

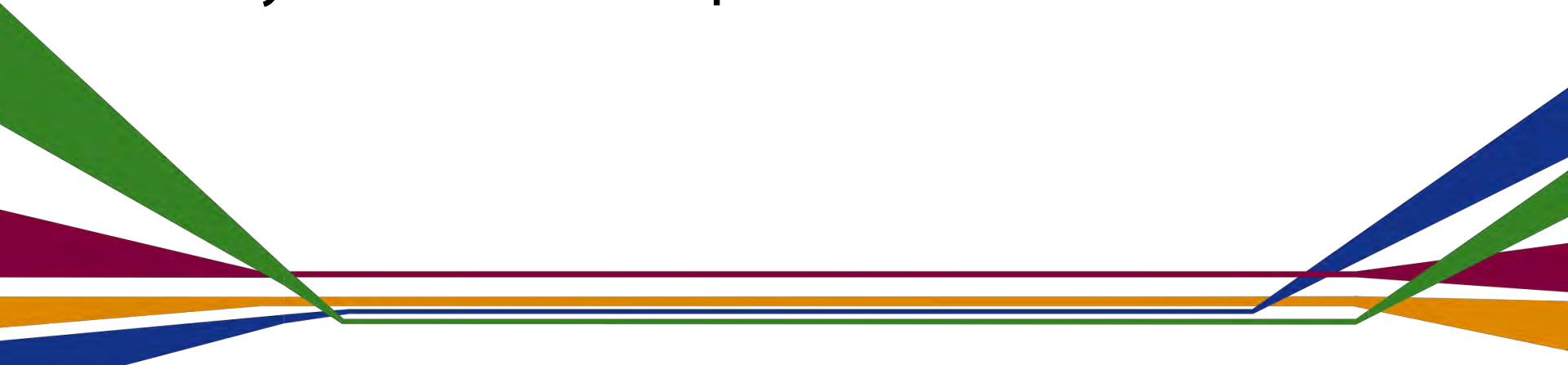
Who is in favour of what with whom?

Community views about the reintegration of women ex-prisoners

Terry Bartholomew, Lesley Hardcastle, & Joe Graffam



Outline

- Reintegration as a new focus
 - The legal context
 - The social context
 - The study's approach
 - Early trends and implications
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Goals of sentencing

- Incapacitation
- Retribution / punishment
- Rehabilitation
- Deterrence
- Denunciation
- Restoration
- *Anything missing?*

A new addition?

- Reintegration: the process of assisting ex-prisoners / offenders (re)establish connections to wider society
- Reintegration is the only sentencing objective that requires community support in order to be realised.

Rehabilitation v reintegration

Rehabilitation

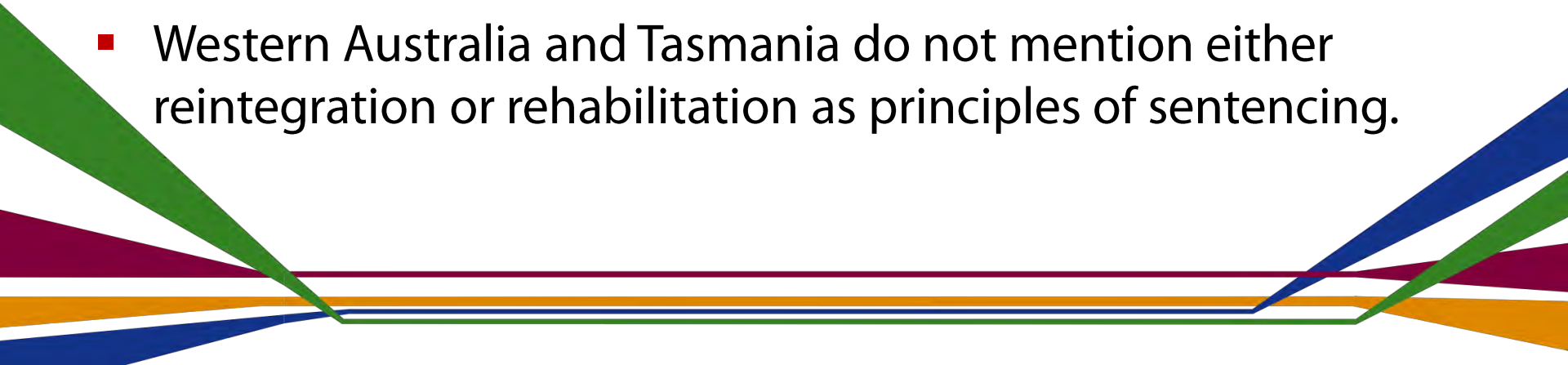
- Focused on individual
- Based on risk/need principles

Reintegration


- Process of reintroducing an offender into society
- Holistic
- Complex interaction of personality, comorbidity, housing, employment, family, social support

The legal context: Some harsh realities

With regard to adult offenders:

- Reintegration is not mentioned as a goal or 'principle' of sentencing in the relevant legal authority of *any* Australian jurisdiction
 - Rehabilitation is mentioned as a principle of sentencing in 75% (6/8) of Australian jurisdictions (ACT, NSW, NT, QLD, SA and Victoria)
 - Western Australia and Tasmania do not mention either reintegration or rehabilitation as principles of sentencing.
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So, in the Australian context...

