Welfare Conditionality

SANCTIONS, SUPPORT AND BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

'Problem' women in the context of poverty, crime and intensive interventions

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1.0
Introduction to my PhD

Introduction to my PhD

How do women with "particular vulnerabilities" make sense of and respond to interventions and approaches which promote desistance from crime *and* normative, pro-social behaviours?

- How, why and by whom is this population managed?
- How do women make sense of their lived experiences?
- How do their individual experiences relate to broader shifts in public policy and society?

2.0
Fieldwork

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Sample

- 4 gatekeeper organisations: 2 women's centres, 1 domestic abuse survivors support group, 1 homeless day centre.
- Purposeful sampling
- 24 women accessing services
- 10 frontline workers drawn from gatekeeper organisations
- Location: 2 northern UK cities
- January 2016 - February 2017

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Research methods

- **Mixture of qualitative methods**
- 64 interviews with 24 service users (2-4 interviews per participant), repeat interviews facilitated visual research methods:
  - Auto-photography - 'counter-images' (Brown, 2014); 'just images' (Carrabine, 2012)
  - Photo-elicitation - "audiencing" the photographs, rich data (Rose, 2012), 'counter-narratives'
- 10 semi-structured interviews with frontline staff
- Ethnographic methods:
  - participant observer in gatekeeper organisations
  - walking methods (O'Neill and Hubbard, 2010)

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Participant profiles

- Aged: 18 to 56, mainly white British

- Except for a few exceptions most had histories of childhood abuse, recurrent victimisations throughout their lives

- Loss of children to care proceedings

- Complex, multiple needs/vulnerabilities - they are all very far from the labour market (Employment and Support Allowance)

- Gatekeeper organisations play an important role in their lives

- Often involved in voluntary work, voluntary participation in regular workshops/sessions

- Criminalisation of female victims of crime and structural violence which 'warehouses' them on the margins of society

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3.0 Findings

Annie (aged 27)

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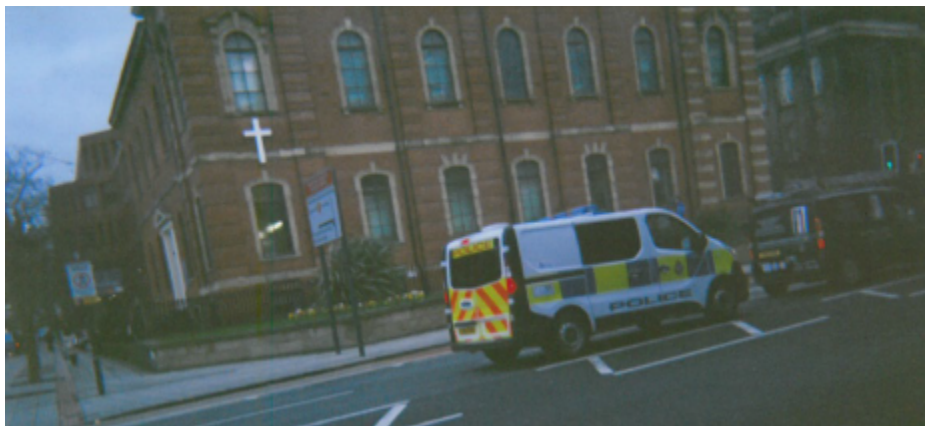ECONOMIC
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Annie

I have been given promotion at work so been super busy and also moved house. I am now head of guest relations. The restaurant has been voted one of the best in the U.K. It's a big job and a really great opportunity.

My employer has never asked me if I have a criminal record...It affected how I felt about myself at work for a long time I felt really conscious of it and felt anxious and that I was hiding a secret from the people I worked with.

I had an advantage where I had a degree and past employment and skills so I have had an advantage over other women who are at a disadvantage.

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Gillian (aged 44)

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Gillian

It was 14 year on and off...I've had enough, I'm too old for that, I can't do it any more.

I was on ICU three times cos I collapsed and had fits...I didn't realise how dangerous it is, but I've come off the beer now myself. It's determination really.

Since I've come off the beer, it's opened my eyes up more, I come here every day just to get out of the house and to stop me thinking about the beer.

I know other women, they work in charity shops but I couldn't cos I've got fraud on my record.

Linking back to theory & the literature

- **Bourdieu's capitals matter**
  - dominant discourse and policy places an expectation on the individual to take responsibility for their actions and to adjust, those who haven't accrued as much capital lose out

- **Elias's process of 'Fremdzwang' (social constraint) and 'Selbstzwang' (self-restraint) and Foucault's 'disciplinary society'**
  - process of internalisation of social constraints

- **Stigma of punishments served: Benthamite 'less eligibilty' & Mannheim's 'non-superiority' principles**
  - common to both participants' experiences

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4.0
Reflecting on fieldwork

Visual research methods

- Provides a creative outlet for participants

- Potential for reducing power imbalance

- Provides a non-verbal way of communicating

- Gives researcher richer insights into participants' lives

- Very time consuming, additional costs

- Issues with over/under-exposure

- A different avenue to 'game' the researcher?
  e.g. Jane's photos

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Researching on the margins

- Ethics - when it is and when it isn't appropriate to go through with an interview

- Participants were either 'too open' or difficult to engage on a deeper level

- Gatekeepers were essential to keeping in touch as some participants found it difficult to keep to a set date for our research interviews

- Researcher wellbeing
  - disclosures of abuse and violent activities
  - ongoing traumatic experiences such as child removal
  - risk of 'secondary traumatic stress' in transcription (Kiyimba and O'Reilly, 2015)

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5.0
Thank you for listening

Questions and comments

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