The British Journal of Criminology, 2022, **62**, 982–999
https://doi.org/10.1093/bjc/azab074
Advance access publication 4 August 2021
Article

OXFORD

'That Doesn't Leave You': Psychological Dirt and Taint in Prison Officers' Occupational Cultures and Identities

Joe Garrihy*

*Joe Garrihy, Department of Law, Maynooth University, New House, Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland; joe.garrihy@mu.ie.

This article examines the conceptualization of prison officers as psychologically 'dirty'. It defines the novel 'psychological taint' and taint management strategies in their occupational cultures. Drawing on ethnographic data, psychological taint's three sources are identified as the psychological processes necessary to do their job, contamination through association with groups stigmatized as mentally unwell, and the pernicious effects of prison work. The article analyses the relationship between unaddressed anxiety provoked in prison work and the amplified salience of external threat in psychological taint. While advancing studies of occupational cultures and identities, psychological taint offers a constructive lens to analyse occupations across multiple fields. The presented implications address the nature of prison workplaces, punishment and the provision of mental health supports.

Key Words: prison officers, occupational cultures, identities, psychological taint, dirty work

INTRODUCTION

> My father died 18 months after I joined the service.
> D'you know what he died of?
> He died of shame! (common joke told by Prison Officer, Male, >26 years in service)

Those who work in prisons are profoundly shaped by their role, their occupational cultures and their perceived relationship to wider society. Hughes (1958: 122) defined dirty work as 'any job that is physically, socially or morally tainted by society'. The occupation, role or task is not inherently dirty but societal perceptions socially construct it thus defining them, or elements of them, as running 'counter to the more heroic of our moral conceptions' (Hughes 1958: 50). Cultural classifications of dirt as profane and the associated taint evoke the taboo in Douglas' work (1966). There is a growing literature exploring the diverse 'dirty' dimensions of criminal justice occupations (Dick 2005; Gassaway 2007; Rivera 2014) but is less developed on prison officers (Tracy and Scott 2007; Lemmergaard and Muhr 2012).

Prison work is a complex source of internal and external taint for officers. Their occupational cultures play a pivotal role in enculturating officers into a complex web comprising multiple dimensions of taint. The novel dimension of psychological dirt and the associated taint is defined in this article. A key feature of Ashforth and Kreiner's (1999: 421) analysis is the role of 'strong occupational ideologies' in providing 'a means for interpreting and understanding what the occupation does and why it matters'. The value of understanding dirt in working cultures lies in the intricate culturally constructed perceptual matrix comprising of taints. Simply put, 'where there is dirt, there is system' (Douglas 1966: 36). Based on the qualitative findings of a mixed-methods study in Irish prisons, the analysis synthesizes theories of social defences and dirty work to define the new dimension of psychological taint to account for prison officers' psychological experiences and their occupational cultures (Gadd and Jefferson 2007; Armstrong and Michael 2015). Psychological dirt and taint stem from three sources: the psychological processes demanded of officers to engage in their work; sustained exposure to a group stigmatized for psychological disorders, (i.e., prisoners); and the pernicious psychological effects of the work.

Psychological processes facilitate work in prisons such as 'mind games' (McDermott and King 1988) and humour (Nielsen 2011) but also consist of social defences against anxiety provoked by the work (Menzies 1960). The pernicious effects of prison work are profound and range from acute to long-term psychological atrophy while some officers resist and even thrive in their occupational environment (Cullen et al. 1985; Crawley 2004; Griffin et al. 2010; Liebling 2011). It is asserted that prison officers' occupational cultures externalize the threat from unreconciled internal anxieties and psychological processes provoked by their work to amplify the salience of psychological taint associated with their occupation. Prison officers' occupational cultures propagate the prevalence of negative perceptions of prison work and officers (Garrihy 2020). Concomitantly, occupational cultures provide diverse strategies to manage taints to develop positive occupational identities and esteem. The perceived stigma experienced by officers is a key component of their occupational identity and sense of self. The strategies employed by officers speak to many of the core features of prison work and shape the lives of people in prison.

The article commences with a review of the relevant literature and a discussion of the study before examining psychological dirt and taint in prison officers' occupational cultures. An analysis of the taint management strategies employed by officers in the study will follow before concluding with a discussion of implications including the provision of mental health services, support and training, the persistent use of prison to punish and its role in society. The article further aims to open fresh avenues in theorizing psychological experiences of workplaces and their symbolic classifications in occupational cultures across criminal justice fields and beyond.

DIRTY WORK, TAINT AND DEFENSIVE STRATEGIES

Hughes' (1958: 122) definition of 'dirty work' as work that is considered to be 'physically, socially or morally' tainted by society resonates with Douglas' (1966: 36) contention that 'dirt is matter out of place'. Douglas (1966) conceived societal classifications of cleanliness as goodness and dirtiness as badness which carry moral values. She supported this with the assertion that society strives to distance itself from dirtiness and the associated moral taint (Douglas 1966). In the case of prison work, those who partake in it come to personify dirt and a contravention of 'ordered relations' (Douglas 1966: 44). Thus, as transgressors, they are considered dirty and therefore, taboo, tainted and are to be avoided (Douglas 1966). Moreover, Goffman's (1963: 3) work on stigma—defined as 'an attribute that is deeply discrediting'—is an essential component of the conceptualization of dirty work in this article. The novel dimension of psychological

taint must be conceived as an advance in our understanding of occupational cultures and dirty work while overlapping with the existing dimensions.

Physical taint arises when occupations are associated with waste, effluent and/or death (e.g. prison officer, nurse, butcher, funeral director) or are perceived as carried out in harmful or unpleasant conditions (e.g. prison officer, sex industry, construction, fire service). Social taint derives from consistent contact with already stigmatized people or groups (e.g., prison officer, police, psychiatric carer, social worker) or appearing to have a servile relationship with others (e.g., prison officer, care staff, domestic worker, cleaner). Goffman's (1963: 30) term 'courtesy stigma' provides further insight into the transference of taint. Moral taint relates to occupations considered wicked to some extent or of dubious virtue (e.g., prison officer, exotic dancer, professional poker player) or those that 'employ methods that are deceptive, intrusive, confrontational or that otherwise defy norms of civility' (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999: 415) (e.g., prison officer, bail bondsmen, private security). Tracy and Scott's (2007) study of prison officers in the United States identified examples of the three original dimensions of taint. The conceptualization of dirty work was expanded by Rivera (2014) and McMurray and Ward (2014) with the addition of emotional taint. McMurray and Ward (2014: 1134) define emotional dirt as, 'expressed feelings that threaten the solidarity, self-conception or preferred orders of a given individual or community'. Emotional taint stems from managing and performing problematic, challenging or inappropriate emotions (e.g. Samaritans, funeral director, border patrol) (McMurray and Ward 2014). Lemmergaard and Muhr (2012) examined emotional taint for Danish prison officers.

Occupations can be tainted by more than one dimension simultaneously. There are variances in the levels of and relationships between the breadth and depth of dimensions, the work and the worker (Kreiner et al. 2006). Breadth refers to the proportion of the work that is dirty or its centrality to the work. Depth relates to the intensity of the perceived dirtiness and the extent to which the worker is involved in it (Kreiner et al. 2006). Many physically and socially tainted jobs enjoy a 'necessity shield' which is not often available for those morally tainted. The protection of a 'prestige shield' (Ashforth and Kreiner 2014: 357) is available for some occupations but the taint of dirty work undermines occupational prestige while simultaneously facilitating 'the development of strong occupational cultures' (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999: 420). Douglas' (1970) dual-axis 'group' and 'grid' cultural theory classificatory system for social control in communities is a useful heuristic device. The group dimension is classified according to social cohesion and the grid by shared classifications or knowledge. Where a community is represented on the graph directly relates to the salience of taint in this context.

