
Bringing Justice Back into the Community: The Case of Vermont, US

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Outline

- Research questions
 - Permeability of social systems
 - Research design
 - Discussions
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Research questions

■ Initial questions

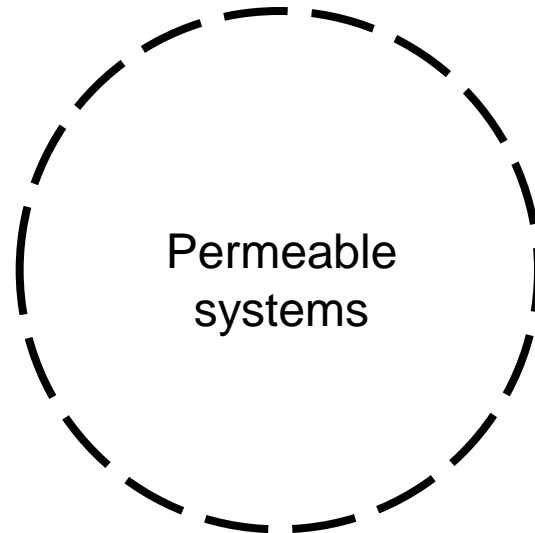
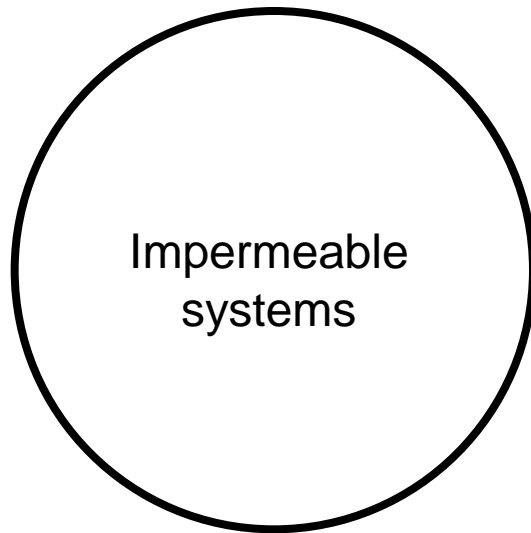
- ❑ How did restorative justice permeated child protection services in Vermont, US?
- ❑ What factors are shaping professionals' decision to use such restorative practices in their work?

■ Further questions arising from data

- ❑ How did restorative justice permeated the criminal justice system in Vermont, US?
 - ❑ To what extent can we label as restorative the practices used by child protection workers?
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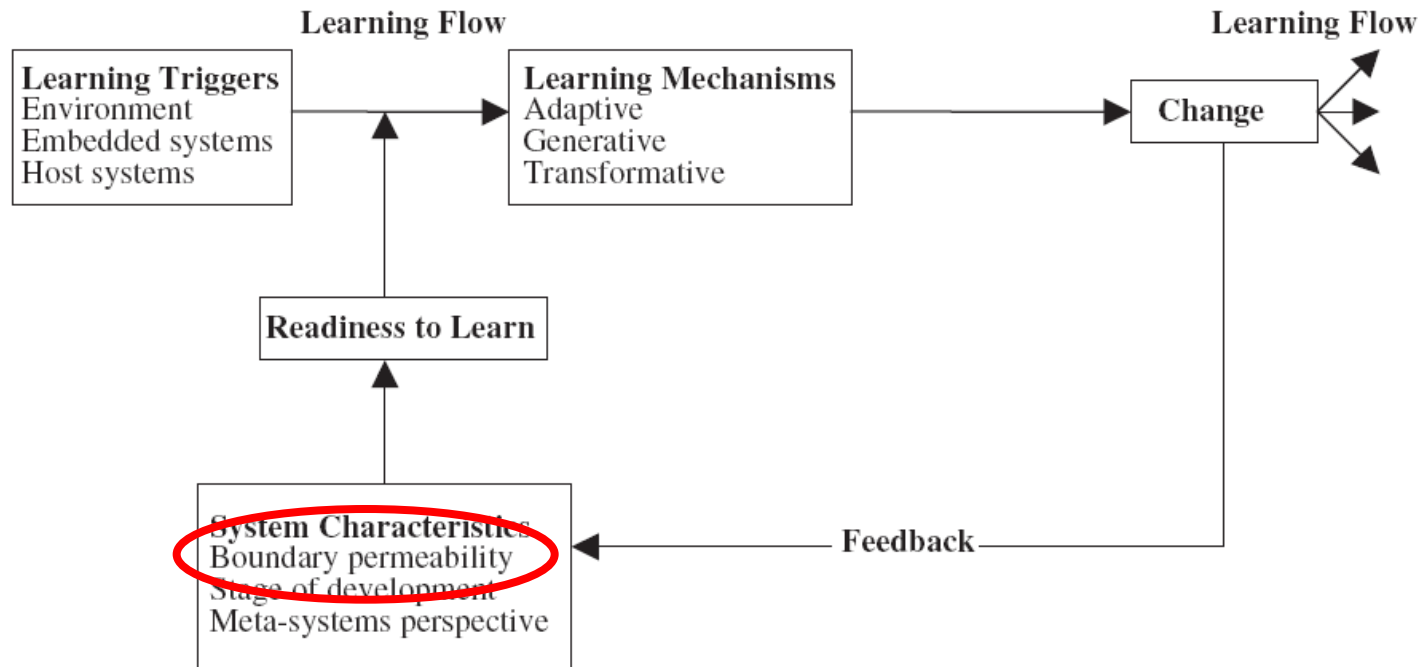
Permeability of social systems

