The penal voluntary sector: a hybrid sociology

Abstract

The penal voluntary sector (PVS) is an important, complex, under-theorised area. Its non-profit, non-statutory organisations are highly significant in the operation of punishment around the world, yet ill-understood. Burgeoning scholarship has begun to examine specific *parts of* the sector, particularly individualised service delivery. We offer a five paradigm framework which more fully conceptualises the PVS, including different types of service delivery *and* important campaigning work. Our hybrid framework applies and extends Burrell and Morgan's (1979) influential four paradigm model of social theory, which maps the theoretical diversity underpinning varying organisational activities. Our framework i) provides ideal-types which illustrate the *range, fluidity and hybridity* of PVS programmes and practices, and ii) highlights the (potential) roles of brokers in (re)directing activity.

Introduction

The penal voluntary sector (PVS) comprises voluntary (i.e. non-profit, non-statutory) agencies working principally with prisoners, (ex-)offenders, their families and victims in prison, community and advocacy programmes, from the micro to macro levels (Tomczak, 2017a). The PVS affects the experience of punishment and penal policy around the world: including *at least* the UK, Nordic countries, France, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand (Tomczak, 2017a). For example, the voluntary sector is the USA's primary provider of prisoner re-entry programming (Kaufman, 2015), managing "more people, more poor people, and more poor people of color than the prison system itself" (Miller, 2014: 307) *in the jurisdiction that is the world leader in incarceration* (Wildeman and Wang, 2017). Australian voluntary organisations are involved across court, prison, substance treatment and youth justice work (Ransley and Mazerolle, 2017). As such, actors within the PVS form part

of the mass of institutional interactions through which penal coercion and exclusion is (un)contested, (re)produced and (re)justified[1]. Yet, PVS involvement in punishment has gone "largely unnoticed"[2] (Armstrong, 2002: 345) and state/ voluntary sector partnerships have "largely escaped close scrutiny and serious public and policy attention" (Salamon, 2015: 2149).

This oversight is at least partly attributable to the sheer complexity of the PVS and lack of analytical concepts, which continue to obstruct scholarship (Never, 2011; Soteri-Procter and Alcock, 2012; see also Hassard and Cox, 2013). It is compounded by varying nomenclature (even within the same jurisdiction) (Rochester, 2013), and the differing framings and foci scholars adopt (e.g. youth, gender, race, sex offenders; prison, reentry, court). The PVS is "complicated, concerning and full of potential" (Tomczak, 2017a: 170). It is a significant agent of social control (Miller, 2014), yet voluntary organisations can make important contributions to society, helping: reduce violent crime and recidivism[3] (Lewis et al, 2007; Sharkey et al, 2017), saving (ex-)offender lives (Tomczak and Thompson, 2017) and promoting personal growth and change (Buck, 2018). But how can scholars tease out these nuances and systematically analyse the "multi-layered ways in which voluntary sector organisations are engaging with the state" (Maurutto and Hannah-Moffatt, 2016: 183)? These multi-layered engagements take place amongst and even *within* organisations, presenting a considerable analytical challenge. How can accounts focussed on particular types of PVS activity be located and contextualised amidst the whole sector? How can the PVS be conceptualised without essentialising it?

These already significant challenges are further complicated by emerging markets for penal services. A key stimulus for recent scholarly attention to the PVS

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[1] Penal development is fuelled by open, intense and quiet ongoing struggles among actors with varying resources (Goodman et al, 2015).

[2] This contrasts to e.g. police studies where assemblages crossing the public-private divide have been theorised (White, 2018).

[3] Given the £15 billion annual costs of reoffending in England and Wales (MoJ, 2016: 3) this potential deserves further exploration.

has been governments around the world shifting from state-dominated criminal justice to quasi-markets, where responsibility and funding are shared by state, private and voluntary organisations (Salamon, 2015; Ransley and Mazerolle, 2017). Economic retrenchment is often cited as a key driver for the apparent shifting of voluntary organisations' role from *subsidiary to* the state's monopoly on punishment to key (discursive) players in the mixed market for penal services (Ransley and Mazerolle, 2017; Tomczak, 2017b). Neoliberal carceralism's framing of the PVS as an uncritical competitor in the market for penal services has curtailed public debates, with consensual approaches to delivering public services arguably replacing contestation and deliberation (Zizek, 1999). In the UK, "the message from Government is clear: the role of voluntary organisations is to efficiently and cost-effectively deliver services. Those who campaign run the risk of being blamed for wasting taxpayers' money and playing politics" (Ishkanian and Ali, 2018: 7).

Yet, by generally focussing on professionalised voluntary organisations that are committed to delivering public services and engaging in advocacy around narrow policy questions, academics are doing the PVS, and in turn society, a disservice (Powell, 2009; Tomczak, 2017a). Voluntary organisations, as part of broader civil society, have played important roles in challenging the status quo on issues ranging from domestic violence to same sex rights (Ishkanian and Ali, 2018). Despite increasing Government attempts to curtail campaigning[4] (such as the 2014 'Lobbying Act'), these organisations continue to campaign using a variety of strategies and "are able to affect the legal and penal process" (Maurutto and Hannah-Moffatt, 2016: 173).

We provide the first sociology of the PVS, offering a systematic means of more *fully conceptualising* this important, ill-understood sector through a five paradigm framework. Our theoretical point of departure is Burrell and Morgan's

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[4] Large-scale trends e.g. in the economy and politics affect but *do not fully determine* struggles over punishment and penal outcomes (Goodman et al., 2015).

