

the Howard League for Penal Reform

Early Career Academics Network Bulletin

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Introduction



Firstly, I am pleased to announce that the Howard League has awarded its [research medal](#). This time we have joint winners: Professors Lesley McAra and Susan McVie for the Edinburgh study of youth transitions and crime and Professor Kevin Haines and Dr Stephen Case for their work on the Swansea youth diversion scheme. Congratulations to the winners! Their research was not only rigorous but clearly demonstrated a significant impact on practice, with both working to change outcomes for young people. Articles about their work will be published in the summer, and the winners will receive their medals at our [President's annual wine reception](#) at the Houses of Parliament on 4 July 2013. ECAN members are very welcome to join us at this event.

I am keen for all of you to participate in our international conference in October, which is supporting the work of our symposium, *What is Justice? Re-imagining penal policy*. The symposium is charged with generating intellectual debate that can act as a springboard to contest the conventional role of the penal system, ultimately promoting a new, achievable paradigm that will deliver a reduced role for the penal system. We are keen to draw on ideas located within the criminological and legal disciplines, but we also want to consider ideas emanating from other fields of study including philosophy, geography, political science and economics. A [call for papers and posters](#) has been issued so please encourage your friends and colleagues across university departments to add their voice to the debate in Oxford. We are already adding speakers to the agenda, and we are really pleased that Danny Dorling, Professor of Human Geography at Sheffield University, has agreed to speak. Our [website](#) will be updated regularly with information about new speakers.

Applications for the Howard League's bursary to attend this year's British Society of Criminology Conference in Wolverhampton are now open at <http://www.britsoccrim.org/annualconference.htm>. The person awarded the bursary will get full access to the conference and we will also publish a version of the paper presented at the conference. The closing date is 29 April.

Finally, just a reminder that this bulletin can be used to showcase your work so please do send me your articles for publication. I am interested in your research.

Anita Dockley
Research Director

News

Ashfield Prison punished children unlawfully, High Court rules after Howard League legal challenge

Ashfield Prison, near Bristol, unlawfully punished seven boys after they were involved in a protest over conditions on their wing, and also violated the right to a fair trial, Mrs Justice Nicola Davies found. The Serco-run prison failed to provide essential documents to legal representatives in advance of hearings before the Independent Adjudicator when inmates faced punishments including further days' imprisonment.

The boys, who were aged 17 at the time and are now all 18, were kept in isolation after the incident. Five of them were subjected to an informal 'shadow segregation' regime, known as 'restriction on the wing'. This was unlawful because it lacked any of the safeguards applicable to formal segregation procedures.

The case was heard at the High Court in December 2012. The Ministry of Justice announced in January that Ashfield is to be re-rolled as an adult prison. All children are to be transferred out of the prison by the end of March.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "This judgment confirms what we have been saying for a long time, and what the government has now recognised – Ashfield is no place for a child."

Intelligent Justice: Balancing the effects of community sentences and custody



The Howard League for Penal Reform has published, [*Intelligent Justice: Balancing the effects of community sentences and custody*](#), written by Professors Mike Hough, Stephen Farrall and Fergus McNeill.

The pamphlet considers the purpose of community and custodial sentences, and examines the issue of deterrence alongside the 'incapacitative' effects of imprisonment. The research suggests that crime reduction caused by prison taking those who offend out of the community can be overestimated, and explores the idea that custody can lead to amplification of offending and can create 'job vacancies'. It finds that the key factor preventing people from offending is how likely they are to be punished, rather than how severe the punishment is.

The paper presents key criteria on which sentences should be judged, including their effects on reintegration. The authors call for punishment to have broader ambitions than to simply contain risk, through the construction of

a penal system which encourages people to 'buy into' compliance with the law.

Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "The prison population in England and Wales has more than doubled since the mid-1990s and the trend of ever-rising prison numbers is unsustainable in the face of current cuts to public spending. This paper provides a framework for new thinking that might provide an escape from the current crisis."

Wiley Legal Focus blog – become a News Editor

Legal Focus is a Wiley-Blackwell blog written in cooperation with their leading journals in law and criminology, including *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, *European Law Journal* and *Journal of Law and Society*.

The site features regular posts from a team of News Editors, who are asked to find a new story linking topical news items to articles published in the featured law and criminology journals. News Editors generally post once a fortnight, and are encouraged to comment on other items between scheduled posts.

For further information email: legalfocus@wiley.com or visit: legalfocus.wordpress.com



Child Deaths Bulletin: How many more children need to die before we stop putting them in prison?

Responding to the Prisons and Probation Ombudsman's learning lessons [bulletin](#) on the deaths of three teenage boys in children's prisons, Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said:

"How many more children need to die before we stop putting them in prison and start realising that tackling their complex problems is more important than harsh punishment?"

"The simple fact is that children who end up in custody are highly vulnerable – they might be victims of neglect, have mental health issues or be growing up in a home plagued by drug and alcohol abuse. This important bulletin reveals the terrible consequences of putting these children in prisons, based on a system for adults, which puts punishment before welfare needs."

Howard League for Penal Reform responds to youth custody green paper announcement

Responding to the 14 February announcement by Justice Secretary Chris Grayling to introduce a green paper on education and training in youth custody, Frances Crook, Chief Executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform, said: "We welcome the fact that the government is concentrating on the educational difficulties of children who enter the criminal justice system.

"However, we should never send children to prison to get an education. Confusion is at the heart of these plans, which risk repeating the mistakes of history such as the failing Secure Training Centres where reoffending is sky-high and two children have died.

"Almost all the children who end up in custody could be dealt with in the community and that is the way to get them back into school, college or training."

'Guerilla knitting' used in Leicester to reduce crime fear

Leicester residents have seen hundreds of pom-poms and knitted items strung from trees in Bede Park and on Great Central Way in an effort to help reduce fear of crime.



Leicestershire Police hope the 'guerilla knitting' will encourage

more people to use the park. Sergeant Simon Barnes said: "I am really hopeful that the actions will reduce the fear of becoming a victim of crime, as the perception really is much different to the actual reported levels of crime."

Criminologist Charlotte Bilby, a senior lecturer in criminology at Northumbria University and a member of the Howard League's Research Advisory Group, said they could have a positive effect. "If you see something that makes you smile, that makes you think that other people have enjoyed being in that space and have done something funny ... then that's going to change your perception about what it is to be in Bede Park."

Howard League response to the Transforming Rehabilitation Consultation

The Howard League submitted a [response](#) to the Ministry of Justice's Transforming Rehabilitation Consultation. The Howard League is concerned that under the system put forward in the consultation, the public probation service will be unable to monitor and assess risk effectively, recommend sentence options to the court, and make decisions around breach. It is vital

that the public probation service is able to carry out these core duties in the public interest.

The dual aims of reducing reoffending and cutting the justice budget are better achieved by reducing use of short term custodial sentences. The Howard League opposes the centralisation of probation. It is vital that probation services reflect and respond to local need, within a national framework of standards and inspection.

Paramedics called out twice a week to G4S prison HMP Oakwood

The Birmingham Mail reported that paramedics have been called to a new flagship Staffordshire prison run by private security firm G4S more than twice a week since it opened last year.



Paramedics treated four prisoners who had been assaulted, 22 who had taken overdoses, 14 for psychiatric or suicide incidents and 79 others who suffered heart attacks and other medical conditions.

