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Opportunity and Empowerment in Female Prison Reentry in Wooster, OH

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Abstract

This study investigates the process of reentry after prison for women in Wooster, Ohio, using theories of morality and punishment by Durkheim and Foucault, general strain theory by Broidy and Agnew, and intersectionality by Hill Collins. Both quantitative and qualitative data was collected to gain a broad understanding of this particular court system and the people involved in it. Statistics on the people sentenced to prison through this court from January 2012 to October 2015 were gathered and analyzed to learn of the demographics of those sentenced to prison and how different backgrounds, especially gender, affect the charge and sentence length. To supplement this, interviews were conducted with four women in the process of reentry, as well as three staff members of the courthouse. The results revealed that despite the fact that many women sentenced to prison come from marginalized backgrounds, prison programs and a supportive probation department have aided successful reentry.

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Chapter One | Introduction

The United States has prided itself in being a world leader in many ways. However, it also leads the world in incarceration rates. Since the early 1980's, prisons and jails have been steadily swelling, peaking in 2011. Currently, the total prison population[1] stands at over 1.5 million—an astounding number, considering the entire population of the United States is 318 million (Carson 2015). While this population is mostly comprised of men, women are increasingly being incarcerated, with 2015 being a record year for the highest number of female prisoners. Such rates inspire the question of what leads women to crime in comparison to men due to gendered roles. Importantly, studies have shown differences in charges for men and women, with women often leaning towards drug and property crimes. This indicates that women have specific reasons behind their illegal activity. For many, crime is a response to adverse situations. As two theorists on female crime argue, this phenomenon "is rooted in the oppression of women" (Broidy and Agnew 1997:288). This has the implication that once women have served their sentences, they may be returning to environments in which they have few coping mechanisms. Because of this, it is important to study how women experience prison and navigate reentry.

This project is a capstone of my academic interest in the criminal justice system of the U.S. As a sophomore, I read *The New Jim Crow* by Michelle Alexander for a sociology course and was struck by the grave consequences of the War on Drugs that has disproportionately affected people of color and has resulted in a nation of mass incarceration. Other studies also show that generally, prisons are set up to punish rather than to rehabilitate, resulting in a vicious

[1] This thesis will focus on the prison system rather than incarceration as a whole, which includes both jail and prison populations.

cycle of incarceration. As I read more literature on the issue, though, it became evident that many studies focus on male prisoners and reentry. Despite the fact that the overwhelming majority of the prison population is male, my readings on feminist literature inspired me to turn my attention to the process of reentry for women. My interest was solidified by an internship at the Wayne County Court of Common Pleas. Through observation of several reentry court meetings, I noticed subtle differences in the experiences of, and the language used by, male and female participants. This internship also revealed the uniqueness of this particular court system in its use of a reentry court docket. The program piqued my curiosity as to how this court system differs from others and how they aid reentering citizens. Specifically, my study was propelled by the following research questions:

-How does this county differ from the rest of country?

-Who from Wayne County is being sentenced to prison? What are the demographic differences between men and women?

-How are women experiencing their process of reentry?

To respond to these questions, this project begins with a review of the literature on female reentry, in Chapter Two. Chapter Three analyzes theories relating to crime, prisons, and gender. Chapter Four explains the methodology used for gathering data. Chapter Five analyzes the results and the importance of the data. Ultimately, this project has studied the complex interactions between trauma, addiction, and crime for women and the impacts of prison programs and probation in a state of mass incarceration.

Chapter Two | A Review of the Literature

Section 1: Introduction

Due to the phenomenon of mass incarceration, the literature on prisoners has grown immensely in the past fifteen years. However, much of the research focuses on male experiences, as has been noted by several authors on female prisoners and reentry (Arditti and Few 2006, 2008, Benda 2005, Carson 2015, Cobbina 2010, O'Brien 2005, Richie 2001, Slocum et al. 2005). While this is legitimate given that the majority of prisoners—93%, to be precise—are male, the female population displays unique patterns (Carson 2015, percentage calculated by author). Following the lead of many publications on female reentry, this section will examine the most recent statistics on prisoners and reentry and the gendered differences within each subject.

As mentioned previously, the United States incarcerates more of its citizens than any other country in the world. However, in the last several years this population has declined. In 2014, the population was the smallest that it had been since 2005. There are several factors contributing to this, but primarily, less people are being admitted to detention facilities. In the past, admissions rose in proportion with the growth of the prison population, but from 2013 to 2014 there was a .5% decrease in admissions. This contrasts with previous patterns that showed any decline in prison population was often attributed to more people reentering society.

However, the female prison population differs statistically from the male population. While the general prison population has been decreasing recently, the female population is the highest that it has been since 2008. From 2013 to 2014, there was a 2% increase in women sentenced to one year of prison or more, contrasting with the overall decline in admissions. There are also differences in the crimes committed between men and women: women are more likely to commit property or drug-related crimes, whereas men are far more likely to commit violent crimes, with 7.5% of male prisoners and 4.4% of female prisoners committing violent

crimes. Additionally, there is a contrast in the racial composition of female and male prisoners. While black men (36.9%) make up a larger part of the incarcerated population than white men (32.3%), there are more white women (50%) than black women (21.3%) in the inmate population. Hispanics constitute 16.8% of the incarcerated population of women and 22% of men, with "Other" accounting for the remaining 11.9% for women and 8.8% for men (Carson 2015, percentages calculated by author).

With such a large amount of prisoners, a staggering number of people return to their communities each year. A study conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) outlines reentry patterns from 2005 to 2010, noting recidivism rates and gendered differences (DuRose et al. 2014). Importantly, the majority of formerly incarcerated people, 76.6%, are charged with committing new crimes within five years of being released. However, not all return to prison—the rates for that are 55.1% within five years. Recidivism also varies among types of crime. People initially incarcerated for property crimes are more likely to recidivate, followed by drug crimes. Offenders of violent crimes are least likely to recidivate, and within this category offenders of sexual assault and murder have lower recidivism rates than those of assault and burglary. Additionally, there are several other factors that lead to higher rates of recidivism—younger people and black people are more likely to recidivate.

Gender is another important factor for recidivism rates. The authors of the BJS report note that "recidivism rates (as measured by arrests) for males were higher than those for females, regardless of the incarceration offense or the recidivism period" (DuRose et al. 2014:11). This is evidenced by the fact that within five years of release, 77.6% of men had been rearrested in comparison to 68.1% of women. However, it is important to note that this report does not include reincarceration rates by gender. But as for recidivism, there is no difference between genders

within specific crimes. This means that while there are gendered differences in crimes initially, there is no difference in the rates that individuals reoffend within each crime. However, a quantitative study by Benda (2005) notes that there are specific factors that lead to recidivism for women: "urban residence, childhood and recent abuses, living with a criminal partner, selling drugs, stress, depression, fearfulness, and suicidal thoughts are stronger positive predictors of recidivism for women than for men" (2005:336). This is evidence that experiences of criminality are specific to gender. The following sections will review the literature on female reentry, noting that there are three main themes: women's backgrounds, prison experiences, and reentry itself.

Section 2: Women's Backgrounds

Overall, the literature notes that many women prisoners come from marginalized backgrounds which compounds reasons for committing crimes. However, the literature spends minimal time on this—usually the profiles of women before crime are only a paragraph or two in the studies. Additionally, much of the literature describes the profiles of women in prison, but not many discuss how these backgrounds affected women's pathways to crime. Nevertheless, there are specific patterns in the backgrounds of incarcerated women, with the main four being poverty, race, addiction, and mental and physical health issues especially as the result of gendered violence.

According to Carlen and Tombs (2006), prison has been used to solve the problems of poverty, given the high amount of poor people who are incarcerated. However, not all other studies reflect this. In fact, the studies in the BJS report did not include any information on socioeconomic status. Additionally, not a lot of the literature explicitly mentions poverty as a motivating factor for getting into crime but they do mention aspects that are related to socioeconomic status, such as education (Benda 2005, O'Brien 2006). However, Richie (2001)

bases her study of "reentry women" on those based in low-income neighborhoods and notes that just over a third of women prisoners in the United States had been employed full-time before imprisonment. Furthermore, in Slocum et al.'s (2005) study "almost 40 percent were unemployed for the entire 3-year reference period and just over half (51 percent) received welfare or some other kind of financial assistance" (1079). Thus there is evidence that poverty affects the likelihood of turning to crime; however, what remains to be studied is the specific reasons why poverty affects women's participation in crime.

Unlike poverty, race has been thoroughly explored in the literature. Most studies note that women of color, especially black women, are disproportionately imprisoned (Benda 2005, Carson 2015, Cobbina 2010, DuRose et al. 2014, O'Brien 2006, Richie 2001, Saada Sar et al. 2015). This is not representative of actual crime rates: currently there is no difference in drug-related or violent crime rates between races but black women are still criminalized (i.e., charged, convicted, and incarcerated) at higher rates than white women. Statistically, Native American girls are especially likely to be criminalized. In their study of girls in the criminal justice system, Saada Sar et al. (2015) note that young women of color are policed harsher for nonviolent crimes. O'Brien explains the historical basis for this. At the beginning of twentieth century, reformatories were suggested for women because they were supposedly kinder than penal institutions. However, it was primarily white women who were sentenced to reformatories while black women were sent to chain gangs. This has continued today: "Black women historically were disproportionately committed to custodial settings as they are today, while higher proportions of white women were once sent to reformatories or, currently, to treatment centers" (O'Brien 2005:4). Evidently, racism is incorporated into the criminal justice system on an institutional level. While this affects men as well—and as noted earlier, men of color are

criminalized even more disproportionately than women—racism and gender are tied uniquely throughout history.

Institutional racism has been fueled by the War on Drugs over the past thirty years. As noted by O'Brien (2005) and in the statistics, drug crimes constitute the majority of charges for women, and women are more likely to be imprisoned for drug crimes than men. This is correlated to the increase in stricter laws regarding drug-related offenses. These policies have disproportionately affected women according to O'Brien (2005) due to surveillance tactics and stringent law enforcement that target women who use or deal drugs, often in the home. However, due to the fact that more women are entering on drug charges suggests that they are users as well. This has been reflected by the samples in various studies—in the Slocum et al. (2005) study, 90% of the sample reported drug use at least three months prior to incarceration and in Arditti and Few's study, over half said outright that they struggle with addiction to alcohol or drugs. Addiction can be debilitating and in all the studies the participants discussed the difficulties of managing addiction while avoiding crime.

Overall, when women are incarcerated they enter prison in poor health both physically and mentally. Physically, the effects of struggling with addiction over the years often take their toll. Additionally, prison populations often have higher rates of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections than the general population (Richie 2001). This high rate of HIV is correlated to poverty and drug use. Health problems associated with diet and dental issues are grounded in societal background as well (O'Brien 2005). While this has not explicitly been recorded in other studies, the fact that women enter prison in poor health is noted in tandem with the lack of comprehensive health care in prison, which will be expanded on in section 3 (Richie 2001). This is also noted with mental health. Once again, the prison population shows

disproportionate rates of mental health issues. In Arditti and Few's (2006) study, 40% of their sample was clinically depressed. In another study of prison inmates, "8.9 percent of males and 18.5 percent of females had diagnosable serious mental illnesses (dysthymia, anxiety, schizophrenia, bipolar-manic, major depression, posttraumatic stress disorder)" (O'Brien 2005:6). Thus this is a gendered issue, shown by the higher rates of mental illness among women inmates.

An explanation for the above could be that women experience violence specific to their gender and often report more frequent instances of trauma (Saada Sar et al. 2015). Women in prison are much more likely to be victims of physical and sexual violence than male prisoners or non-prisoners (O'Brien 2005, Richie 2001, Arditti and Few 2006). Despite these studies as well as other local and regional studies, Saada Sar et al. notes that there is little national data examining rates of sexually abused girls and women in the prison system. The one national study shows that girls in detention are four times more likely to be sexually abused than boys. The rates are 31% in comparison to 7% according to this study, but this is on the lower end in comparison to local studies. However, these rates do not explain the type of sexual abuse: one study showed that 40% of the 56% of female prisoners that had experienced sexual abuse had been raped or sodomized, and in another study girls who had been abused had on average four different assaults before the age of twelve. This trauma starts at a young age—one study in California on incarcerated young women found that the age that girls are most likely to be sexually assaulted is five years old (Saada Sar et al. 2015). Additionally, women cannot escape the cause of the trauma: "Their accounts suggest that even though women in abusive relationships are incarcerated (and theoretically protected from physically violent partners on the outside) they continue to be controlled, manipulated, threatened, and even stalked by their

abusers" (Richie 2001:375). These statistics can lead to the sobering realization that many women enter crime because of their dire situations, as many juveniles cope with this trauma by supposed deviant behavior such as truancy or running away (Saada Sar et al. 2015) or drug and alcohol use (O'Brien 2005).

Section 3: Prison Experiences

Because many women enter prison with marginalized backgrounds, their process of reentry is ameliorated when their prison experiences are productive and helpful. When prisons provide programs for educational and vocational experiences, addiction management, and both mental and physical healthcare, women's accounts in the literature show their effectiveness. However, as Carlen and Tombs (2006) note, programs in prisons often address issues that women have been dealing with prior to any criminal activity and by emphasizing the individual actions of incarcerated women, it can produce feelings of guilt when they are told that they have the ability to choose their actions. Additionally, many women come from and will return to disenfranchised communities which limit opportunities to avoid crime, suggesting that inequity in American societies are at fault rather than individual women. But despite programs' innate issues, having programs in prisons are essential for the ease of reentry as they provide skills to avoid recidivism.

Considering that the large majority of women prisoners are minimally educated and employed, educational and vocational programs have great advantages. However, not all prisons are able to provide sufficient programs. While this could be outdated now, Richie (2001) claims that "most prison- and jail-based rehabilitation programs have not been systematically evaluated" (377). Additionally, programs can be limited depending on the length of the sentence in some prisons (O'Brien 2005). This is problematic in the face of data that shows that these programs

are especially useful for women. According to Benda's (admittedly small) sample (2005), "Each additional year of education cuts women's risks of self-reported illegal earnings by 18% but increases men's risk by 2%" (327). This is because skills that are taught to women in prison can be used when searching for employment. Moreover, maintaining a busy schedule helps some women pass time and maintain good behavior (Arditti and Few 2006, O'Brien 2005). Additionally, prison employment sometimes allows women to reenter with some savings (Arditti and Few 2008, O'Brien 2005). For instance, two women in O'Brien's (2005) study were able to buy cars right after release which aided greatly in all the commitments they had while reentering. Finally, some women cited employment in prison as a source of self-worth (O'Brien 2005).

Learning to manage addiction is also useful for self-worth. Again, women in prison use drugs or alcohol at disproportionately high rates, thus addiction programs are valuable to prison experiences. Accounts of women overcoming their addiction are noted in both O'Brien's (2005) and Arditti and Few's (2006) studies. However, not all prisons are responsive to addiction problems. Some women "indicated that the prison medical system was unresponsive to their health and addiction histories and may have unintendedly sustained their addictions" (Arditti and Few 2008:312). Additionally, some programs designed to help addiction are not sufficient:

> Of those women who were able to complete drug treatment while they were incarcerated, many I interviewed reported that short-term, prison-based intervention (in a setting where drugs are not as readily available) does not adequately prepare them to abstain from substance abuse or manage their addiction once they are released into the community. (Richie 2001:372)

This is caused by disorganization in prisons or just a lack of well-prepared programs (Richie 2001), and it may also have to do with the limited budgets of prisons and the politics that surround this, although this is not thoroughly explored in the literature.

Another factor that impacts reentry is the lack of sufficient healthcare in prisons. While emergency care is provided in prisons, very rarely is there consistent medical attention provided. This is important because women are more likely than men to seek medical services, and also women have more specific needs such as reproductive health (O'Brien 2005). Furthermore, because of their histories women require more integrative healthcare than just medication. Some women are prescribed medications to resolve health issues but this counters their struggles with addiction. Indeed, for some this led to their reincarceration (Arditti and Few 2008). Additionally, a study on Russian women prisoners notes that dental care is the most coveted service because missing teeth are often markers of imprisonment in both Russia and the U.S., but often prisons do not address dental health with proper care, choosing instead to pull teeth because it is cheaper and easier (Moran 2012). Thus healthcare in prison is necessary: Richie (2001) laments that "Such treatment is paramount for their successful return to the community, because their medical needs are often serious and urgent, presenting serious barriers to reintegration" (373).

Similarly, many women with serious symptoms of mental health illnesses go undiagnosed and untreated while incarcerated. In Richie's (2001) study, the majority of women experienced mental health issues, some being severe such as hearing voices or feeling suicidal, but even these were largely ignored by prison mental health professionals. Additionally, while many women are not able to obtain mental health treatment, some who are treated are only given medications to help them cope, rather than counseling or other methods. Of those who are medicated, many are uncomfortable with their prescribed medications due to their history of drug

abuse and choose instead to reject their medications (Arditti and Few 2008). Importantly as well, mental healthcare addressing trauma from gendered violence can be difficult to find in prisons (Saada Sar et al. 2015, Richie 2001). This is especially problematic because sexual violence from prison guards is increasingly becoming an issue and there are few services that address this (Arditti and Few 2006, Saada Sar et al. 2015). As women reenter society with compounded trauma or mental illnesses, their success is hindered. This is shown by the fact that of the sample of women in Arditti and Few's (2008) study, those who were reincarcerated were overall more depressed than when they were incarcerated for the first time.

From the accounts of women's experiences in prison, it appears that prisons overall do not prepare women for their reentry into their communities. While prisons can help women by providing solutions to issues based in their poverty, such as their education and employment skills, prisons further exacerbate problems when they disregard other circumstances under which women commit crimes.

Section 4: Reentry

It is important that prisons help prepare women for their reentry because when they are released, there are a plethora of challenges that they must overcome:

> The woman will need an apartment to regain custody of her children, she will need a job to get an apartment, she will need to get treatment for her addiction to be able to work, and initial contact with her children may only be possible during business hours if they are in custody of the state. The demands multiply and compound each other, and services are typically offered by agencies in different locations. (Richie 2001:381)

These competing demands can be impossible for some women to attend to. However, those who are able to balance these demands often have several factors helping them out: supportive family

and friend networks, availability of housing and employment, supportive parole officers, and reintegration services.

