Does lived experience with incarceration change conceptualization of criminal justice policy?

By: Nitya Marimuthu

Abstract:

As one of the most widely implemented government systems in the United States, the carceral state is of utmost importance to study in the political science subfield. The physical isolation of prisons means that its effects are understudied, even though those incarcerated and recently released are often too familiar with state interventions. Those with felony convictions are disenfranchised in many states, both while they serve their sentence and after release; time spent in detention also generally correlates with higher distrust in government and thus lower voting practices on the aggregate. The few official surveys that penetrate prison walls usually gather demographic information, meaning that policy understandings for currently and formerly incarcerated people might be less widely known. To see how much of a gap there is in understanding the process of incarceration, both in policy outcomes and generally in knowing how the prison system works, I investigate whether lived experience in a prison directly changes the way a person conceptualizes criminal justice policy. I hypothesize that the high levels of violence that comes with imprisonment along with the publicly displayed consequences doled out by officers of the state changes one's understanding of government institutional interventions. I find that while incarceration alone might lead to slightly more liberal beliefs about prison, specifically in support of reform on certain axes, race is a necessary factor for more substantive policy shifts towards system-wide reform or altogether abolition. In other words, race is not enough of a factor to cause a difference in criminal justice policy beliefs, but incarceration

heightens racialization and increases knowledge about the operations of the prison system, causing a change in criminal justice policy beliefs on a more significant level.

Table of Contents:

Background: (3-13)
Literature Review: (13-41)
- The experience of incarceration
- Ideologies in criminal justice policies
- Locus of control

Hypotheses: (41-44)
Methods: (44-47)
Study 1: (47-52)
Study 2: (52-56)
Discussion: (56-91)
- Knowledge increase:
- Race as a factor:
  - Inability to shield oneself:
  - Prison Culture:
  - Correctional Officers and CJS officials:
- Lifetime of Violence:
  - Pre-prison violence:
  - Carceral Society:
  - The revolving door:
- Policies
  - An appalling healthcare system:
  - What instead?

Limitations and further research: (91-93)
Conclusion: (93-97)
Acknowledgments:
Works Cited:

Background:

The United States has the highest rate of incarceration of any country in the world (Widra & Herring, 2021). Out of the total population of 331.9 million, 1.2 million people were incarcerated in 2021, not including the approximately 1 million people held in immigration detention centers and juvenile detention (Carson, 2022). The US prison population per capita is six times that of Canada and is about five times that of the 144 out of 100,000 average prison population rate estimated by the United Nations (Walmsley, 2016). Due to the extent of incarceration and the ever-growing criminal justice system, "[the] prison has become a looming presence in our society to an extent unparalleled in our history or that of any other industrial democracy. Short of major wars, mass incarceration has been the most thoroughly implemented government social program of our time" (Currie in Davis, 2003). The government program of mass incarceration is usually seen as restricted to physical prisons, but the structure stretches far into outside society. Mass incarceration is just one branch of the carceral state; prisons are "porous institutions[s]" whose mechanisms stretch to detention centers, halfway houses, schools, gated communities, and other establishments (Khan, 2022). Certain communities are also especially subject to carceral contact — Burch (2013) finds that at any time, up to a third of residents in disadvantaged communities are under criminal justice supervision. The central control mechanisms of prison, surveillance and constant evaluation, are also present in routinization of background checks by employers, the regularity of registries and "rap sheets," the time-out and suspension system within the education structure, and other carceral logics which infiltrate many aspects of daily life. The criminal justice system is a major deliberative institution and given the unprecedented number of people it oversees, it warrants abundant research explaining and justifying it.

Ironically, policy that forms the criminal justice system continues to ignore empirical research on how to address crime. Though there is no unanimous consensus, there is general agreement on certain aspects of crime prevention, which are largely contradicted by recent policies and the expansion of the prison system on the whole. Nagin, Cullen, and Jonson (2009) find that use of imprisonment against offenders does not deter them from committing another crime, and potentially increases the rate of reoffending as compared to noncustodial options. The comprehensive literature review conducted by Nagin (2013) finds that deterrence largely seems to be tied to "certainty of apprehension," or the certainty of facing consequence for one's actions, rather than the actual punishment itself. Nagin (2013) highlights how informal sanctions, such as adverse responses from family members, friends, and the community, might actually be more costly than formal sanctions (state-initiated punishments). Tonry (2011) confirms Nagin (2013)'s findings and argues that imprisonment as a whole thus appears to be unnecessary based on policy findings, if not more conducive to recidivism[1]. Even short-term imprisonment severs family ties, leads to job loss, and labels an individual as a "felon," worsening employment, housing, and welfare-accessibility outcomes. Children, friends, and family members of the incarcerated person often suffer along with them, either due to the shared pains of incarceration by seeing their loved one's brutal treatment, or through the loss of social and economic support. An offender locked out of traditional (legal) means to earn money and barred from other ways to increase opportunity (education and social programs) is more compelled to turn to extra-legal ways to bridge the gap. Following general trends in crime research would then tell us that as few people should be locked up as possible, and that whenever possible, sentencing should not be extremely long.

[1] Repeat offenses, or reoffending

Nagin (2013)'s work also suggests that not only does the length of imprisonment not have a greater deterrent effect, imprisonment as a punishment does not heighten deterrence as opposed to less socially disruptive measures. It is not necessary to separate an individual from their family, community, and connections to outweigh the perceived benefit of committing a crime. The established harm caused by long prison sentences directly contradicts policy in place in Michigan, including minimum mandatory sentencing (also called truth in sentencing), life without possibility of parole, and increased prison sentences for repeat offenders.

Despite these areas of agreement among researchers, since the rise of mass incarceration in the 1970s, support for harsher sentencing laws and increasingly punitive policies rose as crime rates fell throughout the country. These punitive policies are markedly different from researcher's suggestions, and are not in response to increasing crime. Policy proposals could be in part influenced by the false beliefs held by the public, or a "cycle of intolerance" that causes harsher attitudes towards crime and "disorder" (Tonry, 2004). Tonry (2004) argues that the American governing process, namely the ability to publicly elect prime criminal justice actors, makes crime a partisan political issue subject to the public's "sensibilities" at the moment. The public thus has the ability to implement "progressive" crime policy, and does so at moments (such as the massive movement to decriminalize drugs in the 1980s), but successful political campaigns can also push forward extreme criminalization (Tonry, 2004). Lowry et al. (2000) discuss the extensive literature showing that media coverage is directly correlated with the salience of issues on the public agenda, meaning that the news informs what the public prioritizes. The public gathers much of its information about crime from media outlets, which tend to overrepresent types of crime that are most attention catching. The background fear of unsafety and general intolerance towards certain marginalized groups can then work alongside

with mass media's highlighting of a certain issue to create a "moral panic," allowing a "window of opportunity" to open up where public officials and political groups can convince the public on a certain issue to focus on (Tonry, 2004). As Murakawa (2014) states, lawmakers seem to be justified in their punitive responses to the "natural disaster" of "crime 'waves' and drug 'epidemics,'" despite an extensive amount of research that refutes the relationship between increasingly repressive measures and lowered rates of crime. Lu (2015) further reinforces this idea — despite no reported increase of drug use in the late 1980s, 64% of poll respondents said that drugs were the most important problem for the nation in 1989, up from 12% in 1987 and 2% in 1985 (Dugan, 2018). Lu (2015) attributes this to the anti-drug campaign run by the first Bush administration. The various pathways leading to harsh policies mean that laws put into place due to media frenzy over a specific issue or as a strategic political maneuver will endure long past the craze dies down. The responsivity of the public to media influence could potentially separating those who personally experience the criminal justice system from the punitive public consensus, since those within the carceral state are convicted of a crime themself and could be more familiar with the factors leading to criminal activity along with coming in contact with those deemed most dangerous, potentially dispelling myths about the nature of those labeled violent criminals.

Moral panics can work in favor of "progressive" policies or more conservative ones, but they often tend towards the political right. Policies will thus be put into place depending on the emotional fervor of the public over a specific issue, one that is amplified by the media. These policies often negate careful, rational assessment to the harm or benefit of individuals who face them.

Along with the tendency of right-leaning moral panics to drive policy creation, neuroscience research also explains why the public might be more prone to punishment — the

act of punishment activates the area of the brain associated with anticipating reward (Muenster & Trone, 2016). People continue to chase the anticipated reward from punishment even as psychological research displays that they do not feel satisfaction from imposing punitive measures onto perceived offenders (Muenster & Trone, 2016). Despite the contradiction between expected reward and emptiness, public opinion polls continue to express a constant urge for high rates of punishment even as sentences get more punitive, with a strong sense of security in the justice system's ability to carry out this aim (Muenster & Trone, 2016). Importantly, just as with moral panics, policies can be affected in a number of different ways depending on notions about what best fulfills the craving for punishment at the time. Life without parole might replace the death penalty if politicians argue that death relieves an offender from continual pain and guilt. Thus, the ideological support for punishment can be harnessed in a number of different policies.