- Prison studies
- Erving Goffman (1961)
 - Prison as total institution
 - Permeability is the extent to which the social standards within an institutions and the social standards within society have influenced one another



Continuous learning in organisations

- London & Sessa (2006):
 - Different triggers spark learning
 - System's readiness shapes the learning mechanisms and the change process



Research design

■ Methods

- Interview (70)
- Non-participatory observation (15)
- Case file analysis (4)

■ Sampling

- Convenience sampling, top-down approach
 - Professionals (69): DCF, DOC, Court Diversion, CJCJs, BARJ programs, CWTP, private service providers
 - Service users (11): children (12-18 years), parents, caregivers
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About Vermont, US



Picture: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vermont#>

- 626,000 inhabitants
- Most rural of all states
- Montpelier: the least populated capital in US
- First state to outlaw adult slavery
- Racially homogenous: 95% white
- Majority democrats in power
- Best maple syrup

Human services in Vermont

- Under one agency (AHS)
 - Department for Children and Families
 - Department of Corrections
 - Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living
 - Department of Health
 - Department of Mental Health
 - Department of Vermont Health Access
 - New approach
 - Integrating Family Services
-

RJ permeating criminal justice

■ Different developments

- Reparative boards made of volunteers from the community, for low-level adult offenders
- Vermont Legislature was changed to incorporate principles of reparative probation
- CJsCs were created in every county to conduct panels
- DOC adopted CoSAs

■ Issues

- Overlap between community justice principles with restorative justice principles
 - Participation of victims
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RJ permeating child protection

- Types of practices
 - Balanced and Restorative Justice programs
 - Family centred meetings: Family Group Conferencing (New Zealand model), Family Safety Planning, case closure meetings
 - Family Time Coaching, including family time and post family time meetings, shared parenting meetings
 - Issues
 - Overlap between family engagement principles and restorative justice principles
 - Participation of children
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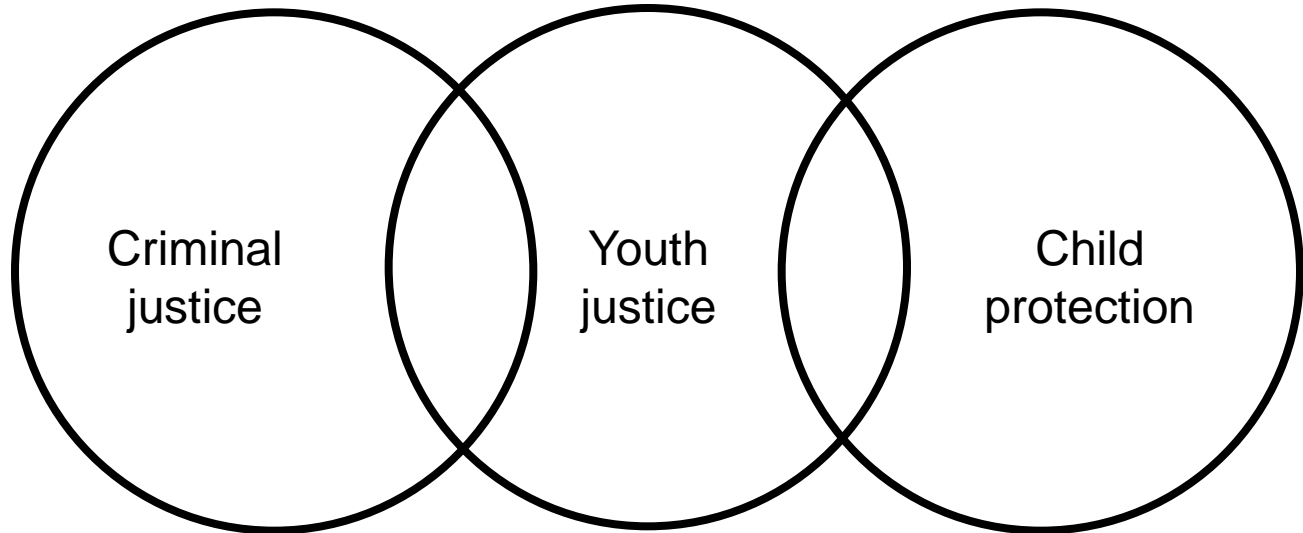
Participation and taking responsibility