While family and friend relationships can have positive or negative effects, research shows that social support networks are especially important for women (Arditti and Few 2006, 2008, Benda 2005, O'Brien 2005). There are three main types of relationships that women depend on—the nuclear family (or pseudo-family), significant others, and children. Family (or pseudo-family) such as parents, grandparents, and siblings are often important for emotional support, but they also provide important resources after leaving prison, such as financial help, childcare, and having a place to stay. These methods of support help women become financially independent (Arditti and Few 2006, Cobbina 2010). As for emotional support, many women agree that relationships with female friends or relatives are more beneficial than those with men (Arditti and Few 2008, O'Brien 2005). These relationships are especially important because some women have to navigate complicated relationships with their parents (due to childhood abuse, for example) as they have to depend on parents for childcare or a place to stay after leaving prison. As O'Brien (2005) explains, "Healing the pain of past abuse and betrayal as well as identifying family members who can promote participants' growth in the transition, although elusive for some of the women, is an ongoing process for most" (113). Emotional support is also necessary for avoiding recidivism. Generally, when family members engage in or encourage criminal behavior it impacts women to reoffend. However, it is difficult to cut criminal family off, especially if they are providing any kind of aid: "58% (15 of 26) of incarcerated women and two-thirds (15 of 24) of paroled women reported having family who had been or were currently incarcerated. Because the family serves as one of the most efficient informal control agent in the reentry process, their involvement in crime often negatively impacts reintegration among

released prisoners" (Cobbina 2010:223). However, lack of family also has a negative effect on reentry women. Family loss or disconnection due to substance abuse or other negative interactions is especially difficult, with some resorting to self-medication to cope (Arditti and Few 2008).

Women are also greatly affected by their partner's lifestyles when reentering. Indeed, living with partners who engage in criminal activity presents a much higher risk of reoffending for women than for men (Benda 2005, Cobbina 2010). In fact, many studies indicate that women commit crimes because of a relationship with a man, often by coercion or pressure to engage in criminal activity and occasionally in defense from violence. For drug offenses, "Men rely on women's work in the home in several ways for its provision of a stable base: It enables them to steal or, alternatively, deal drugs" (O'Brien 2005:88). Additionally, staying sober is especially difficult for women with partners who are still struggling with addictions. However, this is not the sole motivator for turning to drugs or alcohol: "Our findings also suggest a deeper phenomenon: women did not get into trouble solely because their men were 'dealing' or doing drugs. Relational distress associated with intimate others was the underlying reason for problematic behaviors such as binge drinking or abuse of pain killers" (Arditti and Few 2008:316). Relationships with partners after incarceration can be fraught with distress because many women depend on their partners for a place to stay, but partners sometimes take advantage of this and abuse the women (Cobbina 2010, O'Brien 2005, Richie 2001).

For many women their relationships with their children are more important than with romantic partners. 80% of female prisoners are mothers and oftentimes women jump right back into being caretakers of their children after prison. For some this is rewarding, but for others it is added strain: "All the women reported that incarceration was problematic in that it put a strain on

family relationships and created stress for children. However, several women reported that incarceration actually helped strengthen their family ties because the family had to pull together for the wellbeing of the children and to help her get back on her feet" (Arditti and Few 2006:111). These relationships are strained by prison, due to the distance of prisons and the strict visitation hours that limit the amount of time that mothers can have with their children. Additionally, interactions with prison staff can make visits unpleasant (Arditti and Few 2006), and some children find the sight of their mothers in prison too upsetting and thus desist from visiting (Arditti and Few 2008). This research is further supported by the fact that every parent in O'Brien's (2005) study discussed the difficulty of being separated from their children and having to rely on others to bring their children to visit. For some, this contributes to the weakening of bonds of mothers to children. Overall, though, relationships with children are able to withstand the trials of incarceration. In Arditti and Few's 2006 study, the feeling of closeness with children only decreased from 79% to 71% throughout incarceration. Indeed, some women's maternal guilt from not being present during incarceration was explicitly keeping them from reoffending (Arditti and Few 2008). However, as O'Brien says, this is not a matter of personal resolve: "The actual outcome of reunification with children, however, is shaped by how the woman has resolved issues related to how she parented prior to incarceration, as well as financial and emotional factors that affect her ability to support them after her release" (2005:121). This further underlines the importance of the availability of prison programs.

The ability to parent well is also greatly affected by the availability of housing and employment upon release. This is the first step for anyone leaving prison and it is a predictor of their reintegration, according to O'Brien (2005): "Having a home—a place to go—is a taken for-granted part of structuring our daily lives. For women returning to the free world, identifying a

place to live provides the starting point from which they can build the relational supports they need to facilitate the transition" (52). However, formerly incarcerated people face many barriers in obtaining housing and employment, due to the laws that limit government aid and housing for those with criminal records. As mentioned previously, many women return to live with family or significant others because they are not able to provide for themselves financially immediately after release (Arditti and Few 2006, Cobbina 2010, O'Brien 2005). This can be a negative experience for women because they feel that they are not independent, or in more severe cases, they are forced to live with abuse (Cobbina 2010, Richie 2001). Overall, many accounts showed that women must rely on other people to obtain housing. In O'Brien's (2005) study, the majority of the women obtained housing and employment simply on good luck and the kindness of strangers, because structural constraints did not allow the formerly incarcerated women to be autonomous. This is especially difficult when resources are already limited in the communities to which the women are returning. For all the women in Richie's (2001) study, the search for housing has always been difficult, as they had all been homeless at least once in their lives and they had also always lived in substandard conditions.

Socioeconomic status also compounds difficulties of finding employment, and formerly incarcerated women have an especially hard time obtaining jobs. For the women in Arditti and Few's (2006) study, it took an average of two months for women to find a job after release. This is often caused by having a criminal record—many women expressed their experience of discrimination due to their status as former prisoners (Arditti and Few 2006, 2008, Cobbina 2010, O'Brien 2005, Richie 2001). The U.S. is unusual in its laws on criminal records—they are "exceptionally public, exceptionally punitive, and exceptionally permanent," as employers and landlords in other Western countries do not have this access, according to a law article (Lapp

2015:2). Furthermore, as time goes on without employment the search can become more difficult, especially after using resources available such as family help and community services. As Richie put it, "The women I interviewed described how the pull toward illegal activity becomes stronger as they exhaust these options" (2001:377). Additionally, when looking for employment reentry women find themselves in situations they are not well prepared for: "In various ways, the women discussed how their incarceration was a barrier not only to their obtaining employment but also to having a realistic notion about how they would assume the responsibilities that quite possibly they had not assumed previous to their incarceration" (O'Brien 2005:38). This is because prison is extremely routinized and women are held accountable for punctuality. Upon release the distance between various obligations as well as their places of work adds to the competing demands that reentry women must face (Cobbina 2010, Richie 2001). On top of this, some women feel that while having a job is beneficial for financial independence and for staying busy, it is exhausting to maintain, especially with entry-level jobs that have low wages and long hours (Arditti and Few 2008).

These difficulties can be greatly alleviated or hindered by parole expectations and parole officers. Cobbina (2010) notes that this is especially the case for women:

> The role that parole officers played in the reintegration process may be tied more broadly to the import of relationships for women. In general, women place a great deal of value on relationships (Giordano, Cernkovich, & Pugh, 1986; Steffensmeier & Allan, 1996). As a result, when the relationship between supervising officers and offenders are characterized by trust and fairness it makes it possible for women to divulge their problems and discuss how to solve them with their supervising officer. (227)

For an example of unsupportive parole officers, some women have specific hours for their job that make it difficult to attend parole meetings, but some officers are unyielding in their schedules (Cobbina 2010, O'Brien 2005, Richie 2001). Additionally some are persistent in knowing the daily activities and actions of women, making them feel that their privacy is invaded (O'Brien 2005). This is summarized by a participant in O'Brien's (2005) study, explaining that "'you're not allowed to be human. You're not allowed to make an error, and that error could cost me my freedom'" (83). However, when parole officers are helpful and understanding, they support women's reentry by being flexible with parole expectations to accommodate work schedules, promoting progress by providing favors, listening with full attention, and generally creating a relationship of equal exchanges (Cobbina 2010, O'Brien 2005). Importantly, parole officers are able to be more helpful when their offices have enough employees to lighten caseloads; otherwise they have no time to fully interact with reentering women (Cobbina 2010).

While this has not been explored in the literature, it is possible that parole officers are also able to be supportive when there are reintegration services offered in the community. This is another factor that aids women in reentering. Programs such as parenting classes, life skills classes, and housing aid are often utilized to facilitate reentry (Arditti and Few 2006, Richie 2001). However, an issue with these programs is that some do not consider race and gender specificities:

> Women of color returning from jail or prison do not feel embraced by their communities, and they are not identified as having the right to demand services from it. The sense of being marginalized within the context of a disenfranchised community has a profound impact on the ability of women to successfully reintegrate into it. (Richie 2001:383)

Similarly to programs within prisons, reintegration programs that are specialized to reentry women's needs have the greatest effect on successful reentry. However, funding may limit the services that programs can provide, although this has not been explored explicitly in the literature.

Overall, factors that help to alleviate the competing demands that women face during reentry are the best predictors of successful reintegration. Importantly, relationships with family, friends, romantic partners and even parole officers have a greater impact for women than men. While all formerly incarcerated people struggle with finding employment and housing, women face gendered challenges with this due to their increased reliance on abusive partners or family members. Furthermore, women with children identify strongly as their statuses as mothers, increasing their responsibilities as caretakers and breadwinners. With all this, strict parole expectations and large distances between responsibilities constrain women's abilities to maintain control of all their obligations as well as their mental health.

Section 5: Conclusion

A consistent theme in all the literature on female reentry is that reintegration in the United States can be extremely difficult. First of all, before even entering the prison system, the majority of women in prison are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Many have experienced poverty in the form of homelessness, poor education, and unemployment. This is also representative of the racism in the U.S. that has pushed people of color to low-income communities, as minorities are disproportionately represented in prisons, although this is more so in male prisoner populations. However, women are also more likely to enter prison with mental health issues, as girls and women in criminal justice systems have on average experienced nearly twice as many instances of trauma than their male counterparts (Saada Sar et al. 2015). Gendered

violence such as this has led to deviant behavior that ends in incarceration, as many cope by either running away or turning to drugs and alcohol. Because of this, the manner in which prisons treat such issues is crucial to reentry women's success. Prison programs that address addiction, as well as mental and physical health issues, provide basic necessary steps for women when they reintegrate after incarceration. Additionally, given the high number of women who have limited education and professional skills, educational and vocational programs aid women greatly for reentry. This is especially true since finding housing and employment after incarceration is the first step for most. Without a home or job, though, women struggle to manage responsibilities of children and parole expectations. Because of these competing demands, women especially rely on family and friends for financial aid and emotional support. Additionally, relationships with parole officers are important for women, as their support or lack thereof makes the difference between an overwhelming situation and a manageable one.

However, there are structural constraints put in place by the government that limit the positive factors for successful female reentry. Overall, designated funding from both local and national governments for programs in and out of prison is inadequate. This has the effect of both limiting the number of accessible to programs and also limiting the quality of programs, overlooking the importance of gender and race specific services. Additionally, underfunded probation offices are unable to give reentry women the attention and compassion needed for smooth transition.

Interestingly, the majority of reentry researchers end their publications with suggestions for policy changes. Apparently, the policies in place have a great effect on women's reintegration. As noted in the statistics, the United States incarcerates its citizens more than any other country in the world, and reimprisonment occurs for more than half of those released. This

is also beginning to become a gendered issue, as the female prison population has been increasing over the past few years in contrast to the overall decline of the prison population. This is partly due to stricter laws and longer mandatory minimum sentences, but additionally, the criminal justice system often fails to recognize the correlation between marginalized backgrounds and crime. Thus when the issues that led to crime in the first place are not addressed in prison, people reenter the same disenfranchised communities even further disadvantaged due to their status as a former prisoner.

In Europe, there are many more reintegration services and recidivism rates are lower. Arguably, this is preferable to the criminal justice system in the U.S. However, Carlen and Tombs (2005) argue that by implementing comprehensive in-prison programs that address systemic issues that women prisoners have faced in their lives, the criminal justice system encourages women to feel guilt for reacting in ways that are reasonable given the circumstances. Summarized, their claim is:

> Protected by its key ideological support, the myth of in-prison rehabilitation, and showcased via scientistic psychological programming, new managerialism and global marketeering, the women-prisoner reintegration industry relies not only upon a revivalism of psychological explanations of crime. It also silently colludes in the contemporary conversion of the traditional crime/imprisonment couplet (the previously persistent myth that female lawbreakers are imprisoned because of the seriousness of their crimes) into an implicit recognition that some women are, and always have been, more likely to be imprisoned for the complexity of the anti-social, gendered and exclusionary nature of their living conditions. (Carlen and Tombs 2005:339)

Evidently, crime that is based in systemic issues is reflective of governmental policies that do not address poverty, education, and sexism. However, in the U.S. this is perhaps not the first step to address reentry, as there are still a significant number of women in prison at this point in time. As of the most recent literature, it is evident that women are indeed criminalized for situations out of their hands, but they are also ill-prepared in prisons, and after release, for the transition back into their communities.

Chapter Three | Theoretical Analyses of Female Reentry

Section 1: Introduction

Because academic interest in female reentry is only recent, the existing literature has been called "theoretically shallow" (Martin 2013:494). However, female reentry is a unique facet of both structural and individual forces of crime and punishment. In order to understand the complexity of the idea of punishment in our society, Durkheim's writings on morality, punishment, and the division of labor will be analyzed in tandem with Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1975). Together, these theories suggest that punishment does not aim to actually correct and prevent crime; instead, it works to maintain order. This is shown by the increasing focus on the individual and the varied and discreet methods of surveillance used to encourage certain behavior. While Durkheim and Foucault provide a basis from which to understand crime and prison overall, it is important to recognize the effects on the individuals who undergo the process of punishment. Agnew's general strain theory and Agnew and Broidy's gendered specificities examine the lives lived and the choices made by both men and women that lead them to commit crimes. Overall, general strain theory argues that crime is often a rational choice given the stress that individuals endure and the lack of other coping mechanisms. Finally, Patricia Hill Collins's writings on intersectionality note the distinct differences felt by people from marginalized groups in any part of society, especially those with complex identities. This is relevant to female reentry given the unique experiences of women of color or other identities when navigating release.

Section 2: Laying the Groundwork—Durkheim and Foucault on Punishment

This section will examine the ways in which America's unique phenomenon of mass incarceration and ill-prepared reentry have been put into place by ideas of shared morality and discipline. Although approximately seventy years separate Durkheim's writings from Foucault's, they both provide important insight as to how the carceral system reflects societal views of

punishment. While Durkheim's theories of punishment have recently been thought to be irrelevant, he provided an important structure in which Foucault bases his *Discipline and Punish*. Additionally, the two both note the powers of self-discipline as well as the rise in societies of record-keeping (Ramp 1999). However, the two theories are structured differently; as Martin (2013) says, "what separates Foucault from Durkheim is not his lack of attention to meaning, but his emphasis on power in analyzing punishment's communicative role" (497). In contrast, Durkheim focuses on punishment stemming from the "collective conscience" of a society, as crime violates the shared morality. The resulting sense of vengeance has led to the focus on the criminal rather than the crime, as Foucault notes. Foucault adds that in order to maintain discipline, societies employ surveillance tactics that are seeped into everyday life, such as policing and record-keeping. Finally, Foucault notes that the economic systems with a high division of labor and capitalism helped to create this society of punishment, and a Durkheimian analysis of this phenomenon can help explain the motives behind such a movement.

Durkheim's main theories explain the power of a "collective conscience." He argues that morality would not exist if it were not for the conglomeration of people in societies, saying that moral duties "are, in reality, duties towards society" (1933:395). This shared morality holds the society together, as is evidenced with the fact that "acts that conform to the moral rule are praised and those who accomplish them are honored" (Durkheim 1953:63). Conversely, acts that violate the shared morality are punished. This comes from the fact that a shared morality is reinforced by socially approved actions, and when acts contradict the morality it is weakened. Because of this, Durkheim notes that one "must not say that an action shocks the conscience collective because it is criminal, but rather that it is criminal because it shocks the conscience collective" (1933:47). Consequently, reactions to crime are always steeped with a sense of

vengeance as acts that violate the shared morality also violate individuals' own sense of morality if they subscribe to the conscience collective. However, Durkheim believed that this vengeance was more noticeable in pre-modern societies, and that physical, violent punishments would lessen as societies developed and became more complex. Garland (1999), a Durkheim scholar, notes that this may have been more accurate at the time of Durkheim's writing, but today punishment comes in the form of mass incarceration in the United States, a rather extreme form of punishment. This can be explained by the idea—originally a Durkheimian concept that Garland expands on—that the less cohesive the society the weaker its conscience collective, and the more punishment there is: "Punishment is used most frequently where authority is weakest, but in such situations, it has least effect. Conversely, the more authoritative, stable, and legitimate is the political order, the less need there is for force-displaying uses of punishment" (Garland 1999:31). This punishment is less effective because rather than the issue being individuals acting deviantly, the society is not socializing these individuals well enough.