As outlined, fear is a key factor in the public's perception of crime, and the public tends to harbor blind spots about the harshness of criminal justice policies. Roberts (1992) finds that, due to their fear of crime, the public overestimates the prevalence of violent offenses and underestimates how harsh sentences tend to be. Kinder (1998) finds that the public generally has a "depth of ignorance" about the political process and most policy issues that is "breathtaking." The public's ignorance about policies, especially including those within the criminal justice system, is only partially overcome by the "miracle of aggregation," in which the public appears to estimate empirical reality as an aggregate group (Kinder, 1998 in Cullen et al., 2000). For criminal justice policy, Cullen et al. (2000) argues that the "miracle of aggregation" suggests the public will come to an agreement over a "get tough" punitive rationale due to the collective investment in public safety, but the public will also become progressive on certain fronts. Though Cullen et al. (2000)'s argument about the public's mix of support for both standard

punitive policy as well as more progressive legislation might prove possible, it is also important to highlight exactly where the "miracle of aggregation" fails to overcome individual ignorance (Page & Shapiro, 1992). Warr (1980) finds that while the public might know the rate of specific crimes and the gender distribution of offenders within this small scope, the public is often ignorant of the prevalence of a large range of offenses. On the procedural front, Cullen et al. (2000) finds that the public is knowledgeable about the relative variation in rates of specific crimes, but unaware of more niche aspects like recidivism rates, legal reforms, legal rights in the criminal justice process, and parole.

The public's misconception both influences and is informed by the platforms of public officials. On one side, White (2022), Campbell (2002), and Justice and Meares (2014) argue that people's interactions with policies (in the form of state programs and government institutions) can shape their attitudes and behavior, causing them to change their politics altogether. Justice and Meares (2014) describe this change as a result of individuals evaluating the degree of procedural justice for others within their group identity (race, gender, class, etc.), allowing them to learn the "hidden curriculum" of democratic processes that might decrease their trust in the government. Serving on a jury or being incarcerated can familiarize individuals with the way that people of their race, gender, class, etc. are treated in the system, changing their perception of policies. People learn about civic processes from instructive experiences with them rather than formal education (White, 2022). Proposed policies can also cause people to look into related material or civil resources, increasing their knowledge and participation in the issue at hand (Pierson, 1993).

The public's perception on government processes proves to be highly important, especially when it comes to policy proposals. Burnstein (2003) finds that when an issue is

salient, public opinion has a substantive impact on policy outcomes in a majority of cases, even with direct opposition by interest organizations or by elites (Burnstein, 2003). Public officials will modify their political campaigns and pass policy in order to best achieve electoral success; in the case of criminal justice policy, they believe public opinion polls, or other information that appears to represent public opinion, and use it to inform their platforms. Public opinion also influences how criminal justice actors — like police, prosecutors, and judges — act since they are cognizant of their public image (Enns, 2014). If officials do not carry out the public's goals, the public has the ballot initiative pathway in 24 states that allows them to directly elect in new policies (Enns, 2014). Thus, public opinion is worth examining as it can be powerful, putting into place policy that endures even past other socio-political changes in society.

The use of public opinion polls presents officials with general understandings of what the public wants, but looking into the specifics of these policies reveals particularities of policy that the public is much more flexible on, and that largely impacts the experience of those who are in the system. Lu (2015) emphasizes that public response to policies fluctuate based on the wording of surveys; support for the death penalty decreases when life without parole is provided as an alternative in the question itself. Further, Cullen et al. (2000) highlight how surveys generalizable to a nationally representative population often try to measure complex understandings of criminal justice policy in one or two simple questions, with no questions probing into the public's more progressive beliefs (non-punishment oriented ideas) on criminal justice policy. Questions about alternatives to prison are usually restricted to drug charges or mental health difficulties, with questions about intermediate sanctions like restitution, home confinement, or community service for "violent" offenders rarely asked. The questions about policy also tend to ask about groups (violent offenders, for example), which overlooks the

flexibility that people display when taking into consideration more individual stories (Cullen et al., 2000).

Beyond the miscommunication in beliefs between the public and officials, the physical separation of prisons from general society creates more ignorance about how prison policy works. There is a vast amount of discretion granted to criminal justice officials, allowing for a wide range of interpretation or individual judgements in their implementation, and the lack of research surrounding incarcerated individuals means that the public is essentially forming beliefs about a group with little formal data. For example, everything from the exact charges brought against people, use of solitary confinement as a punishment rather than for safety, length of solitary confinement, citations and write-ups inside prison, racial makeup of units, job opportunities inside prison, parole release dates, and much more are all in control of the individuals in power at that moment due to the vagueness of laws surrounding them. There are no public opinion surveys that reach those currently incarcerated, and the last survey on the beliefs of incarcerated individuals occurred in New Jersey in 1982 (Sparks et al., 1982). Since the majority of people inside the system are disenfranchised from voting for at least the length of their sentences, those who truly experience the system are unable to voice their beliefs on policies. Many states continue to disenfranchise those with felony convictions even after they have served their sentence, so those who have first hand experience within the system are the least likely to actually express opinions on the policies in place. Given that understanding of government processes is often informed through lived experience, it is important to hear directly from those who have been incarcerated to see where policy beliefs diverge versus where they overlap.

Further, even while there is agreement among researchers on the harms of incarceration and failure of deterrence theory, alternative propositions face dissent due to differing values placed on the impact of race, gender, and other social identities. Increasing police presence has often been a proposed solution for heightening rates of apprehension (and has been advocated by some researchers), while other researchers like Tonry (2011) emphasize that increased police is also proven to compromise civil liberties and lead to racial profiling. Engel and Calnon (2004) find that Black and Hispanic men were disproportionately targeted in traffic stops by police, and Soss and Weaver (2017) expand the discrepancy to frisking and questioning of Black men in these stops. Soss and Weaver (2017) also find low-level arrests to be largely on the basis of race, class, and location rather than due to criminal activity. Possible deterrent effects of policing must be weighed against racial disparities that often accompany police practices. Similarly, discrepancies between crack and powder cocaine sentencing also did not deter sales of crack cocaine and instead increased racial disparities within prisons (Tonry 2011). Thus, those who are most familiar with the way that salient identities impact criminal justice outcomes might also be more prepped to make value judgements on which policies have unintended consequences and which policies achieve the shared goal of general public safety.

Although currently incarcerated individuals are uniquely positioned to provide invaluable information and relevant experience to speak on the flaws and successes within the criminal justice system, protocols within research institutions and in the system itself prevent those individuals from being reached. To overcome a part of this difficulty, this honors thesis focuses on a population that has similar experiences, though without the immediacy provided from the currently incarcerated population. Formerly incarcerated people also have lived experience with prisons and other aspects of the criminal justice system and may have additional insight on these

matters. Those who have experienced incarceration have a valuable insight into potential causes of crime, as they have been convicted of one. They also encounter a large group who likely also committed a criminal action. Thus, given that these individuals are placed in situations that might lead to criminality, will they hold the same widespread belief that the individual is to blame for crime, much like is presented by mainstream media and public officials to justify punitive action? Or, is incarceration enough of a transformative experience, given the depth of mental and physical violence endemic to the process, to lead individuals to believe crime is as likely to be the result of flawed systems as it is of flawed individuals? If incarceration does prove to be a strong enough factor, does it also map onto voting practices? That is, do the formerly incarcerated have distinctive voting preferences? This research aims to answer these questions by comparing formerly incarcerated individuals to comparable individuals who did not share this experience, discerning whether public opinion collectively estimates similar policies. I start by outlining the experience of incarceration, general trends in criminal justice policy, and a sociological schema for describing how much influence individuals perceive over their life. This discussion leads me to the setup of my three key hypotheses, which I will then test through two different studies. In the discussion section, I will further examine the main parts of incarceration highlighted by formerly incarcerated people before moving on to a discussion of policy changes suggested by this population.

Literature Review

The experience of incarceration

Theories of imprisonment:

To understand the psychological and political impacts of imprisonment, it is important to consider the power dynamics and structural setup of prison institutions. Though separated by walls, the prison very much reflects the socio-political setup of the outside world, reflecting the violence imposed by structures (like police, healthcare, etc.) onto individuals and also intra- and inter-group violence based on race, ethnicity, and socio-economic status. As Barak-Glantz (1981) indicates, the prison reenacts "the noxious conflicts on the streets of our slums," one that is informed and caused by the isolation of certain groups, leaving them with limited resources and chaotic environments to navigate. Whether crafted from the justification of conservatives as bringing "law and order" to these settings, or from the liberal stance of protecting civil rights, Murakawa (2014) argues that criminal justice system policies are always racially charged and often reinforce the "paternal notions that Blacks benefit from proximity to white superiors."

