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Perrie Lectures 2013
**Contraction in an age
of expansion**

Reviews

Book Review

Crime and the Economy

By Richard Rosenfeld and Steven Messner

Publisher: Sage (2013)

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(paperback)

Price:

In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crisis and in the midst of the subsequent economic slump, the hegemony of global capitalism has been subject to increasing intellectual attack. In a series of powerful and persuasive publications, the practice of capitalism has come to be criticised for its effects including increasing inequality, weakening communal bonds and intensifying social breakdown.¹ Within criminal justice, there has also been a growing interest in the role and impact of economics, including the links between crime and the economy and the growing marketisation of policy and practice.² In this short but effective volume, distinguished American academics Richard Rosenfeld and Steven Messner, make a contribution to these debates, offering a theoretical approach accounting for and exploring the links between economics and crime.

In the Preface, Rosenfeld and Messner set out their two primary objectives, which are to:

'... shed light on the multifaceted linkages between criminal behaviour and the structure and functioning of the economy in advanced, capitalist societies ... [and] ... demonstrate that the complex linkages between crime and economic factors can be

best understood when viewed through the lens of an *institutional perspective*.' (italics in original)

The opening two chapters focus on the first aim, discussing the links between socio-economic factors and crime, victimization and entanglement with criminal justice system. They also offer some economic accounts for crime including rational choice theory and descriptions of economically derived sub-cultures. The third and fourth chapters explore more extensively the institutional perspective so central to Rosenfeld and Messner's account. Form this perspective, they argue that:

'... crime is a normal property of social systems which reflects the core features of the institutional order. Different institutional arrangements are expected to generate distinctive levels and types of crime, which should change along with alterations to these arrangements.' (p.57)

They articulate what they term 'institutional-anomie theory'. In this theory the economic order is seen in the context of non-economic institutions such as families and communities that provide a moral foundation, The theory suggests that:

'... an institutional structure characterized by economic dominance impedes the social control and support functions of institutions which, when combined with an anomic cultural ethic, strips away the moral authority of these institutions and in so doing undermines institutional regulation. In other words, when the market economy dominates the institutional order, its rules and the

values they reflect tend to prevail over those that would counterbalance market-orientated values and alleviate the impact of market conditions and outcomes on families and individuals.' (p.66-7)

From this basis, Rosenfeld and Messner suggest that rampant, unconstrained capitalism has deleterious social consequences, creating a self-interested culture. They argue that counter-balancing social institutions are required in order to ameliorate these effects. In their conclusion, they argue that radical new ways of thinking about and organising society will emerge in the future, but in the meantime:

'We see no better way to limit crime and promote justice in contemporary developed societies than to reign in the excess of market economies with policies that guarantee a decent standard of living to all citizens and, by their very nature, reinforce a sense of mutual obligation and collective responsibility. That is the historic promise of the welfare state as part of a vital and responsive democratic polity.' (p.118).

This concise but powerful volume packs a considerable punch. It enunciates and develops a credible account for the links between economics and crime as well as drawing upon work that situates this within a wider social context. As such, this is not only a book about crime; it is a book that illuminates the darker corners of contemporary global capitalism.

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1. For example see Wilkinson, R. and Pickett, K. (2009) *The spirit level: Why more equal societies almost always do better* London: Allen Lane; Sandel, M. (2012) *What money can't buy: the moral limits of markets* London: Allen Lane; Stiglitz, J. (2012) *The price of inequality: How today's divided society endangers our future* W.W. Norton: New York.
2. See. Albnerton, K. and Fox, C. (2012) *Crime and economics* Abingdon: Routledge.

***The Evidence Enigma:
Correctional Boot Camps and
Other Failures in Evidence-
Based Policymaking***

By: Tiffany Bergin

Publisher: Ashgate (2013)

ISBN: 978-1-4094-4490-9
(hardback)

Price: £55.00 (hardback)

The Evidence Enigma, presents a mixed methods analysis of the diffusion and subsequent contraction of correctional 'boot camps' across the United States between 1983 and 2005. Extensive use of statistical methods, and rather thinner qualitative textual analysis, combine to present a wide ranging and sometimes surprising account of the rise and fall of boot camps in the United States.