The strength occupational cultures are also instrumental in the provision of diverse strategies to manage taint and create positive occupational identities and pride in their work. Ashforth and Kreiner (1999) identify strategies across diverse occupations including refocusing (shifting attention to untainted aspects), recalibrating (changing the measures of taint) and reframing (altering the meaning associated with the stigmatized job). The dirty work literature contains workers' adaptations of Sykes and Matza's (1957) techniques of neutralization to cope with their stigmatization in denying responsibility, injury and victims and engaging in selective social weighting (Ashforth and Kreiner 2014). In addition to these strategies, prison-orientated studies include distancing, depersonalizing and dis-identifying (or ambivalent identification with aspects of the work/role) (Kreiner and Ashforth 2004; Tracy and Scott 2007; Lemmergaard and Muhr 2012). Taint management strategies are not mutually exclusive and overlap in multiple ways. A strategy may accentuate the need to employ another strategy or be required as circumstances dictate (Simpson et al. 2012).

The centrality of psychological processes, practices and effects of prison work has been widely explored in penological literature (Kauffman 1988; Griffin et al. 2010; Denhof and Spinaris 2013; Liebling et al. 2020) while the literature on diverse occupational environments

is constructive to their analyses. The conception of taint rests upon an anxiety-provoking sense of external threat related to the work or occupation and defences against it. In her nursing study, Menzies Lyth (1960) asserted that anxiety is generated through contact with patients. Accordingly, social defence systems that reflect unconscious dynamics were developed within institutions to relieve these anxieties. However, such defences often had the opposite effect in arousing secondary anxiety while failing to comprehensively address primary anxiety. Social defences are constituted and embedded in institutional structures, practices, policies, training, authority dynamics and decision-making and working patterns. Social defences for nurses that are constructive in the analyses of prison officers' occupational cultures include a collusive system of denial, splitting and projection that are culturally prescribed (Van Der Walt and Swartz 1999). The secondary effects of social defensive systems resonate with prison studies such as disaffection of talented staff, increased turnover and low morale undermine the positive development potential of effective working practices and pro-social relations (Menzies Lyth 1988).

Scholars such as Gadd and Jefferson (2007) have sought to synthesize Kleinian psychoanalytic approaches to defence mechanisms and relational dynamics of identification to advance criminological analyses of anxiety. Through this perspective, 'anxiety arises out of a complex mix of biographical, historical and situational circumstances' (Robinson and Gadd 2016: 189). The psychosocial approach conceives anxiety's origins in insecurities and vulnerabilities and 'the hurt of losing those with whom one closely identifies' (Robinson and Gadd 2016: 189). Hurvich's (cited in Robinson and Gadd 2016: 191) definition of annihilation anxiety—'fears of being overwhelmed, merged, penetrated, fragmented, and destroyed'—provides constructive insight into the relationship between defences and their efficacy and motivations to invest in specific conceptualizations of identity, gender, race/ethnicity, freedom, justice and so on. Addressing anxiety provoked in the workplace is a central concern for staff and organizations such that defences are integrated into organizational policies and occupational cultures. The relationship between internal psychological processes and externalized classifications of threat in psychological taint, and their implications, will be examined after a brief discussion of the study on which this article is based.

THE STUDY

The findings presented here are drawn from the qualitative data of a mixed-methods study exploring prison officers' occupational cultures and identities. The study examined how officers 'make sense' of the experiences that comprise their 'deep stories' (Hochschild 2016: 135) to socially construct a meaningful occupational world. The research questions sought to account for officers' occupational cultures as internalized prisms through which officers perceive their world and externalized frameworks within which officers perform their occupational identities. The nuanced ways that occupational cultures are challenged, perpetuated and/or reinforced in Irish prisons were identified. While not focusing deductively on dirty work, its importance emerged from the inductive thematic analysis. It is noteworthy that the dirty work literature highlights its role in facilitating strong occupational cultures (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999). In this way, the analysis of occupational cultures identified the corresponding role of strong occupational cultures in facilitating salient perceptions and classifications of dirty work. The evidence for the four existing dimensions was comprehensive, however, the existing typology did not satisfactorily account for the data on prison officers' psychological experiences and their classification. Thus, the analysis identified the new dimension of psychological taint. The sources of psychological taint are not exclusive. There is considerable overlap with the existing dimensions of taint and sources play diverse roles in other aspects of officers' lives, work and cultures. Dirty work and occupational cultures relate to perceptions and often an indirectly ar-

ticulated intangible sense of self. Accounting for these benefits greatly from a comprehensive dataset collected through ethnography. The ethnographic approach offers a thorough blend of methods including participant observation and interviews in the endeavour of 'scratching surfaces' (Geertz 1986: 373). Put simply, to understand prisons, one must explore them through immersion in all senses.

Research approval was granted by the Irish Prison Service (IPS) Research Committee and the University College Dublin Human Research Ethics Committee. The qualitative component of an exploratory pilot study included seven semi-structured interviews. Over many months, access—unprecedented in the Irish context—was secured through diverse gatekeepers including IPS Research Office, multiple governors and facilitation by the (Irish) Prison Officers' Association. The qualitative data collection comprised fourteen months of ethnographic research with the independence of movement and association throughout four Irish prisons from November 2015 to February 2017. The four prisons comprised two medium-security closed male prisons, a medium-security closed female prison and a low security semi-open male prison, all for people over 18 years of age. Officers of all ranks from prison officer to governor participated in 69 semi-structured interviews. A purposive sampling frame was designed to reflect a broad spectrum across staff demographics such as gender, age group, years in service, training, provenance and rank. The completed interview sample was a combination of self-selected (volunteers), and participants recruited by the author to satisfy the sampling frame (Table 1). Information sheets and posters with clear accessible language were distributed before the research commenced. The complementary nature of data collection by 'hanging about' (Bryman 2015) in ethnographic research and interviews allowed officers to speak informally and/or seek further information before deciding whether to participate in a recorded interview. The interview questions incorporated 'Appreciative Inquiry' which seeks to understand the complexity, diversity and subjectivity of human action while identifying strengths and visions of what is possible rather than focusing predominantly on weaknesses and the impossible (Liebling et al. 1999). This inquisitive approach goes beyond naturalistic appreciation by encouraging actors to reflect explicitly upon their most positive experiences and has been conceived as a tool for stimulating growth and change (Liebling et al. 1999). Negativity is commonplace in prison and the field sites reflected this. Therefore, the suggestion of considering positives served as a counterintuitive tool to generate reflective, nuanced and holistic interactions throughout the fieldwork.

The interview schedule was original and informed by existing literature. In line with the exploratory nature of the study, the questions were open-ended allowing for multiple interpretations and supported interviewees expanding and/or diversifying topics. They included psychodynamic characteristics in seeking officers' perspectives and encouraging reflection on their experiences. The interviews began with basic introductory questions about length in the service and previous employment. The interview proceeded through topics such as staff–prisoner relations, training, learning the role and early career adaptations, relationships with peers, gender, emotions and life outside prison. The interviews were conducted throughout the four prisons during the ethnographic fieldwork which benefitted from my familiarity with these occupational environments. The nature of these research questions simultaneously facilitated the focus on phenomena, behaviours and perceptions of officers while allowing the detailed specifics of these to emerge from the data to address the research questions. Interviews took place in a private room provided by prison management but due to the logistics of prison fieldwork and availability of participants, many took place in ad hoc locations such as class offices, storerooms and a café.