The current prison system is steeped in racial control mechanisms developed with the onslaught of enslavement in the United States and continued through the constant regeneration of similar control systems. Scholars have characterized the prison labor system, beginning in 1865 in the wake of the postbellum period, as one of the harshest faced by American workers, with incarcerated individuals working in the physically demanding conditions of mines, cotton fields, railroad lines, prison factories, chain gangs, and other remote locations coupled with "barbaric torture tools" like whippings from overseers (Thompson, 2011). A record number of Black men were quickly incarcerated to fit the growing labor desires, either by passage of targeted laws or kidnappings off the street by sheriffs. The forced labor conducted by primarily Black inmates is a pattern that continues onto the modern prison from the other several "peculiar institutions," meant to control Black people in the US (Wacquant 2000). Wacquant (2000) argues that the prison system as we know it is directly connected to and morphed from chattel slavery, the Jim

Crow system, and the ghetto (urbanization and proletarianization of Black people from 1915 until the 1960s to create a separate caste). The ghetto is a sociospatial device that enables a dominant group to both socially ostracize the minority/outcast group and also to exploit their labor. The ghetto can be seen as an ethnoracial prison, encasing the minority group through stigma and territorial confinement all while the majority group monopolizes possible material goods or opportunities through constraints and organizational insulation (Wacquant, 2000). Further references to the ghettoized society draws on this specific definition, understanding confinement of communities of color in the context of this sociospatial structure which serves as a branch of the prison system.

The prison system is also articulated as a means of social control, with Cunha (2014) arguing that the growing emphasis on individual responsibility deteriorates the social conditions of the "urban precariat," a member of a socioeconomic class characterized by chronic economic insecurity brought about by the abandonment of the social welfare net in exchange for a robust penal system. Cunha (2014) articulates that prisons have become a general existence in poor urban neighbors, where community-level depletion extends to social, economic, civil, and political spheres. The state deregulates the market and shrinks social welfare while addressing problems of inequality and struggle through the penal system (Cunha, 2014). Since the advent of mass incarceration starting in the 1970s, the government has spent a smaller amount on welfare and aid programs relative to correctional and prison programs. While the government spent $7 billion on prisons and jails in 1980, it exceeded over $70 billion in 2007, with an even larger umbrella of $216 billion going to criminal justice expenditures generally (Wacquant, 2009). In that same period, government welfare spending comparatively decreased as a portion of overall spending, going from $21 billion on the two largest assistance programs in 1980 to $47 billion in

1996, with changes coming into play that year to also heavily restrict who was allowed to apply for public assistance programs (Wacquant, 2009). Thus, as the prison system grows in funding and population, a decreasing number of the population is eligible for the smaller public assistance programs. The lack of public assistance programs suggests not only an increased number of "criminal" acts committed out of survival, but also a greater profitability for incarcerating those who are already predisposed to be labeled as criminals who have little resources to dispute this state-sanctioned violence. Understanding the prison as a structure of social control is crucial to seeing incarceration as a factor strong enough to potentially shift one's perception of control, especially if one already feels that government programs tend to target and destabilize them due to their (racial) identity.

The shift in the 1970s from the ghetto as the primary means of control to mass incarceration provides key insights into who would feel the strongest repercussions of the government-assisted carceral expansion. Wacquant (2000) describes how prisons solved the "'breakdown' of social order in the 'inner city'" to those disturbed by the "urban upheavals" of the 1960s. As the ghetto threatened to fall apart as a means of social control, the prison expanded to fill its place, infiltrating communities and shaping environments in and outside of prison (Wacquant, 2000). Policies like the "zero tolerance" campaign implemented in New York City in the mid 1990s increased arrests by 40% in five years, despite a fall in crime rates in those same years (Wacquant, 2009). Many of these arrests had no charges brought against those detained but still caused the police force to become a looming presence in city life, aggressively enforcing laws in a way that upturned the city itself and overwhelmed jails and the judicial circuit. The hyperincarceration of the period is targeted first by class, then by race, then by location as it zeroed in on working-class, Black men who are trapped in the "crumbling ghetto." (Wacquant,

2009). The same group of Black men circle between the prison and the carceral ghetto society, both of which marginalize them socially and legally. Material goods and opportunities are often funneled away to the dominant status group, leaving those in the ghetto space to grapple with a culture and identity partly shaped by these deprivations. After being released from prison, these individuals face the stigma of the "felon" totalizing identity, their changed physical and mental health from imprisonment, and difficulties in the economic market. Their relationship with their community and family often shifts due to the collective affliction of imprisonment and the inability to fill a traditional masculine role which often requires providing a stable flow of income. The same institutions reach into the ghetto as in the prison, perpetuating instability and undermining individuals' pursuit of normative social standing. Therefore, though I focus on incarceration as a specific factor, carceral structures stretch far into communities that are not personally detained, imposing violence and increasing their knowledge of government processes in unison with their incarcerated counterparts.

The widening net of individuals captured by the carceral state means that experience with incarceration could be strong enough to cause an individual to feel that criminality is mostly influenced by outside factors, like the (lack of) state or a higher power, or forces of incarceration could simply replicate carceral society, causing no further loss of control. Incarceration might change the way a person characterizes their relationship to government processes and policy, or it might simply reinforce racialized, gendered, and classed dynamics that exist in the carceral society. The magnitude of carceral structures suggests three possible outcomes: incarcerated and non-incarcerated individuals both feel that they have little control over their life due to the preeminence of state influence, incarcerated individuals only feel that they have little control, or both incarcerated and non-incarcerated are so used to state intrusions that they both feel they

have control over their life, though they must adjust to external influences. Further analyses will theorize whether incarceration is a strong enough factor to affect people unilaterally, or it simply factors into other facets of an individual's identity.

Correctional officers and power

One unique aspect of prisons as opposed to general carceral society is the place of correctional officers, who must negotiate power with those incarcerated under them. While it might seem like correctional officers will always have the upper-hand, the setting frequently determines the relative influence of correctional officers and incarcerated people, often because of race and gender. The mechanisms by which prisons attempt to keep control of individuals within its walls are partially articulated by Barak-Glantz (1981) through his four models of prison systems: authoritarian, bureaucratic lawful, shared-powers, and inmate control. The first two display a lean towards correctional officer supremacy, whether as a collective unit or as an individual centralized power. An authoritarian prison system is an arbitrary one that relies on the centralized social control of the warden. The authoritarian warden can do as they please within extremely broad limits of authority accrued to them, creating a "totalitarian island within a democratic political system" that relies on terror, incentives, and favoritism to keep both guards and incarcerated individuals under control (Barak-Glantz, 1981). The model results in a lack of public accountability and due process guarantees. The next model is the bureaucratic-lawful one, a system in which the prison imitates a private corporation in its bureaucratic, procedural setup. The prison aims to become cost-effective, produce quarterly reports, and incentivize the prison population through policies like promising early release for certain behaviors. Guards gain power

in this model, since they can unionize and make demands of the warden, who is legally responsible for the functioning of the prison bureaucracy.

The next two models grant some level of system governance to those incarcerated. The shared-powers model explains a system characterized by the use of minimum, absolutely necessary levels of control for reform and rehabilitation of those inside, focusing on treatment and granting basic rights to prisoners. Incarcerated people retain effective control and autonomy, especially through the creation of ideological-based groups and advocacy groups. In response, custodial staff began to also bargain for improved conditions and ask about greater issues in response to the loss of power as inmates gain control. Finally, the inmate-control model is a spinoff of the shared-powers model in which incarcerated individuals gain the power to determine prison policy and even execute it at times. Even with the maintenance of the physical structures of prison, incarcerated people gain real control over the community within, often through groups that resemble gangs outside of prison. These gangs have a hierarchical structure and specialization, and often use strong-arm practice to control their members and turf. The groups are often organized along an ethnic-racial dimension, and the gangs control aspects inside the prison like allocation of jobs, housing assignments, and freedom of movement. Depending on where a prison falls in these models, there can be differences in the relative levels of violence experienced by incarcerated people, both through intra-personal conflict and negotiations with the institution.

Given that the same characters can cause widely different power dynamics in the same setting, we can assume that the experience of imprisonment will widely vary across time periods and different places. The centrality of racial and religious groups in negotiating for power also suggests that racial identification will cause a difference in experience, either through efficiency

of the shot caller's negotiations with authority, and the relative level of punishment ascribed to the individual based on racial biases in a more individualistic authoritarian model.

