

Community Corrections: Rethinking its purpose, scale and shape

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- Purposes: What's the point of community corrections?

Purposes of (Community) Corrections

PURPOSE

Promoting community corrections

Assisting judicial decisions

Rehabilitation/public protection

Punishment/enforcement

Offenders' welfare

Victims' interests

Reparation

MEASURE

Increased “market share”

Judicial satisfaction with reports;
improved decisionmaking

Reduced reconviction/improved community
safety

High compliance, efficient enforcement

Improved inclusion and well-being

Victim satisfaction with process and outcome

Constructive and proportionate redress provided

McNeill, F., Farrall, S., Lightowler, C., and Maruna, S. (2012) Reexamining “Evidence-Based Practice” in Community Corrections: Beyond “a Confined View” of What Works, *Justice Research and Policy* 14(1): 35-60.

What do we want Community Corrections to be?

- Pessimistic (?) visions
 - A service that enforces punishment
 - A service that efficiently manages (social) waste through control and incapacitation
 - [A service that efficiently minimizes the harms and manages the risks of reoffending]

What do we want Community Corrections to be?

- Optimist and constructive visions
 - A service that plays a part in righting wrongs (i.e. an agency of justice)
 - A service that plays a part in building a fairer society by supporting re/integration
 - A service that helps people change for the better and helps others support and recognize the change
 - A capacity-building service for the individual and the community

- Scale: Growing community corrections?

Mass supervision?

- Growth in volume
- Geographical distribution
- Intensification of conditions
- ‘Mass supervision’ has been neglected by scholars preoccupied with ‘mass incarceration’.... At least until:
 - www.offendersupervision.eu

Arguments for expanding community corrections

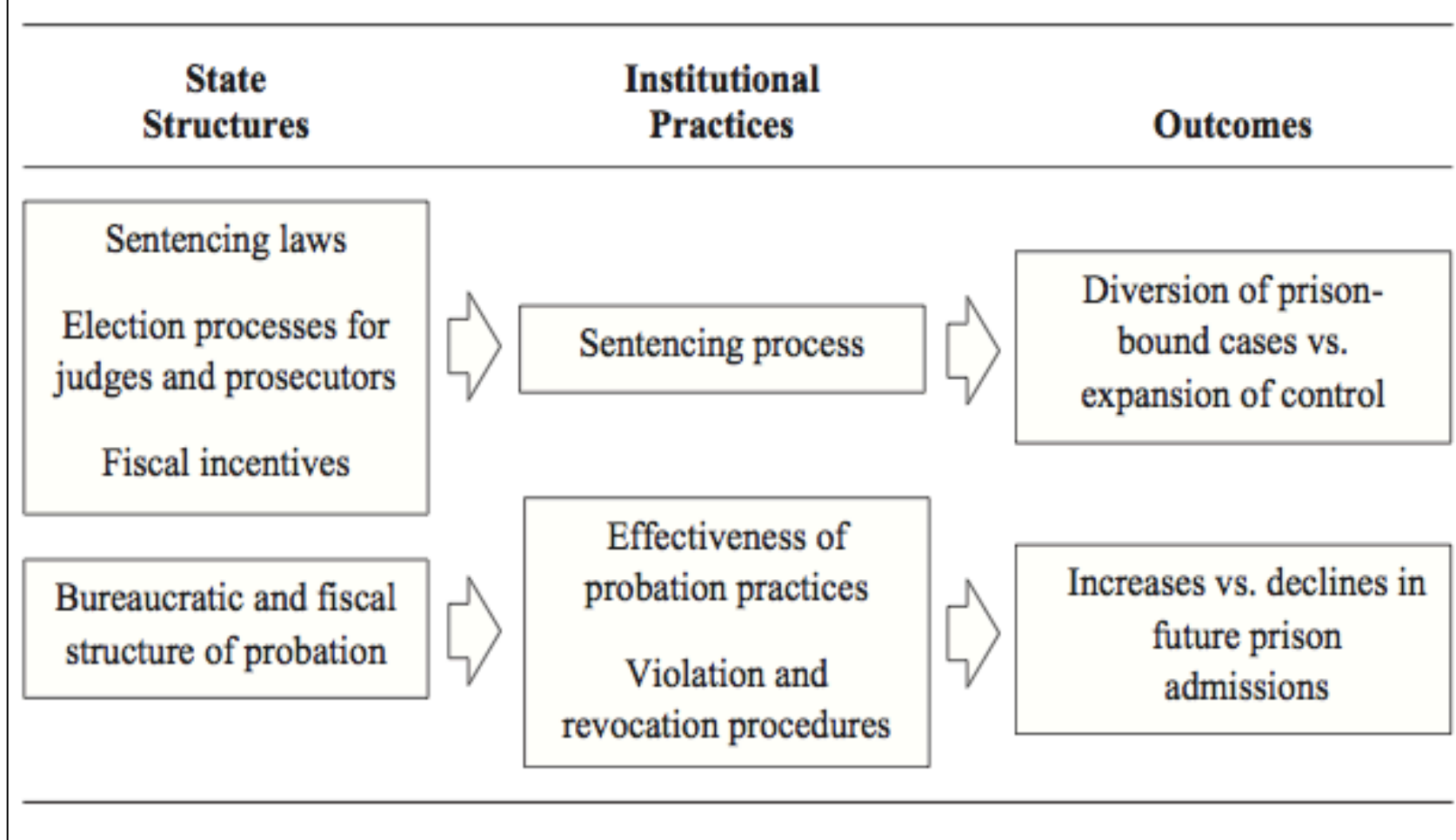
- Less expensive than imprisonment
- Less harmful than imprisonment?
 - To its subjects
 - To their families
 - To their communities
- More effective than imprisonment in reducing reoffending?
- More respectful of human rights?