The synthesis of the ethnographic and interview data allowed for the recording and systematic cataloguing of myriad informal and more formal interactions. Fieldnotes and interviews

Table 1 *Demographics of interview participants (excluding pilot study)*

Study	%	Sample	Total
Gender			
Male	66.2	45	68[a]
Female	33.8	23	
Age			
23–29	4.4	3	68
30–36	28	19	
37–43	25	17	
44–50	23.5	16	
>50	19.1	13	
Years in service			
5–9	35.3	24	68
10–15	26.4	18	
16–20	19.1	13	
21–25	7.3	5	
>25	11.7	8	
Training			
HCCC[b]	33.8	23	68
9 weeks	66.2	45	
Grade[c]			
Prison Officer	78	53	68
Assistant Chief Officer	11.7	8	
Chief Officer	5.9	4	
Governor	4.4	3	

[a]There were 68 individual interview participants but 69 interviews. An interview was interrupted by another officer who joined the interview with the consent of the original officer. Individual interviews were held separately with each officer later.
[b]The Higher Certificate in Custodial Care (HCCC) was introduced in 2007 as a two-year training programme for recruits, replacing the previously provided nine-week course.
[c]Distinctions between equivalent levels of grades (ranks) were combined to protect participants' anonymity (such as Assistant Chief Officer and Work Training Officer or various Governor grades).

were typed or dictated into text documents upon leaving the prison and imported into NVivo (Version 11) using anonymized descriptors. Participants' names or identifiable information do not appear in the data analysis or publications. The data analysis is best defined as a continuum commencing concurrently with the ongoing data collection (Bryman 2015). Initial analysis was systematically operationalized through the employment of an analytic memorandum combined into an analytic research journal and complemented by a reflexive research journal that focused on monitoring the experience and practicalities of conducting the fieldwork. A combination of inductive and deductive thematic analysis was employed (Braun and Clarke 2006). Open coding was used in the initial phase by reading the transcripts line-by-line in a conceptual context (Braun and Clarke 2006). A coding frame was not developed before the analysis or designated *a priori* codes, but the review of the literature and the theoretical framework informed the coding process. The coding was thus open and inductive or a 'bottom up' (Noaks and Wincup 2004: 131) approach before employing pattern coding to collate content from initial coding including those from memos and entries into the analytic research journal into more meaningful units of analysis (Saldaña 2015). The combination of existing themes and the flexibility to allow for

emerging themes, concepts and theories was integral to this study. This is exemplified by the case of the existing concept of dirty work and the new dimension of psychological taint defined in this article and to which I now turn.

PSYCHOLOGICAL TAINT

Psychological processes in prison work

The psychological landscape of the prison is complex and challenging. To navigate it, officers must perpetually engage in 'mind games' (McDermott and King 1988), display resilience, develop patterns of thought, decision-making, interaction, discourse and sense of humour (Kauffman 1988; Crawley 2004; Liebling et al. 2011). Defined as 'jailing' by officers in this study, these essential skills to *do* prison work are a combination of individual, organizationally prescribed psychological processes and practices and those provided through their occupational cultures. Such psychological processes and practices facilitate prison work and constitute social defences against anxiety provoked by the work (Menzies Lyth 1988). The psychological processes that underpin 'jailing' often transgress societal norms and are classified as unpleasant and to be avoided. The jail craft and resilience essential for prison work are considered here as psychological dirt and sources of psychological taint.

Although valorized forms of cultural capital in prison officers' occupational cultures, in the context of dirty work, they account for the perceived psychological contaminant for officers. The psychological norms that guide officers' interpretations and behaviours deemed typical within their occupational environment undermine their psychological orientation, are conspicuous and inappropriate in non-occupational environments. This dissonance is a source of psychological taint. Consequently, officers related how psychological tools that are invaluable to their work, such as their hyper-vigilance and suspiciousness can be detrimental in life outside. Psychosocial practices proffered include 'sizing up' strangers on the street, excessive protectionist approaches to their children and who they associate with, or other practices in public spaces.

> When I'm in public I always sit with my back planted against the seat where I can see the door, the bar and toilet. (Prison Officer, Male, 21–26)

Hyper-vigilance and suspiciousness combine to manage their potentially violent workplace but fail to manage the anxiety of potential violence. Officers reported that the threat of violence can be one of the most challenging aspects of their work. They must learn the psychological skills necessary to cope with an occupational environment where lengthy uneventful periods are punctuated by vigorous activity and/or violence. Fortitude and resilience are highly valued but heavily gendered attributes in prison officers' occupational cultures (Zimmer 1986; Britton 2003). Officers' emotional labour (Hochschild 1983; Crawley 2004) and introjected systems of defence (Menzies 1960) are mandated and enforced as part of their institutional role and occupational cultures. Their gendered nature is particularly salient in relation to psychological taint. Officers' conceptualization of the *natural* gender roles for men and women are perceived, performed and perpetuated in social interactions with prisoners and peers. Male prisons are hyper-masculine environments with relatively low proportions of female officers. Here, the willingness and opportunities for officers to acknowledge or discuss coping are severely curtailed. Officers employ considerable 'impression management' and emotion work to present an embodied occupational identity that would be undermined by disclosures relating to psychological challenges (Goffman 1959; Britton 2003; Crawley 2004). For prison officers in this study, such disclosures generate further anxiety, perceived as they are, as a weakness that lessens that individual or could be used against them in professional, disciplinary and/or social circumstances. Irrevocable damage or spoilage to

their occupational status and identity may result. Being perceived as unfit for the job often generates greater anxiety than potential violence. Prison workplaces create the conditions where officers may unconsciously be motivated to invest in prejudicial attitudes and articulations of specific gender types including hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995). Such discourses offer defence against annihilation fears generated by their work such as fear of being overwhelmed and inability to cope, loss of self, being immobilized or confined by anxiety in their working environment and the lack of support to address it (Robinson and Gadd 2016). Moreover, the ineffectiveness of social defences and the limited opportunities to engage or manage anxieties through psychological growth or positive practices leaves many unreconciled. Psychological dirt and taint as constituted in prison officers' occupational cultures provide a potent sense of external threat onto which their unreconciled anxieties can be projected through their individual and collective psychological defences. Thus, strong occupational cultures amplify the salience of psychological taint which undermines officers' sense of dignity and intensifies perceptions of stigmatization. The oft-cited phrase 'society and management see us as a necessary evil' (Prison Officer, Male, 16–20) illustrates this characterization of profound external threat and underpins the introjection of occupational cultures' ideologies.