Insights on power dynamics suggest how the prison experience might impact an individual's sense of control, thus relating to policy beliefs. Those in a more authoritarian model might feel less control and higher levels of violence due to the top-down inflictions and the intra-group struggle among incarcerated people. Less authoritarian models might prove less violent for some groups, given the amount that correctional officers might be willing to work alongside them. Descriptions by formerly incarcerated individuals on their prison experience can also allow us to fill in gaps about power differentials based on the model most reflected. Importantly, in none of the models is there a sense of the individual and their needs — all predicate on the struggle of power between guards, groups within prison, and the institution. In other words, the incarcerated individual is not able to redefine their prison experience alone or ask for their personal needs to be specifically addressed. This comes in direct contrast with the ethos of imprisonment, which often blames the individual for their own bad decisions and relative status. Such a contradiction might appear in policy justifications: an individual might feel like there are systemic changes to be made within the prison system even while continuing to blame a person for their bad decisions, causing them to limit their reforms to explicitly within the penal structure.

Prison, race, and class

As touched upon earlier, the prison system is a racial capitalistic system. It is well-known that non-white people are overrepresented in the prison system, especially Black people who are incarcerated at much higher rates than their white counterparts (Cunha, 2014; Davies, 2021;

LeCount, 2017; Murakawa, 2014). By the age of 23, Black men are at a 49% chance of arrest as compared to the 38% chance of arrest for white males (Schleiden et al., 2020). When accounting for levels of alcohol and drug use, delinquency, and prior arrest rates, and neighborhood disadvantage (implying an increased police presence for Black communities), the arrest rate of Black young adults was seven times that of white young adults, suggesting that despite similar or lesser rates of delinquency, Black youth are much more likely to be in the criminal justice system early on in their lives (Schleiden et al., 2020). When comparing young men between the ages of 22-30 who dropped out of high school, 6.7% of white men are incarcerated compared to almost 33% of Black men (Burch, 2013). Race and class are consistent predictors of arrest rates and incarceration (Davies et al., 2021). Latino youth were 16% more likely to be incarcerated in a juvenile facility as compared to white youth in 2021, which represents less of a disparity (76%) compared to 2011 (Sentencing Project, 2021). Within racial groups, there is a further gap on the basis of class status; as of 2000, Black men without a college education were 12 times more likely to serve time in prison, with an almost 60% lifetime chance as opposed to the 5% chance for Black men with college degrees (Wacquant, 2010). Considering that only 24.9% of Black men over the age of 25 have a college degree, a majority of Black men face a high chance of imprisonment (U.S. Census Bureau, 2021).

Once in the system, race continues to play a key part in deciding “nearly every level of interaction with the criminal justice system,” including outcomes and levels of penalization (LeCount, 2017). Black individuals particularly are subject to worse outcomes, even when controlling for social class and jurisdiction (LeCount, 2017). Carcerality becomes “embedded in race,” both in assumptions of what your race indicates about your character, but also physically with the presence of police, the child protective services (CPS), school resource officers, and

other carceral structures in Black and brown communities (Khan, 2022). In federal courts in 2008 and 2009, Black people were on average sentenced for 90 months, while white people's average sentence was 55 months (Rehavi & Starr, 2014). Even when controlling for criminal history, arrest offense, and sentencing disparities among districts, there remained a 9% gap between Black and white sentence lengths, and a 13% gap when including drug charges (Rehavi & Starr, 2014). Once in the system, race is brought to the forefront of operations. Racial disparity in sentencing length often starts with the prosecutors' decision to use charges that have mandatory minimum sentencing, a tactic that Black men face at 1.75 times that of white men, or at a 65% increase in probability (Rehavi & Starr, 2014). Along with influencing how an individual is treated by correctional officers, their length of sentence, ability to access healthcare or jobs, and other institutional figures, race also becomes a key part of survival. Irwin (1970) describes the prison community as one that engenders groups with their own normative codes divided along ethnic-minority lines, gang membership, or violent groups from other outside world interactions. Essentially, previous social identities and group memberships, formed due to the nature of heavily penalized, working-class, urban neighborhoods, are carried over into the prison system (Cunha, 2014). Prison culture and the dynamics of race in prison will be further discussed in discussion, but the importance of race in shaping outcomes before and after prison is a vital point to highlight. To do a study of prisons without incorporating race into the framework would be to misunderstand the experience of incarceration and the dominance of race in causing (adverse) carceral interactions.

Most people in prison are working-class, regardless of race and gender. Low-income communities are also disproportionately affected by sanctions imposed by the criminal justice system caused by their inability to pay fines or fees (Davies et al., 2021). Lower-income

communities are targeted by the penal system and have a worse outcome in the prison system and after their release due to the economic sanctions imposed by prisons. This does not negate the role of race and gender in shaping outcomes — class works alongside and on top of other identities. Black women were faced with the fastest growing incarceration rate between 1990 to 2010, a rate that was three times that of white women (Murakawa, 2014). Black women are also more likely to face gender-based violence in their communities and from state entities, either through excessive contact outside of prison or neglect in situations (both in and out of prison) where Black women are in need of protection. Women are more likely to be sexually victimized by prison staff (Buchanan, 2007). Gender-nonconforming Black men find themselves prone to exploitation and criminalization due to their lack of personal protective walls from a performance of gender and sexuality (Davies et al., 2021). Thus, it is hard to isolate one factor from another, but class, race, and gender identity (including both gender and sexual orientation) all play key roles in rates of carceral contact and the nature of the prison system once inside.

While inequality on the basis of race, gender, and class exist both inside and outside of prison walls, the lack of privacy in the prison system means that there is a greater chance to see group identity as a determining element since comparison groups' outcomes are publicly known. Incarceration might then increase one's awareness of unequal results, making them feel as if individuals are not fully in control of their lives, thus changing the way they vote on criminal justice policy.

Violence of prisons

The physical and emotional separation of prisons from society means that the extent of punishment is often obscured, making the realities of imprisonment largely unknown to those

without direct experience. This section and discussion of aspects of imprisonment from Study 2 will aim to dispel that ambiguity.

Violence is a regular and constant part of prison life, both on the collective level and from individuals. Though female prisons do experience collective violence, individual-level violence is more characteristic of male prisons. Wooldredge (2020) theorizes that incarcerated women can be seen as less prone to conflict, more prosocial, and more likely to have a history of abuse and serious depression, causing them to turn more towards inward violence rather than that against others. Wooldredge (2020) summarizes how stigma from societal rejection, physical incarceration, misogyny by male officers, and higher levels of condescending and paternalistic rhetoric towards women in the system can cause them to join together in camaraderie with other incarcerated women to improve their self-perception. In comparison, a carryover of masculine expectations from broader culture might also influence men to use violence against others as a means of proving their dominance or as a means to gain authority. Despite the difference between men and women's prisons, the environment remains violent on multiple dimensions.

The violence in prisons occurs in part due to the decentralization of management that allows a wide range of possible experiences. Revisiting Wacquant (2008)'s philosophies of the role of the penal system in controlling those who suffer from poverty and as a method of state governance, prisons operate as a branch of the state. This means that prisons are characterized by a similar dynamic as that of the state, as a "diversified web of institutions, procedures, rationalities, and actors that coexist in a complex and sometimes contradictory manner" (Cunha, 2014). The workings of prison are subject to the discretion of the correctional officers, state regulations, and other institutional pieces. There is no "single system-wide intention," rather, the carceral system is shaped by "concrete social relations and in the work of frontline personnel,

within various specific constraints, occupational cultures, subjectivities, and moral configurations" (Cunha, 2014). Correctional officers have the ability to dictate the day-to-day workings of incarcerated people with "little need to justify their behavior or explain decisions" (Crewe, 2011). Officers can thus act outside the law and actively mistreat those they supervise, and often do (Crewe, 2011). Further, most incarcerated individuals are handed indefinite sentences, with their release decided by a parole board and other officials who judge so-called behavioral changes. Though such a configuration would make it appear as if the violence imposed on incarcerated individuals is arbitrary, it is important to note that the workings of the criminal justice system are anything but random. The system is meticulously crafted in a way to deprive individuals of their mobility, liberty, and agency. For an incarcerated individual experiencing the violence, it might appear to be altogether arbitrary; the system is granted a sense of plausible deniability by hiding its procedures and fostering panic that distracts from the top-down policies creating the problems at hand.

