

Book Reviews/Comptes rendus

MADONNA MAIDMENT, *Doing Time on the Outside: Deconstructing the Benevolent Community*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007, 188 p. + index.

Madonna Maidment's book analyzes how federal and provincial correctional systems interlock with non-state agencies with respect to the criminalization of women. Relying on the articulated experiences of women who have been in jail, prison, mental health facilities, and half-way houses, Maidment shows that barriers such as the feminization of poverty, child care responsibilities, and lack of familial support, coupled with problems germane to the criminal justice system (gender-blind risk assessment procedures, lack of gendered programming), keep many criminalized women disadvantaged socio-economically.

Doing Time on the Outside is thus not only about incarcerated women, but women's experiences of constantly being in and out of "the system," in prison one day and out the next, never really having a sense of self or place. The research was conducted in the province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Employing a women-centered standpoint epistemology, the focus is on criminalized women's everyday lived experiences. Maidment provides a schedule of her interview questions, which would be helpful to other scholars conducting similar research.

Maidment has four main arguments. First is that women who have escaped a long history of formalized social control prior to entering prison have a better chance of staying out of prison once they are released. Second, women's definitions of success differ from the official definitions of the Correctional Service of Canada. Third, even those who do manage to stay out of prison still remain caught in a web of governance by other entities. Maidment uses the term "transcarceration" to represent this extensive and always changing web of governing agents and agencies. Transcarceration is also linked to the idea of "net-widening" and "net-strengthening." Net-widening refers to bringing more women into contact with the criminal justice system. As Maidment puts it, "Canada, like other industrialized countries, is locking women up at a rate that should be criminal itself" (p. 26). Net-strengthening refers to making controls more demanding. Fourth, social support networks outside prison, like kinship, are more effective aids in "re-integration" than professional interventions made by parole officers and counselors.

Another goal of *Doing Time on the Outside* is to critique labels such as “women in trouble” and “women in conflict with the law.” These labels implicitly suggest that women are responsible for coming in contact with the law, for being jailed, and so on. Such labels cannot account for the barriers mentioned above, for problems with the criminal justice system, or for transcarceration. Thus Maidment recommends the label “criminalized women,” which does a better job of showing how these women are constituted as law breakers and criminals. Criminalized women are more often subjected to poverty and abuse, which are pathways to incarceration. As one of Maidment’s respondents stated, “I don’t want to go back to prison but I can’t afford not to” (65).

Maidment shows the detrimental effects of the lack of women-centered services during incarceration. The rationality of imprisonment still operates primarily on the idea of formal equality, women and men should have access to the same resources and services. This ignores the fact that women may require different treatment than men while in the criminal justice system. The author is very effective in conveying a sense of the many barriers criminalized women face after release in order to make it “on the outside.” A high percentage of criminalized women are single mothers and cannot escape the pressure of child protection agencies.

One issue that could have been made clearer is the distinction between prison and jail. Maidment writes about two-tiered prisons. The term “two tiers” refers to the provincial and the federal level. Women sentenced to two years or more serve their sentences in federal institutions. If the sentence is under two years, it is spent in a provincial institution. Maidment’s respondents would try to serve time at the federal institutions because there are a greater number of services offered at the federal level. Provincial institutions often lack mental health services. But calling both of these institutions “prisons” is inaccurate. In other words, Maidment is not clear about the distinction between jail and prison. This is not just a matter of terminology. Failure to call jails what they are is a serious glitch (yet common in criminology and penology) because jails hold roughly one third of Canadian prisoners on any given day. Suicide rates in jails are much higher. Jail conditions are harsher, which is unjust because the majority of jail inmates are the “presumed innocent” who have not been convicted of any offence, or if convicted, are not yet sentenced.

Another issue that could have been given more attention is how the literature on transcarceration, which Maidment draws on, is reconciled with the literature on governmentality. Governmentality scholars assume that governing is not limited to state politics. But instead of conceiving government in terms of control, the focus is on how people identify with governmental rationalities. Perhaps Maidment did not venture into the waters of governmentality because she wanted to retain a socialist feminist perspective, and it is a bit easier to work with the conceptual tools offered by the transcarceration literature while retaining a feminist focus than to try and do so with the conceptual tools offered by the governmentality literature. This is because instead of starting with a fixed or naturalized

subject category (e.g., women), as Maidment does, in the governmentality approach the point is to show how people are constituted as subjects. More explanation as to why the governmentality approach was not utilized or even broached would have made the book appeal to a greater number of theoretically-oriented scholars.

Doing Time on the Outside is accessibly written. The volume is a critical piece of research. Considering the prevalence of “tough on crime” discourse today, it is also timely. The book should appeal to critically-oriented criminologists and penologists, but also sociologists and political scientists interested in feminism, governance, and criminal justice.

Kevin Walby, *Carleton University*.

© Canadian Sociological Association/La Société canadienne de sociologie