

Editorial

At a recent meeting of the European Society of Criminology working group on community sanctions and measures, two questions were central to the ensuing discussion. The first concerned a consideration of ‘who works in probation’ and the second focussed upon the terminology used to describe contemporary practices in different jurisdictions. Such questions highlight and invite us to reflect upon our accepted wisdoms and ‘taken for granted’ notions of our common understandings of terms such as ‘probation’, ‘rehabilitation’, ‘reintegration’, and ‘resettlement’. They also remind us, not only of the contested nature of these concepts, at both the theoretical and the practical level, but also how they translate across different countries. Initiatives such as those undertaken by the Council of Europe in framing probation rules and the work of the CEP in promoting best practice across Europe are assisting in developing common frameworks and understandings. It is within this spirit that the *European Journal of Probation* seeks to foster the exchange of ideas; drawing upon the different perspectives offered across jurisdictions and is reflected in the range of articles presented within this edition.

In *The Good Lives Model in Practice: Offence Pathways and Case management*, Mayumi Purvis, Tony Ward and Gwenda Willis consider the Good Live Model of Offender Rehabilitation (GLM) which is becoming increasingly influential as a framework for rehabilitative practices that seeks to move beyond a narrower concern with risk factors and engage with, and shape the case management of offenders in a more constructive and meaningful way. Drawing on the adoption of the approach by Corrections Victoria in Australia, working with those convicted of sexual offences, the authors contend that the model can be extended to effectively engage with *any* offender whilst being responsive to the individual's situation, their offending and risks. In considering the application of the model to the case management setting, the authors outline the practice tools required to ensure structured, targeted and individualised offender management. As the authors highlight, such an approach forefronts professional expertise in interviewing and motivational work backed up by quality training and mentoring. This requires institutional and organisational support in providing the structures that support the processes contained within the model and maintain its integrity.

As Susanne Karstedt has pointed out ‘Notwithstanding the global scale of exchange, criminal justice systems and policies are definitely local, and embedded in traditions, culture and the particular institutional regimes of national states’ (Karstedt, 2002). This is vividly highlighted in the next two articles in this edition. In *Desisting in France: what probation officers know and do. A first approach*, Martine Herzog-Evans considers some of the cultural factors which have mitigated against an informed and considered application of desistance based approaches including that of ‘Making Good’ (which is closely aligned to the Good Lives Model). Drawing on the findings from a small scale research project overseen by the author, she concludes that probation practice in France remains dominated by a psychologically-based and somewhat reactive approach in supporting those who possess the motivation to

change. In this respect some of the workers interviewed retained a narrow conception of the role of case management as a coordinator of referrals to other services in which, the author speculates, the more active forms of engagement are undertaken by charitable enterprises. This leads the author to conclude, somewhat pessimistically, that professional traditions and regressive policy changes are considerable obstacles and likely to hinder the implementation of progressive desistance supportive practices within France in the near future.

On a more positive note, in *A Framework for a Restorative Society? Restorative Justice in Northern Ireland*, Brian Payne and Vicky Conway outline how the use of restorative justice has been employed in Northern Ireland and whose scope has extended beyond criminal justice concerns to include schools and children's care homes. As the authors note, restorative approaches have been applied in post-conflict or transitional settings and the transition within Northern Ireland from armed conflict to the implementation of the peace process could be seen to explain this. However, the authors contend that whilst the conflict might have encouraged a consideration of alternative forms of justice, the success of restorative approaches has not been defined by the conflict. Instead, the authors found that restorative work in Northern Ireland was largely defined by a diverse range of practices that were shaped and adapted to their operating context. As such the authors conclude that the definition and application of restorative justice is in the main determined by situation and context and that its expansion and effectiveness is as dependent upon the cross fertilisation of ideas between organisations within jurisdictions as it is upon the importation of ideas from other jurisdictions.

The final article in this edition is a thought provoking contribution from Ann Opie that utilises the theoretical insights provided by the respective works of Alfred Shutz and Jacques Derrida to our understanding of transitions such as those faced in the reintegration of ex-prisoners. In common with the other contributors to this edition, the author acknowledges that such transitions and the possibility of successful desistance are constructed through the interaction of structural and societal factors with organisational policies and practices. The author applies the focus provided by both theorists on the specificity (as oppose to composites of psychological or sociological factors) of the human situation to enlighten the process of transition from incarceration to the community or from offending to desistance. Using the metaphors provided by Shutz and Derrida, the author describes released prisoners as travellers on a complex journey in which they have to overcome both actual and hypothetical borders which they have to negotiate using the individual means available to them and involving the acquisition of new skills and bodies of knowledge. As such, the author provides a powerful challenge to the adequacy of the claims of those forms of knowledge creation whose rationale is based upon the identification and classification of human behaviours (based upon levels of dangerousness and risk) against a given body of law, and instead calls for a broader conceptualisation and understand of human nature and behaviour that forefronts the individual.

As always, the editorial board welcomes any comments or responses to any of the issues raised by the articles in this edition. The next edition of the *European Journal of Probation* will be a special edition focussing on issues regarding occupational cultures and training within probation.

Lol Burke (on behalf of the Editorial Board)

References

Karstedt, S. (2002) Durkheim, Tarde and beyond: The global travel of crime policies, *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, May 2002 vol 2 no 2 111-123, SAGE.