The constant feeling of insecurity cultivated by the prison social structure and conduct of officers inside allows both mental and physical violence to be inflicted onto prisoners. Those in prison continue to cite deprivation of liberty, misuse of authority, threats from others, isolation from family and friends, "unremitting loneliness, the crushing of emotional existence, and institutional thoughtlessness" as part of the grief that they face while locked up (Crewe, 2011). The total control of prison causes a "mortification of the person," or a systematic feeling of degradation and humiliation to both the external, social aspect of a person and their internal notion of personhood (Goffman, 1961 in Rowe, 2011). Muenster and Trone (2016) describe more of the harrowing experiences narrated by those who have been incarcerated, including severe overcrowding in cells, solitary confinement, lack of healthcare including services for

addiction and mental illness, loss of vocational and educational programming, and limited contact with family members and community. As succinctly summarized by Muenster and Trone (2016), “American sentencing and correctional policies have created an environment that diminishes human dignity for those incarcerated, extends punishment way beyond the prison walls, and places an immense burden on individuals, families, communities and society at large.” All individuals within the prison system are subject to the power of authorities to lengthen a sentence, creating the possibility of indefinite confinement that weighs on the psyche of an individual. Incarcerated people are subject to a constant policing of their personality and existence as a means to justify the delay of release. Further, the loss of agency means that individuals feel infantilized and suffer the mental pain of being unable to define their self-presentation (Rowe, 2011). The stigma of being labeled as a prisoner manifests in a mental battle on a number of fronts: coming to terms with one’s offense in an institution that gives them no space or privacy to do such, the fear of being around other stigmatized people who seem to pose a threat to one’s own security, and the efforts to avoid a “kind of bodily colonization” (Rowe, 2011). This “colonization” refers to the internal rift created by needing to adapt one’s personality and priorities to overcome the deprivations of the prison environment but also wanting to maintain an individual identity separate from the adverse, forced experience of imprisonment. For women, the mental conquering is the focus of prison regimes, which are often reformed to be less punitive in nature but instead to have intense surveillance meant to bring women in line with principles of normative femininity (Rowe, 2011).

Prisons combine this constant mental battle with a physical one. Most prisons in the United States still make use of solitary confinement, consisting of physical isolation of individuals to their cells for between 22-24 hours a day. Individuals confined have little to no

social contact, are in a barren environment, and are subject to high-tech surveillance. Solitary confinement is justified as a tool to keep vulnerable individuals safe, but it is often used as a means to maintain prison order through usage as a punishment (Smith, 2006). A survey of 1,118 LGBTQ+ incarcerated people by Black & Pink found that 85% of respondents were placed in solitary confinement during their sentence, with half of them serving two or more years in solitary confinement (Lydon et al., 2016). Race factors into this rate, with Black, Latino/Hispanic, mixed-race, and Native American respondents twice as likely to be in solitary confinement compared to white respondents (Lydon et al., 2016). Beyond this recognized method of torture that is overutilized in prisons, violence emanates through all environmental conditions. As described by Crewe (2011), prisons often contain filthy, overcrowded cells without in-cell sanitation, have facilities with little natural light exposure for those incarcerated, provide showers or clean clothing rarely and based on officer's discretion, food is cold and poor quality, and incarcerated individuals are deliberately mistreated by staff. On top of the constant intimidation and humiliation, those in prisons are exposed to "scandalous" medical practices, "with healthcare provision deeply inadequate and psychotropic drugs widely used as a means of control" (Crewe, 2011). A Department of Justice report on Cook County jail revealed similar circumstances: the facilities lacked adequate sanitation, with overflowing toilets in many cells; had exposed electrical wires; and healthcare systems that took weeks to reach (Crewe, 2011). Despite the decrease in "hard" power used by prisons, prison's coercive potential remains, with those inside never able to anticipate what actions might trigger a sudden, harsh punishment. Incarcerated individuals adopt an "ontological insecurity"— they lose faith in the reliability of the world beyond them and "can no longer trust their tacit assumptions about external realities" (Crewe, 2011). Prisons have the potential to reconfigure an individual's mental processing of the

world, likely contributing to the high rates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) found in currently and formerly incarcerated populations (Wolff et al., 2014). The sheer violence of detention and imprisonment might also change the way an individual understands criminality, one's ability to control the direct outcomes of their actions, and thus the criminal justice policy that should be voted in.

In response to conditions within the prison, a certain form of culture is formed. Both the type of culture inside and levels of interpersonal (incarcerated person on incarcerated person) violence arise out of a prioritization of needs based on the social environment (Wooldredge, 2020). Open facilities with greater privileges and more supportive staff is tied to a less violent prison culture, likely because there is less situational frustration that manifests in violence against others, but also because problem-solving no longer requires coercion through violent action (Bottoms, 1999). Further, the belief that officers are illegitimate and incapable of solving problems causes those incarcerated to rely on other forms of governance and rule enforcement, creating a perception of a more violent prison (that potentially could match reality) due to the need for prison gangs to take on rule-enforcing through other methods, often more strong-arm due to the lack of resources or other legitimate means to enforce conduct (Wooldredge, 2020). Crewe (2011) details how correctional officers encouraged a system of control among imprisoned people, allowing "vigilante punishment" and creating blind-spots that encouraged "sexual exploitation, wheeling and dealing, and strong-arming of various kinds." Prisons can become an arena of extreme survival, with threats from top-down and horizontally as each individual fights for limited resources in a space that breeds frustration, fury, and insecurity. The culture inside prison illustrates in part how race and other group identities change one's proximity to power and state resources, suggesting the way that an individual views government

interventions and policy will likely be informed by their lived experience based on those identities.

Ideologies in criminal justice policies

This research endeavors to tie conceptions of how crime occurs to specific policy support. Past literature has shown that there is often a disconnect between what people vote on and the values which they purport to hold. Further, people tend to hold a wide variety of values, many of which contradict each other. Policy support can then become extremely unclear, as people will express support for the idea underlying a policy, while never actually voting for it and supporting other policy that directly contradicts the goals they ostensibly embrace. To overcome this discrepancy, I sort the interviewees into ideological schemas based on broad criminal justice policy trends. The four ideological frames I utilize are those who are tough-on-crime, advocates for status quo or no change to the relatively punitive system, prison reform oriented, or supporters of prison abolition. I identify mainstream policies from each of the schools I outlined, asking interviewees about their level of support for the policy. Interviewees can then be placed in schools depending on the type of policy they consistently support.

Even while an interviewee might support policies from two different schools, when the two schools are placed in direct conflict with each other, they will lean towards one side, indicating their ultimate preference. For example, prison reform supporters can easily be prison abolitionists, as they view reform as a plausible stepping stone to an overhaul of the system. A prison abolitionist can be made distinct when asking about the maintenance of humane prisons, a policy which prison reform believers will support while prison abolitionists will reject. Rather than using ideological values as a way to know policy an individual should plausibly support, I

work backwards, identifying policies that individuals are willing to support, and then extracting their categorical belonging in criminal justice policy discourse. Based on their policy school, I can then estimate their understanding of how crime occurs based on the ideological underpinnings of that specific line of discourse. Questions to interviewees on how much control they think they and others have over their lives is mainly used to control for the effects of incarceration, seeing which life events comes to the forefront of their mind as changing their view of the world. I will now outline the four schools aforementioned, including the discourse within this area that crafts specific policy proposals, the underlying values, and specific policies.

Tough-on-crime:

Tough-on-crime logic appears to have two foundational values: the emphasis on the individual, and the belief in retribution or deterrence as the main justifications for punishment. Much of the best known policies from the "get-tough" movement can be traced back to the 1970s, a period marked by the emergence of the "New Right" and a neoliberal conservatism, which emphasized individual morality, the market as regulatory for society, and a shift away from the social welfare state. Emphasis on "victim's rights" also grew in the 1980s, adding to the validity of retribution-based policies. Punitive public beliefs held constant from the 1960s through the 1990s, despite increases in "tough-on-crime" policies like mandatory minimum (truth in sentencing) sentencing and three strikes laws (Enne, 2014). Thus, the logic underpinning "tough-on-crime" policies came from all people, Democrats and Republicans, who saw the individual as the problem. These individuals were to be punished using harsh penalties as to stop others from following in their path and to unequivocally penalize the individual for their harm against others.

The creation of an individual ravaged by their immorality and prone to disaster in society is a key narrative that functions beneath tough-on-crime policies. As Sered (2019) describes, this narrative about an "imagined monstrous other — a monster who is not quite human like the rest of us, who is capable of extraordinary harm and incapable of empathy, who inflicts great pain but does not feel it as we do, a monster we and our children have to be protected from at any price" was couched in language about felons, "super-predators," and men like Willie Horton[2]. As Soss and Weaver (2017) explain, a "powerful gendered [figure] of underclass deviance and threat" was crafted through mass media and public, governmental discourse, a "masculine gang thug" unphased by policing interventions or harsh punishment and the "feminine welfare queen and drug-addicted mother of 'crack babies'" who also needed mass public oversight. Both of these caricatures push forward punitive government intervention, whether through strong family oversight or through surveillance and removal of individuals whose bodies alone pose disastrous outcomes. Belief in the individual as the start and end of moral action meant that digressions for the rule of law were met with harsh backlash, and the public tended to support long sentencing as a way of "pay-back," viewing such policies as supporting victims.