Foucault also notes this trend in contemporary punishment, arguing that norms rather than laws are what define criminality and punishment. Foucault claims that the aim of punishment is not entirely to catch wrong-doers; instead, it is to maintain discipline within the society. This explains why institutions choose to focus on the criminal, and his or her life story, rather than the crime itself. These two concepts together suggest that contemporary states and societies punish particular lifestyles and identities. Foucault explains the historical processes behind this, noting that punishment shifted to focus on the criminal rather than the crime at the beginning of the nineteenth century, when it was recognized that crime was based in life experiences and perpetrators were often on the fringes of society. But instead of recognizing this with compassion, punishment developed classist tendencies: Foucault cites a letter from a judge

to the king of France noting that there was a new "'severity towards the poor, a concerted rejection of evidence, a rise in mutual mistrust, hatred and fear'" (77). This could be attributed to the fact that crimes started to shift from violence towards fraud and other petty property crimes, although this shift is due to the increased prevalence of capitalism. Within the nature of capitalism there are differences forged between the classes. Garland (1999) argues that in communities that are not homogenous, crime and punishment deepen rifts between certain groups. This is further exemplified by Foucault's argument that punishment is selective about legalities—not every act is punished and certain acts are punished more harshly. Foucault (1975) attributes this to the fact that with the focus on the criminal, individuals become defined as "delinquents" rather than simple offenders, as they are "linked to [their] offenses by a whole bundle of complex threads (instincts, drives, tendencies, character)" (253). Additionally, these lives are defined and monitored based on the "norms" of the society rather than the law itself. Thus although monitoring crime appears to be the goal of punishment, it is instead to monitor certain lifestyles deemed as delinquent.

In order to maintain this sense of discipline, states use subtle tactics. Overall, Foucault defines the technique that states use as "panopticism," which is comprised of various methods to maintain constant surveillance and control over bodies. As Foucault notes, the methods are so varying and insidious that it would be difficult to note all of them; thus, the main three that I will focus on are record-keeping, policing, and the sliding scale of appropriate behavior.

Record-keeping and examinations have helped normalize surveillance, as "normal" individuals are examined less. Additionally, record-keeping and examinations have also achieved normalization by becoming an integral part of every institution in societies. Foucault notes the rise of institutions was indeed its own tactic of distributing bodies in "functional sites," as this

made it easier to keep track of abnormal situations; for example, ill people being contained in hospitals. These sites, including military, factories, and schools, used record-keeping to supervise attendance and examinations to measure competence, among other examples. While this was evident in all institutions, educational institutions became the most common and continuous—an "uninterrupted examination"—as most people experience it continuously from an early age (Foucault 1975:186). As Foucault notes, the examinations served as knowledge both for the student and the teacher: students were made to understand what they were supposed to know and teachers were able to understand what constituted normality in these developing citizens. Indeed, this type of surveillance is "inherent to [the practice of teaching] and which increases its efficiency" (Foucault 1975:176). Garland (1999) expands on this from a Durkheimian perspective, noting that schools are an important location for learning the norms of the society and that punishment is used to enforce "normal" behavior.

The educational institution is also an example of how policing is performed by many more people than actual law enforcement officers. With the rise of the prison, there was also the emergence of social sciences such as psychology, sociology, and criminology, along with various professions that analyzed abnormal individuals. As Foucault explains, this produced "an epistemological 'thaw' through a refinement of power relations; a multiplication of the effects of power through the formation and accumulation of new forms of knowledge" (224). Thus, people like teachers, psychologists, and social workers help maintain the normalization of surveillance by administering examinations and increasing scrutiny by focusing on those who do not follow the norms.

Furthermore, this surveillance is carried out by not only punishing disobedience, but also by rewarding obedience. This has been done through the assignment of ranks and hierarchies in

institutions (which is also a tactic of record-keeping). Upon the realization of "good" behavior, individuals are assigned higher ranks, and the opposite is done to individuals who have misbehaved. This happens especially in an educational setting as it helps to determine an individual's capacity as an adult, and also (importantly) because it encourages "a constant pressure to conform to the same model," once again reinforcing normality. As Foucault (1975) notes, this also fosters individualization through which the "nature" of people is "measure[d] and hierarchize[d]" (183). Additionally, punishing through individualization "introduces, through this 'value-giving' measure, the constraint of a conformity that must be achieved" (Foucault 1975:183). In short, with the sliding scale of appropriate behavior and individualization individuals and their behavior are defined in relation to the norms around them.

This has also been a useful tool with the rise of capitalism and a high division of labor. According to Foucault, the high division of labor started in factories in order to easier surveil workers to confirm that job performance was up to par, minimizing loss of capital. However, according to Durkheim such a high division of labor makes for a weaker conscience collective and greater "anomie" (the feeling of isolation from the rest of society), noting that "on the one hand, every individual depends more directly on society as labor becomes more divided; and on the other, the activity of every individual becomes more personalized to the degree that it is more specialized" (1933:101). Durkheim argued that people traditionally established connections and communities through their common occupations, thus the increasing specialization of individual professions (which continues today) affects the stability of the conscience collective. Durkheim also noted that this can also be exacerbated through disparities in education and class that limit individuals' potentiality to perform the labor best suited to their personalities, saying that "labor is divided spontaneously only if society is constituted in such a way that social inequalities

exactly express natural inequalities" (1933:370). Thus by using both Foucault and Durkheim it is possible to see that certain groups of people are unable to achieve their full potentiality in their professions through constantly being regulated to lower ranks due to their determinedly delinquent lives. This in turn leads to anomie and subsequently to their lack of conformity to societal norms. From this point the supposed delinquency of certain groups is confirmed in the eyes of both the state and the conscience collective, and they are punished—with the prison as the final confirmation of the delinquency of individuals.

From this perspective, reentry as an overall phenomenon can be examined as an extension of punishment, especially punishment of certain groups. This will be noted in tandem with the unique history of the United States, including its history of racism and sexism as well as its capitalistic nature, steeped in its origins of individual rights and liberties.

But first, it is important to return to Durkheim's idea of punishment stemming as a reaction from the conscience collective. As noted, punishment is often enacted with a sense of vengeance; as Garland (1999) says, "passion lies at the heart of punishment" (20). This passion can be especially strong when there is a growing sense that morality is being threatened, which comes about from an increase of crimes committed against the conscience collective. The state of mass incarceration in the U.S. suggests that the conscience collective is weakening. This can be attributed to the fact that the U.S. has a wide range of diverse people and, historically, there has been strife between groups. As Garland (1999) argues, social order is "a matter of subduing competing social movements and social groups who seek to create a different society and to establish an alternative moral and legal order" (28). Considering the ill treatment of people of color, women, the mentally ill, immigrants, and other marginalized groups throughout time in the United States, their attempts to shift the conscience collective are understandable. However, the

rest of the population of the U.S. remain in power and deviation from their norms results in punishment to display and maintain their power. This is evident with the fact that a disproportionate amount of incarcerated people are from marginalized groups, as noted in the review of the literature. Martin (2013) additionally notes the passionate punishment enacted against people of color in his critique of Foucault:

> Greater obedience is demanded from those whose physical difference marks them as aberrational or threatening, while others appear more docile because of physical conformity to idealized notions of class, color and sex. State or police gazes fall differently on different bodies. While some are provided space to be self-policed or policed without physical force, others are controlled and punished with violence. Political technologies do not target 'the body', but classed, racialized and sexualized bodies. (502)

Garland attributes the disparate treatment of different types of bodies to the lack of proper socialization through education. In the U.S. this can be observed by the fact that many communities of color are not afforded the same funds for education as all-white communities. Relatedly, these inequalities in education are reinforced through the division of labor, as both Durkheim and Foucault note that when individuals are not able to comply with the norms during their education then they are limited to lower-ranking occupations. This can help explain how marginalized groups often struggle to escape from poverty. Additionally, the communities in which marginalized groups live are often policed with higher frequencies. As Martin notes, "ghetto neighborhoods increasingly resemble prisons, and prisons ghetto neighborhoods" (498). This also evident with the increased surveillance of women, as when they commit crimes they are doubly punished:

> Given that criminal behavior is most often perceived as a male bastion, women who break the law suffer the double impact of not only violating a given social norm, but of violating sex role expectations as well. This double violation helps to determine the nature of women's prisons, the internalization of disciplinary surveillance (Foucault 1977), and the additional challenges women face in at-tempting to resume power once they are released (O'Brien 2005:26).

This provides an important theoretical perspective for studying female imprisonment and reentry. Women—especially women of color—are pressured to maintain to their race and gender roles and any deviance results in their punishment.

However, this societal pressure is generally overlooked when a carceral system is the main form of punishment. As noted previously, individualization has become an important facet of surveillance through the methods of record-keeping, policing, and hierarchizing behavior. In the U.S., this coincides with the nation's founding principles of individual rights and liberties. This has been made evident with the language on and treatment of prisoners and parolees. As Turnbull and Hannah-Moffat (2009) note in a theoretical study of reentry women in Canada, there is some extent of recognition of the life histories that lead individuals to crime (such as poverty or violence) by parole officers through specified constraints placed on parolees. However, the criminal justice system still frames this deviant behavior as the women's choice rather than as reactions to difficulties in their lives, which are often gendered: in fact, "the paroled subject is not simply cast as a passive victim—her susceptibility to crime is constituted as a character flaw (and thus a risk factor), as is her tendency to be dependent" (Turnbull and Hannah-Moffat 2009:6). This mindset is problematic as it restricts female offenders to gender roles of weakness in the face of negative influences, rather than recognizing the limited choices

of women who are under pressure from male counterparts. As noted in the review of the literature, many women do commit crimes because of men—but rather than it being a sign of their vulnerability, it is often a rational choice to either avoid or end harmful interactions.

Overall, the process of individualization in parole is in fact a method used to minimize recidivism. But rather than doing so in the interest of the offenders, parole boards work to lower return rates in order to maximize their capital and legitimize their role. As Halsey (2010) notes in his study on reentry in Australia, "re-entry, in short, is too often imagined to be an exclusively 'individual' journey authored solely by the quantum of commitment of the parolee instead of as a collective process whose quality or progress is not always reducible to short-term bureaucratically measured outputs (clean urine tests, zero blood alcohol levels, good program attendance, etc.)" (550). By focusing so intently on individual choices, punishment continues to target delinquency rather than the social context in which offenses occur, even after prison.

This is in part what makes reentry extremely difficult in the U.S. But Foucault further argues that prisons do quite the opposite of eliminating crime—rather, they produce delinquency. As noted previously, while certain lifestyles are regulated before incarceration, the prison is the ultimate form of power for disciplining bodies. Foucault (1975) notes that in replacement of the "annihilated body of the tortured criminal" of the past, the prison became the most significant marker of criminal bodies, thus condemning individuals to a permanent status of delinquency due to the "link" that is made between the offender and the prison (254). Additionally, as noted with the nature of parole, surveillance of these delinquents continues well after leaving prison. In fact, Martin (2013) points out the innate problem of the idea of reentry: "Often conceptualized through a prison/freedom binary, it suggests a clean break between inside and outside" (494). Citing Foucault's concept of a "carceral archipelago," Martin (2013) notes that delinquents are

punished after their prison sentence has been completed. This is especially noticeable with the increasing importance of the criminal record in the U.S. As discussed in the review of the literature, criminal records are exceptionally public in this country and have severely limited former prisoners from obtaining employment and housing, for example. This is due to the negative association with prison that reinforces offenders' status as delinquents—"as objects of public policy, reentering prisoners are treated especially severely in part because of their association with an oppressed group in a historical and social context of racial hierarchy" (Martin 2013:502). As Martin notes, crime is often linked with people of color in the U.S. despite the emergence of "color-blind" legal arguments. Thus any person who commits crime is relegated to this negative view; however, when people of color commit crimes their delinquency is only reinforced. From a Durkheimian perspective, this is because punishment of offenders legitimize the outrage from the conscience collective. Furthermore, when the same offenders commit crime again, the conscience collective is reinforced, and the delinquency of certain populations reaffirmed. Following this logic, these emotions help to build the barriers to successful reentry for former prisoners.

O'Brien (2005) sums this up by noting that because the criminal justice system is not set up to rehabilitate, it is expected that offenders will return to the same disadvantaged environments from before prison and will reoffend. Citing Foucault, O'Brien (2005) labels this as a naked expression of power of the state. This evidence, as well as the examples of the individualization of parole, suggest that the U.S. maintains this system of mass incarceration to establish discipline, especially over the bodies of women, the mentally ill, the drug addicted, and people of color. However, as noted previously, the high rates of imprisonment are not effective as deterrents to crime nor as a form of social solidarity. This is apparent not only by the high

return rates in the U.S. but also by the fact that marginalized groups continue to be excluded from the rest of society, as shown by inequities in education, employment, housing, income, and treatment. The increased surveillance and punishment of these marginalized groups only deepens the rift. Furthermore, the fact that these disparities are solely attributed to individual choices entrenches the system as it is.

Section 3: Structural Barriers as Effects on Individual Lives—General Strain Theory and Intersectionality

Although Durkheim and Foucault provide an important perspective on punishment by noting the general societal factors that lead to certain groups being incarcerated more than others, it is important to remember that factors in individual lives also affect the likelihood of incarceration. Additionally, Durkheim and Foucault do not focus on the differences of life experiences between men and women, especially as to how gender affects crime. Robert Agnew's (1992, Broidy and Agnew 1997) general strain theory can help explain how and why women turn to crime in response to stressors in their life that are unique to their gender. Furthermore, Durkheim and Foucault also do not note the impact of having multiple marginalized identities. Patricia Hill Collins (2000) can expand on the importance of considering not only gender in reentry studies, but race and class as well. Together with studies supporting these theories, the nuances of gender and other identities affecting reentry become visible.

In order to understand the effects of gender on crime, Agnew's general strain theory (GST) must be explained first. GST is a microtheory that "focuses on the individual and his or her immediate social environment" (Agnew 1992:48) and explains which factors lead people to crime. This theory expands on previous strain theories such as Merton's, noting three main types of strain that cause negative emotions and reactions which can lead to acting delinquently. The three main components are the following: "strain as the actual or anticipated failure to achieve

positively valued goals, strain as the actual or anticipated removal of positively valued stimuli, and strain as the actual or anticipated presentation of negative stimuli" (Agnew 1992:60).

Failure to achieve positively valued goals can be divided into two sections—tangible and non-tangible. Tangible goals can be those such as achieving a high GPA in school or attaining a well-paying job. However, non-tangible can be objectives in which the individual hopes to be treated equally or with justice. These types of goals, given their ambiguity, can be more difficult to realize. The next type of strain, loss of positive value, can also be considered more tangible. Examples can include death of loved ones, loss of romantic partners or friends, or loss of employment. The final type of strain, presentation of negative stimuli, covers a wide array of possibilities. Some examples are physical and mental abuse at any point in life, negative experiences in school or work, negative relationships of any kind (which are defined by Agnew as "relationships in which others are not treating the individual as he or she would like to be treated" (1992:50)), as well as biological discomfort that Agnew calls "unconditioned negative stimuli" (1992:58). This last example can include pollution, heat, lack of personal space, and high density in the population. While Agnew does not explicitly state this, these types of strains are more commonly found amidst lower socioeconomic neighborhoods. Class and other identities could affect the other types of strain felt by individuals as well.

Strain is not simply caused by isolated events, however. Stressors can be cumulative, resulting in an aggregation of strain. Events can be additive, just piling up on top of each other, or interactive—each event gives significance to another. For example, someone who was abused as a child and then as an adult could consider the stress from each event an interactive effect, further accumulating the strain felt. In contrast, for someone who failed to achieve a high salary

at one point in their life and later on lost a relative to death, such stressors would just add up in the list of strain in the individual's life.

Similarly to accumulation of strain, there are four other factors that are involved in the experience of strain that can increase negative emotions: magnitude, recency, duration, and clustering, to use Agnew's (1992) words. Magnitude as described by the author can include various definitions based on the type of strain:

> With respect to goal blockage, magnitude refers to the size of the gap between one's goals and reality. With respect to the loss of positive stimuli, magnitude refers to the amount that was lost. And with respect to the presentation of noxious stimuli, magnitude refers to the amount of pain or discomfort inflicted. (Agnew 1992:64)

For an example of magnitude within presentation of negative stimuli, being raped could be considered more stressful than being slapped by a partner. However, ratings of magnitude can be subjective. Overall, then, the greater the size of the strain then the greater effect the stressor has on the individual. As for recency, this refers to the time that has passed since the strainful event. Agnew notes that events that have happened within the last three months have the largest effect. However, the duration of the event could change the effectiveness, even if it occurred over three months in the past. As Agnew states, "discrete events may be unimportant except to the extent that they affect chronic events" (1992:65). This means that events that are encountered for a short period of time are rarely considered a stressor unless they are added to events that are endured for a long period of time. An example of this could be incarceration itself: people who are only put in jail for a few days will experience less strain than those imprisoned for long sentences. Finally, clustering can affect the amount of stress felt as well: data has shown that

suicide is more likely to occur when events occur within a few weeks (Agnew 1992:66). If negative outcomes such as this can transpire, then crime could be another result.

However, coping strategies are an alternative to crime that deal with the strain presented above. Coping mechanisms can include cognitive, behavioral and emotional methods. To begin, cognitive coping is comprised of three aspects. The first, "ignore[ing]/minimize[ing] the importance of adversity" (Agnew 1992:67) means saying that a goal or value is not important or less important than others. For example, upon separating from a romantic partner, one could claim that being in a relationship is not as important as their job, using relational language. Another example could be that after losing a job, one could say that money is of no importance. In this case, the individual is placing no value at all on a previously esteemed goal. Cognitive coping methods can also include "maximize[ing] positive outcomes/minimize[ing] negative outcomes" (Agnew 1992:67). This can mean setting lower goals—for example, aiming for a GPA of 3.0 instead of an original 4.0 in school. This case is also consistent with reconstructing a more positive outlook on the situation—as Agnew notes, data shows that "individuals with poor grades…often report that they are doing well in school" (1992:68). By doing so, individuals are able to gain autonomy from their stress. This is similar to the final aspect of cognitive coping which is "accept[ing] responsibility for adversity" (Agnew 1992:68). This means placing the blame of strain on oneself, even if it was unrelated to the individual's actions. For many people, this means claiming that they "deserved" the consequences. This aids people in coping because otherwise, their conceptions of a just world are broken. For example, it is easier for a woman to say that it was her fault that she was abused by her partner because otherwise, she would have to face the fact that she is in an abusive relationship. Thus overall, cognitive coping methods are constituted by individuals' shift in mentalities regarding stress.

