

Prisons Research Centre

INSTITUTE of CRIMINOLOGY

University of Cambridge

ANNUAL REPORT

June 2012



Prison Research Centre Annual report 2012

The Cambridge Institute of Criminology Prisons Research Centre (PRC) was established under the Directorship of Alison Liebling in 2000, with a modest budget, one research assistant and a part-time administrator. It is now well established and attracts funding from NOMS, research councils (for example, the ESRC, Leverhulme and the Nuffield Foundation) and from other organisations. Its members include Professor Alison Liebling, Dr Ben Crewe (Deputy Director), Dr Susie Hulley (Senior Research Associate), Ms Vicky Gadd, and around eight PhD students at any one time, all doing individual research projects, sometimes linked to or developed from other research going on in the Centre. Deborah Kant acts as Centre Administrator (part-time). Associate Members include Helen Arnold (a past Research Associate), Dr Adrian Grounds, Dr Joel Harvey (a past PhD student), Dr John Rynne, and Dr Charles Elliott. The centre hosts Visiting Scholars from time to time: for example, Thomas Ugelvik, from Oslo University spent six months with us in 2012 (see below) and Professor Noel Whitty, from Nottingham University, also spent three weeks with us in 2012. Both gave seminars, attended PRC seminars, and generally joined in with the research (and social) life of the Centre. Professor Anthony Bottoms, and many other members of the department, provide the Centre with intellectual companionship and guidance 'behind the scenes' (Tony is technically retired!), but this companionship, as well as the contributions made by members of our Steering Group¹, matter a great deal and have enhanced the life of the Centre.

The Cambridge Institute of Criminology Prisons Research Centre aims to provide a stimulating research environment in which a coherent strategy of high quality research can be pursued, and integration between funded and non-funded, and applied and theoretical projects can be facilitated. Our vision is of methodologically rigorous and theoretically relevant field-based studies addressing problems of human and social

¹ Current members include: Professor Anthony Bottoms, Professor Richard Sparks, Professor Shadd Maruna, Professor Fergus McNeill, Juliet Lyons, Ian Poree, Joyce Drummond Hill, Michael Spurr and Jo Bailey.

values, punishment practices and the organisation and effects of prison life. We are striving to consolidate and enhance the Cambridge Institute of Criminology's strengths in penological research, in forging links with research in the broader fields of criminology and sociology, and our capacity to collaborate with others.

This Report provides summaries of ongoing projects, including PhD and (for the first time) selected MPhil theses, as well as a summary of new, recently funded research. Two of the MPhil studies reported will become the basis for PhD research in the coming academic year.

The Annual Research Day and Steering Group Meeting will take place this year on *October 18th 2012*.²

² There are limited places available, but we are happy to receive requests to attend.

Contents

Introduction

Contents page

Research projects

1. Values, practices and outcomes in public and private sector prisons 4
2. An exploration of staff-prisoner relationships at HMP Whitemoor: Twelve years on 6
3. Understanding prisons: Extended MQPL and SQL exercises 7
4. An exploratory study into Aboriginal quality of prison life 9
5. Risk and protective factors in the resettlement of imprisoned fathers with their families 10

New Research

1. Experiencing long-term imprisonment from young adulthood: identity, adaptation and penal legitimacy 11
2. Educational Pathways of Young People in the Youth Justice System (April 2012 – March 2013) 12

Visiting Scholars

1. Thomas Ugelvik 12
2. Noel Whitty 13

PhD Research

1. Ruth Armstrong 13
2. Jason Warr 14
3. Amy Ludlow 15
4. Rachelle Larocque 16
5. Marie Hutton 16
6. Thomas Akoensi 17
7. Esther van Ginneken 17
8. Nicola Clay 18

MPhil research

1. Elaine Freer 18
2. Alice levins 18
3. Bethany Schmidt 19
4. Kirstine Szifris 19
5. Robert Walker 19

Other Activities

1. An International Symposium on Legitimacy and Criminal Justice 20

Research projects

1. Values, practices and outcomes in public and private sector prisons

Alison Liebling, Ben Crewe, Susie Hulley and Clare McClean

Prison privatisation was initially conceived as an 'experiment' – a test of different models of the provision of custodial 'services'. It is important to assess some of the claims that have been made for (and against) private sector involvement in prison management, rather than allow debates to rest on rhetoric and ideology alone. The need for a scrupulous empirical research base in this area is all the more important in the current political context, which is seeing an 'opening up of the market to new providers from the private, voluntary and community sectors' (Green Paper 2010: 10) and the introduction of payment by results. These developments promise to transform a vital area of public policy, but there is little existing evidence about the relative performance of public and private provision, or the effects of competition, despite the fact that the modern era of prison competition started in 1992, with the opening of HMP Wolds.

Part of the problem is that there is little consensus about the best way to conceptualise and measure prison quality. Should we judge prisons only by 'external' measures, such as their impact on reoffending, or by 'internal' measures such as suicide rates, or the quality of life experienced by the imprisoned? What are the criteria by which we should measure the prisoner experience? What is the relationship between a prison's 'moral performance' (Liebling and Arnold 2004) and future behaviour? Might it be the case that the public and private sectors have different strengths and weaknesses, which lead to different kinds of outcomes, and which might be combined in prisons of the future?

In 2006, with many of these questions in mind, the authors embarked on a detailed study of values, practices and outcomes in public and private corrections. Taking advice from practitioners in both sectors, we sought to 'match' two public and two private sector prisons (that is, ensure that they

were comparable in terms of age, function, security level), and compare their cultures, relationships and the experiences of prisoners and staff within them. Our ethnographic research in these prisons – two of which were training prisons for adult males, and two of which were local prisons, also for adult males – involved observations of and interviews with prisoners and staff, plus the administration of quality of life surveys to both groups. In all four establishments we were given keys and allowed free access to all areas of the prison, enabling us to talk openly with prisoners, uniformed staff and managers about their experiences. This 'deep' fieldwork was supplemented by shorter research visits to three further private sector prisons (Rye Hill, Lowdham Grange and Altcourse), in which we distributed our surveys and conducted a small number of interviews.

In our evaluation of the two pairs of matched prisons, the two public sector prisons (Bullingdon and Garth) generally outperformed their private sector comparators (Forest Bank and Dovegate). The public sector training prison scored significantly higher than its private sector comparator on seventeen of our twenty-one prisoner 'quality of life' measures and below it on none, while the public sector local prison scored significantly higher than its private sector comparator on eight of the measures and below it on none. These measures included prisoner assessments of the respectfulness of their treatment, their safety, their psychological wellbeing, and the professionalism of prison staff.

Data from the three supplementary private prisons complicated this picture. One of the private sector training prisons (Lowdham Grange) scored significantly above the public sector training prison on nine of the twenty-one dimensions (and below it on none), while the additional private sector local prison (Altcourse) scored significantly higher than the public sector local prison on fifteen of the twenty-one dimensions (and significantly below it on none). The public sector prisons in our study were considered to be fairly high-quality. This made the prisoner evaluations of the two high-performing private sector prisons all the more striking.

