Original Manuscript

Feminist Criminology
2023, Vol. 0(0) 1–22

DOI: 10.1177/15570851231151728
journals.sagepub.com/home/fcx


Working Together? Gendered Barriers to Employment and Desistance From Harm Amongst Criminalised English Women

Úna Barr[1]

Abstract

Drawing on narrative interviews with 16 criminalized women and a year of observation at English Women's Centers, this study explores the women's qualitative experiences of employment and volunteering. Findings indicate traditional perspectives on desistance from crime ignore the intersectional disadvantages women face. Criminalized women experience trauma and stigma that have long-lasting effects on their mental health. Women present as desisting from crime by taking on unpaid employment. This reinforces perspectives on desistance which disregard the many generative roles which women are often quietly involved in. This article contributes to emerging discourse around critical anti-carceral, intersectional feminist desistance (Hale, 2020)

Keywords

women's desistance, female criminality, intersections of race/class/gender, reentry from prison to community, qualitative research

Introduction

Criminalized women experience barriers to finding employment including the double stigma of being a woman with a criminal record (Grace, 2022). Feminist research on

[1]Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool, UK

Corresponding Author:
Úna Barr, Liverpool John Moores University, 80-98 Mount Pleasant, Liverpool L3 5uz, UK.
Email: u.m.barr@ljmu.ac.uk

pathways to crime indicate additional barriers such as childhood victimization and associated traumas, extreme economic marginalization and dysfunctional intimate relationships which Roddy et al. (2021, p. 6) suggest 'impact women's efforts to carry out their employment-related personal projects'. This indicates criminalized women's structural disadvantage in access to the workplace. Only 14% of prison leavers have a job 6 months after release in England and Wales. Women are more than twice less likely than men to be in work 6 weeks after leaving prison (Working Chance, 2021b). In addition, the 'good woman' (Rutter and Barr, 2021) who supports her partner's desistance often has to do this additional unpaid care work whilst maintaining her own desistance. There is a drive in policy and practice to view and promote desisting women as 'hyper-moral' (Matthews et al., 2014) in their generative activities and work, and as a reaction to their double deviance. This adds to the unpaid labor of women, and amplifies gendered, racialized (Dehnavi, 2021; Working Chance, 2021a) and neoliberal pains of being a woman in the workplace, where jobs are precarious and underpaid, childcare is prohibitively expensive, working poverty is a salient reality (Joseph Rowntree Foundation (JRF), 2022), and women's services bear the brunt of austerity measures (Mansfield & Cooper, 2016).

Desistance research which examines how and why people move away from crime has been concerned with the 'social bonds' individuals make to conventional life. This work often highlights the importance of meaningful, generative employment (Carlsson, 2012; Horney et al., 1995; Laub & Sampson, 2003; Maruna, 2001; Sampson & Laub, 1993; Verbruggen et al., 2012). Yet Barr (2019) has argued for a shift in focus in the drive for desistance from crime to desistance from harm including from the gendered harms of interpersonal and state violence. This argument is solidified by feminist (Hart, 2017; Hart & van Ginneken, 2017; Österman, 2018) and abolitionist (Hale, 2020; Barr and Hart, 2022) perspectives which note that individual intentions to desist by criminalized women can be eclipsed by historical and ongoing disadvantage and trauma (Kashy & Morash, 2022). Hale (2020) for example has noted amongst the criminalized women participants in her research, a fatigue from drug use. Hale notes that the women's children in this case can be a motivator to desist and/or impetus for reoffending, if for example their children needed something they could not provide. (Re)offending can be survival (Garcia-Hallett, 2019; Hale, 2020; Opsal, 2012). What is more important in these intersectional perspectives is a move away from harm. Disadvantage and trauma can emerge from state neglect and violence through interaction with education, welfare and 'care' systems. Across both traditional and more critical examinations of desistance is an agreement that meaningful, unionized, well-paid employment can act as a desistance-promoting social bond, in terms of both crime and harm. Yet feminist researchers are keen to draw attention to the unpaid labor of women, which is particularly salient in criminalized women's experiences (Barr, 2019). Criminalized women are doubly demonized Heidenshohn and Silvestri, 2012; Leverentz, 2014; Worrall, 1990) and desisting women often have to live up to gendered and racialized understandings of the 'good woman' (Rutter and Barr, 2021). This affects

their experiences of employment and desistance. Therefore, a holistic understanding of the work experiences of criminalized women is required.

The article begins by examining literature about the experiences of criminalized women, considering early life experiences including exclusion and marginalization, early and ongoing trauma and the cumulative effect of these experiences on criminalized women's mental health. The role of stigma-power, particularly considering the work of Imogen Tyler (2020) is considered. The article offers a brief theoretical examination of the role of critical approaches to desistance (Hart, 2017; Hale, 2020; Barr, 2019) and the importance of perspectives which focus on diminished citizenship (Sered, 2021), arguing that these approaches can be complimentary. The article then considers the methodology that informs this critical argument, examining also the limitations of the work. Finally, the findings are set out, a discussion is considered and a conclusion reached. The article builds on previous research on gendered desistance from harm by a focused examination on the holistic experience of employment, stigma-power and the connections between diminished citizenship and critical desistance research.

Exclusion and Marginalization

Intersectional feminist understandings of criminalized women's experiences highlight harms of patriarchy, neoliberalism, colonialism and racism within their lives. Trauma, violence, poverty and socio-economic marginalization are pervasive. This is true historically and contemporaneously (Carlen, 1990; Barr, 2019). In England and Wales, almost two thirds of women in prison are survivors of domestic abuse and more than half of women in prison have experienced childhood emotional, physical or sexual abuse (Women in Prison, 2021). Trauma is compounded by the depriving, violent, coercive nature of the prison environment. It is clear from small-scale qualitative research that domestic abuse is a common experience even for those who have not served prison sentences (Barr, 2019). Criminalized women are commonly excluded from school (Arnez & Condry, 2021; McAra and McVie, 2013; Sanders et al., 2020) and around one third of women in prison have experienced care[1] as a child (Women in Prison, 2021). Almost half of women leave prison without accommodation to return to (Women in Prison, 2021). Racially minoritized women are over-policed and, in England and Wales, are over two times more likely to be arrested than white women (Dehnavi, 2021; Women in Prison, 2021). Criminalized women experience harms beyond criminalization including structural harms and neglect from the state in the form of education, welfare and state 'care' systems[2] (Hale, 2020; Carlton & Segrave, 2011)

Mental Health and Trauma

Mental health needs of criminalized women are more widespread, acute and diverse than men's (Petrillo, 2016). More than seven in 10 of women in prison (71%) reported that they had a mental health problem, compared with nearly half of men (Prison

Reform Trust, 2022). Researchers have linked this with gendered traumatic experiences (Cohen et al., 2020; Corston, 2007; Petrillo, 2016) including childhood and interpersonal abuse, motherhood, and the particularly gendered pains of imprisonment (Crewe et al., 2017). Childhood and interpersonal abuse were also common amongst women serving community-based sentences (Barr, 2019). Psychological trauma, is defined as 'an event, series of events or set of circumstances that is experienced by an individual as physically or emotionally harmful or life threatening and that has lasting adverse effects on the individual's functioning and mental, physical, emotional or spiritual well-being' (SAMHSA, 2012, p. 7). Trauma-informed practices with criminalized women have become more widespread in agencies who work with criminalized women (Covington, 2022). Yet, as Covington (2022) also notes, physical, mental or sexual abuse related trauma may be hidden, and it is often the case that criminalized women have had no counselling or treatment to help deal with traumas they have experienced.

