal justice, in particular on work within prisons. It speaks of the internal complexity experienced by workers in prisons and begins to explore how policy, management and the diversity of imprisonment can leave an impression on officers, rehabilitation workers and working prisoners, such as Listeners

(prisoners trained by the Samaritans offering emotional support for prisoners in distress). Whilst this review draws greater attention to the chapters connected to imprisonment, it is impressed by the innovative approach that this book takes to the many areas seen within criminal justice and criminology. Readers from across many different areas will go to this text and find interest and connection to their own work as well as being able to discover others. This is explored in two ways. The first part investigates current literature on the subject of emotional labour, bringing to the forefront the literature already offered, whilst justifying the need for further and future research on the subject. The second part offers primary research and analysis conducted by the chapter authors, which directly address the issues outlined in part one and further demonstrate the necessity and scope for research in emotional labour. Undeniably, the theoretical summaries and primary research used throughout will encourage readers to explore many areas presented within this book, which offer unique and important lessons to academic and criminal justice practitioners alike.

The first section of the book sets out the theoretical lens of emotional labour, taking influence from Hochschild<sup>1</sup> and others who discuss the ways that emotion has become a commodification within many areas of public services. This approach presents how organisations seek to use workers for emotional labour, drawing on their interactions with others to

produce an emotional state and also to encourage workers to display control over their emotions in line with the 'feeling rules' set out by the organisation. There are, of course consequences of this labour which many workers in criminal justice face and this is recognised early in this text. A key benefit of this is how the editors have collected and organised expert authors to build a contextualised picture of the emotional labour experienced within many fields of criminal justice.

The contextual differences offered within the chapters is the largest contribution this book offers, making the chapters important and useful to understand the complex experiences seen within policing, courts, prisons and probation. For example, when discussing prison officers, Nylander and Bruhn (chapter 5) recognise them as a 'crucial tool' (p.71) that without would leave prisons in disorder. This is due to the important role that they play in engaging with prisoners within the different environment, or sub-cultures, seen throughout the prison. Nylander and Bruhn also recognise the perception that this work has, referring to Hughes's<sup>2</sup> idea of 'dirty work' to recognise how the public view the role and how this sort of work is often seen as tainted presenting as 'low occupational prestige' (p.77). Any reader would consider this approach alongside the other chapters outlined on prisons with a bitter taste in their mouths, in particular when discussions turn to the consequences that emotional

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1. Hochschild, A.R. (1983) *The Managed Heart. Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press)

2. Hughes, E. C. (1951). Work and the self. In J. H. Rohrer & M. Sherif (Eds.), ----- (pp. 313–323). New York: Harper & Brothers

labour has on prison officers and prison Listeners.

Robinson (chapter 8), pays credit to those prison workers who care for dying prisoners, demonstrating further the conflict that comes with the tainted work and the emotional response that officers experience. She offers an in-depth overview to how officers manage and control their emotions through strategies of deep level and surface acting, so that they can counteract the consequences of their emotional work. Robinson explores interviews with prison officers to conceptualise their strategies in dealing with the emotional consequences of death whilst also recognising the challenges with working in this field. For example, officers discussed seeing their own sadness as going against the occupational need of their role, which then requires strategies such as emotional desensitising in order to protect themselves and their families from the emotional toll the work can take. A further example of emotional work in prison is offered by Nixon (chapter 15) where primary research was undertaken with Prison Listeners. This chapter is incredibly insightful, demonstrating similar consequences and techniques within emotional labour seen in other chapters, but with the added pressure of being imprisoned whilst holding the role. Nixon discusses these consequences through the voices of Listeners, noting the challenges of holding this role are complicated through managing their relationships with prison officers, staff, and also fellow prisoners. In particular the chapter highlights how Listeners engage forms of concealment when conducting their responsibilities, as the training and direction offered by the Samaritans can often conflict with the Listener's own beliefs in supporting distressed prisoners.

This book offers a serious and important contribution to the study and practice of criminal justice, through its originality and critical outlook on the work seen within many fields and experienced by many. Reading this text will inspire further research and engagement with the support needed for workers. Indeed, this is a question that maintains after reading the text, as there is an overwhelming feeling of injustice when managers do not consider the consequences of these emotional labours. An injustice that I hope readers will tackle after reading this book.

*Lewis Simpson is a Lecturer in Criminology at Leeds Beckett University.*

### **Respect and Criminal Justice**

By Gabriella Watson

Publisher: Oxford University Press (2020)

ISBN: 9780198833345

Price: £80.00

This book is part of the Clarendon Studies in Criminology series which the OUP publishes. What prompted the author to write it was 'an enduring sense of curiosity as to why criminal justice institutions—whether by neglect or intent—collectively overlook or devalue a moral value as fundamental as respect' (p.2). It enquires why in policing and imprisonment respect is 'more akin to a slogan than a foundational value of criminal justice practice' (p.1). Its core claim is that 'in policing and imprisonment, there is an overwhelming preoccupation with instrumental outcomes, with the result that respect is understood, at best, as a weak side-constraint on the pursuit of those outcomes' (p. 2). By way of introduction, the author, an academic lawyer, claims (p.9) 'this book offers the first sustained examination of respect and criminal

justice, extending a handful of shorter contributions on this theme.' It seeks to achieve its purposes by examining the philosophical and social scientific meaning of respect; and then considering two specific aspects of operational practice — 'stop and search' in policing and the serving of meals in prisons.

Watson sees criminal justice as characterised by two central considerations — instrumental outcomes and moral values — and concludes having reviewed the literature, policy documents and reports inquiring into operational practice, that the police and prisons are preoccupied with the former. Her consideration of police 'stop and search' practice provides a critique of its disproportionate and discriminatory use. The conclusion, that 'a respectful stop and search should be concerned primarily with process rather than outcome' (p.83-4), is followed by three recommendations for improving operational practice: lighter regulation; the provision of training in procedural justice for police officers; and, ultimately, the abolition of 'stop and search'.

The recommendations on police training reinforce the author's view that the imperative is to prioritise process over outcome. Practitioners may regard this as principled but not that operationally practicable. And there's the rub: in operational worlds grounded in a gritty practice, 'theory' seems subordinate to the practical outcome. One might reflect whether, as long as this dialectical tension defines the discourse (crudely 'theory' and 'practice'), reform is likely. For Watson, by framing procedural justice training in terms of respect, 'police officers would be introduced to an idea that has intuitive appeal...but which also has praxis, offering a coherent framework for the practice of stop and search' (p. 87).