On the other hand, the *least* impressive prisons in our study were also in the private sector. Both of the private prisons in the main ethnographic study exhibited weaknesses in the areas of policing and control, organisation and consistency, and the 'personal development' of prisoners (e.g. their feeling that the prison regime was constructive and was helping them to lead a law-abiding life on release). Senior managers in both of these prisons acknowledged that their staff were less good at following procedures than those in the public sector, that the quality of uniformed staff and middle managers was highly variable, and that the high turnover of staff was a major problem. The emphasis in staff training on interpersonal skills - and the effort made to inculcate staff cultures that were positive and respectful - did not lead to our two main private sector prisons outperforming their public sector comparators in the expected areas. In these private prisons, relationships between prisoners and staff were courteous, and prisoners generally recognised that staff were benign and committed. However, the lack of experience and expertise among uniformed staff (and their low numbers) meant that prisoners' legitimate expectations were often unmet. The relatively low levels of staff professionalism in these prisons was also manifested in both the over-use and under-use of authority.

In the public sector prisons, officers were confident and knowledgeable, delivering regimes that were safer and more reliable than in the matched private sector prisons. Relationships with prisoners were fairly informal, and, in general, power was exercised fairly and confidently. However, prisoners sometimes described an experience of imprisonment that felt 'heavier' and more 'edgy' than in the private sector comparators. Uniformed staff could sometimes be indifferent towards prisoners, and the dispositions of staff towards prisoners were more negative than those of most private sector staff.

The two high-performing private sector prisons that were added into the study seemed to combine many of the strengths of both sectors. They were unencumbered by some of the cultural 'weight' of the public sector - in particular, a powerful trade union culture that has often promoted an ethos of cynicism - allowing

relationships between staff and prisoners to be respectful, supportive and caring. Uniformed staff seemed confident and knowledgeable, having built up more experience than staff in the poorer-performing private prisons. Interestingly though, there were indications that, in the domain of security and policing, even the high-performing private prisons were less strong than in other areas of quality. Staffing levels were tight and power was slightly under-used.

Not all of the most important issues about prison privatisation can be addressed through these kinds of evaluations. Questions remain about the ethics and longer term effects of private sector involvement in incarceration, and we do not wish to diminish the significance of these matters. Yet our data suggest that some lessons can be drawn from the privatisation 'experiment'. First, since there are huge variations in the quality of private prisons, we should not assume that the private sector is in itself any better at running prisons than the public sector; second, there are some risks in doing privatisation 'on the cheap'; third, there are some hidden strengths in the public sector, particularly in relation to staff professionalism and the use of authority; and, finally, the quality of management really matters, and might account for the differences between the performance of otherwise similar establishments.

The process of publishing and disseminating the findings has continued. Feedback seminars have been given to the Prisons Inspectorate, the Prison Reform Trust, User Voice, the Prison Service public sector bids unit and Interserve, and the Universities of Westminster, Royal Holloway, Sydney (NSW), and Griffiths (Brisbane). Professor Liebling and Dr Crewe have been quoted on the research in articles in *The Financial Times* and *Public Finance*. Since the last report, the most relevant publications are as follows:

Publications

Crewe, B., Liebling, A. and Hulley, S. (2011) 'Staff culture, the use of authority, and prisoner outcomes in public and private prisons. *Australia and New Zealand Journal of Criminology. Special Issue on Contemporary Penal Politics*, 44.

Liebling, A., Hulley, S. and Crewe, B. (2011) Conceptualising and measuring the quality of prison life. In D. Gadd, S. Karstedt and S. Messner (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Criminological Research Methods*. London: Sage Publishing.

Hulley, S., Liebling, A. and Crewe, B. (2012) 'Respect in prisons: Prisoners' experiences of respect. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 12(1), 3-23.

Crewe, B., Liebling, A. and Hulley, S. (under review) 'Heavy-light, absent-present: Re-thinking the weight of imprisonment'

Crewe, B., Liebling, A., Hulley, S. and McLean, C. (in progress) *Staff culture, professionalism and the prisoner experience in public and private sector prisons in England and Wales*

Based on the findings of the study, further articles are planned on legitimacy, staff professionalism, and personal development (see below).

2. An exploration of staff-prisoner relationships at HMP Whitemoor: Twelve years on

Alison Liebling, Helen Arnold and Christina Straub

This study, completed in 2011 and currently in preparation as a book, constitutes a major contribution to our understanding of the contemporary experience of long-term imprisonment in conditions of maximum security. Uniquely, it revisits a prison studied in depth twelve years earlier, using mainly qualitative methods, finding a set of fundamentally changed relationships among prisoners, and between prisoners and staff. The culture, population, organisation and purpose of the prison have all significantly altered. Newly long and indeterminate sentences, a political climate requiring no 'pampering' of prisoners, some significant changes to the prisoner population, including greater diversity and the housing of offenders convicted of offences of terrorism, an excessive emphasis on risk, and a newly uncomfortable or less confident staff group, have transformed a largely professional prison into a place where prisoners said: '*This is not an honest prison*', '*I [feel like] a casualty of politics*', and '*They don't see you as a person*'. In-prison conversion to

Islam was a new and highly complicated feature of life in the prison, as prisoners searched for meaning and power.

In these circumstances, prisoners found themselves facing unimaginable sentences with little opportunity for activity, self-development or meaning. Many described a kind of 'existential crisis' with few avenues for growth. The combined effects of younger prisoners serving longer and indeterminate sentences, and less professionally confident staff, generated distance, fear and violence in the prison. A complex population composition consisting of internally conflicted as well as competing faith groups led to struggles for power and belonging. The changing roles played by faith, trust, and risk, the hidden flow of power, the search for meaning and identity, and the responses of prisoners and staff to these challenges, had reshaped the long-term prison. In an MQPL survey conducted at the early stages of the research, only three out of twenty-one dimensions scored 'positively': these were 'policing and security', 'safety', and the control of 'drugs and exploitation'. These findings reflected the prison's preoccupation with security over legitimacy: a change in the mission and tone of long-term prisons that had taken place without explicit reasoning.

The full report, and the book in preparation, describe this state of affairs in detail, explaining how prison life is shaped by external and internal reflections of late modern society. We contrast our account with the findings described in the classic study (*Psychological Survival*) conducted 40 years ago by Cohen and Taylor. Whereas the prisoners in their study became preoccupied with the maintenance of sanity in order to cope once released, a sort of 'preservation' of the self, the prisoners in this study describe a preoccupation with the creation of meaning and the very possibility of survival, or a self, in a prison offering little hope and minimal recognition. The struggle between the official requirement of the creation of an alternative acceptable identity versus the real process of individual change and development created falsehood, and deep frustration.

Unlike Cohen and Taylor, this account also makes the prison staff fully visible, describing their search for meaning and purpose in a new, demanding,

performance-driven penological climate in which their own role has become somewhat uncertain. The study attempts to integrate wider sociological analysis with individual prisoner and staff experiences, making sense of the new conditions of imprisonment. It depicts a dramatic (and yet unintended) erosion of trust, purpose and humanity in a crucial part of the penal system of major symbolic significance for the prison system as a whole.

A Dialogue group comprising a small group from the Institute of Criminology, the Divinity Faculty and the Psychology Department, and faith practitioners from Whitemoor, on 'faith related practices and personal development in prison' has met twice, to discuss the report and its implications, as well as possible future developments.

Publications

Liebling, A., Arnold, H and Straub, C (2012) *An Exploration of Staff-Prisoner Relationships at HMP Whitemoor: Twelve Years On*, NOMS Research website.