Drawing from Enne (2014), tough-on-crime supporters tend to believe in an increase in use of force against "criminals," the death penalty as a viable and vital form of punishment, increased spending on the criminal justice system and fighting crime, and a low confidence in the ability of the police to lower crime. Tough-on-crime advocates will thus be identified by their belief in measures like the death penalty, life without parole, three-strikes sentencing, and mandatory minimum sentencing.

[2] William (Willie) Horton is a Black man featured in an ad ran by the National Security Political Action Campaign against Democratic presidential candidate Michael Dukakis. The ad overlaid pictures of Horton, meant to emphasize his African American features, over a story of how he took advantage of multiple furloughs from prison to commit more felonies (Hurwitz & Peffley, 2005). The use of Willie Horton is often described as an instance of implicit racial connections between Black individuals and criminality, linking prison reform with "undeserved" benefit to Black individuals who "get off easy."

Status Quo:

This school is categorized as those who believe the system works relatively as it should currently, or do not feel that change in either direction is necessary. Individuals might be hesitant to make change due to a lack of information, they might feel apathy towards government processes that reduce their political participation, or they might trust institutions as they currently are. Compared to the other groups, the status quo school often abstains from drafting policy themselves, making decisions on changes posed to them. Since the flow of criminal justice policy currently is more tough-on-crime, the status quo school is also in support of more punitive measures such as mandatory minimum sentencing, but might lean towards decriminalization or lower mandatory sentencing for "non-violent" crimes like drug offenses. Status quo supporters also could support life without parole, but for only cases they deem to be the most "extreme" (bringing to mind the monster rhetoric outlined in the tough-on-crime section). Status quo supporters might also encourage programming or services, but as a facet of prisons rather than a way to decarcerate or as an alternative to prison. The death penalty will not be supported by the status quo school, but neither will a large range of reforms; modifications will mostly be limited to making current processes slightly more efficient rather than radical shifts.

Prison reform:

Unlike prison abolitionists, prison reformers might still believe that "harsh punishment [is] the right approach" but disagree on the way that this punishment is doled out on individuals and the social cost of this punishment (Muenster & Trone, 2016). Prison reformers can often advocate for a cost-savings in the prison system, feeling that the state should not focus so much

energy on punishing people when others, who are seen as more deserving of state resources, are suffering from the divestment of their services. Like tough-on-crime advocates, those who push for prison reform often place emphasis on the individual, but believe that crime is caused by "psychological problems" that can be mitigated through "cognitive adjustments," essentially medicalizing crime (Cunha, 2014). Crime is seen as a result of flawed cognitive processes, either due to drug use, mental illness, or gender-based oppression, all of which can be fixed through community-based treatments. This group advocates for treating or rehabilitating offenders to avoid posing further risk to public security and to respect offenders' "autonomous capacity of choice as moral agents" (Cunha, 2014). Prison reform advocates might believe that given the right set of mental tools, an individual might choose not to commit a crime.

Prison reform advocates are also those who might support prison as a legitimate means of punishment, but believe it should be more humanized as to avoid stepping into the realm of outright torture. Cunha (2014) argues that this humanization aligns with the liberal democratic tendency "toward[s] the moralization of the institution" through regulating government's coercive power. Prisons are supposed to become close to the outside world in "central aspects of human existence," meaning that the key tool of imprisonment is not deterrence through fear but rehabilitation through sustaining access to education, health, training, and voting rights (Cunha, 2014). The continued emphasis on the individual means that prison reform will not stretch into prison abolition, as there still holds the belief that some individuals are incorrigible and thus must be housed in humanized prisons. Those who believe in prison reform will thus support alternatives to prison for a certain subset of the population (usually those suffering from mental illness, substance abuse, or juveniles), larger programming inside prisons and better healthcare provisions, and possibly the abolition of bail and pretrial detention. Those in support of prison

reform will emphasize rehabilitation and reform over restoration as the main goal of redressement through the criminal justice system.

Prison Abolition:

Along with pushing prison reform as a temporary solution to the problems within, prison abolitionists also believe that prisons reflect the problems of a larger system, and thus must be abolished in the process of achieving freedom and equality for all. In this view, prison abolition is necessary to fight for investment in widespread societal changes rather than concentrating resources in punishment. This view identifies a power imbalance between the criminal justice system as an institution and the communities which it primarily targets (Davies et al., 2021). In the abolishing of prisons, prison abolitionists search for a way to transfer economic and political power from the police and prison system to the people who are most subject to its workings. This includes an "invest-divest" strategy where crime is redefined, safety alternatives are established rather than police forces, and harm in communities is addressed through a more redistributive approach. In this view, the Black community, which is most subject to criminal justice systems and procedures, is seen as under-resourced and over-policed, and thus investing money in the root causes of intra-community violence would challenge current power relations and address issues without imposing further harm and control (Davies et al., 2021). Prison abolitionists do want to end current harm within the prison system, but focus their energy more on stopping the expansion of prison population and bringing back currently incarcerated individuals into the "free world," along with reforming the free world to slow the stream of individuals forced into the system (Davis, 2006). This view emphasizes the connection between the problems of the prison system and the rest of structures — focusing too much on prison as an abstract site

separate from the rest of reality ignores the violence inflicted onto communities from which prisoners are disproportionately drawn.

Abolitionists see the prison system as a reincarnation of slavery meant to imitate slave systems in its form of exploiting individuals for cheap labor, maintaining base living standards, and subjecting individuals to lower political and social status (Davis, 2006). The prison system continues to grow because of a professionalization of police and of those who work within prisons, a standardization of punishment across multiple individuals, and the political push for the carceral system (Davis, 2006). Prison is a "black hole into which the detritus of contemporary capitalism is deposited" (Davis, 2006). It also acts as a way of appeasing individuals by making it appear as if the root of violence has been addressed, taking away attention from global capitalism, racism, and other larger systems. Prison abolitionists consider a replacement to prison that stands "outside of the logic of capital and private property, state violence, and racialized subjectivity" (McQuade, 2018). The abolition of the prison system is approached through the lens of Black Feminist theory, highlighting those on the greatest margins of society as best able to critique the carceral system, which reflects larger patterns of social, political, and economic violence (Davies et al., 2021). Prison abolitionists will thus be clearly identified by their support of restorative justice and large-scale redistribution (consisting of community healing) as the key goals of the criminal justice system.

Michigan's criminal justice policies

Every state has differences in its policies pertaining to prison, parole, probation, and other carceral branches. Drawing from the Prison Policy Initiative (2021), below are some unique policies that make a substantial impact on the prison system in Michigan:

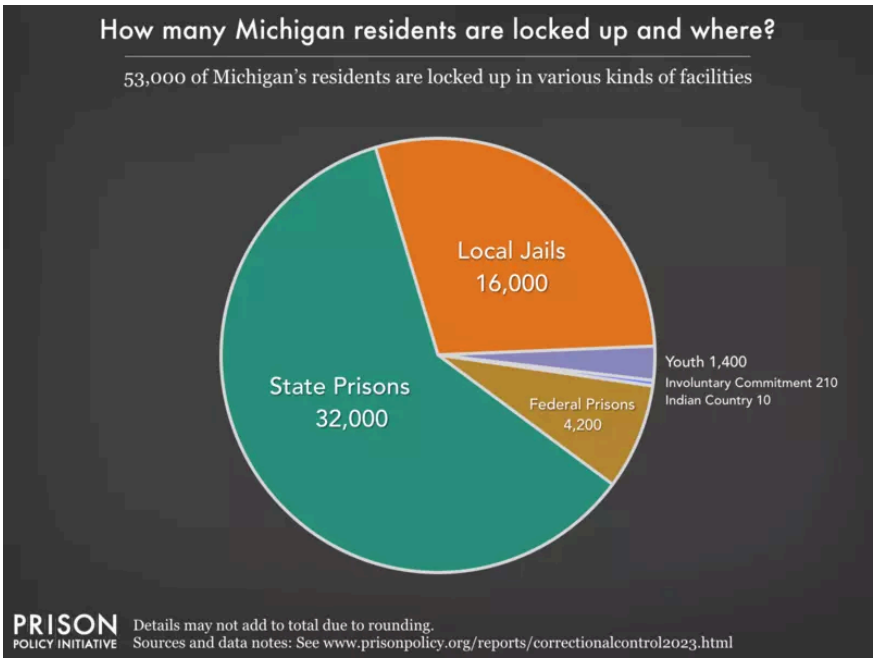
- 

Figure 1: Graph displaying where incarcerated people in Michigan are locked up. While in detention, the majority of Michigan's incarcerated are in state prisons, which is where this research focuses its efforts on. (Wang, 2023)

- Michigan has a high rate of people on parole or probation, with more than double the amount incarcerated at 122,000 people (compared to the 53,000 incarcerated).
- Michigan pays as low as $0.14 and up to $0.56 to incarcerated people working jobs inside, despite the high cost of communication ($0.25 per JPay[3] or $2.10 for a 15-minute phone call).
- Michigan is one of 10 states where association with people with a felony or misdemeanor conviction is a punishable parole violation, posing a problem for those with convicted family members or those living an a densely packed area where association is inevitable.