Stigma-power

Once criminalized, women experience the additional stigma of a criminal record. This can have myriad effects including barriers to employment. Recent research in England and Wales by the charity FairChecks has highlighted the enduring stigma of criminal records with more than a third of the childhood offences set out in Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) certificates in 2021 relating to records from more than 40 years ago (Dugan, 2022). Women are 'doubly demonized' Heidenshohn and Silvestri, 2012; Leverentz, 2014; Worrall, 1990) for breaking gendered and societal norms, with Baldwin et al. (2021) arguing that for mothers, the demonization is threefold when they are shamed for breaking the social-, gender-, and mother-contract. For criminalized women, the stigma barriers to employment 'are many: the solutions are few' (Grace, 2022, p. 79).[3]

Tyler (2020) contends that stigma is not created in a vacuum, nor is it something which is experienced only interpersonally, instead arguing for a refocus on 'stigma-power' which notes the structural causes and implications of stigma. Tyler outlines the political function of stigma historically and contemporaneously, linking this with intersecting structures of neoliberalism, patriarchy and racism, describing stigma as 'a governmental technology of division and dehumanisation…' that corrodes 'compassion, crushing hope, weakening social solidarity' (Tyler, 2020, p. 7). Tyler refocuses the conversation on the production of stigma: 'where stigma comes from, how and by whom stigma is produced and for what purposes' (p. 8). In this way, we can begin to examine the impact of gender, race and class on the experiences of criminalized women.

One outcome of uncritical adoption of desistance theory and practice which focuses on desistance from crime is the outcome that criminalized women are encouraged to present as a particular type of 'good woman' (Rutter and Barr, 2021). Criminalized women not only face stigma related to criminalization but also through

their victimhood, drug use and benefits claiming (Barr and Rutter, forthcoming). This stigma is classed, gendered and racialized. Criminal justice rhetoric of responsibilization (Hart, 2017) which is also present in uncritical examinations of desistance (Gålnander, 2020) can encourage women to present as 'good women', constructions that revolve around often cis-heteronormative ideas around motherhood and marriage (Rutter and Barr, 2021). Compounding this, full-time employment is valorized in neoliberal society. Work is seen as virtuous in and of itself (Grace, 2022). Simultaneously, women are particularly likely post-pandemic to be underpaid, working in precarious employment and are more likely to be lone parents and struggling to afford childcare (Buckingham et al., 2020; Francis-Devine, 2021; Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2022).

Theory around desistance from crime placed central importance on employment, particularly where it is meaningful, and where possible, generative (Maruna, 2001; Farrall, 2002; Aresti et al., 2010; Healy, 2012). Criminalized women are encouraged into hyper-moral roles (Matthews et al., 2014), perhaps as both an individual and societal reaction to their supposed 'double deviance'. In criminal justice practice, this often comes in the form of volunteering, particularly encouraged in Women's Centers for example (Barr, 2019).

Diminished Citizenship or Feminist Desistance?

Susan Starr Sered (2021) has argued for a theoretical shift away from what she sees as the individualistic, responsibilizing logic inherent in studies that focus on desistance from crime. Instead, Sered favors a move towards a consideration of 'diminished citizenship' to understand and analyze the structural experiences of criminalized women in the community. This would have three core elements – political, civil and social/economic citizenship. In relation to an examination of the relationship between diminished citizenship and employment in the American context, she notes (Sered, 2021, p. 223):

> The right to autonomous participation in the economic sphere is central to American constructions of citizenship. By working in the formal sector one receives entitlements such as health care and retirement benefits (Turner, 2001). Paid work historically has been morally valorized in American culture (Shklar, 1995). And paid work is the means for most individuals to freely purchase goods and services, actions that are central to the construction of citizenship in the context of American capitalism (Scott, 2011).

Sered argues that criminalization has barred women from participation in economically valued activities, despite their desire to take part. In this way, their economic citizenship is diminished. Sered makes the case for key issues to be addressed to restore full citizenship which include 'reducing incarceration; expunging criminal records; devoting resources to reuniting families harmed by mass incarceration; creating an extensive jobs program similar to the Civilian Conservation

Corps of the New Deal'[4] and 'supporting affordable housing for all with a goal towards universal home ownership' (Sered, 2021, p. 235).

There have however been advances in discussions around desistance which have already addressed the important structural issues which Sered (2021) has set out (Barr, 2019; Hale, 2020; Hart, 2017; Hart & Van Ginneken, 2017; Österman, 2018; Barr and Christian, 2019). As argued in Barr (2019: 191-2):

> Patriarchal and neoliberal understandings of the good life only enable women to desist in a certain way. Desistance from crime can mean a curtailment of law breaking. It also can mean a life of poverty including a lack of state support, reinforced by social stigma, shame and the fear of male violence and coercive control. Desistance is a powerful theoretical concept which shines a light on the positive changes individuals make in the face of adverse life experiences. However, without a simultaneous challenge to structural inequalities, it can mean (re)conformity to a life filled with injustice.

As Hale (2020) notes, pursuit of a better life for criminalized women may necessitate offending. Similar to Sered's argument about diminished responsibility, a focus on desistance from *harm* rather than from crime has the ability to challenge the structural inequalities which form the background to most women's criminalization in the first place and which shapes their post-carceral experiences. Barr and Hart (2022), set out an anti-carceral feminist approach to desistance, which demands abolition of women's prison. In particular, the authors demand immediate resistance to the expansion of the women's prison estate. The authors also note the importance of welfare-based interventions, including (amongst other elements) 'the removal of criminal records (as barriers to employment); decoupling of drugs from the criminal justice system; decent quality social housing for all; safe spaces for women and children; truly accessible mental health support; fairly paid and unionized employment and access to universal education' (Women in prison, 2021, p. 234).