Liebling, A (2011) 'Moral performance, inhuman and degrading treatment, and prison pain', *Punishment and Society* 13(5): 530-550.

Liebling, A. and Arnold, H. (2012 forthcoming) 'Social relationships between prisoners in a maximum security prison: violence, faith, and the declining nature of trust', *Journal of Criminal Justice*.

Liebling, A. and Straub, C. (2012 forthcoming), 'Identity Challenges and the Risks of Radicalisation in High Security Custody', *Prison Service Journal*.

3. Understanding prisons: Extended MQPL and SQL exercises

Alison Liebling, Ben Crewe, Susie Hulley, Marie Hutton, Nicola Clay, Deborah Kant, Amy Ludlow, Bethany Schmidt, Robert Walker

Largely in response to specific requests from Governors, several 'extended' MQPL and SQL research exercises have been carried out in the last

year involving many members of the Prisons Research Centre. Three such exercises were carried out at HMYOI Brinsford (October 2011), HMP Birmingham (December 2011) and HMYOI Aylesbury (February 2012), involving observation, interviews, and quality of life surveys with prisoners and prison staff (SQL). The staff surveys were conducted at full staff meetings, following a brief research presentation.

These studies were 'self-contained' exercises aimed at diagnosing each prison's culture, establishing baselines, and assisting Governors in their future planning. Each led to a report to the Governor. These kinds of studies have also stimulated us to closely examine *like* prisons, with slightly different social environments, priorities, strengths and difficulties. Such has been the usefulness of these exploratory research exercises, we have agreed to build two or three in annually, on an open-ended basis, to our future work.

HMYOI Brinsford.

The first of these research exercises was a small study of the quality of life for prisoners and staff in HMYOI Brinsford. The PRC research team were invited to survey the prison as part of an overall evaluation of the culture and quality of life of the prison by the Governor, who intended to use the results to inform a 'revised vision and priorities document for the prison'. A team of six visited the prison for six days between 20 October and November 2011.

Brinsford showed many characteristics that are typical of public sector prisons. Prisoners reported that there were some very good staff, who were fair, supportive, and treated them with decency and humanity. However, they said that many others uniformed staff treated them poorly, talked to them in a manner that was disrespectful, used their power in an inconsistent and arbitrary manner, and acted preferentially towards favoured or compliant prisoners. Prisoners felt powerless and frustrated – particularly at the amount of time that they spent confined to their cells, and the consequences of this – but had to 'hold down' their frustrations for fear of the consequences: being denied further access to showers, telephones and exercise. Relationships between wing staff and prisoners who worked closely with

them were good, but these represented a minority of prisoners. There were some indications that staff were reinforcing and using the prisoner hierarchy in order to make their lives easier. Prisoners – especially those who were non-White – complained of unfairness in staff treatment.

The staff culture was somewhat traditional, complacent and custody-oriented. The collective definition of 'decency' and 'decent treatment' among staff was rather narrow and limited, and the model of safety among uniformed staff was to keep prisoners confined rather than develop a more legitimate regime. Staff over-estimated the quality of their relationships with prisoners (a typical finding in a culturally poor prison), and did not carry in their minds a clear idea of decent, constructive relationships or how to work effectively with young people. They were unaware of how traditional-custodial the prison was or the extent of the prison's problems; some were resistant to taking on board messages about prisoners' frustrations and the prison's shortcomings, even when these are outlined in official inspections ('prisoners say it's good but they don't rate it on paper – it's hard to know which is true').³ Many uniformed staff were committed and well-disposed, and expressed enthusiasm to be more involved in rehabilitation work, but they were unaware of how they could do so. Similarly, a high proportion of uniformed staff appeared to be positively oriented to prisoners and keen to be led, if somewhat dispirited. We suggested in our report that these staff might need their leadership to be more 'emotional, supportive and imaginative'. They coveted praise and positive feedback. At the time of our study, they felt treated in a way that they regarded as judgmental, undifferentiated, and disbelieving (and they expressed a similar attitude towards prisoners). The fear of being doubted and disciplined by managers when using control and restraint (as a result of attempts to tackle over use) seemed to have led to some staff over-using alternative sanctions (threats; and illegitimate use of

³ There were also indications that some staff were reluctant to acknowledge deficiencies in the domain of prisoner safety. One middle manager expressed doubt about HMIP findings in this area, noting that prisoners tended to use the word 'safe' in a way that was different from official definitions.

discretion), and others 'sitting back' and 'switching off'. Staff needed further guidance on de-escalation techniques, and a clear, simple, positive route map for the future, with less detail.

Brinsford was an anxious and somewhat demoralised prison, for a number of reasons, some of which were external to the immediate environment. Many of the difficulties faced by the senior management reflected national trends: fierce competition, the demand for rapid improvement, financial pressure, overwork, and a high and challenging prisoner population. There was support for the Governor's agenda, but we suggested that it might be important, in future, to 'harness the positive'. A full Appreciative Inquiry exercise had begun at the same time as our study.

HMP Birmingham

The PRC team visited HMP Birmingham in December 2011, during a significant period of transition for the prison: it had been transferred from the public sector to G4S in October 2011, the first such transition from the public sector to a private company in UK prisons history. The aim of the study was to provide a benchmark for some testing of the effects of the transition, one year later. We have agreed with Audit and Corporate Assurance that we will join in with their time-tabled MQPL visit in December 2012.

During the research we found that staff were enthusiastic and impatient for change – most of which was in practice was planned for early 2012. Yet, staff also showed signs of stress and considerable exhaustion following a prolonged period of uncertainty and anxiety, exacerbated by uncertainty about further job losses (e.g. especially among OSGs and administrative officers). Considerable energy and willingness to pursue a new agenda were expressed by the majority of staff. Their loyalty to the prison was high. Birmingham prison has the advantage that it is located in the heart of the local community, and is staffed and populated by people who live in it. We were surprised by the commitment to future development shown by staff, given the difficult nature of the exercise.

Prisoners' evaluations of their treatment, however, were largely negative. None of the 'harmony' or

relational dimensions in the MQPL survey scored 3 (neutral) or above and, in general staff overestimated the quality of their relationships with prisoners. However, staff were not 'hostile' to prisoners, and some good work went on. We concluded that staff could be significantly more effective as well as respectful in their dealings with prisoners.

As we left the prison, a major programme of change was underway.

HMYOI Aylesbury

In February 2012, the research was undertaken in HMYOI Aylesbury, this time at the request of the organization, User Voice. Aylesbury's Governor had recently welcomed User Voice, an organization which established prisoner councils, into the prison.

The surveys showed that staff and prisoner evaluations of their quality of life were relatively low, but the prisoner survey scores had improved since the previous MQPL undertaken in February 2011. Common themes included poor staff-prisoner relationships and regime delivery. Perceptions of poor regime delivery were indicative of broader problems of organisation and inconsistency. There was a sense of stagnation expressed by prisoners. Staff expressed considerable stress due to wide ranging organisational changes and alterations to the regime and their working conditions. In particular, low staffing levels (due mainly to high levels of staff sickness) impacted negatively on many areas, including implementation of the daily regime, use of authority, relationships with prisoners, staff morale and safety. Despite positive perceptions among staff of the Governor and the Dep, the staff felt generally unsupported. The results suggested that, amongst other planned changes, there was considerable potential for User Voice to develop better communication and relationships between staff and prisoners, and between staff and management as well as scope to improve the predictability and consistency of the regime for both. Uptake in such initiatives was slow at first, but skeptical prisoners agreed that they would be encouraged by visible changes and improvements in these areas.