Frances Crook, chief executive of the Howard League for Penal Reform said: “These figures indicate that G4S-run Oakwood is either a prison which is dangerously out of control, or one which dumps its problems on to the NHS because they are too expensive to deal with.

“The Justice Secretary, Chris Grayling, has singled out Oakwood as an example of how cheap prisons can be, but this story proves that cheap means the public is put in danger”.

Feature

17-Year-olds in Police Custody

Harriet Balcombe, solicitor



In England and Wales, children can be arrested, detained and interviewed under caution in police stations from the age of 10. While much of the law and procedure applying to child suspects is the same as for adults, there are special measures in place for children. The law pertaining to the police investigation stage of the criminal justice process does not, however, recognise 17-year-olds as children, although other stages do. This article explores this anomaly and its implications, with particular reference to access to legal advice in police stations.

Police powers and human rights

All suspects are currently entitled to free and independent legal advice at the police station. This right is provided by the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE), which forms a legislative framework for police powers, and, along with its Codes (the Codes), governs the treatment of suspects. Two instruments apply specifically to the rights of children subject to criminal justice. These are the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which deals with the rights of children in general, and the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Administration of Juvenile Justice ('The Beijing Rules'), which provide specific guidance for the protection of children's rights in the context of juvenile justice.

The UNCRC states that 'Every child deprived of his or her liberty shall have the right to prompt access to legal and other appropriate assistance...' (Art 37(d)). In addressing specifically the rights of children subject to allegations and accusations, Art 40.1(b) (ii) requires a minimum guarantee of '...legal or other appropriate assistance in the preparation and presentation of his or her defence'.

The Beijing Rules describe in detail the conditions recommended for child suspects. Rule 7 requires that:

Basic procedural safeguards such as the presumption of innocence, the right to be notified of the charges, the right to remain silent, the right to counsel, the right to the presence of a parent or guardian....shall be guaranteed at all stages of proceedings.

It is therefore clear that, at an international level, the provision of both universal rights and special measures to counter vulnerability are required for children at this stage of the criminal justice process. How does national law provide for this?

The Codes require that a person responsible for the child's welfare must be informed of their detention 'as soon as practicable' and that an 'appropriate adult' (AA), who may be a parent or guardian, social worker or other adult assuming responsibility for the child's welfare, must be contacted and asked to attend the station. The AA must be present during a number of procedures, including the child being informed of their rights, caution, and interview.

What is a child?

Before examining the advantages afforded by these measures, we must establish how we define a child. In this article, the term 'child' is used for any person under 18 because the UNCRC defines a child as '...every human being below the age of eighteen years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier.' PACE, however, uses the term 'juvenile' and defines an 'arrested juvenile' as 'a person arrested with or without warrant who appears to be under the age of 17'. The special measures provided for in the codes, therefore, apply only to those children who have not yet reached their 17th birthday.

The role of the appropriate adult

The right to an AA, which is also given to adults and those over 17 if the custody sergeant considers them particularly vulnerable, is the most significant of the special measures available to child suspects. Code C provides that the AA attending for a child may be a parent or guardian; a social worker; or any other adult assuming responsibility for the child's welfare. The parent or guardian – or other family member – is therefore seen as the first choice of AA. In practice, the custody officer will attempt to contact a parent or guardian, and if none is available, or if they are not appropriate (for example if they are the complainant, a witness or also a suspect); a worker or volunteer from the local appropriate adult service is contacted.

The role of the AA is outlined in the Home Office *Guide for Appropriate Adults*, a leaflet intended for parents and relatives. The leaflet explains that the AA should 'support, advise and assist the detainee', ensure that the police act fairly and that the suspect's rights are respected, and aid with communication. It is emphasised that the AA is not there to provide legal advice, but does not explain what sort of advice they are expected to give. The AA's role in interview is outlined, this includes ensuring the suspect understands the caution, intervening to aid communication or if the AA feels the questioning is 'confusing, repetitive or oppressive', and asking for a break for the suspect to rest or receive legal advice.

A section of this leaflet is devoted to legal advice, explaining that the AA may ask for a solicitor to be called even if the suspect declines legal advice, but that the suspect cannot be forced to see the solicitor when they arrive. It also explains that there is no entitlement for the AA to be present during legal consultation between the suspect and their solicitor (although they may attend if requested to help with communication) and that the AA is not protected by legal professional privilege.

Does the appropriate adult help or hinder?

In practice, there are advantages and disadvantages to the presence of an

AA. Solicitors report that parents or close relatives can help to calm a child, which aids taking instructions and giving advice. For a child the unfamiliar environment of a custody suite, being detained in a cell and the prospect of an interview under caution can be truly frightening, and having a familiar adult there can make all the difference. It is also sometimes helpful to have assistance with communication, especially in sensitive matters such as sexual offences, where a child's vocabulary may be very different from the words police or a solicitor may use. Such assistance can make the difference between effective legal advice, and advice which may be irrelevant or misleading through no fault of the lawyer.

One of the main difficulties, however, concerns delay. Suspects of any age can be susceptible to the – usually erroneous – belief that if they ask for legal advice, they will have to wait longer for a solicitor to arrive than if they go ahead to interview alone. Parent AAs sometimes decline legal advice in order to avoid delay, sometimes because they do not realise the likelihood of their child being criminalised for what, a few decades before, might have been seen as mere naughtiness and resulted in a simple telling off by a police officer. Parents can also be less than helpful if they are angry with the child for getting into trouble, if they have a poor relationship with the police themselves, or if they encourage the child to 'tell the truth' at all costs which may not coincide with legal advice. AAs from the appropriate adult service are trained, which is helpful, but their availability is often restricted, and whereas the police are involved in their training, defence solicitors currently do not take part.

An AA who calms and reassures the child, requests legal advice and encourages the child to give full instructions and follow the advice, is clearly an advantage and is facilitating the observance of the child's legal rights. An AA who neglects any of these things or does the opposite, however, may well be preventing the observance of those same rights.

Proposed reforms

Guidelines could be implemented to help minimise disadvantages. For example, if a solicitor were called for every child suspect, even though the child could not be forced to consult with them, and if the AA service were used more routinely and parents called in simply for their reassuring presence, several of the problems concerning parent AAs could be avoided. Providing AA services for longer periods and ensuring defence solicitors are involved in the training of AAs could also improve the standard of AA services. Potential difficulties resulting from the lack of legal professional privilege could be rectified by the extension of privilege to AAs, thus ensuring that their presence at consultation does not undermine the protection normally afforded to the lawyer-client relationship. Currently, it is common practice for solicitors to consider conducting the consultation without the AA present in order to ensure the child is free to disclose any incriminating information.

Rates of uptake of legal advice

The right to an AA is absolutely vital for children and, as discussed above, any disadvantages resulting from inconsistencies or vagueness in the role could be rectified. The group of children who are between their 17th and 18th birthdays are not, however, currently entitled to this right. Kemp et al. (2011)

report that, when rates of uptake amongst child suspects are broken down by age range, one of the lowest levels of uptake is amongst 17-year-olds. The report surmises that ‘...the marked decrease in requests for legal advice by 17-year-olds is because there is, at present, no mandatory requirement for an appropriate adult’. If these older children are missing out on legal advice because there is no AA, there are serious questions to be asked concerning their rights both as children and as human beings in general.

