

<b>Institution:</b> Queen's University Belfast		
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 20 Social Work and Social Policy		
<b>Title of case study:</b> The Impact of Desistance Research on Rehabilitation Practice		
<b>Period when the underpinning research was undertaken:</b> 2005-2014, 2018 - 2020		
<b>Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:</b>		
<b>Name(s):</b> Dr. Shadd Maruna	<b>Role(s) (e.g. job title):</b> Reader in Criminology 2005-8; Prof. of Criminology, 2008-14 Prof. of Criminology, 2018-	<b>Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:</b> 01/8/2005 – 31/8/2014 01/8/2018 – present
<b>Period when the claimed impact occurred:</b> August 2013 to December 2020 inclusive		
<b>Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N</b>		
<b>1. Summary of the impact</b> <p>Shadd Maruna's research and theoretical development on desistance from crime, moral redeemability, and 'reintegration rituals' have had demonstrable influence on the following aspects of rehabilitation practice in the UK and beyond:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I. Reimagining rehabilitative <b>programmes</b> from a desistance perspective, with a growing influence of strengths-based interventions such as the Good Lives Model</li> <li>II. Influencing rehabilitation <b>policy</b>, including the development of "community rehabilitation centres"</li> <li>III. Inspiring a new generation of "strengths-based" <b>assessment</b> frameworks, such as AssetPlus and the Structured Assessment of Protective Factors</li> </ol>		
<b>2. Underpinning research</b> <p>Since first joining Queen's University Belfast (QUB) in 2005, Maruna has been a pioneer in developing desistance theory, research and practice, along with colleagues and collaborators. These include Anne-Marie McAlinden (QUB), Fergus McNeill (Glasgow), Stephen Farrall (Sheffield), Claire Lightowler (Strathclyde), Ruth Mann (HM Prison and Probation Service), Tony Ward (Victoria University of Wellington), Thomas LeBel (Wisconsin-Milwaukee), and Kevin Roy (Maryland). Among Maruna's most substantial contributions to this work include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theory and research on the role of <u>identity change</u> in the desistance process, including the development of the concept of the "redemption script" or "desistance narrative" (3, 5). This research challenges implicit presumptions in the dominant model of offender rehabilitation around the need for individuals to accept full blame for past mistakes and to challenge any social explanations as excuse-making (1)</li> <li>• Theory and research on the impact of "<u>belief in redeemability</u>" on the treatment of individuals in the justice system and their internalised self-beliefs (4)</li> <li>• The development of the concept of the "<u>redemption ritual</u>", framing prisoner reintegration as a "rite of passage", emphasising the role of external validation and celebration of internal change in the desistance process (6).</li> <li>• The development of the <u>strengths-based interventions</u> (5) that challenge prisoners to demonstrate their value in leadership roles rather than as passive recipients of treatment. In particular, Maruna's research has been instrumental in shaping the the "Good Lives Model" (GLM). With Tony Ward, Maruna co-authored the only comprehensive, book-length articulation of the Good Lives Model in 2007 (2).</li> <li>• One of the first studies, internationally, of <u>desistance from sex offending</u> (a co-equal collaboration with McAlinden at QUB funded by the ESRC in 2013) outlining how the experiences of this group differ or resemble those desisting from other types of criminality.</li> <li>• An ESRC-funded "Desistance Knowledge Exchange" study (with McNeill, Farrall &amp; Lightowler), undertaken in 2011-12, where the concept of <u>desistance-based practice</u> was</li> </ul>		

developed and refined in dialogue with practitioners and service users across several justice systems.