One of our MPhil students (Bethany Schmidt, see further below) is evaluating the work of User Voice and so has maintained contact with the prison (as well as others), noting both how effectively they implement their work and any effects.

Some of the general conclusions we drew from the three studies so far were: an apparent lack of focus on positive personal development work with prisoners in YOIs; a need for more attention to be paid to the process of leading and achieving positive change in difficult prisons; and the unintended effects of fast-paced organizational change on the morale and attitudes of prison officers. Further analysis of the data from these three studies, including additional MQPL and SQL data from two contrasting prisons (one high performing YOI and one high performing local prison) will be conducted in the early autumn.

4. An exploratory study into Aboriginal quality of prison life

Alison Liebling, John Rynne, Yolonda Adams and Sjharn Leeson

This is a nationally-funded three year study, supported by the Australian Research Council, to develop an Australia-wide measure of Aboriginal prison quality; and to devise a model of correctional best practice based on Aboriginal culture. The research project is investigating in particular how elements of Indigenous culture could be used in understanding and improving prison quality as well as to empower prisoners, and whether lessons learned can be transferred into remote Aboriginal communities. Well-being expert Dr John Rynne of Griffith University in Queensland is the Principal Investigator.

As part of the project, a visit was organised to several prisons, work camps and communities in Northern Territory and Western Australia during April 2012. During this exercise, informal conversations were held with prisoners and staff, and an attempt made to pilot the use of Appreciative Inquiry in talking with Aboriginal and other prisoners about the prison experience. The explorations were very fruitful. The visit ended with a day in Australia's first purpose built Aboriginal prison. It is appropriate

that in the 25th anniversary of the commissioning of the Inquiry into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody, a prison has been constructed that goes beyond the recommendations of that Commission to recognise the uniqueness of Australia's Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders. Construction of a new prison is not something to be celebrated, and the prison cannot in itself solve the over-representation of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander in the criminal justice system. What it may achieve is recognition that a different approach to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander imprisonment is required if the imprisonment rate is to decline. For the first time in Australia, the design, construction and operational potential of the West Kimberley prison provides the infrastructure for corrections professionals, Aboriginal Elders and Respected people, and local community members to work collaboratively in an environment that acknowledges the complexities of Aborigine and Torres Strait Islander culture. The new prison has the potential to move beyond rhetoric and to embed traditional ways in the administration of justice in a custodial institution. The West Australian State Government, Department of Corrections and Inspector of Custodial Corrections have been 'congratulated for committing to the project and for working in consultation with the local Indigenous and non-Indigenous community to make this prison happen' (Press Release). The hope of the research team is that we will over time see evidence that the opening and operation of this prison acted as a catalyst for the reform of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander over-representation, a reduction in recidivism, and the empowering of Indigenous people. The research will explore quality of life for prisoners in several existing as well as newly opening establishments.

The visit to the West Kimberly prison generated considerable interest:

'Two prominent researchers – John Rynne and Alison Liebling - were given a tour of the the WKRP site last month as part of their investigation into Aboriginal offenders' experience of prison life. They were hosted by Superintendent Mike Macfarlane before meeting with Shire President Elsia Archer. Dr Rynne said "By helping prisoners to heal and learn during their prison sentence, we have the opportunity to reduce further offences and

hopefully prevent rearrest, which in turn will help to create safer communities".

The Australian research team plan to come to Cambridge in October 2012 to spend two weeks with the PRC. They will participate in specially organised training in Appreciative Inquiry, prison visits, and research collaborations.

5. Risk and protective factors in the resettlement of imprisoned fathers with their families

Principal Investigator: **Friedrich Lösel**

Project Co-ordinator: **Gill Pugh** (Ormiston Children and Families Trust)

Research Team: **Lucy Markson, Karen Souza, Caroline Lanskey.**

The final report for this 2 year longitudinal study of the experiences of fathers, their partners and children during and after the father's imprisonment concluded in November 2011. It was run in partnership with Ormiston Children and Families Trust with a grant from the Big Lottery Fund.

The study's results showed mixed experiences for the families after release. The quality of family relationships continued to be relatively stable but fathers were less involved with their children than prior to imprisonment. According to parents' reports, most children adjusted relatively well to their father's release although qualitative analyses revealed the fragility of the well-being of most of the children and young people interviewed. Fathers and mothers reported lower consumption of both alcohol and illegal drugs than prior to the imprisonment and improved physical and mental health after the imprisonment. Their experience of stigmatization did not increase. Fathers were economically worse off than before prison, Mothers were in a financially stronger position than during the fathers' imprisonment. The level of support from family and friends remained the same. Overall, families' expectations regarding potential problems on release were mostly realistic. Approximately one-fifth of the fathers had been returned to prison.

The factors most consistently linked to positive

resettlement outcomes for fathers, mothers and children were: high quality of family relationships; good communication between the father and family during imprisonment; high frequency of contact during imprisonment; intensive involvement of fathers with children before prison; social support from family and friends; participation in family-oriented programmes (when controlled for quality of the parents' relationship); more material resources before imprisonment (i.e., income, employment, accommodation); and less previous involvement of the father with crime and the criminal justice system.

Of course, this study only provides a snapshot of the bigger picture of the process of resettlement for imprisoned fathers and the adjustment of their families. Although it covered up to six months after release, we do not know the longer-term development of the families. However, the first months after release are a particularly critical period for resettlement and a number of factors in this process may have a longer impact.

The project's final report was published in January 2012. It is available at:

<http://www.ormiston.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Risk-and-Protective-Factors-final-report.pdf>.

New Research

1. Experiencing long-term imprisonment from young adulthood: identity, adaptation and penal legitimacy

Dr Ben Crewe and **Dr Susannah Hulley** have recently been awarded a two-year research grant by the Economic and Social Research Council, in order to study the growing number of prisoners who are serving extremely long sentences from an early age. These prisoners have to endure and adapt to periods inside prison that are almost as long as their lives as free citizens, while maturing into adulthood in an environment that does not allow, or is hardly conducive to, normal adult experiences. Practitioners have suggested that the characteristics and adaptive styles of very long term prisoners have changed, leading to a number of organisational and operational challenges for

the Prison Service. Meanwhile, recent studies of prison life suggest that the system to which they are committed has in many respects become more onerous and demanding.

This study will explore the experiences and attitudes of this group of prisoners with three sets of questions in mind. First, how do they make sense of and manage such long sentences, and deal with existential issues of identity, change and future? How do they experience 'growing up' and maturing into adulthood in prison? Second, how do they adapt socially to the demands of the environment, i.e. on what basis do they form relationships with other prisoners and with prison staff? Third, how do such extreme sentences, and the fact that the prisoners serving them are often socially alienated and hostile to state institutions prior to their imprisonment, shape their perceptions of the prison's legitimacy, with what implications for their adaptation and compliance? What are the effects of their feelings about their sentences, and their wider social experiences, on their prison behaviour and their willingness to engage with staff? How are imprisonment, the criminal justice system and the state regarded overall by these prisoners?

