

the authors build on existing literature on family experiences of incarceration, strengthening the depth of their narrative. They speak to what little research exists on what influences parenting after prison, how parenting might influence the prisoner's reintegration into the family and community, or the long-term effects of incarceration on parenting and, in particular, the father-child relationship. Though this study did not address every knowledge gap, it lays a strong foundation for future research to build upon – creating knowledge gaps by exerting and demonstrating an admirable grasp of the literature and thus identifying future research needs. Nevertheless, despite the complexity of the topic and the sheer volume of the data collected, *Holding On* showcases why studying both sides of the coin – the prisoner side and the family side – is essential to truly understand the human experience and impacts of incarceration and reentry.

### Reference

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### Rosemary Ricciardelli and Sara MacNaul

Barry Goldson, Chris Cunneen, Sophie Russell, David Brown, Eileen Baldry, Melanie Schwartz, and Damon Briggs, *Youth Justice and Penalty in Comparative Context*, Routledge: London and New York, 2020, 260 pp. ISBN 9780815374459, £120.00 (hbk), ISBN9780815374466, £34.99 (pbk), ISBN 9781351242134, £31.49 (eBook)

Youth and crime, as well as how children in conflict with the law are treated within the youth justice system, has always been an important area of criminological research. Yet, penalty as the 'whole system of punishment, ranging from its philosophies, laws, and methods, to its material effects and the wider social, cultural, and political environments in which it is located' (p. 1) has rarely been interrogated holistically in reference to young people.

This book rectifies the lack of attention on penalty in relation to young people. It compares the similarities and differences between four Australian states and England and Wales, with special emphasis on locality and the sub-national reasons for convergences and divisions between the two jurisdictions. The book emphasises how, in the Western liberal-democratic nations of England and Wales and Australia, illiberal and undemocratic penal practices against children are negotiated on the ground when criminal laws and youth justice policies clash with organisational discourses and institutional working practices, yielding discriminatory treatment of structurally marginalised young people that McAra and McVie (2005) have, albeit in another context, called the 'usual suspects'. The book outlines and explains current manifestations of such processes, including the racialised practices of stop and search, arrest, detention and police custody, restrictions of freedom of movement

and association, court proceedings, and penal detention as employed against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children in Australia, and Black young people in the UK.

Chapter 1 sets the scene for the book by providing an overview of the inter- and intra-jurisdictional similarities and differences between England and Wales and four Australian states from the early 1980s to the present. The chapter touches upon the injustices of youth justice in the two jurisdictional contexts, focusing on the disproportionate treatment of minority ethnic children, girls and young women, welfare-involved youth, young people with neuro-developmental disabilities and mental health disorders, and other socially excluded children. The chapter presents the research design of the study, triangulating police and youth justice statistics, analysis of shifts in legislative provision, policy, and practice over four decades, as well as qualitative data, gathered through interviews with youth justice service managers and practitioners in Australia and England and Wales, and 27 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people in juvenile detention. Exploring the trends in youth justice and penalty over the last forty years is the focus of Chapter 2. The chapter gives a detailed analysis of three periods: 1980–1991 (diversion and decarceration); 1992–2002 (consolidated diversion and decarceration in Australia and politicisation of youth justice in England and Wales); and 2003–2018 (‘messiness’ of competing priorities: actuarial justice and risk management, punitiveness, ‘what works’ logic).

Chapter 3 uses case studies from both countries to illustrate how different public representations of young offenders can have regressive, neutral, or progressive effects on laws and youth justice policies. The chapter also critically examines the ways in which social media platforms are shaping discourses about young people in trouble with the law. Chapter 4 focuses on how international human rights standards have impacted youth justice in Australia and England and Wales and exposes human rights violations at different levels of the system. Chapter 5 explains the ways in which youth justice and penalty have been racialised both in England and Wales and Australia, and places these trends in the historical context of slavery and colonial ordering. Drawing on ‘critical disability criminology’ (Baldry et al., 2018) that shifts the focus from individual definitions of disability to the systemic disabling effects of institutions, chapter 6 examines the overrepresentation of children with mental health problems and cognitive impairments in the youth justice system. The chapter concludes that youth justice in England and Wales and Australia is ‘broken’ (p. 147), contributing to further systemic exclusion of vulnerable children. Chapter 7 exposes the importance of doing comparative research at not only the global and international level but also sub-nationally as it is local penal cultures and working practices of institutions that often moderate or inflate punitive national penal policies. Chapter 8 reflects upon the main arguments of the book and looks to the future by encouraging the synthesis of global human rights standards and international youth justice knowledge bases.