(1979) influential four paradigm model of social theory, which is one of the most referenced works of the last half-century in organisation theory (Hassard and Cox, 2013). We adopt a hybrid approach (Hassard and Cox, 2013) which can usefully guide paradigmatic analysis whilst retaining capacity to acknowledge how practices and their underpinning theoretical principles can be hybrid, or mixed up together[5]. This approach retains the utility of Weberian 'ideal-type' paradigm modelling for demonstrating the theoretical principles underpinning practices. It conceptualises the paradigms as fields that operate in relative combination and tension with one another, illustrating significant *mixing of paradigms* rather than hermetic sovereign states (Hassard and Cox, 2013). The ideal-types share far more than they withhold (ontologically, epistemologically and methodologically), but identifying them does not "define that paradigm as intellectually sealed, professionally static or methodologically uniform" (Hassard and Cox, 2013: 1708). Our hybrid framework, developed from these models, can direct nuanced accounts of the full spectrum of PVS activity and contribute to more reflective theory and praxis. This is useful because the PVS has tended to attract polarised commentary (Tomczak, 2017; Tomczak and Thompson, 2017) rather than nuanced, empirically informed debate on its numerous forms and effects (see also White, 2018). Our account and framework are relevant to the PVS across jurisdictions, given careful consideration of varying penal cultures and conditions, and geo-political, socio-cultural and legal intricacies (e.g. Pratt and Eriksson, 2013).

Burgeoning literature
Amidst a burgeoning literature, three influential accounts (Miller, 2014; Kaufman, 2015; Quirouette, 2017) examine local PVS service delivery with criminalised individuals in North America. Miller (2014: 308) highlights 'carceral devolution', i.e.

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[5] This approach draws on actor-network theory. For a full explanation of how actor-network theory can be applied to analyse the PVS, see (Tomczak, 2017a).

"policies that transfer carceral authority […] from federal and state-based institutions to local ones" in the Near West Side of Chicago, USA. Amalgams of responsibilised local institutions have seen prisoner reentry "outsourced and privatized, moving from within prison walls and into the therapeutic spaces, church basements, and community centers of the inner city" (Miller, 2014: 308). Concurrently, "psychological processes and outcomes, rather than prisoners' economic ones have become the primary site of intervention in criminal justice and social policy" (Miller, 2014: 315).

But Miller's (2014) convincing account of the changing political economy of prisoner re-entry is *impoverished by its dystopia*. Miller does not consider whether these agents of carceral devolution (could) have revolutionary agency. Do, or could they do something other than continuing to responsibilise the urban poor? Indeed, Goddard et al. (2015) describe progressive grassroots social justice organisations (in isolation[6]) across US cities *including Chicago*, as we explore below. Carlen's (2000: 469) woefully under-cited argument bears repeating, that: theoretically brilliant Foucauldian accounts "help foster a view that as far as penal reform is concerned 'nothing works'. Again and again the implication is that, sooner or later, all reforms (or apparent reforms) work to strengthen the repressive arm of the state".

Adding nuance at the micro-level, Kaufman (2015) valuably distinguishes between penal re-entry in Wisconsin, USA by 'classic reentry' nongovernmental organisations emphasising treatment and work (reflecting Miller, 2014), and 'broader incorporation' organisations, which include individual ex-prisoners as citizens in particular communities. Thus, organisations "may have more agency to diverge from the goals of state re-entry policy than many previous researchers have recognised" (2015: 535). Quirouette (2017: 2) provides further distinctions,

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[6] Many have criticised the scholarly neglect of grassroots organisations' relationships with formal voluntary organisations (e.g. Rochester, 2013), although boundaries between grassroots and formal organisations are less clear. Boundaries between grassroots activists and penal voluntary organisations are blurry and perhaps misleading, but some guidance is provided by Goddard et al (2015) and Ishkarian and Ali (2018).

illustrating how 'community practitioners' in the lower criminal courts of a large Canadian city "can become important agents of resistance, advocacy and reform" for individuals. These practitioners cross traditional agency and disciplinary boundaries to "mobilize knowledge, making choices and manipulating narratives that have important effects on release planning, diversion, specialized courts and community conditions", thus managing to "deflect the power of law" locally, for individual clients (Quirouette, 2017: 2).

Whilst important, the focus on individual casework in these accounts is a limitation. Structural inequalities and racism are enduring, complex problems, but they are not unassailable phenomena that the PVS is unable or unwilling to exert any form of resistance to. Miller's (2014: 317) re-entry agents had "limited capacity to take on the largely structural dilemmas former prisoners navigate" so instead focussed on "brokering a qualitative change in the rationalities, mentalities and meaning-making processes of their clients" (2014: 321). Quirouette's (2017: 17) practitioners were "struggling to effect change regarding poor housing options (and) systemic racism". They did not address "criminogenic needs (e.g. by providing housing, employment or treatment)" (2017: 17), but often operated as "brokers for clients and criminal justice courts" (2017: 2) by explaining "to police, bail and probation, lawyers and judges why a person before the courts might *not* be able to comply with conditions or qualify for housing, treatment or service" (2017: 17, emphasis in original). Miller (2014) and Quirouette (2017) illustrate how the PVS can broker qualitative change of and for criminalised individuals. For Quirouette (2017: 2), community practitioners inevitably "extend the power and reach of law to enhance their therapeutic projects", although simultaneously mediate its power and discourse. But can, or could such practitioners never *broker challenges to or reductions in* the power and reach of law?

Indeed, Goddard et al. (2015: 77) point out that "years of activism by community-based organizations and coalitions" have brokered more radical change

in US cities, being a key trigger for the late 2014 onwards US national conversation around police violence, racial disproportionality in incarceration, and the racialized consequences of mass incarceration. This significant analysis records examples of grassroots social justice organisations seeking to broker systemic and radical change through varying forms of activity, resistance and organisation. They identify three categories of grassroots social justice organisation. *Activist social justice organisations* work to build "social movements against tough on crime practices" (Goddard et al, 2015: 80), mobilising marginalised youth to campaign against e.g. new jail construction, police presence in schools and due process failures for youth placed on gang watch lists; and holding rallies for justice reinvestment and immigration reform. *Program and service delivery social justice organisations* combine campaigning with service delivery programmes (e.g. intervening on harmful behaviour) developed with different degrees of service user input and centred on 'consciousness': i.e. understanding that many individual problems are rooted in systemic deprivations (Goddard et al., 2015: 82). *Advocacy and policymaking organisations* coordinate actions, serving as umbrella organisations that "bridge grassroots groups working on related issues across a given city or state, or even across the nation" (Goddard et al., 2015: 84). Such challenges to social exclusion have *continued under neoliberal governance* (Goddard and Myers, 2018).