Interviews will be conducted with 100 prisoners sentenced to life with a recommended minimum term or 'tariff' of 15 years or more when they were aged under 21 years (around a third of the overall population of such prisoners). The sample will be divided into those prisoners at the start of their sentence, those in the middle, and those approaching the tariff-point or release. This will allow us to explore how identity and adaptation are shaped at different times during the sentence. Interviews will comprise two parts: a life history interview and an interview focussing on prison experiences.

Based on interviews with prison staff and senior managers, the proposed research will also explore how the prison system - its frontline staff and managers - manages a set of prisoners who present a range of organisational problems. How is life made meaningful for prisoners facing such extended periods of incarceration? How are they prepared for release? To what degree do they represent a risk to institutional stability? The

research will aim to inform policy and practice in relation to a group of prisoners about whom little is known either by practitioners and academics. It will contribute significantly to the sparse and outdated literature on the experiences of long term prisoners, specifically, those who are barely adults when they enter prison. It will address fundamental questions about identity, coping and humanity under intense duress, and about the lived outcomes of extreme forms of state sanction and punishment.

A research assistant, **Ms Serena Wright**, has recently been appointed to the study, which will begin in August 2012.

2. Educational Pathways of Young People in the Youth Justice System (April 2012 – March 2013)

Principal Investigator: **Caroline Lanskey**

This 12 month project supported by the Society for Educational Studies has two objectives. The first is to develop an explanatory framework for the educational experiences of young people in the youth justice system. The second and related objective is to identify practices (pedagogic, strategic and administrative) which support young people's engagement with learning.

At the centre of the research are a purposive sample of 25 young people with community and custodial sentences under the supervision of the Cambridgeshire Youth Offending Services (YOS). Their experiences of education/training will be tracked for up to six months during their time in the youth justice system. The young people will be interviewed twice: at the beginning and at the end of the six month period (or at the end of their YOS supervision if shorter than six months). Interviews will also be held with their parents/carers, youth offending services managers and staff, education providers and policy makers. These data will be supplemented by observations of the education/training the young people receive and an analysis of Youth Justice and Local Education Authority records.

Visiting Scholars

1. In recent months, the Prisons Research Centre has hosted **Thomas Ugelvik**, from the University of Oslo. Here, Thomas reports on his time in Cambridge:

Originally, my plan was to combine my visit at the PRC with a short period of ethnographic fieldwork in either an Immigration Removal Centre or one of the prisons in England and Wales that holds foreign nationals exclusively. I am currently starting up a new research project on immigration detention and foreign national prisoners in Norway, and forms of cooperation (or lack thereof) between the prison service and the immigration authorities, and was therefore hoping to gather a modest amount of empirical material for comparison purposes. Having wrestled for some time with the online NOMS research application system, I was eventually informed that the research would not be supported. Thanks to the excellent reputation of the PRC, I was however able to briefly visit several UK prisons in a more informal capacity (HMP Wormwood Scrubs, HMP Canterbury and HMP Huntercombe) towards the end of my stay. These visits have provided me with insights into the UK system that will be valuable for my future work. More importantly, though, it has been a great experience to be a guest at the PRC. Being able to discuss prisons, prison life and prison research with colleagues who are among the very best in the field on a daily basis has been inspiring. I hope to be able to return the hospitality in the future.

I have completed six papers while at the PRC: one on the paternal pains of imprisonment, one examining the links between the Norwegian welfare state and its prisons, one focusing on prisoners' "othering" of rapists as a technique of the self, one exploring the links between masculinity and grassing, a review of Norwegian immigration detention (co-authored with Synnøve Ugelvik) and a comparative analysis of crime news media on the UK, Norway and Italy (co-authored with Yvonne Jewkes and Rinella Cacere).

Publications

Ugelvik, T. 'Paternal Pains of Imprisonment: Imprisoned Masculinity, Resistance and the Fight

Against State Power'. To appear in a special issue of *Punishment and Society* on Immigration, gender and crime (M. Bosworth and S. Pickering eds).

Ugelvik, T. 'Less Eligibility Resurrected?: Immigration, Exclusion and the Norwegian Welfare State Prison'. To appear in *Borders of Punishment* (K.F. Aas and M. Bosworth eds), OUP.

Ugelvik, T. "'We Are Not Like Them": The Narrative Exclusion of Immoral Others as Ethical Work on the Self'. To appear in *Narrative Criminology* (L. Presser and S. Sandberg eds).

Ugelvik, T. "'Be a Man. Not a Bitch.": Snitching, the Inmate Code and the Narrative Construction of Masculinity in a Norwegian Prison'. Submitted to *Men and Masculinity*.

Ugelvik, S. and Ugelvik, T. 'Immigration Detention, Norway Style'. To appear in a special issue of *European Journal of Criminology* on immigration detention in Europe.

Jewkes, Y., Cere, R. and Ugelvik, T. 'Media and Crime: A Comparative Analysis of Crime News in the UK, Norway and Italy'. To appear in *The Routledge Handbook of European Criminology*.

2. In February 2012 **Noel Whitty**, Professor of Human Rights Law at the University of Nottingham, was also hosted by the Prisons Research Centre. Noel reflects on his time in Cambridge here:

My three weeks at the PRC were a most stimulating experience. I am working on a book length project (working title, *Prisoners: Rights, Risks and Politics*) which is exploring some UK case studies of imprisonment through a focus on the relationship between risk management practices and human rights law. The dynamics of prisoners' rights – historically, legally, culturally – is one key part of the analysis and, when at the PRC, I was engaged with a particularly intriguing aspect: perceptions of legality. There is an obvious awareness of 'the legal' in accounts of punishment and prisons-focussed criminological research, but one also finds very different emphases given to the empirical details, and theoretical implications, of legal consciousness,

prisoner litigation and related criminal justice politics. Researching this question has led to a widening of my focus and an exploration of different styles of criminological engagement with human rights (law), both historically and in recent years. One is left with an interesting contemporary situation to assess: why, for instance, do some criminologists now argue for a distancing from human rights because of their legalistic qualities – while other criminologists argue for a much deeper engagement with the legal culture and practices of the human rights field?

The PRC was a superb environment in which to pursue these questions, not only amongst staff and students but also with other visiting academics. My thanks to Alison and Ben for being excellent hosts, and to Tony Bottoms for the history lesson (and explaining why he wrote in 1986 that criminology would need to broaden its focus from criminal to public law).

Publications

Whitty, N. (2011) 'Human Rights as Risk: UK Prisons and the Management of Risk and Rights', *Punishment & Society* 13(2): 123-148.

PhD research

1. **Ruth Armstrong** is in the final stages of writing up her PhD, '**An ethnography of ex-prisoners released from a faith-based prison programme**'. The study reports on the lives of 48 men released over a six month period from a faith-based prison program in the USA, with additional insights from a purposively selected sample of their volunteer mentors. Anchored in desistance theory, it analyses participants' experiences in their first year post-release.

The thesis begins with a description of life on 'parole', a term deriving from the French meaning 'spoken word', indicating the need for trust. It charts how parole practice has moved away from a concept of trust and become more risk averse, categorising parolees as 'dangerous others', categorically untrustworthy, risks to be managed. Participants' parole conditions were imposed indiscriminately, in ways that interfered with

known elements of desistance and successful re-entry. This established a structure for parole interactions that communicated mixed messages to parolees about their personhood and how far they could and should take responsibility for their future.