Intersectional feminist approaches to desistance from crime (Barr and Hart, 2022; Hale, 2020) and harm (Barr, 2019) are compatible with diminished citizenship models (Sered, 2021) because they refocus the attention not on the individual attempting (or not) to move away from offending and harmful existences but to the social-structural conditions which enable or otherwise desistance from crime and harm. In both critical feminist desistance and diminished citizenship understandings of criminalized individuals' experiences, there is an emphasis on challenging patriarchal colonial capitalism and related criminalization whilst promoting (for example) fully unionized, stable and meaningful employment, community support, childcare support, housing stability and decriminalization.

The Current Study

The research presented is based on semi-structured interviews with 16 criminalized women, as well as observations conducted for a year at five Women's Centers (WCs)

located across Northshire,[5] a county in the North of England. The women interviewed were either part of the Housing for Northshire (HfN) Project (n = 3), or were completing/had recently completed Specified Activity Orders at Northshire WCs. The Housing for Northshire project offered shared accommodation within community housing in two to four bedroomed units. All three of the women interviewed who were part of the HfN Project (Michaela, Shelly and Kelly-Marie) were referred whilst in prison but women were also referred from police, probation or by self-referrals.[6] From the HfN Project, women could be referred to counselling, domestic violence services, health services, employment and training support. The houses were described by Rebecca Brown, owner and founder of the HfN project as a 'stop gap' with a view to enabling people to become 'responsible functioning members of society with a view to getting back to work.' Northshire Women's Centers provided a 'one stop shop' for criminalized women through a contract won through Northshire Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC). Criminalized women referred through police, courts, probation and other parts of the criminal justice service. All the interviewed women were serving specified activity orders as recommended by the courts.

The 16 criminalized women were participants in at least one semi-structured life-course interview.[7] Interviews lasted on average 50 minutes and were conducted by the author. The participants were aged between 23 and 60, with an average age of 41. Women's Center women were recruited following observations at the center. HfN women were recruited through snowball sampling, particularly through contact with the founder on Twitter. Incentives offered were lunch or coffee. Women who participated described the process as cathartic and hoped it would help other women. The women's offences were varied and quantitative analysis was not carried out on offending histories. However, most recent offences included drink driving, theft, benefit fraud, tax fraud, credit card fraud, growing cannabis, drug dealing, burglary, handling stolen goods, shoplifting, assault on a police officer and non-payment of housing benefit overpayment. The interviews sought to collect life-course narratives of the criminalized women and covered topics including youth, education, offending, experiences of the criminal justice system, identity, substance misuse, accommodation, finance, lifestyle, relationships with family, friends and partners, community and society, emotional well-being, values and beliefs, health, victimization and aspirations for the future (McIvor et al., 2011; McAdams, 1995). Narratives were collected, content-coded and analyzed for patterns in tone, theme, plot, roles, value structure, coherence and complexity (Maruna, 2001) using N-Vivo software. In particular, references to employment, volunteering and education were important for the purposes of the current article. Pseudonyms are used for the places and people discussed in this paper to preserve anonymity.[8]

Interviews did not measure desistance. Women were not categorized in terms of desisters or non-desisters. Yet all women were being encouraged to desist from crime by the services with whom they were in contact. All women expressed a desire for change in their lives in regards to stopping offending, giving up drugs, gaining employment (Opsal, 2012), regaining custody of their children, improving

health or moving away from the communities in which they currently lived. At least a quarter of the women were 'first time offenders' in that this was their first contact with police and probation, seven of the 16 women had spent time in prison, on the whole these were relatively short sentences for non-violent crimes. Michaela served 22 sentences throughout her life; the longest of these was five and a half months. Shelly had 'lost count' of the number of times she had been in prison and Kelly-Marie had been in prison at least seven times, the longest sentence she served was 7 years for burglary, this was the longest served by any of the women. Michaela, Shelly and Kelly-Marie's crimes all related to heroin addiction and funding the addiction through shoplifting and burglary.

At the time of the first interview, 13 of the 16 women were unemployed, two were employed, and one worked in a voluntary capacity. Other than the two women who were unable to work for health reasons, all the remaining unemployed women expressed a desire to gain a paid or voluntary job and/or additional training or education. The employment histories of the women were varied. For example, Julie, the daughter of a police officer, worked in the legal profession all her life until her most recent offence. Grace was a former laborer, which she gave up after becoming pregnant. Sue was a travel agent before the death of her father resulted in a move to voluntary work Grace and Sue's experiences. Many of the women had exited employment recently.

A critique of the methodology of this research is the absence of voices of racialized black and brown women. This was a reflection of the makeup of the criminalized women's population of the Northshire area where the research was based. Further research that supplements the understandings around criminalization and the intersecting nature of gender, class and race-based discrimination and violence in women's access to work (Working Chance 2021a) is required in order to understand criminalized women's relationship with work and desistance including desistance from harm.

Findings

Historical Contexts: Exclusion and Marginalization

Criminalized women often experienced exclusion and marginalization in the early years of their lives. Common school experiences included exclusion, as Holly notes:

> Researcher: And what were you like when you were at school?
>
> Holly: I got kicked out in year 10
>
> Researcher: What happened?
>
> Holly: I got excluded for fighting with some girls, me and my best friend. So we both got excluded at the same time

Researcher: And did you go back after that?

Holly: No we got kicked out permanently; I didn't go to another school after that… It were 'cause everyone else were doing it so I followed into their footsteps. And most of my friends from where I live had been excluded so I think it were just the normal thing…

Karen narrated a similar experience:

Basically I was quite like, if someone was getting bullied, I'd intervene, I'd get in everyone's business which got me in trouble, I got excluded from school early, high school, quite young. And then I was out of education for a year. And then the education department come out and said to my mum, basically if she didn't send me to this five day residential she would be sent a fine and whatever. (Karen)

Anna did not feel she did as well at school and in exams as her potential because she was working nights during her studies and her father went to prison at the time.

