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The Continuation of Violence: Analyzing the Retraumatization of Incarcerated Survivors of Domestic Violence and Evaluating the Potential of a "Trauma-Informed" Prison Model

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The Continuation of Violence: Analyzing the Retraumatization of Incarcerated Survivors of Domestic Violence and Evaluating the Potential of a "Trauma-Informed" Prison Model

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Abstract

The United States criminal justice system emphasizes punishment, in the form of incarceration, over the rehabilitation of individuals convicted of criminal activity. While confinement is harmful to many inmates, incarcerated women are even more vulnerable to the extent that they are disproportionately survivors of domestic violence and abuse. Given this vulnerability, the primary purpose of this study is to explore the impact of incarceration on survivors of domestic violence and abuse. I aim first to analyze the ways in which punitive institutions replicate dynamics of abuse, often retraumatizing female survivors of domestic violence. I then evaluate the policies and procedures utilized by "trauma-informed" systems of care, a framework that actively mitigates subsequent exposure to trauma through community integration and relationship building. This evaluation is done in order to weigh the likelihood of a broader trauma-informed prison model, in the context of the punitive nature of the United States criminal justice system. To accomplish these aims, I reviewed relevant literature by which to ground a qualitative research study. I then collected data through interviews with professionals involved in the criminal justice system, as well as with formerly incarcerated survivors of abuse. My findings indicate (a) the direct and indirect connections between domestic violence and incarceration; (b) the negative, lasting effects of trauma upon survivors of abuse; (c) the extent and mechanisms through which punitive institutions replicate dynamics of domestic violence and abuse and; (d) opportunities and barriers related to the implementation of a trauma-informed prison model. I conclude by offering a non-carceral, restorative justice approach to the criminal justice system, one which advocates for the healing of all three parties impacted by harm: the survivor, the abuser, and the community in which the harm has taken place.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Confronted with a crime against oneself or one's community, individuals often wish for some form of "justice" or retribution, acting as if their healing process is "complete" only when the perpetrator has suffered as well. Whether a natural human impulse or a socially constructed behavior, this emphasis on justice has served as a fundamental rationale for the criminal justice system. As a result, we have grown reliant on the criminal justice system as a means of restitution; members of law enforcement are viewed as inherently "good" and heroic, in direct opposition to the "bad" criminals they remove from society. Like many social constructions, however, the United States criminal justice system has proven to be fundamentally unjust. This can be seen within the racism and classism implicitly embedded within our punitive institutions: while Black and Hispanic adults account for 29% of the overall United States population, they constitute approximately 69% of inmates within the adult criminal justice system (Sakala 2014). By disproportionately targeting marginalized communities and failing to address underlying systemic issues, the United States criminal justice system continues to effectively perpetuate widespread oppression and exploitation.

It is critical to recognize that this perpetuation occurs *within* and not simply across the specific institutions that comprise the criminal justice system. While incarceration is harmful to many inmates, it has been found to be particularly detrimental to survivors of domestic violence and abuse. Following the National Domestic Violence Hotline's definition, "domestic violence" refers to "physical and sexual violence, threats and intimidation, emotional abuse and economic deprivation" in the context of intimate relationships (NDVH.org). Overall, such relationships are characterized by the inappropriate assertion of power and control. Disproportionately affecting women, especially those of marginalized

racial identity and socioeconomic status, domestic violence negatively impacts the physical, emotional and psychological stability of those who experience it. For reasons explored later in this project, the direct and indirect actions of domestic violence survivors often lead to entry into the criminal justice system. Much like their abusive relationships, such survivors have once again become imprisoned within institutions that offer few avenues to assert power and control. This dynamic is quite significant given the fact that incarcerated women are estimated to have rates of abuse six to ten times that of women in the general population, indicating a larger systemic issue that the criminal justice system fails to address (Dirks 2004:103).

In an effort to better support women who may have experienced domestic violence and abuse more generally, certain programs and organizations — such as addiction treatment centers or domestic violence shelters — have worked to implement "trauma-informed" frameworks of care. Such frameworks actively mitigate subsequent exposure to trauma and emphasize the sustainment of relationships as tools for healing. Fortunately, trauma-informed models have proven to be extremely successful in supporting survivors of abuse. Due to the punitive nature of carceral institutions, however, such trauma-informed models have failed to become mainstream within the criminal justice system. Thus, the purpose of my Independent Study is twofold. I first aim to analyze the ways in which punitive institutions replicate dynamics of abuse, often retraumatizing female survivors of domestic violence. I then evaluate the policies and procedures utilized by trauma-informed systems of care in order to evaluate the likelihood of a broader trauma-informed prison model, given the punitive nature of the United States criminal justice system.

While my Independent Study focuses on incarcerated survivors of domestic violence in particular, it is important to clarify that the mentioning of "trauma" may refer to a number of unique situations. These situations may include but are not limited to: sexual assault, childhood neglect or abandonment, the death of a close friend or family member, gun violence, serious physical injury or traumatic brain damage, war or political violence. This is significant because those who work to implement "trauma-informed" systems of care often do so with many or all of these situations in mind. In considering the topic of my Independent Study more broadly, it is important to acknowledge that like women, men, non-binary folks and transgender individuals experience domestic violence in devastating ways. My primary focus on female-identifying individuals in the context of abuse should not be taken as disregarding this reality, and instead reflects the sheer number of women around the world who experience domestic violence, some of whom do not survive.

In completing this project, I struggled to interact with the distinction between domestic violence and abuse; while "domestic violence" is categorized as abuse, not all survivors of abuse experience domestic violence. Interestingly, this struggle is not unique to me and can be discerned within both the literature I reviewed and the interviews I conducted. I thus decided to use the phrases "domestic violence" and "abuse" somewhat interchangeably throughout my Independent Study. I did this not to essentialize or minimize any experiences of abuse, but to better understand how systems interact with abuse survivors more broadly. Finally, my use of the word "survivor" when referring to those who have experienced abuse is entirely intentional. While terms such as "victim" and "battered woman" are often utilized, I find that "survivor" not only returns a sense of agency to such women, but better signifies a

viable future for them as well. "Survivor" implies that there is more defining an individual's identity than their history of abuse in way that "victim" and "battered woman" do not.

My introduction to this topic was entirely incidental. While I knew I wanted my Independent Study to focus on gender and the criminal justice system, I was not exactly sure what that would mean or look like. When completing initial research this past September, I was reading a book on the experiences of incarcerated mothers when I happened to stumble upon a footnote. Though I have since failed to find the exact quote, the footnote stated something along the lines of "it is an unfortunate reality that victims of domestic violence often reexperience such dynamics of abuse during incarceration." As soon as I read that footnote, the topic of my Independent Study became clear to me. All too often, the experiences of marginalized and vulnerable individuals are relegated to footnotes, buried deep within academia. And all too often, the voices of incarcerated women are deemed to be nonexistent or "silenced," when in fact it is us who are not listening hard enough. Above all, I hope that my Independent Study serves to directly counter these two realities.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

It is an unfortunate reality that although women's incarceration rates have been steadily increasing since the mid-20th century (Islam-Zwart and Vik 2004:522), the academic literature centered on imprisoned women has not kept pace. This serves as a stark contrast to incarcerated men; since the inception of criminology itself, extensive literature has been conducted analyzing the motives, imprisonment and recidivism rates of male individuals. This is due both to the widespread gendering of crime as a masculine act, as well as to academia largely being a male-dominated field. Historically, the conclusions from these androcentric studies have simply been "applied" to female offenders, ignoring the variety of differences which exist when the gender of an offending individual is considered. One such difference is the connection between domestic violence and the criminalization of women. Disproportionately affecting women, domestic violence is often accompanied by other forms of violence, including sexual abuse. Both domestic and sexual abuse have been identified as primary predictors of entry into the justice system for women (Saar et al. 2015:5). For example, young women who have left their homes due to an abusive situation typically end up in sex-work — either of their own volition or due to sex-trafficking — and may be arrested on charges of prostitution, causing further punishment and isolation.

Unfortunately, retraumatization during incarceration is common for survivors of abuse, and can have devastating emotional, physical, and psychological consequences (Dirks 2004:206). Therefore, it is critical to consider and address the abuse history of offending individuals, offering relevant support and care. I will thus review the existing literature which discusses: the retraumatization of female incarcerated survivors of abuse; the ways in which the structure of prisons contributes to retraumatization; the psychological impact of

imprisonment on female survivors during and after confinement; and models of trauma-informed incarceration.

Retraumatization in Prison: An Overview

Perhaps the most comprehensive piece of literature pertaining to the retraumatization of incarcerated abuse survivors is "Sexual Revictimization and Retraumatization of Women in Prison," by sociologist Danielle Dirks, published in 2004 in *Women's Studies Quarterly*. The article identifies a direct link between physical, sexual and emotional abuse and rates of incarceration, noting that "incarcerated women are estimated to have rates of abuse six to ten times that of women in the general population" (Dirks 2004:103). While few studies have been conducted directly on the retraumatization of incarcerated abuse survivors, Dirks provides an extensive overview of the related literature, drawing conclusions based on the trends and theories compiled. She writes that "for women with previous stories of abuse, prison life is apt to simulate the abuse dynamics already established in these women's lives, thus perpetuating women's further revictimization and retraumatization while serving time" (102). One compelling example Dirks provides is the fact that in prison, women are often reexposed to the "four powerful traumatizing processes of childhood sexual abuse," first conceptualized in 1985 by sociologist David Finkelhor and Dr. Angela Brown in "The Traumatic Impact of Child Sexual Abuse." These processes consist of traumatic sexualization, betrayal, stigmatization, and powerlessness (Finkelhor and Brown 1985:1). Whether intentional or unintentional, these four dynamics can be identified within the criminal justice system, both between inmates and within power dynamics in the prison. Dirks also notes the commonality of how abuse and criminalization impact marginalized women; due to unjust stereotypes and systematic forms of oppression such as racism and

homophobia, both Black women and lesbian women face elevated rates of abuse, often leading to incarceration and further trauma.

The physical and sexual violence that occurs within prisons can be very detrimental to incarcerated survivors of abuse. In her paper "Conceptualizing and Stopping State Sexual Violence Against Incarcerated Women," Dr. Michelle VanNatta analyzed the research studies pertinent to all forms of sexual violence in prisons. While VanNatta agreed with Dirks' conclusion about the direct link between sexual/domestic abuse and criminalization, she also argued that "sexual coercion is inherent in incarceration itself" (VanNatta 2010: 31). In order to substantiate this, VanNatta first established that incarcerated individuals are already victims, writing that "most people who are incarcerated already lived within systems of control and surveillance deployed by the neoliberal state" through systems such as the courts, public assistance, or the nonprofit industrial complex. Thus, "prison imposes the ultimate state control on those already disempowered, silenced, and hyper-marginalized" (28). While the fact that prisons are spaces of further marginalization and victimization is problematic in itself, it is especially detrimental for survivors of domestic abuse. VanNatta echoes Dirks' finding that the same dynamics of control within abuse are present in prisons as well; this is especially relevant when incarcerated women are under the supervision of male guards. As she summarized:

> Guards of all genders have harassed and attacked prisoners of all genders, but an Amnesty International report asserts that male supervision of female prisoners presents particular problems... the social authority and control male custodial officers hold over incarcerated women creates a "super authority" and [the] gaze of male guards when women prisoners are undressed creates an atmosphere of threat (29).

By establishing incarcerated individuals as victims both before and during their time in prison — as well as discussing the gendered power dynamics of traditional prisoner/guard

relationships — VanNatta effectively posits sexual coercion as inherent within prisons. The stage is thus set for retraumatization and re-victimization to occur.

The Structure of Prisons

Physical Organization

Often, the physical structures and organization of prisons themselves inadvertently allow for sexual assault and intimidation to take place between inmates. This reality is substantiated by the article "Sexual Assault and Coercion Among Incarcerated Women Prisoners: Excerpts from Prison Letters," written by Leanne Fiftal Alarid and published in 2000. Alarid's research began by distributing a survey within a "large county jail in the South" asking incarcerated women about their personal experiences with "the institutional subculture, the inmate code, play families, and sexual and economic behaviors" (Alarid 2000:394). While it was not the initial aim of the study, the surveys suggested the prevalence of sexual coercion among inmates. Alarid selected a random group of 25 from the survey participants and asked for additional information. One woman, identified as Velmarine, maintained contact with Alarid on a weekly basis for five years, and much of Alarid's piece focuses on the letters she received from Velmarine. Due to the fact that Velmarine was in five different institutions as she was writing, she was able to offer comprehensive evaluations spanning various institutional environments. By analyzing these letters, Alarid found that "institutions with a greater proportion of open dormitory-style housing seemed to have more incidences of sexual coercion and sexual assault than areas with one or two-person cells," due to increased opportunities for interaction (401). Additionally, Velmarine discussed the danger of "restriction dorms," where "women are housed for temporary loss of privileges for prison rule violations" (401). Alarid's review of these letters found that sexual assault

between prisoners was more likely to occur in such areas due to the limited camera coverage or security personnel placed there.

Institutional Procedures

In addition to the physical organization of prisons, many of the institutional routines and procedures of incarceration mimic the control and dehumanization associated with domestic abuse. This begins with the total control over the daily schedules of incarcerated women, as covered in "Women's Psychological Adjustment to Prison: A Review for Future Social Work Directions," written by Dr. Gina L. Fedock from the University of Chicago. Fedock provides an extensive overview of how different institutional factors affect the psychological health of incarcerated women. She hopes that this information will be utilized to improve "incarcerated women's mental health, [prevent] suicide in prison, and [promote] long-term outcomes such as reduced recidivism" (Fedock 2007:31). According to Fedock, many daily prison policies are designed to dehumanize and remove autonomy from incarcerated women. She writes that:

> … instead of women in prison being referred to by name, they are often referred to by their assigned inmate number... Daily routines are highly structured and often leave little room for prisoner choice; from wake-up time to choice of dress to diet, prisoners are instructed when, where, and how they will conduct themselves; for example, women are given infractions for not correctly tucking their shirts into their pants (Fedock 2007:32).

This "highly structured" environment impacts every individual, yet the dynamics of total control may particularly trigger abuse survivors. Although the review does not specifically focus on survivors of domestic abuse, Fedock does emphasize the influence of an individual's personal history (demographics, family history, substance use and mental health) on their psychological health in prison. She writes that "trauma and adversity histories, especially sexual assault histories, negatively influence women's psychological adjustment to

prison life" (37). Fedock's review is beneficial in that she identifies and evaluates two theories used to predict and explain the psychological adjustment of women in prison: deprivation theory and importation theory. While deprivation theory "highlights the role of the prison environment… importation theory focuses on individual-level factors that influence psychological adjustment" (34). These two theories will be evaluated further in my subsequent chapter on the theories relevant to the retraumatization of incarcerated abuse survivors.

In addition to the control that correctional facilities have over incarcerated women's daily schedules, procedures such as restraints and bodily searches may retraumatize abuse survivors. This was addressed in a 2015 report written by researchers from the Human Rights Project for Girls in conjunction with the Georgetown Law Center on Poverty and Inequality and the Ms. Foundation for Women. Titled "The Sexual Abuse to Prison Pipeline: The Girls' Story," the authors illuminate the correlation between abuse and incarceration, including a discussion of how abuse continues well into imprisonment. The authors write that routine procedures, such as "the use of restraints and strip searches, as well as the isolating, punitive environment itself, can be particularly harmful to victims of trauma by triggering their traumatic stress symptoms" (Saar et al. 2015:16). The findings stated in this report are echoed in one published in 2017 by the Juvenile Law Center (JLC) titled "Addressing Trauma: Eliminating Strip Searches." Defined as "a search that requires a person to remove or arrange some clothing so as to permit a visual inspection of the person's breasts, buttocks, or genitalia," strip searches are used frequently within punitive institutions to "locate hidden contraband" (JLC 2017:1). The report states that:

> The experience of a strip search can cause youth to experience anxiety, depression, loss of concentration, sleep disturbances, difficulty performing in school, phobic

reactions, shame, guilt, depression, and other lasting emotional scars... Strip searches can also retraumatize youth who are survivors of sexual abuse (2).

Although the JLC's report focuses primarily on the impact that strip searches have on incarcerated youth, the conclusions are similar for survivors of abuse at all ages. Both this report and the one published by the Human Rights Project for Girls ultimately argue for a full enforcement of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), which — in addition to other critical provisions — places limits on invasive procedures such as strip searches.

Due to the alienation and extreme limitations of solitary confinement, incarcerated survivors of abuse are further traumatized when subject to time in isolation. A 2019 report compiled by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) evaluates the ways in which solitary confinement impacts incarcerated women in the United States. The report defines solitary confinement as the process of "isolating a person in a cell for upwards of 20 hours per day and severely limiting human contact and environmental stimulation of any kind" (ACLU 2019:6). While there may be brief interactions with correctional staff or medical providers, this "may be a prisoner's only human contact for days, weeks, months, or even years" (6). Titled "Still Worse Than Second Class," the report offers a comprehensive explanation of how different populations of incarcerated women are affected in particular ways; these populations include youth and elderly women, pregnant women, people with mental illness, transgender women, and immigrants. It is critical to note that each of these vulnerable populations may also have a history of abuse, causing further victimization. For incarcerated survivors of abuse, the ACLU writes that in solitary confinement:

> The isolation, enforced idleness, and absence of normal stimulation can all contribute to further psychological deterioration in vulnerable women. Those in solitary confinement, especially victims of sexual abuse, can experience acute psychological suffering when they are closely watched, with virtually no privacy, by correctional officers who have complete authority over them (9).

 In addition to the devastating impact solitary confinement has on the psychological health of incarcerated abuse survivors, the report also notes that such confinement enables further abuse to occur. For women held in isolation, likely dangers from male guards include the use of excessive force and discipline, physical restraints and sexual abuse. This abuse can be difficult to detect "particularly because isolation cells are separate from the general population" (10). Sadly, solitary confinement can also be utilized to retaliate against incarcerated women who have spoken up about the abuse or neglect they face. According to the ACLU's report, "women who have been sexually abused by officers are thus faced with another painful dilemma, forced to decide between reporting the attack and risking retaliation, or not reporting it and risking further assault" (10). While the report is bleak in terms of the detrimental impact of solitary confinement, the authors do endorse specific legislation and offer ten concrete suggestions which seek to improve confinement within correctional facilities. These include abolishing solitary confinement for vulnerable populations and assessments by medical health practitioners before and during solitary confinement.

Power Dynamics

    A. Inmate-Officer Relationships

The power that prison officers and guards have over incarcerated survivors of domestic violence has been alluded to in various sections throughout the literature review thus far, demonstrating its importance as an enduring reality of the system. Unfortunately, the dynamics of male guards overseeing and controlling the lives of incarcerated women force many survivors of abuse to relive their trauma. This was examined in the 1998 review "The 'Dirty Little Secret:' Why Class Actions Have Emerged as the Only Viable Option for

Women Inmates Attempting to Satisfy the Subjective Prong of the Eighth Amendment in Suits for Custodial Sexual Abuse" by litigator Amy Laderberg. Laderberg's review provides a comprehensive overview of the legislation and lawsuits related to the sexual abuse of female prisoners by male guards. Before doing so, Laderberg echoes VanNatta in arguing that abuse is inherent within the power dynamics of the inmate/guard relationship (and confinement in general), rendering abuse of power likely (Laderberg 1998:324). This is due to how prison guards exercise complete authority over prisoners, controlling everything from invasive searches to communication with family members and time in solitary confinement. These dynamics of power and dependency mirror those found in abusive relationships, causing survivors to re-experience trauma via flashbacks of prior abuse. Laderberg writes that incarcerated women with an abuse history thus "become entrapped in a different, and seemingly inescapable cycle of abuse" (339).

Unfortunately, these dynamics often extend beyond past trauma to include the infliction of new abuse; Laderberg writes that due to their positions of power, prison guards have many opportunities to sexually harass and assault inmates with little chance of consequence. In the 1997 case *Carrigan v. Delaware,* plaintiff Dorothy Carrigan accused officer Peter Davis from the Delaware Department of Corrections of rape; Carrigan testified that while she was napping, Davis entered her room, told her to be quiet, and assaulted her. When reporting the rape, Carrigan was threatened with additional jail time and a loss of privileges (345). Taking these dynamics into account, Laderberg summarizes that incarcerated women are "not only aware of the authority of the officer but are also in a position where their complaints may be disregarded or played down" (340). This power dynamic is reflected once again in *Women Prisoners v. District of Columbia,* a 1994 lawsuit

in which female inmates across prisons in Washington, D.C. mobilized after reports of sexual assault to their respective institutions were mishandled. In reviewing the institutional responses to the reports, Laderberg noted "the absence of confidentiality of complaints, the inadequacy of the investigations, and the prisons' repeated failures to take remedial action," adding that investigating officers simply regarded the complaints as "gossip" (354). The outcome of *Women Prisoners v. District of Columbia* was significant in that presiding Judge June Green ruled in favor of the women, finding a "level of sexual harassment objectively cruel and to which the Defendants [were] deliberately indifferent" (356). While this lawsuit was critical, Laderberg reminds us that not all incarcerated women are given the information or resources to recognize and address such exploitative power dynamics in the first place.