Conclusion

Having noted that the UN defines a child as anyone under 18, examined the international instruments requiring special measures for suspects of this age, and considered the provisions made by English and Welsh law for child suspects, it seems at the very least surprising that 17-year-olds are not afforded the same measures as younger children. The opportunity to rectify this anomalous situation could have been taken in drafting the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012. It is clear from the wording of the act, however, that the intention is for 17-year-olds to continue to be regarded as adults in the police station.

Having faced this issue as a criminal practitioner and researched it as an academic, I find it unacceptable that our legal system is failing a section of society still regarded as children.

Reference

Kemp, V., Pleasance, P., and Balmer, N. (2011) ‘Children, young people and requests for police station legal advice: 25 years on from PACE’ *Youth Justice*, 11, pp. 28-46.

About the author

Harriet Balcombe is a criminal defence solicitor and also completed an LLM in Legal Practice focusing on the legal rights of child suspects in police stations at Anglia Ruskin University.

Feature

Still Life: Ageing in the Prison Environment

**Natalie Mann, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
Anglia Ruskin University**



Prison space, characterised by high walls, reinforced doors, barbed wire fences and tight security, is there to demonstrate that 'physical and social exclusion is the price of non-conformity' (Matthews, 1999: 26). This environment differs greatly to that in which many individuals in wider society grow old, so it is unsurprising the ageing prison population experiences difficulties when housed in these antiquated institutions, primarily designed for aggressive young men.

Using photographic images by award winning prison photographer Edmund Clark, and the voices of some of the ageing prison population, this essay examines the harsh reality of ageing behind bars, focusing primarily on the issues of deterioration and decline within the prison environment.

Introduction

In recent years, ageing prisoners have become the fastest growing section of the prison population (Personal Correspondence with the Ministry of Justice, 2011). Whilst these prisoners undoubtedly need to be punished, the criminal justice system must strike a careful balance between curtailment of the ageing individual's freedom and protection of the individual's human rights. Whilst the general 'pains of imprisonment' are well documented (Sykes, 1958; Johnson and Toch, 1982); research carried out by myself and others (Crawley & Sparks 2005a, 2005b; Wahidin, 2000, 2004, 2005) has found that ageing prisoners are punished even further by the prison environment.

This essay includes images from Edmund Clark's (2008) photographic work on HMP Kingston's¹ elderly residents. Clark's work is not only a record of the prison space, but also documents the many contradictions which surround the notion of elderly criminals. The individuals in question have committed offences deemed serious enough by a Judge and jury to warrant a term of imprisonment, and this presents a dilemma for anyone involved with the ageing prison population, as summed up by Simon Norfolk in his foreword to Clark's book:

I don't want to feel sympathetic towards these people...what evil do you have to do to get 30 years? ... But why are there bars on the window of a man who can't walk without a frame? What kind of escape plan can be hatched by a man who can't remember how to go to the toilet?

Using Clarks' photos as an extended ethnographic tool, this essay offers a unique insight into the lived reality of one of the fastest growing sections of the prison population.

The study

The data used in this essay is taken from my PhD study researching the experiences of ageing male prisoners in England and Wales. The study addressed general issues such as the prison regime, education, employment and prison healthcare, as well as more specific issues such as agency, intelligence and power. The study was based on in-depth interviews with 40 prisoners aged 55 years and over, at three establishments across the country.

The in-depth interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes and took the form of a two way conversation. The data produced was grounded in the respondents' point of view and captured the deeper meaning of experiences in the respondents' own words (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 61).

Imprisonment and the aged

Figure 1 depicts the entrance to E-wing, the unused administration block which from 1997 to 2004 (Prison Governor, Personal Correspondence, March 2006), was transformed into the UK's only unit for ageing male prisoners. Clark's image captures the solitary nature of the unit, and what lies behind the imposing metal gates.



Figure 1: Inside Kingston Prison, Portsmouth

The image evokes the noises, smells and, at times, the fear which the prison environment imposes on its inhabitants. In this image Clark also captures the 'world' beyond the gate; free from the sounds of arguments and restraint and from the obvious tensions which lie beneath the surface of the normal prison environment. E-wing was nick-named 'God's waiting room', and was disturbing because it lacked all of the ambient characteristics that make a prison feel like a prison, and instead felt like the asylums which feature in Goffman's (1961) work.

The large locked metal gates are the main focal point of this image, epitomising the balance between surveillance and control, a key feature of many outdated Victorian prisons. A world away from even the worst care homes, the prison as a site for ageing is, at best, challenging; and at worst, totally unmanageable; a point succinctly illustrated by Crawley and Sparks when they state:

Their very fabric (the stairs and steps and walkways, the distances, the gates, the football pitches and gymnasias; the serveries and queues; the communal showers; the incessant background noise) is, in general, constructed in blithe unconsciousness of the needs and sensibilities of the old (2005b: 350).



Figure 2: Stair lift for E Wing residents

In the second image, Clark reflects the true juxtaposition of imprisonment and ageing. The stair lift is the ultimate signifier of old age (Saussure, 1983), yet at the same time, this stair lift is part of the prison structure; the drab, yellowish wall serves as a reminder of this. Ageing prisoners often find themselves housed in old fashioned Victorian prisons, and whilst the majority do have informal arrangements for placing prisoners with mobility problems in ground floor cells (HMCIP, 2004), this is not always possible; thus many ageing prisoners find themselves unable to leave their accommodation. During the course of my research, this point was explained by one respondent, Tony, for whom a cell on the first floor of the vulnerable prisoners unit meant that he was completely cut off:

The chair don't even come out of me cell; I have to get up on me crutches and that, then somebody has to fold me chair up and put it out of the cell. The doors aren't wide enough, so I don't get to come out and see the other lads, so I'm stuck in there... The cell door is shut all the time.

This lack of mobility due to the constraints of the prison building becomes even more damaging when considering how important it is for ageing individuals to remain active. However, for those that are infirm or disabled, narrow hallways, landings connected by metal stairways and very little natural light means that accessing prison activities is often impossible, resulting in lengthy periods of inactivity and seclusion (Le Mesurier, 2010; Mann, 2012).



Figure 3: Shared cell

At first glance this image offers the viewer a more colourful representation of the drab world of the prison. The multi-coloured blanket contrasts with the white walls and floors, which although sterile in appearance, do appear clean and hygienic. However, on closer inspection the purpose of the brightly coloured blanket becomes apparent. It is an ad hoc room divider in a cell shared by two ageing men; someone's attempt to maintain privacy in a world where every action is surveyed.

Although commonplace, cell sharing poses many problems for ageing prisoners. Aside from privacy, the general decline which accompanies ageing can create tensions between cell mates, as Sam explains:

I shared a cell. That was a pain; it wasn't his fault...but he was quite deaf so the television was always on loud so he could hear it.

The use of bunk beds in shared cells poses access problems for ageing prisoners, something highlighted by Chief Inspector of Prisons, Ann Owers, who found that many immobile men were allocated to upper bunk beds, and often fell out (HMCIP, 2004). A shared toilet in a shared cell can also be degrading, particularly with increased incidences of incontinence and bowel disorders in old age (Harari, 2002).

For those individuals unable to access the communal showers due to disability, showering only when an officer can escort them is commonplace (HMCIP, 2004; Mann, 2012). The lack of privacy can be disturbing for many, because their ageing bodies are often ridiculed by younger prisoners. One elderly man in the HMCIP thematic review 'No Problems – old and quiet: Older prisoners in England and Wales', reported that he had not showered in eight weeks due to the negative attention he receives from younger prisoners (2004: 6).