The teachers went mad because I could have done really well, I had the brains, I just didn't want to do it. I was working nights part time during my exams, and to be honest with you, my dad went to prison around the time of my exams so it kind of like blew me into a world of criminality… because he'd went down for guns… yeah, it spiraled, my life, out of control 'cause then you get all the naughty ones coming forward then it's like, "oh guns"! It's like a big thing. (Anna)

Heather described bullying and abuse at home and in school

… my dad was very abusive, to me and my mum. And then my mum would drink all the time and then she'd become violent. And it were just a vicious circle all the time…I used to get followed to and from school. They [other students] used to spit on me, throw stones at me… and then it got to the time where it'd have to be a half day 'cause then I don't get followed home…I actually got pinned up once by a teacher. Yeah... and she ruined all my new shoes, my new bag and everything… none of the teachers helped me. So after that I just decided I'd had enough. (Heather)

After changing to a smaller school and moving in with her grandmother, life improved for Heather. Since her conviction for benefit fraud, however, Heather's mental health declined and criminalization contributed to a suicide attempt. Considering the high levels of exclusion and harm faced by many criminalized women in their early years (Arnez & Condry, 2021; McAra and McVie, 2013; Sanders et al., 2020; Women in Prison, 2021), it is perhaps unsurprising that Women's Center staff noted a low level of basic skills including low levels of literacy and, particularly important during the time of research with benefit reforms and the introduction of Universal

Credit, a low level of digital literacy. Many women, including Grace, expressed a desire to get back to education but were worried about how this could be funded:

> I'm hoping to go to college but I'm struggling with finding funding because the only thing I could claim if I was going to college would be job seekers allowance, but I wouldn't be actively seeking work because I would be at college, so I'm trying to find a part time course which I have to pay for. Because I've no GCSEs and I know I am very clever, you know I was predicted straight As at the end of primary school but left at the end of year 9. But yeah I want to go on to become a social worker or a counsellor… When you've been there you can sympathize with the person, obviously give them advise that I wish I'd have had when I was starting out sort of thing. (Grace)

Grace's hopes for the future were 'carrying on with further education. I don't want to be stuck in a dead-end job, I want to have a nice job, get driving, a nice house. Or depending on what I choose to do, further along in my education… I know what I want and I know where I want to end up, I'm just not sure about what's needed in between'. In Grace's narrative there was a clear dearth of structural support to help her achieve her goals, which include desistance from crime but, more importantly, a move towards better mental health and away from poverty. Her pursuit of a 'better life' (Baldry, 2010 as cited in Hale, 2020; Hoskins, 2022) was most important to Grace. In other words, for Grace, desistance from harm was More important than desistance from crime.

Historical Contexts: Bereavement, Gendered victimization, Harm and Mental Health

Some of the Northshire women's narratives included stories of happy and stable childhoods yet most were marred by child abuse, parental drug addiction, criminalization, violence in the home, 'care' systems and, commonly, neglect by the state. Many of the women also faced harmful circumstances including bereavement, domestic abuse and other forms of harm. This often had an impact on the women's mental health to the point where they had to give up paid or voluntary work positions. Anna was a single mother and her eldest child's father was abusive towards her "in every single way". She described physical, mental and sexual abuse which resulted in Anna having health issues with her back, the result of slipped discs. When her father went to prison, Anna gave up work to care for her sick mum; when her mum died, Anna's mental health took a turn for the worse.

> I gave up work to look after me mum. I were working butty vans several days a week, but I gave it up when me dad went to prison, looked after me mum… I were alright until my mum died and then about a year later, I woke up 1 day wi' back ache and thought, "I'm knackered", there's just something not right and it went downhill from there... I used to be really on the ball with everything, every little thing that I done. Nowadays, I'm piling letters up going, "oh I'll open them next week" when I feel up to it you know? (Anna)

Anna's hopes for the future were modest and included to continue learning and reading. This passion for reading and learning was something she shared with her mum and helped her feel close to her whilst she was grieving.

Heather's narrative was outlined briefly above and her early years included childhood abuse, abandonment and school exclusion. Three years prior to interview, Heather began self-harming:

> I'm not employed. I did do voluntary work before I got ill. I went, oh Gosh, before I moved in that house so I'd say about 3 years ago, before things just went out of control… I started self-harming. I had OCD really bad, I was frightened to go out of the house and frightened for my partner to go out of the house. This is before I got any help so it were just terrible. I didn't know what was going wrong. (Heather)

Similarly, Karen's narrative included exclusion experiences from school, she experienced forced sex work, she was a single mother and her most recent partner, the father of 3 of her 4 children was mentally, physically and sexually abusive to her during a period where she 'settled down' from drug use and offending. This resulted in poor mental and physical health conditions and Karen's inability to work.

> I'm not able to work at the moment, I've bad DVT [deep vein thrombosis], I've bad anxiety, panic attacks because I was involved in a bad rape and locked up two weeks in the house, I've been through quite a lot. I don't really go out a lot, I never do… there's a big build up to it, you know there's a big build up for me to even step out that door, it's just mad because I'm so confident, you wouldn't believe it that I am so bad with anxiety and depression. (Karen)

Poor mental health caused by traumatic experiences, in childhood and adulthood, including, but not limited to, criminalization and often gendered abuse, informed the day-to-day experiences of the Northshire women. This meant that desistance from intersectional experiences of harm was central to their wellbeing (Barr, 2019) and ultimately had a large impact on their education, skills and ability to work.

Barriers to employment: Criminalization and Stigma

Both Heather and Katie's offences involved benefit fraud, Heather had not declared her partner's employment, whilst Katie was arrested and convicted for claiming disability benefit whilst working. Both women stated that these had been honest mistakes. Both women had attempted suicide since their criminalization. Ruth was criminalized due to an overpayment of housing benefit, council tax and income support. When she could no longer afford to pay, she was taken to court. Ruth, a single mother of two, was homeless at the time of interview. She had been working 55 hours per week as a cleaner and in a pub but following a relationship breakdown had nowhere to live and 'went on the sick'. Ruth attempted suicide on Mother's Day.

> There's no doors opening forward, there's just people chasing me from behind and it's just one thing after the other. It's like I've got housing benefit chasing me for arears which they can't have what I haven't got it… I've nothing left they can't take…even when I had the kids I still went to work. It's just seemed to have knocked me so far this time, I just want somewhere to live and go back to work. But obviously with this on my record for the next 2 years… it seems harsh, to give me a criminal conviction over this when I've never been in trouble before. I'm not a reoffender and that's what all these courses are for, all about reoffending… and reoffending isn't what's going to happen. It's not as if I've gone out and done something wrong. But yet I'm paying the price for them overpaying. (Ruth)

As mentioned, Katie's offence was for claiming disability benefit whilst working. Yet Katie continued to be signed off sick from work at the time of interview. Katie noted she had been encouraged to 'go guilty' by speaking with a counsellor who convinced Katie she was too unwell mentally to go through a court case, as she was classed as high risk for suicide. However, the effects of her criminalization created additional stress on her mental health.