Emphasising social justice work and demonstrating how it can take place through (hybrid service delivery and) campaigning work at a variety of scales is a crucial project, which too few have taken up. But tying social justice to grassroots action and isolating these from other forms of PVS work is unhelpful. For example, Goddard et al. (2015) do not consider the (lack of) relationships between 'grassroots social justice organisations' and other parts of the PVS. Are grassroots social justice organisations and the individuals working within them hermetically sealed from e.g. top-down, professionalised organisations seeking social justice through

redistributive and/or consciousness-based approaches? Can grassroots social justice organisations only ever collaborate with their 'own kind'?

Goddard et al. (2015: 77) argue that "progressive and critical criminologists need to better understand [grassroots social justice] organizations, in part because they provide a way to engage with today's possibilities for change". Whilst wholeheartedly endorsing this call for scholarship looking beyond (dystopic) service delivery with individuals, our hybrid sociology of the PVS usefully demonstrates the (potential) inter-relationships between the organisations and practices described by Miller (2014), Goddard et al. (2015), Kaufman (2015) and Quirouette (2017); developing Burrell and Morgan's (1979) influential model of social theory to illustrate further hybrid examples of and *possibilities for* social justice action.

We provide a coherent paradigmatic framework to support politically enabling analyses[7] of the PVS's hybrid practices. Such analyses are not only more complete but sorely needed amidst neoliberal carceralism. We highlight fluidity between paradigms and introduce a fifth paradigm to the model, to reflect the (potential) roles of brokers in (re)directing activity. Our framework is a useful means of grouping and untangling the varied, wide-ranging practices within the PVS, whilst illustrating how individual organisations simultaneously undertake diverse types of work, and are often not clearly divisible into categories such as social justice or the 'other'. We illustrate existing heterogeneities and, in turn, possibilities for academics and practitioners to consider. We therefore make a small contribution towards unsettling the harmful yet "taken-for-granted features of contemporary crime (or penal) policy" (Garland, 2001: 1), problematising the "long standing collusion between social welfare and criminal justice actors to manage marginalized populations" (Miller, 2014: 305) by mapping and highlighting contrasting practices.

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[7] See Zedner, 2002; Tomczak, 2017a.

Four paradigms: regulation to radical change

Burrell and Morgan (1979) conceive social theory through four broad paradigms - functionalist, interpretive, radical humanist and radical structuralist – which derive from distinct intellectual traditions. This model (see Figure 1) has made a major contribution by challenging the intellectual hegemony of functionalism (hegemony arguably reflected by dominant accounts of individualised PVS service delivery) and opening up alternative forms of analysis, which have contributed to more reflective theory and praxis (Hassard, 1991). The four paradigms encapsulate diverse sociological debates including the (de)merits of a society based on notions of order and conflict, and debates about whether to understand society subjectively or objectively (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 23). *Functionalist*s provide objective explanations of social order. *Interpretivist*s see reality subjectively, as a network of assumptions. *Radical humanist*s challenge ideological superstructures. *Radical structuralist*s view society objectively, but seek to radically change structural relationships in a realist world (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 21-35).

(Figure 1 here)

This powerful analytical map has been widely applied to negotiate organisations (Hassard and Cox, 2013). Helpfully for our purposes, Howe's (2016) now classic interpretation (first published 1992, see Figure 2) depicts the four main orientations of social work and underpinning assumptions:

> "Burrell and Morgan's […] analysis […] included a simple but rather elegant classification of sociological theories […]. Rather than teach one theory after another, the […] classification allows social workers to appreciate the logic that underpins and drives each theory and its associated practice. What up until then appeared an interesting, busy, but slightly untidy field of study suddenly gained order and clarity. […] Capitalising on the skills of the social theorist takes the practitioner on a […] journey around the profession's major ideas" (Howe, 2016: viii-ix).

Whilst we advocate future dissemination and co-production of our framework with practitioners as Howe describes, our purpose here is to encourage scholarship considering a fuller spectrum of fluid and hybrid PVS practices and underpinning sociological theories. We hope that this interesting but incredibly untidy (and therefore neglected) area of inquiry will in turn gain interest, order and clarity. Despite prominence in the allied field of social work, Burrell and Morgan's model has barely been adopted in studies of punishment[8].

Howe's (2016: 47-48) *fixers* are functionalists, aiming to objectively improve the psychology or behaviour of individuals; *seekers after meaning* are interpretivists, regulating through client's subjective lived experiences and perspectives; *raisers of consciousness* are radical humanists, considering that many personal problems can be understood and challenged by becoming aware of the dehumanising characteristics of modern society's ideological superstructures; *revolutionaries* are radical structuralists, who critically but objectively examine the state's machinery and promote the welfare of subordinate classes.

(Figure 2 here)

Of course, models risk obscuring the inherent messiness of social science research and practice (Law, 2004). For Burrell and Morgan (1979), the four paradigms present mutually exclusive views, but this approach has been widely critiqued. In line with Hassard and Cox (2013), our findings indicate that paradigm fluidity and hybridity is a more accurate strategy for investigating the PVS. Our framework therefore offers a theoretical map, which includes clear concepts whilst highlighting that PVS programmes and practices are messy, heterogeneous and able to change (Law, 2004). Each voluntary organisation may simultaneously engage in

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[8] See Nielsen (1998) for a consideration of the social organisation of Canadian Native Youth Justice Committees.

different types of work and organisations (and the individuals within) may switch between different or adopt hybrid orientations. For example, we would be surprised if any objective-regulatory programme *never* considered the client's point of view, and services intervening into the lives and psyches of criminalised individuals can be combined with radical consciousness raising and campaigning for redistribution (Goddard and Myers, 2018). Our aim is not to obscure these complications, but to provide a systematic means for conceptualising the PVS whilst highlighting fluidities, hybridities and *possibilities*.