For those prisoners who do not have in-cell toilets, night time sanitation becomes problematic, as long queues build up, creating difficulties for those with incontinence. Time restrictions for the use of the facilities are also unrealistic for ageing prisoners who naturally take longer to prepare for and use the toilet (HMCIP, 2004).



Figure 4: Instructions on the wall of a single medical cell (how to go to the toilet)

The absurdity of imprisoning some ageing men is captured by Clark in figure 4. The viewer finds themselves questioning how dangerous a man can be if he cannot even use the toilet correctly, and requires instructions. Yet these men are serving prison sentences, and some for crimes of a horrific nature. Clark's work conveys this misalliance of vulnerability and predatoriness.

Prison is a structure heavily based on young men, and so the general pace of the prison routine causes many ageing prisoners severe problems and great concern (Mann, 2012). Many of the men I spoke to during my research felt that because the majority of prisoners were younger, healthier and physically fitter than themselves, the pace of life in prison was too fast and expectations of prison staff were unrealistic. One ageing prisoner, Cliff, explained this:

Everything is hurry, hurry, hurry and they don't seem to realise that some of us can't keep up. There's no consideration in prison for the fact that people are getting older, therefore they are gonna slow down a bit.



Figure 5: Single medical cell

This final image is perhaps the most distressing. It depicts a medical cell and the space is filthy looking, with a dirty floor and tired looking bedding. More like a room from a bad hostel than a medical space for sick individuals, this image represents the many horrors of prison healthcare which have been conveyed to me and others by prisoners (Crawley and Sparks, 2005a; Mann, 2012; Ornduff, 1996; Wahidin, 2004).

Ageing brings with it increased incidences of morbidity, infirmity and general decline. However, as the prison population has aged over the past two decades, no significant improvements have been made to the healthcare on offer in the prison estate, despite the recommendations made in the 1999 combined report by the Prison Service and the National Health Service (Sim, 2002). The result is that prisoners are still 'punished for being ill' (Wahidin, 2005: 10). In this image Clark gives a sense of the lower standards these individuals receive because they are prisoners first, and human beings second.

As Ornduff (1996: 178) pointed out over a decade ago, prison overcrowding has led to inadequate healthcare and poor treatment for prisoners, a reality one ageing prisoner in my research accurately summed up:

The healthcare's overstretched, the staff on the wings don't have time, the old men cannot physically access the healthcare and really you'd have to be in immediate danger of dying before anything was done. I just thank God that I'm in good health, if I was seriously ill or had a degenerating condition, I would be in trouble because those people end up suffering.

Conclusion

Based on outdated principles of punishment, the prison environment is, as this essay has demonstrated, wholly unsuitable as a site for ageing and the aged. The unaccommodating nature of prison in terms of layout and facilities results in the passivity and isolation of many older prisoners, whose problems continue once in the confines of their cell. Inadequate health care and the associated decline of the individual both mentally and physically increase reliance on others, further reducing the integration of the individual into the prison regime.

Within the five images selected for use in this essay, Clark explores the issues facing an ageing prison population, and does so without prejudice or judgement. The absence of people in his work creates a sense of stagnation, and also avoids 'glamorising' those who offend through images of deviance.

By their very nature, prisons are guarded and secretive places to those outside of the criminal justice system, but Clark's work allows a temporal and momentary glimpse of what so often goes unseen (Sontag, 2003). By placing the prison firmly at the fore of the viewer's consciousness, Clark's images make us feel uncomfortable. By forcing us to recognise the traumatic reality of others, Clark's images make us question our tacit interpretation of perpetrator and victim, right and wrong.

Notes

¹ HMP Kingston's E Wing opened in 1997 in response to the rising number of ageing prisoners in the system and was the first and only segregated unit for older prisoners in the UK penal system. However, having received much criticism from Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons, the new Governor of HMP Kingston closed E Wing shortly after his arrival in 2004.

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About the author

Dr Natalie Mann joined Anglia Ruskin University in January 2011, having worked as a Teaching Fellow in the Sociology Department at the University of Essex. She completed her PhD in Criminology at the University of Essex in 2008. It was entitled *Doing Harder Time? The Experiences of an Ageing Male Prison Population in England and Wales* and was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. The research investigated the ways in which ageing men experience imprisonment, how they cope and the unique problems they experience.

Feature

Unlocking the door? Exploring the potential for a less penal approach to youth crime

Dominique Slaney, ESRC funded Postgraduate Researcher and Graduate Teaching Assistant at the University of Exeter.



The Study

ESRC funded project May–September 2012

This project explored the views of professionals in the youth justice system towards the comparatively high penal approach to youth crime in England with particular regard to custodial sentences. The project aimed to test two hypotheses: firstly that staff within Youth Offending Teams would support a less penal approach (i.e. one utilising fewer custodial disposals) and secondly that support for a less penal approach would differ according to professional role. Despite a recent decline in the numbers of children and young people in custody (1,690 in June 2012) this project was timely as:

- England retains a high rate of youth custody compared with the majority of other countries
- England retains a low age of criminal responsibility

The project also considered the Swedish approach to youth crime which has very low youth incarceration rates but comparable overall crime rates, and sought the views of professionals working within the youth justice system in England towards the Swedish approach.

The research was conducted in two phases. First, a quantitative survey targeted all youth offending team staff across England and Wales. A sample of 77 respondents was obtained which examined staff attitudes towards the use of custodial penalties for children and young people and the consequences of this. Second, a qualitative study comprising ten in-depth interviews, with professional staff selected from the national sample, was carried out exploring attitudes and views towards a less penal approach – specifically by introducing participants to the approach followed in Sweden.

The Context

Over the past three decades, youth justice in England and Wales has become increasingly punitive. In 2007 there were ‘near record numbers of juveniles in custody’ (Morgan 2007); in August of that year the custody population for those aged under-18 reached 3,067. A peak of 3,072 was reached in June 2008 (YJB Youth Custody Report). Table 1 illustrates data taken from the Council of Europe Statistics in September 2002 combined with collated figures from national statistics (Cavadino and Dignan, 2006) showing the numbers

of young people held in custody across Europe. England was the European Leader.

Table 1: European custody numbers (Under 18 Year olds) September 2002

Country	England	Germany	France	Scotland	Spain	Austria	Finland	Norway	Sweden
No of under 18 year olds in prison	2869	841	751	170	136	114	17	13	14

Source Hazel, 2008:59

Data from the United Nations seventh survey illustrates incarceration rates for juveniles across the globe. Data highlighted in Table 2 again evidences the punitive approach of England and Wales.

Table 2: Incarceration rates (juveniles) 2001. United Nations Surveys

Country	USA	South Africa	England & Wales	Denmark	Norway	Belgium
Incarceration rate per 100,000 juveniles	38.4	28.85	18.26	0.11	0.07	0.02

Source Muncie, 2006: 44

The increasingly punitive approach cannot be explained by crime trends; state responses to crime have arisen from a clear political dynamic (Estrada, 2004). The power of the media and the increasing politicisation of all things anti-social are reasons posited. Baker and Roberts (2005) argue globalisation has homogenised problems and responses across jurisdictions, accelerated penal policy transfer and promoted short-term punitive policies at the expense of evidence based longer term policies. This is despite the Beijing Rules (19.1) and the United Nations convention on the Rights of the Child 1989 (Article 37) providing that imprisonment should only be used as 'a measure of last resort' and in apparent conflict with the primary and paramount consideration given to the principle of 'best interests of the child'. (UNCRC 1989 Art 3 Para 1, Art 21).