> I still don't know why I pleaded guilty, looking back now, I wouldn't have done, because like I can't go out and get another job, with a criminal record. It's not as bad as if I've been given a suspended sentence or anything, but I don't know how long it's there for. I got a sheet from the women's center that said because it was only supervision that I can write it off. But I've heard it's up to seven years, so I don't know. (Katie)

Desistance from crime is a redundant lens through which to view the experiences of Ruth, Katie and Heather. Yet, a focus on desistance from harm could enable a structural consideration of the harms of neoliberal patriarchy which formed the basis of their criminalization and created barriers to employment. Throughout observations at the Northshire Women's Centers were references to how long women would have to disclose their criminal records, and often there was confusion about this from the staff and the criminalized women. Whilst the Woman's Centers noted that it was unlawful for employers to discriminate, the women refuted this with their personal experiences. During observations at the Women's Centers, Claudia, a staff member in Easton talked about her own experiences of criminalization regarding a teenage shoplifting offence that she had to disclose when applying for the job at the Women's Center.

> My opinion is there are offences that should stay on peoples records like sex offences but all the rest of this silly rubbish needs to be deleted (Claudia)

Beyond the stigma of criminalization, women noted the enduring impact of their sentences on their ability to work. Marie noted the severe affect her driving ban had on her ability to work and help friends and family.

> …They might as well have chopped me arms, me legs, me head and everything off really 'cause it's just totally ground me. It's like "wow", 'cause I'm so used to driving... So yeah, it's just affected me a lot… driving my mum to the hospital and that. And then I said I was going to join in with this dog walking business me mum's got, she were going to pass it down to me... And she has to go to hospital, I have to take her to hospital, that's all knackered basically so it's just really really ground me… But he [the judge] said to me, he said "I'm going to give you a chance, so you can start up your business and carry on with your mum and stuff." And then I thought, "Eh? Without a license? I'd be better off doing a month in prison." (Marie)

Kelly-Marie meanwhile talked about the qualification which she received in prison as a hair and beauty stylist and her desire to put this into practice on the outside to generatively provide other women with a sense of hope – she wanted to work in a 'project within a project… To give other women self-worth and to let them know that you can do something with yourself and there is hope.' Yet when she exited prison, Kelly-Marie got a full-time position in Timpsons, a UK-Based company which includes locksmiths, cleaners and photography companies who specialize in employing 'ex-offenders'. However, working in a job that did not fulfil her, Kelly-Marie felt contributed to her heroin use again and ultimately resulted in a recall to prison.

> So I've gone to jail and I thought, "Right, better sort me shit out now." And I've got there, I've got meself clean, I got meself into education, I've come out after two and a half years a qualified beautician and hair stylist. I was interlinked with recovering addicts, I was a recovery mentor. I got meself a full time job wi' Timpson's. But I took meself off all me medication. And I thought I were fine, I thought I'd got it made now, everything's fine. Anyhow I've got home and everything were fine for about 3 weeks. I started to think, "I don't want to be out here; I can't cope out here. I'm not ready to be out here."... I didn't want this job at Timpson's, I didn't get this hair and beauty to go and cut keys at Timpson's. And I'd stopped taking me mental health medication; I'd took meself off me methadone. And within 7 months of being home, I'd started using. (Kelly-Marie)

Volunteering, generativity and unpaid gendered labor

Despite the overwhelmingly negative experiences of criminalization and linked effects on desirable employment prospects, some of the women did mention the positive help and advice they received both from the Women's Center and the Housing for Northshire Project. Generative work has long been noted as a key feature of desistance from crime (Farrall, 2002; Giordano et al., 2002; Healy, 2012; Maruna, 2001). Paula attended a dedicated work-focused course for example at the Women's Centers and staff noted how women could access money for clothes for job interviews. Other women described the positive impact the voluntary work

assigned as part of their sentence had on them. Grace worked in a charity shop as part of her sentence and noted the distraction it provided when her daughter was removed from her custody:

> I went from being a full time mum to being like nothing, it kept me occupied, it kept my mind off things and they're very nice, they talk to you, you know and I get along with all of them there. (Grace)

Sue, who had been criminalized due to drink driving offences, had an uncommon narrative amongst the interviewed women. After the death of her father when Sue was 30, and following her mother's death when Sue was 16, Sue noted her 'luck' in inheriting well which allowed her to give up work following a mental health breakdown and begin volunteering.

> I started having panic attacks and I basically had to give up work… went on antidepressants, and was on those for about… two years? Wasn't working but I was doing voluntary work because I managed to inherit from my father a substantial amount of money so I was able to live off my savings. And the voluntary work was something that actually helped me because I was actually doing something that I actually wanted to do… Initially it was a teaching assistant in a primary school, with the kiddies, so I loved that. And then… I then started working for… the children's hospice, which is what I've been doing up until now… voluntary work has sort of saved me. I've made a lot of new friends, I haven't been tied into a job as such, I've had the flexibility and that's probably what I've needed… just for me to sort of think about myself. (Sue)

In Sue's experience, being able to volunteer was a privilege and benefitted her mentally and socially. Katie also talked about the benefits of the volunteering which she has been involved with following her sentence which has helped her challenge some of the stigma she has experienced elsewhere:

> I help out at a charity shop when I'm needed, … So I just do Saturday to help out and that gets me out meeting people again, I'm not as nervous going out and contacting people. And everybody's lovely down there, they're really helpful. Nobody knows about... what's happened. If they happened to say mention it, I'd tell them, I wouldn't be frightened of telling them. But nobody's asked and you know so... I've thought, "Well you know if they ask, I will tell them but otherwise you know it's alright." (Katie)

The Women's Center staff were keen to promote the benefits of volunteering, particularly in terms of experience and training. Yet, there was some resistance from the criminalized women, regarding the lack of payment they would receive from such a position. Generativity was not new to the women, although there were post-criminalization examples of women taking on 'hyper-moral' (Matthews et al., 2014) roles, arguably as a reaction to the stigma emerging from their violation of legal and

gender norms, women had life-long examples of often unpaid caring work. As noted in Barr (2019) women were full-time mothers, foster carers, took on mother roles to their partner's children, were involved in Church-based volunteering and fundraising, offered advice, practical support and counselling to family and friends, supported their partner's and (male) family member's desistance (Hall & Harris, 2022) and provided care and dignity for friends in prison. In short, women provided gendered caregiving roles unrelated to their efforts to desist from crime. Yet within desistance discourse, both theoretically (Best et al., 2017; Buck, 2014; Höing et al., 2016) and at the criminal justice practice level, for example in the Women's Centers, women continued to be encouraged into free generative labor.

