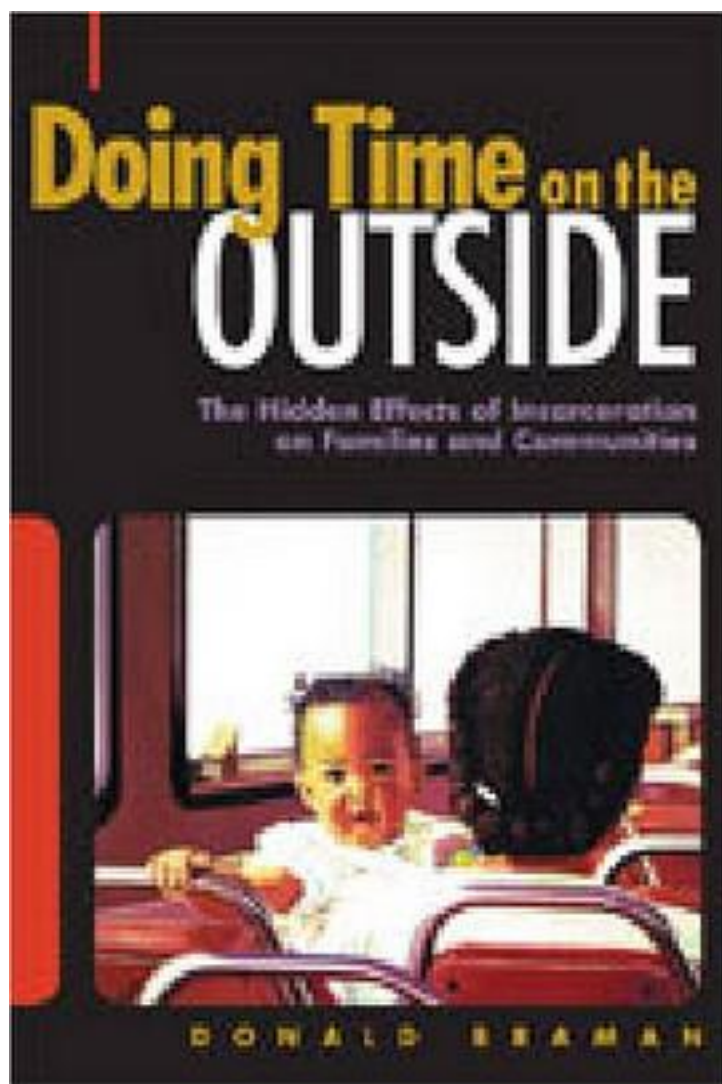


Doing Time on the Outside



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著者:Maidment, MaDonna R.

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Criminalized women are the focus of great interest in contemporary sociological research all over the world, however much of the growing body of work in this area has focused on the prison. Considerably less attention has been paid to women serving their sentences in the community. Doing Time on the Outside fills a gap in the research by focusing on the experiences of women on conditional release, and attempting to understand how some criminalized women avoid going back into custody given the many challenges they face. Using data collected in a series of interviews, MaDonna R. Maidment identifies four major factors characterizing women's attempts at re-integration. First, the fewer 'layers of social control' a woman lived under prior to her prison term, the greater her chances of staying out of prison. Those women accustomed to a lifetime of formal social controls are vulnerable and largely dependent on continued intervention. Second, women's own accounts of their success do not coincide with official definitions. For many women who have spent their lives being controlled by state agencies, managing a relatively short period of independence in the community marks a major milestone. Third, for those women who have managed to stay out of the criminal justice system, a majority remain tightly entangled in other state-sponsored control regimes, where patterns of dependency, medicalization, and infantilization still persist in the treatment of women. Fourth and finally, familial and social support networks are paramount to women's successful re-integration, far more so than professional supports provided by state and community agencies. Maidment's important findings have significant implications: they beg us to re-examine how our society processes criminalized women, and to call into question well-entrenched contemporary policies, which have failed to account for the economic, social, and cultural realities of women's lives.

作者介绍:

目录:

[Doing Time on the Outside_ 下载链接1](#)

标签

评论

[Doing Time on the Outside_ 下载链接1](#)

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