

Reflecting on Leaders in Corrections

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This chapter reflects on all ten interviews with correctional executives from eight different countries, these correctional leaders' commitment to reform and their willingness to embrace the complex challenges this form of work entails is obvious. Considering the challenges in contemporary and historical correctional management and of the successful and unsuccessful solutions to those challenges, the following chapter presents emergent features of the interviewees' responses taken as a group. By utilising the main interview structure of each interview reported on in the foregoing chapters, this final chapter draws these themes together and examines corrections leadership through a theoretical and practical lens.

Reflecting on all ten interviews with correctional executives from eight different countries, these correctional leaders' commitment to reform and their willingness to embrace the complex challenges this form of work entails is obvious. Again, the nature of this volume, and the expert interviewers' skills and knowledge of the jurisdictions discussed, has provided the reader with a unique collection of descriptions of challenges in contemporary and historical correctional management and of the successful and unsuccessful solutions to those challenges. Many wishes and plans for future evolution of correctional systems are clearly articulated by interviewees, providing a stimulating road map of options for future correctional leaders. Similarities in experience and professional orientation exist, which is the true emergent value of comparative work of this nature. In particular, the interviews conducted in languages other than English and presented here for the English reader in English, makes a highly valuable contribution to comparative analysis in correctional leadership worldwide. The following summary of emergent features of the interviewees' responses, taken as a group, follows the main

headings and question themes utilised by the interviewees, which structure the report of each interview in the foregoing chapters.

A preliminary comment is that the various systems from eight countries presented in this volume can be grouped or distinguished in at least four dimensions: (i) responding to national independence relatively recently (Lithuania and the Slovak Republic), (ii) responding to significant prison scandals (Honduras, Japan and South Africa), (iii) responding to severe overcrowding, especially due to tough on (drug) crime policies of national governments (Philippines, Thailand), and, (iv) responding to demands for private prison providers (Texas, USA). Only one chapter in the volume was solely focused on a juvenile system (Chapter 4) and it was, interestingly, documented as a county system in the USA's decentralised approach to corrections rather than a national level of executive administration. Despite these unique pressures, there are emergent similarities under the headings below. That is even the case in the now militarised management of corrections in Honduras.

Career

A number of the interviewees had enjoyed, or are still enjoying, extremely lengthy stints in correctional or public service leadership, even if the correctional aspects of their careers were unexpected from the vantage point of their early careers or core training. For example, Mr Nathee Jitsawang (Thailand) spent more than 40 years in the correctional service system; Mr Johan Ellis Le Grange (South Africa) is still in corrections after 40 years, while Colonel Garcia (Honduras), from a military service background, was unexpectedly called upon to direct a national correctional system and has close to 40 years' experience.

In terms of disciplinary career changes and intriguing pathways into corrections, we see the following range of career movements. Živilė Mikėnaitė was initially trained in mathematics and IT before police training, legal training (to Masters level) and academic work before becoming the first woman to lead a confinement institution in Lithuania. For Martin Lulei, from the Slovak Republic, the move was not so unexpected after university studies and work experience in mediation, probation, criminal law and social work and victim support. This mirrored the apt study and training for Dany Pirdle, from Dallas County, Texas, USA, whose university study, culminating in doctoral study in juvenile justice, saw him leave academia and lead juvenile justice

service units before returning to teaching and academia. The interview with Dany Pirdle reveals strong, clear and candid reasons for returning to academia from correctional leadership, despite him thinking he ‘wanted to finish his career in the field’. The interview also records his view that his academic work and teaching is greatly enhanced by correctional system leadership, and, that he ‘would not trade’ the field experience he had in juvenile justice for anything. Similar related university-level training in criminal justice was completed by Tomiyama, from Japan, before he commenced a career in corrections, and Jitsawang, from Thailand, was a law graduate but also held positions titled penologist, legal officer, researcher and Director of Correctional Staff Training before becoming a Deputy Director-General and then Director-General of the Department of Corrections.

More unexpected career moves included that of Adonay Davila, from Texas, who wanted to be a police officer but waited three years for a police academy invitation following slow security clearance procedures due to his juvenile traffic fines record; just enough time for him to catch the correctional service bug completely and to refuse the eventual offer to train as a police officer. In the Philippines, it is now required that all correctional staff have a university degree. Randel Latoza’s was in civil engineering before training at a police academy and making the unexpected discovery that he could work in remand facilities by joining a jail department rather than a prison department once he set his sights on correctional service.