[3] Electronic messaging service inside Michigan state prisons

Locus of control

To understand how lived experience with incarceration might change one's understanding of causes of crime, and thus policy that best addresses it, it is vital to understand how an individual fits criminal actions into their psychological understanding of the world. As developed by Rotter (1966), the locus of control argues that individuals will vary on how much they believe an outcome of their behavior is caused directly by their "behavior or personal characteristics" as opposed to chance, luck, fate, powerful other(s), or as "simply unpredictable." The locus of control thus suggests a scale stretching to two poles: one end representing those who believe more strongly in internal control, or that events are contingent upon their own behavior or relatively permanent characteristics, and the other end representing those who emphasize external control, or a greater complexity of forces factoring into the outcome following an individual's action. A person's emphasis on control might connect to their beliefs on how crime occurs, as they might be apt to blame an outcome on either an individual's own tendency to make "bad" decisions or on external influences that factor into an individual's "bad" choice. Both locusts of control can emphasize factors like a higher power, systemic constraints, luck, or chance, but those leaning towards internal will perceive a stronger connection between their behavior and the outcome, while those leaving external will find the outside factors to play a stronger role in the outcome compared to individual behavior (Iles-Caven et al., 2020). Establishing where an individual lies on the locus of control scale may also indicate the types of crime prevention mechanisms they would be most likely to support, as their solutions would tie to their perception on the cause of crime.

The locus of control provides an important framework and psychological consideration on how to tie together individual's understandings of the world around them to specific beliefs

on crime. It attempts to bridge together personal experience with policy voting. The original theory surrounding locus of control by Rotter (1966) does highlight that an individual's belief on their degree of control will likely vary depending on the situation at hand, though there might be some broader generalizations possible. To partially overcome the situational dependency of the locus of control, this concept can be tied together with Carroll and his co-authors' (1987) framework that creates a belief scale on causes of crime. Beliefs on the criminal justice system can largely be grouped into those who emphasize internal control, or the actions of individuals, or external control, or societal and environmental factors. Combined with Ortet-Fabregat and Perez's (1992) incorporation of the professional role of each individual in criminal justice beliefs develops the Attitudes towards Crime Scale.

As described by Ortet-Fabregat and Perez (1992), the scale measures different temperaments toward the three portions of criminal justice dealings. This includes the (Attitudes Towards) Causes of Crime Scale, (Attitudes Towards) Prevention of Crime Scale, and (Attitudes Towards) Treatment of Crime Scale. For causes of crime, individuals either believe in hereditary and individual causes (genetics, fate, mental illness, lack of strict rules of social control) or social and environmental causes (economic, learning, education, social disadvantage factors). On prevention of crime, individuals believe in coercive prevention (fear of detention, severe punishments, strict law enforcement, threat of punishment as deterrent) or social intervention prevention (social agents, youth institutions, community centers for high-risk youth, removal of poverty, removal of other social disadvantages). On treatment of crime, individuals align with assistance (treatment of prisoners based on social assistance and education, non-punitive measures, more humane prisons, alternatives to prisons, assess effectiveness of treatment programs) or punishment (punitive prisons, physical punishments, hard work) (Ortet-Fabregat &

Perez, 1992). Aligning their comprehensive categorization with the internal-external resonances, those who emphasize the internal locus of control will also support individual/hereditary causes of crime, coercive intervention in preventing crime, and punishment as the treatment. On the other hand, those who believe in an external locus of control will support social/environmental causes of crime, social intervention as a means of preventing crime, and assistance as the dominant treatment.

Such a framework would be a convenient and seemingly intuitive way to break down beliefs of the criminal justice system, but the system's binary nature causes a key issue. Mascini and Houtman (2006) and Cullen et al. (2000) call into question whether the values on the opposing ends of Ortet-Fabregat and Perez's spectrum are truly opposites, with an individual only being able to hold one of the two values. Mascini and Houtman (2006) compellingly argue that much of the American public is both in favor of rehabilitation and punishment, posing the notion that individuals actively weigh the two principles at the same time. Further, the authors argue that rehabilitation is just a transmutation of punishment, with the regulation coming from within rather than through external coercion. Cullen et al. (2000) also finds that the American public is both punitive and progressive, wanting the correctional system to "do justice, protect society, and reform offenders." To overcome the dichotomy of thought that exists in an individual's ideology at the same time, the internal-external resonance must be expanded. The contradictions in belief appear to resemble a micro and macro difference, specifically, individuals believe one way when considering themselves and other singular cases, but apply a different logic on a systematic or global scale. Further, religiosity complicates the binary system, as belief in God's intervention could manifest in a stronger internal locus of control (God personally guides a person's compass and behavior) or an external locus of control (God

predetermines one's life track). Iles-Caven et al. (2020) also highlights the negative psychological outcomes associated with an external locus of control, such as higher rates of anxiety, depression, and psychoses, suggesting a possibility of adopting an internal locus of control (for oneself) as a protective mechanism, emphasizing individual ability for personal benefit even while one might still feel external factors play a larger role in outcomes generally.

Thus, drawing on Ortet-Fabregat and Perez (1992), attributions about the causes of crime can be individualistic or societal, expanding the internal-external resonance to include both a micro and macro scale. On the individual level, the locus of control concept adequately applies to beliefs on the criminal justice system; however, even while those beliefs exist, individuals might believe a contradictory notion about whether society or the individual is to blame on a structural scale. Measurement on the views of incarcerated individuals on the criminal justice system can be categorized into internal and external resonances, one micro and the other macro. Beliefs about group-identity, meaning stereotypes, schemas, or other understandings, might change the way an individual conceptualizes locus of control on a macro level (outside of themselves) as opposed to the factors that influence locus of control on an individual, case-by-case, micro level. This research will weigh both how the individual characterizes their locus of control when considering themselves specifically alongside how the same considerations might shift when looking at another individual or external group. Further, the locus of control provides insights into how a person might factor the deprivations associated especially with imprisonment, changing the way they view the experience of being incarcerated and thus their views on criminal justice policy (Rowe, 2011). Locus of control will thus serve as a measure for how much certain identities influence the way a person conceptualizes their place

in the world, and whether a lack of resources causes certain identities to become more salient to themselves and their policy decisions.

Hypotheses:

The American prison system is undeniably dangerous, namely in addition to the literal violence it promotes, it also causes mental isolation and infantilization, often inflicting mental health disorder onto individuals due to the survival state heightened by physical threats. It is therefore possible that facing imprisonment pushes an individual into an external locus of control on the micro scale. Violence is emblematic of the experience of individuals in and out of prison, but the close setting might allow incarcerated individuals to compare their experiences to the others around them and see the explicit power that correctional officers have over their daily lives. Further, solitary confinement is an experience relatively unmatched in any other setting, torturing individuals to such an extent that it would be difficult to rationalize the pain. Incarcerated individuals might then feel the world around them to be more arbitrary, or that their direct actions have little effect on their life experiences. Initially, they might turn to hegemonic ideas about their moral deficiencies or might be prone to blaming themselves for the direct outcome; however, at a certain point, I expect that the violence within the prison society becomes too much to rationally blame on themselves, leading them to develop an external locus of control. Though an incarcerated individual might still hold themselves partially culpable, they would also feel that forces outside of themself led to the ultimate outcome.

Hypothesis 1: Formerly incarcerated individuals will tend to have an external locus of control when considering themselves.

This expectation is complicated by the general tendency of individuals to respond to psychological environments in differing ways. Even with the same physical environment, individuals will respond differently to specific environmental attributes, and will face differing levels of stress, based on their way of prioritizing their needs. For some individuals, therefore, the aforementioned violence of prison might cause high levels of stress, potentially enough to redirect their locus of control outward to larger institutional forces. There is still the possibility that some individuals will not feel enough of a sensory deprivation to disagree altogether with the hegemonic rhetoric of individual culpability. Even with the external locus of control when considering oneself, it is hard to say the same logic will hold for others. As there is little research on the views of criminal justice actors, especially those with the specific experience of being incarcerated, my hypothesis draws on more subjective guesses based on personal interactions and the research about locus of control for policy leanings. Based on conversations with currently incarcerated people, it appears that many hold a fear of an ambiguous "evil person" who holds no empathy and ruthlessly commits violent crime. Since this person holds steady in the conscience of those who have personally experienced the violence, it is likely a sign that locus of control has not been redefined when considering external individuals or groups.