Despite this globalising pressure there are, however, societies that have not followed this trend. Attitudes towards criminality in Scandinavia differ; reasons suggested for this difference include a greater sense of national unity, trust and reciprocity (Bondeson, 2005). Myer and O'Malley (2005) argue that Canada has not experienced the punitive turn. Nelken (2005) highlights the lenient treatment of young people who offend in Italy. Other jurisdictions have also bucked the trend; Finland, Sweden and Iceland have maintained low custodial rates (Muncie 2006).

As well as one of the highest rates of child incarceration, England and Wales has one of the lowest ages of criminal responsibility (10 years). In 79.5 per cent of European Countries, represented in the European Sourcebook of

Crime and Justice Statistics (3rd edn 2006), the age of criminal responsibility is 12 years or over; in 74 per cent of European Countries it is aged 14 or above. The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child have stated that the age of criminal responsibility in England and Wales is too low, 'The low age of criminal responsibility and the national legislation relating to the administration of juvenile justice seem not to be compatible with the Convention' (UNCRC 1995).

Sweden was used for comparison in this project owing to its demonstrably different approach to young people who offend and its comparable overall rate of offences. Sweden rarely incarcerates any child; the age of criminal responsibility is 15 years. Those over 15 who have committed a serious offence are sentenced to closed institutional care but this is rare (Johansson and Palm, 2003); Eighty-five 15–17 years olds were sentenced to closed youth detention in 2001 (in 2008 just 93 young people who offended received this disposal).

Research shows young people in custody come from some of the most disadvantaged backgrounds, and have often experienced poverty, family discord, drug and alcohol misuse, mental distress and homelessness. Suicide is still a problem. In the past 21 years 31 children have died in custody. Inquests have reported eight of these as self-inflicted accidental deaths or misadventure, five as self-inflicted but with an open verdict, one unlawful killing and eleven confirmed suicides (one verdict awaited) (Inquest 2011). In 2010–11 there were 7,191 incidents of restraint used in the youth secure estate resulting in 259 injuries, 5 per cent of which were serious. It should also be noted that death has followed the use of such techniques (Adam Rickwood and Gareth Myatt, 2004). The HM Inspectorate of Prisons found that adult methods of control were being used and were not always properly monitored; instead of restraint being used as a last resort it was found to be routinely used as a response to non-compliant behaviour (Aynsley-Green 2009). During 2010/11 there were 1,424 incidents of self-harm in youth custody (Youth Justice Board Statistics 2010–11).

If custody is not working, should we be considering law reform in order to limit the use of custody and the potential damage to young people resulting from our high penal rates? This project sought to establish whether professionals working within the English youth justice system support its punitive nature, or whether law reform would be welcomed which might more effectively balance the tensions between the need to respond to youth crime and the welfare needs of young people.

Key Findings

- The majority of YOT professionals consider the youth justice system in England to be too heavily weighted against those who offend; too many young people are criminalised, the age of criminal responsibility is too low, and too many young people are imprisoned.

- The majority of YOT professionals would support a less penal approach, one that ensures fewer young people are imprisoned and fewer children and young people are involved in the criminal justice system.
- The majority felt that the age of criminal responsibility should rise to 12 years or above.
- The approach taken in Sweden, though regarded positively, was considered neither appropriate nor achievable in England and Wales.
- Support for a less penal approach was not general across professional roles; police officers did not support a less penal approach.
- The risks of custody were widely acknowledged and recognised by professionals, with the exception of police officer respondents.
- There was wide acknowledgement, across all roles, of the benefit of enhancing the current list of available community sentences with additional disposals.
- There was acknowledgement of the potential benefit of custodial placements for some young people from extremely damaged, disadvantaged backgrounds or current life circumstances.
- The impact of youth crime on victims featured highly in police officer discourse but was not so evident across other roles.

Results

Number of children and young people incarcerated

Seventy-one per cent of the survey respondents felt that fewer children and young people should be punished by way of custodial penalties; 66 per cent felt that the youth justice system currently imprisons too many children and young people, however results indicated that the police officers held a disparate view either disagreeing with this position or holding a neutral opinion. Further responses reinforced this position; 66 per cent disagreed that custodial penalties are appropriately given; 65 per cent disagreed that the youth justice system has the right balance between custodial and community penalties.

Impact of custody and potential for harm

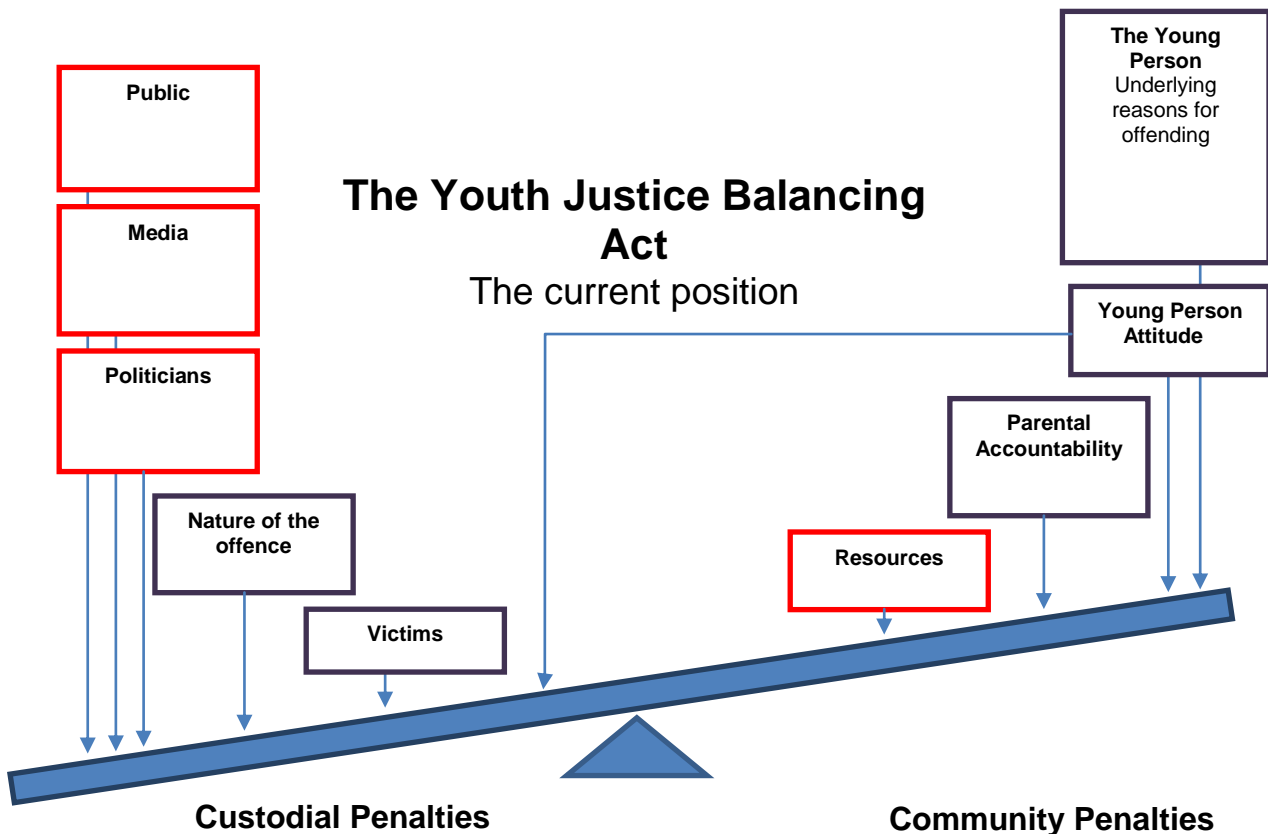
Seventy-seven per cent of respondents agreed that children in custody are at increased risk of self-harm, 84 per cent agreed that they are at increased risk of assault and 80.5 per cent that they are at increased risk of suicide. The results again indicated a difference in opinion between roles; police officers either disagreed or held neutral views on the increase of risk in custody.