There are standout examples (e.g., Tomiyama from Japan and Davila from Texas) of the rare situation of highly experienced low-ranking correctional officers eventually being promoted to become correctional system executive leaders able to structure system-wide policy and procedural changes from the perspective of grass roots practice and much lived experience on the ground in prisons. Adonay Davila is in the rare situation of having a highly distinguished career in public corrections before working in private corrections, facilitating rich comparative comments between those two systems in his interview. From these criminal justice correctional jobs, he has also ended up in executive positions in immigration detention facilities, another telling and pressing comparison many countries also have between criminal and administrative detention regimes. What is intriguing about these highly experienced correctional officers becoming executives is their familiarity with the lot of those they lead; Davila,

in particular, experienced significant and extreme stress and challenge in highly violent correctional facilities and prisons with high rates of mental illness and use of segregation as a younger correctional officer.

Other leaders (e.g., Pirdle from Texas, Chapter 3) have decided to move back into academia having served some time as a correctional leader at the coalface of correctional management, suggesting that links made between theory and practice can shape mobile careers and movement between leadership and advocacy roles from both within and outside of executive teams working in prisons and correctional departments.

Changes Experienced

As the reader learns of the positive and negative system and practice changes the correctional leaders catalogued, it is clear that there are some rather unique jurisdictional politics, history and social changes contextualising the evolution of each correctional system. In the relatively new and independent nations of Lithuania and the Slovak Republic, a raft of new and constantly amended correctional and criminal legislation has posed many challenges for correctional leaders, and, in the case of the Slovak Republic, is further shaped by the regional compliance demands of EU membership. For those systems responding to scandal (e.g., 362 deaths from a fire started by a prisoner igniting his mattress in Honduras and aggression by correctional officers leading to one prisoner's death and one with permanent disability in Japan), the drastic changes witnessed by the relevant correctional officers are motivated by a need to recover public confidence in corrections. For those systems facing crushing overcrowding due to tough on (drug) crime political agendas (e.g., the Philippines at 400% overcrowding and a 40% prison population increase since 2016, and Thailand with 65% of all inmates still incarcerated for drug crimes), the ability to change much at all is remarkable and the leaders lament how their hands are somewhat tied as managers by the pressures of overcrowding. Those jurisdictions like Texas, that has seen four private prisons in 1989 (housing around 2,000 prisoners) swell to 16 private facilities with 12,908 beds in 2015, have witnessed probably the biggest change, and surrendering of private trust in correctional administration, of all the jurisdictions considered in this volume. As Adonay Davila notes, privatisation requires contracting governments to negotiate well with private providers in a highly detailed fashion if

comparable prisoner experience is to be guaranteed in both public and private prisons in the one state.

Further examples of the changes noted by the interviewed correctional officers range from the realisation that true rehabilitation and reintegration success post-release only flows from individualised case management and throughcare, rather than ‘one-size-fits-all’ oppressive confinement and programming (Lithuania, Japan, the Slovak Republic), via an embrace of the utility of probation (the Slovak Republic), therapeutic communities and residential drug programmes in prisons (Dallas County), and greatly improved officer to prisoner ratios from the unworkable 228:1 ration once tolerated in some Texan facilities prior to the legal decision in *Ruiz v. Estelle* (see Chapter 4). It also requires understanding that new facilities must be built to prevent overcrowding and new correctional staff training academies are needed to develop the professional or occupational identity of correctional officers (Honduras), the provision of (para-)legal services in remand jails to avoid some remandees spending a decade or more in custody pre-trial (the Philippines), and, some notable demographic changes in prisoner profile, from poorer and less educated to wealthier and better educated perpetrators (Thailand).

Personal Correctional Philosophy

Many of the leaders stated that correctional philosophy must move away from punitiveness (South Africa), isolation (Lithuania), compulsory work (Japan), and strict security concerns (Thailand) *only*. In their place, the most favoured correctional philosophies espoused by these highly experienced and some newer correctional leaders were shaped by realisations that individualised justice is paramount if re-entry and reintegration is to succeed. In turn, that success depends on the adoption of apt correctional cultures and philosophies centred on rehabilitation and improving prisoners as people (Texas, South Carolina, Honduras, Thailand), dignity/human rights and treating prisoners as human beings (Philippines), challenging the rationale for current practice (Dallas County), and, even contemplating better separation of violent and non-violent prisoners (Texas).

