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Feminist Convict Criminology for the Future

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Abstract
Women's incarceration has outgrown the pace of men's incarceration in recent decades. Their experiences in correctional settings are also unique from that of their male counterparts. Feminist criminology has provided insight into the lived experiences of women who are criminalized, as well as individuals with multiple oppressed/stigmatized statuses. However, the paucity of these experiences from a convict criminology perspective stands out. While this "struggle for inclusion" has been acknowledged and discussed in the academic literature, it still needs to be rectified through increased scholarship documenting the unique, intersectional and shared experiences of formerly incarcerated and/or system-impacted individuals in terms of age, race, gender and gender identity, sexuality, and nationality. One way this can be done is by incorporating feminist epistemology and theory into the discipline in order to shape a truly diverse and inclusive convict criminology of the future—a feminist convict criminology for the future.

Introduction

US incarceration of women remains at a historic and global high (Kajstura, 2018). Women's incarceration rates are now higher than men's. The female prison population grew ninefold between 1975 and 2011 (Carson & Sabol, 2012; Casey-Acevedo & Bakken, 2002). Despite the recent decline in the number of females sentenced to 1 year in prison, there are currently over 83,000 women under the jurisdiction of state or federal correctional authorities (Carson, 2021). Including the number of female adults on probation (19%) and parole (10%) in 2020 (Kaeble 2021), the total population of women under some form of confinement or correctional supervision increases estimates to over 860,000. Notably, while only

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4% of the global female population lives in the USA, the USA accounts for over 30% of the world's incarcerated women (Kajstura, 2018).

System involvement for women of color and sexual minorities, including those who identify as LGBTQ + and gender non-conforming, has also increased. For instance, incarceration rates are disproportionately high among transgender women, with estimates of incarceration history ranging from 37 to 65% in convenience sample studies (Reisner et al.,, 2014; see also Brennan et al.,, 2012; Clements-Nolle et al., 2001; Garofalo et al.,, 2006; Reback et al., 2001). Relatedly, Luhur et al., (2021) discovered that LGBTQ + individuals are more likely to be arrested and thus have disproportionate front-end representation in the criminal legal system. Others have also demonstrated how sexual minorities are incarcerated at higher rates (Meyer et al., 2017). More importantly, racial disparities remain with Black and Native American/indigenous women being overrepresented among these incarcerated populations (Carson, 2021; Kajstura, 2019).

Feminist criminology has provided insight into the lived experiences of criminalized women and individuals with multiple oppressed/stigmatized statuses. However, the paucity of these experiences from a convict criminology perspective stands out. The rapid growth of women's incarceration, coupled with the long-standing focus on men, means that recent criminal justice reforms have not kept up with the number and needs of incarcerated women (Kajstura, 2018). Convict criminology has also had a long-standing focus on the carceral experiences of men. Thus, ConCrim should embrace feminist epistemology at the forefront of its growth as a discipline.

This paper aims to address the continued lack of inclusion in ConCrim, especially in terms of women's experiences. At the same time, ConCrim has appeared to find its place in the academic profession through the official formation of the Division of Convict Criminology (DCC) of the American Society of Criminology (ASC). Membership is growing and becoming increasingly diverse in age, race, gender, sexuality, and nationality, as well as carceral experiences and impacts felt by the criminal legal system. Relatedly, the "struggle for inclusion" is a long-standing issue within the ConCrim discipline that—while it has been acknowledged and discussed—still needs to be rectified. One method for accomplishing this is by incorporating feminist epistemology into future ConCrim research to better shape a diverse and inclusive convict criminology.

To demonstrate why feminist epistemology is needed within the ConCrim discipline, this paper will begin with a brief discussion of the history of convict criminology and the reasons for its formation in criminology. In other words, the importance of putting "convict" in criminology and shedding light on first-hand accounts of what it is like to have a criminal conviction or the lived experience of being incarcerated. However, despite making theoretical strides, some have criticized ConCrim due to the lack of women's experiences, as well as the experiences of ethnic and sexual minorities. Thus, the history of this "struggle for inclusion" is also discussed and recent scholarship on the topic is highlighted.

The third section will lay the initial groundwork for feminist convict criminology. Specifically, the epistemological approaches of feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint theory (including Black feminist thought), and situated knowledge are presented. Coincidentally, ConCrim already engages in several of these feminist methodological practices. However, the challenge continues for ConCrim to reflect on *whose* experience and knowledge are consistently represented and whose are underrepresented within the discipline (Larsen & Piché, 2012). Therefore, feminist epistemology is crucial for providing a platform to amplify the unique carceral experiences of women, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ + individuals. This is how we can begin to shape a *feminist* convict criminology for the future.

Finally, a call for action is made and recommendations are provided on how ConCrim can begin to implement feminist convict criminology (FCC) from an academic and professional standpoint. Three recommendations are made to help shape a feminist future including increasing the scholarship of women's experiences, the use of queer and transfeminist theories, and increasing the mentorship and professional development opportunities for feminist convict criminologists and other marginalized individuals involved in DCC. A brief discussion on the power of language concerning the continued use of the word "convict" in FCC is also provided. As the suggestions for an FCC perspective in this paper are not finite, we conclude by encouraging ongoing dialogue and conversation about this proposed epistemological approach. Questions inquiring whether the FCC perspective is "feminist" or not are presented, as well as critical discussions from those who denounce criminology as a discipline as it is inherently designed to control others (Agozino and Pfohl, 2003) and uphold imperialistic and colonial systems. Thus, efforts to decolonize criminology (Agozino, 2019; Ball, 2019) are also recognized as a path forward for ConCrim.

Including the "Convict" in Criminology

Convict Criminology (ConCrim) is a ground-breaking and relatively new genre of justice research (Maruna, 2020). Generally, it provides an alternative to the traditional way crime and criminal justice problems are analyzed and interpreted by researchers, policymakers, and politicians—many of whom have had minimal to no contact with correctional systems or people identified as convicts themselves (Ross et al., 2012). However, as Maruna (2020) continues, ConCrim "… is also an inherently generative pursuit, involving outreach, mentoring, coaching, and supporting of a new generation of scholars" (p. xix). The ConCrim perspective was borne out of the frustrations ex-convict professors, graduate students, and allied scholars felt when reading the academic literature pertaining to crime, corrections, and criminal justice (Ross et al., 2012). They were particularly concerned that much of the scholarship on corrections reflected the ideas of prison administrators and largely ignored the experience and the day-to-day realities of imprisonment (Ross et al., 2012). Moreover, there was distress over disciplines like criminology and criminal justice (and the so-called criminologist "experts") that had long monopolized writing (and therefore, publishing) about the convict as "the other" that society should fear and control.