But... Two and a half myths

1. The growth of probation shrinks the prison population.
2. Making probation ‘tougher’ and/or more ‘credible’ and/or more ‘effective’ and/or more ‘professional’ increases public and judicial support for it.
 - a. Being supervised in the community is easier for offenders than doing prison time.

- Probation growth can accompany prison growth (and contribute to it)
- Probation growth can restrain prison growth (and perhaps contribute to ending mass incarceration?)
- Probation growth can have a null effect on prison growth

Table 1. The Paradox of Probation Model: Understanding the Probation-Prison Link



Probation as decarceration

- In order for probation to reduce prison populations and to avoid a net-widening effect
 - its systemic context needs to facilitate and incentivize penal reductionist goals (through political and sentencing reform);
 - it needs to be effectively targeted; its practices need to be effective; and
 - its management of breach/violations needs to be careful and considered.

The half myth: Penal burdens

- The pains of probation (Durnescu, 2009)
 - Autonomy, privacy, time, money, stigma, ‘forced return’, threat
- Helping, holding and hurting (McNeill, 2009)
- In comparison with short custodial sentences (Armstrong and Weaver, 2011)
 - More productive and preferable
 - But **not** because it is easier
- In some studies (mostly in the USA) the simplicity and clarity of custody is preferred

How do people experience correctional supervision (in a welfarist jurisdiction)?



How do people experience correctional supervision?



How do people experience correctional supervision?



Containing growth?

- For most people, most of the time, the community is the better context for supporting change (and desistance)
- But **we cannot and must not assume that community corrections and its growth is an unqualified good.**
- Like prison, its use must be parsimonious and proportionate, and subject to human rights safeguards
 - Non-supervisory sanctions
 - Upstream diversion

- Shape: How should we reshape community corrections?



Depends on
what you want
it to do...

