

Reviews

Anne Worrall, Punishment in the Community: The Future of Criminal Justice, Addison Wesley Longman, London (1997) ISBN 0582293057

A range of issues regarding penalty attract attention in Australia. Prominent among these are deaths in custody, private prisons and, more recently, sentencing guidelines. Anne Worrall's book raises a different development in social control that has occurred in the late twentieth century and should be carefully considered - the widespread use of community-based sanctions for regulating and normalising large numbers of offenders.

This is a commendable text focused on the use of non-custodial penal measures in the United Kingdom. By drawing attention to practices of delivering punishment in the community, the text provides a detailed analysis of these developments to be considered alongside works that take the prison as the central point of analysis for criminal justice system penalties. For Worrall, the theoretical basis (or lack thereof), political and organisational goals of community-based punishment alternatives can be better understood by reference to the changing nature of the probation service.

The text is presented in two main parts, although the final chapter and conclusion constitute the author's basic arguments for reconstructing the work of probation officers in the future and rethinking the use of community-based penalties, effectively being a third main part of the work.

The first part sets up a broad context for considering punishment in the community sentencing options. This four chapter section traces the emergence of community punishment, noting its transformation from an alternative to the use of the prison into a sphere in which exclusion and regulation of offenders, rather than integration and inclusion (consistent with rehabilitative goals), have become paramount. While there is no in-depth discussion, Worrall refers to the works of theorists including Bottoms, Cohen, Foucault, Garland and Mathiesen to locate such emergence. The basis for understanding the delivery of punishment in the community is further built by the author's analysis of criminal law and legislation related to the UK criminal justice system, various philosophies of punishment, sentencing principles for different objectives and a brief, but critical, reference to neo-conservative elements of reform agendas involving economic rationalism and the pursuit of individualism which fundamentally re-shapes the notion of the community and its responsibility for responding to particular groups of offenders. Also, problems of these alternative sanctions and their public/political concerns, well noted in criminological discourse, are canvassed.

In chapters 5- 8, Anne Worrall provides an intimate account of the 'front line' of those charged with the responsibility for dealing with offenders outside the prison. We are taken on an analytical journey which traverses the socio-legal context of the past and present probation service. Worrall argues that probation has become a profession, central for

contemporary criminal justice system functions, but is beset with organisational changes that have led to alterations in its essential services. Her main message is that the professional objectives of the service have altered. There is now less concern for the social context of offending and the prospects for meaningful rehabilitative supervisory work to be carried out by practitioners. The extent of the shift for the probation service in post-Thatcher governed UK is evidenced when one considers chapters 9 and 10 which outline the cases of sex offenders and young offenders, the public's attitudes to appropriate punishment and the requirements of probation to provide a controlling kind of supervision to maintain an exclusionary form of community-based penalties.

The final chapter and the conclusion of *Punishment in the Community* sketch Worrall's visions for the future in regard to community punishment and the role of the probation service. Her plea is to restore the social context of criminal offending in the work of the profession and restructure the service. Worrall, ideally, would like to see a resistance to the influence of corporatism and managerialism objectives that became prominent in the 1980s during the Thatcher government and have persisted in later years under the guise of political pragmatism and an ideological commitment to exclusionary forms of punishment. The bottom line is the need for 'a new political will to invest in human, social and cultural capital ... [which]...may secure a more hopeful future for community punishment in general and the probation service in particular' (p 151). Whether Blair's 'third way' Labor government can deliver community-based alternative sanctions which reactivate rehabilitation, in inclusive and democratic citizenship terms for offenders, as a criminal justice system priority remains to be seen. To do so, at least requires tackling well entrenched public sentiments about the use of the prison as the appropriate punishment for crime and the perceived leniency of community control mechanisms.

Anne Worrall's book is an important step in that regard. This is a text which demonstrates intellectual rigor, thorough knowledge of the sphere of community probation services and places this latest phase of western societal punishment practices in a broad and useful political, legislative and theoretical context. Higher education and criminal justice system professionals are likely to find this book most useful for courses and further education.

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