Motivated by their lack of inclusion, the founders of ConCrim set out to conduct research that reflected a more hands-on and well-rounded analysis of prison reality (Ross et al., 2012). This has resulted in scholarship on a variety of topics such as what the ConCrim discipline is and what it aims to do; how carceral experiences can be helpful for criminological theory; first-hand experiences related to collateral consequences of imprisonment and reentry; issues related to higher education and working as a criminal justice system-impacted faculty member; and concerns related to prison, jail, and mass incarceration. In addition, ConCrim tends to specialize in "on-site" ethnographic research in which the lived experience of imprisonment informs their work (Cox, 2020b). Despite recent criticisms associated with the word "convict" (Bryant, 2021; Cox, 2020a; Ortiz et al., 2022; Uggen et al., 2013), convict criminologists have always been and continue to be mindful of the language they use as they recognize the powerful effect rhetoric can have on our perceptions of people and situations (Richards, 1998, 2009). Today, the academic literature of ConCrim consists of essays, peer-reviewed journal articles, and books written by those with conviction status, direct carceral experience, or some level of system involvement.

Notably, another vital role of the convict criminologist is the mentorship and support of other system-impacted individuals. This includes formerly incarcerated individuals who have reentered the community and system-impacted undergraduate/graduate students and faculty at institutions of higher learning (Jones et al., 2009; Ross et al., 2012). They assist these individuals with adjusting to the effects of their conviction status or criminal history, appearances before the parole board, emotional support, academic advising, and preparation for employment or admission to graduate programs (Ross et al., 2012). The ConCrim Facebook page and website (concrim.org) also serve as a resource for system-impacted individuals, their family members and friends, and allies (sometimes referred to as "noncons") seeking support or advice, information, and mentorship (Ross et al., 2016).

Convict criminology has made strides in academic scholarship and professional development and has thus begun to find its respected footing in international professional organizations. For example, in April 2020, the informal group known as Convict Criminology officially became the Division of Convict Criminology (DCC) of the American Society of Criminology (ASC). This allowed the group to be formally recognized within the organization to "represent an active and functionally unitary interest of a group of members" (ASC, 1980) interested in the ConCrim discipline. More importantly, the ConCrim network and outreach efforts have expanded due to growing DCC membership. Membership is also becoming increasingly diverse in age, race, gender, sexuality, and profession, as well as correctional and/or carceral experiences, levels of justice involvement, and impacts felt by the criminal legal system. For example, the demographics of recent DCC Executive Board members (2020–2022 and 2022–2024) include several female and racialized members. DCC Board members also vary in their lived experience and there is a fair amount of balance between those who have been involved with carceral systems and those whom these systems have impacted. Despite these academic and professional advancements, some have criticized the ConCrim discipline for its continued lack of diversity, equity, and inclusion. This "struggle for inclusion" has sparked lively dialogue between some convict criminologists and feminist criminologists who criticize ConCrim for being rooted in Western white male privilege (Belknap, 2015, 2016).

Convict Criminology and the "Struggle for Inclusion"

In her 2014 American Society of Criminology (ASC) Presidential Address, Belknap (2015) provided a call to action that stressed criminologists' responsibility to advocate for social and legal justice through efforts related to their teaching, research, and service. While numerous types of criminology activism are identified in her address, one suggestion was to continue "diversifying the representation of criminologists" (Belknap, 2015: p. 1). Noting her disappointment with critical criminology failing to address intersections of oppression for the female offender, Belknap took aim at convict criminology after sharing her experience of writing a letter to her own doctorate program for her formerly incarcerated (female) undergraduate student and discovering the lack of women's experiences in ConCrim literature. Specifically, she called attention to the fact that the authors in the Ross and Richards (2003) edited book, *Convict Criminology*, were predominantly white men. Only two chapters were written by women, and both are "well-known women's prison scholars who are white and who are not former convicts" (Belknap, 2015: p. 9). In a footnote, Belknap (2015) clarifies that this is not to deny the scholarly reputations

of these women, but to emphasize the lack of *women convict criminologists*. A similar criticism was made a few years earlier by Larsen and Piché (2012) when challenging ConCrim to reflect on *whose* experiences and voices are consistently represented and whose are underrepresented.

However, her criticism goes beyond the lack of women in ConCrim. Belknap (2015) does not buy Richards' (2013) claim that the ConCrim perspective is "thriving" and "maturing" due to its lack of diversity and inclusion. In response to Richards' (2013: p. 375) question, "When will the criminal pariah be welcome at our universities?," Belknap (2015: p. 10) retorts, "When will men of color, women, and lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender/queer (LGBTQ) scholars be represented among the convict criminologists?" Recognizing how the criminal legal system disparately impacts these marginalized groups, Belknap (2015) concludes that it is unacceptable that convict criminology is "seemingly a bastion of almost entirely white men or at least portrayed that way" (p. 10).

Convict criminologists responded to Belknap's (2015) critiques in a special edition of *Critical Criminology*. Aresti and Darke (2016) acknowledge and address her concerns regarding the absence of marginalized voices by drawing attention to the academic activism that British Convict Criminology (BCC) has been conducting in Europe. They highlight collaborative research-activist efforts between academics, ex-con, and non-con network members. They also discuss the absence of marginalized voices in the BCC Network. Like the United States, this lack of representation is a function of broader social and structural constraints that serve to reproduce inequality within a variety of institutions, including the academy (Aresti & Darke, 2016). Regardless, Aresti and Darke (2016) agree that the absence and/or underrepresentation of marginalized voices is undoubtedly an issue to address and change through targeted recruitment efforts.

Similarly, Ross and colleagues (2016) responded to Belknap (2015) in their own rejoinder. In it, they provide more detail related to the initial formation and growth of ConCrim and highlight several examples of activist criminology they have engaged in, further building a more inclusive group (Richards et al., 2011). They note the unique prejudice and discrimination against formerly incarcerated individuals. They argue that "many criminologists fail to understand or acknowledge the very real stigma associated with being categorized as a felon in the United States" (Ross et al., 2016: p. 492). Ross and associates (2016) continue to explain how levels of stigma, discrimination, and prejudice are likely to be further exacerbated for convict criminologists who are women, people of color, or identify as LGBTQ. Thus, "they have numerous good reasons for deciding not to out themselves" (Ross et al., 2016: p. 495). Ross et al., (2016) also remind Belknap (2015), and other criminologists by proxy, that individuals should self-identify as convict criminologists on their own. Other criminologists and academics cannot simply label them due to assumptions about their carceral and/or system-impacted experiences (Aresti & Darke 2016; Ross et al., 2016).