In this context, churches provided opportunities for social and spiritual transcendence and forums for demonstrating a 'new self'. However, common struggles in re-entry acted as barriers to involvement in churches. There was scant evidence of churches engaging with these problems in tangible ways. The notion of individual salvation and miraculous reform obfuscated the need for realistic responses to the struggles of re-entry. The PhD argues that if assistance from churches was offered not because it was earned, but because it was needed, it could make it easier for ex-prisoners to be honest about their shortcomings, and remain in congregation.

In a similar vein, analysis of the faith-based Aftercare programme showed how, despite its important work immediately post release in transitional issues such as employment, accommodation and trouble-shooting with parole, it struggled to prioritise ex-prisoners who had the greatest needs and risks. The overall goals of the faith-based programme included spiritual transformation and (as a result) reduced recidivism. Yet the goal of reduced recidivism created behavioural expectations that failed to recognise the fluctuating nature of desistance and the difficulties of re-entry. In this context, a doctrine of individual responsibility flourished.

The findings of this study suggest that attracting and effectively training volunteers to work with prisoners and ex-prisoners is one way to mediate ex-prisoners' experience of stigmatising social attitudes and assist them in reentry. Volunteers working with prisoners came to understand that prisoners were not so 'other' but were 'just like you and me'. Volunteers acted out of a sense of service to God practicing a 'theology of personhood' - not seeking to establish whether a prisoner was trustworthy, but treating them as personworthy, and extending trust on this basis. Volunteers extended trust, and made themselves vulnerable, based on their own faith rather than

the recipient's response. This established the basis for a relationship that could not only support ex-prisoners' strengths, but could also embrace the idea of 'struggle', supporting desistance through the ability to acknowledge its ups and downs.

Publications

Armstrong, R. (2010) Short Article: *Searching for Mercy Street: An examination of the re-entry of ex-prisoners released from a faith-based prison programme in the USA*, Academy for Justice Commissioning, Bulletin Winter 2010/11

2. Jason Warr is a fourth year PhD student working on a thesis entitled '**The Forensic Psychologist: The Contemporary 'Prison' Psychologist in Person and Practice.**'

The last twenty years have seen a significant increase in the demand for and expansion of psychological services within the prison estate. Overwhelmingly, these services have been provided by specialist forensic practitioners. The expansion of psychological services is an outcome of a number of factors, including a shift towards, and an overt commitment to, the ideals of public protection. These changes have impacted directly upon the nature and level of work faced by psychologists in prisons and have thus resulted in a new range of occupational, institutional and individual pressures that impact not only upon themselves but also the prisoners whom they assess.

The study is based around an Appreciative Inquiry model and explores the role, practices, motivations, values and experiences of the modern forensic psychologist. Set against a background of contemporary penal power and forensic psychological literature, it seeks to provide a sociological account of the complexities involved with being a forensic practitioner in the modern penal environment. The sample has been drawn from the national pool of forensic practitioners who are currently (or who were at time of interview) employed within the prison estate of England and Wales.

A number of interesting results have emerged from the study, which were largely unpredicted

and do not conform to the rather limited, mainly US based literature on psychologists working in prisons. The three major themes are: firstly, the nature and depth of the emotional toil that comes from operating within secure settings; secondly, the manner in which psychologists themselves experience power within prison establishments - both in terms of wielding power predicated upon their expertise and being subject to the power both of the institution and of uniformed staff; and thirdly, the impact of the gendered nature of the environment on psychologists' professional and personal well-being.

Publications

Warr, J. (2012) 'Afterword', in B. Crewe and J Bennet (eds.) *The Prisoner*, London: Routledge.

Warr, J. (2012) 'Book review – Psychological Therapy in Prisons and Other Secure Settings', *The British Journal of Community Justice*.

Warr, J. (in progress) 'Experiencing Power: The Forensic Psychologist in the Modern Prison'.

3. Amy Ludlow is in the third year of her PhD in law at the University of Cambridge. Her research, entitled "**Does Public Procurement Deliver? A Prison Privatisation Case Study**", is jointly supervised by Alison Lieblich and two colleagues (Nicola Padfield and Catherine Barnard) in the Faculty of Law.

Contestability, through market testing and competitive tendering with private sector involvement, is a major experiment in penal organisation and management. It may result in prison closure or the transfer of management to a private company (privatisation). This business restructuring necessarily has enormous, and perhaps not entirely undesired, potential to effect employment and industrial relation change. It also demands new types of commercial understanding and engagement from the public sector.

Amy's research combines public source data collection with a case study at HMP Birmingham, the first operational public sector prison in the UK to be transferred into private management. Amy followed the competition at Birmingham for a

year, through its transition period to the prison's transfer to G4S in October 2011. One of the aims of the research is to describe and evaluate market testing and procurement processes in prisons against labour law and human resources values. The research explores the role of procurement and employment law in shaping the staffing and industrial relations impacts of contestability and privatisation.

In practice, procurement and the workforce restructuring it tends to bring, appear to come into tension with some aspects of employment law as well as with good employment and industrial practice, particularly in the current economic climate. Amy's research explores how this tension has been managed by the managers, bid teams and NOMS staff who have been charged with steering the competition. In drawing upon the experiences of Birmingham prison staff, it questions whether the law provides an adequate and effective framework within which employment rights can be safeguarded and the promises of competition (such as value for money and innovation) can be fulfilled. The study explores and articulates the tensions between contestability / privatisation in the prison sector and good employment law and practice. It reflects upon what these new practices might mean for the occupational identity, role and future of prison staff. Its purpose is to connect law and the criminological literature on prisons and prison staff to the story of the people in and behind the competition processes in the sector.

Publications

Ludlow, A. (2010): Case Note: "Prison privatisation in Israel: Important Transnational Lessons" *Cambridge Student Law Review*, Volume 6, (2010), 326-329.

Ludlow, A. (2011): Short Article: "Exploring Contestability and Privatisation - what it means for Prison Staff" *Academy for Justice Commissioning*, Issue No. 13, (2011), 8-9 (<http://virtual.nationalschool.gov.uk/AJC/Pages/Bulletin-Issue13.aspx>).

Ludlow, A. (2011) Thematic Interview: Prison Strikes, Respondent for England and Wales, *FATIK*

Tijdschrift voor Strafrecht en Gevangeniswezen, Issue No. 130, 30-32 (published in Flemish).

Ludlow, A. (2011) "Regulating Prison Strikes and Industrial Conflict", *Prison Service Journal*, Issue No. 198, (2011), 17-21.

Ludlow, A. (2012, forthcoming,) "Competition & Contestability in Action: Restructuring the prison sector to achieve workforce and industrial change" (*Public Law*, July 2012).

Ludlow, A. (work in progress) "Do prison custody officers have a different (legal) status to prison officers?".