### 3. References to the research

- (1) Maruna, S. & Mann, R. (2006). A Fundamental Attribution Error? Re-thinking Cognitive Distortions. *Legal and Criminological Psychology*, 11, 155-177 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1348/135532506X114608> (cited 583 times)
- (2) Ward, T. & Maruna, S. (2007). *Rehabilitation: Beyond the Risk Paradigm*. London: Routledge ISBN-13: 978-0415386432 (1160 cites)
- (3) LeBel, T., Burnett, R., Maruna, S., & Bushway, S. (2008). The “Chicken and Egg” of Subjective and Social Factors in Desistance from Crime. *European Journal of Criminology*, 5, 131-159. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1477370807087640> (759 cites)
- (4) Maruna, S. and King, A. (2009). Once a Criminal, Always a Criminal? “Redeemability” and the Psychology of Punitive Public Attitudes. *European Journal on Criminal Policy and Research*, 15(1), 7-24 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10610-008-9088-1> (215 cites)
- (5) Maruna, S. & LeBel, T. (2010). “The Desistance Paradigm in Correctional Practice: From Programmes to Lives” (pp. 65-89) In McNeill, F. Raynor, P., & Trotter, C. (Eds.) *Offender Supervision: New Directions in Theory, Research and Practice*. Willan DOI: 10.1057/9781137379191 (195 cites)
- (6) Maruna, S. (2011). Reentry as a Rite of Passage. *Punishment & Society*, 13(1), 3-27 DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1462474510385641> (350 cites)

Source for citation counts: Google Scholar

### 4. Details of the impact

In the past decade, the practice of rehabilitation in the UK has continued to move away from primarily risk-based models to a greater focus on “Good Lives” or “strengths-based” approaches to rehabilitation. Specifically citing Maruna’s work (4., above), HM Chief Inspector of Probation stated in her 2019 Annual Report that:

Current rehabilitation theory is founded in a belief in moral redeemability, and the assumption that people can change and that a person’s past is not his or her destiny... We know that moral redeemability approaches can work (A).

According to a 2015 Ministry of Justice report, this approach influenced by Maruna’s work has:

shifted emphasis away from formal identification of criminogenic needs and risks towards a ‘strengths-based’ outlook centred on the offender’s story about their life and behaviour. The Good Lives Model (GLM) of rehabilitation (Maruna, 2001; Ward and Maruna, 2007) emphasises the importance of identifying and reinforcing positive characteristics of individual offenders to support them to lead ‘good’ lives desisting from crime (B).

Although this approach began to gain traction around 2010, the desistance model became particularly prominent from 2013 as a result of the ESRC-funded Desistance Knowledge Exchange project, recognised by the ESRC ‘Celebrating Impact’ awards in 2014 (C). A 2014 report titled *Prospects for a Desistance Agenda*, prepared by the Criminal Justice Alliance, a coalition of 74 third-sector justice organisations, tracked the emergence of the desistance model across every sector of justice practice:

The work of advocates such as Fergus McNeill, Shadd Maruna, Stephen Farrall and others cannot be overstated. Their research has been vital in building credible evidence on the potential for desistance within Britain, as have their efforts to disseminate their findings to policymakers and practitioners. The majority of those interviewed [for this report] first came across desistance at a lecture or conference where one of these academics was speaking (D).

#### I. Reimagining rehabilitative programmes

Since 2012, Maruna has been an active member of the Correctional Services Accreditation and Advice Panel (CSAAP), the board responsible for accrediting all rehabilitative interventions in England and Wales (E). In both 2016 and 2020, the CSAAP revised its

accreditation criteria to include a greater emphasis on desistance research, including the requirement that all programmes address factors relevant to “the promotion of desistance”. The current CSAAP guidance includes references to two of Maruna’s recent articles (F). Indeed, a majority of the 18 currently accredited interventions in England and Wales list Maruna’s research as a key influence in their “theory manuals” according to the Head of Interventions Services for HM Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS):

Maruna’s work... has directly influenced the design of 11 programmes. These programmes are delivered on a large scale – indeed, the latest published statistics show that approx. 6,500 men/ women attended a programme influenced by Maruna’s work’ (E).

Maruna’s research has also been the primary inspiration for many smaller, grassroots projects across the UK, such as “On the Out” in Manchester (F) and the Ether Programme in Camden, targeted at young, BAME men involved with the youth justice system (F).

In the United States, Maruna’s research on reintegration rituals has had a particular impact according to Butler, Cullen & Burton (2020, p. 40):

Formal ceremonies that embody the four central elements of rehabilitation ceremonies identified by Maruna ... have been implemented in courts and correctional systems throughout the United States (F).