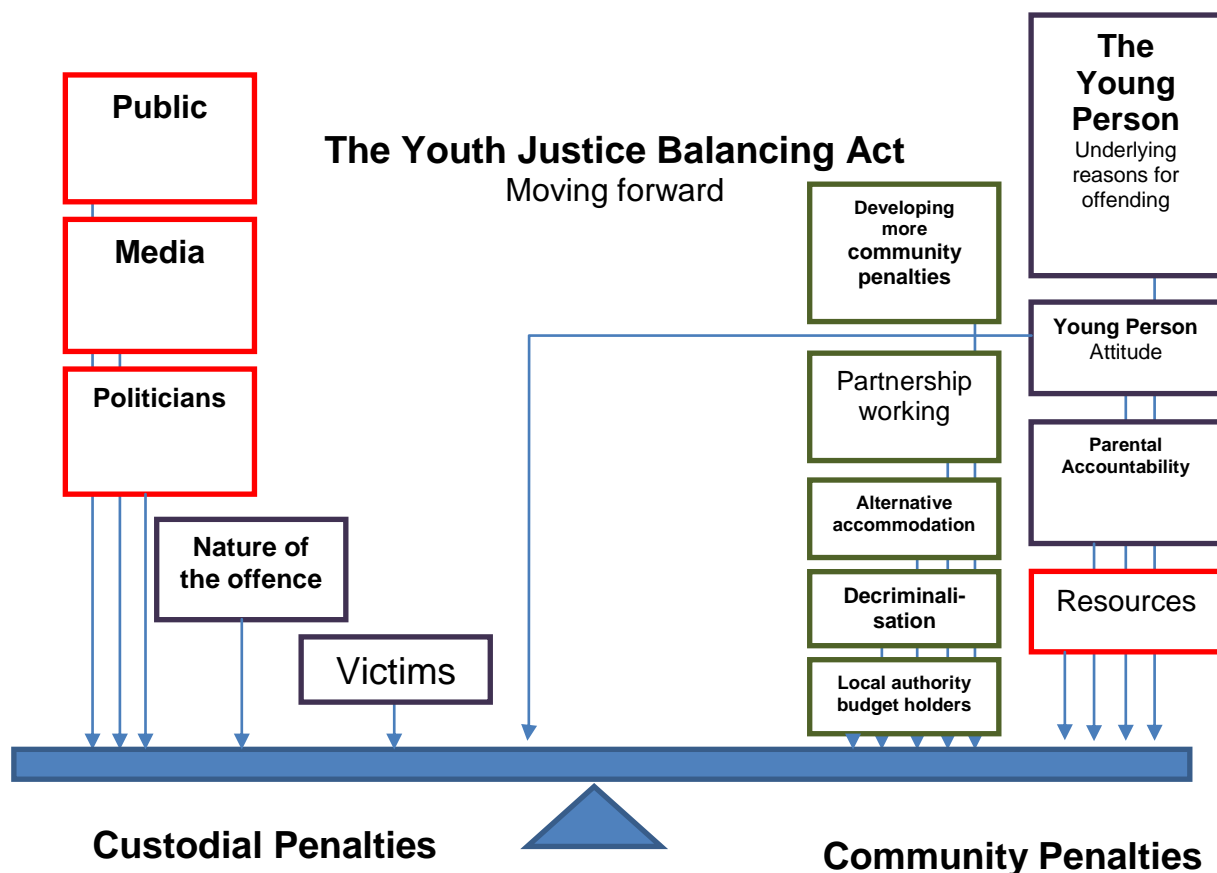
Age of criminal responsibility

Seventy-seven per cent of the survey respondents felt the age of criminal responsibility should be higher, selecting an age of 12 or above. Thirty-nine per cent of this group felt that 14 was a more appropriate age.

The youth justice balancing act and barriers to following the Swedish approach

The thematic maps below illustrate the relationships between the themes that emerged from the qualitative inquiry; the first depicts the views expressed of the current youth justice position, the second how the youth justice balance might look should additional steps be taken aimed at reducing custodial rates. The see-saw represents the ‘youth justice balancing act’ inherent in the custody decision. Public views, the media and politicians all influence the punitive approach, thus tilting the see-saw towards ‘custodial penalties’. These influences were recognised as significant barriers to adopting the Swedish approach, along with societal differences and access to resources. These factors are counterbalanced by the needs of the young person and the underlying reasons for their offending behaviour. Participants’ suggestions for redressing the balance, and how the English youth justice system might move forward towards a less penal approach, are reflected in the second thematic map: developing more community penalties; more partnership working; alternative placements to young offenders institutions; parental accountability; and decriminalisation. As mentioned above, the majority of participants felt that the current system in England is weighted against young people and is too punitive.





The Sweden approach, though regarded positively, was considered neither appropriate nor achievable in England because of the significant influence of the media, politicians, public opinion and the nature and structure of our society and state organs.

Limitations of the Research

The research was undertaken within a limited time frame (four months), and the low response rate of YOTs meant the sample obtained was small and therefore not statistically representative. Comparisons and explorations of differences between roles proved difficult due to the uneven distribution of responses from the five agencies working in YOTs; the low number of representatives from police, health, education and probation limited exploration into views held by professionals in these agencies. It would be beneficial for future research to have a greater number of participants from these agencies as well as overall; enabling theoretical saturation of emerging themes as well as providing a more nationally representative sample. Professional staff, working with young people who offend, are cognisant of the myriad of reasons behind a young person’s offending. The absence of a victim focus in this project’s findings (with the exception of the police officers) means that further research looking at the views of victims and the general public is needed in order to indicate whether legislative reform would be welcomed more widely.

For a full copy of the research report please email das217@exeter.ac.uk.

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About the author

Dominique Slaney is currently an ESRC funded Postgraduate Researcher and Graduate Teaching Assistant at the University of Exeter. Following a Bachelor of Law degree and Masters in Social Work, Dominique worked in youth justice with the Torbay Youth Offending Team. Dominique then moved to a role with the national Youth Justice Board as Performance Monitor; inspecting and reviewing the performance of Youth Offending Teams and Secure Institutions across the South West of England. She was awarded the Masters in Socio-Legal Research in 2012 and is currently undertaking a 6-month fellowship at the Library of Congress, in Washington DC, undertaking empirical research into the juvenile justice system in the USA.