4. Rachelle Larocque is a third year PhD student, whose thesis is titled: '**A Critical Analysis of Canadian Penology and Scholarship**'. The Canadian penal system has a reputation for being the 'liberal' neighbour of a very different American system with more in common with its European partners. Despite pressure to adopt 'tough on crime' measures found in the United States, it has retained a balanced and disciplined approach to the use of imprisonment (Meyer and O'Malley, 2005). For instance, Canada's imprisonment rates have remained relatively stable since the 1960s with only small fluctuations during the 1990s (although the legislative tide is beginning to turn). Nevertheless, Canada is neglected in international comparative studies on imprisonment. To date, there is no robust empirical study of Canadian penology. Canada repeatedly 'polices' criminological knowledge by denying entry to the penal system for research purposes. It is significant that Canadian prisoners' experience of punishment is hidden from view except in narrow studies of rehabilitative efforts. Research on 'special' populations such as Aboriginal offenders, women, and young offenders is more widespread but still fairly restricted.

Rachelle's research examines the extent to which Canadian penal practices, values, and habits are liberal-humanitarian and/or punitive in practice. It aims to provide an empirical account of the experiences of imprisonment in Canada. Empirical research has so far included a 2 week secondment at the Office of the Correctional Investigator in Ottawa Canada, and a visit to Kingston Penitentiary

in Kingston Canada where she spoke with prison staff and familiarized herself with the Canadian penal system. Subsequently, she undertook six months of fieldwork during which she administered quality of prison life questionnaires to prisoners and staff, as and conducted in-depth interviews with prisoners and staff at five Ontario prisons. Preliminary analysis suggests that many prisoners experience shame and disconnection during their imprisonment. Many discussed feeling worthless and unimportant in the eyes of the officers and the system as a whole. Moreover, a new type of 'covert punitiveness' appears to be emerging in at least four of the five establishments - a type of punitive behaviour where brutality, cruelty, and harshness are not deliberate or intentional but are rather manifested as a form of 'indifference'.

Publications

Book Reviews

Larocque, R. (2010). Why We Kill: Understanding Violence Across Cultures and Disciplines. *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 49(5):547-548.

Larocque, R. (2011). Supermax: Controlling Risk through Solitary Confinement. *Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, 50(2): 227-228.

Larocque, R. (2012). Incivility: The Rude Stranger in Everyday Life. *Crime, Media, Culture*, 8(1):113-114.

5. Marie Hutton is in the second year of her PhD, entitled '**A Critical Analysis of the Visiting System in English and Welsh prisons**'. She will shortly be conducting an in-depth case study of the visiting system in a local male prison in the north of England. Adopting a combined ethnographic and phenomenological methodology, she will be observing each stage of the visits process, conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews with prisoners and their visitors, and undertaking focus groups with visiting staff. This will enable her to obtain an 'in depth analysis of the meaning of the lived experience' of prison visits to those who experience them (Kilinc and Campbell, 2009) and interpret the culture and social structure of the visiting system. The research will be underpinned by considerations that arise from the application of Article 8 of the European Convention

on Human Rights - the right to respect for a person's private and family life – to domestic prison visits. Article 8 ECHR case law on prison visitation often highlights a conflict between respecting the Article 8 right and the operational and security needs of prisons. How prison personnel understand and address this balancing act in practice and the extent to which this impacts on the 'quality' of visits experienced will be explored. Marie also aims to 'humanise' human rights concepts by exploring what a 'private and family life' means to prisoners and their visitors in a prison setting.

Marie has also recently completed an evaluation of a Children's Play Project at HMP Doncaster. The aim of the project is to help prisoners maintain and strengthen their relationships with their families during imprisonment to aid their rehabilitation and resettlement upon release. Over the course of two weeks, she observed as a group of prisoners created and performed a play for their children and conducted 'lightly structured' interviews before and after the project with participants. The evaluation explores the impact of the project on the participants, their relationships with their families and the implications for the prison more widely. A publication of the study is forthcoming.

6. Thomas Akoensi is in the second year of his PhD, '**Prison officer stress - the case of the Ghana Prison Service**', exploring some of the stressors that are unique to Ghana's prisons system and those that are shared with western counterparts.. With the aim of ascertaining who the Ghanaian prison officer is, how he accomplishes his daily routines, the challenges on the job, and what causes him stress, Thomas has adopted a mixed methods design, combining both qualitative and quantitative strategies. Recently, he has conducted mainly in depth non-structured interviews with 78 prison officers in 20 prisons located in all but two of Ghana's administrative regions. He has administered 1,300 surveys to prison officers stationed at 31 different prisons, resulting in 1,062 usable surveys overall, covering issues such as job stress, job satisfaction, perceptions of the dangerousness of the job, impact on family life, and organizational commitment. Between October 2011 and March 2012, he also spent time in all but one of Ghana's administrative regions, closely

observing prison officers as they went about their normal duties.

So far, Thomas's preliminary analyses indicate that concerns over infectious diseases, dangerousness, low levels of job autonomy, conflict between work and family life, and prison officer perceptions of their own legitimacy (power-holder legitimacy) are significant predictors of job stress. Power-holder legitimacy seems to be based on both instrumental factors (e.g. uniform and legality) and normative factors (personal qualities such as respect, good interpersonal relationships and self-discipline/integrity). This has implications for the training of prison officers in securing prisoners compliance and shaping the moral milieu of the prison.

7. Esther van Ginneken, a second-year PhD student, is writing up her findings on '**The psychological adjustment of prisoners: An empirical and conceptual analysis**', based upon 30 interviews with male and female prisoners on their prison experience, psychological well-being and outlook on the future. Most prisoners in the sample were soon to be released and were serving a determinate sentence of a year or longer. Various patterns of psychological adjustment emerged from the analysis, which reflected variation in the extent to which prisoners had come to terms with their imprisonment. Negative adjustment was characterized by poor coping, unhappiness, and hopelessness or uncertainty about the future. Neutral adjustment could be described as 'quiet desperation', which comprised adequate coping and functioning, but also a sense of apathy, which distinguished this group from positively adjusted prisoners. This last group (which mostly consisted of women who were in prison for the first time) had a positive outlook on the future and could be described as 'flourishing'. Counselling and support appeared to contribute to positive adjustment.

Prisoners' narratives were also analysed for themes from the desistance literature, such as agency, generativity, and optimism about the future. From a positive psychological perspective, the main finding was that imprisonment functioned as a turning point for some people. Prisoners who held this view had interpreted their prison experience as having a positive influence on

their life, because it represented a breaking point from a bad situation (e.g. abusive relationship, drug addiction). Furthermore, these individuals used their time in prison as an opportunity for treatment and support. Other prisoners displayed varying degrees of desistance-readiness, which was related to expressions of agency and expectations about the future. Contrary to current practice, interventions to promote desistance should arguably focus more on fostering a sense of self-efficacy and optimism, rather than on reducing risk.

Esther has also collaborated on a project investigating the relationship between cell sharing and quality of prison life with Toon Molleman from the WODC (Research and Documentation Centre) in the Netherlands. They conducted a multi-level analysis on data from a Dutch prisoner survey and found that cell sharing is associated with lower perceived prison quality, which is partially mediated by reduced quality of staff-prisoner relationships. The paper presenting these findings is currently under review.