Reshaping Corrections: Supporting Desistance

1. Desistance is a process of personal, human development
2. That takes place in and is shaped by its social and cultural contexts; hence also a social transition
3. That involves movement away from offending (volume, frequency, severity)
4. *And movement towards successful social integration, citizenship and participation*

Desistance

Primary/
Formal

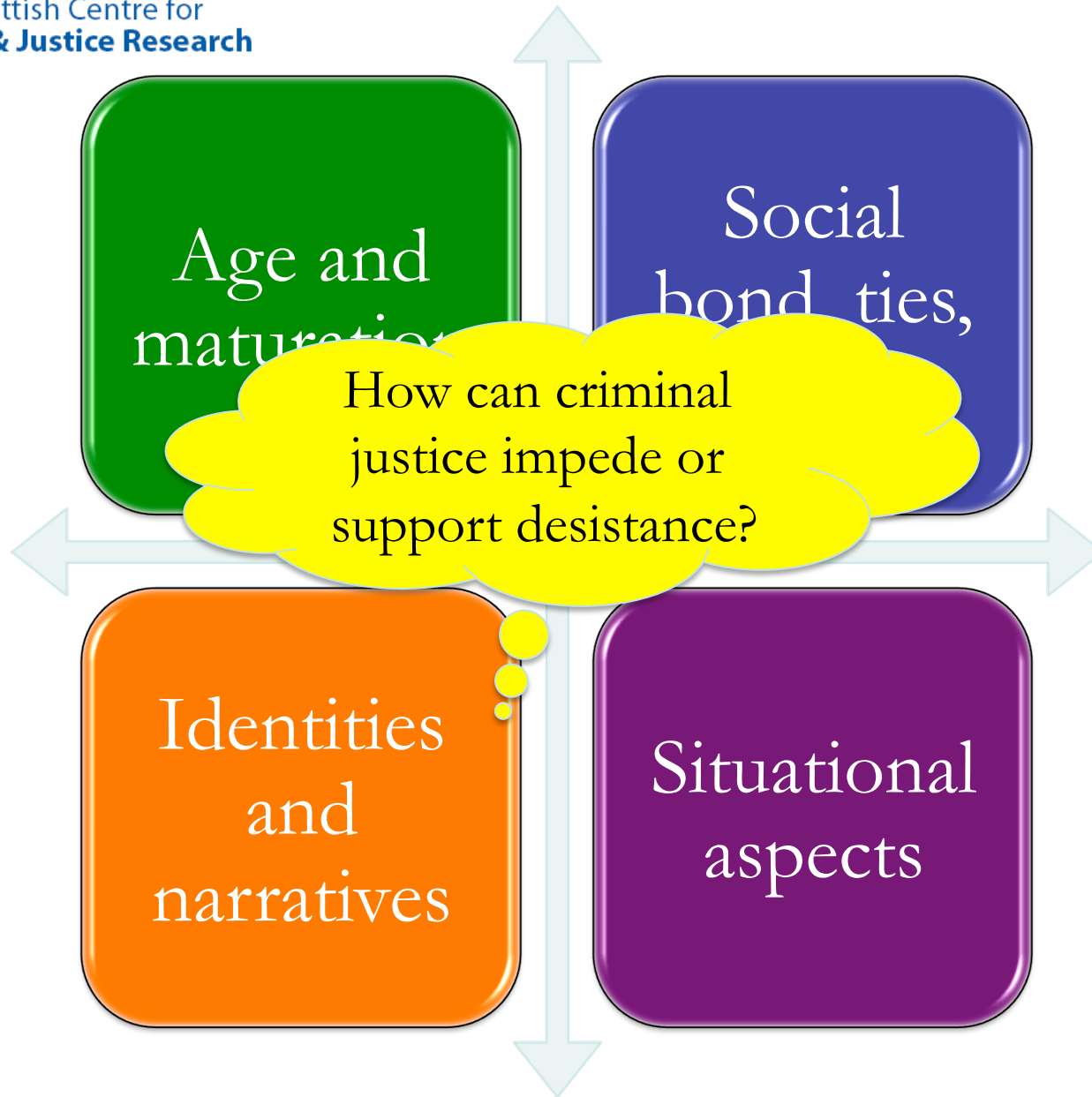
- Behaviour

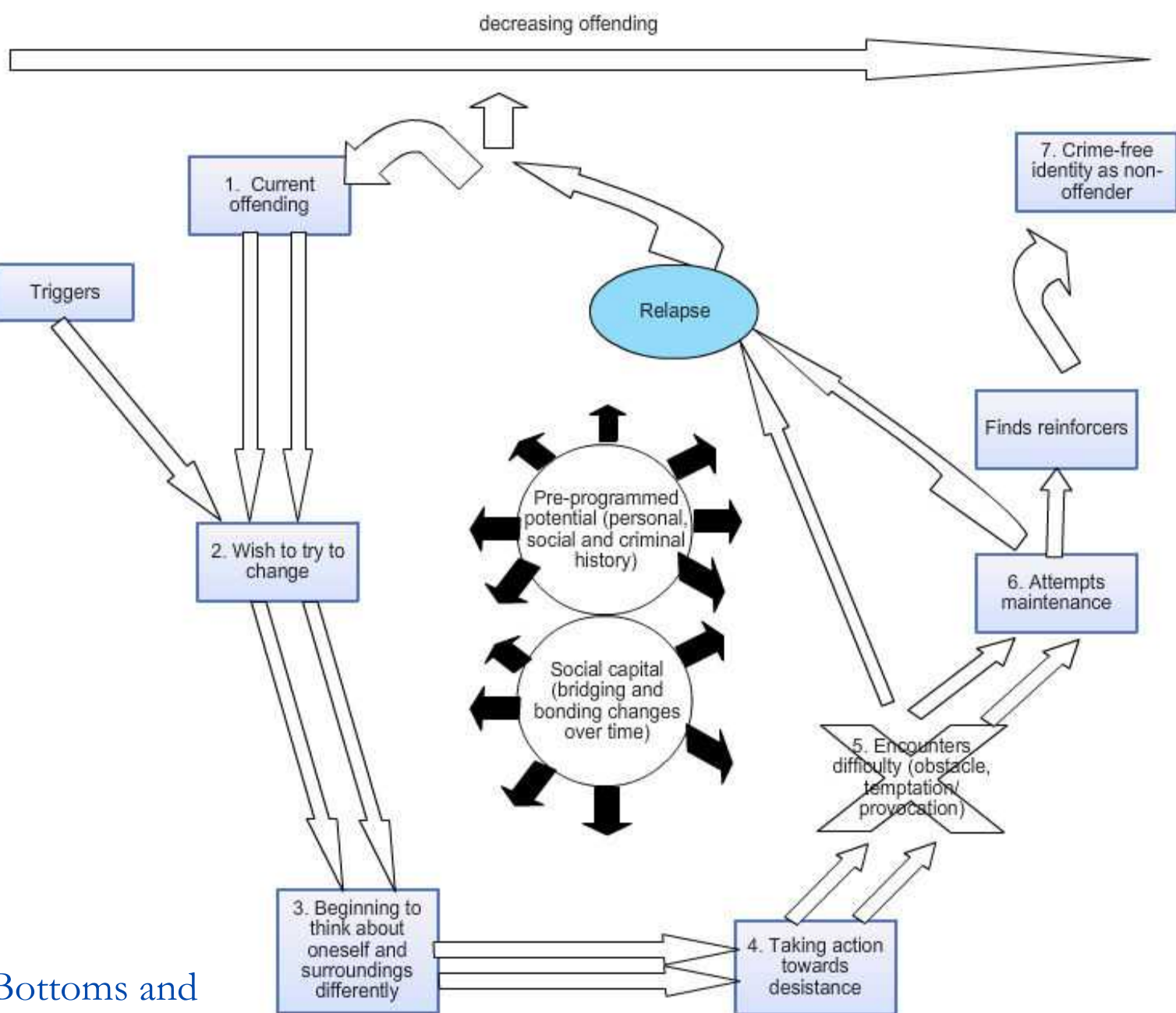
Secondary/
Substantive

- Identity

Tertiary/
Secure

- Belonging





From Bottoms and
Shapland (2011: 70)