Categories

Voluntary organisations vary tremendously. Their funding, personnel and mission are not only fluid over time (Corcoran et al., 2018) but are hybrid even at single points in time: having multiple funding sources (Tomczak, 2017a), different staff groups (paid staff, volunteers, paid and volunteer professional 'ex-s') and practices underpinned by different and hybrid paradigms. Individual organisations, their cultures, their different programmes, the practitioners involved in their delivery, the clients engaged and excluded, and the relationships between individual practitioners and individual clients are diverse and dynamic (Tomczak and Thompson, 2017). Apparently 'safe' or therapeutic places can be, or become, significantly more punitive, disciplinary or directive than they appear (Hannah-Moffatt, 2005). This hybridity might ostensibly require an 'anti categorical' approach, as proposed by intersectionalists, but in turn a lack of concepts *impedes substantive analyses* (Walby et al., 2012). Furthermore, mapping can be a tool of governing and can contribute to the "instrumental [and reductionist] production of the nonprofit sector" as a tool of statecraft (Nickel and Eikenberry, 2016). However, explaining who is mapping and for what purposes can mitigate this issue (Appe, 2012).

As sociologists of punishment, and in turn social marginalisation (Wacquant, 2012), we conceptualise the PVS to stimulate scholarship across a fuller spectrum of

PVS activity. Partisan accounts in themselves can undermine reformative potentials. Although "the responsibility of the social commentator for which [s]he passes judgement should not be overplayed", scholarship has political implications (Zedner, 2002: 364). Nickel and Eikenberry (2016: 394) rightly "question the assumption that it is a positive development when civil society is better targeted by […] knowledge-collecting and knowledge-producing institutions", but can mapping never enable social progress or act as a tool of resistance? Goddard and Myers (2018: 47) examine community programmes for youth "with an emancipatory focus […] to show real-world examples of how things could be done differently", *because* scholars of crime and justice have been "slow to take up" this task.

Garland notes that "reformers, administrators, policymakers, and politicians […] consciously perceive the bounds of political possibility and adjust their actions accordingly, sometimes struggling to change the rules of the game, more often making compromises with the constraints that they face" (2018: 7). Our multi-paradigmatic framework *encourages attention* to the PVS's potential and (arguably limited) existing struggles to change the rules of the game[9] *and* the constraints they face. Our framework is itself not a neutral tool, but offers an interesting and enabling way for academics (and practitioners) to talk about the PVS rather than a perfect(able) model or a hegemonic claim over PVS theory and practice: it is a set of ideal-types and sensitising concepts rather than a definition[10] (Deetz, 1996). Our framework makes a valuable contribution to (re)conceptualising PVS scholarship and practice.

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[9] The missing link in the diffusion of protest is asking others: being asked by a strong tie relation increases the chances of participation more than being asked by a weak tie relation; weak tie interpersonal recruitment is however crucial to mobilization, stimulating participation invitations across and through micro networks; organisational mobilisation is effective because their members amplify the call for participation more broadly (Walgrave and Wouters, 2104).

[10] This approach could be considered compatible with Actor-Network Theory (Law, 2004) and/or postmodernism (Noble, 2004). For an explanation of how poststructural and postmodern thinking can be classified *within* the Burrell and Morgan model, see Hassard and Cox (2013).

Approach

Our combined fifteen years of qualitative PVS research experience in England and Wales (Tomczak, 2017a; Buck, 2018) and discussions with researchers and practitioners at a 2017-2018 seminar series have demonstrated both the necessity and difficulties of fully conceptualising this sector. In considering if and how the PVS can be defined and mapped, we undertook a literature review including searches of financial account and annual report documents in 2018. These documents are publicly available through the Charity Commission. Document analysis was the best means of scoping the wide range of hybrid PVS work that we include. It illustrated a complex mix of programmes, which operate at scales from individual people and places to public and policy discourse. The public availability of the documents also mitigated ethical issues including consent, harm and privacy (Vogt et al., 2012). Our document analyses focused on how PVS organisations conceptualised their work. Further research could examine how our framework applies or varies in specific settings and other jurisdictions.

Grappling with different spectra of PVS diversity (e.g. Gill and Mawby, 1990) eventually led us to Burrell and Morgan's (1979) model of social theory, Howe's (2016) closely associated model of social work and Hassard and Cox's (2013) re-interpretation. We adopted these models as our theoretical point of departure, given their illustration of theoretical positions underpinning practice which we could usefully apply to the PVS. We tested and adapted these models to create our conceptual frame, which illustrates PVS fluidity and hybridity. Whilst these models are not the only means of exploring a fuller spectrum of hybrid PVS activity, they offer useful conceptual tools that are currently lacking.

The penal voluntary sector as functionalist regulator: fixing individual 'flaws'

The generally dominant functionalist paradigm involves viewing subject matter objectively, with the aim of understanding the nature of regulated order (Burrell and

Morgan, 1979). Functionalist social workers are interested in orderly relationships and the social mechanisms employed to deal with deviance: "the regular patterning of social life is recognised and applauded […] to maintain such stability, there is a need and preparedness to regulate and control behaviour" (Howe, 2016: 49). Functionalist approaches primarily "try to 'mend' those who are failing as mothers, husbands, workers, school children and well-behaved citizens" (Howe, 2016: 113). Functionalist PVS programmes focus upon 'fixing' deviant individuals within an otherwise orderly social system. The practitioner/ volunteer/ social worker defines what is best for the one who is to accept help (Svensson, 2009). The structural causes of criminalisation receive minimal challenge and such programmes "too often only help people to better endure unjust social conditions" (Goddard and Myers, 2018: 130).

For example, stand-alone cognitive behavioural therapy regulates e.g. the anger of criminalised individuals without acknowledging the stresses and strains resulting from i) their punishment and/or efforts to 'normalise' them (Gallo and Ruggiero, 1991; Haney, 2006; Cavadino and Dignan, 2007; Liebling and Maruna, 2011) and ii) their likely marginalised backgrounds "in neighbourhoods where employment is scarce, criminalisation and violence remain realities, legitimate outlets for meaning-making are few, and social services are meagre" (Goddard and Myers, 2018: 41).

