



The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare

Volume 34

Issue 2 June - *Special Issue on Globalization,
Social Justice & Social Welfare*

Article 15

2007

Review of *Changing Lives: Delinquency Prevention as Crime Control Policy*. Peter W. Greenwood. Reviewed by Matthew T. Theriot.

Matthew T. Theriot
University of Tennessee

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw>

 Part of the Social Work Commons

Recommended Citation

Theriot, Matthew T. (2007) "Review of *Changing Lives: Delinquency Prevention as Crime Control Policy*. Peter W. Greenwood. Reviewed by Matthew T. Theriot.," *The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 34 : Iss. 2 , Article 15.

Available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol34/iss2/15>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Social Work at ScholarWorks at WMU. For more information, please contact maira.bundza@wmich.edu.



Democratic Party is more identified with feminism, feminist women continue to work within the Republican Party for their point of view. Schlafly continues to pursue her philosophy through her Eagle Forum, an independent organization. A new breed of active and high-ranking Republican women, such as Mary Matalin, an aide to Vice President Cheney, do not especially identify with feminist causes or movements or suggest that they speak for women. They identify themselves as individuals, the author notes.

In several ways, the book is a useful and objective analysis of some of the forces of recent American politics and the conflicts over feminism as well as liberal versus conservative political philosophies within the Republican Party. It will be a useful resource for anyone interested in these developments.

Leon Ginsberg
Appalachian State University

Peter W. Greenwood, *Changing Lives: Delinquency Prevention as Crime Control Policy*. Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2006, \$37.00 hardcover.

The conversion of scientific knowledge about juvenile delinquency to actual policy and practice has been dreadfully slow and even stalled at times. Criminological research consistently links such factors as delinquent peer affiliations, neglectful parental supervision, low school achievement, and adolescent substance abuse to juvenile delinquency, and juvenile delinquency itself is a risk factor for adult criminality. Despite this robust knowledge base, however, recent developments in crime-control policy often look strikingly like old developments. Tougher sentencing laws, expanding police departments, and construction of more prisons are promoted, supported and funded over proven evidence-based interventions.

The frequent evolution of chronic juvenile delinquents into serious adult offenders would seem enough to justify the need for sound, early preventive programming. Yet, as Peter Greenwood notes in his new book, *Changing Lives: Delinquency Prevention as Crime-Control Policy*, delinquency prevention is

a difficult and complex undertaking. Key issues around how prevention is defined, what types of criminal behavior are to be prevented, and who is responsible must be addressed. Clear definitions of program success and a better understanding of what works are needed, as well as reliable mechanisms for the transmission of information and evidence from researchers to public policymakers and practitioners. These issues drive the book, and Greenwood does a remarkable job of highlighting, analyzing, and critiquing these most critical topics and considerations.

Following a foreword by noted legal scholar Franklin Zimring, the brief opening chapter introduces the purpose and focus of the book. Greenwood recognizes the disconnect between research and policy, the need for better prevention strategies, and the necessity of examining those issues described in the preceding paragraph. Chapter 2 then assumes an historical perspective when tracing the evolution of juvenile delinquency prevention from the emergence of colonial-era institutional placements to the establishment of the juvenile court to the Great Society programming of the 1960s and the policy shifts that marked the 1980s and 1990s. This is a fascinating chapter with relevance beyond simply summarizing interesting social welfare and criminological history. Instead, a better understanding of the historical developments and changes in delinquency prevention gives context to the political and social climate surrounding prevention today.

The third chapter gives an overview of how prevention programs are evaluated and how program impact can (and should) be measured. Greenwood argues that cost-effectiveness is the most appropriate criteria for program comparison and evaluation, though he acknowledges that such analysis is uncommon and many delinquency prevention programs have not been evaluated at all. It is also recognized that variations in study design and methodology often hinder our understanding of a program's true effectiveness. Whereas this chapter argues strongly for the establishment of scientifically-rigorous and consistent criteria for evaluating program effectiveness, the next two chapters extend this to systematically review what works (chapter 4) and what doesn't work (chapter 5) in delinquency prevention. In chapter 4, programs are organized

by target age and the chapter concludes with a brief cost-benefit assessment of the most effective programs. Chapter 5 reviews ineffective programs organized by prevention level (primary, secondary, and tertiary) and it includes an interesting discussion of specific programs that continue despite evidence that they do not work (D.A.R.E., boot camps, and Scared Straight). The discussion of why such programs persist is especially compelling and speaks to the need for clearer definitions of program success as well as better dissemination of research evidence.

Part 2 of the book (Chapters 6-8) tackles important policy-related issues. Chapter 6, for example, discusses the strengths and limitations of cost effectiveness in resource allocation, while chapter 7 examines the role of government in prevention programming. This chapter debates critical questions about which level of government and which branch of government should be responsible for crime and delinquency prevention. Such choices will absolutely impact a program's mission and goals, yet these questions do not receive enough scholarly, popular, or political discourse. The final chapter (chapter 8) focuses specifically on programming in the juvenile court. The juvenile court is in a unique position to provide and regulate a variety of services aimed at preventing juvenile delinquency. As this chapter recommends, juvenile courts should be knowledgeable about the current evidence base, divert youth to available services when appropriate, consider programming needs and sanctions in all cases, monitor the quality of local programs, and identify programming and service gaps.

Perhaps the real strength of this book is its usefulness to multiple disciplines and professions. As evidenced here, the contents have clear utility to politicians and policymakers as well as juvenile court judges and court administrators. Social work practitioners, social service providers, and agencies seeking to implement programs will also find the book useful, especially chapters 4-5 that review effective and ineffective programs. As noted in chapter 4, adjudicated juveniles, or those youth involved with law enforcement and the courts, pose a distinct risk for re-offending and chronic delinquency. In light of such risk, the brief discussion of effective programming for these youths in the book is disappointing.

However, this is more reflective of our limited understanding of what works with these juveniles than it is a criticism of this book. On the contrary, *Changing Lives* is an important book with broad appeal and equally broad application. It is wholeheartedly recommended for everyone working in the juvenile and criminal justice systems or for anyone with an interest in delinquency and crime prevention.

Matthew T. Theriot
The University of Tennessee

Lori Askeland (Ed.). *Children and Youth in Adoption, Orphanages and Foster Care: A Historical Handbook and Guide*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2006. \$59.95 hardcover.

This book provides an historical and multicultural perspective of issues resulting from children in need of care outside the birth family. The editor and contributors have backgrounds in English, history, and law and they provide somewhat different perspectives than those found in traditional social work. Social work educators who are well versed on the history of child welfare may not find this book informative.

The book is divided into three parts. Part I includes seven essays describing various aspects of the history of child welfare, Part II addresses original documents and Part III, a variety of related resources. This reviewer found the first chapter, about the inclusion of children in need of care outside of their birth families during the Colonial and New Republic period (1605-1850), the most informative. The chapter describes how Native American tribes added non-relative children and adults to meet the needs of continuity and lineage as opposed to meeting the specific needs of children. The influence of the European family and care of U.S. children provided an alternate means of children's care outside the immediate family. Parents most often placed their children in others' homes through apprenticeship arrangements or through indentured servitude. The strength and adaptability of African Americans under the adversity of slavery is described as well. The importance of extended family and tribal communities encouraged taking in