A key feature of psychological defences and coping in prison, humour serves myriad occupational and social functions including but not limited to comic relief, social bonding, defining and affirming occupational roles and boundaries, initiating, a defence mechanism, carrying unsettling feelings and projection (Tracy et al. 2006; Nielsen 2011; Schmidt 2011; Laursen 2016). In the context of psychological taint, the nature, tone and/or content of the prison officers' occupational humour serves to taint officers' non-occupational identities. Officers must engage in significant identity work and manage internal anxieties to carefully separate the taken-for-granted comments, stories and premises central to their occupational humour outside the prison. Officers' accounts highlighted problematic circumstances where this can convert from intrapsychic conflict to interpersonal conflict with loved ones. Examples range widely but generally involve an unconscious reaction or comment expressed before the officer had the opportunity to consider their surroundings and context. This can lead to negative reactions in social settings and may damage social relations and relationships as exemplified below:

> I was out to dinner with my girlfriend's family and they were talking about the news report about a well-known rapist, they said the news report mentioned that the jail term for rapist was 'jockey[1]' and how this was vile. I was eating away and when they said 'jockey', I just chuckled but when I lifted my head up, there were seven faces staring at me wide-eyed. (Work Training Officer, Male, 16–20)

Officers' occupational cultural doxa (Bourdieu 2005) perpetuates the belief that integrating these psychosocial interactions and practices—a normative sense of humour—result in a spoiled identity that transgresses societal order resulting in psychological taint. This extends to officers' appropriation of the macabre premises and subtexts of their occupational humour as deeply internalized psychological interpretations of phenomena. Psychological spoilage is perceived as degrading to human dignity (Hughes 1962). To adapt Hughes' (1958: 50) original phrase defining dirty work, prison work runs 'counter to the more heroic of our *psychological* conceptions'.

Association with a group stigmatized on grounds of mental health

Prisoners present with higher rates of mental health issues than the general population (Office of the Inspector of Prisons 2016; Mills and Kendall 2018; Gulati et al. 2019). Persistent

1 The term 'jockey' refers to a prisoner convicted or accused of rape or sexual assault in prison argot.

conditions such as violence, solitary confinement, overcrowding and lack of meaningful activity negatively impact on mental health. Recent media coverage in Ireland and internationally increases public awareness of mental health issues (McCarthy 2018; Grierson 2020; Kasakove 2020). Representations of prisoners in the media and popular culture continue to feature psychotic and sadistic prisoners (Fenwick 2009; Cecil 2015) while documentaries give insight into the mental health in prisons (Wivell 2018). Officers' association with prisoners with mental health issues is perceived as a source of psychological taint. There are parallels with social, moral and emotional taint but psychological taint is distinct as it stems from sustained proximity to and association with groups stigmatized specifically for their characterization as likely having mental health issues. Prison officers are thus perceived as contaminated by the psychological dirt of prisoners. In the conceptualization of psychological taint in prison officers' occupational cultures, society does not wish to have any association with psychologically stigmatized prisoners. Through consistent interaction with mental health prisoners, officers occupy a liminal space anomalous to established categories as an 'element which does not fit a given set or series' (Douglas 1966: 47). Furthermore, officers' association with mental ill-health in prison presents as ambiguous within classificatory systems with multiple interpretations of their role. Common but unaddressed experiences of role conflict are externalized and projected onto their multiple perceived public characterizations such as being *of* the prison (aligned with prisoners), *for* the prison (propagators of punishment and mental ill-health) or *as* the prison (suffering from mental ill-health). The resultant discomfort in out-groups produces and perpetuates psychological taint.

The prevalence of mental health issues among prisoners was brought into sharp relief throughout the fieldwork for this study. Despite pervasive, and sometimes profound, mental health issues among prisoners, officers consistently asserted that they were ill-equipped to deal with them appropriately.

> We have to look after them when they're all unlocked. Not one of us is a psychiatric nurse. Not one of us is trained. They're [officers] probably doing a half-hour course in mental health awareness. I think it's an absolute disgrace and disgusting for the prisoners. They need the help. … They need help, they're not getting it here. (Prison Officer, Male, 10–15)

The characterization of prisons as warehouses for the mentally ill is well established in the literature (Galanek 2015; Mills and Kendall 2018). Officers' sense of psychological taint through association relates to the shift in their depiction from working with prisoners to working with prisoners predominantly with mental health issues. Examples from the data include the consistent transfer of prisoners to the Central Mental Hospital (CMH) before their swift return to the prison. The lack of mental health beds in the CMH has featured in multiple reports to the Irish Government by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (2020). Practices amounting to solitary confinement and 'barrier handling'—teams of officers in full Control and Restraint equipment—to deal with a psychiatrically unwell prisoner generated psychological taint for officers in this study.

While attitudes towards prisoners with mental health issues vary among officers, the consistent sense of taint by association was pronounced across all officer cohorts. Simplified categorizations of prisoners as 'mad, bad or sad' (Prison Officer, Female, 10–15) persist in officers' occupational cultures. Lavoie et al. (2006) found that higher levels of mental health training correspond with more positive attitudes to prisoners with mental health issues. Mental health training in the IPS was highlighted during the fieldwork as the proliferation of prisoners being confined in conditions tantamount to solitary confinement garnered attention nationally and within the prisons. Such conditions causing and/or exacerbating existing mental health issues was juxtaposed with officers consistently bemoaning their lack of mental health training further

illustrating the lack of support for psychological growth or engagement with their occupational environment. The IPS instituted a compulsory one-day training course in mental health during the study. The course was cancelled on several occasions due to low staffing levels. This provides a telling reminder that security is prioritized, and of the legal and budgetary constraints under which prisons operate. To compound this, a directive was issued to suspend the mental health course to prioritize a fire safety course due to a health and safety regulatory issue. Many officers did not attend this course before its suspension. Despite the commendable organizational commitment to introduce a mental health course, the potential of a mandatory six-hour course to significantly improve officers' skills and prisoners' care is limited.

The gendered nature of mental health in prisons is a critical component of this analysis. Female prisoners present with higher rates of mental health issues (Carlen 1983; Quinlan 2011; Mills and Kendall 2016). This study is illustrative as one of the only two female prisons in Ireland formed part of the ethnographic fieldwork. In addition to the higher concentration of female prisoners, a higher percentage of prisoners with mental health issues in female prisons results from the combination of the trends of female criminality, the contexts before, during and after imprisonment, and the sentencing of females (Kennedy et al. 2005; Mills and Kendall 2018; Gulati et al. 2019). Officers' perception of psychological taint by association is thus exacerbated for officers in female prisons. The conceptualization of pollution through exposure is articulated in officers' comparisons between prison officers and psychiatric nurses in expressions such as, 'they start out looking after them and they end up one of them' (Fieldnotes, 5 February 2016). Exposure causes psychological taint by association but simultaneously risks the contamination and deterioration of officers' mental health. In this way, the pernicious effects of prison work are synthesized in their occupational cultures as will be detailed in the following section.

The pernicious psychological effects of prison work

Quite apart from the psychologically taut prison environment, mental health has received increased attention in contemporary society from which prison cultures are not impermeable (Health Service Executive 2020; Mental Health Ireland 2020). Through this lens, officers perceive the pernicious psychological effects of their work as a new form of dirt and source of taint. The officer quoted below illustrates the combination and complexity of taints, specifically physical, emotional and psychological taint. In the interview excerpt, he described the physically dirty and dangerous aspects of his working life experience, but the final sentence underlines their overlapping psychological impact.