Ross and colleagues (2016) have also attempted to explain the low numbers of women and minorities in the ConCrim group. For instance, they argue that the number of female ex-convicts associated with ConCrim is the result of the following factors: (a) The US felony population is overwhelmingly male (90%), thus providing a small pool of female felons or ex-convicts for membership; (b) perhaps women are less likely than men that exit prison to enter college due to their role as primary caregivers to dependent children; and (c) it may be more different psychologically for women to "come out" and self-identify as an ex-convict (Ross et al., 2016). Relatedly, similar structural barriers are present for potential convict criminologists of color. While Ross and several other prominent ConCrim scholars have "… mentored numerous Hispanic and African-American convicts and

ex-convicts that are now professors of criminology/criminal justice … very few … graduate with doctorates in the field" (2016: p. 495).

Despite these efforts put forth to "clarify the context and constraints" of ConCrim (Ross et al., 2016: p. 490), Belknap (2016) responded with a rejoinder where she continued to call for more system-impacted folks from diverse races/ethnicities, genders, and sexualities who are also criminology scholars. She rightfully points out that given the overrepresentation of many marginalized groups in prison, former justice-involved scholars (and convict criminology by proxy) can also offer a significant opportunity to change race/ethnicity, sexuality, and class representation in academia in general (Belknap, 2016). However, these opportunities are rare as few academics with convictions and/or criminal histories successfully complete their journey from incarceration to criminological scholarship (Tietjen & Kavish, 2020). Moreover, those who do complete this journey tend to experience academia in a state of instability and precariousness when compared to non-system-involved criminological scholars (Tietjen & Kavish, 2020).

Tietjen and Kavish (2021) identify this state as *status fragility* (SF), a social-structural impediment that can further marginalize and threaten the academic legitimacy of students, instructors, researchers, and faculty with past convictions. These individuals tend to navigate the academy through increased uncertain circumstances, fear of bias, marginalization, and being delegitimized if they are open with colleagues, their institutions, and the public about their conviction status and/or criminal history (Tietjen & Kavish 2021). Status fragility also considers additional structural hurdles ConCrim members with multiple oppressed statuses face at the societal level such as stigma-identifying qualities, intersectional marginalization, and discrimination (Tietjen & Kavish 2021). In turn, these additional hurdles can severely discourage the desire to *come out* with their conviction status and/or past experiences with the criminal legal system (Tietjen & Kavish 2021).

Being fearful of "coming out" as a convict criminologist and/or wary of revealing their status as formerly incarcerated is made even more difficult for individuals with multiple oppressed/stigmatized statues (*i.e.*, historically oppressed minorities, women, and those who identify as LGBTQ+) (Ross et al., 2016; Tietjen & Kavish 2021). It is no accident that the more privileged ConCrim members—namely white males with a drug or white-collar crime conviction—were often more willing to risk outing themselves without damaging their academic careers (Tietjen & Kavish 2021). Thus, the hesitation to openly identify as a convict criminologist further validates SF from a professional academic standpoint (Tietjen & Kavish 2021).

Status fragility can also help further explain the lack of representation of women, members of racialized groups, and LGBTQ+ scholars in the ConCrim discipline and academic literature because these individuals have an inherently higher stake in conformity among their non-convict counterparts. Custer and colleagues (2020) observed some of these higher stakes among system-impacted faculty navigating the academic job market. They note in their conclusion that they were unable to secure an interview with a female faculty member for their sample. This was due to their concern that their identity would be impossible to disguise because there are so few system-impacted female faculty (Custer et al., 2020). Unfortunately, the increased hesitation and trepidation to be "out" results in decreased opportunities for diversity and inclusion (Tietjen & Kavish, 2021), despite that the need to consider the voices of criminalized women and racial/ethnic minorities has always been, and remains, a critical concern for ConCrim (Bozkurt et al., 2020; see also Aresti & Darke, 2016; Ross et al., 2016). It is crucial that their voices are given a platform to articulate their experiences, and it is instrumental for truly shaping an inclusive ConCrim of the future (Bozkurt et al., 2020).

Another issue to consider is the prior-mentioned debate about the title of the discipline and professional organization, "Convict Criminology". For several years, the debate has occurred among ConCrim members about whether to maintain the word "convict" as part of the division's name. The split among members, which appears to concentrate primarily between the earlier founders of the group and those newer to the discipline who represent a more diverse membership, may also be part of why some do not choose to identify as part of ConCrim. Language matters on both sides of the debate, and inevitably some feel disempowered to be a part of ConCrim, regardless of system-impacted status, due to not wanting to use the term "convict" as a personal identifier. Current ConCrim scholarship is beginning to address the power of language and looks forward to engaging in academic dialogue concerning the word "convict" through future research and peer-reviewed publications (Ortiz et al., 2022).

The "struggle for inclusion" remains because some DCC members continue to feel a lack of representation. In other words, some individuals do not see themselves represented in the discipline as equitably as their white, male counterparts. This is particularly the case in the area of scholarship and publications, especially collaborative scholarship created by well-established ConCrim members. As women and other marginalized groups have been historically left out of academic disciplines (and the epistemologies associated with them) due to colonial and androcentric systemic arrangements, concerns remain that ConCrim appears to be maintaining and recreating this inequality. The authors respectfully acknowledge that this is certainly not the intention of ConCrim, but more so influenced by a myriad of factors related to scholarship and the peer-review process that serves to reproduce gatekeeping and maintain inequality. In the meantime, the need for an increased focus on highlighting system-involved women's experiences within the ConCrim discipline remains. One manner in which this can be done is by utilizing feminist epistemology to recognize various intersectional feminist standpoints among ConCrim scholars and DCC members. These are additional tools that ConCrim scholars can add to their toolbox to guide them in approaching scholarship from an intersectional perspective.