Research update

Intelligent Justice: Balancing the effects of community sentences and custody

Fergus McNeill

This article first appeared in The Scotsman, 11 February 2013.



Most criminologists agree that one of the drivers of spiralling prison populations in the UK and the USA in the last quarter of the 20th century was the increasingly febrile penal politics associated with a bidding war around which party was toughest on crime (or, more accurately, on criminals).

For that reason, many commentators have been intrigued by the emergence in the USA of a 'Right on Crime' movement within the Republican Party, championed by hardliners such as Newt Gingrich (one of the candidates in the 2012 presidential primaries). The surprise is that these right wingers are now advocating the shrinking of the prison

population. Odd as this Damascene conversion to penal reform may seem, it has an obvious logic.

These are conservatives who favour small-state, low-tax policies and who have awoken to the fact that penal expansionism (even where it creates private-sector growth) violates both values. Influenced by these ideas – and their financial crises – several US states not known for progressive penal approaches (such as Georgia and Texas) have recently seen unprecedented declines in their prison populations.

Informed by these developments, the Howard League for Penal Reform (in England and Wales) has begun asking UK Conservatives to take note. On 5 February, it published a pamphlet, *Intelligent Justice: Balancing the effects of community sentences and custody*, which I co-authored with two English criminologists – Professors Mike Hough and Steve Farrall.

Intelligent Justice tries to advance us beyond the perennial debate about the relative merits of custodial and community-based sentences. It responds in part to an earlier paper by Professor Ken Pease, published by Civitas, which argued in favour of custodial sentencing as an effective means of reducing reoffending through incapacitating people who offend.

Being much more sceptical about such prison effects, we argue that at least some of the crimes notionally prevented by incapacitating prisoners may in fact simply be deferred or committed by others who fill the 'vacancy' their absence creates. More to the point, the total volume of offending by those

incarcerated may be amplified in the longer run; prison has many perverse, unintended and adverse effects.

When, as Ken Pease did, we try to put a monetary value on incapacitation's crime-reducing effects, these and other complexities need to be taken into account. But leaving aside the technicalities, Intelligent Justice raises more fundamental questions about punishment: questions of purpose.

Crime reduction, we argue, is not the only (and not even the first) purpose of criminal justice. Punishment imposes harms on citizens, so it must always be carefully bounded and governed by law. We may take different views about the merits of imposing pain on people for reasons of retribution, but most of us can probably agree that merely imposing pains without also restoring people to good citizenship is both morally wrong and counterproductive, since it leaves the whole policy weakened.

For these reasons, we argue that the merits of sanctions should be judged on at least three criteria: their parsimony, their support for positive change and their effects on reintegration. Justice is not just about righting wrongs, it is about restoring relationships, about renewing reciprocal obligations, about reinforcing social solidarity. If our means of punishing do not correspond to those ends, then our system of justice is in trouble – and so, ultimately, is our society.

Decent societies need people to comply with the law for normative reasons (and eventually out of habit) more than because of fear or threat. Indeed, that is arguably one of their defining characteristics. As it happens, and as the 'Right on Crime' Republicans may have guessed, it is also a lot less expensive than financing a custodial apparatus that seeks to compel compliance but (if reoffending rates are any measure) is woefully incapable of doing so.

The full report is available to download from the Howard League's website.
<http://www.howardleague.org/publications-intelligent-justice/>

About the author

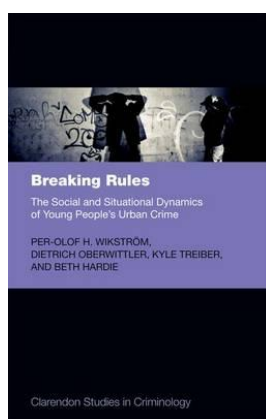
Fergus McNeill is Professor of Criminology and Social Work, Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research at the University of Glasgow. He is a member of the Howard League's Research Advisory Group.

Book review

Gary Manders

Breaking rules: The social and situational dynamics of young people's urban crime

by Per-Olof Wikström, Dietrich Oberwittler, Kyle Trieber and Beth Hardie (Oxford University Press)



Breaking Rules presents one of the most significant recent studies of crime and offending involving young people, and should be essential reading for Howard League early career researchers. It offers a template for how good criminological research should be conducted, and affords ample material for teaching undergraduate and post-graduate criminology.

Wikström et al. set out to provide an integrated theory of crime, outlining the conceptual development of situational action theory based on empirical evidence from the Peterborough Adolescent and Young Adult Development Study (PADS+). This is a longitudinal quantitative study conducted over five years with 716 randomly selected youngsters aged between 12–17 years; the important adolescent time-window when young people's involvement in crime is at its peak.

This study challenges Felson and Clarke's (1998) notion that 'opportunity makes the thief', arguing that people are not just enticed into criminal action by tempting opportunities in their environment. Instead Wikström et al. place morality centre stage in explaining criminal behaviour. The theory proposed emphasises the interaction between a person's moral choices shaped by their morality (moral rules, moral emotions and ability to exercise self-control) and the moral context of the 'settings' to which they are exposed (moral norms and levels of enforcement such as supervision, monitoring and deterrence). Crime as moral action involves a perception–choice process by which people breach rules of conduct stated in law, arising from the interaction of the person and their environment. Wikström et al. argue that morality serves as a filter intervening between an individual's motivation and action alternatives. The difference between the law-abiding and criminals is that the former have internalised moral constraints and do not see crime as a viable option. In the decision-making process that leads to people committing acts of crime, the important factor is the interaction between personal moral rules and the moral norms of the setting.

Situational action theory is reliant on four factors: the person, the setting, the situation, and an action. The interaction of people and settings creates situations to which their action is either a habitual or a deliberate response. Habitual action entails the automatic application of the rules of conduct, whereby the individual perceives only one course of action – the act of crime. Through deliberation there are a number of action alternatives to be weighed up. The outcome may or may not involve the commission of an offence

depending on the process of choice. People are seen as exercising moral agency, but they do so guided by moral rules and are not 'merely puppets at the mercy of psychological and social forces' (p. 19). The inhibiting presence of external controls can influence a person's deliberations when choosing to adhere to or break the rules.

A key message of this study is: 'It's all about interactions', the critical one in crime causation being the interaction between a person and their environment. As Wikström et al. explain, crime is perceived as 'an outcome of a perception-choice process initiated and guided by the causal interaction between a person's crime propensity and their exposure [to criminogenic settings]' (p. 17).

The core of the book explores the social and situational dynamics of adolescent life and involvement in urban crime through a detailed empirical presentation of data on people, place, and context. The book includes comprehensive interviews with young people, self-report data and the use of cognitive tests. Small community area surveys were conducted and the authors also examined official records, police and youth offending service crime data, and court records.

A particularly useful methodological innovation in this seminal study is the 'space-time budget'. This analytical tool looks at how young people move around geographically and how they spend their time in specific locations, then relates this information to crime. The space-time budget recorded the characteristics of settings a person encounters over a particular period of time: four days each year from 13–17 years of age (205,885 hours); covering main activities, functional settings, and the people present. Comparisons can be made with the type and level of participation in structured, semi-structured and unstructured activities, and the difference that supervision and monitoring makes. The analysis takes account of young people's increasing independence, changing mobility with age, and access to financial resources.