B. Inmate-Inmate Relationships

Another power dynamic related to the retraumatization of incarcerated abuse survivors is that which exists between inmates themselves. This dynamic is particularly important due to the high percentage of sexual assaults which occur between incarcerated women in American prisons. In 2006, this issue was addressed with the publication of "Sexual Violence Inside Prisons: Rates of Victimization," a study conducted by criminologists Nancy Wolff, Cynthia Blitz, Jing Shi, Ronet Bachman and Jane Siegel. In June of 2005, the researchers distributed a survey to inmates housed at twelve adult male prisons and one adult female prison in the United States; overall, this amounted to the participation of 6,964 men and 564 women. Available in both Spanish and English, the survey was conducted via a computer-administered questionnaire and consisted of both demographic information and specific questions pertaining to experiences of sexual victimization. These particular questions were adapted from the National Violence Against

Women and Men Surveys (Wolff et al. 2006:838). According to the researchers, it was critical to clearly and thoughtfully define the wording which composed the questions centered around sexual victimization. As they explained:

> The specific sexual assault questions were clustered to reflect definitions of sexual violence developed by the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Sexual violence was defined as *nonconsensual sexual acts,* which consisted of forced sex acts, including oral and anal sex, and *abusive sexual contacts,* which included intentional touching of specified areas of the body (838).

Overall, the researchers found that there were no statistically significant differences between female and male respondents in terms of reporting staff-on-inmate violence, with roughly 7.6% for both populations (844). 21.2% of female inmates reported experiencing a form of sexual victimization from a fellow inmate, compared to 4.3% of male inmates. Additionally, it became clear that "the percent of inmate-on-inmate rape [was] over ten times higher than rape rates of adult women in the total population, and the rate for staff-perpetrated rape… almost six times higher" (844). Here, it is important to acknowledge the likelihood of male inmates being less likely to report instances of assault, due to gendered codes of masculinity. This study also illuminated the reality that younger prisoners have a higher risk of sexual victimization from fellow prisoners than older individuals do, signaling the hierarchical dynamics present in punitive institutions. While it is often assumed in scholarly literature that male guards pose the biggest threat to incarcerated women, these findings emphasize the need to examine the sexual victimization between inmates themselves.

In her letters to researcher Leanne Fiftal Alarid, Velmarine offered a detailed account of the power dynamics and structured hierarchy she discerned among fellow female inmates during incarceration. The dynamics are incredibly pervasive in the context of sexual relationships and coercion, as Alarid found that 75% to 80% of women in jail or prison have

been or currently are involved in "the homosexual mix," meaning they participate in "play families and sexual liaisons" (Alarid 2000:395). Velmarine noted that unfortunately, many of the incarcerated women she lived with "have no concept of a healthy relationship to begin with, and thus do not recognize" sexual or romantic coercion when it occurs (395). Through her observations and experiences, Velmarine identified the different types of sexual roles women typically fit into while incarcerated. As she explained, "jailhouse turnout femmes" are women who experiment with homosexuality for the first time while in prison; femmes constitute the majority of those in the "homosexual mix," and adhere to traditionally feminine characteristics. "Studs," on the contrary, are female inmates who "speak, dress, and play a masculine role in a sexual/courting relationship" (404). While women of all ethnic backgrounds often prefer the femme role, Velmarine noted that studs are typically African American, in addition to those who identified as lesbian prior to incarceration (395).

Alarid's study found that those who occupy the femme role are often more sexually aggressive towards other female inmates than studs and in fact, it can be dangerous for a stud to ignore a femme's sexual advances. As she wrote:

> Sometimes, verbal threats and sexual harassment by femmes can lead to physical altercations (e.g., property destruction, scalding with hot liquid, assault) of a stud. One of the results of this situation is that studs, perceiving the need to uphold their reputations, may spend more time in a restriction dorm or solitary confinement for fighting (397).

Alarid notes that when a stud disregards the sexual advancement of a femme, the aggressor will enlist the help of other femmes who form alliances to retaliate against the unwilling stud. This "play family" of femmes serves as a stark contrast to studs, who are more likely to respond to sexual coercion individually. The alliance of femmes may fabricate stories about harassment or hide contraband in the stud's dorm, warranting disciplinary reports or a loss of

privileges from correctional officers (396). This dynamic is complicated further due to how femmes adhere to stereotypically feminine norms, as they are often favored and trusted more by correctional officers (397). In some cases, the punishment for disregarding sexual advancement extends far beyond a loss of privileges; when Velmarine herself ignored the advances of fellow inmate Anna, she was forcibly dragged by a group of six women into Anna's room and raped. After her report about the initial incident was ignored by staff, Velmarine remembers that she asked "to be racked in my cell all day except for meals and showers… Every time I'd come out for a shower, I'd get fondled or dragged out naked to the dayroom" (400). It is as a result of these threatening power dynamics that Velmarine observed many incarcerated women reluctantly entering into sexual relationships as a way of surviving their time in prison.

The Impact of Imprisonment on Abuse Survivors During and After Incarceration

During Incarceration

During confinement, female abuse survivors are impacted on a psychological level in complex ways. This has been substantiated by Kayleen Islam-Zwart and Peter Vik in the 2004 study "Female Adjustment to Incarceration as Influenced by Sexual Assault History," which appears to be the only study of its kind.[1] Through a series of questionnaires and interviews, the psychologists compared the adjustment to incarceration between childhood sexual assault survivors and inmates with either no history of assault, a history of adult sexual assault only, or both childhood and adult sexual assault. The authors define

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[1] Although Islam-Zwart and Vik's study focused on sexual assault survivors in particular, it is relevant to my research on domestic abuse for two reasons: childhood sexual assault substantially increases the risk of further forms of abuse (Coid et al. 2001:450); and there is a glaring lack of academic studies addressing the psychological impact of incarceration on survivors of domestic abuse.

adjustment as "modifying, adapting, or altering individual behaviors to bring behaviors into conformity" with the prison environment (Islam-Zwart and Vik 2004:524). This was examined by evaluating 92 women serving first offenses in a minimum-security unit in the western United States. Clinical and demographic data from structured interviews conducted immediately after an inmate arrived in prison were correlated with results from the Prison Adjustment Questionnaire (PAQ), which measured overall adjustment to incarceration. The participants were asked to complete the PAQ again two weeks later, and 64 women obliged.

Islam-Zwart and Vik's findings are incredibly nuanced. Initially, multivariate analysis indicated that women with a history of both childhood and adult sexual assault reported the lowest internal adjustment scores, which reflect "discomfort around guards and other inmates, insomnia, and anger" (531). For external adjustment (arguments and fights), women reporting solely adult assault scored the highest, followed by women with a history of both childhood and adult sexual assault. There were no significant differences for physical adjustment (illness, fear, injury and feeling taken advantage of) based on sexual assault history (531). For the results collected after two weeks of incarceration, Islam-Zwart and Vik hypothesized that women with a history of both childhood and adult sexual assault would show slower adjustment to incarceration than those reporting no assault or adult sexual assault only. Overall, they found that "inmates with a history of adult sexual assault or childhood and adult sexual assault reported slight increases in internal adjustment difficulties after 2 weeks" (532). There were insignificant findings pertaining to external adjustment by assault type over time, while all participants indicated decreases in physical adjustment issues over the course of the study.

Islam-Zwart and Vik conclude by examining the paradoxical nature of their study's results. For women with a history of sexual assault, the dynamics of prison may be similar to their "typical experience," with Islam-Zwart and Vik adding that such women may "conceptualize prison as a similar trauma, consequently, utilizing coping strategies previously developed to handle sexual assault" (534). Additionally, the instability of housing that women with assault histories frequently report may mimic the shift to living in prison. Islam-Zwart and Vik note that "for this reason, prison may be perceived as another move and not arouse feelings of discomfort and anger… these women might not experience much change in threat and therefore feel no less comfortable in prison" (535). It can be concluded that incarcerated survivors of abuse of a low socioeconomic status may thus perceive prison as a "safer" environment than their previous living situations. For survivors of childhood sexual abuse, Islam-Zwart and Vik suggest that:

> Victims of childhood sexual assault may have less ability to make accurate judgments regarding the dangerousness of people and situations (e.g., prison, guards, inmates) and, as a result, are less likely to see prison as an uncomfortable experience (Islam-Zwart and Vik, 2004:535).

This perceived safety extends as well to survivors of adult sexual assault, who "have more than likely experienced an unsafe relational and/or living situation in the recent past and may find comfort in the prison structure and in distancing themselves from those unsafe environments" (535). These factors all seek to explain what appears to be "easier" adjustments to incarceration. Overall, the results from Islam-Zwart and Vik's study illuminate two critical findings: sexual assault history does have an impact on adjustment to incarceration for women; and there is a pressing need to further research the psychological impact of incarceration on survivors of all types of abuse so that retraumatization is avoidable.

Post-Incarceration

There is a void in the literature pertaining to the psychological adjustment of female survivors of domestic abuse post-incarceration. This is problematic due to the high rates of continued abuse and recidivism associated with such populations (Mallicoat 2011:493). Therefore, a more general overview will be given on post-incarceration adjustment using "The Psychological Impact of Incarceration: Implications for Post-Prison Adjustment" by psychologist Craig Haney. In his report, Haney examines the ways in which formerly incarcerated individuals adjust to life post-incarceration, beginning with an overview of institutionalization or "prisonization." While these terms refer to the typical adjustment process of incarceration, Haney notes that due to "increasingly harsh policies and conditions of confinement," including solitary confinement, prisonization has become "extraordinarily prolonged and intense," affecting life after incarceration in profound ways (Haney 2003:77).

The report notes a multitude of psychological implications for individuals post-incarceration, including the reality that for parents still "dependent on institutional structures and routines," it can be difficult to "effectively organize the lives of their children or exercise the initiative and autonomous decision-making that parenting requires" (86). Haney's mention of how parents are affected post-incarceration is significant in that women, who are disproportionately affected by domestic abuse, are subject to strict gendered stereotypes with regard to parenting (Jewkes 2015:144). These realities exacerbate the difficulties that survivors of abuse face post-incarceration. Haney additionally notes that the "distrusting and hypervigilant adaptation to prison life" often leaves individuals unable to "promote trust and authenticity" within their post-incarceration relationships, leading to social invisibility and alienation — this inability to connect leaves many struggling to "overcome the diminished

sense of self-worth that prison too often instills" (86). Overall, Haney articulates how the

"residual effects of the post-traumatic stress of imprisonment and retraumatization… can

jeopardize the mental health of [people] attempting to reintegrate back into the freeworld

communities from which they came" (86). While Haney's report is broad in terms of prisoner

demographics, he echoes the aforementioned literature's claims that prisonization

specifically impacts inmates with histories of abuse, writing that such prisoners find:

> …the unwanted proximity to violent encounters and the possibility or reality of being victimized by physical and/or sexual assaults, the need to negotiate the dominating intentions of others, the absence of genuine respect and regard for their well-being in the surrounding environment… [are] all too familiar. Time spent in prison may rekindle not only the memories but the disabling psychological reactions and consequences of these earlier damaging experiences (84).

For incarcerated survivors of abuse, Haney notes that imprisonment can be so stark and

psychologically distressing that it "represents a form of traumatic stress severe enough to

produce post-traumatic stress reactions once released" (84). While psychological

implications post-incarceration likely exist for all individuals, the re-entry process would be

particularly hard for survivors of abuse, whose histories of trauma would leave them

especially vulnerable.

It is a staggering reality that while imprisoned populations experience an extremely

high risk of unnatural death post-incarceration, this risk increases substantially for women;

this was illuminated in "Women's Survival Post-Imprisonment: Connecting Imprisonment

with Pains Past and Present" by criminologists Bree Carlton and Marie Segrave. According

to the report, formerly imprisoned women are twenty-seven times more likely to die an

unnatural death post-release than women with no imprisonment history (Carlton and Segrave

2011:555). While previous literature on the topic often attributes this statistic to drug

overdoses, Carlton and Segrave's study considers trauma and abuse history (both within and

outside of confinement) as well as near-death experiences post-incarceration. While Carlton and Segrave's study was conducted in Australia, whose punitive systems differ from the United States, their conclusions can still shed light on the psychological impact of imprisonment on women post-incarceration more broadly. Over a period of six months, Carlton and Segrave interviewed 14 formerly imprisoned women and 16 advocates and support workers in Victoria, Australia. The researchers note that the women's prison community in Victoria is relatively small and closely-knit, especially when compared to nations such as the United Kingdom and America. Carlton and Segrave write that this means "women are intimately aware of other women's personal histories" post-incarceration (556). For this reason, the researchers were able to "document the narratives of both survivors and non-survivors, given that the stories of women who die upon release can only be told by those who knew them" (556).

When analyzed, the narratives reflect the nuance articulated by Islam-Zwart and Vik; some note the relative safety of prison, while others emphasize how imprisonment can exacerbate and replicate previously experienced trauma (559). Within the interviews, many women "reported multiple pre-imprisonment and post-release experiences of near-death in a range of traumatic contexts such as accident, attempted suicide, domestic violence, sexual assault or drug overdose" (562). The continuation of trauma before, during and after incarceration situates traumatic experiences — such as abuse and assault — as constant in the lives of many women. Upon release, many women identified their declining mental health as a predictor of further trauma or near-death experiences. Carlton and Segrave note the participants often highlighted feelings of loneliness, boredom and self-identification as disappointments and failures as struggles post-incarceration (561). The interviews

illuminated that even those who meet the "indicators of 'success' – who do not reoffend, who find homes, who regain custody of their children – may still attempt to take their own lives and/or die as a consequence of drug use, physical abuse or other unnatural causes" (561). It is important to recognize the overlap of the studies by Carlton and Segrave, and by Haney: while Haney's research was quantitative and relied on psychological concepts and analysis, Carlton and Segrave's qualitative narratives of lived experience illustrate similar findings. Taken together, these studies contribute a more holistic picture of the negative psychological impact of incarceration on survivors of abuse.

Models of Trauma-Informed Incarceration

The amount of literature detailing how survivors of domestic abuse may be retraumatized in prison is matched by the amount of literature offering ways to improve prisons for survivors, leading to the concept of "trauma-informed" incarceration. In order to detail the alternative procedures and models of trauma-informed incarceration, it is first necessary to understand what exactly this treatment seeks to do. According to clinical social worker Dr. Erin King, trauma-informed incarceration acknowledges "the extent of the trauma and the individualized impact of the trauma" many incarcerated women face (King 2017:670). Institutions who utilize this model are aware of the ways in which institutional procedures, such as invasive strip-searches, may trigger incarcerated survivors of abuse, and therefore take precautions to eliminate further victimization. Additionally, King writes that institutions who participate in trauma-informed care will incorporate specific "interventions," which are typically "strengths-based and attempt to promote resilience, recovery, and overall wellness in the individual" (670). In "Outcomes of Trauma-Informed Interventions for Incarcerated Women," King reviews a number of programs within prisons which

incorporated trauma-informed interventions in the treatment of incarcerated women. The interventions included programs such as the "Trauma Recovery and Empowerment Model" and "Beyond Violence," as well as different forms of therapy specifically designed for women with histories of abuse. While these programs will be explained more fully in the "Mental Health Treatment and Emotional Support" section of this chapter, it is critical to note King's conclusions. Overall, the programs King reviewed indicated a decrease in PTSD among incarcerated survivors of abuse, as well as an increase in emotional management and communication; these findings illustrate the importance of trauma-informed models of incarceration.

Structural Organization and Institutional Procedures

It is critical for institutions utilizing trauma-informed care to consider how structural organization and institutional procedures play a role within the retraumatization of incarcerated survivors of abuse. As mentioned previously, Alarid (2000) found that replacing open dormitory-style housing with one and two-person cells may significantly decrease the amount of sexual victimization between female inmates (401). This preventative measure is imperative, due to the incredibly high risk of sexual assault between female inmates that exists within punitive settings. Additionally, a study conducted by the Urban Institute in 2011 concluded that by placing cameras in "blind spots" where sexual assaults between inmates more often occur — such as isolation or restriction rooms — fewer incidents took place and inmates reported feeling more secure (La Vigne et al. 2011:2). In terms of institutional procedures, many advocates of incarcerated survivors of abuse argue for the regulation of invasive strip searches. The aforementioned report from the Juvenile Law Center (2017)

wrote that although the best policy would be to eliminate all forms of invasive strip searches, there are less intrusive searches that may be conducted if necessary.

The following framework from the JLC was developed to protect incarcerated youth from invasive strip-searches, but applies well to the protection of abuse survivors. When a prison guard suspects that a prisoner is in possession of illegal contraband, the guard should be required to state a probable cause of contraband "that could not otherwise be discovered" without a bodily search (JLC 2017:3). If this condition is met, the prisoner should be verbally notified what they are suspected of, and guards should "exhaust all verbal intervention techniques" to persuade the individual to "voluntarily surrender" the item(s) (3). If the verbal intervention techniques fail, the report writes that the guards should inform the prisoner of the next steps in the process and allow any questions to be asked. Detection devices such as a "hand-held metal detector wand or body scanner" should be utilized while the prisoner remains fully clothed. If the devices fail to result in the retrieval of the suspected contraband, the guards should inform the prisoner that they must conduct a visual, manual or physical search of the body. The report writes that if the prisoner "expresses concerns about being touched before or during a search, staff must be sensitive and accommodate such requests to prevent trauma and/or re-victimization" (3). By implementing a strip-search model that is less immediate and invasive, prison guards may protect incarcerated survivors of abuse from re-experiencing the physical dynamics of their trauma.

Due to the detrimental impact that solitary confinement has on incarcerated survivors of abuse, the ACLU's report (2019) offers critical recommendations for how it should be regulated in correctional facilities. To begin, all prisons should have established policies and procedures controlling solitary confinement that are written, uniform and available to the

public. If prisoners are assigned to solitary confinement, they should be notified prior to the punishment and given a written explanation detailing the reasoning for, and duration of, their sentencing (ACLU 2019:18). The ACLU echoes Laderberg (1998) in that prisons should ensure that guards and supervisors never use solitary confinement as a retaliatory measure; for female prisoners in particular, a qualified Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) auditor should be "specifically tasked with ensuring that prisoners' reports of abuse are never met with retaliatory placement in solitary confinement" (17). Additionally, all prisoners should undergo a mental health evaluation by a qualified health practitioner before and during their time in solitary confinement; these practitioners should also have the power to override the decision to place a particularly vulnerable prisoner in confinement, as well as to remove from isolation those whose physical or mental health require it (17). The report notes that "women who have experienced sexual assault should be provided appropriate mental health programming, including counseling," and "women who are vulnerable to retraumatization should be supervised by correctional officers who are women" while in solitary confinement (17). While the report offers these suggestions, the ACLU emphasizes that ultimately, solitary confinement should never be used on particularly vulnerable populations including those with a history of abuse. Instead, alternative placements for such individuals should be sought out.

Changes Within Guard Supervision

In order to address the detrimental power dynamics prevalent within the inmate/guard relationship, changes must occur in how prison guards are trained to supervise survivors of domestic abuse. In the 2012 report "Creating Trauma-Informed Correctional Care: A Balance of Goals and Environment," psychologists Niki Miller and Lisa Najavits offer a framework

for implementing trauma-informed practices among staff at correctional facilities. The researchers note that by training staff members in the basic characteristics of domestic abuse and PTSD, all staff "can play a major role in minimizing triggers, stabilizing offenders, reducing critical incidents, de-escalating situations, and avoiding restraint, seclusion or other measures that may repeat aspects of past abuse" (Miller and Najavits 2012:1). Additionally, clinical staff members at institutions practicing trauma-informed care can provide therapy and counseling sessions specifically designed for survivors of abuse, reducing the possibility of retraumatization. Miller and Najavits emphasize that trauma-informed incarceration is beneficial not just for the prisoners, but for staff members processing trauma of their own. The researchers explain that prison guards may have "experienced direct exposure to trauma from witnessing prison violence, on the job injuries, during military service or in their personal lives," leading to a state of constant hyper-vigilance or numb detachment while working (3). By providing this training intentionally designed to protect survivors of abuse, staff members at correctional facilities can support both those they supervise and themselves.