Bergin claims to have conducted the 'most statistically rigorous examination of criminal justice policy making ever under taken in criminology' (p. 138). Her use of statistics, in an area that does not easily lend itself to quantification, is certainly ambitious. Though I baulked at the quantification of abstract concepts like 'legislative professionalism' and 'liberal public ideology', I was nonetheless impressed — or perhaps I should say amazed — that the analysis generated a series of statistically significant findings regarding these variables and others as diverse as 'veteran status of governor' and 'income inequality'. Starting with basic correlations, and moving to more complicated statistical regressions through to event history analysis, Bergin tests her wide range of variables against four main outcomes: the diffusion and the contraction of adult boot camps, the diffusion of juvenile boot camps, and the combined contraction of adult and juvenile boot camps. Surprisingly, many of her variables were highly significant with reference to one of these

outcomes, but few variables were significant against more than one of these outcomes, and none significant across all four.

Compared to the scope of the quantitative section, Bergin's qualitative section, based on a case study of the two states Illinois and New Jersey, lacks detail and depth. The most interesting finding was that role that a single pragmatic consideration played towards different outcomes in otherwise similar states: in New Jersey the introduction of boot camps was very much delayed by difficulties finding a publicly acceptable site for one.

Notwithstanding the shortcomings of the qualitative chapter, the use of mixed methods does prove fruitful. For example, the quantitative section finds a strong correlation between boot camp diffusion and a high proportion of African Americans within a state, but the qualitative section provides no indication that race might have played a role in the diffusion of boot camps. Bergin's use of mixed methods thus enables her to demonstrate the significance of a factor, race, which might not have been apparent using qualitative methods alone. However, further statistical analysis establishes that the racial profile of states was associated with the diffusion of juvenile — but not adult — boot camps, and that state racial profiles did not predict the closure of boot camps within a state. In this way Bergin provides some limited support for 'racial threat theory' (which suggest that states with higher African American or Hispanic populations will adopt more punitive criminal justice policies), but little explanation of why race might be relevant only to the establishment of juvenile bootcamps and not to their closure or to the establishment of adult boot camps. Unfortunately the sheer breadth of Bergin's questions and methods prevents her from

exploring such matters in any further depth.

Overall, it was the very ambition of the research, and the heterogeneity of its findings that left me questioning its significance. Bergin tests a diverse range of theories about boot camp diffusion and contraction and finds most of them significant some of the time, but none of them significant most of the time. But, without delving deeper into the ambiguities of her findings, Bergin's extensive efforts generate only the unremarkable conclusion that there may be some substance to all the theories tested, but that the situation is too complex to be reduced to any single one.

Personally, I had hoped that this book would provide insights into the role of evidence in current British policy making. However, and despite the promise of its title and introduction, this book is not so much about a failure of evidence based policymaking as it is about policymaking occurring with little reference to the available evidence base. Boot camps, Bergin suggests, seemed so self-evidently effective to many policy makers and voters that little attention was paid to the applicable research evidence; 'statistics could not compete against conviction' (p. 114). In contrast, over 15 years since New Labour came to power with promises of 'evidence based policy', the Coalition government's 'payment by results' take evidence a stage further. It is no longer enough to generate evidence based policy (or to pay lip service to it); it is now becoming policy that service providers must provide evidence of their efficacy if they are to secure or retain the privilege of being service providers. The US policy makers in Bergin's research may have been sceptical or disinterested in the research evidence relating to their criminal justice policies. By contrast current UK policy making is fixated with evidence. Politicians not only

want evidence to show that their policies work, they want to use evidence itself as a device to improve performance. Ours is not an environment where statistics cannot compete with conviction; it is becoming one in which conviction is invested in the transformative power of evidence itself.

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Book Review

Life Imprisonment: An Unofficial Guide

By Alan Baker

Publisher: Waterside Press (2013)

ISBN: 978-1-904380-93-1

(paperback)

Price: £9.95

Life Imprisonment: An Unofficial Guide aims to provide an easy to read reference book aimed principally at the small market of newly sentenced 'lifers'. The unique selling point of the book is that, although there have been a number of books and articles written by ex offenders, this has been written by a serving life sentenced prisoner, Alan Baker, who has served over 20 years in prison. The manuscript of this book won the Koestler Trust Silver Award so promises to be an insightful read.

A forward is provided by Tim Newell, a former Prison Governor, accompanied by an interesting and apparently sincere apology from the author to his past victims. The bulk of the book, however, comprises of 41 short segments that explain some key pieces of information relevant to the 'offender journey' of a life sentenced prisoner, throughout their time in custody, including explanations of Life Sentence Tariffs, Personal Officer Schemes and Money Management.