In the case of Honduras, specific dimensions of rehabilitation are currently articulated as goals based on vocational, educational, spiritual, and occupational engagement. Further subtlety in correctional philosophy was conveyed by Tomiyama (Japan), who emphasised that professionalism and training of correctional staff working

within well-supervised and open and non-defensive work cultures is key to implementing the other aspects of desirable correctional philosophy. This Japanese leader, heavily involved in investigating and responding to the 2001–2002 Nagoya prisoner maltreatment scandals, notes that the implementation of any correctional philosophy must result in societal trust of correctional authorities. Again, more subtlety exists for Tomiyama in demanding teaching of life skills and not just vocations as part of any rehabilitation programme focused on criminogenic needs etc., acknowledging that many offenders without core life skills need to be habilitated as they cannot just rehabilitate if they never had those skills prior to offending.

Problems and Successes Experienced

The level of specific detail given in the reflections on successes and ongoing problems for correctional leaders is a trove worth considering by any new or incoming correctional leader. Not only would digestion of these summaries by the interviewed correctional leaders assist others to prevent ‘reinventing the wheel’, but there is possible reassurance here that tough decisions and innovative approaches do produce both desired as well as unintended consequences and that both of these can be managed with humility and honesty. Taking such decision-making risks, such as introducing new programmes and being provocative as a correctional leader, seem worth it for good correctional leaders who must respond to pressures and demands from many directions. Many of the problems and ongoing systemic deficiencies identified by these eight leaders may seem like intractable systemic concerns; however, attempts to tackle these are the dimensions upon which all correctional leaders are judged and they are the motivations for such work.

Examples of problems noted by the interviewed leaders included poor and failing infrastructure (Lithuania), adverse impact of actuarial and other risk assessment tools on minorities, leading to harsher and more incarceration of minorities (Dallas County), high correctional staff turnover rates (Dallas County), lack of management and leadership training for correctional leaders (Dallas County), overly hasty abandonment of immature programmes (Texas), still attempting to manage prisons and lead correctional staff through fear alone (Texas), setting up programmes for failure (e.g., returning graduates of a gang renunciation programme back into a gang-structured general population of a prison (Texas), lack of prisoner classification assessments

(Honduras), lack of security technology (Honduras), escalation of inappropriate control methods via excessive rule imposition (e.g., marching when moving in Japanese prisons), aging prison populations (Japan), corruption (the Phillipines, South Africa), and the need for diversion programmes, especially for drug offenders (Thailand).

Examples of successes proudly related by the interviewed leaders included implementing individual case management systems and dynamic security approaches to understand each prisoner better as an individual (Lithuania), a gardening project that assists in beautifying aging infrastructure too (Lithuania), cooperation between prisons, academics and NGOs to improve educational opportunities (the Slovak Republic) and wider partnership working (South Carolina), justice reinvestment initiatives that provide community programmes as alternatives to incarceration (Dallas County), graduation pride in vocational programmes (Texas), training correctional staff in the links between trauma and offending (e.g., under Federal US schemes such as PREA, Dallas County), more manageable case manager to client ratios (1:25 instead of 1:50, Dallas County), use of youth diversion courts (Dallas County), improving food (Honduras) by making wardens directly responsible for food quality rather than outsourced providers (the Phillipines), targeted prison programmes (e.g., for drugs, gangs, sex offenders, traffic offenders, and perpetrators needing to develop empathy with their victims, Japan), deregulation of health services in prisons to encourage more doctors and allied health professionals to work in prisons (Japan), searching corrections officers before shifts and cells to reduce weapons and other contraband in prisons (the Phillipines), and elite athlete development programmes (Thailand).

Theory and Practice

The clearest example of the value given to the 'vital' (Lithuania) nexus between theory and practice by the interviewed correctional leaders is the commitment to lifelong learning and higher education shown by the leaders themselves. Some leaders powerfully and simply acknowledged that 'practice without theory is reckless' (Tomiyama, Japan), especially when designing and evaluating programmes. Predictably, years of executive leadership give each leader a sharp critical edge to their engagement with theory and academic critique of correctional systems and correctional practice. However, most leaders believed that a connection between theory and practice is crucial and will usually provide mutual benefit between the communities of

correctional leadership practice and the academy, realising the core *raison d'être* of professional associations such as IPES.

Examples given of successful integration of theory and practice included higher education courses for correctional officers, especially in law and psychology (Lithuania), and internships (the Slovak Republic).