In contrast, behavioral coping mechanisms involve a change in an individual's conduct. This can be separated into two distinct patterns. The first is "maximizing positive outputs/minimizing negative outputs" (Agnew 1992:69). This method refers to actively searching for different outlets to avoid stress. Agnew uses the example of an adolescent transferring schools or skipping class to avoid negative stimuli associated with education. As is evident, there are more deviant ways of maximizing positive outputs and minimizing negative outputs, such as skipping school instead of transferring. Another deviant method is vengeful behavior. This involves acting out of revenge towards those who perpetuate stress, either with physical violence or with "incorrigible behavior" (Agnew 1992:69). The final coping mechanism is emotional. This is defined by alleviating negative emotions through therapeutic work, such as meditation, yoga, therapy, and medication. However, many people lack the means to acquire these methods, despite their effectiveness. In turn, some people turn to self-medication such as alcohol or illicit drug use.

In general, the above coping mechanisms are often unavailable to certain people, which leads them into crime—exemplifying the point of GST. There are several factors that contribute to people being unable to use coping methods: "initial goals/values/identities of the individual," "individual coping resources," "conventional social support," and "macro-level variables" (Agnew 1992:71-72). The first refers to the fact that if high value is placed on these goals or identities, then strain will be greater. Many people do not have other goals/values/identities to rely on, creating more negative feelings when such values are unattainable. The second, "individual coping resources," explains that some individuals do not have the emotional capacity to help themselves overcome strain. High self-esteem and self-efficacy aid in coping, but not all individuals have such skills. Because of this, adversity could become an everlasting cycle.

Additionally, "conventional social support" such as healthy relationships with family members and friends is a privilege for those who have it, as it provides alleviation for informational, instrumental, and emotional issues, according to Agnew (1992). Finally, macro-level effects can influence all of the above barriers to coping. Various environments create specific mentalities that are conducive to crime—such as prisons themselves, which can be defined as criminogenic atmospheres. Furthermore, certain environments provide less options for coping; for example, poorer people cannot move away from their neighborhood or quit their job in the face of adversity.

However, Agnew (1992) acknowledges that little attention has been paid to the effect of identities formed through the macro-social environment on strain. It is important, then, that further studies expand on this research, because "criminologists must recognize that individuals and groups may experience the strainful events in such inventories differently" (Agnew 1992:62). Fortunately, Agnew collaborated with Lisa Broidy to produce an examination of gendered effects within GST.

In order to counter previous theories that have claimed that women commit less crime because they experience less strain, Broidy and Agnew tackled two main questions: the first asks why males are more likely to be labeled criminal than females and the second asks why females turn to crime. To start, previous literature has shown that females experience the same amount of, if not more, strain than males (Broidy and Agnew 1997). Furthermore, other studies have found that women rate strain as more stressful than men do. Females also experience strain specific to their gender such as sexual violence, insubordination, abortion, and in general subscribing to gender roles (such as being emotionally supportive to people in their lives).

Such gendered strain must be examined in detail in order to refute the claim that men experience more strain. As shown with the previous descriptions of GST, there are three main types of strain. The first type, difference between goals and conceptions of fairness, contrasts between genders: men are generally more interested in monetary success whereas women are concerned with social relationships due to their socialized gender roles. Furthermore, men are more interested in distributive justice, whereas for women procedural justice is more important. As for the difference between genders in regard to loss of positive stimuli as well as the presentation of negative stimuli, females are generally more limited due to their gender which causes strain. In contrast, men experience strain because of competition with their peers. They also experience financial strain more often. These differences are correlated to the fact that women commit less violent crimes and are more likely to perform self-harming deviance such as illicit drug use. Furthermore, women commit fewer serious crimes because they are more often pressured to feel and act more responsible for children and others due to social norms.

Overall, Broidy and Agnew show that due to the differences in strain felt by men and women, it is impossible to say that men feel more strain than women. Thus, this cannot be an explanation for the increased crime in the male population. However, another reason for this phenomenon is that men and women react to strain differently. First of all, women respond with depression more often than men. Depression generally causes self-harm rather than crimes inflicted towards others. Anger is a more common base emotion in crime—Broidy and Agnew say that “anger was most likely to lead to delinquency when depression was low” (1997:283). Interestingly, men and women report feeling anger in response to strain at similar rates; however, the two groups experience anger differently. Women are more likely to internalize anger with accompanying feelings of anxiety and fear. Conversely, men are more aggressive in their

anger—they feel a "moral outrage" (Broidy and Agnew 1997:282). This can be explained by the fact that women generally place more blame on themselves in contrast to men. It should be mentioned that race affects perceptions of anger, as black women tend to view their own anger less negatively. In contrast, white women view their anger as "failure of self-control" (Broidy and Agnew 1997:282). However, it appears that regardless of race, there is a gendered difference between the settings in which people feel anger. Men are more likely to experience anger when they are being publicly evaluated, such as at school or in competitions. Women feel anger in more private settings, specifically surrounding relationships. Because anger is a major factor in leading to crime, this explains the fact that men commit more crime.

Additionally, men and women have differing reactions to strain and negative emotions. Consistent with the evidence shown above, men are more likely to turn to crime out of strain. Using GST, Broidy and Agnew note that women use more of the traditional coping mechanisms in response to strain. For example, women are more likely to ignore or suppress their anger, demonstrating cognitive coping. Women also generally have higher social support which can aid in alleviating negative emotions. Furthermore, women are less willing to risk relationships by engaging in crime. Another facet that affects this is women's commonly lower self-esteem, which prevents them from pushing social boundaries by acting deviantly. Stereotypical gender roles affect all—"for women, aggressive responses to provocation are more common among those high in gender-role masculinity than low-masculinity subjects" (Broidy and Agnew 1997:285). Such specified gender roles can be traced to childhood, as girls are often socialized to follow the rules whereas boys are permitted to be more recalcitrant.

Overall, the above has shown why males commit crime more often than females. The authors further elaborate on why females turn to crime in detail. This can be divided once more into the three strains identified in GST.

The first, goals and expectations versus reality, can be characterized by several factors specific to females. For example, Broidy and Agnew (1997) point out that while men have historically been breadwinners, there has been a recent trend of women becoming heads of households. Because of this, the financial strain on women has increased. This is furthered by the fact that women are still subject to discrimination in the workplace, preventing them from obtaining their goals or expectations for finances. Additionally, another goal or expectation shared by men and women alike is to be treated equitably; however, women are consistently denied fair treatment domestically, professionally, and socially.

As for the loss of positive stimuli, women face further discrimination. This is manifested in the social control of female behavior. This includes the risks of traveling alone, focus on appearances, mixed messages regarding sexual activity, and pressures to conscribe to femininity. Furthermore, while Broidy and Agnew do not explicitly say this, these barriers could also greatly affect marginalized groups who are also expected to fit images of white, middle-class women. But regardless of race or class, socialization at childhood can make these barriers especially difficult. While female children are allowed to participate in supposed masculine activities, at puberty they are expected to switch to specified feminine codes. Such conformity can provide stress for women, starting in their adolescence.

Finally, the presentation of negative stimuli for women can be not only the above stated insubordination and financial strain, but abusive relationships as well. Data has shown that females are more likely to be abused both sexually and non-sexually within their families which

has caused more females to run away. However, this then puts women in difficult predicaments in which they are unable to find legitimate housing or employment, thus turning to delinquency. This is an example of Broidy and Agnew's (1997:288) statement that "female crime is rooted in the oppression of women." Moreover, this very knowledge of societal devaluation of women causes additional strain for females (Broidy and Agnew 1997).

To conclude the analysis of GST in relation to gender, the authors note that these types of strain disproportionately affect women of color and women in poverty, further saying that "it is these women who are most likely to be serious offenders" (Broidy and Agnew 1997:294). Thus not only can strain be felt differently by gender—race and class are also important factors. The effects of this can perhaps by expanded by Patricia Hill Collins' theory of Black feminist thought and intersectionality.

While the term "intersectionality" was coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw, the concept was popularized by Hill Collins when she first began to examine the interactive effects of race, gender, and class in the United States. Hill Collins notes that throughout history, such identities have repeatedly been divided into hierarchy. While being on the lower end of the hierarchy is difficult enough, when two or more subjugated identities coincide such groups have experienced significant disadvantage. As Hill Collins states, "intersectional paradigms remind us that oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and that oppressions work together in producing injustice" (2000:18). This is to say that oppression, like strain, can be cumulative and affect people in varying manners. Hill Collins focuses specifically on the ways that black women have been affected by this concept, noting that due to the intersections of gender and race, "U.S. Black women's similar work and family experiences as well as our participation in diverse

expressions of African-American culture mean that, overall, U.S. Black women as a group live in a different world from that of people who are not Black and female" (2000:23).

Thus far, very few studies have applied Black feminist thought to studies on female reentry. However, Patricia O'Brien's (2001) book on women reintegrating into mainstream society after incarceration supports Hill Collins' use of outsider-within relationships. She notes that such a methodology is a legitimate form of women's epistemology, which she seeks to demonstrate through her research on the process for women reentering. She succinctly explains the reasoning for such an epistemology, as it "…is based on women's experience and provides a partial framework for how to assess individual development and the processes of change as formerly incarcerated women move toward developing empathy for self and others after release" (O'Brien 2001:58).

The idea of establishing a framework to analyze individuals' pathways to crime also correlates with Agnew's GST, in that it is necessary to understand the effects of gender on crime and reentry. However, by using Hill Collins explicitly, O'Brien acknowledges the concept of Black feminist thought and thus that race and gender must be considered in tandem. In contrast, the two studies that focus on GST do not consider the impact of race or class differences upon women. However, they do support several aspects of GST. A study by Barrick et al. (2014) examines the effects of social ties on recidivism, one of the factors in the process of reentry. This relates to GST as social ties can be positive stimuli. The authors reference Agnew directly in saying that "…most modern criminological theories anticipate that social ties should reduce criminal behavior" (Barrick et al. 2014:280). Thus while GST does not generally focus on strain within prison affecting crime after release, the authors connect the importance of strain in any point of women's incarceration processes. Indeed, the study found that women with more contact

with family while in prison had lowered rates of recidivism afterward, consistent with the literature reviewed in the previous chapter. The results also revealed that contact with children during incarceration was sometimes detrimental for women, which also holds true to Broidy and Agnew's claim that women experience strain when they feel and are responsible for others—and in this case, parenting can be especially difficult while being incarcerated.

Further evidence of GST within female reentry is shown in Scroggins and Malley's study on the presence of various reentry programs in major U.S. cities. The authors reference Agnew in saying that "histories of victimization are associated with female offending" (Scroggins and Malley 2010:148). They then correlate the history for such women to the need to provide aid after incarceration, given that many return to the same communities. However, not every city is equipped with the necessary skills and resources to help women navigate potential stressors. The study showed that "counseling and mental health services were offered by less than half of the programs," despite the fact that "more than 40% of incarcerated women report prior sexual or physical abuse, and in some cases nearly half have come from family environments that may have caused mental distress" (Scroggins and Malley 2010:156). This is consistent with GST in saying that abuse is a major stressor that often leads to crime for women. Thus the two studies based on GST show that strain does have legitimate effects on women and furthermore, that strain can continue after the initial crime and subsequent incarceration. This data can help explain how the formerly incarcerated are often rearrested and reincarcerated.

However, the lack of studies that use Hill Collins or any other similar theorists show the lack of intersectionality in this area of study. Further research can explore the compounding effects of gender, race, class, sexuality, and more identities. These perspectives could help in conjunction with GST for identifying pathways to crime for various groups. However, another

step that must be taken is the effect of prison. While GST was not used specifically, it is evident that prison can be considered a source of strain as well. Perhaps the theory can be extended to this step of the process.

Overall, though, it is apparent that crime stems from not simply individual histories, but also from structural barriers imposed on certain groups of people. This has been shown in GST with the fact that strain for women has been a result of their subordinate positions throughout history. While Broidy and Agnew mention it only briefly, strain is further aggravated when class and race are examined as well. Hill Collins shows that this structural oppression is the result of traditionally white men residing as the dominant force for most of the history of the United States. Thus including the experiences of all who live under such oppression is necessary in furthering the research on female reentry. Intersectionality theory, as applied to GST, helps link this micro-focused perspective with the macro-focused perspective of Durkheim and Foucault, revealing how larger social factors influence and shape individual behavior that leads to contact with the carceral system.

Section 4: Conclusion

From the perspectives of either overarching punishment or individual choices, it is evident that crime itself is not quite as problematic as the current policies on criminal justice suggest. Even using the term "criminal justice" to refer to the system of punishment reveals an accusatory view towards the individuals who are punished. However, because general strain theory indicates that individuals commit crime as a rational decision, Durkheim and Foucault's theories suggest that supposed criminals are punished for a lifestyle that is contrary to the state and the conscience collective. Because of this, prison and parole are set up in a way that cannot necessarily correct the supposed wrongs of offenders. However, within overarching systems

there are always unique situations that can provide an alternative perspective. In the case of prison and reentry for women, it appears that the Wayne County Municipal Court is this alternative perspective.

Chapter Four | Methodology

While the review of the literature and the theory section has focused on female reentry overall, experiences vary depending on the location. The city of Wooster, Ohio became the focus location for this project, in part due to my proximity. However, this city is also unique due to the courthouse having a specialized docket designed specifically for reentry, as courthouses are not required to have these types of services. This inspired the question of whether this program has an effect on reentry, especially for women. In order to answer this, I chose to examine reentry in Wooster in both a quantitative and qualitative framework. This chapter will explain the reasoning behind these methods, the process of collecting data, and the limitations of these methods.

The reentry court is a specialized docket at the Wayne County Court of Common Pleas that was established in 2011. The program is only available to incarcerated people who are eligible for early release, meaning that offenders with charges that require mandatory minimum sentences are not eligible. As the program overview describes, "The main goal of the Reentry Court Program is to reintegrate offenders into productive members of society through treatment, intensive case management, supervision and personal accountability. …Reentry Court sessions focus on ensuring immediate treatment and supervision compliance through didactic interaction with the Reentry Court Judge" ("Reentry Court Program Overview" 2013). This was evidenced by my personal experience. I have attended several sessions of reentry court because of an internship I had in spring 2015 and I was struck by the relationships between the judge and the participants. My initial perception of other court systems and their officials was one of strict professionalism, to the point of impersonality; however, the judge in the Reentry Court knew each participant by name and often asked details about their personal lives, such as their hobbies. Because the previous literature has a theme of women's reentry being easier when their probation officers are supportive and understanding, it made sense to further study this court and

learn how it affects the individuals who participate, and also how court systems can become supportive like this.

As for the importance of researching in a quantitative method, I chose to remain consistent with previous studies that present the demographics of the sample size. It is especially useful to compare statistics of the sample to national statistics such as those of the Bureau of Justice examined in the review of the literature. This provides a basis from which to analyze the local prison population in relation to the community at large. However, quantitative data alone is not sufficient to understand female reentry. It has been evident in previous literature that while statistics may show differences in reentry between men and women, it does not explain the experiences felt by women. This is important to record because while the statistics may show differences, these experiences are nuanced and must be explored accordingly.

Thus for the quantitative data, I decided to gather statistics on the people that had been sentenced to prison through the Wayne County Court of Common Pleas since January 2012, which totaled to 270 people. I collected data on both men and women in order to compare any differences. In addition to gender, I recorded the charge, length of the sentence, age at the time of sentence, race, highest level of education attained, employment status, and income if it was available. In order to obtain this data, I contacted the courthouse which gave me access to a list of everyone who had been sentenced to prison. From there, I was given access to pre-sentence investigations which list offenders' social histories, which provided demographic information. However, this was only available for people who were not directly sentenced to prison. For the individuals that were directly sentenced, one of the staff members of the courthouse accessed the jail records and recorded the race, age, education level, and employment status. Unfortunately, the income was not recorded for this section of the population. I additionally used the public

records of the courthouse to obtain the charge and sentence length. While collecting this data, there were some variances, such as income being listed as an hourly wage rather than yearly income. For these cases I assumed that the individuals work a standard forty-hour work week to calculate their yearly income. Additionally, when some people had a sliding scale of income I took the median of the two figures. As for the education level, even if people had completed some college without graduating, I only listed their diplomas attained considering that many professions require specific credentials.

From there, I entered this information into SPSS to compare the data and run statistical tests. In order to do so, I recoded several variables. For the charge, I replicated the BJS study "Prisoners in 2014" model by noting the incarcerated individual's most serious offense. This is usually defined by the degree of felony. I also narrowed it down (again, following the BJS study) to the categories of violent (murder, manslaughter, rape and sexual assault, robbery, aggravated assault, and abduction), property (burglary, larceny-theft, motor vehicle theft, arson, and fraud), drugs (possession and trafficking), and public order (weapons, driving under the influence, and failure to notify change in address), and "other," a separate category in public order that includes endangering children, failure to comply, violation of metal scrapping laws, perjury, and failure to pay child support.

Again, statistics alone cannot explain the experiences felt by women. At the beginning of this project, I hoped to interview five women who had been released and after six months had not recidivated and five women who had been sent back to prison after being released. However, there are simply not enough women who have been through the Wayne County Court who fit these descriptions. Additionally, the prison that I had hoped to go through rejected my application to interview, citing a small sample size and a limited area. However, I was able to

interview four women who had reentered and not recidivated. These women were contacted by the chief probation officer at the courthouse and asked to participate in my study. They were informed of the subject of the research and potential risks and benefits. Once they agreed to meet with me, each participant signed a consent form (see Appendix A). Three women had graduated from reentry court at least six months before the interview and one was participating in reentry court at the time of the interview.

Each interview lasted about half an hour in a private office at the courthouse. The first two interviews that I conducted I used a faulty audio recorder, but fortunately the two women kindly agreed to redo the interviews. Thereafter, I recorded the interviews with my iPod using Voice Memos application and later transcribed them.