Young people are exposed to certain settings either through self-selection or through being socially selected into certain environments. This has implications for prevention and intervention efforts. Wikström et al. point out how the ability to identify key criminogenic settings where young people spend unstructured peer-oriented time provides critical information for practitioners in the criminal justice system. City centres and local centres were found to be particularly criminogenic, and most crimes tended to be committed closer to home. Crimes also tended to be closely related to specific activities such as unsupervised activities with peers outside of a school or work setting.

Wikström et al. conclude that crime propensity (determined by a person's morality and ability to exercise self-control) and criminal exposure (determined by the setting's moral norms and their enforcement) correlate strongly with involvement in criminal activities. They assert that 'criminogenic exposure is only relevant to crime prone people' (p. 319) that is, particular kinds of people in particular kinds of setting. The most crime prone are more likely to be in areas with a high level of criminogenic characteristics and are also likely to

commit a high proportion of offences there. In this way the focus for policies and interventions should be on trying to generate internal constraints within children and young people. This requires understanding of the particular developmental and socialisation processes through which people acquire differential crime propensities. This also involves appreciating the wider effects of environments on young people's lives.

Breaking Rules provides much stimulus for thought regarding criminological theorising, including how theories are grounded and tested empirically. In addition it has implications for practice in how we support young people to move away from crime, and also in establishing broader strategies for policing.

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About the author

Gary Manders, is a final year PhD candidate at the Institute of Applied Social Studies, University of Birmingham, and has worked in the criminal justice system for over ten years, previously as a senior practitioner in a Youth Offending Service. His PhD explores the interplay between the beliefs and values of young people who offend and their attitudes to offending, with particular reference to religious identity.

Upcoming events

What is Justice? Re-imagining penal policy

International two-day conference, 1–2 October 2013, Keble College, Oxford



Call for papers and posters

This conference forms part of the symposium *What is Justice? Re-imagining penal policy*. The symposium is charged with generating intellectual debate that can act as a springboard to contest the conventional role of the penal system, ultimately promoting a new, achievable paradigm that will deliver a reduced role for the penal system while maintaining public confidence, fewer victims of crime and safer communities.

The Howard League for Penal Reform is looking for papers and posters from academics, policy makers, practitioners, PhD students and researchers from within the criminological and legal disciplines. We are also keen to include contributions from those working within the fields of philosophy, geography, political science and economics. We will consider theoretical, policy and practice-based contributions on a wide range of issues that encompass the broad theme of *What is justice?* as well as papers on the themes of:

- Local justice and participation
- Social justice, human rights and penal policy
- The role of the state

Abstract guidelines

Proposals should be titled clearly and should not exceed 250 words. Please include the proposer's name and contact details along with their job title or role.

Please submit abstracts to: Eleanor.Biggin-Lamming@howardleague.org

Closing date 20 May 2013

Decisions about the posters will be made by the end of June 2013.

More information about *What is Justice?* and attending the conference can be found at <http://www.howardleague.org/what-is-justice/>.

Review

Out of Place: Exploring the Criminalisation of Sexually Exploited Girls and Young Women

Isabel Ellis Martin, Howard League Intern

This ECAN event was held at the University of Leicester as part of the Scarman Lecture Series. Professor Jo Phoenix gave a lecture outlining her research, commissioned by the Howard League, into the policing and criminalisation of sexually exploited girls and young women. This ECAN series aims to increase knowledge of the Howard League's campaigning issues



through promotion of relevant and significant research. The event had a high turnout and attracted a wide variety of people including ECAN members, practitioners, police, youth workers, researchers, academics and the general public. The lecture led to interesting discussion and debate both within the question and answer session and in the wine reception afterwards.

Drawing on Jo's research background in sexual exploitation, prostitution, and youth justice the lecture explored the way in which practitioners make decisions about whether or not to prosecute and use criminal justice sanctions against sexually exploited girls. Using quotes from both practitioners and girls, Jo considered the contradictions faced by police dealing with these cases.

The main contradiction raised by Jo was the tension between the process and the real impact of safeguarding. Jo explained how, according to their criteria, practitioners were successful but in reality their actions did little to safeguard girls, had little real effect in terms of addressing their needs, and sometimes



even led to their criminalisation through increased monitoring. Practitioners were also sometimes in tension with objectives coming from government. This led to what Jo termed an 'anomic context' full of contradictions faced by police who reacted in terms of 'imaginary safeguarding', acting as if these contradictions did not exist.

A second paradox discussed was that of 'impossible policing' or 'policing the unpoliceable'. The girls did not want to be policed and were therefore difficult

to control, yet they were at serious risk if no intervention took place. Jo went on to outline the ways in which these girls were criminalised not only through increased surveillance, but also through the practice of perpetrators promoting crime among girls, and in some cases girls using crime as an escape mechanism to exit exploitation or as a cry for help.

Finally, Jo noted that the extended persistent engagement needed to reach and help these girls cannot be provided owing to stretched time and resources during the present economic climate.

Jo concluded that these contradictions will remain if the economic poverty of these girls is not addressed, that structural circumstances led to these situations and that safeguards rarely get to the heart of the gender relationships that drive sexual exploitation.

The lecture led to an interesting question and answer session. Topics included socio-cultural change that has led to sex changing from being solely relational and procreative to becoming an object to be consumed; concerns with the systems of governance and situations police are facing, the little information we have on perpetrators and the question of whether police are targeting the men.

Member profile

Chantelle de Sousa

School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.



I am pursuing an LLM in Human Rights, Justice and Conflict at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. I completed degrees in Law and Economics in South Africa and then completed the legal traineeship to become an attorney. I initially specialised in Intellectual Property but have always been drawn to human rights and decided to pursue the LLM at SOAS.

Having arrived in London and become more involved in the human rights community, I discovered that more

attention is given to issues of torture and prisoners' rights here than in my home country. I become particularly interested in the issue of accountability and reparations for victims of torture. My research has looked at whether statutory limitations should apply for tort claims based on torture, given the difficulty that torture survivors have in talking about their abuse. I am also interested in socio-economic rights and how vulnerable persons, such as prisoners may have great difficulty in accessing these rights. I am currently volunteering with an NGO to help compile a global report on the factors giving rise to torture, international and national mechanisms to prevent torture, accountability and redress.

I hope to pursue a career in the field and make a contribution to research. The Early Career Academic Network is particularly important to me as I would like to know more about the penal system and how it can be reformed.

Get involved

Call for evidence - Commission on Sex in Prison

The Howard League for Penal Reform has established an independent Commission on Sex in Prison to investigate:

- Coercive sex in prison
- Consensual sex in prison
- Healthy sexual development among young people in prison

The Commission comprises academics, former prison governors and health experts. Its purpose is to understand the nature and scale of the issues and problems regarding sex in prison, and to make recommendations with a view to make prisons safer.

Call for written evidence

The Commission is keen to receive written evidence from academics, practitioners and policy makers within the criminological, legal and health disciplines. The Commission on Sex in Prison is currently focusing on the issues and problems regarding coercive or consensual sex among adults in prison.

Find out more and how to submit at

<http://www.commissiononsexinprison.org/public-consultations/>.

Guidelines for submissions

Style

Text should be readable and interesting. It should, as far as possible, be jargon-free, with minimal use of references. Of course, non-racist and non-sexist language is expected. References should be put at the end of the article. We reserve the right to edit where necessary.

Illustrations

We always welcome photographs, graphics or illustrations to accompany your article.

Authorship

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Format

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