

Book Review

Key Concepts in Crime and Society

Edited by Ross Coomber, Joseph F Donnermeyer, Karen McElrath and John Scott
Publisher: Sage
ISBN: 978-0-85702-256-1
Price: £20.99

The Key Concepts series of books are billed as a valuable tool for students. Sage is a leading academic publisher and a reliable choice for both introductory and more in-depth resources. The contributors for the *Crime and Society* book in the series are all established academics with varied and extensive knowledge of western criminal justice, having undertaken research and academic work across the United Kingdom, Australia and United States of America.

Key Concepts in Crime and Society is an introductory level book with an average of four pages covering each topic. It serves as a good reference aid to be dipped into and prompts thought. The authors state their aim is to provide a critical analysis of each topic; a challenge to achieve whilst remaining informative and retaining an introductory tone. They meet the challenge well. In particular, the sections on 'prisons' and 'alternatives to imprisonment' provoke thought about the success of crime reduction initiatives and the challenges which arise from various aspects of society. Similarly, sections such as 'race/ethnicity and crime' and 'sex work' succeed in prompting thought about sensitive moral concerns and explaining complex issues whilst remaining concise and introductory.

The book is, perhaps unnecessarily, split into three sections; the origins of theoretical and social concepts, different types of crime, and responses to crime. It should be read with the introductory tone in mind so as to prompt further reading and ensure issues are not

misunderstood. This is particularly important with reference to theories such as deterrence and social control where there would be specific benefit of deeper exploration. In a practical sense, definitions are documented throughout the chapters and the contents is easy to follow but the lack of an index and glossary seems odd for a reference book of this nature. References are provided but links to further up-to-date reading would add value.

Although clearly written with students and academic courses in mind the book would prove useful too for managers and keen prison and probation staff as a reference point for key themes which transect our work. Wouldn't it be a great starting point if our new and existing prison officers, for example, were encouraged and enabled to explore 'key concepts' in their work through reading and research? With officer focused initiatives in areas such as safer custody and the 'five-minute intervention' developing at pace such resources as the Key Concepts series might be a complimentary resource for inquisitive criminal justice practitioners at all levels. Topics such as specific types of crime, gangs, prisons, alternatives to imprisonment and policing may prove particularly relevant.

This is a sound choice for an introductory guide to *Crime and Society*. One would be hard pressed to identify any topics missed. The book introduces influential criminologists and sociologists, approaches to research and practice, and provides both historical background and modern insight into current issues and practices. The authors also manage to refer to, and distinguish between differences across continents whilst remaining succinct and clear.

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Book Review

Dangerous Politics: Risk, Political Vulnerability, and Penal Policy

By Harry Annison
Publisher: Oxford University Press
ISBN: 978-0-19-872860-3
Price: £65.00 (Hardback)

A title like *Dangerous Politics* might be more suggestive of a John Grisham thriller than an academic publication, but with *Dangerous Politics*, Harry Annison has written a thorough and informative account of the construction, system wide effect and then eventual demise of the Imprisonment for Public Protection (IPP) sentence in England and Wales—and it also happens to be an accessible and compelling tale to follow.

It draws on over 60 in-depth interviews with key policymakers, to help tell the story of the development and impact of this indeterminate preventative sentence. In so doing, the book looks at the interplay between government, the Civil Service, the judiciary, civic society and indeed all the many and varied factions which directly and tacitly shape policy development. The book helps illustrate the extent to which law making happens, not in a theoretical world of omniscient political masters, but in a real world of flawed and human interactions, media influences and a tumultuous mix of other agendas which all play their part.

This book may be well placed to take advantage of a post E.U. Referendum spike in interest in the process of political decision-making and policy formulation. Indeed parallels between the Referendum and some key aspects of the IPP story: an under-represented public voice, a disregard for the views of academic experts and strong tabloid media pressure; suggest that the themes explored in *Dangerous Politics* really transcend the story of the IPP to speak to factors still extant and thriving in British political life today.