For some advocates of incarcerated survivors of abuse, solely implementing trauma-informed training for staff members isn't enough; this is exemplified by the work of Flyn Flesher, a litigator whose work seeks to wholly eliminate cross-gender supervision in correctional facilities. Flesher's most notable piece on this is "Cross-Gender Supervision in Prison and the Constitutional Right of Prisoners to Remain Free from Rape," which was published in 2007. Flesher's article begins by reviewing the ways in which cross-gender supervision has been found to be detrimental to incarcerated women. Echoing many of the researchers noted above, he writes that female prisoners with a history of abuse "are often more fearful of male guards, are more traumatized by cross-gender supervision and searches,

and become more vulnerable to sexual assaults while incarcerated" (Flesher 2007:844). Here, it is important to acknowledge the constitutional rules established to protect against these dynamics — notably, the Fourth Amendment which prohibits unreasonable searches and seizures, and the Eighth Amendment which bans cruel and unusual punishment. Additionally, the Fourteenth Amendment has been used to support the notion that "all United States citizens, including prisoners, have a right to remain free from rape at the hands of government officials" (860). Unfortunately, Flesher notes that these Amendments have proven to be ineffective when invoked in court cases initiated by survivors of abuse, ultimately disadvantaging and retraumatizing the plaintiffs. It is due to these dynamics that Flesher urges the elimination of all cross-gender supervision for imprisoned women, proposed as a form of trauma-informed incarceration. If this were to be done, Flesher argues, prison populations would experience a highly positive "ripple effect" where female prisoners are able to live "free from fears of sexual violence at the hands of male guards" (863). Of course, Flesher's proposal does not address the sexual violence that female prisoners face from other female prisoners and guards, as demonstrated in VanNatta's research.

Mental Health Treatment and Emotional Support

Due to the lack of academic literature surrounding ways to mentally and emotionally support incarcerated survivors of domestic violence, I explore a broader understanding of the treatment of abuse. Of note, there are two prominent books relevant to this research: *Trauma and Recovery — the Aftermath of Violence* by Judith Herman, and *Restoring Sanctuary: A New Operating System for Trauma-Informed Systems of Care* by Sandra Bloom and Brian Farragher. Initially published in 1992, Herman's book has been hailed as "a landmark" by Gloria Steinem and "a magnificent gift to survivors" by the *Women's Review of Books* for the

ways in which it has transformed the acknowledgement and treatment of various forms of trauma. The first half of *Trauma and Recovery* paints a nuanced and comprehensive portrait of traumatized women, offering details about the ways in which violence negatively impacts not only survivors but those around them. While trauma is inherently complex and can be experienced in multiple ways, Herman identifies a few characteristics that are universal; for women in abusive relationships and women in prison, the inflicted isolation causes individuals to become "increasingly dependent on the perpetrator, not only for survival and basic bodily needs, but also for information and even for emotional sustenance" (Herman 1992:81). Though this description is bleak, the second half of Herman's book provides guidance for healing trauma survivors. Recovery, she writes, unfolds in three stages: the establishment of safety, remembrance and mourning, and reconnection with ordinary life (155). Throughout each stage, Herman largely emphasizes the power of forming relationships with others, arguing that:

> The core experiences of psychological trauma are disempowerment and disconnection from others. Recovery, therefore, is based upon the empowerment of the survivor and the creation of new connections. Recovery can take place only within the context of relationships; it cannot occur in isolation (133).

Unfortunately, the traditional ways in which prison tends to function — limited interactions with friends and family members and isolating inmates in solitary confinement — renders it difficult to incorporate these stages of healing. Keeping this in mind, institutions practicing trauma-informed incarceration must work to allow prisoners to construct and build relationships while in confinement, an idea emphasized by ethicist and psychologist Carol Gilligan in her conceptualization of the "ethic of care." This will be discussed in my theory chapter.

Written in 2013, *Restoring Sanctuary: A New Operating System for Trauma-Informed Systems of Care* by Sandra Bloom and Brian Farragher builds upon the concepts identified in Herman's book, utilizing them to develop frameworks for trauma-informed care. In particular, Bloom and Farragher focus on "the Sanctuary Model," an approach which was conceptualized to allow those with a history of trauma to "heal through the supportive care of others… where tendencies toward violence and vengeance have been subdued, where individual and collective powers are used to bring about a better life and a better world" (Bloom and Farragher 2013:1). While *Restoring Sanctuary* doesn't focus specifically on the criminal justice system, the Sanctuary Model is valuable in that it can be applied to prisons implementing trauma-informed care. A core part of the model centers around the acronym "S.E.L.F.," which serves as a "compass" exploring the four key domains of healing: Safety (physical, psychological, social and moral safety in self, relationships and environment), Emotional management (identifying and modulating levels of emotion in response to memories and people), Loss (feeling and dealing with personal loss) and Future (adjusting to the role of "survivor," finding meaning in the new normal) (53). Bloom and Farragher write that this nontechnical language was specifically developed to ensure that those engaging in the healing process are neither blamed nor judged. According to the authors:

> The bottom line is that S.E.L.F. is an exceedingly powerful tool for pushing the envelope of change. It is nonlinear because it is not about stages, but rather about constant movement. Whenever we get stuck in one domain, we simply move to another domain and go from there (54).

Bloom and Farragher also echo Miller and Najavits (2012) in that S.E.L.F. — and the Sanctuary Model overall — is significant for both survivors and for staff members treating them, who may suffer from trauma as well. In developing such a model, Bloom and Farragher indicate the importance of a holistic approach towards trauma recovery.

Chapter Three: Theory

While the model of "the prison" has undergone significant structural and societal changes throughout history, the primary goals of punitive institutions have largely remained the same: to punish those who commit an act deemed unlawful, and to prevent future crimes from taking place. In many ways, the prison model has proven to be more or less successful; through some form of a judicial process, individuals found guilty of a crime pay for their sins, effectively securing "justice" for the victim(s) and deterring additional deviance. In fact, the function of punitive institutions has been justified by prominent classical theorists such as French sociologist Émile Durkheim, who was born in 1858 and died in 1917. On crime and punishment, Durkheim argued that when deviance is punished, both offending individuals and the community as a whole strengthen. In a more contemporary context, sociologist Erving Goffman built upon Durkheim's notions surrounding prisons, arguing that they exemplify "total institutions," or restrictive social establishments designed for a particular purpose. Unfortunately — as many social constructions fail to consider — entry into the criminal justice system is nuanced and impacted by complex societal dynamics including race and socioeconomic status.

Gender is another societal dynamic often overlooked in classical theories surrounding crime and punishment; this is particularly the case in Durkheim's work, which is greatly informed by his dismissive and patriarchal attitudes towards women. Therefore, in order to use classical sociological theory to understand how incarcerated survivors of abuse become retraumatized in prison, it is necessary to incorporate the work of alternative theorists. I begin by providing a brief overview of Durkheim's traditional theories on crime and punishment, and applying them to female offenders in particular by utilizing the work of Yvonne Jewkes. This is followed by a discussion of Durkheim's views towards women and gender, which justifies the

decision to incorporate Mead as a theorist. I then present an abridged version of George Herbert

Mead's "genesis of the Self" and symbolic interactionism. This section culminates with the work

of Durkheim and Mead synthesized into a theoretical perspective on the retraumatization of

female incarcerated survivors of abuse. I then bring in the work of Erving Goffman and his

discussion of "total institutions," which is applied to domestic violence partnerships by Israeli

criminologist Noga Avni. This is followed by an introduction to Carol Gilligan's "ethic of care,"

a framework of care for organizations practicing "trauma-informed" policies. Finally, I provide

an overview of Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of "intersectionality," a pillar of feminist theory and

critical to my Independent Study.

Durkheim on Crime, Punishment, and Women

In order to create a classical sociological framework for understanding the

retraumatization of incarcerated survivors of abuse, it is first necessary to establish Émile

Durkheim's views on crime and punishment. According to Durkheim, a deviant act stems from

an individual's rejection of internal discipline, which he posited as an inherent and universal

trait. In "Moral Obligations, Duty and Freedom" from *Selected Writings,* Durkheim likened

discipline to "the way in which nature realises itself normally, not a way of minimising or

destroying nature" (Durkheim 1972:111). Durkheim continues this metaphor, writing that:

> Like everything which exists, man is a limited being; he is part of a whole. Physically, he
> is part of the universe; morally, he is part of society. Therefore he can- not, without
> contradicting his nature, try to supersede the limits imposed on every side. And, in fact,
> everything that is most fundamental in him depends precisely upon this quality of
> limitedness (111).

Here, Durkheim emphasizes the importance of discipline both for individuals and for the

Here, Durkheim emphasizes the importance of discipline both for individuals and for the society

of which they are a part; everything "most fundamental" to a person is contingent upon these

imposed limits, and his/her actions directly impact society as a whole. While discipline and deviance are two distinct concepts, they are related in that discipline is used as a deterrent and justification for adhering to traditional moral codes, which minimizes deviance. Therefore, a deviant act — knowingly committing a crime — can be seen as "superseding" these limits of discipline, contradicting the very nature of the offending individual *while* harming society in the process. As Durkheim explains, however, there are beneficial aspects to this defiance. A criminal act reaffirms the shared beliefs, ideas and values of a community, reinforcing what Durkheim refers to as the "conscience collective" of a society. It is in this shared opposition to deviance where Durkheim finds a justification for punishment, remarking that "since it is the *conscience collective* which is attacked, it must be that which resists, and accordingly the resistance must be collective" (Durkheim 1972:127). According to Durkheim, deviant behavior and the resulting punishment thus serve two purposes: reinforcing the inherent limitations disregarded by an offending individual, and strengthening the "conscience collective" by reaffirming societal values.

By utilizing a Durkheimian analysis of crime and punishment, it is possible to recognize how female offenders in particular are impacted by the societal response to deviance. It has been discerned that when women are thought to have participated in crime, they are socially penalized in more severe ways than their male counterparts. This is due to the fact that the act of committing a crime directly defies codes of femininity and womanhood (Barlow 2016:7). From a young age, girls are socialized to remain disciplined and compliant, respecting the moral and behavioral codes established by those in positions of power. This passivity serves as a stark contrast to the development of young boys, who are often socialized in ways replicating traditional masculinity: physical aggression, challenging authority, and an early interest in sexual

behavior. Of course, the socialization of both men and women is complicated by additional factors such as race and socioeconomic status, which contribute to the ways in which certain behaviors are regulated and understood. Nevertheless, using the language of Durkheim, women are instructed to adhere more strictly to their internal discipline, yet men are given the space to challenge such limitations. This distinction has led to the reality that while crimes committed by men are disdained in society, it becomes morally reprehensible for women to act similarly.

This perspective is supported by the work of Yvonne Jewkes, a feminist sociologist specializing in criminology. In the third edition of her book *Media and Crime,* Jewkes writes that "women who commit serious offences are judged to have transgressed two sets of laws: criminal laws and the laws of nature. In Ann Lloyd's (1995) memorable phrase, such women are 'doubly deviant and doubly damned'" (Jewkes 2015:133). Due to this disconnect between gendered stereotypes and perceived behavior, the mainstream media often constructs narratives to "justify" female offenders to the public; Jewkes attributes this trend to the "absence of any alternative discourse to explain the existence of violence and cruelty in those whom society views as essentially good" (134). Unfortunately, these narratives often emphasize the "pure evil" within the offending women, largely relying on motifs and stereotypes. Jewkes writes that this dynamic is detrimental due to how:

> … these tried-and-tested narratives often keep aspects of the woman's involvement in the crime hidden, or only partially represented, allowing the public to dip into the cultural reservoir of symbolic representations and fill in the gaps as they see fit. Moreover, they combine to render women passive and unstable, lacking in moral agency and somehow not able to act as fully formed, adult, human beings (134).

Jewkes identified eight such narratives, which include "the bad [wife]," "the mythical monster," and "the evil manipulator" (134). Although dependent on the specific characteristics of the woman and nature of the crime, each narrative seeks to dehumanize and villainize the offender.

It is important to note that because offending women's particular involvement in crime is typically only partially represented by the mainstream media, her "crime" as a form of self-defense may be obscured. This is the case for many incarcerated women whose initial victimization in relationships characterized by domestic violence served as a direct pipeline to the criminal justice system. In applying Jewkes' theories back to a Durkheimian analysis, he would posit that when a woman is convicted of a crime, her double punishments — imprisonment and vilification — strengthen the conscience collective of a community by reaffirming societal values relating to the construction of gender. While my Independent Study does not rely on the content analysis of news articles, Jewkes' theory of the narratives commonly prescribed to female offenders is helpful in that it explains the role of the mainstream media in the dramatic societal reactions to "offending" women.

Although Durkheim's theoretical perspectives on crime, punishment and society have been quite influential, it is critical not to disregard his problematic, patriarchal views towards women. In his famed doctoral dissertation *The Division of Labour in Society* published in 1893 and later reprinted as a book, Durkheim argues that as modernity has progressed, women have become increasingly weaker and less civilized than men; he writes that "the woman of past days was not at all the weak creature that she has become with the progress of morality" (57). For Durkheim, this purported intellectual inferiority can be substantiated by considering the scientifically "proven" biological differences in brain size between the two genders. He cites a study conducted by Dr. Gustave Le Bon, who found that:

> … the volume of the crania of man and woman, even when we compare subjects of equal age, of equal height, and equal weight, show considerable differences in favor of the man, and this inequality grows proportionally with civilization" (Durkheim 2014:57).

As an aside, it is interesting to highlight that both Durkheim and Le Bon emphasize how societal progress and civilization can be blamed for the increasing weakness and subordination in women. This is paradoxical given that Durkheim largely genders civilization as a "male" process, and thus inadvertently attributes the deterioration of women to the actions of men. Regardless, such deterioration did not likely trouble Durkheim, given his views on the biological "function" of women. As sociologist Mike Gane notes in his essay "Durkheim: Woman as Outsider" which evaluates Durkheim's patriarchal views on women, "insofar as 'civilisation' is a male possession in Durkheimian sociology, women come to stand between the generations as creatures whose function is primarily biological and whose self regulation is governed by facts of instinct" (Gane 1992:87). Therefore, due to the gendered differences rendering women intellectually and physically inferior to men, Durkheim emphasizes that women should function solely as reproductive and maternal beings.

Durkheim's troubling views on gender extend as well to his opposition towards movements seeking to better the status of women in society, which can be exemplified by his disapproval of conjugal divorce. Within his teachings, Durkheim reveals himself to be extremely concerned with the current prevalence of "conjugal anomie," a concept referring to the detachment and/or lack of fulfillment experienced by those enclosed in a marriage. According to Durkheim, this distinct form of *anomie* has roots in a lack of sexual fulfillment, resulting in scholars utilizing "conjugal anomie" and "sexual anomie" interchangeably. Discussed primarily within Durkheim's book *Suicide,* the implications for suffering individuals are evidenced by a sharp increase in male suicide. Durkheim, however, has conceptualized a solution to conjugal anomie. He writes that "the only way to reduce the number of suicides due to conjugal anomy is to make marriage more indissoluble," essentially eliminating the possibility of divorce

(Durkheim 1951:384). Unfortunately, this elimination of divorce would affect men and women in disproportionate ways, a reality emphasized by sociologist Jennifer Lehmann in her book *Durkheim and Women.* Lehmann observes that due to the "sexual differences [in gender] of interest with respect to marriage and divorce," making marriage more "indissoluble" would improve the sexual anomie and decrease rates of suicide for men, yet simultaneously "cause deterioration in the condition of women and increase female suicide" (Lehmann 1994:78). Here, the ways in which Durkheim valued men and women within society become clear.

It is important to note that Durkheim was not unaware of the consequences his proposal to eliminate divorce would have on married women. Of this, he writes that:

> What makes the problem especially disturbing and lends it an almost dramatic interest is that the suicides of husbands cannot be diminished in this way without increasing those of wives. Must one of the sexes necessarily be sacrificed, and is the solution only to choose the lesser of the two evils? Nothing else seems possible as long as the interests of husband and wife in marriage are so obviously opposed (Durkheim 1951:384).

When weighing the impact that sexual anomie (in the form of conjugal divorce) has had on men, Durkheim sees the deaths of women as "the lesser of two evils," a sacrifice necessary to preserve the rest of humanity. What is imperative to establish here is that women seeking conjugal divorces may not simply be "unhappy" in their marriages, but in danger within them, as victims of domestic abuse or violence. This is especially true when considering the time period in which Durkheim was writing, as feminist movements advocating for the rights and security of women (movements that Durkheim deemed "dysfunctional" and deceptive) were not as widespread as they are now (Lehmann 1994:55). In the words of Lehmann, when "confronted with this life-and-death conflict of interest between men and women, Durkheim unequivocally align[ed] himself with the interests of men" (78). Keeping this in mind, it does not suffice to solely use the teachings of Durkheim when developing a theoretical perspective with which to understand the

retraumatization of female incarcerated survivors of abuse; it is thus necessary to incorporate the theories of alternative sociologists, specifically George Herbert Mead.

Mead on the Genesis of the Self and Symbolic Interactionism

Born in Massachusetts in 1863, George Herbert Mead was a renowned sociologist and psychologist predominantly affiliated with the Chicago school of sociological thought. Interestingly, a number of his manuscripts were published after his death in 1931, when his students collectively compiled class notes and unpublished papers. Mead is primarily known for his work on the "genesis of the self," which refers to an internal understanding of who you are in relation to yourself, others, and larger social systems. In his piece "The Self and The Organism" published posthumously, Mead writes that the Self is not present at birth; instead, it "arises in the process of social experience and activity, that is, develops in the given individual as a result of his relations to that process as a whole and to other individuals within that process" (Mead 1934:63). From Mead's perspective, social interaction with others allows for a sense of Self to emerge over time. Mead deems this process of social interaction to be "symbolic interactionism," and demonstrates the concept with a metaphorical dog-fight. As he contends:

> Dogs approaching each other in hostile attitude carry on such a language of gestures. They walk around each other, growling and snapping, and waiting for the opportunity to attack. Here is a process out of which language might arise, that is, a certain attitude of one individual that calls out a response in the other, which in turn calls out a different approach and a different response, and so on indefinitely (10).

In this example, the behavior of each dog can be seen as a direct reaction to the behavior of those around them. Mead's passage notes the "language of gestures" utilized by the dogs, which become "a process out of which language might arise" (10). Using this, he creates a distinction between the dogs — who rely on instinctive physical gestures — and humans, who make intentional, deliberate gestures in order to stimulate a particular response. Mead's conception of

such gestures construct his concept of "significant symbols," which are vocal cues and expressions bringing meaning to communication, effectively acting as stimuli. When the "mind" is able to identify and interpret these significant symbols, the individual can then take part in role-playing or "role-taking," which Mead writes is "represented in the activities of play and the game" (70). Mead emphasizes this importance of role-playing within the genesis of the Self, as the more complex roles an individual can engage in, the more fully-formed the Self becomes. Overall, Mead's teachings articulate that through symbolic interactionism and the genesis of the self, we "more or less unconsciously" learn to see ourselves as the way others see us, as objects. These internalized views of the Self constitute the "Generalized Other," with Mead writing that "we are unconsciously addressing ourselves as others address us; in the same way as the sparrow takes up the note of the canary, we pick up the dialects about us" (34).

By applying Mead's theoretical perspectives on the genesis of the Self and symbolic interactionism, it is possible to analyze the dynamics embedded within abusive relationships. In her aforementioned work, Yvonne Jewkes emphasizes how gendered socialization is responsible for reinforcing socially pervasive gender stereotypes — though less explicitly, these prescriptions can be discerned within Mead's work as well. In "Self, Time and Narrative: Re-thinking the Contribution of G.H. Mead," feminist scholar Stevi Jackson examines Mead's genesis of the Self through the lens of gender and sexuality. She writes that according to Mead:

> Gendered selves emerge not because girls and boys undergo a different process of self-formation, but because the world of others with whom they interact is gendered and the child, in becoming socially competent, must locate herself within these gendered social interactions (Jackson 2010:132).

Although this process of gendered self-formation is not inherently harmful, the ways in which young girls "locate" themselves through gendered social interactions — symbolic interactionism — tend to reinforce damaging stereotypes which label women as passive and under male

authority. Such examples include the emphasis of women as "belonging" at home, as well as the discouragement of challenging men in positions of authority. When these gendered "roles" are repeatedly experienced over time, they begin, as Mead theorized, to construct the Self of women. It has therefore become more likely for women than men to find themselves as victims in abusive relationships, in which they exhibit compliance and experience a lack of physical and economic control. This concept can be seen as justifying the stark statistic from the National Domestic Violence Hotline that from 1994 to 2010, four in five victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) in the United States were female (NDVH.org) Thus, through a Meadian analysis of abusive relationships and the Generalized Other, victims first see themselves as their abusers see them: as possessions which are weak, inferior, and worthless, consequently deserving of physical and/or sexual subjugation and abuse.

While Mead did not academically engage in feminist theory, his views towards women have led a number of scholars to consider him to be a feminist theorist. Mitchell Aboulafia's "Was George Herbert Mead a Feminist?" begins by analyzing a letter that was sent from Mead to his daughter-in-law Irene in 1920 regarding her studies in medical school. According to Aboulafia, Irene was discouraged from attending medical school by her son's pediatrician, and sought Mead's guidance. In return, Mead wrote that in regards to the views of pediatrician Dr. Hoffman, "a woman as well as a man should have the training for a social calling apart from the family life, this for the sake of the best family life but principally for the independence of mind and self which every one legitimately craves" (Diner 1978:409). As Mead continued:

> If you have the will and the courage you can have both the social independence which comes with competence in some real social function, together with the breadth of view and the capacity to criticize life and the living of it — what [W.I.] Thomas calls the man's intellectual world into which woman as yet so seldom enters — and as well, the family life which should be yours in these years (408).