The book aims to be 'credible' to Lifers because of the author's background, reflecting a literary form of the benefits of a prisoner 'Insider' scheme, much used across prisons in England and Wales. Each segment is concise and written clearly for the prisoner naïve to custody, a common occurrence for Life Sentenced prisoners, assuming that unlike 60 per cent of prisoners with literacy problems, they are literate enough to read it. In practical terms an audio accompaniment may have been appropriate for the target audience.

Although some segments are quite specialised for Lifers such as Stages of an Indeterminate Sentence, other segments could easily be applied to all prisoners, including the section about The Complaints System, and include difficult subjects that the author does not shy away from such as Hygiene and Same Sex Relationships in prison. Considering the concise nature of the book and the potentially voluminous amount of information that could be offered to a new Life Sentenced Prisoner, there are some segments that seem incredibly niche, such as the segment on Artificial Insemination, for which the author highlights, within the passage, that only 28 applications have been made since 1996.

Another drawback to this book is that as the author is recounting useful information from his whole sentence, some information is invariably out of date, such as references to Enhanced Thinking Skills courses and Racist Incident Reporting Forms, which could confuse prisoners. Furthermore, a few of the useful addresses are out of date by a number of years, including buildings that no longer exist, and the prison slang section appears quite dated. Future editions of this book would benefit from proof reading for these mistakes so that the author's work doesn't lose credibility with its audience.

In summary, the book offers some useful advice encouraging prisoner readers to behave 'positively' in order to obtain what they need to progress or gain privileges, including encouraging them to take charge of their sentence. It would seem appropriate for this book to be available in libraries in 'local' prisons or in court holding cells, as well as in visitors' centres for families and friends to gain an insight into the often closed world of prisons. It would probably be of very little value to practitioners and academics, with the exception of students new to criminology that need a starting reference point for the typical experiences of Life Sentenced prisoners.

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Book Review

Key Concepts in Youth Studies

By Mark Cieslik and Donald Simpson

Publisher: SAGE (2013)

ISBN: 9781848609846 (hardback)

9781848609853 (paperback)

Price: £65.00 (hardback) £21.99 (paperback)

Key Concepts in Youth Studies is a welcome addition to the wider SAGE *Key Concepts* series which provides students with accessible and authoritative knowledge of the essential topics in a variety of disciplines. Experienced authors and researchers Mark Cieslik and Donald Simpson have acutely summarised the complex field of youth studies in this concise and accessible book. When approaching research and work with young people it can be somewhat perplexing to comprehend the range of issues faced by young people in contemporary society.

This book neatly separates the range of key concepts in youth studies in short chapters which introduce major themes and debates to the reader. The use of concise entries enables the reader to access the information presented more readily than many textbooks in the social sciences which are structured around lengthy chapters. In addition, the authors endeavour to highlight where possible the interconnection between the entries, further enabling the reader to contextualise each issue within the wider concepts presented. The book at first appears short (178 pages) for such a broad subject matter, however these established authors provide a very informative and accessible discussion throughout, which will be of valued interest to academics, youth practitioners and students alike.

The book begins with an introduction *Making Sense of Young People Today?* contextualising the different entries in the book, and sets out some key questions which the authors addressed when focusing on the most important issues in youth research, such as: how do we define 'youth'? which provides the focus of discussion in the first chapter. The introduction further highlights the analytical approaches and debates to studying young people in relation to their cultural practice and social identities and life course transitions to adulthood, setting the scene for the core content of the book which is split into two major sections: (1) *Foundational Concepts, Issues and Debates* and (2) *Major Concepts, Issues and Debates*.

Section one, *Foundational Concepts, Issues and Debates*, consists of ten chapters addressing some of the significant foundations for discussion in youth research. The authors cover a broad range of core concepts, such as the complexity of defining

youth; the importance of youth transitions to adulthood; understanding youth cultures; the ubiquitous nature of social policy and its direct and indirect impact on young people; the unique role of youth workers; the complexities of researching young people; theorising youth; historical perspectives of youth; the social divisions and inequality young people face; (mis-)representations of youth through images and language. These core areas which underpin much youth research provide a broad context for section two, *Major Concepts, Issues and Debates*, which consists of twenty-three chapters, each one introducing a major area of research in youth studies.

