Palgrave Studies in Risk, Crime and Society

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Risk is a major contemporary issue which has widespread implications for theory, policy, governance, public protection, professional practice and societal understandings of crime and criminal justice. The potential harm associated with risk can lead to uncertainty, fear and conflict as well as disproportionate, ineffective and ill-judged state responses to perceived risk and risky groups. Risk, Crime and Society is a series featuring monographs and edited collections which examine the notion of risk, the risky behaviour of individuals and groups, as well as state responses to risk and its consequences in contemporary society. The series will include critical examinations of the notion of risk and the problematic nature of state responses to perceived risk. While Risk, Crime and Society will consider the problems associated with ‘mainstream’ risky groups including sex offenders, terrorists and white collar criminals, it welcomes scholarly analysis which broadens our understanding of how risk is defined, interpreted and managed. Risk, Crime and Society examines risk in contemporary society through the multi-disciplinary perspectives of law, criminology and socio-legal studies and will feature work that is theoretical as well as empirical in nature.

More information about this series at http://www.springer.com/series/14593
Preface

Sexual harm continues to be one of the most pressing global social problems (UNICEF, 2014), and arguably we are at a tipping point where resources to combat it are continually outstripped. The ‘growth industry’ of sex offender management within a climate of diminishing resources has focused research, policy, and practice attention on increasing effectiveness, efficiency, and impact of interventions. All the chapters presented in this volume are characterised by a focus on alternative or emerging approaches to work with sexual offenders, and, in particular, how to gain greater effectiveness in offence reduction and sexual harm prevention. The chapters presented here offer critical reviews of existing practice, alternative responses, and innovatory approaches that can be replicated ‘on the ground’.

Ashmore-Hills, Burrell, and Tonkin, in Chapter 1, present an innovatory approach to combating prolific serial sexual offenders through the use of Behavioural Crime Linkage (BCL), a form of behavioural analysis which identifies behavioural similarities across multiple crimes. They describe the usefulness of this approach to law enforcement agencies when investigating sexual crime. In addition to its utility in crime investigation, Ashmore-Hills et al. also explore its role in primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention, particularly in identifying sexual offenders early in their offending cycle and preventing further crimes. The chapter has a practical focus and will particularly benefit those operating in law enforcement.
Wilson and Sandler, in Chapter 2, explore risk assessment in some detail, providing an overview of actuarial risk assessment instruments. They critically assess the utility of actuarial risk assessment tools, particularly with reference to the contentious areas of civil commitment and preventive sentencing. They cogently argue for the combination of psychologically meaningful factors with actuarial risk assessment factors to provide more comprehensive and robust risk assessment tools. Chapter 3 by Case takes an alternative view of risk assessment tools, challenging the claims of the risk prevention paradigm, and critically reviewing the major risk assessment tools for assessing youth in England and Wales. He argues that reductionism and de-individualisation are unhelpful negative consequences of our over-preoccupation with risk prevention and risk prediction. He concludes by examining the more recent English juvenile justice risk assessment tool ‘AssetPlus’ and the prosocial ethos rather than risk focus embedded within it.

Hilder identifies larger-scale challenges to risk assessment and risk management in Chapter 4 reviewing current issues in the assessment and management of serious sexual offenders who travel between the Member States of the European Union. Current levels of travel, particularly for ‘sexual tourism’ and to avoid vetting and barring, in addition to those EU nationals who have previous convictions in Home Member States who then reside and work in another Member State make this a significant and growing issue. Drawing on a project examining current EU wide procedures and the practices of individual Member States she identifies the key issues which prevent effective assessment, information exchange, and management of this cohort across the EU. Whilst a number of EU legislative arrangements do enable information exchange, management, and monitoring across borders, effectiveness is reduced by varied understandings of risk, rehabilitation, multi-agency working, privacy, and data protection rights across Member States. The implications for a post-Brexit UK are also explored.