We considered the framing of *Prison Fellowship*'s (PF) Sycamore Tree programme to be primarily functionalist, albeit with some interpretivist acknowledgement that prisoners can take responsibility for their offending and associated harm in *their own different ways* and some radical structuralist recognition of the current prison crisis. Registered charity PF delivers the Sycamore Tree victim awareness programme in 40 prisons across England and Wales (PF, 2017). PF volunteers[11] teach the programme to groups of up to 20 learners. Prisoners explore

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[11] http://www.prisonfellowship.org.uk/what-we-do/sycamore-tree/

the effects of crime on victims, offenders, and the community, and discuss what it would mean for them to take responsibility for *their* personal actions. PF highlight several structural challenges, yet the imprisoning of specific populations in particularly unsafe, overcrowded institutions is not challenged, nor is the uneven punishment of 'criminal' behaviour:

> "The operating environment within prisons has been challenging. […] Since 1993 the prison population in England and Wales had increased by […] 92% […]. Rates of self-harm were at the highest level ever recorded and serious assaults in prison have more than doubled in the last three years. There are fewer staff looking after the ever-increasing population (due to) […] savings of almost £900m made between 2010– […] 15. The above context makes it increasingly difficult for officers to move prisoners around the prison establishment for meaningful activities such as receiving support from [voluntary] organisations […]. Incidents such as prisoner disturbances make it difficult to run orderly programming […]. Whilst the challenges described above are undeniable, PF remains very positive about the opportunity to make a positive contribution to the future of those locked away in prison. Volunteers are caused to redouble their efforts and be a part of the solution and not the problem" (PF, 2017: 3)

Our argument is not that functionalist programmes such as the Sycamore Tree programme are 'wrong' or necessarily devoid of value. If someone is cycling through criminal justice, e.g. due to offending caused by heroin addiction, it can be beneficial if a voluntary organisation enables them to engage with services and happily maintain a drug-free lifestyle. Some might yearn to be 'fixed' and 'live a normal life'. It is preferable that those at the more painful end of unjust social conditions are enabled to endure them, should they choose to, which is an often-overlooked benefit of PVS work (Tomczak and Thompson, 2017). Functionalist work can be experienced as very supportive, e.g. mutual understanding between practitioner and client can mask control and attempts to normalise (Svensson, 2003). Furthermore, the voluntary sector may be able to engage with service users in a distinctively valuable way (Tomczak and Albertson, 2016) or provide distinctive

interventions fusing functionalist practices with radical work (Goddard and Myers, 2018).

However, functionalist approaches risk blaming individuals for difficulties resulting from the social system (Hannah-Moffatt, 2001; Howe, 2016). Functionalist practitioners may (come to) accept and validate controlling, regulatory and impoverished penal environments through their desire to 'do good' and genuine attempts to support marginalised populations (Svensson, 2009). Furthermore, by providing stand-alone 'fixes' for 'criminals' *based on the helper's beliefs about what is right*, the voluntary sector risks masking the injustices and painful nature of punishment behind claims of fairness, benevolence and care (Cheliotis, 2014), thus shoring up structural inequality and exclusion by providing selected individuals with sticking plaster solutions for chronic social needs[12]. Whilst a sticking plaster is arguably preferable to nothing, this does little at best to stem the tide of 'criminals' requiring intervention, risks further marginalising the 'failures' who cannot overcome their (generations of) disadvantage in e.g. six sessions of 'therapy', and does not challenge (over)crowded penal institutions and their often harmful practices and arbitrary punishments (Moore et al., 2017; Maier and Ricciardelli, 2018). Very powerful assumptions too often surround voluntary sector work (Armstrong, 2002), obfuscating their potential to shore up existing regulatory practices and perpetuate the taken-for granted use of criminal justice as a black hole for disposing of the detritus of contemporary capitalism (Davis, 2011). Interpretive regulatory programmes raise similar critiques, but foreground the *client's* point of view rather than the helper's.

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[12] 'Evidence-based' programmes prioritise a limited set of individualistic interventions whilst laundering various inequalities at the root of violence and criminalisation (Goddard and Myers, 2017).

The penal voluntary sector as interpretive regulator: enabling individuals to fix their 'flaws'

Interpretivists, like functionalists, are still primarily concerned with regulation but adopt a subjective approach, seeking to "understand the frame of reference of the participant as opposed to the observer of action" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 28). Howe's (2016) 'seekers after meaning' adopt client-centred approaches and are concerned with knowing how things look from the client's point of view (rather than the helpers' beliefs), but again little is said about wider society. This is ostensibly a non-directive approach, following the *client's own view* of their problems and needs: the client "knows best what is wrong, what needs to be explored and what has to be done" (Howe, 2016: 92). When the worker attempts to understand the client's situation and establish trust, the client can face up to their own actions, recover responsibility for their feelings and behaviour and take charge of their own future and destiny (Howe, 2016: 91). Prison and community supervision are predicated upon functionalist rationalities and measurement, but many PVS services do provide some space for individual consciousness and subjectivity whilst still attempting to regulate[13] (Tomczak and Thompson, 2017; Buck, 2018).

Peer mentoring in prisons and the community is a growing area of activity (Maruna, 2017). Preliminary findings indicate that peer practitioners can distinctively attend to and identify with individuals' lived experiences. Although the extent to which peer mentors can reflect their clients'/peers' intersectional experiences is questionable, peers' increased ability to understand experiences of criminalisation and marginalisation can create a space where otherwise subjugated 'criminal' voices become central (Buck, 2017: 1028), albeit within established societal and criminal justice regulatory frameworks. Peer mentors foreground the interpretivist value of 'listening' to lived experiences as an intervention in itself,

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[13] Relational autonomy may be a useful means of examining space for individual consciousness and subjectivity within a normalising criminal justice system. Relational autonomy refers to self-governing agents who are socially constituted and mutually dependent (Christman, 2004).

which is claimed to enable "people to unburden themselves of problems, to begin to see themselves as capable of self-direction when conditions feel overwhelming and to feel heard" (Buck, 2018: 199). In turn, this can enable those labelled 'deviant' to redefine themselves (Whittington and Holland, 1985: 39) and produce a new sense of self.