8. Nicola Clay is in the first year of a PhD entitled '**Routes into and out of trouble: a short longitudinal study of repeat rule-breakers within Young Offender Institutions**'. The research focuses on young adults within the YO estate who receive numerous disciplinary sanctions during their sentence, including periods in segregation, adjudications, or IEP warnings and downgradings. Specifically, the study will look at the types of behaviour for which this group of offenders is punished, the causes of their rule-breaking, and the effects of disciplinary sanctions on this section of the prison population. By using a longitudinal approach, Nicola will also explore how some 'repeat rule-breakers' reduce the frequency with which they are punished whilst in prison. In this regard it will be necessary to consider not only the factors underlying increased compliance with prison rules, but also the extent to which repeat rule-breakers learn how to avoid detection.

Nicola will be using an adaptive theory approach (Layder, 1998) by considering how criminological theory and the existing literature on desistance apply specifically to the YOI setting, whilst allowing for the possibility of alternative ideas and

explanations. The research will also be informed by current understandings of prisoner social life, staff/prisoner relationships, prisoner coping mechanisms, and the attitudes, identities and self-narratives found amongst offenders. In looking at 18-21 year olds, the study will also consider how developmental theories of adolescent delinquency and adult criminality apply to this potentially transitional group.

Nicola is currently applying for access to conduct her research. The intention is to carry out in-depth interviews with a sample of repeat rule-breakers three times over the course of eight months, covering both their life histories prior to and during their imprisonment, and their experiences of rule-breaking within YOIs. In the second and third interviews, the aim will be to look for changes in their attitudes or circumstances that may have led to increased or decreased rule-breaking and/or detection. Subject to participants' consent, selected officers and peers within the prison will also be interviewed to gain additional perspectives on the participant's behaviour.

MPhil research

1. Elaine Freer's thesis explored homicide in prisons in England and Wales between 2000 and 2011, based on documentary analysis of Prisons and Probation Ombudsman Reports, media reports, and a small number of interviews. The research focussed primarily on the attributes of victims and perpetrators, and on the circumstances and methods of the murders. The victims were found to have a variety of vulnerability factors. They had a higher mean age than the perpetrators (40 compared to 28), were more likely to have committed an index offence which was sexual, violent, or had targeted a vulnerable victim, and were more likely to be serving short sentences. In the majority of cases, they were the cellmate of the perpetrator, and in other cases were known to the perpetrator, usually through internal prison trade. The perpetrators were also vulnerable, in some cases, but had fewer vulnerability factors than the victims and were more likely to have been imprisoned for violence. Homicides were most likely to occur in Local, Category B prisons, overnight. Private prisons were disproportionately represented in the

sample. In some prisons, MQPL data on prisoner safety 'predicted' homicides.

2. For her MPhil dissertation, **Alice levins** conducted exploratory research into the experiences of imprisonment for prisoners convicted of sexual offences. Sex offenders make up more than 10% of the prison population in England and Wales, but although it is a commonplace of prison sociology that such prisoners experience considerable amounts of stigmatisation and fear due to the attitudes of 'mainstream' prisoners, very little research has been conducted into this population, particularly in prisons that accommodate sex offenders exclusively. Based on 22 semi-structured interviews with prisoners in HMP Whatton, a Category C men's prison near Nottingham which holds prisoners participating (or hoping to participate) in Sex Offender Treatment Programmes (SOTPs), Alice's study was specifically designed to explore issues of identity, hierarchy, safety and social relations. Alice hopes to conduct further research in this area in the future.

3. **Bethany Schmidt** has explored the work of the innovative non-profit organization User Voice and its ex-offender-led prison council model. Her research employs qualitative methods to examine and understand the processes at work when an active prisoner-based council, which aims to give a voice to prisoners in order to facilitate collaborative problem-solving with staff, is established in the prison environment. Three prisons in varying stages of council development were selected for observation and analysis. The preliminary findings indicate that council participation aids offenders in reconceptualising their criminal identities through increased feelings of confidence, pride, and shared purpose within a community. In addition, the peripheral mentoring they receive from User Voice's ex-offenders increases prisoners' perceptions of hope and the formation of future-oriented goals. Moreover, staff-prisoner relationships are positively impacted from the mutual respect and decreased relational distance exhibited in solution-focused discussions, underpinned by the collective objective of improving the overall environment for both staff and prisoners.

Bethany will be incorporating this MPhil research into her PhD, which will be a 3-year program evaluation of User Voice that will utilize mixed methodologies in order to measure the council's effectiveness in producing constructive change at the individual and institutional levels. Interviews, focus groups, and participant observation from the same three prisons will be complemented by quantitative data measuring prisoner and staff quality of life at the baseline level (pre-council) and up to two years after the introduction of a council. The use of qualitative and quantitative data over several years will add an important longitudinal component to understanding the long-term impact of an active council. The research has important implications for creating penal systems committed to decency through cooperative communication with prisoners, fairness and accountability in administration decision-making and planning, and incorporating prisoners' voices into proactive rehabilitation strategies.

4. **Kirstine Szifris** is seeking to understand the benefits of providing 'a Community of Philosophical Inquiry' (CoPI) to prisoners. A CoPI is a group of individuals who discuss philosophical questions, chosen democratically, in an exploratory, non-adversarial manner. This technique has been used in a Philosophy for Children (P4C) programme in the USA, where claims that CoPI's aid the development of reasoning skills, ethics and personal growth have been supported by a wealth of empirical evaluations.

Kirstine has explored the use of a CoPI with prisoners in HMP High Down, where she has conducted four sessions, each lasting two hours and covering a range of topics. On the whole, the sessions have been well received, with one participant stating that he feels they can 'help in the rehabilitation process'. With this in mind, Kirstine has sought to assess the degree to which a COPI might assist offender rehabilitation by providing a forum in which prisoners are encouraged to explore their moral perspectives and self-identities, issues that the research literature suggests are highly important in processes of desistance. Kirstine has recently been awarded ESRC funding to enable her to continue her research as a PhD.

5. Robert Walker has been studying the nature of aggressive motivation among imprisoned young offenders (aged 18-22). Drawing on both sociological and psychological theories, his aim is to understand the main motivations for aggressive behaviour among this population, whether these motivations are more often reactive (i.e. impulsive and emotion-driven) or proactive (planned and controlled), and how motivations for aggression relate to sociological theories of violence and aggression. As Toch (1978) argued, it is important to understand the stimuli that invoke violent incidents, the contexts which facilitate or invite them, and the groups that encourage or condemn them. Robert's dissertation will be based on interviews with prisoners, which will explore motivations for aggression, alongside an accredited aggression motivation questionnaire (AMQ II), which will provide more specific information on the strengths of aggression motivation types in young adult offenders.

Other Activities

An International Symposium on Legitimacy and Criminal Justice was hosted by two of the Institute's Research Centres (Penal Theory and the PRC) in May 2012, with financial support from the British Academy, the national Academy for the Humanities and Social Sciences in the UK. The conference sought contributions from a high profile collection of scholars (including, apart from the 'home team', Tom Tyler, David Beetham, Jean-Marc Coicaud, Mike Levi, Susanne Karstedt, Jonathan Simon, John Dunn, Dirk van Zyl Smit, Andrew Jefferson, Ian Loader, Richard Sparks, Jacqueline Hodgson, John Jackson, Betsy Stanko, Lucia Zedner and Mike Hough). The conference reflected an exciting mix of interests and disciplines, from mainstream political theory through sociology and psychology to empirical and theoretical criminology. The papers (together with some commissioned since) will be published in a volume to be edited by Justice Tankebe and Alison Liebling.