International and globalised sexual crime is also enabled by online offending. In Chapter 5, Brennan, Meridian, and Perkins present a clear exposition of current knowledge on different types of online sex offending behaviour, including use of child sexual exploitation material, online solicitation behaviour, and use of the Internet for international
perpetrators of sexual abuse. They recognise the growing problem for law enforcement and related agencies in dealing with ever-increasing caseloads, and they consider the utility of risk assessment tools for online offending, and their potential role in case prioritisation.

Gerald Zeng and Chu Chi Meng, in Chapter 6, outline current practice with youth who sexually offend in Singapore, with an important focus on rehabilitation. They offer a practical demonstration of the meshing of risk prevention with the Good Lives model in order to illustrate a comprehensive and holistic approach to the treatment and management of youth who sexually offend. Their approach is developmentally sensitive, and rooted in a commitment to research and evaluation.

Hulley, in Chapter 7, pursues the role of Good Lives in more detail, and outlines her recent research into desistance-based practice with sexual offenders. Her small-scale but in-depth study provides useful insights into the practice of police officers working with sex offenders in the community. Her research importantly shows that sex offenders managed within a strengths-based paradigm are more likely to have a positive relationship with their supervising officer and are more likely to achieve the necessary positive identity change to achieve a non-offending lifestyle. Hulley also considers the role of Active Risk Management System (ARMS) in promoting a strengths-based approach to supervision within policing.

McCartan, Kemshall, and Hoggett, in Chapter 8 extend these issues by considering the role of the sex offender register and disclosure in the community management of sexual offenders. They argue that a different approach is required to deal effectively with the ever-increasing caseload, and to promote rehabilitation, desistance, and reductions in sexual crime. An increased understanding of desistance processes for sexual offenders, and a greater focus on effective practice is advocated in order to make better use of diminishing resources. The chapter concludes with tips for improving current practice.

Hazel Kemshall
May 2017

Kieran McCartan
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Maggie Brennan is a lecturer in the Schools of Applied Psychology and Criminology, University College Cork, Ireland. She is the director of the recently established Research Cluster on Online Sexual Violence and Prevention at University College, Cork. Her primary research interest relates to online child sexual offending—to the role of Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM) and online technologies in the offending process, and the impact of this exploitation on victims. A major focus of Maggie’s work is the development of novel approaches to the assessment, management, and prevention of online child sexual offences, with an emphasis on the development of enhancements for front-line domain practice. Her recent research includes work to develop models of online child sexual offending behaviour, as well as decision-support technologies for public protection professionals involved in the risk assessment and management of CSEM offences. Maggie is a serving member of the Europol EC3 Academic Advisory Network (EC3AAN) and Interpol Specialist Group on Crimes Against Children.
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(Ireland, Netherlands, Latvia, the USA, Canada, Australia); received funding from research councils (including ESRC and Leverhulme), government agencies (including Ministry of Justice, Cabinet Office, and Bristol City Council) and charities (including ANROWS and Circles UK); published widely in academic and professional arenas; and taken part in extensive media interviews. He is on the editorial board of *Sexual Abuse*; the International Representative on the ATSA executive board; a lead blogger on the SAJRT and the NOTA Prevention Blogs; a member of the ATSA Prevention Committee, the NOTA Research Committee and the NOTA Prevention Committee; a Trustee of Circles South West; a grants reviewer for ESRC and NSVRC; and the only international expert research advisor to Bravehearts (Australia). McCartan has over 40 academic publications (including journal articles, books, book chapters, and external research reports); 25+ practitioner/professional articles; 65+ blogs and online publications; generated over half a million pounds in external research funding; given 100+ external presentations nationally and internationally (including conference papers and invited keynotes); and taken part in over 25 media interviews (including ABC *Lateline*, Australia; *Points West*, BBC England; *Nolan Live*, BBC Northern Ireland; BBC International; and TV Live Asia).

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Gerald Zeng is currently a senior manager and senior research specialist at Rehabilitation and Protection Group, Ministry of Social and Family Development, Singapore (MSF). At MSF, he conducts research on rehabilitation and organisational well-being, and is currently involved in a longitudinal study on youth offenders as well as a panel study on the well-being of officers working at MSF. Gerald is also an adjunct research fellow at the Social Science Research Centre at the National University of Singapore.
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