



Reform in the Making: The Implementation of Social Policy in Prison

Ann Chih Lin

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Is it time to give up on rehabilitating criminals? Record numbers of Americans are going to prison, and most of them will eventually return to society with a high chance of becoming repeat offenders. But a decision to abandon rehabilitation programs now would be premature warns Ann Chih Lin, who finds that little attention has been given to how these programs are actually implemented and why they tend to fail. In *Reform in the Making*, she not only supplies much-needed information on the process of program implementation but she also considers its social context, the daily realities faced by prison staff and inmates. By offering an in-depth look at common rehabilitation programs currently in operation--education, job training, and drug treatment--and examining how they are used or misused, Lin offers a practical approach to understanding their high failure rate and how the situation could be improved.

Based on extensive observation and over 350 interviews with staff and prisoners in five medium-security male prisons, the book contrasts successfully implemented programs with subverted, abandoned, or neglected programs (those which staff reject or which do not teach prisoners anything useful). Lin explains that staff and prisoners have little patience with programs aimed at long-range goals when they must face the ongoing, immediate challenge of surviving prison life. Finding incentives to make both sides participate fully in rehabilitation is among the book's many contributions to improving prison policy.

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