> In a [short] period during my career, I found a body of the dead prisoner, witnessed a murder and witnessed a stabbing in a leg artery that caused so much blood that staff were slipping on the floor. That doesn't leave you. (Promoted Officer[2], Male, 16–20)

Previous studies reveal that the pernicious psychological effects of prison work range from anxiety and stress to burnout syndrome and/or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Brough and Williams 2007; Lambert et al. 2012; Finney et al. 2013; Bezerra et al. 2016; Ricciardelli et al. 2020). Spinaris et al.'s (2012) study identified higher rates of PTSD among prison staff compared with military and police personnel. As illustrated above, this is often a result of the officer being directly involved in incidents of violence, injury and/or death (Byrne et al. 2008; Denhof and Spinaris 2013; Barry 2019). In this study, many officers described the trauma associated with experiences such as discovering prisoners attempting to or having successfully committed suicide. Lucid dreams for extended periods often proceeded direct contact with deaths in custody. Suffering serious assaults and/or working in particularly challenging wings of the

2 Specific rank omitted to protect the participant's anonymity.

prisons such as the Challenging Behaviour Unit (CBU) or protection landings were a source of trauma and psychological atrophy.

The difficulty in transitioning from the prison environment to their home lives featured in officers' accounts. Ubiquitous examples include terse exchanges with their loved ones and seemingly inconspicuous but revealing examples of inappropriately loud speech in the home environment. Though superficially less extreme, such examples illustrate the cumulative harmful impact of prison work on the officers and their family lives. Moreover, these are partially reflected in the common experiences of relationship breakdowns reported by officers. The insularity and social isolation characteristic of prison officers are further exacerbated by permanent psychological insecurity and unease.

> These lads will get in on you. Even at the kitchen table in my mother's house, I hate someone being on my shoulder. (Prison Officer, Male, 21–26)

The previously discussed compulsory one-day mental health training course instituted by the IPS focused almost entirely on prisoners' mental health, providing little guidance, or directed reflection on officers' mental health. Consideration here must also include the psychological changes and/or damage caused by the psychological processes and defences against anxiety in prison detailed above. Consequently, officers rarely report their experiences of mental health issues, rendering them ill-equipped to relate to the psychological norms of wider society (Cheek 1984; Crawley 2004; Morse et al. 2011). Officers' maladaptive use and abuse of alcohol and other substances (legal and illegal) were a feature of the data for this study. Put simply, psychological taint occurs where the work results in pernicious psychological effects. Salience for these cohorts is exacerbated as, in contrast to the high staff turnover in other jurisdictions, prison officers in Ireland typically remain in their employment for 30 years until their pension becomes redeemable, and often beyond this. Officers consistently assert that their motivation and primary attraction to the job was a permanent pensionable state job. With most officers persisting in their post despite the effects, they are thus more vulnerable to the resulting psychological taint and atrophy.

Despite the support services available, officers rarely avail of these due to their profound distrust and the conceptualizations of resilience perpetuated through their occupational cultures. The IPS support system for staff mental health includes Staff Support Officers who act as reference points for further services and an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) consisting of three staff, two of whom are former prison officers, and a psychologist offering up to six free sessions. In the occupational cultures in this study, these services are fundamentally undermined due to their links to the IPS Headquarters and therefore, are not perceived to be independent, trustworthy, or motivated by officers' welfare. A further barrier to officers' engagement with IPS-linked mental health services is the power of the Chief Medical Officer to advise against an officer's readiness to return to work after an assault or mental health issue on the grounds of being psychologically unfit. In these circumstances, officers fear that a documented engagement with the EAP may compromise their case to return to work. In addition to the potential loss of earnings, the fear of psychological stigmatization through being labelled as 'not up to it' or 'losing it' among their peers is profound. Furthermore, such annihilation fears are unaddressed and suppressed within negative conceptualizations of mental health in their occupational cultures (Hurvich 2003). Occupational discourse communicates an underlying sentiment that undermines the valorized masculinist mental fortitude perceived as essential for officers to *do* their job and be accepted within their occupational group (Sim 2002). Thus, many officers who do engage these services only divulge this privately. Alternatively, officers employ culturally acceptable narratives to legitimate their engagement with the services such as 'covering' for spurious absenteeism.

The two previously discussed sources of psychological taint are simultaneously manifest in and compounded by the pernicious psychological effects of the work. The definition of psychological taint advances analyses of prison officers' symbolic classifications in occupational cultures and identities in their distinctiveness and interrelation with the existing dimensions of taint. A key contribution here is the analysis of the relationship between social defences against anxiety and the externalized threat of psychological taint in their occupational cultures which, in turn, necessitates further strategies to manage the amplified perception of taint. These strategies are employed to manage and mitigate taint to create occupational esteem and a positive occupational identity but at times they can exacerbate the perceived psychological taint.

TAINT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Prison officers' working cultures provide profound conceptualizations of external threat in the form of psychological taint in addition to the existing dimensions of taint. Defensive strategies offer collectively supported opportunities to manage taint. As discussed in the previous sections, positive or healthy opportunities to engage with anxieties or manage internal threats are often unavailable or unacceptable in their occupational cultures or organizational provisions. Taint and stigma become reified in prison officers' occupational cultures as a salient external cause for their perceived negative experiences or relations with out-groups. During the fieldwork, an officer highlighted the negativity elicited from the public asserting that 'people change when you tell them you're a prison officer. They look at you differently and treat you differently' (Prison Officer, Male, 20–25). When asked if he had experienced this personally, the officer with 22 years of service answered, 'no' (Prison Officer, Male, 20–25). The unequivocal belief in the tainted status of their occupational is illustrative of the occupational cultures in this study corresponding with 'strong group, strong grid' in Douglas' classification system (1970). Institutions and prison officers' occupational cultures do not adequately facilitate or support psychological or emotional growth in positive ways, if at all. Rather, the normative cultural expectations prohibit, or at least, suppress expressions or disclosures of psychological distress generated by their work. Therefore, the imperative of sustaining the individual psychic defences and the credibility and legitimacy of social defences is tied to that of the taint management strategies. Consequently, ineffective psychological processes and practices are perpetuated and a profound intransigence to change are features of officers' occupational cultures and identities in this study.

While myriad defensive strategies are employed and integrated into prison officers' organizational policies and practices and their occupational cultures, it is beyond the scope of this article to thoroughly address the full range. However, I will discuss the strategies provided by the occupational cultures in this study that relate directly to the management of their perceived taint. Prison workers, like many others, strive to create positive occupational identities and esteem (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; Drew et al. 2007; Simpson et al. 2012; Thomson and Grandy 2018). The analysis of taint management strategies demonstrates the relationship between the construction of positive occupational identities within systems of meaning constructed and perpetuated through occupational cultures. Each strategy requires considerable psychosocial endeavour to defend against distressing psychological experiences coming to the fore and characterized by many overlaps (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; Armstrong and Michael 2015). The employment of one strategy may intensify another dimension of taint and the need to employ another strategy or be required depending on the circumstances (Simpson et al. 2012). Ritualism, specifically 'cleansing rituals', are a key strategy that is reified in the prison officer idiom, 'wash off the dirt of jail' and manifest in cleansing before leaving the prison. Officers often removed their uniform and showered before leaving but the symbolism is equally important as many officers do not strictly adhere to the idiom. They do not change but conceal their

their uniform with other clothes or remove the items deemed most polluted at specific points --`you couldn't let those boots [prison officer uniform boots] touch the floor your kids play on' (Prison Officer, Female, 10–15). Nuanced classifications of the polluting potency are managed by cleansing designations such as leaving the boots in the car, porch or staff locker. The place for the offending matter is arranged so as to avoid transgression and contamination (Douglas 1966). Alternatively, the symbolic significance of psychological practices on the journey to and from work include debriefing with colleagues, venting, loud or relaxing music, markers on the journey to compartmentalize and transition to home-life/work life.