Mead's advice to Irene becomes clear; he assures her that as a woman, she has every right to pursue the career she is passionate about, and acknowledges the "man's intellectual world" has been scarcely entered by women, seemingly encouraging her to defy this dynamic. In considering the concepts for which Mead is widely known, Aboulafia's interpretation of his letter posits that a career in the medical field would bring greater "socialization" to Irene, as "membership in various groups enhances one's individuality by increasing the range of one's experience" (Aboulafia 1993:146). Thus, both her career in the medical field and her role as a mother would positively contribute to the genesis of a fully-formed Self. As Aboulafia writes, "to keep Irene Tufts Mead at home would have been to deny her the self that was clearly within society's (and therefore her) powers," something Mead would have deemed an "injustice" (156).

It is important to note that while Mead does reassure Irene of her professional ambitions, he suggests that she do so part-time, ignoring the possibility of his son in the caretaker role. Additionally, Mead qualifies his advice with "the intellectual interest you will have in study will make you a finer woman and therefore a better mother and wife" (Diner 1978:408). Both of these aspects of Mead's letter effectively reinforce gender stereotypes that have proven to be harmful in a number of ways. Even so, Mead's letter to Irene indicates that his views on the advancement and value of women within society were extremely progressive for his time. This can also be substantiated by considering that Mead participated in the women's suffrage movement, resisted the proposed gender segregation at the University of Chicago in 1902 and actively supported his female colleagues. Aboulafia writes that due to these examples and given Mead's response to Irene, he as a theorist "reveals a radically progressive approach to social issues" which can be used "not only… to challenge questionable linkages between sex and gender," but to make "an important contribution to feminist literature and practice" as well

(Aboulafia 1993:146). While many of the classical sociological theorists held problematic views towards the role of women in society (Durkheim being a prime example), Mead's work as a "feminist" theorist can be used to better understand the societal issues plaguing women, including domestic abuse.

Synthesizing Durkheimian and Meadian Theory into a Perspective on Retraumatization

Given these classical views of Durkheim and Mead, it is possible to synthesize the two frameworks into a perspective on the retraumatization of incarcerated survivors of domestic abuse. Due to the fact that over half of incarcerated women in the United States enter the criminal justice system with a history of abuse, it is imperative to start from a point of pre-incarceration. In discussing Mead, it was established that for women in abusive relationships with men,[2] their genesis of the Self can be seen as having been constructed based on the gendered symbolic interactionism experienced; this is due to pervasive gender stereotypes which teach women to prioritize the needs and opinions of others — most often men — over their own. Thus, in relationships which diminish women, Mead would theorize that women then take on the role of a "victim" and through the Generalized Other, begin to see themselves as their abuser sees them: weak and deserving of abuse.

It is here that Mead introduces the aspect of deviance. In his discussion on how the "I" and the "me" are essential to the fully-formed Self, Mead writes that in situations with rigid restrictions, the "I" — an individual's response to the attitudes of others — will "demand…

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[2] It is important to recognize that abusive relationships are not confined to heteronormative ones, and that many same-sex and queer couples experience abuse. Additionally, I do not wish to ignore the reality that women constitute the role of the abuser in many relationships; my focus in this paper on women as "victims" and men as "perpetrators" reflects the staggering number of incarcerated women who have experienced domestic abuse within male-female partnerships.

freedom from conventions, from given laws" (Mead 1934:92). He continues to state that "of course, such a situation is only possible where the individual appeals, so to speak, from a narrow and restricted community to a larger one, that is, larger in the logical sense of having rights which are not so restricted" (92). Utilizing this, when a woman in an abusive relationship is constrained by the strict restrictions placed upon those in the role of the "victim," the "I" will behave in a way which demands freedom and control; this may come in the form of deviant activity.3 From Durkheim's perspective, her entry into deviance would be seen as disregarding an inherent discipline. A feminist analysis however, perhaps from Mead, would assert that in fact, the discipline was taken from her and controlled by her abuser. Regardless, her punishments (both imprisonment and vilification) reaffirm the conscience collective and often leave the abuser "undisciplined." This reality supports Durkheim's notion that in comparison to men, the sacrifice of women is the "lesser of the two evils" (Durkheim 1951:384).

Although a prison sentence for an abuse survivor enables her removal from the control of her abuser, the dynamics of incarceration often retraumatize survivors in detrimental ways. This can be seen within the physical construction of space, as incarcerated women are physically and socially isolated from their family, friends, and overall society in ways similar to how their abusers isolated them, pre-incarceration. It can also be discerned among the institutional procedures utilized by the criminal justice system, which include invasive strip-searches re-triggering those who experienced sexual abuse. Yet this retraumatization is also powerful in that it reconstructs a survivor's sense of Self as not only a victim, but as a felon, someone that

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3 It would be remiss not to acknowledge that for many incarcerated survivors of abuse, engaging in criminal activity was not a deliberate choice, but was forced upon them by their abuser. This can be seen within the example of sex-workers whose bodies are controlled by their abusive partners, who act as procurers.

"deserves" punishment. Through interactions with those both in positions of power (such as guards) and fellow inmates, the survivor's Generalized Other reconstructs the Self in ways that reinforce her status as "bad," powerless, and deserving of the cell in which she is confined. In "Self, Time and Narrative," Jackson writes that from a Meadian perspective, "gendered and sexual self-hood, then, illustrate the point that self-making… is always accomplished from a particular social location, constrained and enabled by the cultural resources available to us" (Jackson, 2010:133). Restricted within the social location of prison, survivors of abuse are left to reconstruct their sense of Self through the available "cultural resources," which more often than not are retraumatizing and re-victimizing forces. In thinking about the reconstruction of the Self, Mead noted the impact of social organization, positing that:

> … the relations between social reconstruction and self or personality reconstruction are reciprocal and internal or organic; social reconstruction by the individual members of any organized human society entails self or personality reconstruction in some degree or other by each of these individuals, and vice versa… (Mead 1934:140).

From this, it can be discerned that the social hierarchies which exist among life in prison have a direct impact on this reconstruction of the Self, which tends to be a damaging process for survivors of abuse. From Durkheim's perspective on the "functions" of discipline, the criminal justice system can be seen as a form of individual and social reconstruction, effectively preparing an offender to rejoin society as a valued and law-abiding member. In actuality, however, the inadvertent retraumatization of female survivors of domestic abuse does precisely the opposite.

Goffman on Total Institutions and the Mortification of the Self

In discussing the theoretical context of punitive institutions, it is critical to include the work of Erving Goffman, a contemporary Canadian sociologist born in 1922; his work was heavily influenced by both Émile Durkheim and George Herbert Mead. Goffman's notions of the prison as a "total institution" and "the mortification of the Self" are particularly applicable to my

Independent Study. In 1961, Goffman released his renowned book *Asylums: Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates,* developed through extensive participant observation and field work at a mental institution in Washington, D.C. Goffman begins by defining "total institutions" as social establishments characterized by their "barrier to social intercourse with the outside and to departure that is often built right into the physical plant, such as locked doors, high walls, barbed wire, cliffs, water, forests, or moors" (Goffman 1961:4). He then theorizes five rough groupings which can be identified as total institutions within society. Briefly, these five "types" are:

1. Those established to care for the "incapable and harmless" (homes for the blind, aged, orphaned, and indigent)
2. Those established to care for persons felt to be "both incapable of looking after themselves *and* a threat to the community" (hospitals for the physically and mentally ill)
3. Those established to protect the community against "intentional dangers… with the welfare of the persons thus sequestered not the immediate issue" (jails, penitentiaries, P.O.W. camps, and concentration camps)
4. Those established to "pursue some worklike [sic] task" (army barracks, ships, boarding schools)
5. Those established as "retreats from the world even while serving also as training stations for the religious" (abbeys, monasteries, convents)

After offering these five groupings, *Asylums* seeks to discern the common characteristics which mark these particular social establishments as total institutions. Goffman's discussion includes the various roles required for a total institution to be effective, as well as how those contained are psychologically affected by such regulation. While Goffman illuminates the many social establishments which function as total institutions, I will be particularly focusing on type three, his application to prisons.

Prior to identifying the shared traits of total institutions, Goffman acknowledges that while none of the elements described are exclusive to total institutions, what is distinctive about them is that "each exhibits to an *intense degree many* items in this family of attributes" (5). With this in mind, Goffman summarizes the main characteristics, writing that in total institutions, "all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority" whilst in the immediate company of a large group who are all "treated alike and required to do the same thing together" (6). Each day is prearranged and strictly adhered to, intentionally devised by a formal body of officials. Ultimately, these enforced activities were "brought together into a single rational plan purportedly designed to fulfill the official aims of the institution" (6). In detailing the power dynamics of total institutions, Goffman finds that there is an explicit split between a large "managed group" of inmates — who have restricted contact with the outside world — and a smaller staff of supervisors, who operate in eight-hour shifts and are thus integrated within the larger society (7). Goffman writes that:

> Each grouping tends to conceive of the other in terms of narrow hostile stereotypes, staff often seeing inmates as bitter, secretive, and untrustworthy, while inmates often see staff as condescending, highhanded, and mean. Staff tends to feel superior and righteous; inmates tend, in some ways at least, to feel inferior, weak, blameworthy, and guilty (7).

It is here that we can see how pervasive dynamics of power and control are in total institutions, demarcating distinct boundaries that are not to be crossed. These power dynamics are predominantly constructed and perpetuated by the degrading procedures which begin as soon as an individual is "processed." Goffman references a prison report detailing the admission of incarcerated prostitutes, which describes that:

> First, there is the shower officer who forces them to undress, takes their own clothes away, sees to it that they take showers and get their prison clothes– one pair of black oxfords with cuban heels, two pairs of much-mended ankle socks, three cotton dresses, two cotton slips, two pairs of panties, and a couple of bras (21).

By forcing the inmate to undress promptly upon admission to the institution —which is often accompanied by a bodily strip-search — inmates within total institutions are immediately rendered physically and emotionally vulnerable, at the mercy of those overseeing them. Further, Goffman writes that the loss of their personal clothing items or "identity equipment" can "prevent the individual from presenting his usual image of himself to others," beginning the "mortification of the self" process (21).

A key component of Goffman's notion of total institutions is understanding the mortification of the self, which draws from Mead's "genesis of the self" and symbolic interactionism. According to *Asylums*, the mortification of the self is a process by which total institutions degrade and humiliate inmates, leaving them with a diminished sense of personal identity; this mortification typically happens over an extended period of time and in a variety of ways. For example, while individuals within society are largely autonomous over their bodies, possessions and actions, Goffman writes that in total institutions, "these territories of the self are violated; the boundary that the individual places between his being and the environment is invaded and the embodiments of self profaned" (23). This can be exemplified by the ways in which inmates are subject to invasive strip-searches, live and sleep in collective housing, and use doorless toilets and communal showers (25). This mortification manifests as well in the language exchanged between inmates and guards, as Goffman emphasizes how inmates are often "considered to be of insufficient ritual status to be given even minor greetings, let alone listened to" by those overseeing them (45). Thus, it can be seen that the mortification of the self occurs in two primary stages: inmates are first stripped from the identities they associated with prior to incarceration, and then over time — and through symbolic interactionism — their sense of self is reconstructed based on the cues and regulations enforced by the total institution. Unfortunately,

this process can prove to be difficult for inmates post-incarceration; Goffman notes that both

disculturation (the "loss or failure to acquire some of the habits currently required in the wider

society") and stigmatization typically occur upon release. While in theory total institutions are

meant to prepare inmates for eventual re-entry into the outside world, this is often done so with

underlying intentions. Goffman concludes that while total institutions "frequently claim to be

concerned with rehabilitation," this often means "resetting the inmate's self-regulatory

mechanisms so that after he leaves he will maintain the standards of the establishment of his own

accord" (71). It is when these harsh standards do not replicate those of the outside world that

individuals struggle with dynamics such as disculturation and stigmatization, complicating life

post-incarceration.

Avni on Applying Total Institutions to Domestic Violence Relationships

In a theoretical context, the similarities between total institutions and relationships

characterized by domestic violence are clear, as both are marked by dynamics of power and

control. This concept is substantiated by Israeli criminologist Noga Avni's 1991 research paper

"Battered Wives: The Home as a Total Institution." To support her theory, Avni conducted

thirty-five unstructured interviews with women at a battered women's shelter in Israel. All

participants identified as survivors of abusive heterosexual marriages, leading to their residence

at the shelter. The ages of the participants ranged from 19 to 57 years old, and all of the women

shared children with their abusive partner. 50% of the women were married before the age of 17,

and the duration of marriages ranged from two to 35 years, largely consistent with the duration

of battering (Avni 1991:140). 100% of the women interviewed rated the physical abuse they

were subject to as "severe," and Avni writes that "all of [the women] had to suffer various forms

of psychological abuse, too, such as humiliation and threats, and all of them, without exception,

lost their freedom of action" (140). After providing an overview of her methodology and participants, Avni applied Goffman's theories of total institutions and the mortification of the self to the results of her study; this synthesis is briefly summarized below.

Goffman's *Asylums* asserts that the unequal power dynamics between guards and inmates are established immediately upon entry into a total institution, exemplified by "obedience test[s]" and "will-breaking contest[s]" that take place (Goffman 1961:17). This theme was one that Avni found prevalent within her study as well. According to her results, 87% of the women interviewed noted that the first instance of battering took place within the first month of marriage (Avni 1991:141). As she writes, "in failing to demonstrate any sign of resistance to the *first* occurrence of violence, all our subjects, without exception, thus tacitly confirmed their husbands' assumed role as 'the boss' of the house" (141). Unfortunately, the situations often worsened once this dynamic of control was introduced and seemingly "accepted" by the women. Similar to how inmates within total institutions are forced to adhere to a strict schedule, Avni concluded:

> The battered woman loses her autonomy in all spheres of life: She is deprived of controlling her own time and space usage, her social connections, her activities, and her body. Her home becomes her prison and her husband her jailer (142).

Building off of a loss of autonomy, Avni highlighted the limited contact each woman had with the "outside world," another characteristic shared by total institutions. She states that each woman was "separated from her social contacts" including her "closest family members, thus cutting her off from potential sources of aid… advice or positive action" (142). Isolated from any forms of alternative contact, the women were forced to rely on their husbands for information and resources; as one of the women Avni spoke with disclosed, "I didn't know that there *was* a shelter for battered women, because I was always shut in the house" (143). This lack of

information or potential aid created detrimental cycles of dependency upon the abusive partners, making it difficult to leave.

When drawing conclusions from her interviews, Avni discerned that many of the survivors she spoke with seemed to engage in Goffman's "mortification of the self" during their marriages. As a result, Avni identified three main factors causing women in abusive relationships to go through a process of mortification: suspicion, intimate exposure, and the home as a private sphere. Beginning with suspicion, Avni notes that this factor is specific in that it stems from an explicitly patriarchal attitude, and was found in reflected in studies around the world as "a dominant, intensive and uncompromising characteristic of the battering husband" (144). Described as both a "retroactive" and "prospective" measure, the husbands in Avni's study frequently accused their wives of flirting with other men, followed them when they went shopping, and forced them to give up social groups outside of the home. As Avni and one of her participants elaborated:

> All the women in our sample claimed that they had never been unfaithful to their husbands. This is to be expected… since the husbands make it very clear that the penalty for betrayal is death. As Rina explains: "Even if he had a shadow of doubt that I might have spoken to a man—never mind betrayed him—I wouldn't stay alive" (144).

While Avni notes that suspicion does not directly correlate to Goffman's self-mortification, yet it "generates psychological torture. The [woman] has to be on guard all the time. Consequently, the whole thinking process is channeled into one direction only — self-preservation — while other issues have to be suppressed" (144). Filled with unease, insecurity and self-doubt, Avni's participants began to self-limit their own contact with the outside world, questioning their own behavior and sanity. This reality exemplifies the power of Mead's symbolic interactionism on the genesis of the Self, the foundation upon which Goffman's theories are built.

The final two factors that Avni identified as causing self-mortification in battered women — intimate exposure and the home as a private sphere — are related in that they deal with the structural variables of the home (144). Interestingly, Avni notes that intimate exposure (which includes exposure both psychological and physical) is not inherently harmful, and is in fact found within most family units. Unfortunately, in some marriages these forms of exposure are used as tools used by abusive husbands to maintain power over their partners. In terms of psychological exposure, husbands who have access to documents and information such as medical records, letters and general life history wield such knowledge over their wives, asserting total control (145). This dynamic occurs within total institutions, in which those in supervisory positions are privy to intimate details about their confined inmates. In partnerships plagued by domestic violence, physical exposure is perhaps the most easily recognized factor; when threatened, physical exposure allows an abusive husband to utilize "the ultimate resource at his disposal… his physical power" (145). Avni continues on to write that the "intimate relations with her husband make the wife the 'appropriate victim' … both because she is the main witness to his weakness, and because of her availability" (145).

The perpetuation of both harmful forms of intimate exposure can be attributed to Avni's final factor of self-mortification, which is the fact that the home largely functions as a private sphere. In describing the home as the "most private unit in our society," Avni posits that "social norms conform to this concept and dictate that one's home is one's castle and that society is not to interfere with what happens within its walls" (146). Thus, the women Avni interviewed refrained from asking for help from others, including both family and friends and those in social work and law enforcement. Of this defense of the privacy of the home, Avni writes that:

> [Battered women] are struggling to conceal the fact that their home is not a happy and
> peaceful one. This situation adds to the mortification of the self, not only in the sense of

the psychological burden created by the shame and secrecy, but also in the sense that these two prevent the women from obtaining external support (146).

Avni's study found that this dynamic of privacy was two-fold. Stuck in their acceptance of social norms and constructs, many individuals aware of domestic abuse refused to intervene. Avni included an excerpt from a participant in her study, which reads that:

> The neighbors heard my screams but they would not interfere, because they thought to themselves 'after all you are a married couple and every couple [has] their arguments and fights and it's really embarrassing to interfere.' I cried for help when he beat me, horrible screams ... and no one came to my rescue (146).

Overall, Avni's three factors leading to the self-mortification of battered women — suspicion, intimate exposure, and the home as a private sphere — cause the women to feel intense amounts of shame for their own complicit behavior, perpetuating a complex cycle of abuse. Such shame is intrinsic within total institutions as a whole, and is likely carried with inmates (or battered women) once released from confinement.

Gilligan on the Ethics of Care

The work of Carol Gilligan, specifically her theories surrounding "the ethic of care," relates well to my consideration of institutions practicing trauma-informed care. Born in New York City in 1936, Gilligan is a renowned ethicist and psychologist whose work is largely conducted through a feminist lens. Associated with the philosopher Nel Noddings, Gilligan is perhaps best known for her 1982 book *In a Different Voice,* which posits that many of the theorists foundational to psychology and moral development (such as Sigmund Freud and Lawrence Kohlberg) developed their concepts in highly androcentric ways, ignoring the gender-based differences which exist. Gilligan thus utilized Freud and Kohlberg's foundations to develop a feminist framework of human development and interaction, officially known as the

ethic of care. In Gillian's chapter titled "Concepts of Self and Morality," she offers an evocative

understanding of exactly why this framework is so critical, writing that:

> As we have listened for centuries to the voices of men and the theories of development
> that their experience informs, so we have come more recently to notice not only the
> silence of women but the difficulty in hearing what they say when they speak. Yet in the
> different voice of women lies the truth of an ethic of care, the tie between relationship
> and responsibility, and the origins of aggression in the failure of connection. The failure
> to see the different reality of women's lives and to hear the differences in their voices
> stems in part from the assumption that there is a single mode of social experience and
> interpretation (173).

Gilligan's observation that the voices of women are not only silenced but *ignored* is reminiscent

of prominent sociologists such as Émile Durkheim and Erving Goffman; this highlights a theme

throughout theory and academia, one which disregards the experiences of women and those with

marginalized identities while having a profound impact upon them. When centering the

experiences of women, however, "we arrive at a more complex rendition of human experience

which sees the truth of separation and attachment in the lives of women and men and recognizes

how these truths are carried by different modes of language and thought" (173). In other words,

when recognizing the complexity of differences between men and women in human socialization

and morality, it is necessary for that same complexity to be found in the theoretical frameworks

we utilize for analysis. Thus, the need for Gilligan's ethic of care becomes clear.

With the reasoning for the ethic of care established, it is now possible to understand the

particular characterization of this framework. Gilligan writes that traditional conceptions of

moral judgement and ethics have been developed to reflect masculine ideals which adhere to

rules, structure and logic. Women's conceptions, however, emphasize morality as "a problem of

care and responsibility in relationships rather than as one of rights and rules" (73). At its core,

Gilligan's ethic of care is based around the creation and sustainment of relationships among

specific, rather than abstract, individuals; Gilligan writes that "the logic underlying an ethic of

care is a psychological logic of relationships," which deviates from the more masculine "justice"

model substantiated by "the formal logic of fairness" (73). According to Gilligan, the ethic of

care is a cumulative and "progressively more adequate understanding" of human relationships,

which ultimately "evolves around a central insight, that self and other are interdependent" (74).

