

chosen profession has changed in recent years. Sociologists who study professional occupations will benefit from reading *Urban Lawyers* for the insight it provides into larger issues of de-professionalization and changing conceptions of professional identity. Finally, *Urban Lawyers* is a useful resource for sociologists interested in larger conversations about the ways in which structural changes in the legal profession are symbolic of concurrent transformations in the neoliberal social and economic regime in which it is embedded.

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Downsizing Prisons: How to Reduce Crime and End Mass Incarceration. By Michael Jacobson. New York: New York University Press, 2005. Pp. 292. \$29.95 cloth.

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The mass incarceration movement in this country has garnered substantial scholarly interest. In fact, it could easily be argued that this movement is responsible for a renewed academic interest in penology and the sociology of punishment. The scholarship in this area, with a few notable exceptions, has focused predominantly on how we can explain the phenomenon of the “get touch” or “penal harm” movement (Cullen et al. 2000). A political culture of intolerance, the bureaucratization of prisons, and even the rise of a postmodern penology are all thought to account for this development (Feeley & Simon 1992; Irwin & Austin 1994; Caplow & Simon 1999). Scholars who study the frontline of corrections have noted some of the limitation in this discourse, suggesting that the transformations in punishment are incomplete and often haphazardly realized (e.g., Lynch 1998). But, what has been largely missing from this body of work is a serious consideration of how we might go about changing an excessive reliance on incarceration that has swelled our prison populations to record national and international levels and has absorbed increasing proportions of most states’ fiscal resources.

Jacobson’s *Downsizing Prisons* tackles this important question. The book is framed for both an academic and a policy audience, although it will probably hold more sway with the latter than the former. Academics will be familiar with many of the arguments he

uses to frame his analysis of the current prison system: (1) it is racially and economically biased, (2) punishments are not proportional to the offenses and may not be a deterrent, (3) mass incarceration has substantial negative effects on some communities, (4) alternatives to imprisonment are underutilized, and (5) there is only a weak relationship between prison expansion and crime reduction. But they will not be familiar with his systematic consideration of how we might go about changing our prison system to make it both more socially and fiscally palatable. He employs case studies of both New York City and San Diego to show how different policing strategies both resulted in significant crime reductions and, as well, reductions in their respective prison and jail populations. In an effort to further hammer home the notion that incarceration rates are largely unrelated to drops in crime, Jacobson shows that the states with the largest increases in prison populations did not have the largest drops in crimes. Similar points have been made on an international scale, effectively diminishing the policing argument (see Tonry 2004). Nevertheless, his articulation of the ways in which we can restructure our punishment system—by focusing on eliminating or reducing the terms of imprisonment for technical parole violations, redirecting resources to effective and targeted community supervision, and eliminating barriers to parolees' successful reentry into society—are worthy of widespread and careful consideration. He considers some of our brightest colleagues' proposals for changing our probation and parole services, and he offers a blow-by-blow account of how three states (California, Connecticut, and Louisiana) are attempting to downsize their prison populations. In what is referred to as "success stories," he acknowledges the political realities of running "soft on crime" and facing the powerful corrections unions and private prison industries in the reform efforts in these states.

All told, this is an important read for anyone seriously interested in how we can get a handle on our state prison systems that, to date, have been largely unable to adjudicate between the issues of public safety and fiscal responsibility. While its practical import cannot be overstated, its scholarly merit should not be dismissed. An intriguing question for anyone interested in the "new penology" is why theoretical discourse on the causes of the mass incarceration movement have proliferated but accounts of the reversal of this movement are strikingly absent.

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Women's Lives, Men's Laws. By Catharine A. MacKinnon. Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2005. Pp. 576. \$39.95 cloth.

Reviewed by Justin Reinheimer, University of California, Berkeley

An important and wide-ranging collection, *Women's Lives, Men's Laws* includes more than 20 years of MacKinnon's feminist enterprise. Part defense, part update, part preview, the compilation forcefully defends the notion of women as a group, examines feminism's successes and setbacks, offers visionary strategies to end women's inequality to men, and sets the stage for an upcoming companion volume on the international arena, *Women's World, Men's States*.

In earlier work, MacKinnon famously theorized law as a potent expression of the socially male state, tracing its power along the legal lines of public and private, coercion and consent, difference and dominance, and morality and politics. Much of *Women's Lives, Men's Laws* interrogates the many places these notions of male power can be found and have traveled since their original articulation. For example, MacKinnon provides a structural privacy analysis of the Violence Against Women Act's demise, analyzes the Equal Rights Amendment and liberal feminism in terms of difference and dominance, and further develops alternatives to existing laws against sexual violence grounded in material harms rather than ethical objections. But *Women's Lives, Men's Laws* does more than analyze new issues with existing (if widely unrealized) theory. The compilation elucidates two crucial aspects of MacKinnon's feminism that have been largely implicit in prior published work: her methodology and her equality theory.

Responding to the charge that her feminism is "essentialist," MacKinnon details the origin of her theory in the experiences of