



Sentencing: Time for a Paradigm Shift (Key Ideas in Criminology)

Ralph Henham

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Sentencing is the process through which the legitimacy of punishment is declared and justified. However, it is increasingly portrayed as a social activity which should be more responsive to the pluralistic needs and values of individuals and communities in contemporary society. It will therefore have to adapt to an array of different perceptions of what justice is and how it should be delivered, as well as different sensitivities and emotional responses to sentencing processes and outcomes.

At a time when fundamental questions are being asked about the relevance of existing forms of punishment in contemporary society, *Sentencing* argues for a profound normative understanding of the relationship between sentencing and its perception by citizens – vital if we are to fully comprehend the nature and significance of punishment, and the particular challenges it faces as a force for social cohesion. Henham explores this theme by focusing on key areas of debate within the field:

- the treatment of gender and race in sentencing
- the future role of sentencing in criminal justice governance
- the development of new criteria for evaluating sentencing within a more socially-inclusive framework.

Henham suggests that a greater focus on the relationship between penal ideology and the impact of sentencing in the wider community is essential for effective future policy-making in this area. *Sentencing* will be useful for both undergraduate and postgraduate students of law, criminology, criminal justice and sociology, as well as for academics and criminal justice policymakers.

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