During the interviews with the reentry participants, I asked various questions on their background prior to incarceration such as their education, family relationships, and living situations. From there, participants were asked about their experiences while incarcerated such as whether they participated in programs. Next, questions were asked about the process of reentry, starting with technical issues such as housing, employment, and family reunification. Participants were also asked about their experience with reentry court and probation and the responsibilities that accompany these programs. Finally, they were asked if there was one person or group in particular that helped them with their reentry. The combination of questions on pre-incarceration, incarceration, and post-incarceration was used in order to gain a holistic perspective of reentry.

In addition to the reentry women, I also conducted a group interview with three employees involved with reentry court: the judge, the chief probation officer, and another probation officer. They were asked to participate in person by me. They were informed of the nature of the research and asked to sign a consent form before the interview (see Appendix

A).The three officials at the court were asked various questions about their work with the first being about the purpose of reentry court. They were then asked about their process of interacting with reentry court participants and how they prioritize the offenders' needs. The officials were also asked about the differences between men and women who come back from prison. Additionally, questions on the training and credentials were asked, and also how the training compares to their practice. These questions were posed to gain an understanding of the uniqueness of the Wooster reentry court.

These interviews were then coded into various categories organized by a color-coding system. The categories included substance addiction, family relationships and traumatic experiences prior to incarceration. During incarceration, the categories included opportunities for and engagement in programs as well as any negative aspects. Post-incarceration included personal goals and priorities, obtainment of housing and employment, family relationships, and attitudes towards reentry court and probation. There was an additional category of self-support and personal resolve that applied to all stages of the reentry process.

While the two methods produced satisfactory data, both the statistics and interviews were limited in particular ways. As for the statistics, while it is important to note who is being sentenced, I also wish that I had recorded the demographics of people who have gone through reentry court. However, that would have been a longer route because I would have had to search each person's individual name in the courthouse database to find their criminal record. And for the interviews, I attempted to follow my theoretical goals of not using language that blames offenders for their crimes, but afterwards I realized that I sometimes slipped. Additionally, I was unable to interview any women who have a hard time with reentry who perhaps could have pointed out any negative aspects in the process. But overall, the methods revealed much about

the people that go through the criminal justice system in Wooster and how those processes enfold.

Chapter Five | Results, Analysis and Discussion

PART 1: STATISTICS

Section 1: Demographics

Overall, 270 people were sentenced to prison from January 2012 to October 2015. This population is overwhelmingly male; only 40 women were sentenced to prison, thus constituting 14.8% of the population. However, this is greater than national statistics which show women as being 7% of the population (Carson 2015). This group is also generally white, with 75.9% listed as white. The next largest racial category is African-American, at 17.8%. The Latino population follows, albeit at a much lower percentage of 3.0%. This does not fully represent the demographics of Wayne County overall, as 96.1% of the county is white with only 1.5% African-American, 1.5% Hispanic, 0.7% Asian, 0.2% Native American, and 1.3% multiracial (Office of Policy, Research and Strategic Planning). This correlates to statistics on the prison population of the country overall, which is disproportionately represented by minorities, especially African-American people.

It should be noted as well that there are more men of color than women of color in this sample; only 10% of the female prisoner population of Wayne County is black in comparison to 19.1% of the male population. Additionally, the entire Latino population is male. The Asian and Native American groups only have one person each, with a woman representing the Asian category and a man representing the Native American category. This, too, correlates to the BJS "Prisoners in 2014" study, which shows that the female population is whiter than that of the male population.

Table 1: Frequencies and Percentage Distribution of Racial Categories

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Caucasian	205	75.9	75.9	75.9
	African-American	48	17.8	17.8	93.7
	Latino	8	3.0	3.0	96.7

	Asian	1	.4	.4	97.0
	Biracial	7	2.6	2.6	99.6
	Native American	1	.4	.4	100.0
	Total	270	100.0	100.0	

Table 2: Distributions and Frequencies of Gender and Race

			Gender		
			Female	Male	Total
Race	Caucasian	Count	34	171	205
		% within Race	16.6%	83.4%	100.0%
		% within Gender	85.0%	74.3%	75.9%
	African-American	Count	4	44	48
		% within Race	8.3%	91.7%	100.0%
		% within Gender	10.0%	19.1%	17.8%
	Latino	Count	0	8	8
		% within Race	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Gender	0.0%	3.5%	3.0%
	Asian	Count	1	0	1
		% within Race	100.0%	0.0%	100.0%
		% within Gender	2.5%	0.0%	0.4%
	Biracial	Count	1	6	7
		% within Race	14.3%	85.7%	100.0%
		% within Gender	2.5%	2.6%	2.6%
	Native American	Count	0	1	1
		% within Race	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
		% within Gender	0.0%	0.4%	0.4%
Total		Count	40	230	270
		% within Race	14.8%	85.2%	100.0%
		% within Gender	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

This population was sentenced for a variety of felonies. When separated into four groups of drugs, property, public order, and violent crimes, drug crimes in general are the most common with 40%. Within this, trafficking crimes are the most common with 29.6% of total charges. Among property crimes (which constitute 24.4%), burglary is the most common with 12.6% of total charges. For public order crimes (8.9%), failure to provide notice of change of address for sex offenders is the most common with 2.2% of all charges. Finally, among violent crimes (26.7%) aggravated assault are the most common with 8.9%. This breakdown can perhaps be attributed by the rurality and relative wealth of the county, limiting violent and property crimes.

Table 3: Frequencies and Distributions of Charges

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Drugs: possession	28	10.4	10.4	10.4
	Drugs: trafficking	80	29.6	29.6	40.0
	Property: arson	3	1.1	1.1	41.1
	Property: burglary	34	12.6	12.6	53.7
	Property: fraud	13	4.8	4.8	58.5
	Property: larceny-theft	15	5.6	5.6	64.1
	Property: motor vehicle theft	1	.4	.4	64.4
	Public order: driving under the influence	3	1.1	1.1	65.6
	Public order: failure to provide notice of change of address	6	2.2	2.2	67.8
	Public order: having weapons while under disability	5	1.9	1.9	69.6
	Public order: other	10	3.7	3.7	73.3
	Violent: abduction	4	1.5	1.5	74.8
	Violent: aggravated assault	24	8.9	8.9	83.7
	Violent: manslaughter	7	2.6	2.6	86.3
	Violent: murder	2	.7	.7	87.0
	Violent: rape	7	2.6	2.6	89.6
	Violent: robbery	10	3.7	3.7	93.3
	Violent: sexual assault	18	6.7	6.7	100.0
	Total	270	100.0	100.0	

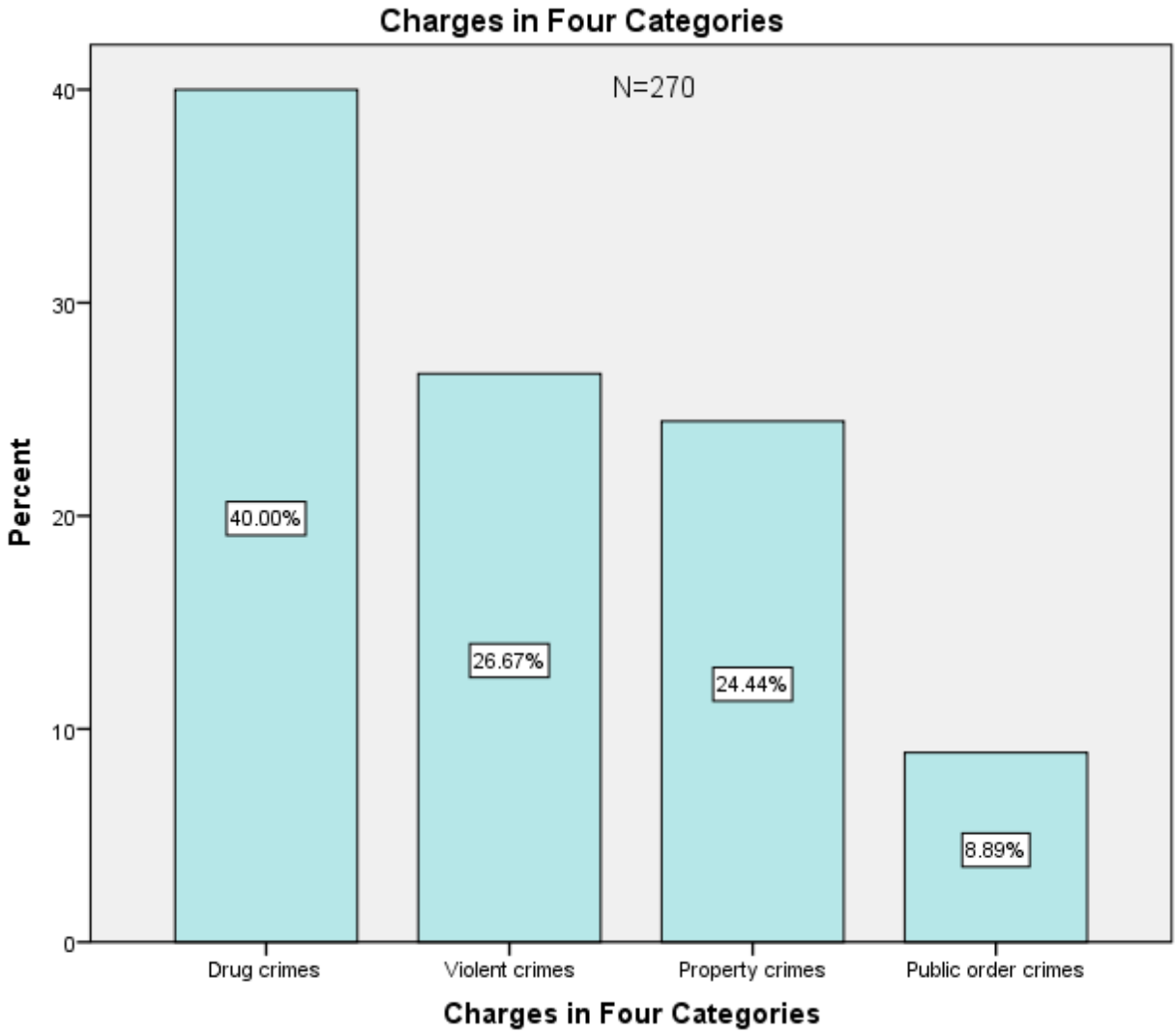

Figure 1: Distribution of Charges in Four Categories

The charges are strongly correlated to the sentence, as shown by the fact that many drug crimes receive shorter sentences. The most common sentence is 36 months. The mean sentence length is 35.63 months or nearly three years with a standard deviation of 33.5. This is to say that for the majority of those sentenced to prison, they will return home fairly quickly. It should be noted that in a personal interview with one of the judges at this courthouse on January 27th, 2016, he said that he "tend[s] to go toward the minimum" with mandatory sentencing.

As for additional demographics, the average age is 33 with a standard deviation of 10.3 years. Additionally, the average yearly income is $16,268.97, although there was a large standard deviation of 16,454.23. This variation is due to the fact that incomes ranged from $1,200 to $93,000 per year. This median falls below the poverty line in Ohio, thus the average person sentenced to prison is impoverished (The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio 2016). However, the sample size of people who had recorded incomes is only 64, which is 23.7%% of the total prisoner population. It should be noted as well that income also included food stamps or disability checks in some cases.

Table 4: Statistical Averages of Sentence, Age, and Income

		Sentence in months	Age at time of sentence	Yearly Income
N	Valid	268	270	64
	Missing	2	0	206
Mean		35.63	33.53	16268.97
Median		30.00	31.00	12000.00
Mode		36	26[a]	2400
Std. Deviation		33.492	10.262	16454.229

As for employment, a mere 21.2% of the sample were employed full time at the time of their sentence. An additional 5.8% were employed part-time and two people (1.1%) had retired. As for the rest, 65.1% were unemployed and 6.9% were unable to work due to disabilities. This is important as employment is consistently related to successful reentry. However, 81 cases (30%) were unable to be recorded, which limits the analysis.

Table 5: Frequencies and Percentage Distributions of Employment Status

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	employed	40	14.8	21.2	21.2
	unemployed	123	45.6	65.1	86.2
	employed part-time	11	4.1	5.8	92.1
	disabled	13	4.8	6.9	98.9
	retired	2	.7	1.1	100.0
	Total	189	70.0	100.0	
Missing		81	30.0		

Total	270	100.0		

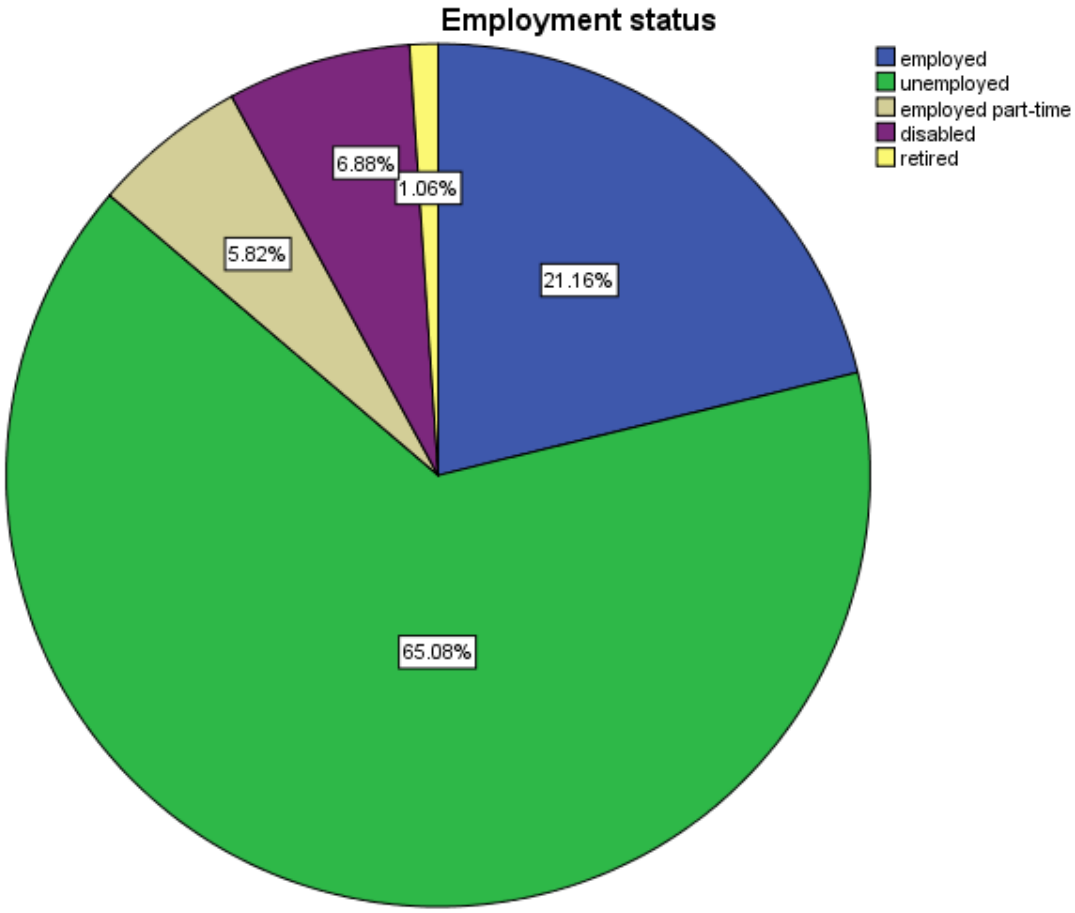

Figure 2: Distributions of Employment Status

The high unemployment status of this population is perhaps representative of the education levels attained. Just under 40% actually completed high school and only 3% went on to attain higher education. A substantial percentage, 27.8%, attained their GED; however, nearly a third (32.4%) did not complete high school and never obtained their GED. This is a significant difference between the overall drop-out rates in Wayne County. The average drop-out rate of all high schools in the county is 0.8%, according to data from a 2013 report by Hawley et al (average calculated by author), which is much lower than the national rate of 7.4%. This suggests that in Wayne County, those who do not complete high school are significantly marginalized. This may also be perhaps why they are unemployed—if the majority of people seeking

employment have received a diploma, then those who have not attained credentials will be overlooked, leaving few other options than to find illegal methods of obtaining income.

Table 6: Frequencies and Percentage Distribution of Education Attained

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Master's degree	1	.4	.4	.4
	Bachelor's degree	4	1.5	1.5	1.9
	Associate's degree	3	1.1	1.1	3.0
	High school diploma	99	37.2	37.2	40.2
	GED	74	27.4	27.8	68.0
	11th grade	42	15.6	15.8	83.8
	10th grade	20	7.4	7.5	91.3
	9th grade	15	5.6	5.6	96.9
	8th grade	5	1.9	1.9	98.8
	7th grade	1	.4	.4	99.2
	6th grade	1	.4	.4	99.6
	5th grade	1	.4	.4	100.0
	Total	266	98.5	100.0	
Missing		4	1.5		
Total		270	100.0		

Section 2: Effects on Charge

In order to understand the depth of the types of crimes committed, charges were examined in crosstabs with the independent variables of education, race, and gender. Of the three, gender has the most statistically significant impact on the charges. Education was not significant at all, which is most likely due to the fact that while education levels were condensed into three levels of college education, high school diploma or equivalent, or less than high school, the group with college education was too small to be compared fairly. However, gender provided important insight. With the chi-square test, the p-value is .004, falling well within the range of significance. Upon examining the crosstab, it is evident that this figure stems from the great difference in violent crimes. Within this category, men were charged for 94.4% of these crimes. However, women are overrepresented in drug crimes, as they constitute only 14.8% of the total population but were sentenced for 24.1% of drug crimes. Alternately stated, 65% of the

female prisoner population committed drug crimes, as opposed to 35.7% of the male population. This can be understood through the context of general strain theory, which notes that criminality for women rarely has victims, as it is a coping mechanism for strain. From this perspective, illegal drugs use can be interpreted as self-medication. This is also consistent with the national statistics on gender and charge examined in Chapter One.

As for race, the p-value is .078, which is significant assuming that the cutoff value is .100. This most likely stems from the division of race within drug crimes—while black people represent 17.8% of the total population, they represent 24.1% of drug charges. Additionally, white people disproportionately represent property crimes, at 90.9%, although they only represent 75.9% of the total population. This is greatly representative of the War on Drugs, whose policies have resulted in harsher policing and higher incarceration rates for men of color.