Biggest obstacles to a better integration between theory and practice were noted as follows: a lack of some core disciplinary experts in some jurisdictions (e.g., lack of criminologists in Honduras, instead, being guided in policy decisions by reports written only by lawyers, priests and/or human rights activists), academics being overly critical of correctional officers instead of correctional officers being engaged in equal discussions with academics (Japan), language of the published theory (often only in English and few larger works translated from English (Japan),

Evidence-based Corrections

Following on from the overwhelming support for fostering the nexus between theory and practice is an endorsement that evidence-based corrections is the way of the future. However, many leaders lamented that correctional system staff are poorly trained to understand the evidence base and to implement its findings (Thailand). Furthermore, many correctional systems do not fund, or cannot adequately resource, evaluative studies of programmes or other system innovations to engage in evidence-based correctional practice (the Slovak Republic, the Philippines). It is clear from the interviews that contemporary correctional leaders must utilise evidence-based evaluations and the fruits of evidence-based research. This is probably clearest in the discussion of the increased use of risk assessment tools provided by the burgeoning literature on these and their implementation. Despite the clear benefit evidence-based risk assessment has had in correctional assessments, some leaders still sounded warnings about these tools not being foolproof and false positives and other errors still resulting in the incarceration of the less dangerous or the overrepresented (Dallas County).

Transnational Relations

It is clear that correctional leaders work in a globalised world and that they learn much from each other, despite some apparent differences in systems. Not only does meeting

and learning from correctional leaders from other jurisdictions educate correctional leaders deeply and seem highly valuable, but such mutual assistance is the most concrete way to allow international norms and best practice to spread around the world. When this happens, the correctional leaders are reassured in their decision making that they would be vindicated and judged more fairly against regional or international norms of best practice. Examples included the EuroPris network of 20 European countries discussing ethics, human rights, and best practice as well as hosting educational tours and cooperative training sessions (Lithuania). Other leaders spoke of support from particular historic or contemporary development allies (e.g., the Czech Republic supporting the Slovak Republic; Dominican Republic as a model for Honduras) and some were assisted by standard diplomatic engagement regarding foreign prisoners' experiences and extradition requests (Japan, Thailand). Some examples of transnational cooperation shone light on particular correctional challenges (e.g., support from the Letot Centre to increase understanding of the offending and rehabilitation challenges for juvenile victims of trafficking, as mentioned by Dany Pirtle, Dallas County). Even though some correctional leaders concluded that their system was unique and could not adopt some of the practices and innovations successful in other places, knowing of the options others have tried and succeeded with (or not) seemed to be acknowledged as the cornerstone of contemporary correctional practice.

Role of Corrections

Of those leaders who developed statements of correctional philosophy into broader views about the society role of corrections, the following points were made. Živilė Mikėnaitė from Lithuania stated that society is 'more interested to condemn rather than extend a helping hand' to prisoners, explaining the tension over the question of the role of corrections in that society that often plays out in the media or in policy and practice debates. Martin Lulej, from the Slovak Republic, expresses the role of corrections as being to instil a sense of responsibility in offenders but to provide them with 'health and dignity' and the skills to re-enter society. Dany Pirtle, from Dallas County, simply quips that if the role of corrections is not being debated in the media, then correctional leaders are clearly doing a good job! Tomiyama, from Japan, notes the paradox of Japanese society valuing corrections only if the correctional institutions and parolees are 'Not in My Back Yard!'. Randel Latoza, from the Philippines, takes issue with political campaigns such as President Duterte's 'war on drugs' which confuse the role

of corrections within society and lead to unmanageable overcrowding. Nathee Jitsawang, from Thailand, describes that the best way the Thai correctional leaders found to promote rehabilitation as a core role for corrections was to hold community fairs and presentations. These events provide an opportunity where prison industries and prisoners achievements are described and the public can see the fruits of rehabilitative orientations within corrections for themselves as an anti-stigma campaign. More broadly, all of the interviewees presented in this third volume of *Trends in Corrections* believe in the positive role that corrections can and does play in society. While there are improvements to be made in the delivery of correctional practice, there is global evidence of positive change occurring within the sector.

General Assessments and Conclusions

This summary and overview of the views of the correctional leaders as a group, defined by many similarities but also some differences, ends with a few choice quotes from the interviews when interviewees were asked to make general assessments of the correctional system they work or worked in. These questions in the interviews tended to serve as summarising hopes and dreams about the future of corrections in each system. Most, but not all, of the interviewed correctional leaders responded clearly to this invitation by interviewers.