One such project is the NYC Justice Corps involving young people convicted of crimes working to “pay back” their communities through peer-led initiatives intended to improve the quality of life in their neighbourhoods. The Justice Corps Annual Report for 2016 writes:

The scholarship of Shadd Maruna offers an essential theoretical framework and insight into the particular value of community benefit projects, which can serve as a “redemption ritual” for Justice Corps members. Maruna has outlined a new, evidence-based model for understanding prisoner re-entry based on an emerging body of research on how individuals are able to successfully desist from crime (F).

Another NYC based project, Ritual4Return was based even more explicitly on Maruna’s theory. The organisation’s website states that “Maruna’s ongoing scholarship regarding rites of passage and re-entry” have been “central to the evolution of R4R” (F)

As all of these programmes are subject to evaluation, evidence of the benefits of incorporating desistance thinking into rehabilitative programming is gradually emerging (F). For instance, in 2014, the Scottish Prison Service introduced a new intensive treatment programme for males convicted of sex offending called ‘Moving Forward: Making Changes’ (MF:MC) rooted in the Good Lives Model. By September 2017, this programme had been delivered to over 900 individuals across 4 prisons and 11 community sites. A 2018 evaluation of this programme, commissioned by the Scottish Government, found broad support for the intervention among both clients and staff, who felt the programme was having a positive impact (F). Likewise, a rapid evidence assessment of probation work internationally found “indications of support for the Good Lives Model (Ward & Maruna, 2007), with the satisfaction of offenders’ primary needs being facilitated by supervision” (F).

## **II. Transforming rehabilitation policy: Beyond programmes**

However, the impact of desistance research extends well beyond programmes. Indeed, Maruna and others associated with desistance research have been critical of the over-reliance on programmes as a rehabilitation strategy. One of the most substantial developments in prisons in England and Wales over the last five years has been a movement away from programmes toward developing a “rehabilitative culture” across entire prisons, and this work has also been influenced by Maruna’s research. For example, in January 2018, HMPPS published a *Rehabilitative Culture Handbook* as a resource for prison staff that makes 5 references to Maruna’s work (G).

Maruna’s research has featured in some of the most important changes in rehabilitation policy in the turbulent period between 2014 and 2020 in England and Wales as well. In 2014, the UK Government enacted a substantial overhaul of probation delivery in England and Wales known

as Transforming Rehabilitation, replacing traditional probation services with Community Rehabilitation Centres (CRCs). The Ministry of Justice report justifying the change included 9 references to Maruna's desistance research (G). Indeed, several of the CRCs that emerged as a result of this legislative change adopted an explicitly desistance-focused approach to their work (G). The Senior Practice Lead at London and Thames Valley CRCs states:

Maruna's work has had a significant impact on all areas of our work within MTC. ... We amended the language we utilise in daily practice (moving from "offender" to "service user"), our approach to risk assessments, sentence plans, measurement of progress, case management, interventions and exit planning. It has shaped our thinking around identity shift as an evidenced based approach, central to long term, sustained desistance from offending. It has provided us with a central and unified focus. ... At a time when there is a lot of focus on targets, it has also served to reinvigorate and excite some employees about 'what works', encouraging them to reflect on their practice, the theory and the why of what they do (H).

In 2015, the UK Justice Secretary enlisted Maruna to chair a meeting of experts to advise on developing prison and probation policy (G) and highlighted the influence of Maruna's research in his statements to the Justice Committee in 2016 (G). The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) *Commissioning Intentions 2014* document outlining the organisation's "position on evidence [and] how it should be used" cites Maruna's work four times (G). Maruna's work also features centrally in Northern Ireland's 2015 Department of Justice strategy document *Supporting Change, A Strategic Approach to Desistance* (G).