Table 7: Distributions and Frequencies of Gender and Charge

			Charges in Four Categories				
			Drug crimes	Violent crimes	Property crimes	Public order crimes	Total
Gender	Female	Count	26	4	8	2	40
		% within Gender	65.0%	10.0%	20.0%	5.0%	100.0%
		% within Charges in Four Categories	24.1%	5.6%	12.1%	8.3%	14.8%
	Male	Count	82	68	58	22	230
		% within Gender	35.7%	29.6%	25.2%	9.6%	100.0%
		% within Charges in Four Categories	75.9%	94.4%	87.9%	91.7%	85.2%
Total		Count	108	72	66	24	270
		% within Gender	40.0%	26.7%	24.4%	8.9%	100.0%
		% within Charges in Four Categories	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 8: Statistical Outcomes of Gender and Charge

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.407[a]	3	.004
Likelihood Ratio	13.887	3	.003

N of Valid Cases	270		

a. 1 cells (12.5%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 3.56.

Table 9: Distributions and Frequencies of Race and Charge

			Charges in Four Categories				
			Drug crimes	Violent crimes	Property crimes	Public order crimes	Total
Race	Caucasian	Count	74	53	60	18	205
		% within Charges in Four Categories	68.5%	73.6%	90.9%	75.0%	75.9%
	African-American	Count	26	14	4	4	48
		% within Charges in Four Categories	24.1%	19.4%	6.1%	16.7%	17.8%
	Latino	Count	4	4	0	0	8
		% within Charges in Four Categories	3.7%	5.6%	0.0%	0.0%	3.0%
	Asian	Count	1	0	0	0	1
		% within Charges in Four Categories	0.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%
	Biracial	Count	3	1	1	2	7
		% within Charges in Four Categories	2.8%	1.4%	1.5%	8.3%	2.6%
	Native American	Count	0	0	1	0	1
		% within Charges in Four Categories	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%	0.4%
Total		Count	108	72	66	24	270
		% within Charges in Four Categories	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Table 10: Statistical Outcome of Race and Charge

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	23.274[a]	15	.078
Likelihood Ratio	26.071	15	.037
N of Valid Cases	270		

a. 17 cells (70.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .09.

Table 11: Frequencies and Distributions of Education Levels (in 3 categories) and Charge

	Charges in Four Categories	Total

			Drug crimes	Violent crimes	Property crimes	Public order crimes	
Education in 3 levels	College	Count	5	2	1	0	8
		% of Total	1.9%	0.8%	0.4%	0.0%	3.0%
	High school diploma or equivalent	Count	73	47	38	14	172
		% of Total	27.4%	17.7%	14.3%	5.3%	64.7%
	Less than high school	Count	28	22	26	10	86
		% of Total	10.5%	8.3%	9.8%	3.8%	32.3%
Total		Count	106	71	65	24	266
		% of Total	39.8%	26.7%	24.4%	9.0%	100.0%

Table 12: Statistical Outcomes of Education (in 3 levels) and Charge

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.094[a]	6	.413
Likelihood Ratio	6.717	6	.348
Linear-by-Linear Association	5.556	1	.018
N of Valid Cases	266		

a. 4 cells (33.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .72.

Section 3: Effects on Sentence Length

Due to the importance of the length of time spent in prison on the process of reentry, the sentence as a dependent variable was tested to examine the ways in which it is impacted. Once again, gender proved to be the most revealing of variables. The t-value is -1.926, showing a tail. The p-value is .016, noting the gap between the means of sentence length for men and women, being 37 and 26 months respectively, albeit the standard deviation for men was quite higher at 35. This can most likely be attributed to the fact that women are more often sentenced on drug crimes, which have lesser sentences than most other crimes. However, it is important to note that women return home sooner than men do, which can affect the ability for women to partake in programs or receive counseling, especially if there is a wait time to be accepted.

Table 13: Statistical Averages of Sentence for Males and Females

	Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Sentence in months	Female	40	26.28	14.205	2.246
	Male	228	37.28	35.589	2.357

Table 14: Statistical Outcomes of Sentence and Charge

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means	
		F	Sig.	T	df
Sentence in months	Equal variances assumed	5.884	.016	-1.926	266
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.379	142.496

Upon the results of the t-test, a question arose of whether race and gender together had an impact on the sentence length. For this test race was coded into a binary group, with 0=white and 1=nonwhite, considering the small size of minority groups. However even with this change, race does not have a significant impact on sentence length. The p-value is .875 with race alone and .055 for gender. However, this does show that even with controlling for race, gender greatly affects the sentence length.

Table 15a: Statistical Outcomes of Race and Gender on Sentence Length

Model Summary[b]

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.118[a]	.014	.006	33.385

a. Predictors: (Constant), Race Dummy, GenderDummy
b. Dependent Variable: Sentence in months

Table 15b: Statistical Outcomes of Race and Gender on Sentence Length

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			95.0% Confidence Interval for B	
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	36.711	4.208		8.725	.000	28.426	44.996
	GenderDummy	-11.081	5.745	-.118	-1.929	.055	-22.392	.231
	Race Dummy	.759	4.801	.010	.158	.875	-8.695	10.213

a. Dependent Variable: Sentence in months

PART 2: INTERVIEWS

Section 1: Introduction

As noted, I was only able to interview four reentry women. However, considering that only forty women were sentenced to prison over the past five years, this is still a representative sample. The women provided rich information about their processes of reentry. Three of the women that I interviewed had already graduated from reentry within the last two years. The last, Monica[2], was participating in reentry court at the time of the interview. She is also the only participant of color, being African-American. The others are all white. Their ages range from 28 to 46, which are close to the mean age of people sentenced to prison. Monica is also the only woman to have been incarcerated at a facility other than the Marysville Prison, as she was sentenced to the Northeast Reintegration Center. However, all the women are from the Wooster area, as they were all sentenced through the Wayne County Court of Common Pleas. Only one woman—Leticia, age 46—did not grow up in the Wooster area, although she moved here about ten years ago. Importantly, all four women were self-described addicts, which ultimately led to their incarceration.

Additionally, the group interview with the three staff members involved with probation and reentry court added another perspective and helped clarify themes and issues with reentry. The judge holds sessions twice a month to check in with participants and decide their next step, such as lessening meetings with probation officers. The probation officers check in more often to learn of their daily schedules, needs, and also do drug tests. The judge has been with the

[2] All names are pseudonyms.

Courthouse for over 30 years, the chief probation officer for 20 years, and the other probation officers for 5 years.

The interviews examined three major periods—pre-incarceration, incarceration, and post-incarceration. Throughout these, themes of trauma, addiction, interpersonal relationships, and personal strength appeared, showing complex stories of navigating the criminal justice system.

Section 2: Pre-Incarceration

All the women spoke of being caught in the throes of their addiction just prior to their arrests. Maria, 33, for example, noted that while her addiction had been present beforehand, in 2011 she "just didn't care anymore" and "chased after her addiction for a good solid thirty days," culminating in her arrest. Monica, 28, additionally noted that she had been caught up with her boyfriend in selling and doing drugs, saying "that's basically what [her] life consisted of." She had also lost custody of her children. For these two, their addiction had limited their ability to carry out responsibilities—for Maria as an employee, and Monica as a mother. For Julia, 43, her addiction extended to harming someone physically. While she had been incarcerated before for problems related to her addiction, when she was arrested the last time it was for texting while driving after drinking, leading to an accident that put the other driver in a wheelchair for life. Julia noted that this event was "life-changing," and she has stayed sober since then.

However, these addictions did not appear in a vacuum. As the GST developed by Broidy and Agnew explains, substances are often used as a coping mechanism for strain, especially for women. All four women spoke of adverse events or situations throughout their lives. Both Leticia and Julia spoke of trauma directly causing their usage of drugs. When asked about the context of her using for the first time, Leticia responded "Oh, I was 15. And mostly it was trauma-based and very introverted, and so when I drank and used I became more sociable and

outgoing and had more friends, so that was the beginning of that." Julia echoed this sentiment, saying that her addiction "all came with, I would say with the abuse from boyfriends—past boyfriends, past relationships." She noted that despite the fact that her family was supportive and that she grew up in a "church-like atmosphere," these abusive relationships had profound effects on her mental health, as her addiction came to the point that she felt suicidal. She was also in high school when she first started using and, similarly to Leticia, substances helped her connect socially: "I wanted to be the cool girl, I wanted to be the party girl. I wanted to have that reputation of being a badass bitch. And I did, I got it, you know two prison numbers later." Monica also tried substances for the first time in high school, but for her, she did not cite this as a response to adversity. However, she did speak of her strained relationship with her parents:

> [My mom and I] never had the best relationship. Ever. Like since I was a little girl, that's why I moved when I was 17. My dad…we were kind of like best friends [prior to incarceration] but I think that's because I sold drugs and he does them. So that's probably why we were so close. Because I've been out of prison for like five months and I still haven't seen him, not one time.

Thus while Monica did not explicitly define this as a factor of her addiction, her story is consistent with GST and the other women's experiences of strain leading to self-medication.

However, Monica did note that her involvement with drugs was largely influenced by romantic partners, especially her boyfriend just prior to her arrest: "I had been in trouble before for selling drugs but it's always been because of some guy that I've been involved with and that's what they do. So that's how it started off with, that's what he [her boyfriend at the time] was doing. I didn't do anything and he was doing it all." This, as well as Julia's history with abusive relationships, is consistent with the literature that notes that female criminality is often in

response to relationships with men. Additionally, while interviewing the court staff the judge recounted the horrific experience of another woman participating in reentry court, who "came from a terrible background, and her dad's in prison for life for raping [her] daughter and he also raped her when she was little." This supports the argument that crime is gendered and are often a result of structural sexism that allows for abuse while simultaneously limiting options for coping mechanisms.

Section 3: Incarceration

While all the women had counseling available to them to address trauma or addiction, they all noted that the services were not effective until they were incarcerated. This is further evidence supporting Carlen and Tombs' (2006) claim that prisons are often used as solutions to systemic issues that lead to incarceration, such as substandard-education, addiction, and trauma. Carlen and Tombs argue that if these issues are addressed earlier in life, there would be no need of programs, or incarceration for that matter. But despite this overarching concern, the facilities in which these women were incarcerated aided greatly in preparing them for reentry. They offer a multitude of programs ranging from drug counseling to dog training, but importantly, the programs are often directed towards women specifically. This has been noted in previous studies as being extremely helpful. The staff members noted the difference as well; as the chief probation officer said, "to be perfectly honest, I know they have some intensive prison programs for males, but a lot of those are released and probation doesn't deal with them because state programming doesn't deal with them…I definitely see a huge benefit."

While all the women spoke of their engagement in programs, the female-specific programs were especially helpful for Monica. She had an overall busy schedule while incarcerated: "I took as many programs as I could. I got as many certificates as I could, I took as

many programs as I could, I went to HA and NA meetings. I just did anything that I can do just to get my mind focused on other things and help me for when I came home." But these opportunities were especially helpful for her because she felt that they addressed problems specifically relating to women. An example of this is a program on co-dependency. Monica explained her experience positively, saying

> …you learn so much about yourself and how it is to be codependent. And I didn't even know there was a thing called codependency until I went there. So once you take this group you get a whole new mindset of you want to make your own money. You don't want to be codependent on somebody else, or you don't want to depend on someone doing everything for you; you want to do your own thing and make your own money.

This concept had a profound effect on Monica, as she made employment her top priority for reentry.

The other women also spoke of their exceptional engagement in programs. Leticia, for example, earned 37 different certificates in jail for various education and employment skills. Julia also spoke positively of her participation with a program training dogs for adoption. She cited the manager of that and another program as important sources of support throughout her incarceration. As for Maria, she spoke highly of a reintegration unit separate from the rest of the prison due to both the program mission and the other participants. The program involved intensive counseling, which while difficult at first, was extremely effective for her:

> I hated the program at first because unlike a lot of things I had tried when I was home, there was no getting around this counselor. There was no 'I don't want to talk about it,' you just had to spill your guts. Which was good, but for somebody like me, I got my addiction because I didn't want to talk about my problems, that took me way out of my

comfort zone, but it was the best thing that could have happened. So I really learned a lot, I learned why I started using and the tools not to use, and just, I felt great about it.

The methods that Maria describes are, according to GST, often more effective than self-medication for coping with strain, but are often not available. Additionally, Maria spoke of the close relationships that she created with the participants of the program, noting that she had never found such strong, consistent sources of support. She attributes it to their similar mindsets, saying that "we all had the same goals: We wanted to get healthy and not come back again. And so when you surround yourself with that it helps build you up, and I made some of the best friends I've ever had out there." She also noted that the staff in the program contributed to this sense of closeness.

However, Maria juxtaposed this experience with her time spent in jail. In contrast to the opportunities offered in the prison, the county jail (in which many people must stay prior to serving prison sentences) provides little to none—people "pretty much just eat and sleep and watch TV, or read," according to Maria. She notes that this is due to the fact that jail sentences are significantly shorter than prison sentences, describing it as "a revolving door." This was echoed by the staff members when asked about sentencing. While being sent to jail is often considered a lesser sentence, the probation officer noted that "if you asked someone who had just served six months in the Wayne County Jail if they would rather serve their time in prison, they would say prison." It is also important to note that certain services, such as reentry court, are only available to those sentenced to prison.

However, prison does still have negative aspects, as reported by Leticia, Maria, and Monica, citing certain staff and other prisoners. Both Leticia and Monica described the prisons as "crazy," despite the fact that women's prisons are publicly perceived as less intense than men's

prisons. As Monica told me while laughing, “I’m sure it probably does the same thing in a male prison, but it’s crazy in there. Literally there’s so many things that happened while I was in there, like this is crazy!” Leticia expanded on this, saying “you hear stories about being in a women’s prison, that’s just as crazy, there are women that do all kinds of crazy stuff and you can’t have a lot of trust with the people in there…you just have to be careful who you associate yourself with.” While neither provided specific examples, their sentiments are consistent with Foucault’s argument that prisons are criminogenic. This can also stem from negative interactions between staff members and prisoners. While speaking of the privileges afforded to those in the reintegration unit, Maria mentioned that “there was a lot of the prison that didn't like that. A lot of staff looked at it like we were able to do too much and we had too many privileges, so that part was a little bit tough.” This speaks strongly to Foucault’s concept of power relations in prisons that often relegate prisoners to positions of inferiority. Additionally, this can be gendered, as Monica mentioned rampant sexual relations between staff and prisoners: “When I was in there, there was something like 20 correctional officers that were fired for having sex with women and one was pregnant.” While sexual coercion and abuse most certainly occurs in men’s prisons, previous literature has noted that this is more often an issue in women’s prisons, and that it often compounds previous trauma experienced by women prior to their incarceration.

However, for the women that I interviewed, prison seems to have been a more positive experience overall than for participants of previous studies. This suggests that the prisons along with reentry court and probation in Wayne County are designed to facilitate reentry more successfully than other systems.

Section 4: Post-Incarceration

In comparison to participants in previous studies, the women in this study transitioned smoothly upon their release from prison, due to having housing and employment as well as support from family members and the probation department. However, they all still had to navigate challenges such as reestablishing their status as mothers, maintaining family relationships, and settling into the community. Additionally, as the chief probation officer noted, reentry can be an overwhelming task, especially initially. According to her,

> The biggest hurdle that they have to overcome is just realizing that things are gonna take time. Before they get out, they think okay, I'm gonna get a job, I'm gonna get my license back, and when they get back they think okay, I'm going back to the same situations, same home, same family and it's not going to be all immediate. So I always tell people they just gotta be patient with themselves and be patient with the process.

This echoes previous findings that competing demands, while manageable on their own, can be exhausting during the reentry process. Furthermore, women often struggle with this more than men, as the chief probation officer explained:

> I think women have a lot more issues at hand than men do. They're a little more complex than dealing with our male offenders. It just seems they have more mental health issues for some reason—this is just me talking personally—they have more family issues, dealing with their children, they may get out and have children services that they have to deal with, getting a case plan, they get very overwhelmed with all the expectations when they get out. But for some reason, it just seems like women in general, whether it be reentry court or not, it just seems a little bit more complex to work with.

She cites this from her experience with managing caseloads, noting that "when you have 10 women that's basically like having 30 men." The other probation officer added that this may be

their perception because women "seem to be more verbal about what they're struggling with," which may make the staff more aware of any problems. However, the interviews with the reentry women do show the complexities of female reentry.

This is exemplified by the responses on their top priority upon leaving prison. Consistent with the remarks made by the probation officers, two of the participants stated their status as a mother. Julia has two daughters aged 14 and 26, both of whom had been in her mother's custody. She notes that due to her addiction and her incarceration, she had never felt that she had fully been a mother: "I was basically like their sister who was addicted to drugs. I didn't do any of the lifestyle stuff with them—the normal mom stuff. While I was institutionalized my oldest daughter had become pregnant. So now I was a grandma and my ultimate goal was to become something I'd never really been." Monica had also relinquished custody of her children (aged 4 and 7) to her mother, and her main goal was to reestablish a connection with them. Both women were single at the time of their release, thus their focus was solely on their children. Monica also stated that her priority was to make money, both to support her children and also because "she know[s] how much [she] like[s] money." She added that prior to learning about co-dependency in prison, she would think, "ugh, I don't want to work so let's just get with a guy so I don't have to work, because I know he's going to take care of me." For Monica, her priority was also to maintain and utilize the skills she had learned in prison. This was also similar for Leticia, who defined her top priority as "dealing with myself and my family, and how I connect with other people, and the acceptance of the past and how that would affect me, and how it would affect them." She has been attending counseling since 1992 and uses this as a coping mechanism to handle strain and her goals reflect her plan to keep using it as such. Finally, while Maria was not asked explicitly about her priorities when coming home, she did speak of the unease she felt

about reentering, especially because she was not informed of the exact date of her departure until the day of:

> When I found out I was coming home, it was kind of scary just because my life was completely, I mean before I went to prison I was married, and we lived in a house, and my job, and I had all of these things. And when I was coming out it was just completely different. I mean I was divorced, and I wouldn't be living in the same house, I didn't really know where a lot of my stuff was, just everything was completely different. I think a lot of people think that you're anticipating coming home, like really, really excited, and I think that's sort of a misconception because I think if you speak to a lot of women, I'm not sure about men, but I know women that I've spoken to when you say "Honestly, what was your first thought about coming home?" everyone is pretty scared, kinda nervous.

