



Between Prison and Probation: Intermediate Punishments in a Rational Sentencing System

By Norval Morris, Michael Tonry

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Across the country prisons are jammed to capacity and, in extreme cases, barges and mobile homes are used to stem the overflow. Probation officers in some cities have caseloads of 200 and more--hardly a manageable number of offenders to track and supervise. And with about one million people in prison and jail, and two and a half million on probation, it is clear we are experiencing a crisis in our penal system.

In *Between Prison and Probation*, Norval Morris and Michael Tonry, two of the nation's leading criminologists, offer an important and timely strategy for alleviating these problems. They argue that our overwhelmed corrections system cannot cope with the flow of convicted offenders because the two extremes of punishment--imprisonment and probation--are both used excessively, with a near-vacuum of useful punishments in between. Morris and Tonry propose instead a comprehensive program that relies on a range of punishment including fines and other financial sanctions, community service, house arrest, intensive probation, closely supervised treatment programs for drugs, alcohol and mental illness, and electronic monitoring of movement. Used in rational combinations, these "intermediate" punishments would better serve the community than our present polarized choice. Serious consideration of these punishments has been hindered by the widespread perception that they are therapeutic rather than punitive. The reality, however, Morris and Tonry argue, "is that the American criminal justice system is both too severe and too lenient--almost randomly." Systematically implemented and rigorously enforced, intermediate punishments can "better and more economically serve the community, the victim, and the criminal than the prison terms and probation orders they supplant."

Between Prison and Probation goes beyond mere advocacy of an increasing use of intermediate punishments; the book also addresses the difficult task of fitting these punishments into a comprehensive, fair and community-protective sentencing system.

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

In recent years both the "rehabilitation model" of sentencing and the "lock 'em up" approach to punishment have failed to stand up to evaluative research. These two well-known criminologists propose greater reliance upon such intermediate sentencing alternatives as fines, house arrest, community service, and combinations of such alternatives. This will be an important addition to the conservative criminological literature of recent years, and will undoubtedly be widely discussed and reviewed for the next few years. For a critique from the liberal viewpoint, see Elliott Currie's *Confronting Crime: An American Challenge* (LJ 10/15/85). For academic libraries.

- *John Broderick, Stonehill Coll., North Easton, Mass.*

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Review

"Excellent....Accurate and informative."--John McLaren, Southwest Texas State University

"Well done, timely, provides insight and direction to the need to develop policy and sentencing statements for where and how intermediate sanctions fit."--Richard J. Billak, Youngstown State University

"Excellent approach. Looks at an area in the Court-Corrections process where there are options not examined before, and bridges the gap between weak intervention (street) and too strong intervention (prison)."--Vincent J. Hoffman, Michigan State Univ.

"An excellent job in putting the issue in a new light. They present a compelling argument that we should not any longer refer to these developments as alternatives to prison but as sentences in their own right. I particularly like their treatment of just deserts."--Dennis Palumbo, Arizona State Univ.

"This is an insightful book that exposes the paradoxes of our current punishment strategies in the U.S. It also offers an introduction to ongoing alternatives that have yet to be adequately studied. The students find the arguments engaging and balanced."-- Michael Polokowski, Univ. of Arizona

"Morris and Tonry offer us a new strategy to deal with our huge offender population. Between Prison and Probation is a book we should ponder, debate, and put to trial"--Bert Useem, Chicago Tribune

"Earnest and exhaustively documented....The authors make a compelling case that far greater use can and should be made of such measures as fines and community service. Policymakers, legislators, civic leaders, and ordinary citizens fed up with the present state of the judicial system would do well to consult this most lucid study"--ABA Journal

"An important addition to the conservative criminological literature of recent years, and will undoubtedly be widely discussed and reviewed for the next few years"--Library Journal

"The book offers a detailed and logically consistent plea for rational sentencing to intermediate punishments."--Charles F. Hanna, Duquesne University

"A sophisticated and imaginative plea for establishing a range of alternatives to prison....We should be considering alternatives to incarceration of the kind recommended by Norval Morris and Michael Tonry."--
The New York Review of Books

About the Author

Norval Morris is Julius Kreeger Professor of Law and Criminology at the University of Chicago and the author of ten books on criminology. **Michael Tonry** is Sonosky Professor of Law and Public Policy at the University of Minnesota Law School. Together they edit *Crime and Justice--A Review of Research*.

Users Review

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