She continues by writing that:

> In this sequence, the fact of interconnection informs the central, recurring recognition that just as the incidence of violence is in the end destructive to all, so the activity of care enhances both others and self (74).

Overall, many of the characteristics of the ethic of care — honesty, kindness, and warmth —

stem from this idea of interconnectedness, that we all benefit when treating others with care.

While the justice model approaches moral dilemmas with strict rules and principles, the ethic of

care is forgiving, considering the context of a situation and more often employing compromise

and accommodation.

When reading Gilligan's work, the essence of George Herbert Mead's genesis of the Self

can be identified. Gilligan's work relies on the belief that an individual's sense of self is

constructed based on the relationships they have with those around them, demonstrating

symbolic interactionism. Yet Gilligan takes this foundation and incorporates a new component,

one gleaned from her observations and experiences as a woman: the moral responsibility

individuals have in caring for others. Thus, Gilligan offers the ethic of care as evidence for the

importance of intentional, nonviolent and relationship-based systems of care, arguing that

overall, they benefit society in significant ways. Here, it is important to recognize how the ethic

of care is strictly gendered; Gilligan offers it as a "women's construction" of moral issues, one

seemingly incompatible with traditionally masculine conceptions. When invoking the work of

Erving Goffman, punitive institutions can thus be categorized as "masculine," with those

practicing trauma-informed care as "feminine." Therefore, the ethic of care stands in direct opposition to the ways in which total institutions were developed, and continue to function today.

Crenshaw on Intersectionality

Given that *In a Different Voice* was written prior to Kimberlé Crenshaw's "Mapping the Margins," it is interesting to recognize that Gilligan's rejection of the "single mode of social experience" inherently draws from Crenshaw's theory of "intersectionality." Born in Ohio in 1959, Crenshaw is a prominent lawyer, civil rights advocate and scholar noted for her work regarding critical race theory (CRT). Published in 1991, the theories she introduced in "Mapping the Margins" now serve as pillars of both CRT and feminist theory, as well as for those pursuing social justice. It is important to acknowledge that while Crenshaw officially coined the term "intersectionality" in 1989, the concept itself draws from the work of earlier feminist scholars of color; such intellects include activist Sojourner Truth and scholar Anna Julia Cooper. Additionally, intersectionality can be discerned within the work of more contemporary scholars like Audre Lorde, Angela Davis, bell hooks and members of the Combahee River Collective.

Crenshaw's influential "Mapping the Margins" begins with a discussion of "identity politics," an approach where political formations are organized not around party affiliation or belief systems, but around shared identities including race, religion, and gender. Crenshaw writes that for marginalized groups such as people of color and those in the queer community, "identity-based politics has been a source of strength, community, and intellectual development" (Crenshaw 1991:1). Even so, the approach is not without its faults; Crenshaw notes that the problem with identity politics "is not that it fails to transcend difference," but that it "frequently conflates or tries to ignore intra-group differences" (1). This dynamic is harmful given that it doesn't acknowledge the multiple dimensions of each individual in the group, ultimately leading

to internal strife and tension (1). Thus, Crenshaw offers intersectionality as an alternative

theoretical framework which recognizes the ways in which various identities and oppressions

interact and intersect with one another. This work effectively "highlights the need to account for

multiple grounds of identity when considering how the social world is constructed" (2). While

this framework is beneficial in it highlighting group differences, it also illuminates a number of

ways in which those with marginalized identities experience oppression.

   Throughout "Mapping the Margins," Crenshaw uses the example of battered women of

color to demonstrate the ways that certain identities are hindered by societal barriers, thus

exemplifying the intersectionality of oppression. She notes that although the experiences of

women of color "are frequently the product of intersecting patterns of racism and sexism," these

experiences are rarely represented within either feminist or antiracist discourse. Therefore,

because of their "intersectional identit[ies] as both women and people of color within discourses

that are shaped to respond to one or the other, the interests and experiences of women of color

are frequently marginalized within both" (1). When constructing intersectionality as a theoretical

framework, Crenshaw creates a distinction between structural and political intersectionality. Due

to the fact that my project analyzes various structural systems of punishment and care, I focus

solely on structural intersectionality. According to Crenshaw, this concept explains how "the

ways in which the location of women of color at the intersection of race and gender makes our

actual experience of domestic violence, rape, and remedial reform qualitatively different from

that of white women" (2). For example, many women of color experiencing domestic violence

who seek out battered women's shelters are also responsible for their children, unemployed and

of low socioeconomic status (2). Thus, Crenshaw writes that:

> Shelters serving these women cannot afford to address only the violence inflicted by the
> batterer; they must also confront the other multilayered and routinized forms of

domination that often converge in these women's lives, hindering their ability to create alternatives to the abusive relationships that brought them to shelters in the first place (2).

According to Crenshaw's theory, in adopting a more structurally intersectional approach of care, organizations engaging in violence prevention will be able to do so in ways which recognize various forms of oppression, thus being more effective.

Crenshaw notes that although these additional burdens are largely due to gender and class oppression as well as discriminatory employment and housing policies, battered women of color are often shut out by the very systems in place to aid them (2). She offers an example where a Latina mother and her young son fled home due to domestic violence. Unable to find a shelter willing to accommodate them both, the pair lived on the streets while communicating with a domestic violence hotline. According to Crenshaw, the hotline counselor was eventually able to find an agency with enough room for both, yet "when the counselor told the intake coordinator at the shelter that the woman spoke limited English, the coordinator told her that they could not take anyone who was not English-proficient" (10). Even when she was assured the son could fully translate, the agency refused due to the concern that this reliance would "further victimize" the woman. Crenshaw writes that despite this woman's "desperate need," she was ultimately unable to receive critical protection due to the shelter's exclusionary policies. As she elaborates:

> Perhaps even more troubling than the shelter's lack of bilingual resources was its refusal to allow a friend or relative to translate for the woman… The point is not that the shelter's image of empowerment is empty, but rather that it was imposed without regard to the disempowering consequences for women who did not match the kind of client the shelter's administrators imagined.

Unfortunately, policies such as these subsequently force already marginalized people into even more vulnerable situations, directly going against the shelter's fundamental purpose. Crenshaw's example of this policy also illustrates the ways in which privilege and oppression intersect; while we may not consider a survivor of abuse seeking shelter to be "privileged" per se, in this

example one achieves such a status due to English-proficiency. In adopting an intersectional approach, we are able to see the ways in which people of color are particularly impacted by the criminal justice system. Furthermore, structural intersectionality is important to note when considering the policies implemented by organizations striving to support survivors of abuse.

Chapter Four: Methodology

The purpose of my Independent Study is to examine the experiences of incarcerated survivors of domestic abuse, paying particular attention to the ways in which punitive institutions may retraumatize and re-victimize such individuals. By focusing on the psychological impact of trauma on survivors both during and after incarceration, I seek to critically evaluate organizations and institutions which utilize "trauma-informed" systems of care. Ultimately, I hope to understand whether punitive institutions are able to fully be "trauma-informed" in ways which support survivors of abuse. To do so, I created a set of questions to frame my research:

1. What is the particular connection between an individual's history of abuse and conviction/imprisonment?

2. How is trauma detrimental to those who experience it? In what ways can trauma manifest?

3. In what ways do punitive institutions (jails, houses of correction, prisons) mimic or replicate dynamics of abuse? How do these dynamics psychologically impact survivors during and after incarceration? In what ways do inmate-inmate and/or inmate-officer interactions replicate dynamics of abuse?

4. Why do some organizations choose to implement "trauma-informed" systems of care? What policies and/or procedures qualify as "trauma-informed?"

5. Is it possible for punitive institutions to be constructed in ways that truly support survivors of domestic abuse? Why or why not?

In order to answer these questions, I decided to use interviews as the primary research method of my study; I aimed to interview both professionals involved with the fields of trauma and criminal justice, as well as formerly incarcerated women with a history of abuse. I chose to conduct interviews because while they do not offer concrete quantitative data that covers large populations, they allow researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the dynamics and themes researched and referenced by participants. Additionally, interviews offer the opportunity to ask

clarifying questions, enhancing the communication of accurate information. From the moment I began conceptualizing my study, it was critical for me to include the voices of the population I was writing about: formerly incarcerated women with a history of abuse. Thus, interviews as a research method were chosen in the hope that it would be possible to interview such women. It is important to note that later in the process, participant observation was added as a secondary means of data collection — this decision will be explained in the following section.

Overall, I conducted semi-structured interviews with twelve participants; nine were with professionals in the fields of trauma, criminal justice or prison abolition, and three were with formerly incarcerated women. Additionally, seven were conducted in person, and five were conducted via a recorded phone call. The recordings of each interview were transcribed using Landmark Associates Inc. (LAI), a secure human transcription and translation service specializing in qualitative data. I will begin by explaining the specifics of my data collection process; this portion will be divided subsections detailing the data collected from "Professionals in Trauma and Criminal Justice" and "Formerly Incarcerated Women." I will then discuss my particular positionality as a researcher, including how my identity contributed to the nuances of the data collection process. Finally, an overview of the benefits and drawbacks of my methodology will be given.

Data Collection

After completing my initial research and identifying the main themes and questions with which to frame my interviews, I completed an online CITI training session on the ethics of social and behavioral research, and then applied for approval from the Human Subjects Research Committee (HSRC), Wooster's Institutional Review Board (IRB). This step is integral to ensure an ethical data collection process where the safety of participants is the main priority. This is

especially true for participants considered to be part of "vulnerable populations," for example pregnant women, children and prisoners. Due to the fact that I hoped to interview formerly incarcerated women with a history of abuse, I worked to ensure the safety and protection of potential participants. In studying the potential retraumatization of incarcerated women, I was also conscious of the fact that the subject matter of my interviews may inadvertently retraumatize my participants. I sought to mitigate this dynamic by emphasizing to my participants that they did not have to discuss any topic they were uncomfortable with, and could stop the interview at any time. In my HSRC application, I outlined the specific details of how I aimed to secure participants and conduct interviews that maintained the confidentiality of my subjects. I also created separate consent forms for Prison and Trauma Professionals as well as for Formerly Incarcerated Women (see Appendix A) and created a distinct set of interview questions for my two populations (see Appendix B). Finally, I developed an audio policy stating the regulation of my recording interviews. Once my HSRC protocol — including all of my forms and proposals — was approved on November 7th, 2019, my data collection process officially began.

Professionals in Trauma and Criminal Justice

When reviewing the literature and constructing my data collection process, the need to interview professionals in the fields of trauma/recovery and criminal justice became clear; this was because of my desire to gain a fuller and accurate picture of both the psychological impact of punitive institutions and the involvement of the court system. Due to the intersectional nature of the dynamics I was grappling with, it was important to interview a range of individuals including therapists, judges, social workers, and correctional officers. All of the participants I interviewed were identified using a synthesis of purposeful sampling and snowball sampling, two non-probability sampling techniques. Purposeful sampling refers to when participants are

carefully chosen by the researcher due to their knowledge in a specific area; snowball sampling is when interviewing one participant leads to the introduction of others. Thus, some of the participants I chose to interview because of their expertise subsequently introduced me to other participants they thought would be helpful to my research.

This process began when I spoke with Dr. Debra Pinals, a close family friend who served as a psychiatrist at several correctional facilities in Massachusetts, and has extensive knowledge of the ways in which the criminal justice system particularly affects female offenders. Although Pinals now teaches at the University of Michigan Medical School, when she was located in Massachusetts, she worked to develop the Women's Recovery from Addictions Program (WRAP). Based out of Taunton, the WRAP is an "inpatient therapy-based treatment facility for women involuntarily committed" to attend alcohol or substance use treatment, according to the program's website (DMH 2019). Due to the population it serves, the WRAP was intentionally created and designed by Pinals and Anthony Riccitelli as a "trauma-informed" system of care. Riccitelli currently serves as the Director of Inpatient & Forensic Program Standardization and Compliance for the Massachusetts Department of Health, of which the WRAP is a part. Pinals connected me with Riccitelli via email and he became my first participant when I interviewed him at the WRAP in mid-December. At the introduction and encouragement of Riccitelli, I later returned to the WRAP in January to interview Teri St. Pierre, who serves as the program director. Both interviews were semi-structured and recorded.

While home in Boston, I also had the opportunity to interview The Honorable First Justice Kathleen Coffey, a trial judge for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. I was introduced to Judge Coffey through my father, who has worked as a consultant for her district court in the past. In addition to presiding over "normal" court hearings, Judge Coffey oversees two specialty

courts: one for homeless individuals with outstanding warrants ("Homeless Court at Pine Street Inn") and one for those with significant mental illnesses ("Recovery with Justice Program"). According to informational literature about the program, Recovery with Justice is "a specialized court session that [provides] intensive social services and mental health treatment to assist defendants in maintaining stability, achieving recovery and avoiding incarceration" (Coffey 2019). Similar to the WRAP, Recovery with Justice was intentionally designed to be trauma-informed, created with the understanding of the intersectionality of abuse, mental health and the criminal justice system. I wanted to speak with Judge Coffey not only about her experience with this type of court, but also to gain insight into the factors which influence a trial judge's sentencing. It is interesting to note that Judge Coffey's specialty courts were modeled after those initially conceptualized by another female Boston-based judge, who I spoke with on the phone. While this judge declined to formally participate in my study and wishes to remain anonymous, our conversation was helpful in that it both clarified and illuminated aspects of the criminal justice system. After observing Judge Coffey preside over a Recovery with Justice Court session in West Roxbury, Massachusetts, I conducted a recorded interview with her in her office.

Following our interview, Judge Coffey connected me via email with Rachelle Steinberg, Esq., the Assistant Deputy Superintendent from the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department. Steinberg is located at the Suffolk County House of Correction at South Bay, a jail housing both male and female inmates serving sentences of 2½ years or less. I met with Steinberg on-site at the Suffolk County House of Correction, which she gave me a tour of following our discussion. Due to the strict protocol of the jail, I was prohibited from recording our interview and did not end up including Steinberg as a participant in my study. However, Steinberg introduced me to Jennifer Wolter, who serves as the program director of Survivors of Abuse Feeling Empowered

for Re-Entry, a collaboration between the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department and RESPOND, Inc., a domestic violence prevention agency based in Boston. The program is currently operating on a grant funded by the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA). While I was unable to conduct an in-person interview with Wolter, we communicated via email and I interviewed her via a recorded phone call in late February. In addition to Wolter, there were four interviews I conducted over the phone. I spoke with Dr. Kathleen Ulman, a clinical assistant for psychiatry (psychology) at Massachusetts General Hospital who specializes in treating trauma; Ulman is also an adjunct professor of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School. I also spoke with Heather,[4] a social worker who works with formerly incarcerated male sex offenders in outpatient treatment. After connecting via email, I spoke with Sue Osthoff, the executive director of the National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women, a nonprofit organization "[working] for justice for victims of battering charged with crimes where a history of abuse is relevant to their legal claim or defense," according to their website (NCDBW.org). Lastly, I interviewed Caren Holmes '17, a graduate from the College of Wooster who is active in the prison abolition movement, advocating for non-carceral ways to address domestic and interpersonal violence. I first spoke with Caren in a non-recorded informal interview over the phone, and then sent her a list of questions to formally respond to via email.

Formerly Incarcerated Women

While I was and am immensely grateful for the opportunity to speak with a breadth of professionals in the fields of trauma, addiction and criminal justice, it remained critical for me to include the voices and experiences of formerly incarcerated women with a history of abuse. In

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[4] The social worker I spoke with chose to remain anonymous and thus, "Heather" has been assigned as a pseudonym.

order to do this, I established a connection with a director of a local nonprofit organization in Ohio; this organization offers both inpatient and outpatient services such as addiction and mental health treatment, sexual assault and rape recovery, and domestic violence services. This nonprofit was chosen because of the unfortunate reality that sexual assault, domestic violence and addiction often lead to entry into the criminal justice system. I began the process by writing a proposal to the organization's board of directors which outlined my intended participant recruitment. In my proposal, I suggested the method of posting flyers in the main office of the organization to publicize my study. These flyers would encourage participation as either a recorded interview or a written response for those who wished to remain completely anonymous. My proposal was approved approximately a month after it was submitted, and three posters were hung up in the office of the nonprofit. Each flyer was identical and read:

> Interested in speaking or writing about your experience within the criminal justice system? Help an undergraduate student with a research project. Please email me at ekahn20@wooster.edu or speak with the front desk to learn more. Your participation in this project is unpaid and will be fully anonymous.

Unfortunately, these recruitment efforts were unsuccessful as I was unable to engage participants for my Independent Study using this method. I spoke again with the director, who suggested targeting one of the inpatient residential treatment centers that the nonprofit offers. She connected me with the Residential Services Manager, who invited me to facilitate a discussion with a group of women currently receiving residential inpatient treatment for drug addiction. At this point in my study, it was necessary to amend my HSRC application to include participant observation as a method of data collection, since it was unclear if I would be able to conduct individual interviews with the women. Once this amendment was approved, I traveled to the residential treatment center and facilitated a group discussion with five women. Of these five, three identified themselves as both survivors of abuse and as formerly incarcerated women. In

addition to taking detailed notes on the group discussion, I distributed blank written prompts to these three women, who chose pseudonyms (Peaches, Kitty and Robin) to protect their identities. The prompt consisted of four open-ended questions, which were as follows:

1. Do you identify as a survivor of abuse? If you feel comfortable, could you identify the type of abuse you suffered?
2. Did your time in prison allow you to heal or process any trauma you needed to? If so, how?
3. How has your life changed post-incarceration? What has it been like to reintegrate into your community?
4. If you were to construct a prison which would support incarcerated survivors of abuse, what would that look like? What elements would be included?

Of the three prompts I distributed I received two back, from Peaches and Kitty. Robin asked for more time to complete the prompt, and all three expressed interest in participating in a recorded individual interview. After receiving permission from the organization, I was able to return to the treatment center approximately two weeks later to conduct these individual interviews. While both Peaches and Kitty participated in the individual interview, Robin had left the program by the time I returned. Thus, my data from this portion of the project consists of detailed notes from the group discussion with Peaches, Kitty and Robin, written responses to prompts from Peaches and Kitty, and individual recorded interviews with Peaches and Kitty.

Positionality

It is important to acknowledge the ways in which my particular positionality as a researcher impacted not only the conceptualization of my project, but also how I reached and was perceived by my participants. To begin with the initial conceptualization of my thesis, the population my project centers around — formerly incarcerated women with a history of domestic violence — is not one of which I am a part. While this dynamic has been a difficult one to

wrestle with, it was also one that I have had time to critically evaluate. I spent the summer of

2019 interning with Jane Doe Inc., the Massachusetts Coalition Against Sexual Assault and

Domestic Violence, which taught me vital lessons. I learned about the qualities needed to be a

good and sustainable ally, as well as the different ways in which people heal from trauma. I also

realized that even individuals and non-profit organizations with the best intentions may

inadvertently harm the communities they wish to help. Even so, my positionality as a non-

member of the population I sought to evaluate contributed to preconceived notions on my behalf.

For example, in developing my project I had a fairly simplistic notion of what was "good" and

what was "bad" in the context of domestic violence and the criminal justice system; while it is

"bad" to incarcerate women with a history of abuse, it is always "good" for male abusers to serve

time in jail or prison. It was through my interviews with both professionals and formerly

incarcerated women, however, that I came to fully realize the complexity and nuances embedded

in such dynamics. This extended as well to the language I utilized in my interviews. For

example, when meeting with Rachelle Steinberg at the Suffolk County House of Corrections, she

informed me that those working in criminal justice prefer the term "officer" to "guard." While

the terminology I used largely stemmed from the literature I reviewed in the fall, I may have

known those distinctions if I had more familiarity with the criminal justice system.

My positionality also impacted how I was able to connect with potential participants. For

example, my relationship with Dr. Debra Pinals was incredibly helpful in that she introduced me

to a variety of participants, who in turn connected me with others. Had I not had this pre-existing

relationship, it is unlikely that I would have been able to secure as many interviews with

professionals as I did. It is also important to recognize the ways in which my socioeconomic

status allowed me to conduct this study. Both in Massachusetts and Ohio, my ability to travel to

conduct in-person interviews was contingent upon my having a car and the resources to maintain it. Additionally, I was fortunate in that I had access to a transcription service, which allowed me to secure as many interviews as I was able to without factoring in the time it would take to transcribe them. It was also interesting to note how my age played a role in securing interviews. As a fairly young researcher, I felt that many of the professionals I spoke with were excited to assist me with my project, and expressed approval at my engaging with such topics as an undergraduate student. On the contrary, however, I came across a few participants who could not take the time to help me with what was simply deemed to be "an undergraduate paper." Perhaps if I had been in a doctoral program with more credibility and resources, this particular dynamic would not have been an issue.