This book provides a thorough investigation of the competing discourses of penalty in reference to young people and reaches beyond the traditional welfare/justice binary often still dominating the youth justice debate. The book emphasises that the youth justice system in England and Wales and Australia is bifurcated, dividing young people into the ‘redeemable’ for whom surveillance, supervision, and incapacitation are seen as harmful and thus inappropriate responses, and the ‘non-redeemable’ that deserve to be

punished via the rigorous justice route. This way, the book contextualises the over-representation of some groups of children within youth justice, explaining how individuals of particular backgrounds and personal characteristics are continuously propelled into the system through the 'architectures of penalty' (p. 7) that individualise socio-cultural marginalisation and penalise its manifestations. It ascribes this to a communicative process between youth justice policies and institutional practices, especially in cases of poor leadership of institutions, 'non-child-focused' philosophical underpinnings of local penal cultures, scepticism towards diversion and knowledge-informed approaches, and cynicism about respecting children's human rights. Importantly, the book acknowledges the contribution of international human rights law to positive shifts within the youth justice system in Australia and England and Wales, but highlights the colonialist and Western-centred origins of such reforms that need further interrogation. Lastly, the book makes practical suggestions on how to make the youth justice system socially fairer: equal access to diversion, early detection and assessment of behavioural difficulties in children, and extending the age jurisdiction of youth justice.

The book will serve as an important source of information for academics in the fields of criminology, youth studies, sociology, and social policy, as well as policymakers and practitioners working with young people in trouble with the law. The comparative, theoretical, and methodological aspects of the book will provide ample inspiration for further research on the topics of youth and penalty. To decolonise justice responses to youth offending both at the policy level and on the ground, as the book suggests, comparative research could benefit from analysing how different ways of doing politics help account for differences in national appetites for the punishment of children. Prospective research in youth justice and penalty could compare welfarist youth justice practices in consensus democracies and/or the global South and more punitive majoritarian political milieus. Theoretically, youth justice that aims to turn the gaze from the individual to the structural causes of crime might have to draw on conceptual frameworks beyond criminology, notably ones that can examine the individualisation of social harms in children and the rise of young people's mental health needs in light of the deteriorating implications of capitalism both in England and Wales and Australia and globally. As the late Mark Fisher observed, 'capital is an abstract parasite, an insatiable vampire and zombie-maker; but the living flesh it converts to dead labour is ours, and the zombies it makes are us' (Fisher, 2009, p. 19). The fall of the welfare state and the dehumanising effects of capitalism for (penal) practices in the global West have impacted how young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties - particularly those of minority backgrounds - are perceived, punished, and/or helped. This book might encourage other criminologists to interrogate how to best divert the most vulnerable children away from the youth justice system, and what kind of a response to utilise instead so that it does not have the same deleterious consequences as punishment and medicalisation. Finally, the book could inspire prospective youth justice studies, both national and comparative, to further prioritise the voices of young people, and include children in research not only as participants but also as co-producers of conceptual and methodological frameworks. In future studies of youth and penalty, children could provide competing definitions of youth, crime, penalty, and justice that they employ to make sense of the world, the justice system, and their place within them. More often than not, young people understand the complexities of wrongdoing

and it is high time criminology and criminal justice acknowledge what *they* want to see at the centre of youth justice. *Youth Justice and Penalty in Comparative Context* will surely inspire criminologists to embark on such comparative, theoretical, and methodological journeys.


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Courtney E. Thompson, *An Organ of Murder: Crime, Violence, and Phrenology in Nineteenth-Century America*. Rutgers University Press: New Brunswick, 2021; 278 pp. ISBN 9781978813083, \$28.95

Courtney Thompson's *An Organ of Murder* joins the body of research that prompts us to think seriously about phrenology. Contra the easy temptation to dismiss phrenology as a quackish pseudoscientific fad, historians has shown that it constituted a serious and respectable attempt at progressive and reform-minded explanation of human behavior. Phrenology, uncomfortably, is a forerunner of significant portions of the contemporary human sciences. However, its precise relationship to the history of criminology has remained obscured. Does phrenology's status as one of the first systematic and putatively scientific frameworks for explaining crime mean that criminology is in some way indebted to or influenced by it? Or did criminologists successfully rationalize away these outdated beliefs about skulls and disordered mental organs.