By 'refocusing', the spotlight is concentrated on the non-stigmatized features of the work (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999). Officers refocusing on the financial benefits of permanent pensionable government employment held historical salience in the Irish context with the availability of unlimited overtime. Additionally, officers refocused on the positive aspects of the staff (altruism of colleagues, communal development of resilience) and the positive aspects of the work ('making a difference' in prisoners' lives, 'keeping society safe'). 'Recalibrating' is a process where the tacit criteria that measure the scale and/or valence of the specific tainted attribute are modified (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999). By recalibrating, the seemingly least attractive posts (challenging or chaotic landings) become the most attractive and come to represent 'real jailing'. Similarly, the societal standards by which officers' 'gallows humour' is judged are recalibrated to present it as a positive. It, thus, distinguishes officers by providing comic relief while demonstrating their fortitude and group solidarity. 'Reframing' techniques, which involve transforming the meaning attached to a stigmatized occupation or aspect of it, are foremost and near-universally salient for officers in this study. Prison officers seek to convert their anomalous identity from a curse to a blessing (Douglas 1966). The two forms of reframing techniques include 'infusing' prison work with the positive value of a mission ('keeping society safe') and the stigmatized aspects as a badge of honour (hyper-vigilance, suspiciousness, confident authoritativeness and 'being able to handle myself' reframed as beneficial attributes in life). Thus, prison officers' liminal identities are reframed as 'mediators' between 'pure' people in the community and those 'impure' confined to prisons underlining their value and generating occupational esteem. Officers' discourse in the prisons in this study highlights these classifications by generally referring to prisoners as 'dirtbirds[3]' and people in the community as 'humans'.

The second form of reframing involves an application of Sykes and Matza's (1957) 'techniques of neutralization' are 'denial of responsibility' ('just doing my job'), 'denial of injury' ('no harm is caused'), and 'denial of victim' ('prisoners know the score', 'they're not in here for being choir boys so deserve what they get'). In this context, a `collusive system of denials' (Menzies 1960: 105) is applied to managing taint but corresponds with social defences against anxiety provoked by their work. Tracy and Scott (2007) identified strategies of physical and symbolic distancing and depersonalizing from the dirt of prisoners that support and overlap social defences (Armstrong and Michael 2015). Other physical manifestations in this study included staying in class offices, avoiding landings, seeking posts off landings and living far from the prison. Finally, 'social weighting' differentiates outsiders by condemning those who condemn or supporting those who support the occupational group (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999; 2014). Officers engage in selective social comparison by comparing prison officers to groups with a perceived higher occupational prestige and social statuses such as fire services, police or armed forces. The findings of this study illustrate the multiplicity of perceived dimensions of taint in prison officers' occupational cultures. I contend that through their occupational lives' officers are concurrently enculturated into an all-enveloping web of taint and provided with a comprehensive suite of strategies for their management.

3 Dirtbird is a colloquial pejorative term for a person who is physically, psychologically or morally compromised or indecent in Dublin argot appropriated for reference to prisoners.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

This article defines the novel psychological dirt and associated taint as perceived and integrated into prison officers' occupational cultures and identities. Psychological dirt is defined as the prescribed psychological processes, associations and effects of prison work that transgress society's perceived social order. The article accounts for the role of unreconciled internal anxieties provoked by prison work in amplifying the external threat of psychological taint as constituted and supported through prison officers' occupational cultures. The salience of taint corresponds with strong occupational cultures while officers' introjection of culturally prescribed perceptions of psychological taint is inexorably linked to the credibility and legitimacy of defensive taint management strategies. Due to this necessity, ineffective psychological processes and maladaptive elements of prison officers' occupational cultures are perpetuated while intransigence to change persists.

The definition and analysis of psychological taint reveal fresh insight into the social classifications and construction of prison officers' occupational cultures, the intertwined social construction of their occupational identities while contextualizing these within the broader societal structures. This article asserts the value of understanding the cultural and psychosocial dynamics of stigma and anxiety in prison lives and work. There are key implications for the design and provision of mental health services, supports and training for prison officers. Identifying and accounting for the anxieties and psychological processes that underpin prison work and their relationship with wider society is imperative to address them at the micro-level through everyday practice and macro level in penal and health policy. Current organizational provisions and occupational cultures offer insubstantial opportunities to manage anxieties and taint in healthy or pro-social ways to facilitate reparative occupational environments or psychological growth. The occupational environment, cultures and mental health of officers directly impact prisoners' psychological care and experiences. The findings presented in this article situate psychological dirt and taint at the intersection of subjective and structural contexts in prison work and occupational cultures and identities, and this must be reflected in future mental health interventions.

The salience of existing dimensions of taint and strategies for their management have been established across a range of occupations in the literature including prison work (Drew et al. 2007; Tracy and Scott 2007). The analysis of psychological taint presents an opportunity for its application to diverse occupations. It is reasonable to argue that analysing the construction of occupational cultures and identities in diverse criminal justice occupations would be enhanced by their exploration through this innovative theoretical lens. Furthermore, staff in psychiatric institutions, paramedics and/or police services provide ideal occupations for further analysis applying this new perspective.

Psychological taint, so conceived, raises concerns about the role and classification of prisons in society. Dirty work is generally considered to be 'necessary but tainted' (Ashforth and Kreiner 1999: 429). As previously discussed, this resonates with prison officers' sense of being society's 'necessary evil'. However, it is reasonable to argue and supported by a diverse body of literature that prisons, particularly in their current forms, are not *necessary* (Mathiesen 2016; Coyle and Scott 2021). Thus, the analysis of prisons through the lens of psychological taint raises more profound questions about the concept of dirty work and the role and impact of prisons in society. An environment and workplace that provokes anxieties necessitating such psychological processes and defences to manage within it while causing pernicious effects on staff who feel tainted from multiple sources are distinctly problematic. Moreover, the perpetuation of such environments and workplaces could only be justified by its imperative to the benefit of society, a reasonable case for which is not forthcoming or sustainable.

Prisons, prison work and prisoners carry a 'symbolic load' (Douglas 1966: 66) within societal classifications of order. Psychological taint also amplifies the differences between categories in classificatory systems to heighten their perception as more distinct than they are which perpetuates 'us and them' binary relationships between officers and prisoners, management and groups in the community. Furthermore, the classification of prison officers and prisoners as pollutants reduces societal discomfort in conceiving prisoners and prison officers as being 'like us'. This facilitates avoidance of dealing with fundamental yet unsettling moral and policy questions on prisons as places of punishment, their effects and social (re)integration.

FUNDING

This work was supported by the Sutherland School of Law Doctoral Scholarship (University College Dublin).

REFERENCES

Armstrong, D. and Michael, R. (eds) (2015), *Social Defences Against Anxiety: Explorations in a Paradigm*, 1st edn. Karnac.

Ashforth, B. E. and Kreiner, G. E. (1999), '"How Can You Do It?": Dirty Work and the Challenge of Constructing a Positive Identity', *The Academy of Management Review*, 24: 413–34. doi: 10.2307/259134

——– (2014), 'Dirty Work and Dirtier Work: Differences in Countering Physical, Social, and Moral Stigma', *Management and Organization Review*, 10: 81–108. doi: 10.1111/more.12044

Barry, C. (2019), '"You Can't Tell Anyone How You Really Feel": Exploring Emotion Management and Performance Among Prison Staff Who Have Experienced the Death of a Prisoner', *International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice*, 61: 100364. doi: 10.1016/j.ijlcj.2019.100364

Bezerra, C. D. M., Assis, S. G. D. and Constantino, P. (2016), 'Psychological Distress and Work Stress in Correctional Officers: A Literature Review', *Ciência & Saúde Coletiva*, 21: 2135–46. doi: 10.1590/1413-81232015217.00502016

Bourdieu, P. (2005), *The Social Structures of the Economy*. Polity Press.