Whose experience? Whose reality? Feminist epistemology and Convict Criminology

An initial outlook of this future was recently published in a volume edited by Ross and Vianello (2020). *Convict Criminology for the Future* (2020) provides a much-needed update on the state of ConCrim and how it has evolved. Seven primary themes are explored across 16 chapters written by a global lineup of contributors. Only one chapter, however, addresses women and gender issues through an examination of surviving motherhood and prison (Bozkurt et al., 2020). It is noteworthy that Bozkurt and colleagues (2020) call attention to the fact that, despite a growing literature focusing on women's experiences of incarceration, there is a lack of first-hand "academic" accounts articulating this experience. This is particularly true for mothers who have experienced incarceration (Lockwood 2018) but even more so for mothers with ethnic minority backgrounds (Bozkurt et al., 2020). They aim to amplify some of the "absent voices" in ConCrim scholarship by providing ethnographic narratives written by Safak and Marisa, both mothers and each of whom is of minority ethnic origin living in the UK (Bozkurt et al., 2020). Both narratives highlight the unique and shared experience of being an imprisoned mother: Safak discusses insights

gained from her personal experience of incarceration and life as a prison officer, while Marisa shares her experience of being a "high security" prisoner (Bozkurt et al., 2020).

Ross and Vianello (2020) conclude their book with five recommendations ConCrim should consider for future activities. One of these recommendations is to incorporate sociological theories and concepts addressing positionality, reflexivity, and how to do ethnographic research while being part of the field. Some examples include the theory of political positioning, the possibility (and difficulty) of talking from a subordinate position (Spivak, 1988), and the concept of situated knowledge (Haraway 1988; Harding, 1991). While the "struggle for inclusion" has long been acknowledged and discussed in the academic literature, it remains an issue that needs to be revisited and rectified through increased scholarship focusing on the lived experiences of individuals with multiple oppressed/stigmatized statuses. This includes women.

One way this can be done is by incorporating feminist epistemology into the ConCrim discipline. Harding (1991) critically examined Western science, technology, and epistemology by inquiring, "Whose science? Whose knowledge?" when considering women's lives. As much of our knowledge and understanding of prison life has been based on men's accounts (Bozkurt et al., 2020; see also Corston 2007; Owen, 2003), the ConCrim discipline must continue to critically ask, "Whose *experience*? Whose *knowledge*?" to highlight unique and diverse perspectives in the realities of prison life and system-involvement. From a feminist perspective, criminalized women's first-hand accounts also contribute to and develop our understanding of the "lived realities" of prison, providing "authentic" knowledge that has the potential to inform policy and practice (Bozkurt et al., 2020). This is especially true for criminalized women of color and LGBTQ+ individuals incarcerated within women's prisons.

Our knowledge of prisons is also limited when understanding them through preexisting male-dominated conceptualizations and theoretical frameworks (Bozkurt et al., 2020; see also Corston, 2007; Owen, 2003). With the need for increased scholarly attention towards the carceral experiences and system-involvement of women, minorities, LGBTQ+, and other marginalized populations, there also comes the need to embrace feminist epistemology. In other words, ConCrim can (and should) utilize existing intersectional feminist theories of gender, race, class, and social location, as well as related concepts such as power and agency. Although women's carceral experiences and system-involvement may be similar from a shared gendered perspective—or *as women*—it is also crucial to simultaneously recognize their *difference* (Crenshaw, 1989; Spelman, 1988; West & Fenstermaker 1995; Zinn & Dill, 1996), as each come from their own standpoint, social location, and position in the matrix of domination (Collins, 1991). Thus, examining the unique and shared experiences of formerly incarcerated and system-involved women and non-CIS-gendered individuals within women's correctional facilities is essential. More importantly, as we are aware of the current racial and economic makeup of incarcerated women and other marginalized/oppressed populations, feminist epistemology would be helpful in narrowing some of these gaps.

Issues may lie, however, in incorporating feminist epistemology into research designs as social scientists have historically been trained in the positivist tradition of interacting with human subjects from a hierarchical position of power, detached neutrality, and objectivity (Burgess-Proctor, 2015; for review, see Harding 1991; Hesse-Biber, 2007; Reinharz, 1992; Smith, 1990). Feminist epistemology was created to critique the positivist (and androcentric) scientific method. There is no single feminist epistemology or distinct set of feminist research methods (Harding, 1987). Instead, feminist epistemology should be seen more as a specific approach or perspective to conducting research. Convict criminology was borne

from a similar critical space and methodological approach; academics with felony convictions and carceral experience came together to push back against traditional criminological theory and documentation of offender experiences within the criminal legal system. More recently, the newly formed DCC has stated that this methodological approach supplies a focused, rigorous, and scholarly examination of the system-impacted perspective in criminology. In turn, this can bring relevance to ConCrim in a manner that informs and educates the discipline of criminology and criminal justice policy both now and in the future (Division of Convict Criminology, 2021).

For example, one of the major criticisms against ConCrim is the belief that researchers cannot do unbiased work (Jones et al., 2009; Ross et al., 2015). As Ross et al. (2015) suggest, these arguments are "akin to someone saying that women cannot be unbiased authors in the field of feminist studies, African-Americans cannot be objective in the field of Race and Ethnic students, or former police officers cannot be objective when studying and teaching about law enforcement" (p. 75). Being part of a group does not necessitate bias, rather reflexive writings can be a valuable part of scholarship in bringing about understanding in the academic field of study (Jones et al., 2009; Ross et al., 2015). Recognizing their unique standpoint in understanding the carceral experience, ConCrim scholars have embraced reflexivity to challenge perceptions of bias. Along with feminist criminology scholars, they have embraced the importance of prison ethnography as one methodological way to understand diverse experiences (Jewkes, 2012; Richie, 2004).

What distinguishes feminist epistemology from a traditional positivist worldview is that it has several distinct goals throughout the research process. Some of these goals include acknowledging and validating women's experiences; a commitment to improving women's lives; "bringing women in" as research experts to create knowledge and empower women; and supporting positive changes in women's lives (DeVault, 1996; Kirsch, 1999; Reinharz, 1992; Sprague,2005). Historically, research and academic scholarship have not been representative of or beneficial for women (Kirsch, 1999). Therefore, the overall goal of feminist research is to produce knowledge *on* women and knowledge *for* women (Harding, 1991). Again, this is akin to the methodological goals of ConCrim scholarship. As traditional criminological theories and research efforts have overwhelmingly ignored and/or erased convict perspectives, ConCrim aims to produce knowledge *on convicts* and knowledge *for convicts*. This also includes knowledge on and for individuals with varying levels of system-involvement.

