



The Shaming of Sexual Offenders: Risk, Retribution and Reintegration

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Sex offenders, particularly those who offend against children, feature prominently in contemporary law and order debates. Child sexual abuse is a component of the broader category of 'gendered and sexualized violence' which causes significant trauma for victims yet continues to evade conventional approaches to justice. This is evidenced not only by the low number of prosecutions, due mostly to low levels of reporting and evidential difficulties at trial, but also by the failure of the justice system to prevent re-offending, largely due to the limited availability and effectiveness of prison treatment programs. This book argues that contemporary, popular, and state-led responses to the risk posed by sex offenders are largely disintegrative in nature. At best, the offender may be labeled, stigmatized, and ostracized from the community, while at worst, he or she may be subjected to violence and vigilante action and ultimately return to offending behavior. The failure of these retributive responses means there is considerable scope for exploring alternative forms of justice and their potential for improving the outcome for victims, offenders, and communities affected by sexual offenses. Although restorative schemes with sex offenders are in short supply, a few initiatives have developed in Canada and parts of the US which have effected significant benefits in 'reintegrative shaming.' The Shaming of Sexual Offenders examines whether such ad hoc schemes may be of general application with child sexual abuse and whether they may be implemented on a more holistic basis.

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Editorial Review

Review

'McAlinden's book makes a courageous and closely argued case for the application of restorative justice to sexual offenders. Her exploration of the growing literature on restorative justice and the management of risk is closely integrated with obvious legal knowledge and expertise - particularly her knowledge of the law in relation to sexual offending. In a scholarly and sensitive fashion, McAlinden takes the theory of restorative justice forward into a distinctly new and important area, and in so doing makes a significant contribution to the field of criminology in general and the management of risk in particular...a highly original contribution to the discipline of criminology. It is the first British book to make a fearless and highly persuasive case for a very different approach to sexual offenders - one, if adopted, that may well result in lower rates of re-offending.' Dr Elaine Crawley, Judge of the British Society of Criminology Book Prize 2008, Senior Lecturer in Criminology, University of Salford. '...a clear and concise book that can be read from cover to cover by a range of audiences in order to gain an insight into the issues...a text of this quality makes a significant impact and contribution to the discipline of Criminology. This has been one of the most interesting, informative and pleasurable reads of an academic text I have had for some time...McAlinden has created an extremely accessible text for all within the discipline as well as outside it...The text not only ensures the 'current state of play' is known by the reader but then moves the debate on. A solid academic text, which considers a very topical issue.' Philip Birch, Judge of the British Society of Criminology Book Prize 2008, Senior Lecturer, University of Huddersfield .a thorough, comprehensive and welcome contribution to the literature on both the management of sex offender risk and restorative justice. Michael Petrunik The Howard Journal Vol 47, No 3, July 2008 [Anne-Marie McAlinden] explores in great depth, the use of shaming mechanisms with sexual offenders,...the book provides a readable history of events over the years and poses numerous questions and possible solutions. Internet Law Book Reviews July 2007 .persuasive and compelling, yet also realistic...This book offers an interesting perspective on how sex offenders can be managed and treated within the community. Dr Karen Harrison Legal Studies Vol 28, No 1 .a useful contribution to the study of sex offenders. Sally Ramage The Criminal Lawyer No. 182, May 08

About the Author

Anne-Marie McAlinden is Lecturer in the School of Law at Queen's University Belfast.

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