Braun, V. and Clarke, V. (2006), 'Using Thematic Analysis in Psychology', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3: 77–101. doi: 10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Britton, D. M. (2003), *At Work in the Iron Cage: The Prison as Gendered Organization*. NYU Press.

Brough, P. and Williams, J. (2007), 'Managing Occupational Stress in a High-Risk Industry: Measuring the Job Demands of Correctional Officers', *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 34: 555–67. doi: 10.1177/0093854806294147

Bryman, A. (2015), *Social Research Methods*. 5th edn. Oxford University Press.

Byrne, J. M., Hummer, D. and Taxman, F. S. (eds) (2008), *The Culture of Prison Violence*. Pearson Education.

Carlen, P. (1983), *Women's Imprisonment: A Study in Social Control*. Routledge.

Cecil, D. K. (2015), *Prison Life in Popular Culture: From the Big House to Orange is the New Black*. Lynne Rienner Publishers.

Cheek, F. E. (1984), *Stress Management for Correctional Officers and Their Families*. American Correctional Association, available online at https://www.ncjrs.gov/App/Publications/abstract.aspx?ID=100002 (accessed 8 May 2020).

Connell, R. W. (1995), *Masculinities*. Polity.

Coyle, M. J. and Scott, D. (eds) (2021), *The Routledge International Handbook of Penal Abolition*, 1st edn. Routledge.

Crawley, E. (2004), *Doing Prison Work: The Public and Private Lives of Prison Officers*. Willan Publishing.

Cullen, F. T., Link, B. G., Wolfe, N. T. and Frank, J. (1985), 'The Social Dimensions of Correctional Officer Stress', *Justice Quarterly*, 2: 505–33. doi: 10.1080/07418828500088711

Denhof, M. D. and Spinaris, C. G. (2013), *Depression, PTSD, and Comorbidity in United States Corrections Professional: Prevalence and Impact on Health and Functioning*. Desert Waters Correctional Outreach.

Dick, P. (2005), 'Dirty Work Designations: How Police Officers Account for Their Use of Coercive Force', *Human Relations*, 58: 1363–390. doi: 10.1177/0018726705060242

Douglas, M. (1966), *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concept of Pollution and Taboo*. Psychology Press.

——– (1970), *Natural Symbols: Explorations in Cosmology*. Barrie & Rockliff.

Drew, S. K., Mills, M. B. and Gassaway, BM. (eds) (2007), *Dirty Work: The Social Construction of Taint*. Baylor University Press.
European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT) (2020), *Report to the Irish Government on the Visit to Ireland Carried Out by the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT)*. Council of Europe.
Fenwick, M. E. (2009), *Reel Images: Representations of Adult Male Prisons by the Film Industry*. University of South Florida.
Finney, C., Stergiopoulos, E., Hensel, J. et al. (2013), 'Organizational stressors associated with job stress and burnout in correctional officers: a systematic review', *BMC Public Health* 13: 82. doi: 10.1186/1471-2458-13-82
Gadd, D. and Jefferson, T. (2007), *Psychosocial Criminology: An Introduction*. SAGE.
Galanek, J. D. (2015), 'Correctional Officers and the Incarcerated Mentally Ill: Responses to Psychiatric Illness in Prison: Incarcerated Mentally Ill', *Medical Anthropology Quarterly*, 29: 116–36. doi: 10.1111/maq.12137
Garrihy, J. (2020), '"There are Fourteen Grey Areas": "Jailing", Professionalism and Legitimacy in Prison Officers' Occupational Cultures', *Irish Probation Journal*, 17: 128–50. Available online at https://www.pbni.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Joe-Garrihy.pdf
Gassaway, B. M. (2007), 'Good Cops, Dirty Crimes', in S. K. Drew, M. B. Mills and B. M. Gassaway, eds., *Dirty Work: The Social Construction of Taint*, 149–68. Baylor University Press.
Geertz, C. (1986), 'Making Experiences, Authoring Selves', in V. W. Turner and E. M. Bruner, eds., *The Anthropology of Experience*, 373–80. University of Chicago Press.
Goffman, E. (1959), *The Presentation of the Self in Everyday Life*. Penguin Books.
———– (1963), *Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity*. Simon and Schuster.
Grierson, J. (2020), 'Self-Harm in English and Welsh Prisons up 14% Last Year', *The Guardian*, 30 April, available online at https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/apr/30/self-harming-in-englands-prisons-up-14-hitting-record-high (accessed 3 May 2020).
Griffin, M. L., Hogan, N. L., Lambert, E. G., Tucker-Gail, K. A. and Baker D. N. (2010), 'Job Involvement, Job Stress, Job Satisfaction, and Organizational Commitment and the Burnout of Correctional Staff', *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 37: 239–55. doi: 10.1177/0093854809351682
Gulati, G., Keating, N., O'Neill, A., Delaunois, I., Meagher, D. and Dunne, C. P. (2019), The 'Prevalence of Major Mental Illness, Substance Misuse and Homelessness in Irish Prisoners: Systematic Review and Meta-analyses', *Irish Journal of Psychological Medicine*, 36: 35–45. doi: 10.1017/ipm.2018.15
Health Service Executive (2020), *Health and Well-Being Events 2020. Health Service Executive*, available online at https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/news/media/diary/health-and-wellbeing-calendar-2020.pdf (accessed 4 April 2020).
Hochschild, A. R. (1983), *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling*. University of California Press.
———– (2016), *Strangers in Their Own Land: Anger and Mourning on the American Right*. The New Press.
———– (1958), *Men and Their Work*. The Free Press.
———– (1962), 'Good People and Dirty Work', *Social Problems*, 10: 3–11. doi: 10.2307/799402
Hurvich, M. (2003), 'The Place of Annihilation Anxieties in Psychoanalytic Theory', *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 51: 579–616. doi: 10.1177/00030651030510020801
Kasakove, S. (2020), '"It's Horrible": How the US Deep South's Prisons Exacerbate the Pandemic', *The Guardian*, 17 April, available online at https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/apr/17/us-prisons-coronavirus-deep-south (accessed 3 May 2020).
Kauffman, K. (1988), *Prison Officers and Their World*. Harvard University Press.
Kennedy, H., Monks, S., Curtin, K., Brenda, W., Sally, L., Dearbhla, D., Conor, T. and Alan, K. (2005), *Mental Illness in Irish Prisoners*. National Forensic Mental Health Service.
Kreiner, G. E. and Ashforth, B. E. (2004), 'Evidence toward an Expanded Model of Organizational Identification', *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 25: 1–27. doi: 10.1002/job.234
Kreiner, G. E., Ashforth, B. E. and Sluss, D. M. (2006), 'Identity Dynamics in Occupational Dirty Work: Integrating Social Identity and System Justification Perspectives', *Organization Science*, 17: 619–36. doi: 10.1287/orsc.1060.0208
Lambert, E. G., Hogan, N. L., Dial, K. C., Jiang, S. and Khondaker, M. I. (2012), 'Is the Job Burning Me out? An Exploratory Test of the Job Characteristics Model on the Emotional Burnout of Prison Staff', *The Prison Journal*, 92: 3–23. doi: 10.1177/0032885511428794
Laursen, J. (2016), '(No) Laughing Allowed—Humour and the Limits of Soft Power in Prison', *British Journal of Criminology*, 57: 1340–58. doi: 10.1093/bjc/azw064