Lastly, it is crucial to understand how my particular identity as a researcher may have impacted the interactions I had with my participants once interviews were secured. To begin, I identify as a woman. Of the eleven interviews I conducted, ten were with other women, including both professionals and formerly incarcerated individuals. While it is entirely possible that this could simply be reflective of the fields I sought to study, it is also likely that these participants felt more comfortable agreeing to the interview because I am a female researcher. This can be substantiated by considering an interaction I had during the group discussion with the women at the residential treatment center. Towards the end of the discussion, Peaches stated that because she had faced years of gender-based violence and abuse, she was a pretty good judge of character and could tell when an individual was being genuine or not. Peaches said that she immediately felt as though she could trust me, and thanked me on behalf of the group for listening to their stories. While this interaction was reaffirming for me, I did wonder whether this outcome would have been the same had I been a male researcher; due to the gendered dynamics

of domestic violence, I do not think this would have been the case. Thus, I can conclude that my gender identity played a role in gaining the trust of my participants, both those who are professionals in the fields of trauma and the criminal justice system, as well as the formerly incarcerated women with whom I spoke.

Due to the intersectional nature of my project, I was fortunate to formally interview individuals representing a broad range of occupations and experiences, ranging from the Assistant Deputy Superintendent of a punitive institution to women who had been confined in ones similar. Unfortunately, this diversity did not extend to the racial identities of my participants, as all of the participants in my study appeared to be white. This is an important factor to consider given the racialized nature of our criminal justice system, which continues to criminalize men and women of color at disproportionately higher rates than white men and women. This lack of racial diversity in my participants is problematic in two primary ways: 1) while I am grateful I was able to interview three formerly incarcerated women, as white individuals their data cannot speak to the experiences of incarcerated women of color who face additional forms of oppression and 2) exclusively elevating the voices and expertise of white professionals in the fields of trauma and criminal justice effectively ignores the men and women of color working to combat trauma and violence in their communities. Further, a large portion of such violence may in fact be inflicted by law enforcement o*n behalf of* the criminal justice system in the first place. That being said, since I interacted with all white participants I am uncertain if my identity as a white researcher played a major role in the data collection process.

Benefits and Drawbacks

As with every research study, there were a number of benefits and drawbacks to the particular methodology my Independent Study utilized. To begin with benefits, I found it helpful

to interview professionals in trauma and criminal justice because I was able to gain a holistic

understanding of the criminal justice system. From interviewing a judge in the district courts to

an administrator within a Boston-based jail to an advocate for prison abolition, I am confident

that my data set is comprehensive and thorough, reflecting diverse roles and opinions.

Additionally, it was beneficial to conduct in-person interviews in particular because by traveling

to each respective place of work, I was able to immerse myself in the spaces so critical to the

dynamics I was analyzing. I also felt as though the interviews I conducted produced information

that challenged any preconceived notions I had and corrected terminology I had gleaned from

antiquated literature. Additionally, since many of my participants had been in their professional

positions for a number of years, it was useful to hear how their respective fields have shifted over

time.

In terms of the participation of formerly incarcerated women, I found interviews to be

beneficial because they allowed an often-marginalized community the chance to tell their own

stories, in their own words. Facilitating the group discussion encouraged the women to build off

each other and find commonalities within their stories, hopefully aiding them in processing and

feeling less isolated in their experiences. In a similar vein, conducting the interviews in the

residential treatment center itself created a safe and familiar setting, emphasizing the autonomy

that the women had over their stories. I appreciated using the semi-structured interview format

because it provided a good balance of structure and flexibility, offering a concrete set of

questions yet allowing for the interview to move in whichever direction was most natural. Lastly,

in each of my interviews with formerly incarcerated women, I made sure to give them an

overview of the people and organizations actively working to support survivors of abuse both

during and after incarceration. I feel that this knowledge was beneficial both in that it validated

their experiences, and offered a bit of hope; I do not feel that this would not have been communicated as well if I had utilized a different research method.

In addition to benefits, it is always critical to acknowledge the drawbacks of a particular research study. To begin, conducting interviews was challenging due to the difficulty I had in not only identifying potential participants, but in actually securing interviews with them as well. As opposed to quantitative research methods such as surveys, interviews require the time and energy of both the interviewer and interviewee, a dynamic which was at times hard to navigate. My data collection process was also complicated because I did not secure my interviews with the formerly incarcerated women until the end of my Independent Study, which left me with less time to analyze my results. Additionally, the nature of my topic made it difficult to gain access to punitive institutions themselves; I experienced this when I was not allowed to bring my interview questions into the Suffolk County House of Correction, or record the interview itself. While I understand that this measure is one implemented to ensure the privacy and protection of both inmates and staff members, it was hard to collect data in a comprehensive and effective way. I also struggled to navigate power dynamics in my interviews, switching from the role of a "student" when interviewing professionals to a position of power when interviewing the formerly incarcerated women. Lastly, my data consists of a very small sample size for formerly incarcerated women; in addition to lacking racial diversity, this reality runs the risk of essentializing the experiences of incarcerated survivors of domestic violence and omitting integral pieces of information.

Chapter Five: Analysis and Discussion

The Connection Between Domestic Violence and Incarceration

A Direct Connection

Throughout my interviews, many of my participants mentioned or alluded to direct connections between domestic violence and imprisonment. This finding substantiates the work done by a number of previous researchers, whose studies indicate that a history of abuse is a predictive factor for entry into the criminal justice system (Saar, et al. 2015). In talking with Sue Osthoff, the executive director of the National Clearinghouse for the Defense of Battered Women (NCDBW), the ways in which domestic violence directly leads to imprisonment became clear. Founded in 1987 by Osthoff and Barbara Hart, Osthoff expressed that at the NCDBW, "we work with a very direct nexus between the history of abuse and the crime for which they've been charged. We do that because then there's generally a legal relevance of that history of abuse." More specifically, Osthoff notes:

> We work primarily with victims of battery who are charged with homicide or assault by protecting themselves against their abusive partners… And women who flee with their children to protect the children and/or themselves, and then get charged criminally with parental kidnapping.

When asked about the number of clients whose conviction is their first offense, Osthoff said that for women charged with homicide, it's an "extraordinarily high" percentage. She summarized this reality stating that "men tend to kill when they think the woman is gonna leave" their abuser, and "women tend to kill when they think they're gonna die." Here, Osthoff indicates that for many women who have killed their abuser, homicide was a last resort, a final attempt of self-defense. The NCDBW also works with cases where "the batterer" is violent towards or kills the child(ren) living in the house, and the surviving woman is charged with neglect or failure to protect. In these instances, Osthoff reflected that "the truth of the matter is, we still live in a

world where people don't like victims of battering all that much, but God, do people *hate* 'bad' moms. Those cases are really hard." Along with illustrating the direct connection between abuse and imprisonment, Osthoff's comment exemplifies Jewkes' theories surrounding the gendered narratives prescribed to female offenders.

The data from the NCDBW can be substantiated by the personal account of Peaches, one of the formerly incarcerated women I interviewed. Since she was 16 years old, Peaches has served a total of seven months in confinement, including juvenile detention centers and county jails. When asked about the first time she was arrested, Peaches stated:

> It was a self-defense domestic violence on my husband. They tried to charge me with it 'cause I was drunk, but it was me defending myself. I was covered in marks, black eyes, choke marks, cuts, bruises. He had not a mark on him. When [the police] showed up, I wasn't acting crazy. I was making my son a bottle 'cause he had woke up to the fighting. Trying to calm him down, and I got arrested… It was pretty crazy actually. They wouldn't even hear my side of the story, 'cause I was drunk.

In considering Peaches' account, it is critical to understand the political context underlying her experience. In 1994, Congress passed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), which was hailed as landmark legislation for recognizing and addressing domestic violence on a federal scale. While successful in raising awareness for gender-based violence, there is substantial evidence that VAWA was not as beneficial as it was intended to be. The introduction of VAWA identified law enforcement as the primary tool to combat domestic violence, implementing mandatory arrest laws for domestic violence disturbances (Pickert 2013). Unfortunately, this regulation often resulted in the arrests of the victims themselves, many of whom had called for help. While the specific details of her case are unclear, this appears to have been at play with Peaches, whose "marks, black eyes, choke marks, cuts" and bruises were not enough, in the eyes of the arresting officers, to negate her intoxication. VAWA's emphasis on law enforcement as the primary way to address domestic violence has also been detrimental due to the ways in which

it further alienates survivors of color, who are more likely to experience police brutality and oppression than white survivors. In any case, Peaches' first arrest exemplifies how surviving domestic violence can serve as a direct connection to entry into the criminal justice system.

An Indirect Connection

For a large percentage of survivors of domestic violence, the connection between abuse and imprisonment is more indirect. This became clear in my interview with Jennifer Wolter, the program director of Survivors of Abuse Feeling Empowered for Re-Entry (S.A.F.E.R.). Throughout her time with S.A.F.E.R., Wolter noted that "a large majority" of the survivors she has worked with ended up incarcerated as an *in*direct result of their abuse. As she elaborated:

> Because of abuse, their life path has changed. It's a lot of survival. It's fast drugs, things that are coming as consequences to current or previous abuse… I've had people that have been accused by abusers, and so they've been in on charges [that are] essentially 'powerplay' charges, as I call them… I've had a few that have taken the rap for [their] partner, or covered up or said, "Yeah, those drugs are mine," when it was really their abuser.

In this except, Wolter emphasizes how abuse substantially changes the lives of survivors, often forcing them to adopt "survival strategies," which may result in continued abuse. Kitty, the second formerly incarcerated woman I interviewed, serves as an example of this trajectory. When asked if she identified as a survivor of abuse, in her written response Kitty answered "Yes. Raped, molested, abused by men, and mental abuse too." In her individual interview, Kitty offered a vivid example of the ways in which this abuse-related trauma can indirectly lead to imprisonment:

> I just think that… our mental state of minds — we're not really [competent]. We do things if we're not getting mental health or working in some kind of program to help with domestic violence or being on… the right kind of meds to help with depression and PSTD [sic] or stuff like that.

Here, Kitty discusses that for those with a history of abuse, "we do things" when there are few

programs and resources available to deal with mental health issues, abuse and trauma.

Illustrating a more indirect connection, incarceration is rendered more likely for such

populations. In considering the connection between abuse and incarceration, Wolter nicely

summarized this reality, stating that whether direct or indirect, "I would say it's a very small

percentage that there's just no connection."

The Impact of Trauma on Survivors of Abuse

One way to grasp the connection between domestic violence and incarceration is by

understanding the impact of trauma on abuse survivors. While I initially set out to collect data on

survivors of domestic violence in particular, many of my participants discussed trauma in the

context of various forms of abuse. Thus, my findings in this section refers to abuse in a broader

scope. Peaches disclosed an extensive history of abuse, which began at age six when she was

molested by a neighbor. This continued with an assault by her stepbrother when she was 16, an

incident that was "swept under the rug" by her family because "they didn't know how to deal

with it." That same year, Peaches entered into an abusive relationship with a man; as she

describes, "I dated a guy who was a lot older than me and took my virginity by raping me

aggressively in both ways. He would hit me, choke me out, call me names. Then I got bullied in

school." These years were further complicated by Peaches' difficult relationship with her

parents, who offered little support throughout her childhood. The culmination of these various

forms of abuse led to Peaches' first interaction with drugs. Peaches explains that:

> I felt rejected. I had really low self-esteem. I felt like a problem to everybody. I felt like if
> I ever told the truth about anything, the consequences would be so bad, I'd get beat. It's
> just ridiculous, the amount of fear and rejection I had at that age. I didn't want to feel
> that, didn't want to feel that at all. When an incident happened and I got thrown on the
> ground, I broke my collarbone. They gave me Percocet and it felt amazing, and in that
> time of my life, I was so vulnerable. I was hooked from there.

It is clear that Peaches' experiences with various forms of abuse contributed to a decline in her mental health; this eventually led to the use of prescription drugs as a means through which to manage her pain. Peaches' experience echoes Wolter's claims in that the abuse she suffered — and subsequent trauma — changed the trajectory of her life.

Peaches' experience of abuse-related trauma and the connection with addiction reflects the stories of many women who identify as survivors of abuse; this was confirmed by my interviews with Tony Riccitelli and Teri St. Pierre from the Women's Recovery from Addictions Program in Massachusetts (WRAP). According to Riccitelli, the WRAP works with women whose addictions have identified them as a risk to themselves or others, and have thus been involuntarily committed to attend treatment by the courts under Massachusetts General Law 123, section 35. While speaking with St. Pierre, she conveyed that "all our women have some form of trauma. Every single one that comes in here, it's just the life that they're living — they're exposed to a lot." In terms of how this trauma manifests, St. Pierre noted that there are often significant behavioral issues. She offered an example of one client in particular, who was "throwing things constantly, throwing her food tray, the juice machine… using language that makes all of us kinda start shaking… and we do know her very well. Horrible history." Other clients at the WRAP feel unsafe in the presence of male staff, with St. Pierre acknowledging that "they can come in pretty beat up. They're scared at that point." However their trauma manifests, St. Pierre stated:

> There's a reason why they're doing that behavior. They're angry at themselves, they're angry at the world, they're hurt, they've been traumatized, unprotected, they don't trust. They don't trust anybody… Our women have been — the things that have been done to them are horrendous. Horrendous.

Here, it is also important to consider the difficult drug detox process many of the women

experience during their time at the WRAP, which contributes to such behavior in significant ways. St. Pierre summarizes that overall, clients with histories of abuse — many of whom have also been incarcerated — can be extremely difficult to engage in treatment. This stems directly from the abuse they experienced, which has led them to "just push the world away to protect [themselves]... it's that trauma that they can't let people in to help them to frame. To let people help them."

Often, the effects of abuse impact survivors long after the abuse has taken place, leading to years of debilitating trauma. In order to understand this, I interviewed Dr. Kathleen Ulman, a clinical assistant of psychiatry at Massachusetts General Hospital and adjunct assistant professor of psychiatry and psychology at Harvard Medical School. While she has treated those in marriages plagued by domestic violence, Dr. Ulman works more consistently with women who survived childhood abuse, which quickly became the focus of our conversation. When asked about how such trauma has impacted the lives of her clients, Dr. Ulman offered an example of one woman who was sexually abused by her father and raped by a family friend during adolescence. Although the client maintained a relationship with her father throughout adulthood, Dr. Ulman noted that "when she had her daughters, she wouldn't leave them alone with him." As she added, "she's still troubled. She has trouble sleeping. She's with a husband who's not physically abusive, but emotionally abusive. She hasn't worked it through. I don't know whether she will or not." In addition to indicating the longevity of trauma, the client's relationships with her daughters and husband illustrate the ways in which abuse has impacted her adult life. A similar theme emerges from the experiences of another client Dr. Ulman treats, a woman working on processing the abuse she faced as a child. Dr. Ulman shared that:

> I have one [client] now who is very isolated — holds a job, has held a job for many years, has her own condo — but she has no friends. She's very scared of men. She started

telling me this in her twenties… She's never had a relationship that had sex in it, a caring relationship.

This excerpt indicates the correlation between childhood abuse and an inability to sustain healthy friendships and romantic relationships, indicating the PTSD that many survivors (such as Kitty in her interview) report as remaining prominent throughout their lives. In listening to the stories of women who have suffered abuse — women like Peaches, the women at the WRAP, and Dr. Ulman's two clients — a portrait emerges of the ways that trauma impacts the lives of survivors. This portrait is one characterized by low self-esteem and addiction, difficulty in regulating emotions and behavior, and fear, all of which lead to isolation.

The Retraumatization of Incarcerated Survivors of Domestic Violence

Physical Organization

Echoing the research analyzed in my literature review, the results from my study indicate that the physical organization of punitive institutions can contribute to the retraumatization of abuse survivors. This can first be seen in the geographic locations of institutions housing female inmates. Osthoff highlighted that while it is common for male offenders to be housed in major metropolitan areas, institutions for female offenders are often located in rural towns miles away from their communities. This makes it incredibly difficult for friends and family members to visit incarcerated women, replicating dynamics of domestic violence by removing crucial systems of support. This distance becomes even more damaging for incarcerated mothers — a staggering 80% of all imprisoned women — whose children are now less able to visit them (Prison Policy Initiative 2018). Osthoff stated that for a woman imprisoned because she killed an abusive partner, it is critical to recognize that her children "have now lost both parents." She continued by wondering, "who's dealing with the trauma that the kids have experienced?" and emphasized the need to "find a way to work with both the mom and the children — and the

caretaker of the children — to help them all heal from an enormous amount of trauma." This is nearly impossible, however, not only due to the nature of prisons themselves, but to the fact that women are housed significantly farther from their communities than male inmates. While many of my participants attributed this discrepancy to a statewide lack of planning for female inmates, Osthoff wasn't as convinced that this miscalculation is accidental. As she elaborated:

> I don't know, maybe it's planned exactly how they want it to be. It's like here in Pennsylvania, [the women's prison] is in the middle of the state. I would say that was planned very well; it's horrible for people from Philadelphia or Pittsburgh. I don't know if it's lack of planning or lack of care. Those are really different things.

Whether planned unintentionally or due to a systemic lack of care, it is clear that this distance further alienates women from their families and communities, retraumatizing those who have experienced prior domestic violence or abuse.

Another way in which punitive institutions retraumatize survivors of abuse is by replicating acts of intrusion and a lack of privacy. In my conversation with Wolter, she illustrated how many aspects of daily life in confinement may retrigger those who have experienced abuse:

> The noises, the banging of doors, locks, keys, yelling, that's all happening. Even if [the women] are trying to just have some quiet moments on their own, there are outside noises always coming in. A lot of inmates feel sleep deprived often, which is a tactic, or method, that abusers use in general. That can get repeated.

Here, Wolter's example reveals the barriers to feeling safe or settled while imprisoned; there are constant acts of intrusion and reminders of captivity, making it difficult to fully adjust. Erving Goffman's theory of "total institutions" teaches us that conditions such as these impact all inmates within punitive institutions. While this is true, they are particularly detrimental to those who have experienced domestic violence, for whom yelling and sleep deprivation take on an entirely different and all too familiar meaning of intrusion over which they have little control.

This can also be seen within the complete lack of privacy given to incarcerated inmates. Wolter

shared that in punitive institutions:

> Toilets are in the cell so at minimum, if they've got a cellmate, that person's watching them change and use the bathroom. The officers can see in the windows and the doors. I've accidentally walked up on people on the toilet. That can certainly be triggering. The phones that they can use — those are all in common spaces. That sense of privacy is lost.

As discussed in previous chapters, abusers often utilize a lack of privacy as a powerful tool,

seeking to remove from their partners any sense of individualism and autonomy. It is crucial to

recognize how the physical organization of jails and prisons does the same. In doing so, it can be

seen that imprisonment — like an abusive relationship — is an all-encompassing infliction of

trauma, filtering down to each aspect of confinement.

Institutional Procedures

In addition to physical organization, my data indicates that many of the institutional

procedures implemented by jails and prisons are inherently retraumatizing for survivors of

domestic violence. Similar to the evident lack of privacy in jails and prisons, the movements of

inmates are strictly regulated, with female inmates being escorted by officers when they need to

access different parts of the institution. Wolter explained that although the women are "locked in

cells for most of the day," when they do need to leave their cells "their movements are

controlled. It's not the case everywhere, but here at Suffolk County, because it is primarily a

male facility, the women are escorted everywhere… there are very specific times that they can

go to certain places and not." Fundamentally, this policy constantly reinforces the message that

incarcerated women are powerless and controlled by the prison staff, a group which has

historically been male-dominated. In addition to being a prime characteristic of total institutions,

this dynamic forces survivors of domestic violence back into a reality where each movement

their body makes is regulated and controlled by those keeping them captive, enabling

retraumatization. While institutional procedures differ for each individual facility, this policy

from the Suffolk County House of Correction also serves as another example of the ways in

which certain policies disproportionately affect female inmates compared to male inmates.

Additionally, it is likely that incarcerated survivors of domestic violence may be

retraumatized by bodily and room searches, procedures which take place frequently in punitive

institutions, especially after inmates receive visitors. In my individual interview with Kitty, I

asked whether or not she had experienced such searches while jailed in Ohio, to which she

replied "Oh, yeah. We had to go through strip-searches and room searches. They tear your cell

upside down." During my visit to the Suffolk County House of Corrections in Boston, I was

informed that bodily strip-searches are gender-specific, meaning that female guards conduct

them for female inmates, and male guards for male inmates; trans individuals are allowed to

specify the gender of the guard. I was also assured that the institution rarely utilizes *cavity* strip-

searches, an invasive type of bodily search where internal body cavities — such as the mouth,

vagina and rectum — are physically inspected for contraband.

Although typical bodily searches are much less invasive than cavity searches, they can

still have a profound effect on survivors of abuse; when asked specifically how bodily strip-

searches affected her, Kitty responded that "I felt I was being violated, when I didn't do nothin.'"

This policing of the body shares a striking similarity to tactics used by abusers, whose physical

actions — beating, shoving, sexually assaulting, etc. — serve as stark reminders of dominance

and power. The routine use of bodily and room searches also communicate a lack of freedom for

and trust in the inmates, who are not viewed as equals in the eyes of the institution. Ultimately,

such procedures may be so retraumatizing that some survivors of domestic violence may

sacrifice time with their loved ones in order to avoid them altogether. Drawing upon her

experience in S.A.F.E.R., Wolter shared that:

> There are a lot of strip searches at different times. I've had women that would refuse visits — they don't want their family to come see them — 'cause they don't want the strip searches after. There's definitely a lot of that isolation.