In 2020, the Ministry of Justice reversed course on its Transforming Rehabilitation policy, renationalising probation services in England and Wales, yet desistance research remained at the fore of its thinking. The HMPPS *Draft Target Operating Model for the Future of Probation Services in England and Wales* (March 2020) contains 26 mentions of "desistance" (G), including a link to the *Academic Insights* paper *Reconciling 'Desistance' and 'What Works'* by Maruna and Mann (2019), commissioned by HM Inspectorate of Probation (G).

### **III. Re-thinking risk assessment: From deficits to strengths**

Finally, this "desistance revolution evident in the adult system" has more recently led to an apparent "sea-change" (Hampson, 2018) in the youth justice system in England and Wales as well (I). The Lead Psychologist for Youth Custody Services of HMPPS writes:

Maruna's work has been fundamental in shaping work around Reducing Re-offending. ... His work around Redemption Self Narratives amongst those who had previously offended played a core role in developing work around Progression Regimes (J).

In particular, Maruna's research informed the development of AssetPlus, an assessment and planning framework introduced by the Youth Justice Board to all youth offending teams in England and Wales between 2015 and 2017, and to all secure youth establishments in England and Wales in 2018 (K). This new assessment framework was designed to place greater emphasis on a young person's strengths and protective factors than their deficits. Ward and Maruna's Good Lives Model was one of the key approaches specifically highlighted as having "... influenced the model as a whole and [been applied] across different sections of the framework" (K). A 2019 evaluation of practitioners' experiences of AssetPlus found that practitioners felt the focus on desistance helped them to provide high quality assessment and intervention plans (K).

Maruna's research has had a similar impact on the process of risk assessment in the adult prisons sector internationally with contemporary tools like SAPROF (Structured Assessment of Protective Factors) (K) and the revision of SARN-TNA (the Structured Assessment of Risk and Need: Treatment Needs Analysis) expanded to include strengths and protective factors:

As part of a review and revision of the SARN framework, protective factors are incorporated into the dynamic framework, making more explicit issues of responsivity as well as factors of desistance. ... This revision explicitly incorporates ideas in the Good

Lives Model (Ward, 2002; Ward & Maruna, 2007) emphasizing the importance of life experiences" (K).

## 5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- (A) HM Inspectorate of Probation (2019) [\*Report of the Chief Inspector Probation. March 2019\*](#), p. 33.
- (B) Ministry of Justice (2015). [\*Re-offending by offenders on Community Orders Results from the Offender Management Community Cohort Study\*](#), p. 9.
- (C) [\*ESRC Celebrating Impact 2014\*](#).
- (D) Criminal Justice Alliance (2014). [\*Prospects for a Desistance Agenda\*](#), p.14.
- (E) Letter, from Head of Interventions Services, HMPPS, 11 January 2021
- (F) **Collated evidence document for Section I:** Includes references to the CSAAP Accreditation Criteria document and to specific programmes (On the Out, Ether Programme, Ritual4Return, NY Justice Corps). Also contains full reference for the Butler et al. (2020) article and three articles regarding the effectiveness of GLM interventions, including the rapid evidence assessment and the MF/MC evaluation in Scotland.
- (G) **Collated evidence document for Section II:** Includes references/links to cited publications from the HMPPS, Ministry of Justice, NOMS, and Department of Justice NI, as well as a briefing and agenda for the expert roundtable with UK Justice Secretary. Also includes article from Fox et al. corroborating the adoption of desistance-focused approaches in the CRCs, and the Maruna and Mann (2019) report for HM Inspectorate of Probation.
- (H) Letter, Senior Effective Practice and Solutions Lead, MTC Ltd, 10<sup>th</sup> January 2021
- (I) Hampson, K. S. (2018). [\*Desistance approaches in youth justice – The next passing fad or a sea-change for the positive?\*](#) *Youth justice*, 18(1), 18-33, quotes from p. 18.
- (J) Email, Lead Psychologist, Youth Custody Services, HMPPS, 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021
- (K) **Collated evidence document for Section III:** Includes references/links to AssetPlus rationale and rollout, and an evaluation of the scheme by Rand Europe. Also, includes references to the development of assessment tools SAPROF and SARN-TNA influenced by Maruna's research.