Again, while there is not a single epistemological program or a specific set of feminist research methods social scientists must use (Harding, 1987), there are at least three feminist epistemologies worth highlighting that have challenged traditional and "objective" approaches that ConCrim should consider utilizing in future research: feminist empiricist philosophy (Harding, 1991), feminist standpoint theory (DeVault, 1996; Harding, 1991) and situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988). To begin, feminist empiricist philosophy aims to correct "bad science" by challenging traditional positivistic assumptions from the classic scientific method (Harding, 1991). Arguing against the traditional philosophy of empiricism (which can allow for objectivity and bias to emerge), feminist empiricists instead suggest that sexist and androcentric biases can be controlled through stricter adherence to existing methodological norms. This epistemological approach harkens to the seminal scholarship produced by the "founding fathers" of ConCrim; while it challenged traditional criminological approaches, it generally followed existing methodological norms and resulted in (primarily) publishing the lived experiences of white, Western, cis-gendered, and heterosexual men.

Reflecting on feminist empiricism, Harding (1991) refined these propositions to generate feminist standpoint theory. This approach posits that all cultural knowledge, and therefore empirical research, is socially situated. Feminist standpoint theorists focus on gender differences and how these differences can give a scientific advantage to those who can make use of such differences (Harding, 1991). As traditional scientific inquiry requires objectivity to be neutral and "value-free," Harding refutes this belief insisting that this early conception of objectivity is impossible to achieve, as no research is completely free of bias. Instead, researchers should recognize and become aware of such bias and feminist standpoint theory can help direct the production of less partial and less distorted beliefs. This is what Harding (1991) reconceptualizes and defines as *strong objectivity*.

The overall goal of feminist standpoint theory is to construct knowledge from the perspective of women's lives (Harding, 1991). Feminist standpoint theory contributes to epistemology by adhering to the following principles: (1) knowledge is socially situated; (2) marginalized groups are socially situated in ways that provide opportunities for *stronger* objectivity than the non-marginalized; and (3) research should begin with the lives of the marginalized—particularly when focused on power relations and agency (Harding, 1991). This epistemological approach would be especially useful for the ConCrim discipline to center women's intersectional incarceration experiences, as well as how an individual's social location can influence their navigation and management of the carceral state through pre-trial detention, sentencing, community supervision (probation, intermediate sanctions, and parole), reentry, and prison visitation.

A related approach to standpoint theory is Black feminist thought (Collins, 1991). This theory argues against the either/or dualisms that are present in traditional objective truths, as these have been recognized as one of the critical links among interlocking systems of oppression (Collins, 1991). Being an *outsider within* also helps combat this issue. By reconceptualizing objectivity in this manner, outsiders within tend to have a powerful balance between the strengths of their sociological training and the offerings of their personal and cultural experiences (Collins, 1991). From a ConCrim perspective, this is a similar position which formerly incarcerated and system-involved individuals share in the matrix of domination (Collins, 1991), including faculty and graduate students employed at higher institutions of learning. While these individuals appear to be generally accepted within professional academic spaces (*within*), their increased level of discrimination and status fragility (Tietjen and Kavish, 2020) due to their conviction and/or criminal history sets them apart from their non-convict counterparts (*outsider*). It may also present increased social structural challenges in their personal and professional lives. For instance, individuals with criminal histories are outsiders often before even making it to academia (and especially being hired as academics) due to background check policies and hiring practices that make it difficult for system-impacted folks to ever feel like an insider (Custer et al., 2020). However, recognizing—and utilizing—the powerful balance that being an outsider within affords is a major epistemological strength of the ConCrim discipline.

In addition to recognizing their outsider within status from a criminological perspective, this theory may also have important implications in explaining the "struggle for inclusion" for Black women's experiences in ConCrim scholarship. For instance, while we are aware that incarcerated women tend to be young, single, unemployed, and undereducated members of racialized groups (Bureau of Justice Statistics 1994; Casey-Acevedo and Bakken, 2002; Celinska 2013; Celinska and Siegel 2010), these demographics also point to racial imbalances in our incarceration rates. Although the number of females sentenced to more than one year in prison decreased by 22% from 2019 to 2020, the imprisonment rate for Black females (65 per 100,000) was still nearly twice the rate

of imprisonment for white females (38 per 100,000) (Carson, 2021). Relatedly, Hispanic females were incarcerated at 1.2 times the rate of white women (48 per 100,000), while Native American and Alaska Native females ages 30–39 were 4.3 times as likely to be in prison at year-end—the highest among all females (Carson, 2021).

The same case can be made for incarcerated women held in jails. Between 2016 and 2017, the number of women in jail on a given day grew by more than 5 percent, even as the rest of the jail population declined (Kajstura, 2019). In contrast to the total incarcerated population, where state prison systems hold twice as many people as in jails, *more incarcerated women are disproportionately held in jails than in state prisons* (Kajstura, 2019). The women's incarcerated population also has a different race and ethnicity breakdown than the US population and the incarcerated population. Again, it is Black and Native American women who are markedly overrepresented in correctional populations: Incarcerated women ($N = 231{,}000$) are 53% white, 29% Black, 14% Hispanic, 2.5% Native American and Alaskan Native, 0.9% Asian, and 0.4% Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (Kajstura, 2019). However, the population rate for Black individuals in the USA is 14.2%, 18.2% percent for Hispanic/Latino, and 1.8% for Native Americans (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020). By acknowledging the standpoint of incarcerated women, and more specifically, the standpoint of incarcerated Black and Native American women, feminist standpoint theory can help provide a richer narrative into the lives of women's mass incarceration. Furthermore, these narratives are already in demand. While the ConCrim literature includes some voices, eagerness has previously been expressed to hear more from women, juveniles, Latinos, Asians, and indigenous people of America, the Pacific Islands, and the Caribbean, as well as LGBTQ + individuals to offer their narratives to the expanding ConCrim story (Irwin, 2012; Belknap, 2015, 2016).

The third feminist epistemological perspective that would benefit the ConCrim discipline is the concept of situated knowledge (Haraway, 1988). Moving from the strong objectivity that feminist standpoint theory provides us, Haraway (1988) argues that by reconceptualizing and utilizing our vision, we aim to embrace *embodied objectivity*. Positioning is key within situated knowledge; this helps ground our vision and claim responsibility and accountability for what we do as researchers. Unlike feminist empiricism and standpoint theory, situated knowledge claims that "no insider's perspective is privileged" (Haraway, 1988: p. 170). These relationships are socially constructed and theorized as power moves, not moves toward truth. Situated knowledge contends that no view is innocent; only a partial view is available. Therefore, it is up to us (as researchers) to recognize and position our partial perspective to utilize our vision and theorize how embodied objectivity can impact the overall research design.

