



book

review

## Juvenile Crime Justice and Corrections

Edited by Allan Borowski & Ian O'Connor

Addison Wesley Longman, Melbourne, 1997, 518 pp.

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*Juvenile Crime Justice and Corrections* is a collection of chapters by different authors organised in five parts.

The first part explores the dimensions and causes of juvenile crime. Part two considers the plight of particular groups of young offenders, including young aboriginal offenders, migrants, victims of child abuse, homeless, intellectually disabled, substance abusers and perpetrators of violent crimes. Part three considers the structures which deal with juvenile crime, including the courts, police and diversion programs. Part four looks at juvenile corrections, including community and institutional programs. Finally part five considers the future of juvenile crime justice and corrections from both research and practice perspectives.

The editors provide a three or four page introduction to each of the five parts of the book. These introduce the themes of each section and help to link the different sections of the book. Perhaps the most difficult thing to do in presenting any edited collection of the work of as many as

thirty authors is to give the reader the sense that they are reading a book rather than simply a collection of articles. The structure of the book, the introductory comments by the editors and the comprehensive coverage of the topic do help to give this book a sense of being more than just a collection of articles.

The contributors include thirty Australian criminologists and academics. From the description of the authors, I could only identify one who might be described as a practitioner. This is not meant as a criticism in respect to an academic text of this nature. It does however highlight one of the themes which emerges from reading the various contributions – that of the gap between research and academic thinking and practices in the juvenile justice field.

Satyanshu Mukherjee highlights in chapter one that development of juvenile justice responses is often based on inadequate and sometimes misleading crime statistics. He suggests, for example, that there is no evidence that juvenile crime is on the increase or that juveniles are particularly prone to violent crime.

The following chapters challenge other popular assumptions such as: that a direct link exists between youth crime and drugs; that more and more punitive models of policing and corrections will reduce crime; that diversion programs successfully divert offenders from prison and crime; and that it is possible to know whether something works without detailed independent evaluation.

This book represents a welcome contribution to the field of criminology. The editors suggest that the book aims to provide an up to date text book for courses in criminology, law and related disciplines. I believe it does this. To my knowledge it has no competitors in Australia and its comprehensive and scholarly nature make it a valuable resource for academics, students and practitioners.

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