This reflects upon the statements made by the probation officers that reentry for women, more so than men, is daunting. Maria further explained that one reason is because she had found a support system in prison unlike any other and to lose it made her nervous. She likened the situation to that of a college dorm, noting that "you have your friends like 24/7—somebody's right there like all the time or just down the hall. It was the exact same thing and I never had that really growing up or even being married. So it was scary losing that kind of support." Again, previous literature has stressed the importance of support from family and friends for women especially, and Maria's comments underline these findings.

It should be noted, though, that these women's priorities are not representative of every reentry participant. The court staff spoke of the fact that many people when reentering must meet basic needs first. The probation officer noted, "Sometimes when they're in prison they have nothing. Like clothing…or, how can we get you an ID in the next couple of days?" This is

because many prisoners come from impoverished backgrounds. To compound this, many prisoners are still paying fines: “a lot of time when they do get funds in prison, a lot of them owe court costs. And even if they have relatives giving them money, that’s getting taken.” This leaves many people in compromised positions, especially because the criminal justice system provides no aid upon release, as the chief probation notes: “They might walk out of there with like $50 or something like that. Not enough to get a hotel room, not enough to really do anything.” The staff noted that there are organizations to help in these situations, such as by providing toiletries or clothing. Additionally, the judge noted that unlike most judges, he waives court costs, explaining that “they’ve got enough problems.” However, it is important to consider that these services and this staff are not required by policy to aid prisoners upon release.

In fact, housing is actively denied to some formerly incarcerated people. The court staff spoke of the difficulties for sex offenders especially. As the chief probation officer remarked, “There’s nowhere for them to live, there’s no services for them.” The judge agreed with this, saying that “It’s almost as if they’re wearing a letter on their chest.” However, this is a gendered issue as there were no women sentenced to prison by this court for sex-related crimes in the past three and a half years. Additionally, the women in this study had few issues with housing when leaving prison. They all lived with family immediately after release: Leticia with her eldest daughter, Julia and Monica with their mothers, and Maria with her grandparents, who helped raise her. However, Maria did have some issues with living with her grandparents, as she felt that they had not been prepared for her personal transformation:

> It's hard because I came back a totally different person. And not in a bad way, but it's hard when you've always known someone to be this way and then they come back totally different. So it was kind of hard to find my fit, I mean they tried and they did the best

> they could but I ended up moving in with a couple that pretty much became like my parents. And so I got to be really close with them. We'd gone to church together for years and we were really close and they visited me while I was in jail, while I was in prison, while my biological family didn't. And so we got really close and it just I ended up moving from my grandparents to their house, there was just more space and just, I don't know, it just seemed like the right thing to do. So I moved there and I actually still live there.

While she did not expand on specific problems with living with her grandparents, these remarks show the complexity of family relationships during reentry, which is another important theme throughout the interviews. Maria was the only participant that does not have children and as noted, her relationship with her biological family is strained. However, she has found a pseudo-family in her church community, thus she is supported. Leticia, perhaps because she is older than the other participants and is not originally from the area, made no mention of family other than her children. Those relationships, though, are solid. She did add that her son has also struggled with addiction, but now that they are both sober they have no difficulties. Julia had positive remarks on the subject of her kids and the rest of her family. She admitted that establishing a relationship her eldest daughter was more difficult, but they are now on good terms:

> I've been home now for over two years and my children and I have a wonderful relationship. I got custody back of my 14 year old the first year I was home—so I've made leaps and bounds. And rekindling my older daughter's relationship, because my mom had raised her 110%, has been one of the hardest. Because she's hard. But she's also very independent and a go-getter…We're really close though today, and I tell her all the time thank you. Thank you for allowing me to be a part of your life again.

To add to that, Julia noted that the rest of her family greatly aided in facilitating her transition back into motherhood and that they have been her "110% support team." As for Monica's transition back to motherhood, she found it easy: "I'm sure in their mind they were probably wondering where I was at, but once I came home it was like boom, back to normal. So it wasn't hard, it wasn't difficult, it just went straight back to normal." Monica also cited her mother as an important form of support despite their strained relationship throughout the years. Because her mother has custody of her children, Monica is able to be close with them. Additionally, her mother has helped Monica meet the obligations for reentry court:

> My mom has helped me stay focused a lot. I mean even though we do argue a lot, because I live with her so it's like I have to be back by 10, and if I go anywhere it's not you're coming in whenever you want to. Which that helps, because just in case I'm like "oh, maybe I should go out," I'm like yeah, not even about to go there with her. Because I'm not about to get kicked out of the only place I have right now. You know having to try to find some place to live, staying with people I don't want to stay with, messing up my probation because I don't have a place to live. So I just completely go by her rules. Even though you may not want to, it helps a lot. She's really helped me stay focused and just stick to what I really need to do.

These examples of family support show that they significantly impact reentry success. The court staff also noted that this is one of the most important factors. When talking about seeing how well people do during reentry, the probation officer noted that they need "6 months at least to see how they do. And not only that, but their family. Because when they first get released, their family is like let's get them home, but sometimes that goes away after they get home… Because they might have the greatest intentions, but once that support goes…" Her trailing off at the end

indicates the difficulty that formerly incarcerated people face when navigating reentry without family support. This is especially true for women, as the previous literature has noted. Earlier studies have also addressed the impact that criminal family members can have on reentering women. However, only Monica mentioned having a family member involved in illicit drug use, and she was not in contact with him at the time of the interview, thus none of the women were subject to this kind of pressure. Overall, the women in this study have largely supportive family or pseudo-family.

Family support can also help maintain employment, and all the participants in this study had family to live with while searching for employment. Three of the women were able to find jobs nearly immediately after leaving. Leticia was the only participant who struggled to find employment, because most of her felonies were related to forgery. However, she is employed part-time. Maria also had to navigate trust issues with employers, saying "it wasn't easy, having a felony and just coming out of prison. I mean of course there's that 'can we trust you, is this going to be okay,' [with employers]." But Maria resolved this by showing perseverance in her pursuit of a certain job by contacting the employer multiple times, offering to work for a week for free, and providing multiple references who confirmed her aptitude. Julia had no trouble at all, though, as her best friend had set her up with a job while she was still in prison. She also noted that there are less constraints in the industry that she works in, quipping "I always say, if you're a felon looking for a job, go into cosmetology!" Monica also had a job waiting for her after prison. As she had worked at the restaurant prior to her incarceration, she had established a positive relationship with her boss, who "couldn't wait until I came home. And I went to go see her on the 10th and I was working by the 14th." Monica did note, however, that she sometimes felt that she has been given extra responsibility because she has needed the extra hours:

> I feel like now that they know how good of a worker I am they kind of take advantage of it because I'm the only one that they're like, do you think you can stay until 6? I'm really the only one who will be like yeah I'll stay until 6, I can do that. Or, do you think you can come in today because someone called off? Yeah, I'll come in today. Only because I started off at only $8.20 an hour. So of course I'm going to need every hour that I can get so that I can make more money.

This as well as the fact that Maria offered to work for free to prove her dedication, speaks to the mistrust that is often accorded to former prisoners.

The distrust that former prisoners face in employment is also representative of the process of reintegrating into the community. As previous studies have shown that stigmatization of former prisoners is common, the women in this study reported feeling uncomfortable in certain situations, and they also noted certain spaces in which they have felt particularly welcomed. Monica, however, has a mostly negative view of the community, as she half-jokingly said that she "hates" Wooster. This can perhaps be attributed to the fact that she lost many connections by becoming sober:

> I need to start making new friends. Or at least more people to talk to because I really hang out with my uncle occasionally and then my [other] friend. And then my kids but that's pretty much it. Because everybody else that was in my past, I don't wanna be around them in the first place, they're still doing the same thing, and I can't even be around them in the first place. So that whole thing has changed completely.

However, she has not felt any self-consciousness about her felony status in the way that Leticia and Maria have. Maria expanded on this, noting the size of the town and that she felt that many people were aware of her incarceration history:

> It's a small town…and everyone knows everything about everybody and not to mention, I was in the paper like twice, front page of the paper….I can't think of one single time that anybody really said anything at least to my face or made me feel bad, but I remember the first time I went to Wal-Mart. I came home from prison and went to Wal-Mart the next day. It was like, I felt like everybody knew who I was and where I had been, I felt like I had this huge orange arrow over my head like "Felon, just got out of prison," like it was very strange. I was kind of afraid to run into people.

She noted that these insecurities often stem from when she compares herself to others, saying that while over time this has improved, they can be difficult to completely ignore around other women her age:

> When I'm with the group of my mom's friends, daughters, here or there, married with kids and they have these like real successful careers. There's some of that a little bit of...Even though I'm happier than I ever have been, when I try to compare myself to them, which is ridiculous to do anyway, there's just still a little bit of insecurity, that I'm this felon that's been to prison. It's hard to shake off.

However, Maria has been able to overcome some of these insecurities when she shared her story openly with first her church, then with a local newspaper, noting that "there's what people think happened or what they read in the paper but they don't know the whole story, so to have a chance to let people know what really happened, that helped." Since then, she has felt that she can speak to people openly about it. Additionally, she reports feeling completely supported by her church community. Julia echoed this sentiment about her own church. She also has a strong sense of connection to the community because of her job—she loves talking to people and "counseling behind the chair" as a hairstylist. The court staff too have been making efforts with the

community as the probation officer noted: “I always think, and it’s something I tell folks when they get out, we all live here so we have to try to make it better. Everybody that works here in our department lives here.” This is in accordance with the fact that many of the women have found connections with the probation department and other reentry programs.

As noted previously, the probation department and reentry court at the Wayne County Court of Common Pleas are unique, hence the reason why they are the focus of this study. As anticipated, the women that I interviewed reported overall positive interactions with these programs as three out of the four identified the probation department and reentry court as the most supportive people or program throughout their reentry processes. Leticia noted that the way the program is set up is helpful in itself, because “I do well under supervision. And a lot of people do well under supervision, that’s another thing I’ve noticed.” The court staff spoke of this aspect as well, as the chief probation officer noted that regular meetings are designed to help keep offenders on track, saying that “one of the biggest pieces to reentry court and with the stats out there, is the accountability with seeing a judge really reduces that recidivism. Knowing that they have to see the judge is really a key component of reentry court.” The consistent obligations have put some strain on Monica, however, as she feels that the meetings can be inflexible:

> I feel like it’s my priority to work because that’s what pays my bills and it helps me take care of my kids. But they feel like their priority is them. So I think it gets a little difficult there because it’s a little irritating, like I don’t do anything but work so I think it’s okay to call and say I’m going to be a little late because I’m at work.

She did note, however, that the other requirements such as the curfew and staying sober have been manageable: “It’s been pretty easy so far, because really, you’re really doing nothing basically. All you’re basically doing is what you’re supposed to.”

It should also be noted that Monica is the only interviewee who was participating in reentry court at the time of the interview, which suggests that she has more responsibilities to focus on at this moment. The other three, perhaps due to their separation, expressed their appreciation for the judge and the probation officers. Leticia noted that the judge had released her much earlier than anticipated in order to make her eligible for reentry court. This further exemplifies the strong relationships between the court staff and the reentry participants. As Julia remarked on the subject of their influence, "I didn't realize before that they were for me because I was still doing bad. But I realized that they were really there for me." Maria also commented on her close relationships with the court staff, noting their emotional support was similar to that of a sponsor:

> I remember, I was home maybe a week, and I was kind of going through some of my things, and I was out in my storage unit, and came across a pill. And I hadn't seen anything like that since I've been home. I was kind of freaked out about it and I called [the chief probation officer] right away. In my mind, that's who they are, they're here to help no matter what.

This has been further underlined by the fact that she has developed a relationship with the court staff outside of the courthouse, as they started a running club and ran a race together, including the judge. As she says, this brought her closer to them—"it's kind of like this little family. I know it sounds crazy, but I've really known them a lot." Her positive experience has inspired her to promote the probation department in prisons as it has a stigma and she wants to change that:

> One of my missions with doing the bible study there is to let people know that the probation department is not your enemy. They sort of have a bad rap because they can arrest us and when you're doing the wrong thing, they're going to come down on you. But

> Wayne County is just seriously blessed to have the people that we do working here. Because I've heard a lot of horror stories of other counties and other places.

The differences in this department in relation to others stems from its particular philosophy, according to the court staff. At this court, they focus on rehabilitation. The chief probation officer expanded on the benefits of a philosophy like this, despite its innate challenges:

> We try to provide change and initiate change for others so they can go on. And it isn't an easy thing to do. It's a lot of trial and error. And even sometimes when they make mistakes, the plus side of that is when they make mistakes is that we're there to pick them up and say this is not acceptable, provide them with skills, teach them and hopefully they get better. But we also on the other hand have a firm hand too…Because without consequences—and immediate consequences—that's a route to disaster as well, so it's that balance that we try to do here.

Thus while there are boundaries set in place, the department facilitates reentry as a rehabilitative process. While the staff of the probation department attend the same basic training as is required by the state, the chief probation officer makes active efforts to send her staff to additional workshops whenever funding is available. One skill that has been important is de-escalation training, which has lowered the amount of physical altercations between the staff and participants as the probation officer notes: "I think part of the reason why we've been so lucky…is because we do a lot of trainings like de-escalation. We learn how to distance ourselves from situations like that and not to make situations worse and to not be confrontational." Additionally, the chief probation officer is ambitious about the department and staff. When asked whether they have enough staff to manage caseloads, she responded "At this point I would say no, because there are some additional requirements that we have that I think if we had additional

staff—I mean, we're maintaining—but if we had additional staff I think we would be able to provide more services and groups and things that we want to focus on." At this point the other probation officer noted that the chief probation officer is perhaps more ambitious to provide services than others, saying "what's good enough other places is not enough here." This is underlined by the dedication of the staff according to the chief probation officer:

> If we didn't have the staff that we have it would be very difficult to do what we do. Because our officers are on call 24/7. I mean we're not just here 8-4:30, I mean we're called out close to Christmastime, we're called out in the evenings, on the weekends, and we're interrupting time with our families. But they're all very dedicated and committed, and I think that the offenders see that too. I mean, they have our personal cell phone, they call us on the weekends. They know that they can get that support.

This is consistent with Maria's comments on how she called the chief probation officer when she came across a pill—the staff make active efforts to support their participants. This is further underlined by the relationships the staff have, as the probation officer attests:

> I don't know if people realize that when our folks struggle, we struggle. There is a relationship that gets developed between probation and the offenders. It's not easy for us to see our folks come in from the jail. We've watched this rip families apart. And that's sometimes hard—I know it's hard for me.

The chief probation agreed with this, noting that they feel that it is their own failure when people recidivate: "it's a personal struggle. And when they screw up, or when they screw up big, it hits us hard." The judge commented that when this happens, he often struggles to sentence them to prison again, and he often shortens the sentence length, noting that "I know sending them back to prison isn't going to help their situation or accomplish much." These comments

support the fact that this department uses personal relationships to connect with reentry participants and help them reenter.

Interestingly, while the participants acknowledged the help they had received through probation or family, there was also a strong rhetoric of talking about their reentry success due to personal resolve to change. This was shown by noting their own perseverance in their goals. Leticia, for example, spoke of the efforts she has made to stay mentally healthy:

> I do a lot of work on myself, I've been doing that since 1992, I've been working on myself and my issues. And it's hit and miss, but now that I'm older and this time that I went to prison and went for three and a half years I did do a lot of work on myself. And so I still do that today, like I know what makes me tick. I know when I'm getting overwhelmed, I know when I'm getting angry, like it's irrational and I know where it's coming from, so I know how to put myself in check.

She also noted that other people who have been incarcerated have not done this type of work which she believes leads to recidivism. When asked what she thought of people who had also been incarcerated, she responded that they are more "criminal minded." She went on to note that this can only change when they resolve to:

> [They have] no kind of respect for themselves or others unless they really truly work on themselves. Like they really find what the root problems are and really accept them and deal with them and then you can move on. But until you deal with that, it's just putting icing on the cake without really checking to see if the cake is good or not… It's just trying to take care of the outside but you're not really dealing. So eventually if not really doing that, then something will trigger it. That's what I see. Something triggers it, and I'll show you how I hurt me, so basically you're hurting yourself, but you are doing things to

> cause great pain in others and great sorrow and you, and then you get sent away and you're like oh my gosh, what did I do? And it's just a sick cycle until you find the root cause of your own issues.

This is understandable considering that Leticia had been incarcerated multiple times. This is also true for Julia, who noted that she was really only able to stay sober once she realized the ramifications of her addiction, when she put a man in a wheelchair from texting while driving after drinking. She seemed to find a lot of strength in being able to change her way of thinking:

> I went to different treatment facilities, probation they always have the AA, the NA programs. But I truly believe if you don't want it, if you just show up—if you don't want it you're not gonna get it because you choose not to. But when you're tired you're tired. And that's what happened, I became sick of being tired, and it was just a complete rat race all the time.

Julia also spoke of how addiction for her can be an excuse to victimize oneself. Speaking of her process of being sober, she explained that

> The easy part is putting the drug down. The hard part is leaving it alone. Like changing your whole idea of thinking. Like this pity party of 'oh, poor me, I'm going to get high, I deserve to get high,' to 'I don't need to get high anymore.'… I was Queen Relapser, and I always put on some kind of excuse on why or how I was gonna get high. Today I'm okay. I'm okay with going to bed without getting high. Because I look in the mirror and I love myself today.

Similarly, Monica noted that in order to be successful in the programs offered in prison, participants had to be dedicated to participation, saying that when one does "take these programs

seriously then I think they really do help." These remarks show the empowerment of feeling that addiction and criminality are in these women's control.