In addition to addressing Black and Native American women's incarceration experiences, disparities exist regarding LGBTQ + status and age. For example, a recent study demonstrated that sexual minorities are incarcerated at higher rates. Based on the National Inmate Survey administered to persons incarcerated in jails and prisons between 2011 and 2012, 36% of women in jail and 42% of women in prisons identified as lesbian or bisexual, compared to 9.3% of men (Meyer et al., 2017). The incarceration rate of self-identified lesbian, gay, or bisexual persons was 1882 per 100,000, more than three times that of the U.S. adult population (Meyer et al., 2017). Compared to incarcerated persons who identified as heterosexual, these women were more likely to have experiences with solitary confinement and other sanctions, to report current psychological distress, to have been sexually victimized as children, and to have been sexually victimized while incarcerated (Meyer et al., 2017). Relatedly, Luhur et al. (2021) have pointed out that LGBTQ + individuals are more

likely to be arrested and thus have disproportionate front-end representation in the criminal legal system. This may also explain why they are overrepresented in corrections.

Notably, sexual minority women in this sample population tended to have more mixed patterns of race/ethnic distribution than did sexual minority men. Results also demonstrated that lesbian and bisexual women are more likely to receive longer sentences than their heterosexual peers (Meyer et al., 2017). Situated knowledge would be a helpful concept to understand further the carceral experiences and system-involvement of sexual minorities, especially for lesbian and bisexual women with racialized backgrounds. Recognizing their positionality from an intersectional lens allows for a more complete analysis of how gender *and* race *and* sexuality impact these experiences.

Mass incarceration also targets girls. Thus, it is also important to address age as a form of positionality within situated knowledge and how it interacts with gender, race, and sexuality to form their lived experience. Of the girls confined in youth facilities, nearly 10% were held for status offenses such as truancy and running away, which tend to be responses to abuse (Sawyer, 2019). This is concerning as such offenses among boys accounted for less than 3% of their confined population (Sawyer, 2019). Research has provided evidence of the link between victimization and offending with abused and neglected girls being arrested at twice the rate of non-abused girls across adolescence and adulthood (Widom and Maxfield, 2001). For example, nearly half (49%) of the abused and neglected girls and 36% of the non-abused girls were arrested for status offenses as youth and went on to be arrested for other crimes as adults (Widom and Maxfield, 2001). This suggests that status offenses act as entry points or increase the risk for continued system involvement for these girls/women (DeHart and Lynch, 2021).

This increase in "overcharging" girls for status offenses (DeHart and Lynch 2021) results in an increase in girls' confinement, which, again, disparately impacts ethnic minority girls and sexual or gender minorities (Pasko, 2017). As with women, girls of color and those identifying as LGBTQ + are disproportionately confined in juvenile facilities: Black girls comprise 35% of the confined population, 19% are Latina, and 38% are white (Jafarian and Ananthakrishnan, 2014). More recent reports have found that 40% of girls in the juvenile justice system identify as lesbian, bisexual, or questioning and/or non-conforming (Griffith, 2019). This statistic stands out as the comparable rate for boys is under 14% (Griffith, 2019). By recognizing the intersection of gender *with* race, sexuality, age, class, and social location—and by not separating gender from these intersections—more unique "lived realities" and "authentic" knowledge will emerge within ConCrim scholarship. The underdevelopment of this topic from a feminist perspective can thus provide ConCrim scholars with ample opportunities to fill in some of these long-standing gaps.

In addition to diverse and inclusive incarceration experiences, another gap that remains is the need for a feminist perspective towards individuals who are impacted by incarceration. One area where increased narrative research is needed is prison visitation. Current prison visitation literature has observed that it is women who tend to visit. Participant samples in a handful of these studies were largely female (Braman, 2004; Christian, 2005; Christian et al., 2006; Comfort, 2003, 2008; Fishman, 1990). Having predominantly women who visit makes sense as sociologist Megan Comfort (2003, 2008) has previously conceptualized the prison visiting room as a *female space*. Talking with women visiting inmates at San Quentin, Comfort (2003: p. 79) observed it is "the wives, girlfriends, mothers, daughters, and other female kin and kith of prisoners" who visit. Relatedly, research examining prison wives concluded that women "often bear the bulk of incarceration's burdens" (Braman, 2004: p. 175). Thus, the ConCrim discipline would also benefit from scholarship focusing on the *gendered* experiences surrounding visitation for these "women

at the wall" (Fishman, 1990) as they continue to bridge the gap between their "outside" lives and the "inside" lives of their incarcerated loved one (Braman, 2004; Christian, 2005).

From a methodological perspective, a feminist presence already exists within convict criminology. Using feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint theory, applying an intersectional lens through Black feminist thought, and incorporating situated knowledge is more than sufficient to acknowledge the individual and shared experiences among the formerly incarcerated, those who are system-involved, as well as those who are system-impacted. Feminist epistemology is, however, necessary for providing a platform to amplify the unique carceral experiences of women, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ+individuals. This is how we can begin to shape a *feminist* convict criminology for the future.

Feminist Convict Criminology for the Future

A feminist convict criminology (FCC) for the future has long been on the minds of several ConCrim scholars. Furthermore, recent efforts have been made to center women's voices within the ConCrim discipline. A thematic panel entitled *Convict Criminology from a Feminist Perspective* was presented at the 2019 annual ASC meeting. The Division of Feminist Criminology (DFC; formerly known as the Division on Women and Crime [DWC]) marked it as a Division of Session Interest. Some of the individual presentations included the need for ConCrim to understand women's prison experiences, the hyper-sexualization/de-sexualization of female bodies in male correctional facilities, and an exploration of gender and delinquency related to the unknown expansion of the carceral state in therapeutic boarding schools. Scholarship efforts were also global with one panelist being from Argentina. The session was well attended by both senior and junior ConCrim/DCC members. This demonstrates a robust interest in this topic and the need for increased inclusion of women's incarceration experiences and issues related to gender in corrections.