The harmed:

Victim

Victim

Child



The harm-doer:

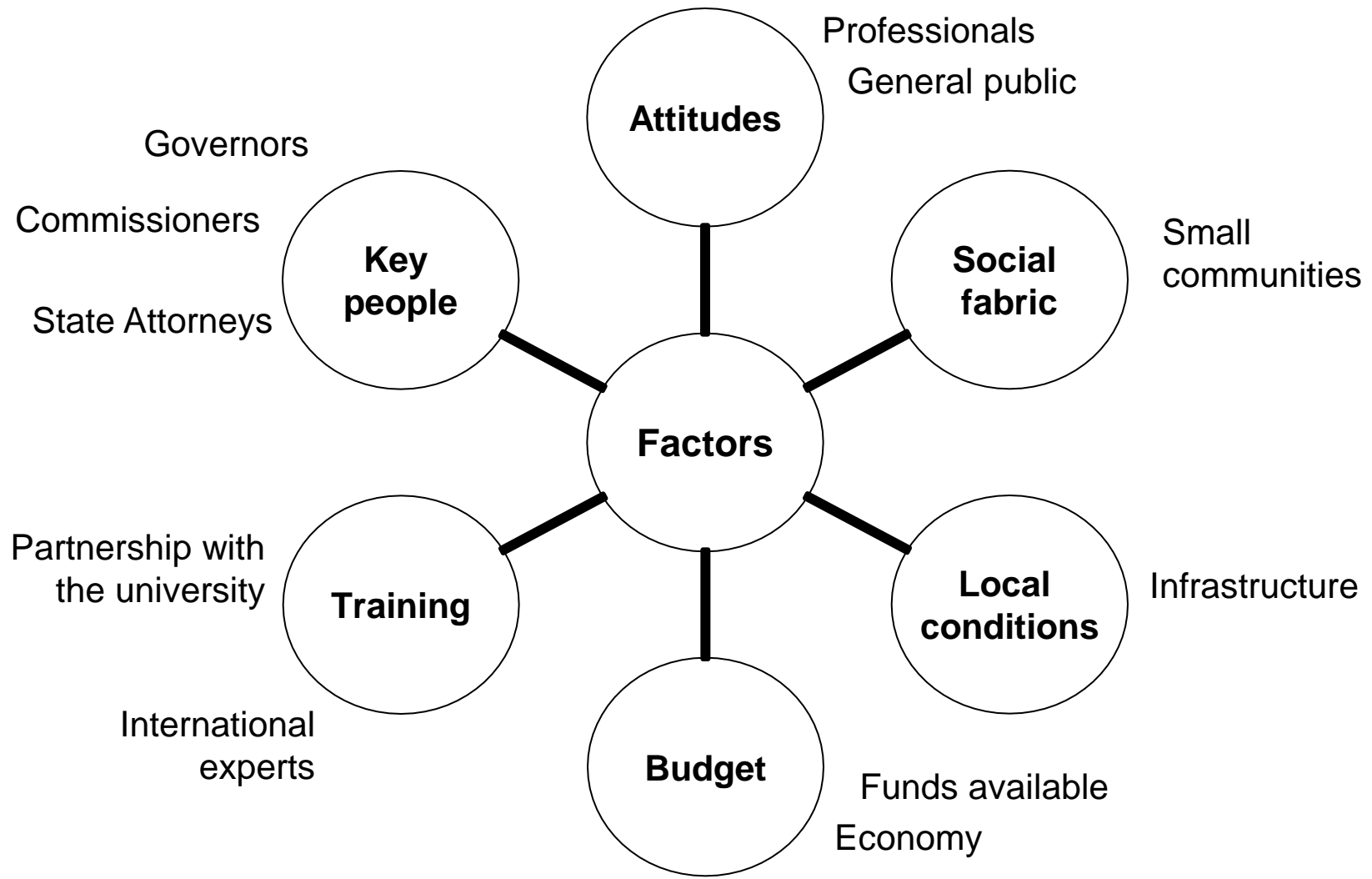
Offender

Child

Parent / Carer

- Restorative justice is about involving all parties and promoting responsibility and healing

Factors fostering permeability



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Thank you !

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