

# PERVASIVE PUNISHMENT



# PERVASIVE PUNISHMENT

Making Sense of Mass Supervision

BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

For Gordon and all the Paulines.



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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Fergus McNeill is Professor of Criminology and Social Work at the University of Glasgow where he works in the Scottish Centre for Crime and Justice Research and in Sociology. Prior to becoming an academic in 1998, he worked for 10 years in residential drug rehabilitation and as a criminal justice social worker.

His many research projects and publications have examined institutions, cultures and practices of punishment and rehabilitation – particularly in the community – and questions about their reform. Between 2012 and 2016, he chaired an EU-funded research network on ‘Offender Supervision in Europe’ which involved about 70 researchers from across 23 jurisdictions. This book reflects upon and consolidates learning from that network.

Fergus has co-written or co-edited several previous books including *Offender Supervision: New Directions in Theory, Research and Practice*, *Offender Supervision in Europe*, *Reducing Reoffending: Social Work and Community Justice in Scotland*, *Understanding Penal Practice and Youth Offending and Youth Justice*. His most recent books include *Community Punishment: European Perspectives* (co-edited with Gwen Robinson); *Probation: 12 essential questions* (co-edited with Ioan Durnescu and Rene Butter); *Beyond the Risk Paradigm in Criminal Justice* (co-edited with Chris Trotter and Gill McIvor); and *Reimagining Rehabilitation: Beyond the Individual* (co-written with Lol Burke and Steve Collett and published by Routledge in 2018). *Pervasive Punishment* is his first sole-authored monograph.

Currently, Fergus is leading ‘Distant Voices: Coming Home’, a major 3-year Economic and Social Research Council/Arts and Humanities

Research Council project using creative practices to explore crime, punishment and reintegration. The project is a partnership between Vox Liminis (a third sector organization that Fergus helped establish), the University of Edinburgh, the University of Glasgow and the University of the West of Scotland.

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justice and its reform ([www.voxliminis.co.uk](http://www.voxliminis.co.uk)). Louis Abbott (in Edinburgh) and Donna Maciocia (in Oxford) provided these beautiful performances. It is a pleasure and a privilege to work with Louis and Donna and everyone else associated with Vox. I owe you all – and especially Alison Urie (that other Wayward Puritan) – a very great deal for teaching me so much about so many things; not least the importance and potency of creativity.

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All but one of the photographs that illustrate this book were taken by supervisees and supervisors in the 'Supervisible' and 'Picturing Probation' projects (discussed in chapter 5). These projects were part of the COST Action IS1106 on Offender Supervision in Europe which I chaired between 2012 and 2016. Wendy Fitzgibbon inspired and led the Supervisible project, and Picturing Probation was led by Nicola Carr, Gwen Robinson and Anne Worrall. I am grateful for their permission to use some of these projects' photographs in the book, but my debt extends to all 70-odd active members of the Action. This book is, in large part, an attempt to consolidate what I learned from and with all of them. I want to pay special tribute to the Action's core leadership group – Miranda Boone, Niamh Maguire, Martine Herzog-Evans, Christine Morgenstern, Elena Larrauri, Ioan Durnescu, Christian Grafl, Gwen Robinson, Kerstin Svensson, Martin Lulei, Ineke Pruin and Sandra Scicluna and to pay special tribute to Kristel Beyens who, as Vice-Chair, offered me invaluable and unflinching support for those four years.

In places in this book, I have leant on and re-developed or re-purposed previous publications, some involving co-authors. Working with these scholars has been crucial to my development and, in some cases, I have to admit that I don't really know where their ideas end and my ideas begin. In particular, I've been co-writing with Gwen Robinson since we agonized



over 23 drafts of our first co-authored conference paper in 2002–2003. Chapter 2 of this book draws on a more recent book chapter that we co-wrote (McNeill & Robinson, 2016); the section on Foucault leans very heavily on Gwen's contribution to that chapter. Chapter 4 redevelops elements of two earlier collaborations (Robinson & McNeill, 2015; Robinson, McNeill, & Maruna, 2013). It is typically generous of Gwen to let me use our previous work in this way, and I am also grateful to the editors at Palgrave, Sage and Routledge for giving their permission for me to use these earlier works here. Chapters 5 and 6 draw on my recent paper in *Punishment and Society* (McNeill, 2018); I am grateful to Kelly Hannah-Moffat and Sage for permission to do so. Thanks are also due to Wendy Fitzgibbon and Christine Graebisch for their permission to recycle the title of our co-authored chapter about the Supervisable project (Fitzgibbon, Graebisch, & McNeill, 2017) as the title of this book. Jo Collinson Scott and Oliver Escobar kindly allowed me to lean on their musicological (Jo) and political science (Oliver) expertise in writing Chapter 6, drawing on their contributions to our ongoing ESRC/AHRC funded Distant Voices project ([www.distantvoices.org.uk](http://www.distantvoices.org.uk)).

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Looking much further back, my career began not in academia but with a decade in practice; first in drug rehabilitation and then in criminal justice social work. That experience still informs what I do even though I realise that it has lost its currency. Being a practitioner in both settings left me with respect and admiration for ‘those who do’; especially those who persevere in pursuing justice and providing help despite the obstacles often-times placed in their way by society, by government, and by policies and systems. That’s why this book is dedicated to Gordon McKean (a good friend and former colleague) and to ‘all the Paulines’ (if you read the short story, that dedication will start to make sense).

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