Lavoie, J. A., Connolly, D. A. and Roesch, R. (2006), 'Correctional Officers' Perceptions of Inmates with Mental Illness: The Role of Training and Burnout Syndrome', *International Journal of Forensic Mental Health*, 5: 151–66. doi: 10.1080/14999013.2006.10471239

Lemmergaard, J. and Muhr, S. L. (2012), 'Golfing with a Murderer—Professional Indifference and Identity Work in a Danish Prison', *Scandinavian Journal of Management*, 28: 185–95. doi: 10.1016/j.scaman.2011.10.001

Liebling, A. (2011), 'Distinctions and Distinctiveness in the Work of Prison Officers: Legitimacy and Authority Revisited', *European Journal of Criminology*, 8: 484–99. doi: 10.1177/1477370811413807

Liebling, A., Price, D. and Elliott, C. (1999), 'Appreciative Inquiry and Relationships in Prison', *Punishment & Society*, 1: 71–98. doi: 10.1177/14624749922227711

Liebling, A., Straub, C. and Arnold, H. (2011), *An Exploration of Staff-Prisoner-Relations - HMP Whitemoor 12 Years on - Final Report*. Cambridge Institute of Criminology, available online at http://moj-build.squiz.co.uk/downloads/publications/research-and-analysis/moj-research/staff-prisoner-relations-whitemoor.pdf (accessed 24 January 2014).

Liebling, A., Williams, R. and Lieber, E. (2020), 'More Mind Games: How "The Action" and "The Odds" have Changed in Prison', *The British Journal of Criminology*, 60: 1648–1666. doi: 10.1093/bjc/azaa046

Mathiesen, T. (2016), *The Politics of Abolition Revisited*, 1st edn. Routledge.

McCarthy, J. (2018), *Patients Being Kept in Prisons Due to Bed Shortages*, available online at https://www.rte.ie/news/2018/0429/959038-central-mental-hospital-patients/ (accessed 12 May 2018).

McDermott, K. and King, RD. (1988), 'Mind Games: Where the Action Is in Prisons', *British Journal of Criminology*, 28: 357–75. doi: 10.1093/bjc/azaa046

McMurray, R. and Ward, J. (2014), '"Why Would You Want to Do That?": Defining Emotional Dirty Work', *Human Relations*, 67: 1123–43. doi: 10.1177/0018726714525975

Mental Health Ireland (2020), *Mental Health Ireland*, available online at http://www.mentalhealthireland.ie/ (accessed 25 March 2020).

Menzies, I. E. P. (1960), 'A Case-Study in the Functioning of Social Systems as a Defence against Anxiety: A Report on a Study of the Nursing Service of a General Hospital', *Human Relations*, 13: 95–121. doi: 10.1177/001872676001300201

Menzies Lyth, I. (1988), *Containing Anxiety in Institutions: Selected Essays*, Vol. 1. Free Association Books.

Mills, A. and Kendall, K. (2016), 'Mental Health in Prisons', in Y. Jewkes, B. Crewe and J. Bennett, eds., *Handbook on Prisons*, 2nd edn, 187–204. Routledge.

Mills, A. and Kendall, K. (eds) (2018), *Mental Health in Prisons: Critical Perspectives on Treatment and Confinement*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Morse, T., Dussetschleger, J., Warren, N. and Cherniack M. (2011), 'Talking About Health: Correction Employees' Assessments of Obstacles to Healthy Living', *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine*, 53: 1037–45. doi: 10.1097/JOM.0b013e3182260e2c

Nielsen, M. M. (2011), 'On Humour in Prison', *European Journal of Criminology*, 8: 500–14. doi: 10.1177/1477370811413818

Noaks, L. and Wincup, E. (2004), *Criminological Research: Understanding Qualitative Methods*. SAGE.

Office of the Inspector of Prisons (2016), *Healthcare in Irish Prisons Report*. Nenagh, Co. Tipperary: Office of the Inspector of Prisons, available online at http://www.justice.ie/en/JELR/Healthcare_in_Irish_Prisons_Report.pdf/Files/Healthcare_in_Irish_Prisons_Report.pdf (accessed 25 May 2017).

Quinlan, C. (2011), *Inside: Ireland's Women's Prisons, Past and Present*. Irish Academic Press.

Ricciardelli, R., Carleton, R. N., Gacek, J. and Groll DL. (2020), 'Understanding Needs, Breaking Down Barriers: Examining Mental Health Challenges and Well-Being of Correctional Staff in Ontario, Canada', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11: 1036. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01036

Rivera, K. D. (2014), 'Emotional Taint: Making Sense of Emotional Dirty Work at the U.S. Border Patrol', *Management Communication Quarterly*, 29: 198–228. doi: 10.1177/0893318914554090

Robinson, R. A. and Gadd, D. (2016), 'Annihilation Anxiety and Crime', *Theoretical Criminology*, 20: 185–204. doi: 10.1177/1362480615594872

Saldaña, J. (2015), *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. 3rd edn. SAGE.

Schmidt, C. (2011), 'Prisons, Performance Arena, and Occupational Humor', *Oral Tradition*, 26: 613–6. doi: 10.1353/ort.2011.0023

Sim, J. (2002), 'The Future of Prison Health Care: A Critical Analysis', *Critical Social Policy*, 22: 300–23. doi: 10.1177/026101830202200206?

Simpson, R, Slutskaya, N, Lewis, P. and Höpfl, H. (eds) (2012), *Dirty Work: Concepts and Identities*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Spinaris, C. G., Denhof, M. D. and Kellaway, J. A. (2012), *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in United States Corrections Professionals: Prevalence and Impact on Health and Functioning*. Desert Waters Correctional Outreach.

Sykes, G. M. and Matza, D. (1957), 'Techniques of Neutralization: A Theory of Delinquency', *American Sociological Review*, 22: 664–670. doi: 10.2307/2089195

Thomson, S. B. and Grandy, G. (eds) (2018), *Stigmas, Work and Organizations*. Palgrave Macmillan.

Tracy, S. J., Myers, K. K., and Scott, C. W. (2006), 'Cracking Jokes and Crafting Selves: Sensemaking and Identity Management among Human Service Workers', *Communication Monographs*, 73: 283–308. doi: 10.1080/03637750600889500

Tracy, S. J. and Scott, C. (2007), 'Dirty Work and Discipline Behind Bars', in S. K. Drew, M. B. Mills and B. M. Gassaway, eds., *Dirty Work: The Social Construction of Taint*, 33–53. Baylor University Press.

Van Der Walt, H. and Swartz, L. (1999), 'Isabel Menzies Lyth Revisited Institutional Defences in Public Health Nursing in South Africa During the 1990s', *Psychodynamic Counselling*, 5: 483–95. doi: 10.1080/13533339908404985

Wivell, P. (2018), *Prison: Episode 2 Mental Health. Prison. 2*. Channel 4.

Zimmer, L. E. (1986), *Women Guarding Men*. University of Chicago Press.