Discussion

For criminalized women, the theoretical, policy and practice focus on desistance from crime may be misled. Individualizing and responsibilizing women to find and maintain generative, meaningful employment and ultimately desist from crime, ignores the structural harms which inform their early and recent experiences and which indeed may follow them into the world of work and/or volunteering or create a barrier to access (Kashy & Morash, 2022). Grace (2022) has argued persuasively that criminalized women can take on the 'worker' identity to provide a positive, alternate identity (Farrall, 2002; Maruna, 2001; Opsal, 2012), yet we must be careful to offer this inappropriately to women as a mechanism to manage stigma. This can inform a construction of the 'good woman' (Rutter and Barr, 2021) which ignores the structural constraints faced by criminalized women whilst contributing to gendered, neoliberal and racialized 'ideals'. Women are historically and contemporaneously overworked and underpaid. Women take on unpaid caring or generative roles which are not as valorized in capitalist societies. Criminalized women in particular may do this whilst supporting men's desistance (Barr, 2019) or whilst in abusive relationships and/or managing trauma and related mental health issues.

Prioritizing desistance from harm (Barr, 2019) involves a whole life perspective on criminalized individuals' experiences. The Northshire women involved in the current research had myriad experiences of social exclusion and discrimination from their early years of life. Exclusion, discrimination and historic experiences of gendered violence affected women's mental and physical health, which in turn affected their ability and desires to work and/or volunteer. These findings reflect what is already known about criminalized women's mental health (Cohen et al., 2020; Corston, 2007; Covington, 2022; Petrillo, 2016). The operation of stigma-power (Tyler, 2020) was clear in women's self-reflection around their experiences of criminalization as well as in their discussion of benefits claiming, drug use and motherhood (De Li & MacKenzie, 2003; Barr and Rutter, forthcoming).

Grace (2022) found that post-carceral employment is not as prioritized for women as it is for men, in both policy and practice. Grace (2022) relates this to conflicting patriarchal and neoliberal norms and expectations that prioritize women's social

relationships (such as mothers) and women's place in the home at the expense of other roles in the workplace. Speaking about the situation in Canada, Grace (2022, p. 76) argues that a 'lack of clarity on the value of post-carceral employment for women mean that policies and programs have been, and continue to be, designed without adequately understanding whether or not they serve women's needs and interests.' In relation to Kelly-Marie's experience discussed above, we can argue that the experience Grace narrates is also present in the English/Welsh post-carceral experience. The Timpson criminal justice scheme is much lauded (Allison, 2021; Nugent & Schinkel, 2016) but it is not a panacea. In order for work to be transformative in the promotion of desistance from harm, it must be meaningful, well-paid and reflect individual's hopes and talents.

Gendered constructions of the 'good woman' (Rutter and Barr, 2021) force criminalized women to take on 'hyper-moral' (Matthews et al., 2014) roles, and particularly volunteering positions for which they are by definition not paid in order to perform or 'prove' their desistance form crime. This was promoted as a way to draw distinction between the past self and a good core self (Grace, 2022; Maruna, 2001). Whilst many of the Northshire women noted the benefits of volunteering for their own mental health and social capital, others were unable to take on work that was unpaid due to other demands on their time and energy. Moreover, all of the women talked about other caring and generative roles they had with children, family and friends, not least with some of the women supporting the desistance of the men in their lives (Barr, 2019; Nugent & Schinkel, 2016; Hall & Harris, 2022). As Codd (2008) has argued, within families of incarcerated people, the burden of caring is likely to be placed on women. Traditional desistance discourse that centers generativity is often blind to the generative lives that criminalized women already lead. At the worst, policy and practice that coerces criminalized women into 'volunteering' positions, adds to the strain of their lives, entrenching the feminization of poverty (Carlen, 1998).

Ruth's narrative was particularly poignant. Ruth did not see herself as an 'offender' nor 'former offender' yet the trauma of her life circumstances including mental health problems, homelessness and adverse childhood experiences have helped place her into these categories, responsibilizing her to take on 'courses' to help 'change her life' whilst facing the structural barriers which are attached to criminalization. This article contributes to a 'small, yet important, emerging discourse – a form of critical feminist desistance' (Hale, 2020, p. 519). Criminalized women are structurally disadvantaged and excluded, often from the very beginning of their lives. Gendered violence and poverty is pervasive. Trauma, including the trauma of criminalization and interaction with the criminal justice system, creates additional barriers to employment. Furthermore, stigma power others criminalized individuals and further creates long-lasting barriers. Criminalized women should be supported to desist from harm, and this must be a collective, feminist, solidarity- and social justice-based endeavor. Full-time employment is not a panacea. Social, political and legal systems 'entrench poverty and marginalization within the neoliberal labor system' (Grace, 2022, p. 85). In the English and Welsh context this is particularly expressed through criminal records, 0 hours contracts, the 'cost of living crisis' and the idea of the 'working poor'. Women

at the margins of society should not be responsibilized to make changes in their own lives when they have faced a dearth of, or inappropriate, structural support all their lives. There is a need to decouple desistance from individual responsibilization, which does not take stock of the gendered, classed and raced intersecting disadvantages of criminalized people's lives. This article rearticulates utopian yet pragmatic (Barr, 2019) demands of 'diminished citizenship' (Sered, 2021) and intersectional anti-carceral feminist (Hale, 2020; Hart, & van Ginneken, 2017; Österman, 2018; Sisters Uncut, 2021; Barr and Hart, 2022) approaches to desistance from harm. These center not only fairly-paid and unionized employment and access to education for all, but affordable housing, childcare support, decriminalization, radical and comprehensive sex education, properly funded mental health and domestic violence services and a benefits system that enables people to live comfortably and free from harm.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

ORCID iD

Úna Barr https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4774-5259

Notes

1. Care here means looked after by a local authority where the local authority takes on the responsibility for the child as if it was a parent.
2. See above.
3. As noted, in England and Wales, because of DBS certificates, criminalized women often do not have the same (limited and problematic) options as the Canadian-based women in Grace's (2022) study.
4. As part of the New Deal Program, to help lift the United States out of the Great Depression, Franklin D. Roosevelt established the Civilian Conservation Corps in 1933. This allowed single men between the ages of 18 and 25 to enlist in work programs to improve America's public lands, forests, and parks. Enlisters were paid $30 a month and many completed high school education whilst working.
5. All people and places have been given pseudonyms.
6. Women did not necessarily have to be involved with the criminal justice system to be referred to the HfN Project. See Barr (2019) for more on the HFN project.
7. Two women were participants in two interviews. The timing of the PhD project only allowed for enough time for these two follow up interviews. See Barr (2019) for more information on the recruitment process.
8. Further details of the methodology employed can be found in Barr (2019).