Realism

- **Manage lapses and setbacks**

Individualisation

- **Respect subjectivity and diversity**

Hope and agency

- **Build self-determination**

Relationships

- **Social relations and social capital**

Recognition

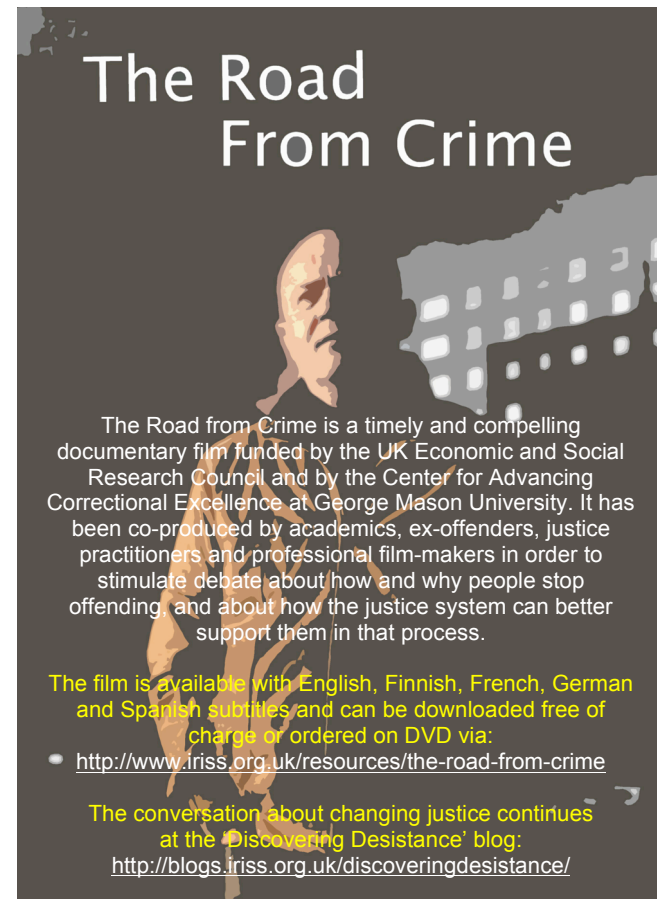
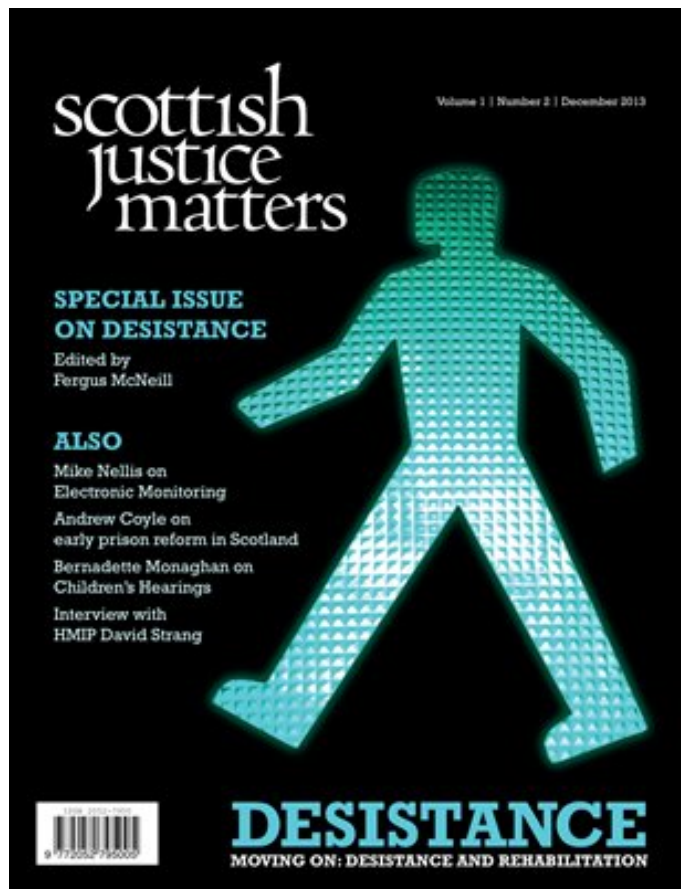
- **Language and representation matter**