These comments are also not to say that the women do not acknowledge the influence of others on their successful reentry experiences. As noted, they spoke of their families, communities, and the reentry court and probation department as sources of support. However, they noted that these factors alone cannot facilitate successful reentry; rather, they enable the women to avoid recidivism, combat addiction, and reintegrate.

PART 3: DISCUSSION

Overall, this research shows that these women have taken advantage of the programs offered in this county to enable their successful reentry, with additional support from family and the court staff that helps overcome various barriers to reentry. There are several implications of this research: first, that reentry is indeed a gendered process but when that is acknowledged it aids women; second, that the community of Wayne County contributes to successful reentry; and third, that self-empowerment is a powerful tool for reentering women.

One way that this research shows that reentry is gendered are accounts of strain specific to women that leads to crime. For example, trauma was noted in the interviews as a factor that led directly to addiction, and all the women explained that their incarceration came as a result of their addictions. This is consistent with GST as substances are often used as a coping mechanism for strain—especially if there are no other services available. While this has not been thoroughly explored in this study, there is the possibility that the stigma on mental health issues prevented many women from seeking counseling or fully disclosing their experiences, postponing any treatment until incarceration. Another possibility for this avoidance of treatment may have to do with lack of resources. While for the most part, the women that I interviewed did not reference

financial issues as a factor in their involvement in crime, the statistics show that many people sentenced to prison are undereducated, unemployed, and impoverished. These too can cause strain, leading to crime.

GST also speaks to the importance of social relationships for successful reentry, as it is a coping mechanism. This was available for all the women in this study, which aided in avoiding recidivism. This adds to the literature that holds that social support is an important factor on women's successful reentry. On the other side of social relationships, however, interactions with the community were sometimes imbued with stigmatization and this had a negative impact. This not only correlates to social relationships but also to the fact that women are breaking normal gender roles by being involved in criminal activity. However, contrary to institutions studied in previous literature, the detention facilities and court system I studied acknowledged these gendered differences by having prison programs specifically for women. The court staff have also made active efforts to address these issues by serving as forms of emotional support. By doing so, these systems have aided the women in their reentry, and the interviewees spoke to this effect.

The question that arises from this evidence is why and how Wayne County has been able to address these gendered differences. When examined through a Durkheimian lens, the research suggests that this community is more cohesive than others because of several aspects. First of all, this county is the size of a small city, at approximately 115,000 residents, and is rural, with many agricultural centers ("Ohio County Profiles: Wayne County"). As Maria noted, such a small community increases contact with others. This can help with maintaining norms for the society. Additionally, this county also has lower high school drop-out rates in comparison to the rest of

both Ohio and the U.S. Education is key to socializing individuals, thus with more people who have been educated, the less likely there are to be people that deviate from these norms.

However, one aspect that may contribute to having a higher retention rate in schools as well as providing other services is the wealth in this area. While the average salary of those who are incarcerated falls below the poverty line, the average salary in Wayne County overall is approximately $48,000, which provides enough taxable income to support the community. On a similar note, this area is mostly white. As has been noted, the War on Drugs has disproportionately affected people of color, especially those in impoverished neighborhoods, thus this might influence the fact that there are more services available for both at-risk populations and the formerly incarcerated in Wayne County. This can also shift the perception of crime which nationally assumes young men of color are criminal. In this area many white people are sentenced to prison which contradicts the traditional image. Because previous studies have shown that people of color are often stereotyped when they engage in crime, it is possible that when white people commit crimes, it is viewed less negatively, thus inspiring more compassion in the housing and employment search.

These aspects of wealth and race might be the reason behind more reintegrative services in this community. This is important because as noted in the review of the literature, probation officers might be able to do their job better if there are community services to supplement their department. The results suggest that this is indeed helpful, as the chief probation officer noted that the services that provide basic needs immediately after release help to address the first priority of reentering men and women. This can ease probation officers' burden of helping former prisoners with few resources, allowing them to support reentering people in other ways.

Interestingly, while the women acknowledged the aid from programs, they mostly spoke of their success as coming from their own resolve to change. This was a theme that as a researcher, I was not expecting to find. Sociology often speaks of the self as being impacted by the surrounding environment and much of the research on incarceration and reentry have noted societal disadvantages largely out of the control of the individual. However, a late interview with Foucault (1984), "The Ethic of Care of the Self as a Practice of Freedom," can help explain the importance of this self-empowerment through his conception of self-care as an act of freedom.

Foucault argues that freedom manifests from care of self. This stems from Greco-Roman period in which great importance was placed on not being a slave, which made liberty a "very basic and constant problem" (Foucault 1984:5). To address this issue, care of self allowed individuals to master themselves and maintain their personal liberty. While Foucault is wary of using the term "liberation" as this can suggest a repression of certain facets of the self that are in fact constructs, he argues that when individuals are able to work on and master themselves then they are free. This has also become an ethical issue. Foucault (1984) argues that care of self is necessary for individuals within society because it allows them to interact ethically with others, as morality is "the deliberate practice of liberty" (4). This is especially true because, according to Foucault, power is often exercised in interpersonal relationships as well as by institutions. These interactions are only able to shift power dynamics when both individuals have practiced self-care and are free from fears, appetites, and desires that threaten to dominate them.

This concept applies to reentry because formerly incarcerated people are subject to power dynamics in which they are often subdued, such as interacting with the police, prison guards, or probation officers, as Foucault points out in *Discipline and Punish* (1975). Furthermore, interactions with employers, landlords, or other community members can be imbued with

stigmatization towards the formerly incarcerated. And finally, personal relationships with abusive and/or addicted partners or family members can also inhibit a reentering woman's freedom, in this Foucauldian sense. But with the concept of self-care, reentering people can overcome these oppressed positions if they are free due to care of the self. This is especially relevant for women as they are doubly oppressed due to their gender. The importance of self-care as freedom has been evident by the fact that when the women that I interviewed spoke of their current situations, they mostly felt secure and content, referencing their personal choices and resolve—and as Leticia noted, this came about after years of "working on [her] self."

This being said, it is important to note that all the women in my study have major support systems. The ability to perform self-care is based in part on the opportunity these women are given to empower themselves with resources like counseling, employment programs, and positive personal relationships. This underlines the importance of establishing effective programs and supportive probation departments, as it provides an environment in which reentry women can perform self-care.

However, with consideration of *Discipline and Punish* (Foucault 1975), probation, reentry court, and prison programs maintain a society of surveillance as a method of discipline. As the judge noted, the main tenet of reentry court is regular meetings to insure that the participant is sober, employed, and avoiding recidivism. The judge and probation officers reinforce the norms by rewarding good behavior by being emotionally supportive and establishing positive relationships with the participants, and punish deviant behavior by increasing requirements for reentry court or by reincarcerating the participant. While this is certainly more effective than other court systems and as noted, the staff are emotionally invested in reentry court participants, the constant surveillance entrenches the carceral system as it is.

On a similar note, it is important to consider the laws set in place that result in incarceration. As noted, the War on Drugs has produced draconian laws concerning drug usage. However in both my research and previous studies, as well as support from theoretical perspectives, drug use and other crimes women engage in are based in their oppression and is often a response to lack of other coping mechanisms. This suggests that rather than waiting until prison to address addiction based in trauma, programs need to be set in place in order to prevent imprisonment, which would allow women to "care for themselves" prior to coming into contact with the legal system. Evidently prison programs and reentry court and probation are effective, thus it is possible to analyze these to learn how to develop better preventative programs and counseling. Because despite the impressiveness of these women's ability to express self-care and interact confidently with power dynamics, it would be more beneficial if they had the ability to do so before being affected by the stigmatization of incarceration.

Chapter Six | Conclusion

Through this research, I have learned that in comparison to the rest of the United States the criminal justice system in Wayne County is unique in that both the prisons and the probation system make efforts to ease reintegration for women after incarceration. This is surprising because previous studies have shown that in general, prisons in the U.S. are not set up to aid those reentering; rather, they often exist to punish. Women in this area are also greatly aided by community reintegrative services as well as support from family and other people, which counters other communities that are unwelcoming to former prisoners. Because of this, the women in this study were able to find housing and employment after incarceration and reestablish ties with their families. These factors have helped the women feel content with themselves and their current situations and have also helped them stay sober, avoiding the possibility for future incarceration. The women do, however, assume responsibility for themselves, noting that their personal decisions are necessary for avoiding recidivism—despite the fact that many identified traumatic experiences as the basis of their addictions. To add to this, the majority of those sentenced to prison through the Wayne County Court from January 2012 to October 2015 were undereducated and unemployed at the time of their sentence, thus many of those sentenced to prison are marginalized. These results suggest that while support is offered in prison and upon reentry, services to minimize risk before committing crimes are less effective or perhaps less available. Future research can examine these as possible deterrents to incarceration.

This study has revealed several other aspects to expand on in future research, many relating to methodology as this is my first major research project. First of all, while I gathered statistics on those sentenced to prison, I was unable to collect statistics on participants of reentry court. This is important for further research because though I was able to learn of experiences through interviews, statistics would help understand the overall demographics and graduation

rates. However, the national statistics on reentry from the review of the literature show that women do recidivate less than men, and considering how women in this area have prison programs and reentry court then it is possible that the statistics from reentry court would show that recidivism rates are overall lower, especially for women.

Another limitation was the inability to interview current prisoners. This would have greatly aided in learning what negative aspects lead to reincarceration. Additionally, part of the reason why my application to interview prisoners was rejected by the Marysville prison is because my study focuses on Wayne County specifically. Although the purpose of my study was to see how the Wayne County community is related to crime, this did limit the analysis to an area which does not represent all criminal justice systems. Future research can perhaps expand the sample size in order to be approved by the prison and also to make comparisons between counties. Another option, though, could be to focus on jails instead of prisons. My research showed that the county jail has less opportunity, making it a "revolving door" as Maria called it. Future research can examine this facility to find why it is less rehabilitative than the prisons.

Another issue with the methodology was the recruitment of participants for interviews. Because I went through the probation department to ask women to participate, and interviews were held in the office of a probation officer, there is a possibility that responses were limited. Although there was a positive response to probation and I believe that this is accurate, the participants could have felt uncomfortable in this setting telling me of any negative aspects of reentry court and probation. If possible, future researchers could find participants independent of the institution to reduce any risk of skewing responses.

This research also focused specifically on women's prisons. A significant reason for focusing on women came from Hill Collins's theory that academia often puts marginalized

voices next to dominant ones as a comparison, which reinforces dichotomies. While it was my intent to add to the existing literature on reentry that largely centers on males' experiences, the results suggest that the women's prisons in this area are more helpful than the men's and it is important to research the impacts of this. Contrasting perspectives would also strengthen any themes found from women's responses as it would provide context.

Another factor that limited my research is the absence of a consideration of race. While I did interview one black woman, I did not ask about her experience of reentry from the perspective of someone of color, and she did not volunteer any information on this aspect. As one of my goals while conducting this research was to be aware of and learn more about intersecting identities within incarceration, this limited my analysis. In the future, research should make diversity a central topic in order to gain a full understanding of reentry.

Evidently, future research can expand greatly from this study, given its limitations. However, this research was also conducted in order to help examine policy. Sociology has great potential to help shape laws, and previous studies have pointed out that their results show flaws in many policies regarding the criminal justice system. To add to these voices, this study has shown that while the existing programs are effective—and programs should expand in reentry and in prisons across the country as they are evidently helpful—current laws limit women from participating in these programs until they are incarcerated. Instead of delaying aid, policy should focus on founding more preventative services for at-risk populations. While these programs can certainly be interpreted as practices of normalization and surveillance, they can also be interpreted from Foucault's later realization that self-care can indeed be a practice of freedom that allows individuals to avoid situations of domination. The interviews in this study showed the inspiring strength and resilience of women reentering after prison, but their stories of years of

battling addiction are heartbreaking. And throughout these interviews, they noted that their personal resolve only changed once they were in prison. The question that arises from this that should be considered by researchers and policy-makers alike is, why are women only provided with healthy coping mechanisms for gendered strain once they are imprisoned? Hopefully this question can be addressed to reduce adversity for women and to strengthen communities overall.

Appendix A | Consent Forms

Consent Form for Formerly Incarcerated Women

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY
COLLEGE OF WOOSTER
Female Reentry in Wooster, Ohio
Principal Investigator: Zoe Cunningham-Cook, Sociology Department

Purpose
You are being asked to participate in an interview. This research is for my independent study thesis for The College of Wooster and will be available to the public upon its completion. The purpose of this study is to learn what helps or hinders women who reenter Wooster after incarceration.

Risks
Any information that you share will not be protected from subpoena. With that said, you may reveal information that you did not intend to share. If this occurs, inform the researcher and the information will be discarded immediately. Additionally, the interviews are a time commitment as they will take approximately 30-90 minutes to complete.

Benefits
I plan on sharing the contents of my research with the administrators at the Wayne County Court of Common Pleas in hopes that they may use the information to examine their policies to better serve reentry participants such as yourself.

Confidentiality
Any information you give will be held confidential. These interviews will be recorded with an audio recording device. When I am not listening to the data for transcription (which I will be doing using headphones in a private space) I will store the tapes in a locked file cabinet in my advisor's office. Once I have transcribed all of the data (which will be protected by a password on my personal computer), I will delete the information permanently from the recording device. No identifying features of participants will be recorded, other than a number that I will assign each participant. In place of your real name, I will assign pseudonyms (i.e., fictional names) to each numbered interview during the writing of my thesis.

Costs
There is no cost to you beyond the time and effort required to complete the procedure described above.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw
You may refuse to participate in the study. If you decide to participate, you may change your mind about being in the study and withdraw at any point during the experiment without penalty. Your refusal to participate will not be reported to anyone at the institution, nor will it in any way affect your chances of parole.

Questions

If you have any questions, please ask me. If you have additional questions later, you can contact me by email at zcunningham-cook16@wooster.edu. Additionally, you can contact my advisor Thomas Tierney if you would prefer a third party at ttierney@wooster.edu.

Consent
Your signature below will indicate that you have decided to volunteer as a research subject, that you have read and understand the information provided above, and that you are at least 18 years of age.

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

Consent Form for Court Staff

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY
COLLEGE OF WOOSTER
Female Reentry in Wooster, Ohio
Principal Investigator: Zoe Cunningham-Cook, Sociology Department

Purpose
You are being asked to participate in an interview. This research is for my independent study thesis for The College of Wooster and will be available to the public upon its completion. The purpose of this study is to learn what helps or hinders women who reenter Wooster after incarceration.

Risks
You may reveal information that you did not intend to share. If this occurs, inform the researcher and the information will be discarded immediately. Additionally, the interviews involve a time commitment of approximately 30-90 minutes to complete.

Benefits
Your contributions will help provide a nuanced perspective to this study which I hope can be used for the purposes of the Wayne County Court of Common Pleas and perhaps the state of Ohio as well.

Confidentiality
Any information you give will be held confidential. These interviews will be recorded with an audio recording device. When I am not listening to the data for transcription (which I will be doing using headphones in a private space) the data can only be accessed with a secure passcode that only I know. Once I have transcribed all of the data (which will be protected by a password on my personal computer), I will delete the information permanently from the recording device. No identifying features of participants will be recorded, other than a number that I will assign each participant. In place of your real name, I will assign pseudonyms (i.e., fictional names) to each numbered interview during the writing of my thesis.

Costs

There is no cost to you beyond the time and effort required to complete the procedure described above.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw
You may refuse to participate in the study. If you decide to participate, you may change your mind about being in the study and withdraw at any point during the experiment without penalty. Your refusal to participate will not be reported to anyone who also works at the Wayne County Court of Common Pleas.

Questions
If you have any questions, please ask me. If you have additional questions later, you can contact me by email at zcunningham-cook16@wooster.edu. Additionally, you can contact my advisor Thomas Tierney if you would prefer a third party at ttierney@wooster.edu.

Consent
Your signature below will indicate that you have decided to volunteer as a research subject, that you have read and understand the information provided above, and that you are at least 18 years of age.

Signature of participant _____ Date _____

Appendix B | Interview Questions

Interview Questions for Formerly Incarcerated Women

1.) Age, race

2.) Tell me about your life before you were incarcerated (for the 1st time.) How much schooling did you receive, who did you live with and where, what was your relationship with your family? Did you have kids and/or a partner/boyfriend/husband?

3.) What do you think led you to being incarcerated? (Violence, poverty, addiction?)

4.) How long were you incarcerated for?

5.) What was prison like for you? What was positive and what was negative? Did you participate in programs, and if so, which ones?

6.) Upon release, what had changed and what stayed the same from your life before incarceration?

7.) Upon release, how did you find housing and employment?

8.) What was your reunification with your family and friends like?

9.) How did your reintegration with the community as a whole feel in Wooster (or whichever town you live in)?

10.) How has it felt to navigate parole? Has it been difficult or easy to meet the expectations?

11.) For women who have not reoffended: who or what has been a source of support while negotiating reentry? How did they help you?

12.) For women who have reoffended: who or what was a negative impact on you while negotiating reentry? How did they affect you?

13.) Why did you start using/turn to crime?

14.) Were there any services available to you that would have helped you before you were arrested?

15.) What was your highest priority/biggest concern when you left prison?

16.) How has it felt to navigate parole? Has it been difficult or easy to meet the expectations?

17.) Do you think that your experiences in prison and during reentry differ at all from men's? If so, how?

Interview Questions for Court Staff

1.) What is the goal of reentry court/probation?

2.) What do you think is the biggest issue facing people upon release from prison?

3.) How do you think the process of reentry differs for women from men?

4.) Where did you receive training for this work? Did your training differ at all from your actual work?

5.) What do you prioritize when you are working with reentry court participants?

6.) What are your personal tactics to help reentry participants succeed?

7.) How do you think the Wooster Courthouse differs from others? Why?

8.) Do you ever note patterns of racism or sexism affecting women or people of color? If so, does that affect your interactions with the offenders?

9.) Do you notice a difference in offenders when they return from prison? How so?

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