As the ConCrim discipline approaches its 25th anniversary, there is no time like the present to end the "struggle for inclusion" by bringing historically marginalized and oppressed voices to the forefront. Again, this can be done by utilizing an FCC approach in future scholarship. Adopting an FCC framework would also be helpful in centering inclusivity in professional development and academic service opportunities for DCC members. This is crucial as membership is becoming increasingly diverse in terms of age, race, gender, sexuality, professional experience, as well as carceral experience, level of justice involvement, and impact felt by the criminal justice system. Thus, this paper concludes by providing an initial roadmap on what FCC would look like in practice. Convict criminology should consider the following three recommendations for a more diverse, inclusive, and feminist future.

Standpoint of the Authors

Recognizing standpoint and positionality as practice toward feminist convict criminology, it is thus appropriate that the authors of this paper reflect on their own individual standpoints in making these epistemological recommendations. To begin, both authors have similar representation: both are white women who identify as LGBTQ+and have earned their master's degrees (MS) and doctorate degrees (Ph.D.). However, the second author has also earned a Juris Doctorate (J.D.). Notably, both authors have had direct or indirect

experiences related to incarceration. Both are current DCC members and active in the ConCrim discipline.

Recommendations for a Feminist Future

The first recommendation for a feminist future is that there needs to be an increased focus on highlighting system-involved women's experiences within the ConCrim discipline. This can be done by utilizing feminist epistemology to recognize various intersectional feminist standpoints among ConCrim scholars and DCC members. Based on the current demographics of incarcerated women and girls, as well as ethnic and sexual minorities, there should be a particular focus on how gender interacts *with* race, sexual orientation, *and* gender identity. One step in this direction is currently in the works through a volume edited by female members of DCC with a specific focus on women in convict criminology. Much more scholarship, however, needs to be produced. This paper proposes that ConCrim begins with some of the foundational methodological approaches available through feminist empiricism, feminist standpoint theory (including Black feminist thought), and situated knowledge to guide future ethnographic and narrative research centering on intersectional experiences.

Second, FCC can also help increase diversity and inclusion within the ConCrim discipline by including transfeminist theory and methodology in future scholarship (Johnson, 2015). As one of the goals of feminist methodology is to fight dualism in the measurement, conceptualization, and operationalization of researchable concepts (Collins, 1991), feminist theory and epistemology must recognize the fluidity of gender. Thus, FCC aims to look beyond *cissexist* and *gender identity blind* research practices that further marginalize transgender and gender non-conforming people (Johnson, 2015). This also comes at a time where—like imprisonment rates of women and ethnic minorities—trans, queer, and gender-fluid individuals are being incarcerated at increasingly alarming rates (Meyer et al., 2017; Smith and Stanley, 2011).

As queer theory and transfeminist methodology are in demand just as much as feminist perspectives are, ConCrim scholars and DCC members interested in this topic are strongly encouraged to collaborate with members of the Division of Queer Criminology (DQC). Both disciplines would have an outlet to share their insights and experiences related to incarceration and the criminal justice system, and both DCC and DQC members would gain an ally in their continued efforts to critique and challenge traditional approaches to criminology and criminal justice, and in particular, corrections. Together, we can work to diversify, "queer" and "trans" convict criminology.

This is akin to the recent suggestion that the related discipline of critical criminology be *transed* (Musto 2019; see also Balaguera 2018; Tudor 2017). Additionally, trans frameworks offer powerful insights to challenge dominant criminological frameworks and offer paths to explore feminism's own complicated relationship to carceral expansion (Musto 2019). Musto (2019) suggests this may help to further uncover and disrupt binary accounts of gender, harm, justice, and punishment and to reframe abolitionist praxis in innovative anti-carceral feminist directions. As the transformative promise of critical criminology lies in its conceptual boundaries (Musto 2019), convict criminology would also be wise to adhere to these suggestions and move the field closer to its feminist potential, whether it be carceral or anti-carceral. While this paper also serves as a call for epistemological action, the authors recognize (and respect) scholars interested in FCC may choose to utilize a variety of feminist theories outside or in addition to the

ones currently proposed. It is always the best methodological practice to use the theories most appropriate for the individual, their lived experience, and overall research design.

Finally, a third recommendation is to increase the mentorship and professional development opportunities for feminist convict criminologists and other marginalized individuals with increased status fragility (Teitjen and Kavish, 2021). As ConCrim has a long history of mentorship and support of system-impacted individuals, efforts can be extended through formal mentoring programs and the creation of scholarship opportunities. Fortunately, DCC has made strides in both of these efforts. First, DCC recently established an Early Career Travel Scholarship. This opportunity is designed to increase the presence of system-impacted individuals at annual ASC conferences. The DCC will award two $500 scholarships to system-impacted academics; one is reserved for a student applicant, while the other will be awarded to an untenured faculty member. To be as inclusive as possible, faculty of all ranks, including adjunct faculty, are eligible for this scholarship.

Members of the DCC Executive Board have also created a formal mentoring program and the initial cohort is currently underway. Modeled after the Division of Feminist Criminology's (DFC) Dr. Christine Rasche Mentoring, this professional development program builds community through mentorship by matching junior members with DCC scholars. Mentors and mentees are paired based on shared areas of interest and experience, and the individuals involved define the mentoring relationship and goals. The commitment to the program is one year beginning at the ASC annual meeting. Matching system-impacted graduate students and junior faculty with tenured/senior faculty can increase opportunities for future research projects and scholarship, advice and guidance on navigating the academic job market, developing professional relationships, and providing a more academically inclined network of support. One author of this paper currently serves as the co-Chair of the DCC Mentoring Program and looks forward to the pro-social relationships—and scholarship—this program will help foster and produce.

Is Feminist Convict Criminology "Feminist"?

It is essential to state that the suggestions outlined for an FCC perspective are not fixed or finite. Instead, this is an initial discussion on the topic. It is anticipated—and encouraged—that ConCrim scholars, feminists, and critical criminologists alike participate in ongoing dialogue and conversation about this proposed epistemological approach. We recognize some may already take issue with naming this approach FCC due to the power of language and use of the word "convict." During initial discussions on this topic, the drafting of thematic panels for ASC, and, of course, writing this paper—both authors have had countless conversations and moments of reflection on whether the title of FCC is "feminist" or oppressive. In other words, is utilizing "convict" as part of identity feminist in nature or not? More importantly, is it intersectional and inclusive in capturing the unique and shared experiences of system-impacted individuals? Again, as the "convict" debate has been previously addressed and discussed (Bryant, 2021; Cox, 2020a; Ortiz et al., 2022; Uggen et al., 2013), we acknowledge the power of language and the agency that lies in personal choice.