Routines

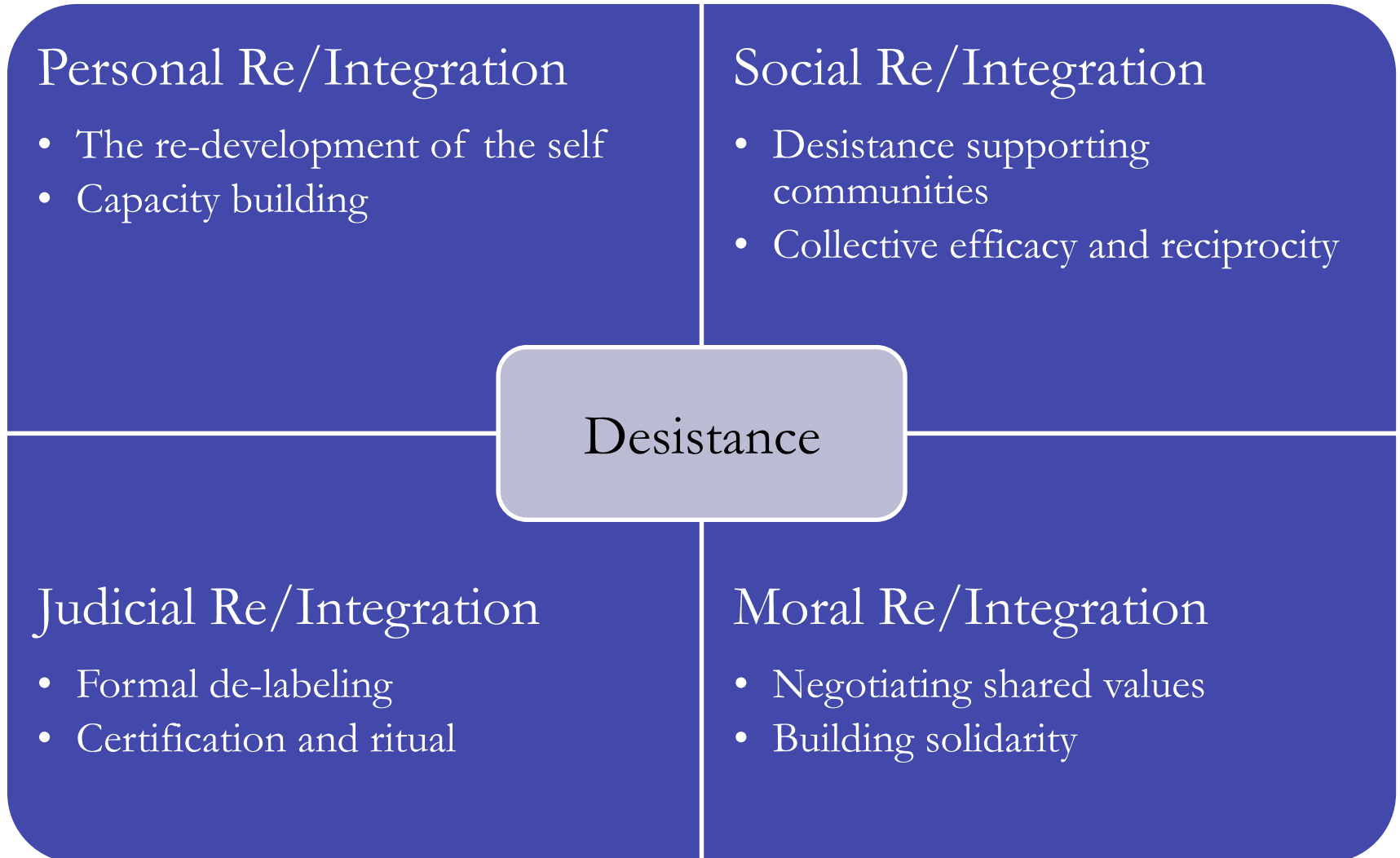
- **Practical supports**

The Desistance Knowledge Exchange Project

<http://blogs.iriss.org.uk/discoveringdesistance/>

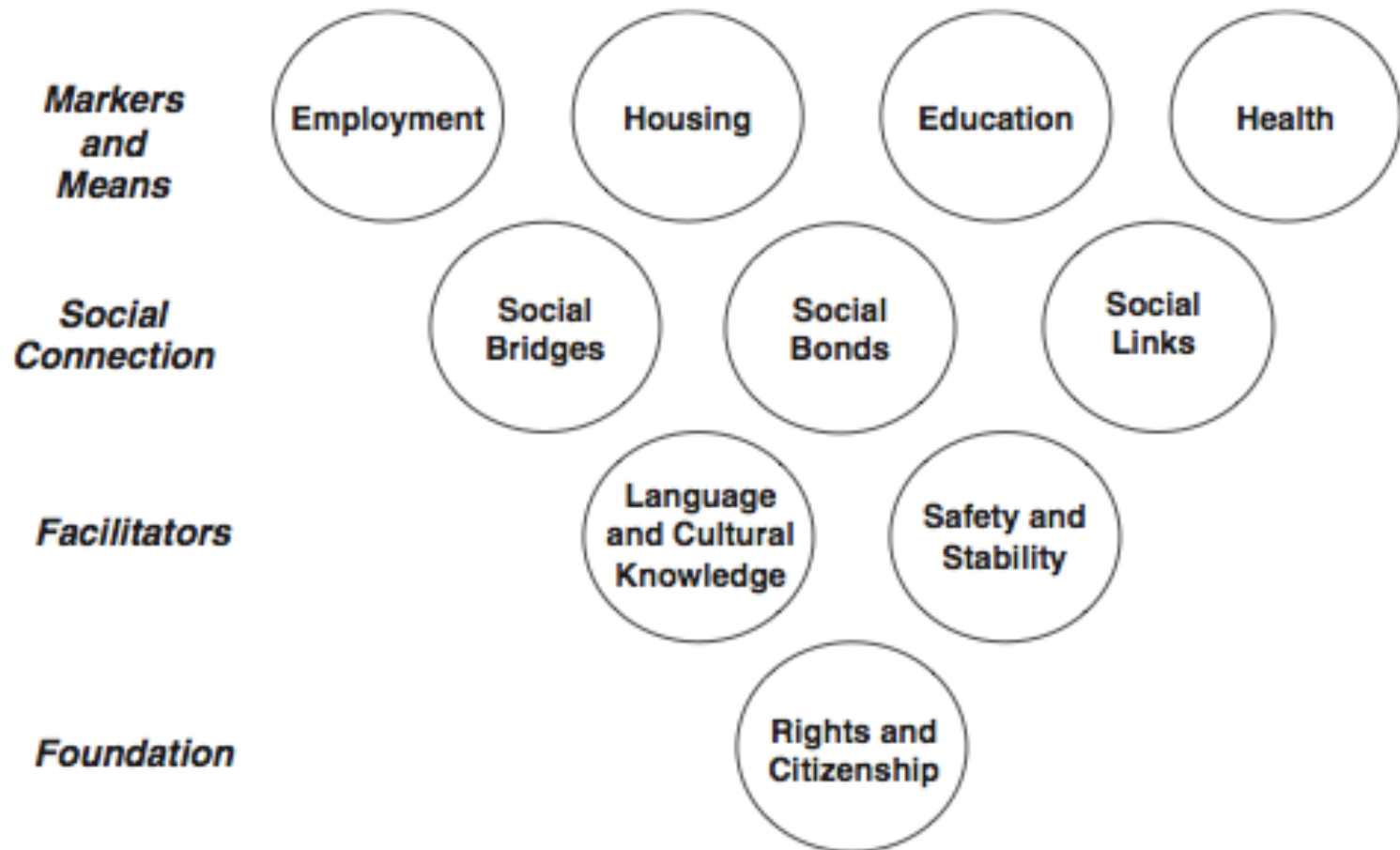


Integration as a positive social good



Integration as a positive social good

A Conceptual Framework Defining Core Domains of Integration



- Clarity of purpose
 - Normative issues; principles and values
- An expansive conception of EBP
 - Explanatory as well as evaluation research
- Co-production of practice models and approaches, in and for your context
 - Also requires local research on desistance and integration, as well as local evaluation research

- Desistance and integration are *social* processes not (just) personal transitions
- Correctional supervision of transitions is not the same thing as support
- Integration of all citizens is a human right and a duty of the state and of civil society – even a responsibility of all citizens
 - Integration work must extend across all of these actors and sectors
 - Corrections needs to reach out, not turn in