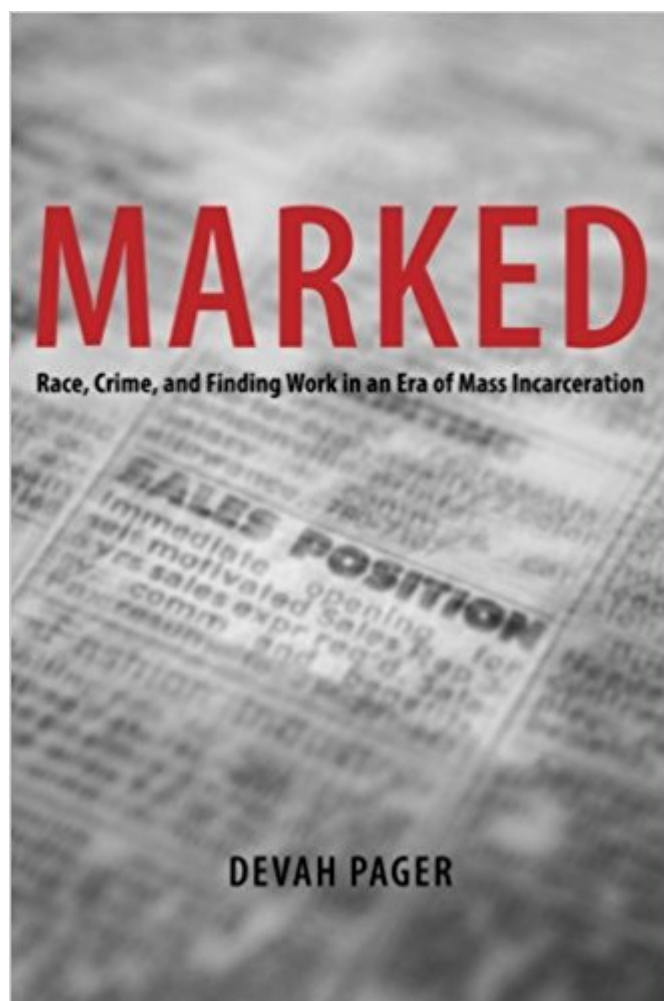


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Marked: Race, Crime, And Finding Work In An Era Of Mass Incarceration



Synopsis

Nearly every job application asks it: have you ever been convicted of a crime? For the hundreds of thousands of young men leaving American prisons each year, their answer to that question may determine whether they can find work and begin rebuilding their lives. The product of an innovative field experiment, *Marked* gives us our first real glimpse into the tremendous difficulties facing ex-offenders in the job market. Devah Pager matched up pairs of young men, randomly assigned them criminal records, then sent them on hundreds of real job searches throughout the city of Milwaukee. Her applicants were attractive, articulate, and capable yet ex-offenders received less than half the callbacks of the equally qualified applicants without criminal backgrounds. Young black men, meanwhile, paid a particularly high price: those with clean records fared no better in their job searches than white men just out of prison. Such shocking barriers to legitimate work, Pager contends, are an important reason that many ex-prisoners soon find themselves back in the realm of poverty, underground employment, and crime that led them to prison in the first place. Using scholarly research, field research in Milwaukee, and graphics, [Pager] shows that ex-offenders, white or black, stand a very poor chance of getting a legitimate job. . . . Both informative and convincing. Library Journal Marked is that rare book: a penetrating text that rings with moral concern couched in vivid prose and one of the most useful sociological studies in years. Michael Eric Dyson

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Customer Reviews

"Using scholarly research, field research in Milwaukee, and graphics, [Pager] shows that ex-offenders, white or black, stand a very poor chance of getting a legitimate job.... Both informative and convincing." - Library Journal "Marked is that rare book: a penetrating text that rings with moral concern couched in vivid prose - and one of the most useful sociological studies in years." - Michael Eric Dyson "How do you tell when a democracy is dead? When concentration camps spring up and everyone shivers in fear? Or is it when concentration camps spring up and no one shivers in fear because everyone knows they're not for 'people like us.'... Devah Pager uses a simple technique to show how mass incarceration has undone the small amount of racial progress achieved in the 1960s and '70s." - Nation"

Devah Pager is associate professor of sociology at Princeton University.

If this depressing book cannot convince people that racism is alive and well in America today, I don't know what could. Dr. Pager reports on an empirical research project in which teams of well-put-together white and black college students went job-hunting in and around Milwaukee, with one member of each team "marked" as an ex-convict. What she found is astonishing. Black job applicants WITHOUT drug convictions fared no better than white ex-cons WITH convictions; with "two strikes" against them, black men with a drug conviction had almost no chance of getting a call-back from a prospective employer. This problem was especially pronounced in the suburbs, which are gaining an increasing proportion of jobs despite the fact that many job-seekers remain in the cities. Dr. Pager also includes informative and well-written chapters on the state of mass incarceration in the United States today, as well as the massive and growing problem of prisoner reentry. With more than 600,000 people pouring out of prisons each year, Dr. Pager's book is a must-read for anyone concerned with the public policy aspects of the reentry problem. This is yet another excellent entry into the recent crop of books cataloging the collateral consequences of mass imprisonment. (See my list on "Prison World" for more.)

An absolute MUST READ if you are in the social work, social justice, criminal justice, sociology, or similar professions. This clearly explains how the US justice system is *not* meant for justice after all. Eye opening!

I want to buy more copies of this book ! Very insightful and well written. Devah Pagers did an outstanding job !

I have read about 4 books on mass incarceration so far this month, and this one was probably in the middle in terms of useful information.

This book is loaded with useful information for the student of corrections, criminology and/or sociology. While this is a book rich with very well done research, Pager's honest admission that low sample numbers in her research, (which need to be expanded on to bolster confidence in results), might undermine the message to some policy makers. Also, while Pager recommends a few ideas, the book seems to offer more in the way of what is going on and not as much about what to do about it. However, in my opinion, the paucity of solutions contributes to this as an objective piece of research. The bottom line is that this is a very relevant and important book that should start a dialogue.

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