It is vital that these questions be further explored as a divide between convict criminologists comfortable with the name and others affiliated with DCC and the ConCrim discipline remains. As being a "convict" is their primary identity that lacks power, this is not the case for most women, racialized and indigenous individuals, and LGBTQ + folks who continue to feel uncomfortable with owning the title/label of "convict." While it is

primarily understood that this was not the intention of the "founding fathers" of ConCrim, some feel the discipline continues to be rooted in androcentrism, which is akin to the discipline of criminology. Thus, those critical of issues related to race, gender, and sexuality within the academic discipline may not see any difference between ConCrim and traditional approaches to criminology. Despite efforts to create space for their marginalized voices, some feminist criminologists would say ConCrim remains rooted in mainstream criminology, or "malestream criminology." For some, keeping the word "convict" in FCC does not align with some of the feminist principles held by DCC members as they believe it further perpetuates harm and oppression of women and other marginalized voices who lack representation within the group.

Additionally, given the research on visitation, ConCrim includes several scholars who have never personally been incarcerated and/or convicted but have lived experience growing up being separated from their incarcerated loved ones. There is vast complexity in the prisoner–family relationship, an area of ethnographic and narrative scholarship that ConCrim should also aim to focus on. There are also ConCrim scholars and DCC members who are non-academics or practitioners working in prison education, prison reform, and reentry. Their experiences navigating and managing carceral spaces are also valuable to the ConCrim literature. Already recognizing why the word "convict" is hurtful and viewed as derogatory and oppressive by some, we also recognize that this word is not inclusive enough to recognize the difference among system-impacted individuals.

Thus, the title of FCC is not permanent; we remain open to amending it to a word or phrase that better encapsulates an intersectional approach to the discipline. For example, as some DCC members have suggested the 'C' in convict criminology be changed to *carceral* criminology (Ortiz et al., 2022), perhaps a more appropriate term should be *feminist carceral* criminology. Revising and refining is an inherently feminist practice these authors wholeheartedly subscribe to—and especially in ways that center women, ethnic minorities, and LGBTQ + individuals. The Division on Women and Crime (DWC) adopted a similar practice when members voted to change their name to the Division of Feminist Criminology (DFC) to better encapsulate a variety of lived experiences.

However, it is important to note that convict criminology is not the only discipline that has experienced a "struggle for inclusion," nor has the DCC been the only division to be criticized for its lack of diversity. For instance, before its name change, the DWC experienced a mass exodus of membership between 2020 and 2021 due to long-standing issues rooted in a lack of diversity and representation felt among Black feminist criminologists, queer and trans criminologists, and other "fourth wave" feminist criminologists. In March 2021, DWC Executive Board members published a Statement of Inclusivity on its website (ascdwc.com) denouncing all oppression, oppressive language, behavior, or publications that perpetuate and/or uphold structural inequalities (DWC, 2021). Within this statement, the authors also acknowledged issues of racism, cisgenderism, transphobia, and heterosexism as central concerns raised by membership. They also listed several actionable activities to address them and make necessary changes to achieve a more inclusive existence (DWC, 2021). Thus, we recognize that DEI initiatives are not a unique issue to ConCrim. We also recognize that feminist theories and epistemologies may not adequately address the "struggle for inclusion" especially when issues remain in other disciplines that already utilize and prioritize these methodologies.

The "struggle for inclusion" is systemic, which gives further support to center critiques from those with lived experience who denounce criminology as a discipline as it is inherently designed to control others (Agozino and Pfohl, 2003). Specifically, Agozino (2019) has argued for the decolonization of criminology as it upholds and

perpetuates imperialistic and neo-colonial arrangements. Others have reflected on the ways in which queer criminology is both invested in, and reflective of, colonial power dynamics based on dominant "Western" LGBT and queer political frameworks that maintain settler colonialism (Ball 2019). Relatedly, *Thug Criminology* (2023), an upcoming edited volume by the University of Toronto Press, centering the traditionally silenced voices of former gang/street-involved peoples turned academics to challenge and disrupt mainstream and academic knowledge about urban youth gangs. Drawing on decolonizing methodologies, this book examines who gets to produce such knowledge, who benefits from such knowledge, and whose voices are privileged within dominant academic and public policy discourses (Ellis et al., 2023).

In addition to considering (and critiquing) the various tools that feminist convict (carceral) criminology may be able to offer, it is imperative to acknowledge some of the recent social and scholarly movements created and maintained by scholars with lived experience. Some examples of these groups include the Black Criminology Network (BCN) and the Black Women Criminologists Collective (BWCC). Specifically, BWCC (2020) published "A Call for Intentional Revolution in Academe and against State-Sanctioned Violence" speaking out against the police and state-sanctioned violence toward Black bodies in the wake of the murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis Police Department. BWCC also provides a list of action items for universities and scholars to engage in. It is noteworthy that they end this statement by insisting that research go beyond the confines of the academic discipline and should instead be used to bring about effective change in the communities that are studied: "The time is now to utilize rigorous and righteous qualitative and quantitative analyses to combat White supremacy and systemic racism that plagues all institutions in the United States" (BWCC, 2020). We hope that convict criminology will reflect on the current methodologies prioritized in the discipline and, again, as Larsen and Piché (2012) have already suggested, reflect on whose experiences and knowledge are consistently represented and whose remain underrepresented within the discipline. Decolonization methodologies, and those that purposively center Black and LGBTQ+experiences, should be considered and prioritized.

Conclusion

We are seeing a new generation of convict criminologists, a "third wave" if you will. Bozkurt and colleagues (2020) have discussed how this new generation can offer additional insights and understandings of the penal system and penal justice, but more importantly, how they will continue to challenge dominant models of practice and policy. As this "third wave" of ConCrim scholars moves toward the future, we already see the discipline taking a new shape (Bozkurt et al., 2020). Progression comes from ConCrim's expansion and diversity (Bozkurt et al., 2020). While it is objectively true that the demographics of recent DCC Executive Board members are primarily comprised of women and racialized members, we respectfully maintain our stance that a "struggle for inclusion" persists. We recognize that strides in diversity, equity, and inclusion have been made in ConCrim over the past 25 years, yet there is still much work to be done to increase representativeness. It is long overdue that the discipline expands to include more women, people of color, LBGTQ+individuals, trans and gender non-conforming individuals, and those who have

been separated from their loved ones due to incarceration. We look forward to this more inclusive, diverse, and *feminist* future for convict criminology.

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