The authors address many areas of research, all of which are important to the study of youth. For example, the different spheres in the lives of young people are addressed such as their education, training, leisure, work and families. The social identities of young people in these settings, how they perceive themselves, and how these evolve over time as young people age are also addressed. The authors acknowledge that these 'short entries cannot possibly hope to cover all of the developments in research' (ix), however these core concepts are presented in an articulate and comprehensible format which offer an excellent introduction to the reader and provides guidance to additional reading for further investigation, which the inquisitive reader should follow-up.

Throughout the series of entries in section two, the authors highlight connections between entries using bold text. For example, the entry for **crime** is connected to **leisure**. This works very well in the text, and is particularly of use for readers with specific interests, for example the youth underclass, to quickly identify connected areas within youth studies work.

A major strength of the book is its accessibility. For the busy practitioner with little time to look-up research — let alone comprehend the complexities of research — the short entries on core topics provide an excellent introduction to youth studies research, highlighting key issues, which will undoubtedly be beneficial to work with young people. For the academic, tutor, or student, who requires a more in-depth knowledge of a particular topic within youth research, the book provides a nuanced introduction to the complexities of understanding, interpreting and conducting research with young people, as well as the benefit of short introductory chapters detailing reading for further investigation and exploration.

The cover of the book identifies that the authors set out to provide a comprehensive overview of the different ways that social science researchers have explored the lives of young people. This is achieved in a clearly written and accessible way. The complex experiences young people encounter in contemporary society as they navigate their path to adulthood is both a fascinating area of research and of acute importance. Cieslik and Simpson present the core issues in a compelling and thought-provoking style. This well-written text would be a welcome addition to any library with a focus on youth studies or work with young people and to anyone with an interest in understanding the complexities faced by youth in contemporary society.

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Book Review

Women, Punishment and Social Justice. Human Rights and Penal Practices

Edited by Margaret Malloch, and Gill Mclvor.

Publisher: Routledge (2013).

ISBN: 978-0-415-52983-9

(hardback)

Price: £80.00 (hardback)

Women, Punishment and Social Justice is a very timely work which is drawn from a series of seminars held during the summer of 2010. These seminars addressed growing concerns about the rise in the imprisonment of women and the ineffectiveness of punitive responses to women who are in conflict with the law. Edited by Malloch and Mclvor *Women, Punishment and Social Justice* provides the reader with an insight into the gendered nature of women's imprisonment. According to the editors it 'provides a critical analysis of approaches and experiences of penal sanctions, human rights and social justice as enacted in different jurisdictions within and beyond the UK'. This is especially pertinent in the light of the talk about the collapse of the International Criminal Court (ICC) and what this might mean for women's rights, the condemnation by the Justice Select Committee as to the unacceptable delays in implementing the Corston Report which was published in 2007 and UN Women organising events at the General Assembly to address the issue of women and access to justice.

Prison has often been the focus for concerns about human rights violations, and campaigns aimed at achieving social justice, and for those with an interest in the criminalisation of women. Evidence seems to suggest that women offenders are receiving harsher sentences from judges and

magistrates for less serious crimes and this is contributing to a steep rise in the number of women in prison.¹ To reduce the number of women imprisoned, a range of policy initiatives have been developed to increase the use of community-based responses to women in conflict with the law. These initiatives have tended to operate alongside reforms to the prison estate and are often defined as 'community punishment', 'community sanctions' and 'alternatives to imprisonment'. *Women, Punishment and Social Justice* challenges the contention that regimes and provisions within the criminal justice system are capable of addressing human rights concerns and the needs of the criminalised woman whilst neglecting to engage with the wider social and economic issues of women's lives.

The book provides insightful discussions about the increase in women's imprisonment internationally despite the dearth of evidence supporting the rise of women's criminal activities. The key themes are women, punishment and social justice with a strong emphasis on the gendered nature of new penal policies, penal institutions, the provision of services both in and outside the prison, the need for change and the dire lack of consideration for complex problems related to women's imprisonment and conflict with the law. These themes are addressed using academic theory, various research findings and experiences which provides the reader with a critical lens into how 'correctional policies become subverted by criminal justice agenda' (p. 206). Threading through these themes and chapters is the criminalisation of women who have mental health problems and the failure of healthcare interventions to

recognize and address this particular issue.