Consequently, such procedures seem not only to physically retraumatize survivors on a daily

basis, but to actively contribute to a decline in a survivor's interactions with her family. While all

humans need social interaction to function, the sustainment of relationships is particularly

necessary for survivors of abuse for two reasons: first, such connections may already be strained

from prolonged periods of abuse in which a survivor was cut off from her family; and second, as

stated by Judith Herman in *Trauma and Recovery,* a successful recovery from abuse depends

entirely on the existence of healthy relationships. As demonstrated in previous chapters, abusers

who inflict violence become more powerful as they diminish the outside systems of support

available to their partner; it is thus imperative to recognize the many ways that jails and prisons

do the same.

My interviews also revealed that the ways in which punitive institutions deal with trauma

and mental health heavily contribute to the retraumatization of abuse survivors. Peaches offered

a vivid example of this, in relating her experience of learning about her brother's fatal overdose

while imprisoned. As she reflected:

> They woke me up, put me in handcuffs, took me down to the phone booth, and let my grandma tell me… She had two minutes to talk to me. She told me, and then they made her leave, and I wasn't allowed to talk to anybody after that. I didn't know what had happened.

Given only two minutes to speak with her grandmother and left without concrete information or

emotional support Peaches shared that after this exchange, "I was a mess." Instead of being

provided with counseling services or allowed the space to process the news, Peaches was

immediately taken back to her cell. She was then taunted by a guard who told her that her brother "was better off dead." Unconsoled and inconsolable, Peaches expressed her grief in ways that were labeled "disruptive" by the guards overseeing her, and she was soon placed in the isolation unit where she remained for days. This particularly painful example indicates how the rigidity of institutional procedures negatively impacts the mental health of survivors; if Peaches had been given more time with her grandmother or access to counseling services, it is likely that she would have been able to process the news and develop coping strategies. Additionally, had Peaches' "disruptive behavior" been recognized for what it was — a sister mourning the sudden loss of her brother — it could have been communicated that what she needed the most was comfort and support. Instead, she was isolated from the rest of her unit, an action essentially serving as a punishment for her grief.

Peaches' experience highlights the issues surrounding isolation and solitary confinement, which were raised by a number of my participants. It is important to recognize that like many institutional procedures, the details pertaining to isolation units differ depending on the facility. The units also differ in name; the Suffolk County House of Corrections refers to it as "segregation" or "restrictive housing," noting that "solitary confinement" is an antiquated term which has been misrepresented by the media. In her interview, Kitty mentioned that she was placed in "the hole" for two months because she was unable to "get along with the other girls." In this section, I will continue to use "isolation" in accordance with its usage by the majority of my participants. During our interview, I asked Peaches to explain exactly what "isolation" meant:

> You wear a red uniform. You're in your cell for 23 hours a day, Monday through Friday. Not on the weekends. You get an hour out for what's called recreation. You don't get to leave the pod. You don't get commissary… They have shit meals. No books, nothing. It's agonizing. It's what I feel like is human torture. It's freezing in there.

When considering Peaches' excerpt, the similarities between her description of the isolation unit and women in abusive relationships are easy to identify. In both situations, the women are completely cut off from their communities and controlled by those in positions of power. Additionally, the women are unable to access their finances, leaving them dependent on their abuser or punitive institution for food and resources. Thus, placing survivors of abuse in isolation continues to replicate detrimental dynamics of domestic violence, leading to further retraumatization.

It is also important to pay attention to the ways in which isolation is used as a punishment for "disruptive" inmates like Peaches. In the group discussion I led at the residential drug treatment program, Robin shared that when she began menstruating in jail, the officers denied her sanitary products; this left her in physical discomfort and emotional distress. For these reasons, Robin refused to get out of the shower the next day and continued to ask for such products. Instead of providing her with what she needed, Robin recalled that she was forcibly put into isolation for her disruptive behavior. She acknowledged that the majority of the officers in this particular institution were male, and that there were few women to advocate for her. In addition to revealing a lack of accountability on behalf of the officers, this example re-emphasizes the ways in which female inmates may be impacted by institutional procedures more significantly than men. By denying her critical sanitary products and penalizing her self-advocacy, the officers effectively recreated an abusive situation where Robin's voice and personhood were minimized and devalued.

Power Dynamics

When conceptualizing this section of my data collection process, I had hoped to gain insight into the ways that both inmate-inmate and officer-inmate power dynamics contribute to

the retraumatization of survivors of abuse. In actuality, besides Kitty and Peaches mentioning

that they struggled with the women in their units, my participants tended to focus more on the

officer-inmate power dynamic. In order to analyze this data, it is first necessary to understand the

background of a stereotypical punitive officer. In my interview with Heather, she offered a

generalized description of those working in the criminal justice system; she began by stating that

many enter the system because it is a job with which they are familiar via family members, and

provides "really, really good money" for those with high school degrees. As she elaborated:

> They come in, and they're children themselves. I don't know what the stats are now but when I was working in prisons, which was 20 years ago, it was probably an 80/20 male/female ratio… They were the definition of toxic masculinity, and it was all about being in control and in charge. To acknowledge emotions or feelings or fear was considered weak, and it was also problematic for the job.

Heather attributed this toxic masculinity to the training provided to punitive staff by their

supervisors, stating these that these are "a bunch of kids who are learning how to be correctional

officers, taught by people whose whole mindset is 'these are hardened criminals that we have to

protect society against.'" Creating and reinforcing this narrative of the "good" prison staff vs. the

"bad" criminals effectively justifies the harsh treatment of inmates, rendering abuse and

retraumatization more likely.

While Heather's comments highlight male officers as the primary gender represented, it

is important to note that female guards are increasingly becoming more common within the

justice system. Interestingly, Peaches noted that in her experience, an officer's treatment of

inmates depended less on gender, and more on age. Younger officers, she explained, were more

likely to be cruel than older staff. She detailed, "the new [officers], which seems to be all jails

are full of, are trying to earn their name or whatever you would call it. It's just ridiculous. They

have no compassion for anyone. They haven't been there long enough to see genuine despair." In

taking both Heather and Peaches' experiences into account, a generalized depiction of punitive

officers begins to emerge.

Unfortunately, my interviews conveyed the tendency for officers to employ verbal abuse

towards the inmates they oversaw; this was particularly prominent within my interview with

Peaches. When asked for a word to summarize her time in jail, Peaches chose "degrading," and

explained that the verbal abuse she suffered was a large part of that. I asked her how often she

was verbally insulted by the supervising officers, to which she replied "Always. Every day.

'Time to get up for morning chow, you scum.' Things like that. You ask for anything. 'You're

nothing but a junkie. You're a criminal. You people.'" Over time, Peaches said, this abuse

became hard to ignore and dramatically impacted her mental health. She stated that:

> I don't know really how to explain it other than that after being told something for so
> long, you just believe it. Like, "you're fat" or "you're ugly" or "you'll never amount to
> nothing" or "you're stupid. You're not worth it. Nobody's ever gonna love you" or
> "You're never gonna change. You're too weak." Things like that. Probably the worst
> thing you can do to somebody is not only turn against them yourself, but get them to turn
> against themselves to where they'll never believe that they'll be anything other than that.
> Because by then, [they've] kinda given up.

Peaches' excerpt reveals the verbal abuse utilized by those in clear positions of power and

influence, a defining characteristic of total institutions. Yet her statement also indicates George

Herbert Mead's aforementioned "Genesis of the Self." In applying Mead's theoretical framework

to this excerpt, when Peaches repeatedly experienced symbolic interactions that intentionally

made her feel silenced and worthless — both in her abusive relationships and in jail — she began

to see herself through the eyes of her abusers. In Peaches' own words, this conception of the

Generalized Other turned her against herself to a point where she "never believe[d] that [she'd]

be anything other than" inferior and deserving of abuse. This pattern can have devastating

consequences; Peaches reflected that "[the officers] just make you feel lower than you already

do. They don't have any type of support, anything nice to say. I can definitely see why a lot of women attempt suicide, being incarcerated."

When an inmate such as Peaches does experience mistreatment by an officer, the power dynamics embedded within the system often serve as barriers to a just institutional response. For example, Wolter noted that at the Suffolk County House of Corrections, "there are officers that are verbally and physically abusive. Many of them are great, of course, but there is always that reality… that feeling and concern." Overall, she explained that:

> There are very few consequences for officers. If an inmate does feel like they're being mistreated, there's a process for grievances and complaints. Some of the officers know that, and they see it. Again, there is the reality of retaliation or escalating abuse from the officers if they "snitch." The snitching mentality here is a big issue. Nobody wants to do that.

Unfortunately, the "snitching mentality" within punitive institutions creates a culture of fear and silence, once again minimizing and invalidating the experiences of incarcerated women. This reality is similar to the experiences of women in abusive relationships who resist reaching out for help ("snitching") due to the very real fear of retaliation from their abuser. This power dynamic thus replicates the notion that abuse is a "private" matter, with jails and prisons being spaces where "society is not to interfere with what happens within its walls" (Avni, 1991: 146). Such dynamics also emphasize the many ways in which the criminal justice system continues to fail survivors of domestic violence.

Trauma-Informed Models and Systems of Care

During my data collection process, I was able to speak with the leaders of three different trauma-informed programs in Massachusetts. While each program was intentionally designed to support survivors of abuse, they differ in the particular population with which they work: Judge Kathleen Coffey's "Recovery with Justice" Program offers defendants struggling with mental

illness an alternative to incarceration; The WRAP is a court-mandated residential treatment

center for women suffering from addiction; and S.A.F.E.R. is a program designed to support

incarcerated survivors of domestic violence during and after their time in prison. I will discuss

the intentionality behind each program as being trauma-informed, as well as the policies and

procedures which render it so. These models will then be utilized to analyze the criminal justice

system as a whole in an attempt to weigh the likelihood of a trauma-informed prison model.

Recovery with Justice (RWJ) Mental Health Court

According to Judge Coffey, creating a trauma-informed mental health court system was

critical because the model recognizes "that people have histories, and that those histories impact

their decision-making and their futures." It also recognizes the correlation between abuse/trauma,

mental health, and entry into the criminal justice system, a dynamic not always taken into

account. Of this, Coffey noted that "historically, the behavioral health system and the criminal

justice system didn't communicate or work well with one another." She explained that when

individuals with diagnosed mental health disorders were placed on parole or probation, it was

often unclear which system was responsible for ensuring their behavioral and mental well-being.

This ambiguity raised a number of questions for both systems, including:

> Who's going to do the evaluation? Who's going to monitor whether [the individual]
> completes treatment? Who's to say that the treatment is being effective, and is actually
> addressing the underlying issues that caused them to enter the criminal justice system?

In response to such dilemmas, a specialized court session model was developed, one which now

seeks to "assist people in navigating systems" that are often littered with obstacles. Additionally,

Coffey noted that trauma-informed court models are crucial in changing the dynamic between

defendants and the legal system; she stated that "for the majority of the folks we see, their

interactions with the court system and with judges in particular haven't gone so well. They don't

see a judge in a black robe as being a supporter or as a resource. They don't see the court as being an ally or actually wanting to help." As a result, Massachusetts worked to implement trauma-informed models as a way of mitigating this barrier.

The Recovery with Justice (RWJ) program functions as a trauma-informed court session in a variety of ways; this can first be seen within the relationship between the judge and defendants in the program, who return to the courtroom on specified Tuesday mornings to offer updates on their stability. Instead of a "regular" court session where Coffey doesn't know the defendant on an individual basis, in RWJ she knows each by name and background. In addition to asking each defendant about their legal obligations — if they've followed their restraining orders and attended their psychiatry appointments — Judge Coffey checks in with them personally. She asks where they slept the night before, if they're taking their medications, and how their families are doing. Coffey also offers words of advice, praising them on their successes and encouraging them to continue prioritizing their recovery. RWJ is unique in that the defendants are provided with a team to assist them in navigating the criminal justice system, and in accessing social services such as housing and health insurance. It can thus be seen that RWJ prioritizes the creation and sustainment of relationships, bringing the participants into the communities from which they are all too often isolated. Overall, RWJ seeks to instill responsibility within each individual; the program holds defendants accountable for their crimes, while also recognizing how the legal system typically fails those with trauma and mental illness.

The Women's Recovery from Addictions Program (WRAP)

I was initially drawn to The WRAP because, like RWJ, it was deliberately designed as a trauma-informed model of care. Contrary to RWJ, however, The WRAP is a court-mandated residential treatment center, meaning that the clients live there full-time and the doors to the

facility are locked. Therefore, it has been interesting to explore The WRAP as trauma-informed while also containing specific elements of punitive institutions. When asked why The WRAP prioritizes a trauma-informed framework of care, St. Pierre responded that such a model is important because "you can't *see* trauma on someone. It's not like a cut or a broken arm, and [they] just get better. Same with mental health issues. You don't see it. They don't look like anything's wrong. You really have to reinforce that idea with the staff, and with the world." Here, St. Pierre effectively justifies the widespread implementation of a trauma-informed mindset; while trauma may be invisible, it is also incredibly debilitating and prolonged. In our interview, she also relayed that part of the reasoning for a trauma-informed model is to protect the clients post-treatment. After finishing treatment at The WRAP, St. Pierre explained, many of the clients are unfortunately "not always going back to great situations." She illustrated the difficulty of these situations, sharing that:

> You wish you could take everybody in here and say "Okay… you're not going to go back to that goddamn boyfriend or husband or whoever was abusing you" … but you can't. How do you prepare them to go back to that and survive? It's hard.

Due to this stark reality, The WRAP seeks to give the women not only the space to detoxify and recover from their addictions, but the tools to recognize and respond to future situations of coercion and abuse. As she noted, "this is a little break for them. If we can build them up while they're here and give them the strength to understand and be aware of their situations, that's it… sometimes that's the best we can do."

In our conversation, both St. Pierre and Riccitelli emphasized that successfully implementing a trauma-informed framework begins with the intentional training of staff members. While it may be difficult at first, Riccitelli explained that The WRAP makes it a

priority to "train our staff to be knowledgeable about trauma and how that trauma impacts our clients." As he continued:

> It's not just understanding that somebody may have had a physical, traumatic event in their life. It's understanding that that event can actually impact their learning, how they respond to treatment, how they respond to other people, how they respond to stimuli, how they respond to being in an environment of this nature.

Upon arrival, each client is assigned a treatment team, consisting of "the client, a nurse, the provider, a doctor and a clinician" who work collaboratively to develop an individualized treatment plan. In addition to substance detoxification, The WRAP's programming includes dialectical behavioral therapy, harm reduction, relapse prevention, and sessions surrounding spirituality. In his interview, Riccitelli acknowledged that being in "an environment of this nature" — a locked, court-mandated facility — may be difficult for women who have experienced abuse. Although many clients "are coming in with handcuffs" and are required to remain in the program, St. Pierre explained that The WRAP strives to empower the women as much as possible; they are able to choose their meals, the movies they watch, and which therapeutic sessions they attend each day. The WRAP is also trauma-informed in that they are conscious about how their male recovery treatment workers (RTW) interact with their clients. St. Pierre expressed that the men, who comprise approximately 50% of all RTWs, "have good boundaries, they're good role models, they're positive… It's not always easy, but it's a good thing for our clients to see that a [male-female] relationship can be a healthy relationship."

Finally, The WRAP can be qualified as trauma-informed due to its continued support of clients who have been discharged from the program. In addition to a treatment team, when arriving at the facility the clients are immediately paired with an aftercare worker who develops a discharge plan specific to each woman. While treatment at The WRAP cannot exceed 90 days, the average length of stay is approximately 42 days. Thus, the aftercare component ensures the

continuity of care upon release, assisting with referrals and appointments for therapy, psychiatry

and primary care (DMH 2019). Additionally, the aftercare worker aids clients with social

services, helping them navigate housing options and secure health insurance; St. Pierre explained

that it is a priority for "each [client] to leave here with insurance" so they continue accessing the

medication and counseling they need post-treatment. When a client is ultimately released from

The WRAP, they are assigned an aftercare team who "follows" each client for six months,

assisting with the transition and working directly with providers in the client's community; this

sixth month period may be extended if the aftercare team deems it necessary. Overall, this

thorough aftercare process can be qualified as trauma-informed because it seeks to provide the

women with as much support as possible post-treatment, hopefully lowering the chances of a

client returning to an abusive situation. St. Pierre noted that days after completing their

treatment, each woman is mailed a postcard stating "We're Thinking of You," which is signed

by the client's treatment team. Part of a nationwide "zero-suicide" initiative in addiction

treatment, St. Pierre said that the responses to this simple gesture have been "amazing," adding

"I can't even tell you how important it is to personalize and connect" with each client during and

after treatment, because "when you do, they're going to reach out to us. And they do."

Survivors of Abuse Feeling Empowered for Re-entry (S.A.F.E.R.)

As a whole, my Independent Study seeks to evaluate the ways in which punitive

institutions may retraumatize survivors of domestic violence and abuse. Consequently, rather

than explaining why S.A.F.E.R. was intentionally developed as a trauma-informed program, I

provide an overview of the policies which render it so. Although domestic violence and abuse is

often discussed in the context of women, Wolter noted that the program works with incarcerated

men and trans individuals as well, albeit on a more limited scale. S.A.F.E.R. is a unique program

in that it is a collaboration between RESPOND Inc., a domestic violence prevention agency, and

the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department. While these are two very different systems of "care,"

Wolter explained that, as a contracted employee from RESPOND, she is able to incorporate the

confidentiality and legal protection of domestic violence counseling to the women she works

with at the Suffolk County House of Correction. Designed to "provide the maximum support to

survivors" within the institution, S.A.F.E.R. offers a wide range of resources for inmates and

detainees. In both individual and group settings, such resources include emotional support

groups, goal and boundary-setting workshops, and escalation management. Additionally,

S.A.F.E.R. places a great deal of emphasis on discharge planning, which Wolter explained is

possible due to the fact that RESPOND is unaffiliated with the criminal justice system.

Therefore, Wolter noted that participants are provided with referrals to community and social

services, court accompaniment, and assistance with protection orders and navigating the legal

system. Like The WRAP, Wolter commented that "the goal is to have a continuum of care, to

ideally find [the clients] safe places to go when they leave."

Weighing the Likelihood of a Trauma-Informed Prison Model

Barriers to a Trauma-Informed Prison Model

Imagine if a domestic violence service center or shelter was evidenced to have sterilized, beaten,
raped, disbelieved or misgendered service users. Imagine they held survivors in solitary
confinement, destroyed mail, withheld medications. We would never demand reforms or suggest
workers needed "trauma-informed" training. Survivors have given us testimony after testimony
of the gender and state violence they have experienced during incarceration. The prison cannot
be "reformed" because the prison system is fundamentally violent and unsafe. — Caren Holmes

Working from the descriptions of three different trauma-informed systems of care, I turn

to weighing the likelihood of a broader trauma-informed prison model. I begin with a discussion

of the barriers towards the implementation of such a model. Perhaps the most prominent barrier

is the fact that jails and prisons are inherently spaces of punishment, not treatment. This notion

can be substantiated by considering the excerpt above from Caren Holmes, whose words offer an

appropriate introduction to this section. Regarding the contrasting nature of punishment and

treatment, a few of my participants mentioned the rehabilitative justice model adopted by

Scandinavian countries. Boasting the lowest recidivism rates in the world, this model emphasizes

accountability, community integration, and the sustainment of relationships (Soloway 2018).

Unfortunately, the United States criminal justice system has not followed suit and continues to

utilize the harshly punitive approach apparent in my data. Riccitelli acknowledged this reality

during his interview, stating that for incarcerated survivors of abuse, "the women are not in a

treatment setting, they're in a prison setting." It is, therefore, "very difficult to take somebody

and offer them treatment, and then put them back in their cell. It's a constant sort of

retriggering."

This dynamic extends as well to the staff members employed in carceral settings. Wolter

explained to me that those working in jails and prisons typically fall into one of two categories:

custody and non-custody staff members. Custody staff are responsible for the security of the

institution and the safety of those who visit it; Wolter stated that these are the officers "working

on discipline, the movement of inmates, logistics and protocol safety." The non-custody staff,

however, are the "social workers, caseworkers, people involved with education [and] medical

and mental health staff," including advocates such as Wolter herself. As a result of this, there

tends to be two conflicting approaches — one more punitive, and one more rehabilitative —

utilized by staff members when interacting with inmates. She elaborated that:

> If they've just climbed the rank of the officers, there's a certain approach. If they are from
> a human services realm, there's a certain approach… There are so many different avenues
> [to employment] that I don't feel a lot of cohesiveness towards a goal.

