



# Reconceptualising the Moral Economy of Criminal Justice: A New Perspective

*Philip Whitehead*

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Includes a foreword by Simon Winlow and Steve Hall, Teesside Centre for Realist Criminology, UK.

This book reconceptualises the concept of moral economy in its relevance for, and application to, criminal justice in England and Wales with specific reference to probation. Beginning in the 1980s, followed by successive New Labour administrations after 1997 and the Transforming Rehabilitation agenda of 2010 to 2015, criminal justice has been radically affected by the technical requirements of economy and efficiency, value for money, measurable outcomes, punishment, prisons, and bureaucratic rationality. These features have combined to impose a paradigm shift in governmental policies and organisational practices, indexed most notably in probation.

Philip Whitehead advances the argument that criminal justice cannot be reduced to an instrumentally driven operation to achieve fiscal efficiencies or provide investment opportunities to the commercial sector. Rather, the starting point is to establish its intellectual and moral foundations, the precepts of which are required to legitimate policy and practice. Accordingly, the concept of moral economy constitutes a point of departure to the orthodoxy of criminal and penal policy, its modernisation, and the platform of neoliberal ideological and material interests that it reflects and reproduces. Crucially, this book takes a decisive step towards reenergising thinking on morality.

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