The book is divided into four parts with a total of sixteen chapters. The chapters are coherent and there is explicit integration between theory and practice. Part one provides a discussion of community provisions for women and how the Canadian experience demonstrates that well-intended correctional policies are easily subverted by criminal justice agencies. Gelsthorpe's chapter emphasises the point that what 'works for men' does not necessarily work for women and that women are incarcerated in a prison system specifically designed to meet the needs of men. Stressing gender equality should not mean that everyone should be treated the same but, as Baroness Corston suggests, rather 'treatment as an equal' (p. 18).

Parts two and three provide the reader with descriptions of women's experiences in prison, both in the UK and internationally. Part two focuses on the penal context and part three on community sanctions, human rights and social justice. Throughout both parts two and three there is an awareness of indirect references to Hosie's argument that a human rights approach is vital in order to improve the experiences of women who are detained, of their families and those working within the institution.

In part two Moore and Jemphrey's chapter strongly supports Gelsthorpe's argument for change, greater cognisance of women's mental health issues and the provision of more adequate personal services regarding issues such as menstruation, hygiene and menopause. Their description of women's experience of imprisonment in Northern Ireland succinctly stresses the dire conditions that women prisoners

1. Commission on Women and the Criminal Justice System (Fawcett Society 2006).

have to endure in prisons that were specifically designed for high security male prisoners and male young offenders. References to strip searches give clear and candid accounts of how women's vulnerabilities are exploited within the prison system. Serious mental health problems and self harming are, according to Cole, endemic. Her use of the casework of INQUEST to highlight how the inappropriate use of prison risks retraumatising women prisoners and, in some cases, leading to death as in the cases of Petra Blanksby (p. 43) and Sarah Campbell (p. 45) is thoughtful and emotional. Mills et al are somewhat scathing of the limitations of using the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) when assessing women prisoners as 1) they were based on the 'expectations of male development and behaviour', 2) it fails to 'recognise the many symptoms of mental disorder' and 3) it tends to reflect the experiences of males. Their experiences of researching mental health problems offer a disturbing reflection about the inadequacies of a clinical approach which is neglectful of recognising the 'complexities and context of women's lives' and this reflects Wahidin and Aday's reiteration of the point that women prisoners are treated 'as an afterthought' (p. 65). They explore reasons for a rising ageing women prison population in the UK and US as well as the high prevalence of mental health issues among ageing women prisoners. Malloch's chapter on the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge (OOHL) and creating a space for 'healing' within a prison environment for Aboriginal women provides insightful

challenges and discussions as to the contradictions between the foci of Euro- western and Aboriginal justice.

The fragmented, exclusionary and marginalisation of women's experience of the criminal justice system continues in part three. Here Lawston refers to Liberty's experience of the gender responsive approach which frames parole as being similar to 'being under correctional control in the community' (p. 109) and a violation of human rights in regard to Article 5 of the UN Declaration of Human Rights (p. 15). This is reflected in the argument proposed by Barton and Cooper that women's penal and correctional institutions do not sufficiently address the practical and ethical problems of women's incarceration. Sheehan continues this discussion in her chapter focusing on risk and how the courts in Australia should not use the prison service as social services for women offenders. I found Beglan's research into The 281 Service and the women's narratives about change quite emotional. Despite the rise in the imprisonment of women in Scotland, this service provides a forum for discussion as how to not only manage women's offending behaviour but also how to provide support when women leave prison. In sharp contrast to this chapter is Convery's which presents evidence that women's experience of imprisonment in Northern Ireland is inappropriate, that there is limited response by the State to concerns about women's imprisonment and that 'the state has perpetuated inappropriate criminal justice responses' to women offending and imprisonment, which is evident in

Gordaliza's chapter, where she raises the question of racist and xenophobic issues that target Gitana and Roma young women throughout the criminal justice system. Malloch and MacIver's concluding comments detail the importance of wider political and public commitment and socio-economic change. They stress the need for more resources that will not only support women in prison but also target issues such as homelessness, poverty and social injustice.

Drawing on international knowledge and expertise, the contributors to this book challenge the efficacy of gender-responsive interventions by examining issues affecting women in the criminal justice system such as mental health, age, and ethnicity. Crucially, the book engages with the paradox of implementing rights within a largely punishment-orientated system designed to meet the needs of the male offending population. *Women, Punishment and Social Justice* will be of interest to those undertaking undergraduate and post-graduate courses that examine punishment, gender and justice, and which lend themselves to an international / comparative aspect such as criminal justice, criminology, criminal justice and sociology. It will also be useful for practitioners undergoing professional training (criminal justice, social work, health) and for those who work with women in the criminal justice system.

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