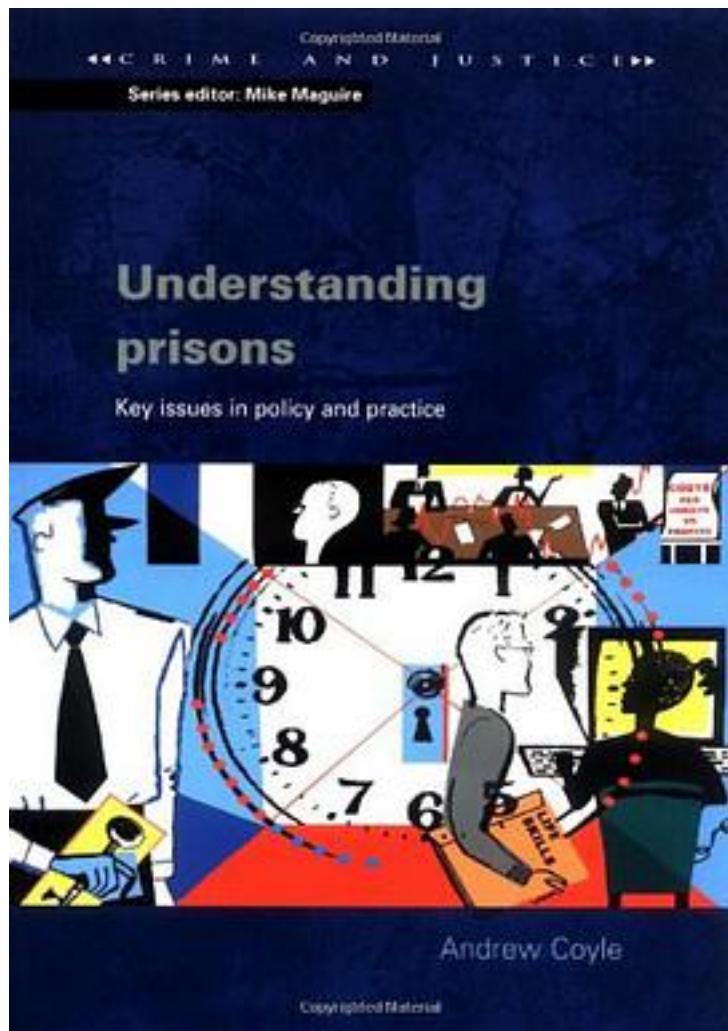


# Understanding Prisons



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'Few people can talk about prisons with the authority and experience that Andrew

Coyle brings to his subject. A former prison governor, an academic author, an international activist and a practical reformer, Professor Coyle knows prisons inside and out, home and abroad, past and present. In "Understanding Prisons" he uses his impressive expertise to guide researchers through the changing world of the English prison. The result is an accessible, up-to-date, and highly informative book that will be welcomed by students and practitioners alike' - David Garland, NYU, author of "The Culture of Control".'Andrew Coyle has drawn on his lifelong experience of governing prisons in Scotland and England and, as the former Director of the International Centre for Prison Studies, Kings College, London, studying prisons worldwide. He has written a comprehensive account of the use of imprisonment and the character of prisons. He persuasively argues that our continued, extensive use of imprisonment cannot simply be explained or justified by the incidence of crime and could otherwise. His book merits close attention' - Rod Morgan, Chairman, Youth Justice Board. There are over nine million men, women and children in prison around the world, and the number of people in prison in England and Wales has increased significantly in recent years. Yet in many respects prison remains the last secretive public institution in our society. "Understanding Prisons" provides a unique, in-depth examination of prisons - how they function, what they achieve, and their historical and political context. The book: describes how prisons developed into their present form; looks at who is sent to prison and what happens to them while they are there; explains how the prison system and staff in England and Wales are organised; examines how order and control is maintained and how high security prisons operate; looks at prisoners' families and the wider community; and, offers a future vision of the prison system. This is essential reading for criminology and sociology students and researchers, criminal justice practitioners, the media and members of the public who are interested in learning more about the closed world of the prison.

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