A general view from the Lithuanian leader was that a general goal must be to increase the level of individual case management of prisoners but to also remember to provide safe conditions for everyone within prisons and in the society to which prisoners return, concluding that leaders must witness an increase in funded research and collaborative activity. A general comment from the Slovak Republic included the paradox that society is punitive and demands uncompromising punishment of adult criminals but still has a somewhat humane and reintegrative view about the fate of juvenile offenders. A wish here is that greater use of intermediate or alternative or diversionary options will be possible into the future. Dany Pirtle, on retreat from Dallas County juvenile correctional leadership back into academia, laments that correctional research is often of quite a high standard and done appropriately at the right times on the right questions, but the implementation of that research is still poor and correctional leaders are often not supported in their desires to implement our scientific evidence-based knowledge of what works. This position, in part, is reflected in Fred Lux's

chapter; however, in this chapter, in which Major Anderson is interviewed, a more optimistic view of corrections is presented, in that it is heading in the right direction in terms of evidence-based knowledge informing practice.

Brian Norris comments that the radical militarisation of the Honduran corrections system suggests that, when all else failed, the Honduran government and the Honduran people trusted the military to lead reform and control of corrections. Satoshi Tomiyama, from Japan, makes a practical and clear general point: employers must commit to supporting the employment of ex-prisoners in Japan to facilitate their reintegration and provide a protective factor against recidivism, especially when 94% of Japanese sentences of imprisonment are for three or fewer years. Randel Latoza, from the Philippines jail system, hopes that jails and prisons in his jurisdiction collaborate more so that insights about managing sentenced prisoners can flow to educate leaders managing remand facilities. He does comment that he is pleased that judges and lawyers now seem to respect correctional officers in the Philippines more as equals now. Echoing many comments from many leaders interviewed for this volume, Nathee Jitsawang from Thailand, one of the longest serving correctional leaders interviewed for this book, reflects on his 40 years of work and states that future correctional leaders will have to prioritise throughcare and making even more of a bridge between incarceration and re-entry into the community if the efforts of correctional leaders around the world are to find favour with many. Drawing the interview chapters to a close, Ann-Mari Hesselink presents the final interview, from a South African perspective, in which the importance and effect of affirmative action is illustrated. Since the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in the mid 1990s, the South African Corrections Department has experienced a shift in correctional practice, one where there is better treatment of prisoners and where racial segregation does not occur.

Final Thoughts

By drawing together the themes of the interviews presented in this third volume of *Trends in Corrections* the importance of both agile and responsive leadership in corrections is evidenced. As noted earlier, in Chapter 1, the need for corrections to be up to date with innovative policy and contemporary practice is a requirement for those in leadership and management roles. There is a need for these positions to be theory driven and evidence based. From examining the interview data presented in this

volume, there are a number of trends affecting the future context of leadership within corrections, including shifting demographics, changes in community expectations and rapid technological advances, to name but few. These trends are all interrelated and together they are driving complexity and change at unprecedented rates, which corrections services around the world are already experiencing. The impact of such trends and changes involves technological innovations, for example, with the management of offenders, as well as growing social diversity within the system, such as ageing prisoner populations. As a consequence, future correctional organisational structures need to be more efficient in terms of cost and flexible enough to cope with greater innovation. Corrections leaders must, therefore, remain responsive to local needs as well as being capable of remotely coordinating and leading the work of prison officers. However, these leaders also need to exercise sufficient influence with partner agencies in the collaborative delivery of services such as education and training. Corrections leaders are responsible for driving their organisation forward and, while a clear strategic direction is required for any organisation, it becomes no more than a paper exercise if it has no achievable goals and direction. Clearly, corrections executives need to drive an organisation to achieve their strategic goals and the leadership role involved in ensuring that the values of the organisation are shared across it is imperative. Often the effectiveness of the individual leader and their management team can be measured simply by examining the 'buy-in' of the personnel to the organisational goals. The degree of 'buy-in' will frequently be determined by the demonstrable relevance of the strategic direction to the external environment and the integrity, commitment and persuasiveness of the individual leader in the promotion of these interconnected components. Therefore, leaders within corrections must stay agile and responsive to current and future changes and challenges, bringing all those who work in the organisation along with these changes and challenges, the importance of which is reflected in the work of Dunoon (2002) who considers 'Learning Centred Leadership'. The approach of Learning Centred Leadership creates a transformational environment in which to 'reframe issues and opportunities and identify viable pathways for action' (Dunoon, 2002, p. 9). The changes and challenges that face corrections leaders in the 21st century, in large part, could not have been imagined by many of those interviewed in this volume decades ago when they joined corrections. However, their ability to enhance and evolve their knowledge and skills over their career is reflected in the accounts of those interviewed and has been central to their success, at

both an individual and an organisational level. It is this ability to evolve that has also allowed those interviewed to respond to the problems that have emerged over the course of their careers. As such, the future of corrections lies within the leadership of these organisations and their ability to respond to, and effectively manage, change and challenges, both individually and organisationally.