- Reintegration not yet present as a sentencing priority for adults; it appears as a 'consideration' in related matters
 - Despite this, there are many reintegration programs now in train, at the planning stage or in operation
 - But how successful can they be when they rely fundamentally on community acceptance / support?
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Factors in reintegration

Personal characteristics

- Health
- Drug and alcohol use
- Education
- Employment experience and skills
- Remorse, motivation to change

Environment, social context

- Employment
- Housing
- Family and social networks
- Gov't policies and programs
- Community attitudes



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Gaps in research

- Some research into attitudes to the employment of ex-offenders (focusing on employers)

but ...

- No community-wide study of attitudes to the reintegration and rehabilitation of ex-offenders, incorporating domains of reintegration: housing, employment, training, psycho social supports.
- No consideration of the gap b/t support for policy and the reality of reintegrative ideas

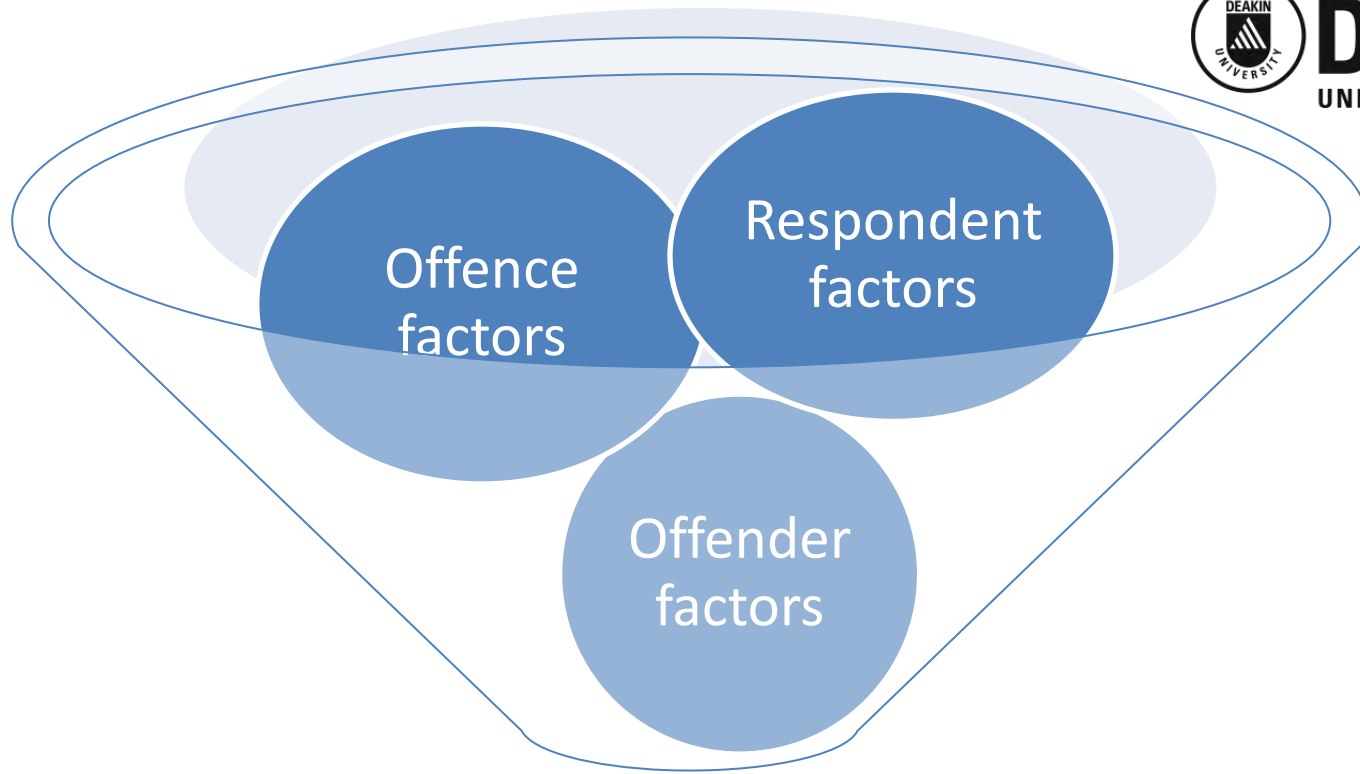
The Study

Aims are to identify:

- Levels of community support for specific aspects of reintegration for (ex)offenders
- Community groups with positive/negative views re reintegration of (ex)offenders
- Offending sub-groups (and offenders) that the community is least/most accepting of
- Reintegrative policies that the community are most likely to support
- To identify the predictors of community views about reintegration.