The *Samaritans* Prison Listener scheme aims to reduce suicide and self-harm in prisons by providing a completely confidential service that can give prisoners the courage to ask for help and talk about what is bothering *them*[14]. Samaritans listen about anything that's troubling an individual, no matter how large or small, with recognition that "what might be a small issue to you may be huge to someone else[15]" (see also Jaffe, 2012). Nevertheless, interpretivist practitioners may be at *greater risk* than functionalists of imposing their own beliefs about what is right and justifying controlling and regulatory actions through their desire to support marginalised populations, facilitated by the veneer of client-centredness within penal regulation and social marginalisation.

Regulation, redistribution and hybridity

The sections above provide examples of primarily regulatory PVS service delivery targeting criminalised individuals. Crucially, no work fits neatly into a single paradigm, as illustrated by the interpretive elements of the Sycamore Tree programme. Programmes can cross paradigms, as regulation/ radical change and subjectivism/ objectivism do not exist in simple dualisms (Deetz, 1996; Hassard and Cox, 2013; Carlton, 2018). Although 'support' services can very easily increase the regulation and control of criminalised populations (Cohen, 1985) that is not and does not have to be the sum total of their contribution.

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[14] https://www.samaritans.org/your-community/our-work-prisons/listener-scheme
[15] https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help-you/contact-us/what-speak-us-about

Gelsthorpe and Dominey (2016: 194) highlight that one of the PVS's key contributions has been "campaigning and awareness-raising", with some organisations having "been at the forefront of campaigning for change in the criminal justice system". Indeed, there is a long history of campaigns "predicated on exposing the inhumanity of locking people away without consideration or understanding of their material circumstances, mental health or social/cultural contexts" (Carlton and Scraton, 2017: 190).

PVS strategies can work "simultaneously within and against the system to disrupt the authority and legitimacy of the institution; pre-empt official responses; pressure for short-term and long-term reforms in the interests of institutional change" (Carlton, 2018: 6). For example, activists in Victoria, Australia used "system reform and lobbying in conjunction with direct action, public education, in-prison systemic advocacy, lobbying and legal challenges to create pressure for change", which drove policy shifts and programme changes that have mitigated harmful conditions in women's prisons (Carlton, 2018: 20). Similarly, US community-based youth social justice programmes tried to enact personal change and harm reduction through their functionalist work, but simultaneously sought to develop radical consciousness amongst their clients and used protest and activism to call for radical structural changes to address youth crime (Goddard and Myers, 2018: 11). As such, organisations can deliver ostensibly regulatory services with nested activist and advocacy components (Goddard and Myers, 2018: 8). Activist-oriented, radical change organisations can organise popular protest and advance advocacy efforts, whilst e.g. forming a contract with a juvenile justice system to undertake violence prevention work or alternative education (Goddard and Myers, 2018: 7). Although these hybrids may be(come) 'unholy alliances', their outcomes and potential should not be prejudged and they deserve rigorous analysis.

The penal voluntary sector as agent of radical change: thought changers

Radical humanists seek "to change the social world through a change in the modes of cognition and consciousness" (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 33). Consciousness-raising practitioners appreciate that individuals' subjective conditions exist within an inequitable society which can be changed by raising awareness of oppression. Unlike functionalists, who take the basic character of society for granted, radical humanists challenge societal mechanisms, raising consciousness and pointing to alternative social relations (Howe, 2016: 111-114). Expert-imposed answers perpetuate oppression, but achieving consciousness about how social phenomena, such as capitalism or patriarchy, profoundly influence members' lives is a prelude to revolution. Clients gain capacity to generate their own solutions if they become aware of their oppression and reactions to unhealthy situations. The parts of people that are limited and oppressed must be challenged and clients are politicised to see the need and value of gaining power for themselves (Howe, 2016: 114-118). Radical humanist criminal justice practice appreciates how things look from the point of view of the criminalised, helps them to define the problem and solutions that suit them, works collectively and seeks changes in the cultural and legal climates that define the criminalised in what can be adverse and unfair ways (Howe, 2016: 126).

User Voice is ostensibly an example of consciousness raising. Their organisation is majority led and staffed by ex-offenders. It raises consciousness through prison councils and consultations for service providers and commissioners. But the alternative forms of social relations they point to are limited: their theory of change aims for prison and probation senior management teams to listen to and act on council proposals[16]. This can be valuable work, but it does not address the uneven criminalisation of marginalised groups or structural inequality, so we consider it semi-radical. It is also questionable how diverse the selective prison councils are because prison 'users' and their voices vary enormously.

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[16] http://www.uservoice.org/about-us/our-services/

The UK organisation JENGbA (Joint Enterprise Not Guilty by Association) was launched by grassroots prisoners' families, to highlight how the use of joint enterprise law has been "unjust, unfair and discriminatory toward working class and BAME communities"[17]. They support legal appeals, lobby for changes to the law and collaborate to produce research (Williams and Clarke, 2016).

Transform Justice undertake deliberately 'mind changing' practice. This charity aims to "change the appetite for progressive reforms by triggering some beliefs and avoiding engaging with others" (Transform Justice, 2012). They attempt to shift public consciousness from "deep seated and sometimes contradictory" beliefs about why people commit crime. Their 'reframing' guide[18] for criminal justice communications explains tested metaphors, such as 'prison is a dead-end road with no means back to a productive life', that can stimulate public appetite for progressive reforms. Rather than trying to create awareness of oppression as a prelude to change, social changers address oppression through change.

The penal voluntary sector as agent of radical social change: distribution changers
Radical structuralists emphasise objective structural conflict, domination and deprivation. In contrast to radical humanists' focus on consciousness as a basis for critique, radical structuralists concentrate on structural relationships within a 'realist' world (Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 34). Practitioners within this paradigm, Howe's (2016: 129) *revolutionaries*, are concerned with changing societal structures to distribute resources and opportunities more fairly (Howe, 2016: 132, 137). This involves service delivery helping clients to gain rights, entitlements and a fairer share of whatever goods are around (Howe, 2016: 138). Radical structuralists "place clients at the receiving end of class-biased social sanctions […] the state's machinery has to be examined critically" (Howe, 2016: 133).