Dangerous Politics is also a comprehensively researched study of the penal and criminological issues around the concept of sentencing for public protection. Risk based practice and assessment of risk are examined here in depth as is the role played by prisons and what they can and can't do by way of rehabilitative intervention.

Throughout the book there is a rich range of quotations from some of the key actors that had involvement with the IPP that give a real sense of originality and proximity in the narrative. For academics and students in the field of criminology the description provided in the appendix to the book, which details the technique of 'elite interviewing', is also an instructive element for those interested in research methodology.

The approach taken in *Dangerous Politics*, of looking at one specific sentence in depth and over a time period which crosses political administrations, allows Annison to really focus in on how different aspects of the IPP interact with a changing environment. This vividly illustrates the ideological and practical influences that were at work. The book provides a clear sense of how criminological and penal theory and practice meet and interact in the sometimes opaque world of governmental policy development. Even for those more familiar with that world, *Dangerous Politics* provides a thorough case study of the introduction of a new sentencing measure, which illustrates, among other lessons, the importance of self-reflection by those involved and the need to be very conscious of which voices are 'in the room' and which are not, as policies are developed.

Dangerous Politics starts by setting the IPP in context, looking at the penal landscape and criminological literature of the time. It then examines the creation of the IPP, looking at the key drivers and the relationship with the Third Way

political ideology. There then follows a dissection of the response to the IPP from concerned actors (from practitioners to parliamentarians). Further sections look at the judicial response to the IPP, the amendment of the IPP and the final abolition of the measure, before drawing out connections to the relevant criminological, legal and political literature.

Dangerous Politics can be commended as an insightful and meticulously thorough consideration of the history and experience of the IPP. For those keen to understand the recent history of this part of the justice field it lets the reader see not just what happened but offers an intelligent analysis of why the IPP developed as it did, and as such it provides some potentially valuable lessons to inform future sentencing policy.

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Book Review

The Routledge Handbook of White-Collar Crime and Corporate Crime in Europe

Edited by Judith van Erp, Wim Huisman and Gudrun Vande Walle, with the assistance of Joep Beckers
Publisher: Routledge International Handbooks (2015)
ISBN: 978-0-415-72214-8
Price: £65.00

This extremely impressive, detailed and contemporary collection of essays provides a fascinating and excellent commentary on a wide range of white collar and corporate crimes within the European Union. This edited collection presents a 'who's who' of critically acclaimed experts from a vast array of different backgrounds. The book is cleverly divided into five parts. The first part

of the edited collection entitled: 'Defining and measuring white collar and corporate crime in Europe' contains a selection of excellent chapters that provide an in-depth commentary on the definition of white-collar crime and its extent. This part of the collection provides a captivating discussion of the threat posed by financial crime and attempts to calculate its extent within the European Union. This is one of the most difficult questions that many academics and economists have attempted to accurately determine and a good attempt is made here. The second part of the collection is entitled: 'Historical perspectives on white-collar and corporate crime in Europe'. These three chapters present an excellent discussion of the origins of white-collar crime research in Europe, the association between corporate involvement in the Holocaust and the enforcement of white-collar crime. The third part, and most detailed section of the edited collection, is entitled: 'Contemporary white-collar crime and corporate crime in Europe'. This contains no less than thirteen chapters that investigate the impact of white-collar and economic crime in a very impressive array of European Countries including Hungary, Croatia, Germany, Iceland and Belgium. This section of the edited collection emphatically illustrates the threat posed by white-collar and corporate crime across Europe and the discussion of the 'landmark cases of white-collar crime in Europe' from pages 276 to 360 was very interesting and extremely original as many of the existing texts that have been written in the area have tended to concentrate on cases that have originated in either the United States of America or the United Kingdom. The discussion of landmark cases in the European Union concentrates on the development and discussion of six fascinating case studies that range from professional football, real estate fraud and corruption. These case