References

Allison, E. (2021). *'There is another way': Why Timpson boss hit out at PM's chain-gang plan*. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/aug/02/there-is-another-way-why-timpson-boss-hit-out-pm-chain-gang-plan. Accessed 12 July 2022.

Aresti, A., Eatough, V., & Brooks-Gordon, B. (2010). Doing time after time: An Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of reformed ex-prisoners' experiences of self-change, identity and career opportunities. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, *16*(3), 169–190. https://doi.org/10.1080/10683160802516273

Arnez, J., & Condry, R. (2021). Criminological perspectives on school exclusion and youth offending. *Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties*, *26*(1), 87–100. https://doi.org/10.1080/13632752.2021.1905233

Baldry, E. (2010). Women in transition: From prison to. *Current Issues in Criminal Justice*, *22*(2), 253–267.

Baldwin, L., Elwood, M., & Brown, C. (2021). *Criminal Mothers: The persisting pains of maternal imprisonment Criminal women; gender matters, Co-authored by the criminal women voice, justice and recognition network (CWVJR)*. Bristol University Press.

Barr, Ú. (2019). *Desisting Sisters: Gender, Power and Desistance in the Criminal* (In) Justice System London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Barr, Ú., & Christian, N. (2019). A qualitative investigation into the impact of domestic abuse on women's desistance. *Probation Journal*, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0264550519881684

Barr, Ú., & Hart, E. L. (2022). Constructing a Feminist Desistance: Resisting Responsibilization Atkinson K, Barr U, Monk H, Tucker K. Feminist Responses to Injustices of the State and its Institutions Politics, Intervention, Resistance. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

Barr, Ú., & Rutter, N. (forthcoming). Desistance and the stigma machine: Being a 'good woman'. In L. Baldwin (eds) Gendered Justice. Taylor and Francis.

Best, D., Irving, J., Collinson, B., Andersson, C., & Edwards, M. (2017). Recovery networks and community connections: Identifying connection needs and community linkage opportunities in early recovery populations. *Alcoholism Treatment Quarterly*, *35*(1), 2–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/07347324.2016.1256718

Buck, G. (2014). Civic Re-engagements amongst former prisoners. *Prison Service Journal*, *214*, 52–57.

Buckingham, S., Fiadzo, C., Dalla Pozza, V., Todaro, L., DuPont, C., & Hadijvassiliou, M. K. (2020). *Precarious work from a gender and intersectionality perspective, and ways to combat it. European Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality. Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs Directorate-General for Internal Policies PE 662.491*. https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/STUD/2020/662491/IPOL_STU(2020)662491_EN.pdf. Accessed 12 July 2021.

Carlen, P. (1990). *Alternatives to women's imprisonment*. Open University Press.

Carlen, P. (1998). *Sledgehammer: Women's imprisonment at the millennium*. Macmillan.

Carlsson, C. (2012). Using 'turning points' to understand processes of change in offending: Notes from a Swedish study on life courses and crime. *The British Journal of Criminology*, *52*(1), 1–16. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azr062

Carlton, B., & Segrave, M. (2011). Women's survival post-imprisonment: Connecting imprisonment with pains past and present. *Punishment & Society*, *13*(5), 551–570. https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474511422174

Codd, H. (2008). *In the shadow of prison: Families, imprisonment and criminal justice*. Willan.

Cohen, R., Trebilcock, J., Weaver, T., & Moran, P. A. (2020). The OPD pathway for women: A hopeful new development? *Criminal Behaviour and Mental Health*, *29*(5-6), 257–260. [4] https://doi.org/10.1002/cbm.2127

Corston, J. (2007). *A review of women with particular vulnerabilities in the criminal justice system*. Home Office.

Covington, S. (2022). Creating a trauma-informed justice system for women. In L. Gelsthorpe, & S. Brown (Eds), *The wiley handbook on what works with girls and women in conflict with the law: A critical review of theory, practice, and policy*. John Wiley & Sons.

Crewe, B., Hulley, S., & Wright, S. (2017). The gendered pains of life imprisonment. *The British Journal of Criminology*, *57*(6), 1359–1378. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azw088

Dehnavi, O. (2021). 'For racialized women in the criminal justice system, their sentence doesn't end with release'. Gal Dem. https://gal-dem.com/women-in-prison-racism/. Accessed 14 July 2022.

De Li, S., & MacKenzie, D. L. (2003). The gendered effects of adult social bonds on the criminal activities of probationers. *Criminal Justice Review*, *28*(2), 278–298. https://doi.org/10.1177/073401680302800205

Dugan, E. (2022). *Thousands in England and Wales locked out of jobs because of mistakes in youth, campaigners say*. The Guardian. https://www.theguardian.com/law/2022/jun/21/dbs-thousands-locked-out-of-jobs-because-of-mistakes-in-youth-campaigners-say. Accessed 23 June 2022.

Farrall, S. (2002). *Rethinking what works with offenders*. Willan Publishing.

Francis-Devine, B. (2021). *How has the coronavirus pandemic affected women in work?* House of Commons Library. https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/how-has-the-coronavirus-pandemic-affected-women-in-work/. Accessed 27 June 2022.

Gålnander, R. (2020). Desistance from crime—to what? Exploring future aspirations and their implications for processes of desistance. *Feminist Criminology*, *15*(3), 255–277. https://doi.org/10.1177/1557085119879236

Garcia-Hallett, J. (2019). Maternal identities and narratives of motherhood: A qualitative exploration of women's pathways into and out of offending. *Feminist Criminology*, *14*(2), 214–240. https://doi.org/10.1177/1557085118769741

Giordano, P. C., Cernokovich, S. A., & Rudolph, J. L. (2002). Gender, crime and desistance: Toward a theory of cognitive transformation. *American Journal of Sociology*, *107*(4), 990–1064. https://doi.org/10.1086/343191

Grace, A. (2022). 'Get to know me, not the inmate': Women's management of the stigma of criminal records. *The British Journal of Criminology*, *62*(1), 73–89. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azab029

Hale, R. (2020). Good intentions: Women's narratives of post-release anticipatory desistance in the context of historical and contemporary disadvantage and trauma. *Feminist Criminology*, *15*(5), 519–544. https://doi.org/10.1177/1557085120923403

Hall, L., & Harris, L. (2022). The gendered weight of desistance and understanding the 'love of a good woman': Desistance emotional work (DEW). *Probation Journal*, 026455052211180. https://doi.org/10.1177/02645505221118084. Online First.

Hart, E. L. (2017). Women Prisoners and the Drive for Desistance: Capital and Responsibilization as a Barrier to Change. *Women & Criminal Justice*, *27*(3), 151–169. https://doi.org/10.1080/08974454.2016.1217814

Hart, E. L., & van Ginneken, E. (Eds), (2017). *New perspectives in desistance: Theoretical and empirical development*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Healy, D. (2012). *The dynamics of desistance: Charting pathways through change*. Routledge.