This lack of cohesion and a common goal act as a barrier to a trauma-informed prison model due to the ways in which custody staff may see the actions of non-custody staff members as a threat to their work, and vice versa. Wolter offered an example of this, sharing that with S.A.F.E.R., she once worked with an incarcerated survivor who was in the midst of an internal investigation with the Sheriff's Investigative Division (SID). When the survivor mentioned she was working with Wolter, the detectives from SID were "really upset" and told Wolter she could not continue to speak with the survivor. Wolter's response, she recalled, was "No, I'm not a department employee; I have strict confidentiality. If you're trying to have her discuss her perpetrator, she needs someone to talk to." As a trained advocate working within a punitive institution, this tension is familiar to Wolter, especially when it comes to her clients' confidentiality. Wolter added that she often has to reassure the custody staff that "I'm not going to undermine you. I'm not going to withhold things that are essential, but I also don't have to share every single thing that is told to me."

Another barrier to the implementation of a trauma-informed prison model is the lack of resources offered to recently released individuals by the institution. While programs such as Recovery with Justice and The WRAP emphasize the importance of creating and sustaining relationships, jails and prisons fail to provide resources or assistance for individuals post-incarceration, other than the probation officer's monitoring for compliance. This factor has been associated with the United States' high rates of recidivism (California Innocence Project). Wolter mentioned this reality during our conversation, offering a hypothetical thought pattern for an abuse survivor about to be released from prison:

> Okay, well, now I'm going to be released. Do I go to that abusive person, 'cause that's who I know? Do I go back to my family who has been abusive? I have to start over, but then there's also the restrictions of probation and parole added onto it.

In addition to illustrating the lack of post-incarceration assistance from the criminal justice system, Wolter's example details how a survivor's transition back into society is often further complicated by their status as a "felon." Wolter notes that for survivors are already "restricted on where they can go, where they start over" due to past abusive situations, "if they're on a [GPS monitoring] bracelet, they're not going to be allowed into a domestic violence shelter" either. Additionally, released survivors who lack health insurance may find it difficult to receive counseling services that are necessary to process abuse suffered both before and during their imprisonment. This "good luck, fend for yourself" mentality of punitive institutions serves as a stark contrast to programs like The WRAP, whose aftercare department works to ensure the success of clients during and after discharge. For example, St. Pierre noted that although it would be nice, "it would be inappropriate" and uncharacteristic for a prison to send a "Thinking of You" postcard to released individuals. It can thus be concluded that the criminal justice system's unwillingness to aid and resources to survivors post-incarceration — who face additional challenges than those with secure spaces to return to — works against the notion of a trauma-informed prison model.

The final barrier to a trauma-informed prison model that I discerned from my data is the reality that while certain areas and institutions may adopt a more rehabilitative trauma-informed approach, it is unlikely for such a model to become widespread. This is due to the fact that nationwide, the criminal justice system is not a cohesive unit. In my interview with Heather, she explained that "You have the state facilities, you have the federal facilities, and then you have the private prisons. And within all of those departments, there are so many different complicated systemic issues." Additionally, the policies and procedures of state-funded facilities are further differentiated based on the state's political leaders and overall philosophy. Wolter mentioned this

during our conversation, when I asked whether or not she truly thought it was possible for a

facility to be trauma-informed in a way that supports survivors of abuse. As she explained:

> I think it's more than what this facility is doing, or that facility. Unfortunately, it's very systemic. In the criminal justice system, there are too many islands between the different counties, between the different states. There's a lot of opportunity to be more thoughtful, cohesive, and consistent in programming. That was one thing that really shocked me: you go from place to place and it's like you're going to different countries. Every facility and every staff is so different.

Wolter echoed Heather in this excerpt, emphasizing that in part, the criminal justice system is

deeply divided due to the larger systemic issues embedded within the system itself. Barriers to

implementing a trauma-informed prison model exist both internally within each institution, and

externally across the system as a whole.

After explaining the barriers that have complicated the success of S.A.F.E.R. within the

Suffolk County House of Correction, Wolter concluded that "the short version is, anyone who

has experienced abuse of any kind, a jail or prison is not where they should be." It is important to

acknowledge that this does not discredit the existence of internal programs such as S.A.F.E.R., or

the critical work being done by advocates such as Wolter. Instead, it highlights the point made by

Holmes at the beginning of the section, when she noted that "the prison cannot be 'reformed'

because the prison system is fundamentally violent and unsafe." In summary, my data revealed

that there are three primary barriers hindering the implementation of a trauma-informed prison

model: 1) the incompatibility between the punitive and rehabilitative approaches maintained by

staff members; 2) the lack of resources and assistance offered to inmates post-incarceration; and

3) the lack of cohesive policies and practices across the criminal justice system in the United

States. Due to these barriers, I agree with Wolter and Holmes in concluding that until the

criminal justice system as a whole is able to adopt a more "radical" rehabilitative approach to

justice, it is extremely unlikely for a punitive institution to be trauma-informed in ways that truly support survivors of domestic violence and abuse.

Towards a Model of Restorative Justice

If a trauma-informed prison model is unlikely to be effective, how is it possible to support survivors of abuse while continuing to address the fact that a crime was committed? In order to answer this question, I turned to Holmes due to her involvement with the prison abolition movement. Holmes explained that in the interest of eliminating the oppression and racism inherent within institutionalized justice systems, "there is no single 'alternative' to the criminal (in)justice system." Instead, the prison abolition movement largely advocates for a restorative approach to justice, one which seeks non-carceral ways to address violence and crime. Holmes emphasizes that in order for such an approach to be possible, as a society we must alter our understanding of "harm." As she elaborated, "we all experience and perpetrate harm. While the criminal justice system sees us only as victims or perpetrators, we must begin to understand 'harm' more complexly." In illustrating this idea, Holmes offered the hypothetical example of a family marked by an abusive marriage. After a domestic violence incident which resulted in police involvement, the primary abuser is arrested and incarcerated. Unfortunately, that abuser was also the primary breadwinner for the family, who is now impoverished and housing insecure. Thus, it can be understood that in this situation, both the abusive partner *and* the criminal justice system participated in the creation of harm.

It is crucial to note that the prison abolition movement is not advocating for individuals to remain in abusive and unhealthy environments, nor is it minimizing the actions of offenders. A model of restorative justice continues to address domestic violence and other forms of interpersonal violence, yet it does so in non-carceral ways. Holmes reflected that:

I'm most inspired and encouraged by projects of transformative projects which aim to (1) support the immediate needs and long-term healing of survivors; (2) hold perpetrators accountable for the harms they have committed, and to transform (and heal) violent and abusive behavior; and (3) restore and transform communities in which violence has taken place.

Here, it can be seen that a model of restorative justice advocates for the healing of all three parties impacted by harm: the survivor, abuser, and broader community. While the current criminal justice system functions by punishing offenders — isolating their support systems and offering minimal resources for rehabilitation — the restorative justice model recognizes the need for an offender to be embedded within an integrated system of healing. Fundamentally, restorative justice centers around this importance of integrated systems, noting that community investment can be utilized as a tool to address complex societal dynamics. As Holmes explains, "when we shift the financial investment we have in building, maintaining and reforming prisons towards public housing, education, social services, benefits, etc., we can radically alleviate many of the social, political and social issues that the prison claims to address."

Although it may not qualify as an abolitionist practice, some programs are already doing restorative work. The Recovery with Justice court, for example, recognizes that those with mental illness and a history of abuse are often retraumatized in punitive institutions. Thus, participation in RWJ functions as an alternative to incarceration, promoting community integration while continuing to hold defendants accountable for their past and future actions. When I asked Judge Coffey how she personally navigates this dynamic of legal punishment and understanding the complexities of people's lives, she explained that:

You just try and be as sensitive and aware as possible in striking a balance. I think the focus is that as a judge you want to be fair, but you also have to recognize that this isn't just all about [the defendant]. There is another obligation, and that is the safety of the community, and the safety of [the defendant's] victims.

Coffey's comments reflect the importance and challenge of taking seriously the protection and

care of both traumatized individuals and society more generally. Her program offers a way to think about how justice can be restorative to those individuals and the communities of which they are, ultimately, members. By providing an example of a program that currently utilizes restorative justice, we are able to see how such a model would be effective on a broader scale.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

The data from interviews with professionals involved in the criminal justice system and formerly incarcerated survivors of abuse confirmed the connection between domestic violence and incarceration. This connection was both direct, as in an arrest of a woman who killed her abusive partner, and indirect, as in a woman arrested for an abuse-related drug addiction. I was also able to gain an understanding of how trauma impacts survivors of abuse. My interviews indicated that survivors may have problems with: self-esteem and mental health; elevated rates of addiction and substance abuse; trouble sleeping; fear of men; an overall inability to maintain healthy adult relationships; and a difficulty engaging in treatment or therapy. My data further revealed the ways in which punitive institutions largely replicate dynamics of domestic violence and abuse. Such dynamics can be seen within an institution's physical organization (distance from community, sensory triggers, lack of privacy), institutional procedures (escorting female inmates, bodily and room strip-searches, isolation units), and officer-inmate power dynamics. Ultimately, this replication of abuse powerfully contributes to the retraumatization of incarcerated survivors of domestic violence.

Fortunately, many programs and organizations offering social services to women have elected to adopt a "trauma-informed" framework of care to avoid the potential of retraumatization. During my data collection process, I was able to access and evaluate three such programs: Recovery with Justice, the Women's Recovery from Addictions Program, and Survivors of Abuse Feeling Empowered for Re-entry. By analyzing these programs, I discerned that a "trauma-informed" model is one that strives to empower and support survivors in planning for their futures, while teaching lessons of autonomy and accountability. Additionally, each program emphasized the importance of creating and sustaining relationships and community

involvement as a means through which individuals can heal from trauma. I then applied this framework to the criminal justice system, weighing the overall likelihood of a trauma-informed prison model. Due to the barriers towards trauma-informed prison models (emphasis on punishment, lack of cohesion among staff, fragmented national punitive system) I stated that such a model is highly unlikely. I conclude by offering a non-carceral, restorative justice approach to the criminal justice system, one which advocates for the healing of all three parties impacted by harm: the survivor, the abuser, and the community in which the harm has taken place. Such an approach invests back into the communities most affected by mass incarceration; it is in the context of these communities that efforts to counter the oppression and displacement that occurs through the current criminal justice system are most likely to be effective.

I want to emphasize that while I found the implementation of a trauma-informed prison model unlikely, this should not diminish the work being done by organizations and programs, such as S.A.F.E.R., whose initiatives are incredibly important and widely needed. Instead, it is important to acknowledge that until the criminal justice system as a whole shifts away from the reliance on punishment and towards a model of rehabilitation and healing, the effectiveness of such programs will be limited by the retraumatization inherent within jails and prisons. Additionally, women should not be able to access critical social services — such as housing options or court accompaniment — only when they have been incarcerated. Such services should become widespread and easily available within each community, a goal held by prison abolitionists advocating for restorative justice.

While I was working on my Independent Study in early December, the *Miami Herald* broke the news of a litigation filed by fourteen women against the Coleman Federal Correctional Complex. Located in Florida, the complex functions primarily as a federal men's prison yet

contains a women's work camp as well. The article, written by Romy Ellenbogen, details the chilling ways in which the women were harassed, sexually abused, raped repeatedly, and forced to take emergency contraception by male officers. If the women did complain about "being groped, fondled or forced to perform sex acts on officers," the inmates themselves were punished (Ellenbogen 2019). In order to dissuade the women from coming forward, the litigation states, the officers would "display computer screens showing the women the exact location of their families, a pointed message that their relatives could be targeted if the women didn't cooperate." In addition to revealing an extensive history of abuse within this particular institution, the litigation is significant in that all fourteen of the women — seven of whom are still incarcerated — used their real names in the lawsuit, not pseudonyms. While the case is ongoing, it has been encouraging to see how the litigation has shifted this abuse, as well as similar stories, from footnotes to headlines. During my interview with Peaches, she described the abuse she endured in jail in the following way:

> You feel almost like you're screaming, but everyone around you is deaf. Except for those who care, they can hear you. Those who have no compassion or just don't care whatsoever, it's like they're deaf.

While I know that writing this Independent Study does little to change the injustice embedded within the criminal justice system, I am so grateful to have had the chance to listen to and elevate the voices of Peaches, Kitty and Robin, three incredible survivors, and enable them to be far more than simply an academic footnote. I hope that by embarking on this project, I made it clear how much I — and so many others doing incredible work for those behind bars — care and can hear them. And I truly hope that those who read this will continue to listen and hear as well.

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Appendix A: Consent Forms

Consent Form for Prison/Trauma Professionals
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY
THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER

The Impact of Incarceration on Survivors of Domestic Abuse
PI: Eliana Kahn, Departments of Sociology and Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies (2020).
- Advisors: Dr. Thomas Tierney and Dr. Zareen Thomas

Purpose:
You are being asked to participate in a recorded interview as part of a research study. I am looking at the ways in which incarcerated survivors of domestic abuse and other forms of violence are impacted by imprisonment. I am hoping to gain knowledge of how the physical construction of facilities, institutional procedures, and power dynamics within prisons affect people's experiences.

Procedures:
If you agree to participate you will be asked to take part in an interview, lasting about forty-five minutes to an hour. The interview will be voice recorded using a password-protected iPhone for transcribing purposes later on.

Risks:
Some participants may experience feeling upset or emotional recalling their involvement within the criminal justice system. You do not have to answer any questions you do not want to answer, and may end the interview at any time.

Benefits:
There are no direct benefits to you for your participation. However, your interview will aid in understanding more about the impact of incarceration on survivors of abuse.

Compensation:
There is no monetary compensation for participation in this study. If you would like a copy of the final research paper, one will be provided to you.

Confidentiality:
You will have the option of remaining anonymous or providing your name. If you do not want to be identified, I will not include any identifying information in the transcription of the interview, or in the written material. The consent forms, transcriptions, and recordings will be kept separately and securely in either a locked location or on a password-protected device. Recordings and transcriptions will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

Costs:
Besides the time and effort required to complete the interview, there are no costs to those who choose to participate.

Right to Refuse or Withdraw:
You may refuse to participate in the interview without any consequences. Additionally, you may change your mind about participating at any time during the process.

Questions:
If you have any questions during the interview, please ask me. If you have any questions before or after the interview, I am able to be reached at ekahn20@wooster.edu. You may also contact my advisors, Dr. Thomas Tierney (ttierney@wooster.edu) and Dr. Zareen Thomas (zthomas@wooster.edu).

Consent:
Your signature below indicates that you have decided to take part in an interview, that you have read and understand the information provided above, and that you are at least 18 years of age. You will be provided a copy of this form upon request.

Signature of participant:

_____

Date:

_____

Consent Form for Formerly Incarcerated Women: Written Response
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY
THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER

The Impact of Incarceration on Survivors of Domestic Abuse
PI: Eliana Kahn, Departments of Sociology and Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies (2020).
- Advisors: Dr. Thomas Tierney and Dr. Zareen Thomas

Purpose:
You are being asked to complete a written response as part of a research study. I am looking at the ways in which incarcerated survivors of domestic abuse and other forms of violence are impacted by imprisonment. I am hoping to gain knowledge of how the physical construction of facilities, institutional procedures, and power dynamics within prisons affect people's experiences.

Procedures:
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to answer a series of open-ended questions, either typing or writing out your responses. I will provide paper, envelopes and stamps in order to return the anonymous responses to me (see confidentiality discussion below). What you write will be kept in a locked location, and destroyed upon completion of the study.

Risks:
Some participants may experience feeling upset or emotional recalling their involvement within the criminal justice system or relationships they have been in. Additionally, the written responses are a time commitment, and may take around 20-30 minutes to complete. You do not have to share anything you do not want to, and may choose which prompts you want to answer.

Benefits:
There are no direct benefits to you for your participation. However, your interview will aid in understanding more about the impact of incarceration on survivors of abuse.

Compensation:
There is no monetary compensation for participation in this study. If you would like a copy of the final research paper, one will be provided to you.

Confidentiality:
The information that you provide will remain anonymous; I will not include any identifying information in the written material and a pseudonym will be assigned to you. The consent forms and written responses will be kept securely in a locked location. The written responses will be destroyed upon completion of the study.

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 complete a written response without any consequences. Additionally, you may change your mind about participating at any time during the process without penalty.

Questions:
If you have any questions during the interview, please ask me. If you have any questions before or after the interview, I am able to be reached at ekahn20@wooster.edu. You may also contact my advisors, Dr. Thomas Tierney (ttierney@wooster.edu) and Dr. Zareen Thomas (zthomas@wooster.edu).

Consent:
Your signature below indicates that you have decided to take part in the study, that you have read and understand the information provided above, and that you are at least 18 years of age. You will be provided a copy of this form upon request.

Signature of participant:

_____

Date:

_____

Consent Form for Formerly Incarcerated Women: Interview
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH STUDY
THE COLLEGE OF WOOSTER

The Impact of Incarceration on Survivors of Domestic Abuse
PI: Eliana Kahn, Departments of Sociology and Women's, Gender & Sexuality Studies (2020).
- Advisors: Dr. Thomas Tierney and Dr. Zareen Thomas

Purpose:
You are being asked to participate in a recorded interview. I am looking at the ways in which incarcerated survivors of domestic abuse and other forms of violence are impacted by imprisonment. I am hoping to gain knowledge of how the physical construction of facilities, institutional procedures, and power dynamics within prisons affect people's experiences.

Procedures:
If you agree to participate you will be asked to take part in an interview, lasting about forty-five minutes to an hour. The interview will be voice recorded using a password-protected iPhone for transcribing purposes later on. The interviews will remain anonymous, and no identifying information will be recorded.

Risks:
Some participants may experience feeling upset or emotional recalling their involvement within the criminal justice system or relationships they have been in. Additionally, the interviews are a time commitment, and will take approximately forty-five minutes to an hour to complete. You do not have to share anything you do not want to, and may end the interview at any time.

Benefits:
There are no direct benefits to you for your participation. However, your interview will aid in understanding more about the impact of incarceration on survivors of abuse.

Compensation:
There is no monetary compensation for participation in this study. If you would like a copy of the final research paper, one will be provided to you.

Confidentiality:
Any information that is shared will remain anonymous; I will not include any identifying information in the transcription of the interview or in the written material and a pseudonym will be assigned to you. The consent forms, transcriptions, and recordings will be kept separately and securely in either a locked location or on a password-protected device. Recordings will be

deleted as soon as they are transcribed, and these transcriptions will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study.

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 interview without any consequences. Additionally, you may change your mind about participating at any time during the process without penalty.

Questions:

If you have any questions during the interview, please ask me. If you have any questions before or after the interview, I am able to be reached at ekahn20@wooster.edu. You may also contact my advisors, Dr. Thomas Tierney (ttierney@wooster.edu) and Dr. Zareen Thomas (zthomas@wooster.edu).

Consent:

Your signature below indicates that you have decided to take part in an interview, that you have read and understand the information provided above, and that you are at least 18 years of age. You will be provided a copy of this form upon request.

Signature of participant:

_____

Date:

_____

Appendix B: Interview Questions

For Professionals in Criminal Justice and Trauma:

1. What is your name, and with what organization are you affiliated?

2. What organizations have you worked with in the past?

3. What is the relationship of these organizations to the criminal justice system or trauma research?

   a. What are the goals of the organizations you've worked with in relation to the criminal justice system?

4. In your experience, what would you say is typically prioritized within penal institutions? These are listed in no particular order.

   a. The physical safety of inmates

   b. The punishment of inmates

   c. The mental health of inmates

   d. Preparing inmates for re-entry upon release

5. In your experience, does incarceration impact women who are survivors of abuse differently than those with no history of abuse? How so?

   a. How does incarceration impact survivors of abuse in both short and long-term ways?

6. Do you know of any current movements or legislation which seek to improve incarceration for survivors of abuse?

7. If you were to construct an institution with incarcerated survivors of abuse in mind, what would it look like? Think about the physical organization, institutional procedures and supervisors of the institution.

8. Is there anything else you would like to add that you feel is important to this research study?

For Formerly Incarcerated Women:

Individual Interviews:

1. How long were you incarcerated for?
2. If you could summarize your time in prison in three words, what would they be?
   a. Can you explain the words you chose?
3. Do you identify as a survivor of abuse?
   a. If you feel comfortable, could you identify the type of abuse you suffered?
   b. How, if at all, did your time in prison impact you as a survivor of abuse?
   c. Were there any dynamics or procedures which particularly impacted you?
   d. If you were to construct a prison which would focus on supporting incarcerated survivors of abuse, what would that look like?
4. How would you characterize your interactions with the guards who supervised you?
5. How would you characterize your interactions with other incarcerated individuals?
6. Did you have a partner before your incarceration?
   a. What was it like to reunite with your partner?
7. Did your relationship with your family change while you were incarcerated?
   a. What was it like to reunite with your family?
8. Were there any services available to you in prison that helped prepare you for reentry? If so, what were they?
9. What was it like to reintegrate back into your community?
10. Upon release, would you say that your life has improved or worsened compared to your life before incarceration?
11. What has been the biggest challenge you've faced since leaving prison?
12. If you feel comfortable sharing, could you tell me in general terms the nature of the crime that led to your incarceration?