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| 1. Record Nr. | UNINA9910779408303321 |
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| Titolo | Exploring the mandatory life sentence for murder / Barry Mitchell and Julian V. Roberts |
| Pubbl/distr/stampa | Oxford, United Kingdom, : Hart Publishing, 2012 |
| ISBN | 1-4725-6121-X 1-299-40314-X 1-78225-025-5 |
| Edizione | [1st ed.] |
| Descrizione fisica | 1 online resource (197 p.) |
| Disciplina | 345.4202523 |
| Soggetti | Life imprisonment - England Life imprisonment - Wales Murder - England Murder - Wales Mandatory sentences - England Mandatory sentences - Wales Sentences (Criminal procedure) - England - Public opinion Sentences (Criminal procedure) - Wales - Public opinion |
| Lingua di pubblicazione | Inglese |
| Formato | Materiale a stampa |
| Livello bibliografico | Monografia |
| Note generali | Description based upon print version of record. |
| Nota di bibliografia | Includes bibliographical references (pages 163-170) and index |
| Nota di contenuto | Defining murder and other forms of criminal homicide -- Origins of the mandatory life sentence by murder -- The mandatory life sentence for murder: the status quo overview -- Making the case for and against the mandatory life sentence -- Public knowledge of trends in crime and punishment -- Public attitudes to sentencing in cases of murder -- Exploring the relationship between information and attitudes to sentencing -- Reforming the sentence for murder: the way forward Introduction -- 1: Defining Murder and Other Forms of Criminal Homicide -- 2: Origins of the Mandatory Life Sentence for Murder -- 3: The Mandatory Life Sentence for Murder: the Status Quo -- 4: Making the Case For and Against the Mandatory Life Sentence -- 5: Public Knowledge of Trends in Crime and Punishment -- 6: Public Attitudes to Sentencing in Cases of Murder -- 7: Exploring the Relationship between Information and Attitudes to Sentencing -- 8: Reforming the |

Sentence for Murder: the Way Forward

Sommario/riassunto

Murder is often regarded as both the 'ultimate' and a unique crime, and whereas courts are normally given discretion in sentencing offenders, for murder the sentence is mandatory - indeterminate imprisonment. Since the crime and the punishment come as a 'package deal' this book looks at both the legal nature of the offence and at the current operation of the mandatory life sentence. Not only does the book adopt a critical approach, by assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the status quo, it also draws upon comparative material from both common and civil law jurisdictions in an attempt to provide a comprehensive exploration of these issues. The need for public confidence in the criminal justice system is particularly acute in the way it deals with the most serious homicides. In this book the authors report findings from the first systematic exploration of public attitudes to sentencing murder in this or any other common law jurisdiction. The picture of public opinion emerging from this recent large-scale nationwide qualitative and quantitative survey, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, is likely to surprise many, and will be of interest to all jurisdictions where the mandatory life sentence for murder has been questioned