Heidensohn, F., & Silvestri, M. (2012). Gender and crime. In A. Liebling, S. Maruna, & L. McAra (Eds), *Oxford handbook of Criminology* (pp. 336–369). Oxford University Press.

Höing, M., Bogaerts, S., & Vogelvang, B. (2016). Helping sex offenders to desist offending: The gains and drains for CoSA volunteers—a review of the literature. *Sexual Abuse*, *28*(5), 364–402. https://doi.org/10.1177/1079063214535816

Horney, J., Osgood, D. W., & Marshall, I. H. (1995). Criminal careers in the short term: Intra individual variability in crime and its relation to local life circumstances. *American Sociological Review*, *60*(5), 655–673. https://doi.org/10.2307/2096316

Hoskins, K. M. (2022). "I'm going to be successful someday": Women's personal projects to improve their lives, and implications for clarifying the nature of agency in criminological theories of desistance. *Feminist Criminology*, *17*(2), 185–205. https://doi.org/10.1177/15570851211064831

Joseph Rowntree Foundation (2022). *UK Poverty 2022: The essential guide to understanding poverty in the UK*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/uk-poverty-2022. Accessed 28 July 2022

Kashy, D. A., & Morash, M. (2022). Predictors of generativity and satisfaction with life in a sample of women offenders. *Psychology, Crime & Law*, *28*(6), 587–607. https://doi.org/10.1080/1068316x.2021.1929981

Laub, J. H., & Sampson, R. J. (2003). *Shared beginnings, divergent lives: Delinquent boys to age 70*. Harvard University Press.

Leverentz, A. (2014). *The ex-prisoner's dilemma: How women negotiate competing narratives of Re-entry and desistance*. Rutgers University Press.

Mansfield, M., & Cooper, V. (2016). The failure to protect women in the criminal justice system. In V. Cooper, & D. Whyte (Eds), *The violence of austerity*. Pluto Press.

Maruna, S. (2001). *Making good: How ex-convicts reform and rebuild their lives*. American Psychological Association.

Matthews, R., Easton, H., Reynolds, L., Bindel, J., & Young, L. (2014). *Exiting prostitution*. Palgrave Macmillan.

McAdams, D. P. (1995). The life story interview. https://www.sesp.northwestern.edu/docs/Interviewrevised95.pdf. Accessed 7 June 2016.

McAra, L., & McVie, S. (2013). Delivering justice for children and young people: Key messages from the edinburgh study of youth transitions and crime. In A. Dockley (Ed), *Justice for young people: Papers by winners of the research medal 2013* (pp. 3–14). Howard League for Penal Reform.

McIvor, G., Murray, C., & Jamieson, J. (2011). Desistance from Crime: Is it different for women and girls? In S. Maruna, & R. Immarigeon (Eds), *After Crime and punishment: Pathways to offender reintegration*. Willan.

Nugent, B., & Schinkel, M. (2016). The pains of desistance. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, *16*(5), 568–584. https://doi.org/10.1177/1748895816634812

Opsal, T. (2012). "Livin' on the straights": Identity, desistance, and work among women post-incarceration. *Sociological Inquiry*, *82*(3), 378–403. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682x.2012.00421.x

Österman, L. (2018). *Penal cultures and female desistance*. Routledge.

Petrillo, M. (2016). "It made my mind unwell": Trauma-informed approaches to the mental health needs of women in the criminal justice system. In J. Winstone (Ed), *Mental health, crime and criminal justice*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Prison Reform Trust (2022). *Bromley briefings prison factfile winter 2022*. Prison Reform Trust.

Roddy, A. L., Morash, M., & Hoskins, K. M. (2021). An exploration of employment-related personal projects undertaken by women on probation and parole. *Feminist Criminology*, *16*(1), 3–25. https://doi.org/10.1177/1557085120951843

Rutter, N., & Barr, Ú. (2021). Being a 'good woman': Stigma, relationships and desistance. *Probation Journal*, 68, 166–185. https://doi.org/10.1177/02645505211010336

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) (2012). *Trauma and Justice Strategic Initiative. SAMHSA's working definition of trauma and guidance for trauma-informed approach*. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

Sampson, R. J., & Laub, J. H. (1993). *Crime in the making: Pathways and turning points through life*. Harvard University Press.

Sanders, L., Liebenberg, L., & Munford, R. (2020). The impact of school exclusion on later justice system involvement: Investigating the experiences of male and female students. *Educational Review*, *72*(3), 386–403. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2018.1513909

Scott, B. R. (2011). *Capitalism: Its Origins and Evolution as a System of Governance*. New York: Springer.

Sered, S. S. (2021). Diminished citizenship in the era of mass incarceration. *Punishment & Society*, *23*(2), 218–240. https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474520952146

Shklar, J. N. (1995). *American Citizenship: The Quest for Inclusion*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Sisters Uncut (2021). Policing is the crisis. *New Socialist*. http://newsocialist.org.uk/transmissions/policing-is-the-crisis/. Accessed 14 July 2021.

Turner, B. S. (2001). The erosion of citizenship. *The British Journal of Sociology*, *52*(2), 189–209.

Tyler, I. (2020). *Stigma: The machinery of inequality*. Zed Books.

Verbruggen, J., Blokland, A. A. J., & Van Der Geest, V. R. (2012). Effects of employment and unemployment on serious offending in a high-risk sample of men and women from ages 18 to 32 in The Netherlands. *British Journal of Criminology*, *52*(5), 845–869. https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azs023

Women in Prison (2021). Key facts. Women in Prison. https://www.womeninprison.org.uk/campaigns/key-facts. Accessed 28 July 2022.

Working Chance (2021b). Government's new prison resttlement strategy falls short of needed reforms, say charities. Working Chance. https://workingchance.org/latest/governments-new-prison-resettlement-strategy-falls-short-of-needed-reforms/. Accessed 28 July 2022.

Worrall, A. (1990). *Offending women: Female lawbreakers and the CJS*. Routledge.

Working Chance (2021a). Worst-Case Scenario: How racism in the criminal justice system harms women's chances of finding work. Working Chance. https://workingchance.ams3.cdn.digitaloceanspaces.com/media/documents/Worst-Case_Scenario_-_Working_Chance_2021.pdf. Accessed 28th July 2022.

Author Biography

Úna Barr is a lecturer in Criminology in an English university, originally from Ireland, she completed her PhD in 2017 and is interested in abolitionist and intersectional feminist approaches to social justice.