Variables

- Respondent factors:
 - Characteristics
 - Experience
 - Knowledge
- Views about **employment** of (ex)offenders
 - Proximity (working with)
 - Policy (gov't support for)
- Views about **housing** of (ex)offenders
 - Proximity (working with)
 - Policy (gov't support for)
- Effects of **characteristics** of (ex)offenders
 - E.g. criminal history, age, motivation to change



Views about 'eligibility'

Housing (policy / proximity)

Employment (policy / proximity)

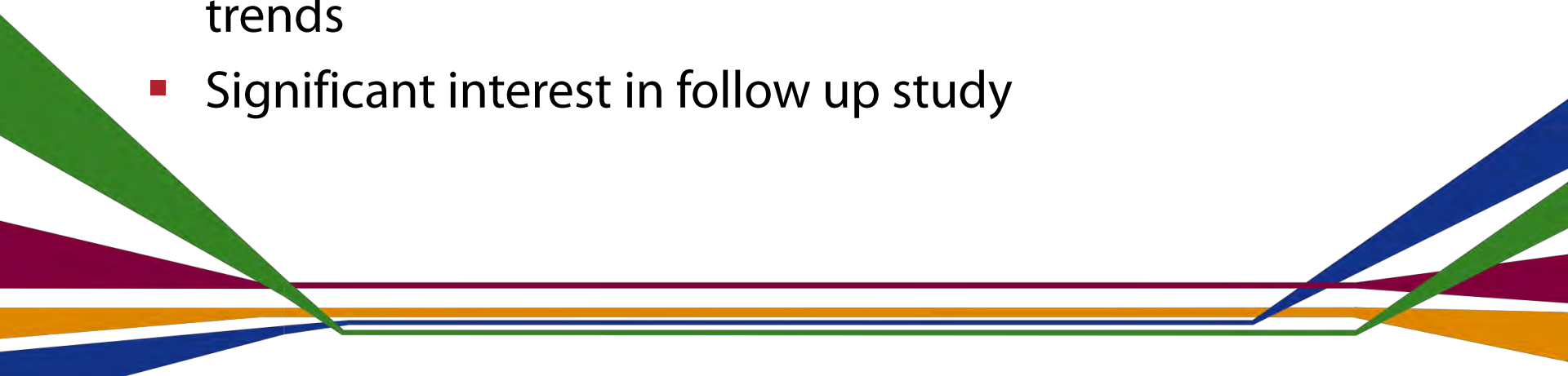
Education

Other Programs

Variables

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Method

- Questionnaire piloted
 - Questionnaire mailed out to min.15,000 randomly selected Victorian households
 - Voluntary, anonymous, reply paid return
 - Reminder card mailed out approx. 2 weeks after initial mail out
 - Expect return rate of approx 15-20%
 - About 500 responses already in, 200 entered, some clear trends
 - Significant interest in follow up study
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Some trends I

- All respondents more comfortable living near and working with a female ex-offender than a male (*proximity*)
- This gender difference is absent at the policy level
- But, all also more supportive of edn, housing and employment *policy* than of actually having contact with the ex-offender in *any* of these domains

Some trends II

- Female respondents more supportive than males of reintegration initiatives (at both the policy and proximity levels)
 - This was true despite women being more likely to report prior victimhood and having higher levels of fear of crime
 - Female respondents rate rehab and reintegration higher as sentencing priorities than males
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Some trends III

Clear continuums of eligibility and forfeiture based on:

- offence type (eg. dealing v possession; 'hands off' sexual offences v 'hands on'),
- type of victim (child /adult)
- relationship to victim
- sentence type
- type of victim
- other processing issues (tmt etc)

So far:

- Some clear patterns – many of which relate to participant and offender gender
- Socially constructed continuums and eligibility cut-offs being identified
- The predictors of these (and rationales) are being highlighted
- Theory building around these processes
- Can identify *genuine* reintegrative opportunities (to aid in the targeting of a limited resource)