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[17] http://jointenterprise.co/
[18] http://www.transformjustice.org.uk/reframing/

In the PVS, radical structuralist arguments and practice were presented by the *Prison Reform Trust*, a charity which examines the penal system and aims to influence reform. Their objectives are to reduce unnecessary imprisonment and promote community solutions; improve treatment and conditions for prisoners and their families; and promote equality and human rights in the justice system[19]. Similarly, the *Howard League for Penal Reform* works with parliament, the media, professionals and the public to 'force meaningful change' in the criminal justice system. They campaign against the over-use of custody as a costly and ineffective way of dealing with crime. Instead they reason that "crime is often caused by drug or drink problems, poor mental health, or abuse and neglect" and that the justice system should address these underlying causes[20]. They also bring legal challenges for the benefit of prisoners (Valier, 2004). As we have begun to illustrate, in England and Wales PVS programmes often simultaneously fuse different forms of practice, underpinned by different sociological paradigms. We now illustrate paradigm hybridity in one organisation.

Hybridity in practice

Women in Prison appears to be what Goddard et al (2015) would label a program and service delivery grassroots social justice organisation, although this description obfuscates their complex amalgam of practices and theoretical underpinnings. Women in Prison was founded by former prisoner Chris Tchaikovsky, with the aim of increasing awareness of the lives behind the women in our prisons – lives marked by sexual abuse, poverty and violence[21]. This women-only registered charity campaigns to expose the injustice and damage imprisonment causes to women and their families. They highlight gendered inequities within criminal justice as a prerequisite for fairer arrangements, which is a radical humanist, thought changing

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[19] http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/WhatWeDo
[20] https://howardleague.org/why-the-system-is-broken/
[21] http://www.womeninprison.org.uk/about/our-history.php

approach. Alongside campaigning for radical change, Women in Prison also deliver services, running three Womens' Centres in Manchester, Lambeth and Woking which directly support women to avoid and exit the criminal justice system[22]. The charity's central approach is subjectivist: women-centred, inclusive and non-judgemental, including the proactive recruitment of women who are, or have been in contact with the criminal justice system as paid and voluntary workers[23]. Women in Prison provide a case study of their work with Tara, who was convicted for assault carried out in the context of domestic abuse and sentenced to 6 months in prison[24]. Women in Prison supported Tara in prison, met her at the gate upon release and visited regularly in the weeks following release, providing practical support and exploring *her* feelings. Tara's feedback was: "I would have been lost without your support. I don't think I would have coped and would most likely have started drinking again and done something silly". The charity are very clear in their radical structuralist, distribution changing ambition, seeking to halve the women's prison population by 2020 because "women in prison are some of the most disadvantaged individuals in our society, often having experience of poverty, addiction, mental ill-health, domestic violence, child abuse and sexual exploitation – all of which are the root causes of offending. Prisons do not address these root causes and in many cases make circumstances significantly worse. […] Building homes and community support services will reduce the prison population, building new prisons will not.[25]"

Brokerage

Our analysis fitted well with the paradigms identified by Burrell and Morgan (1979), but required Hassard and Cox's (2013) paradigm hybridity to fit the PVS. However, the hybrid four paradigm model does not depict the (potential) brokerage work of

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[22] http://www.womeninprison.org.uk/about/who-we-are.php
[23] http://www.womeninprison.org.uk/about/what-we-do.php
[24] http://www.womeninprison.org.uk/services/case-studies.php?s=2015-04-14-taras-story
[25] http://www.womeninprison.org.uk/perch/resources/files/2020%20Supporters%20Briefing.pdf

voluntary organisations, funders, government policy and beyond, which can and could guide practice. Contractual commissioning processes for service delivery can e.g. broker distortions and fragmentations in service provision and hinder the development of trusting relationships which are key to developing interagency cooperation (Butler et al., 2017). But umbrella bodies, collectives of campaigning voluntary organisations and academics (could) also broker radical change.

Co-ordinating/umbrella/membership organisations are important for the PVS at least in the UK, Europe and USA (Goddard and Myers, 2018) but have received very little attention, perhaps because they are not easy to categorise or rarely deliver direct services. However, such organisations hold much (perhaps untapped) potential to connect like-minded organisations and facilitate allegiances and solidarity across punishment, criminal justice and broader social movements (Carlton, 2018: 20). Co-ordinating organisations, and broader groups such as collectives, can undertake brokerage, by linking "two or more currently unconnected social sites" and mediating their relations with each other and further sites (McAdam et al., 2001: 26). Brokerage roles include translating information; coordinating communities; articulating debates; promoting dialogue; and representing members (Lavalle and von Bulow, 2015: 162). Brokers have powerful potential as relational mechanisms (Lavalle and von Bulow, 2015: 159) that can reinforce e.g. functionalist programmes and/or help to diffuse different ways of thinking and practising, and even establish social movements.

In England and Wales *Clinks* is an umbrella membership organisation that supports, represents and advocates for the voluntary sector in criminal justice[26]. *The National Association for Youth Justice (NAYJ)*[27] is a membership organisation with members from practice and academia, campaigning for the rights of and justice for children and young people in trouble with the law. NAYJ seeks to promote the welfare of children and young people in the youth justice system in England by campaigning,

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[26] https://www.clinks.org/resources/about-clinks
[27] http://thenayj.org.uk/about/

lobbying, publishing practice and policy papers and providing training events and conferences. There are many country-specific examples, but perhaps more powerful are transnational organisations such as *Children of Prisoners Europe* and *Victim Support Europe.* The activities of these co-ordinating organisations, their relationships within and beyond the PVS and their effects deserve further analysis, and their potential to broker (radical) change at a variety of scales should be explored.

We also consider that academics also have a larger role to play (Belknap, 2015). Some commentators have discussed the PVS in terms of its links to the privatisation of criminal justice, stressing the troubling issues raised for the voluntary sector's independence and ethos through contracting-out of penal services (e.g. Corcoran et al., 2018). Far fewer have considered how the PVS can affect penal policy or facilitate a more socially just society. We hope that our framework (Figure 3) can stimulate further activity in these important areas, opening up new ways of thinking and acting.

(Figure 3 here)

Analysing hybridity

In this article, we have illustrated the varied, fluid and hybrid paradigms underpinning PVS activity. It is imperative that specific strategies, and the combined elements of practice that they draw upon, are now analysed more thoroughly, using mixed methods to acknowledge both areas of paradigmatic overlap and sites of contradiction (Okhuysen and Bonardi, 2011: 6). In terms of hybridity, Goddard and Myers (2018: 10) note "we were largely concerned with how organisations navigated neoliberal barriers to autonomy when functioning as social movement organisers and service providers to young people; we were less focussed on charting their actual success in building youth movements or winning policy changes". But *the*

devil is in this detail, i.e. the situated, hybrid relationships between different paradigms in practice, and the effects thereof.

In terms of subjective and objective hybridity, Noble (2004: 289) notes that action and resistance can be exercised locally. For example, the *Koestler Trust* is a charity which motivates detainees to participate in the arts. It aims to "stimulate as far as possible, and in as many cases as possible, the mind and spirit of the prisoner" (Koestler Trust, 2018). They encourage ex-offenders to "change their lives through taking part in the arts, and challenge negative preconceptions of what ex-offenders are capable of". This challenging of preconceptions may be wishful thinking, but it is unfair to negate the narrative potential of such work. Local action and resistance can also (seek to) translate to the macro level.

The charity *INQUEST* provides expertise on state related deaths and their investigation. Their recent campaign fuses radical structuralist and subjectivist service delivery recommendations. INQUEST's 2018 report 'Still dying on the inside: Examining deaths in women's prisons' makes the primary recommendation to redirect resources from criminal justice to welfare, health, housing and social care, reallocating criminal justice resources into "independent, specialist and dedicated services run by and for women and (including) culturally specific provision for BAME girls and women" (2018: 20). In a hybrid strategy, they present these recommendations in a report with the cover image 'Perception', by prisoner artist Charlotte Nokes. Charlotte was given an Imprisonment for Public Protection sentence and due to serve 16 months at HMP Peterborough, but died there nine years later, in July 2016[28]. INQUEST's report explains that Charlotte won several Koestler Trust prizes for her art (2018: 2). Images inside the report were provided by the Koestler Trust, from its exhibition '100 Years On: An Art Trail by Women in Prison' (INQUEST, 2018: 2).

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[28] https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/uk/2017/08/im-blame-blunketts-indefinite-prison-sentences-and-thousands-still-locked

It is clear that the PVS attempts objectivist fixing of individuals, subjectivist/ self- fixing of individuals, and at societal level strives for reforms that are objectivist, redistributive and subjectivist, thought changing. In addition, the PVS facilitates local narrative forms of expression, challenging the power to define. These narratives can be incorporated into national campaigns, as illustrated by the Koestler Trust's art in INQUEST's report (2018). Often agents and agencies fuse more than one of these paradigms at the same time, and different practices at different times, in ways and with consequences that are not well understood. Our framework increases awareness of these hybrids. Further analysing them and their potential could have powerful implications for practice, which should also be explored.

We have illuminated the fluidity and hybridity of PVS practices, drawing attention to hybrid objectivist and subjectivist service delivery *and* campaigning work. Our hybrid sociology of the PVS can, we hope, stimulate and contribute to important theoretical and practical tasks. The PVS can bring about radical (and modest) change (Maurutto and Hannah-Moffatt, 2016; Carlton, 2018). Apparent reforms can become tied to system-focussed critiques and ultimately carceral expansion (Tomczak, 2017b; Carlton, 2018), although pressing for humanitarian conditions does not inevitably reinforce, reproduce or perpetuate problematic carceral practices (Carlton and Scraton, 2017: 190). It is essential that scholars go on to unpick exactly when and how humanitarian reform becomes carceral expansion (Gottschalk, 2006) amidst hybrid PVS practices, and how (and by whom) humanitarian reform can be effectively brokered from micro to macro levels and vice versa.

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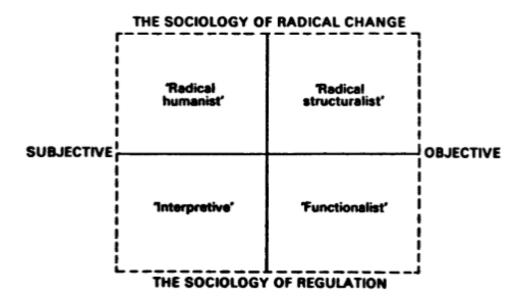
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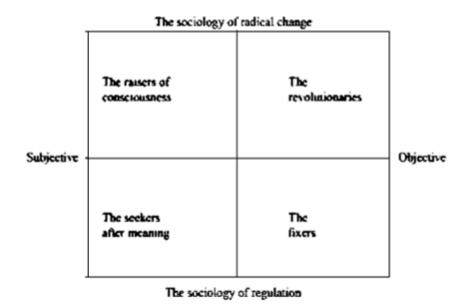
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Figure 1: Burrell and Morgan's model of social theory

THE SOCIOLOGY OF RADICAL CHANGE
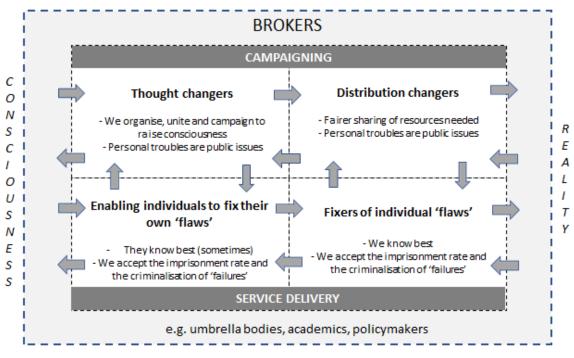
'Radical humanist'	'Radical structuralist'

SUBJECTIVE ———————————— **OBJECTIVE**

'Interpretive'	'Functionalist'

THE SOCIOLOGY OF REGULATION

(Burrell and Morgan, 1979: 22)

Figure 2: Howe's model of social work practice

The sociology of radical change

The raisers of consciousness	The revolutionaries

Subjective ———————————— Objective

The seekers after meaning	The fixers

The sociology of regulation

(Howe, 2016: 47)

Figure 3: Our framework of (potential) PVS activity