Similar to the "monster" that holds steady in the minds of those who have been incarcerated, hegemonic discourse often pushes fear of an incorrigible, criminogenic person who must be controlled by institutions. Thus, it is likely that those with no experience of incarceration will also be pushed by mainstream dialogue to hold an internal locus of control. Even with this hegemonic idea, there is always the possibility of counter-hegemonic developments, especially in the communities most affected by institutional control. Those with no experience of incarceration

might be able to better consider institutions and other factors given their distance from crime, allowing them to consider the bigger picture without the guilt of overturning personal accountability. There is no clear path that an individual might take for locus of control on the whole.

Hypothesis 2: Formerly incarcerated individuals, much like non-formerly incarcerated people, will not have a steady pattern for locus of control outside of themselves. Lived experience with incarceration will not be a strong enough factor to shape locus of control outside of oneself.

Much like hypothesis 2, the third hypothesis comes from mostly subjective observations. The same "evil person" is used to justify the maintenance of the prison as an institution, despite objections to the day-to-day conduct of prisons. The violence is therefore enough to call for efforts to humanize prisons and decarcerate those who are seen as non-dangerous, but not enough to call for an abolishment of the institution as a whole. Experiences of prison violence also weigh heavily enough to push individuals away from tough-on-crime policies, as they are seen as unnecessarily harmful and detract from an individual's ability to take on the project of reform. The idea of prison abolition remains too far away from the status quo for it to be easily accepted without high levels of knowledge about the system and alternatives, making people prone to bend towards tough-on-crime policies when pushed.

Hypothesis 3: The bulk of formerly incarcerated individuals will support prison reform, including less harsh methods of control inside and substance abuse or mental health

counseling, but will not accept prison abolition or tough-on-crime policies. They will be more willing to accept certain tough-on-crime policies when pitted directly against prison abolition.

Methods:

To understand the effect of incarceration on policy beliefs of the criminal justice system, I turn to two different sources of information — quantitative analysis of a statistically significant population from the 2012 General Social Survey (GSS) run out of the University of Chicago and original, qualitative, long-form interviews with a small population. By integrating GSS analysis with long-form interviews, statistically significant conclusions about the impact of incarceration on policy beliefs can be supplemented with nuanced explanations of prison understandings and criminal justice knowledge.

Study 1 makes use of the 2012 GSS, which asks a variety of questions about policy beliefs and locus of control, with the possibility of controlling for incarceration. The variables used are outlined in the table below. I included multiple variables to code for incarceration as GSS did not run an incarceration question that year, so arrest, conviction, and locked up all served as proxies. Locked up would appear to be the same as incarceration, but research shows that time in jail often has a different effect on voting practices as compared to (typically) longer term incarceration in prison. The limitation in adopting each variable independently as a substitute for incarceration will hopefully be mitigated by comparing results across the three.

Variable type	GSS factor name	GSS Description
Controls	race sex	race of respondent respondents sex

	partyid polviews	political party affiliation think of self as liberal or conservative
	sei10	r's socioeconomic index (2010)
	attend	how often r attends religious services
	relactiv	how often does r take part in relig activities
Independent	lockedup	prison or jail ever
	arrest	ever picked up or charged by police
	convictd	convicted of a crime ever
Dependent	courts	courts dealing with criminals [harshness]
	natcrime	halting rising crime rate [is pressing]
	natcrimy	law enforcement: version y
	cappun	favor or oppose death penalty for murder
	accptoth	r accept others even when they do things wrong
	careself	those in need have to take care of themselves
	poleff11	don't have any say about what the government does
	polefy3	avg citizen influence on politics

Table 1: GSS variables used in Study 1 and descriptions of the variables.

Study 2 consisted of long-form qualitative interviews. To isolate the experience of incarceration, I interviewed six individuals who had lived experience with incarceration and three individuals who did not have the same lived experience. Though the second set of individuals had not faced incarceration, this is not to say they did not have contact with prisons or aspects of the criminal justice system. The breadth of the carceral system means that most interviewees have either directly been a warden of child protective services (CPS), the central criminal justice system (jails or prisons), or have partners and community members who have direct involvement. There were too many possible factors to control for all in such a small group, so I focused on race, class, and gender, matching my formerly incarcerated individuals with non-formerly incarcerated people with similar backgrounds. Other prevalent factors in interviews were sexual orientation, neighborhood where they grew up, time incarcerated, and age at which incarceration started. There are a range of other factors that were not controlled for, including institution they were incarcerated in, length of trial, occupation, number of violent life experiences, presence of parental figures, etc. The study was also limited by the use of only three non-incarcerated interviews, all of whom self-identified as female.

Study 1:

I used regressions to analyze eight dependent variables based on the independent variable of incarceration. There were high levels of collinearity between lockedup and convictd, so I ran two separate regressions swapping between each of them (since there was a difference in significance depending on what was used), controlling for the same other variables.

Every regression controlled for either lockedup/convictd, arrest, race, sex, socioeconomic class(sei10), religiosity (relactiv and attend), and political leaning (polviews and partyid)

accptoth	Sex ***	Negative – being female correlated with higher acceptance of others, even when they do things r thinks are wrong
	Slightly liberal **	Negative – being slightly liberal correlated with higher acceptance of others, even when they do things r thinks are wrong
	Slightly conservative **	Negative – being slightly conservative correlated with higher acceptance of others, even when they do things r thinks are wrong
	Liberal **	Negative – being liberal correlated with higher acceptance of others, even when they do things r thinks are wrong
	Arrest **	Negative – being arrested correlated with higher acceptance of others, even when they do things r thinks are wrong
	Conservative *	Negative – being conservative correlated with higher acceptance of others, even when they do things r thinks are wrong
	Extremely liberal *	Negative – being extremely liberal correlated with higher acceptance of others, even when they do things r

		thinks are wrong
	Moderate, middle of the road *	Negative – being politically moderate correlated with higher acceptance of others, even when they do things r thinks are wrong
natcrime	Sex ***	Positive – being female positively correlated with spending too little on halting the rising crime rate
	Sei10 ***	Negative – as lower socioeconomic status, believe either spending right amount or too much on rising crime rate
natcrimy (convictd)	Convictd **	Positive – being convicted positively correlated with spending too little on law enforcement
	Arrest **	Negative – being arrested negatively correlated, so spending right amount or too much on law enforcement
	Sex **	Negative – being female negatively correlated, so spending right amount or too much
	Slightly conservative *	Positive – being slightly conservative positively correlated with spending too little on law enforcement
	—----------	
Natcrimy (lockedup)	sex**	Negative – being female negatively correlated, so spending right amount or

		too much
	Slightly conservative *	Positive – being slightly conservative positively correlated with spending too little on law enforcement
Cappun (convictd)	Race ***	Positive – Being non-white positively correlated with opposing the death penalty
	Sex **	Positive – Being female positively correlated with opposing the death penalty
	Extremely liberal **	Positive – Being extremely liberal, liberal, or slightly liberal positively correlated with opposing the death penalty
	Liberal **	
	Slightly liberal *	
	—----------	
Cappun (lockedup)	Exactly same as above, but sex was only slightly significant (* vs. ** with convictd)	
Courts (convictd)	Arrest ***	Positive – being arrested positively correlated with belief that courts deal too harshly with criminals
	Race ***	Positive – being non-white positively correlated with belief that courts deal too harshly with criminals
	Extremely liberal **	Positive – being extremely liberal positively correlated with belief that courts deal too harshly with criminals
Careself (convictd)	Race *	Negative – Being non-white is correlated with agreement or neutrality towards idea that a person in need should take care of themselves and

		not depend on others
	Sex *	Positive – Being female is positively correlated with disagreement that a person in need should take care of themselves and not depend on others
	Attend: Less than once a year* Attend: Never* Attend: Several times a year * Attend: Several Times a week *	Negative – Being semi-religious and non-religious is correlated with agreement or neutrality towards idea that a person in need should take care of themselves and not depend on others
	Extremely liberal * Liberal *	Positive – Being extremely liberal or liberal is positively correlated with disagreement that a person in need should take care of themselves and not depend on others
Careself (lockedup)	—---------- lockedup * Extremely liberal ** rather than * Same on all other variables	Positive – Being locked up positively correlated with disagreement that a person in need should take care of themselves and not depend on others
Polefy3	Race **	Negative – being non-white negatively correlated with lack of influence; non-white tend towards feeling that average citizen has influence over politics

poleff11	Liberal *	Negative – being liberal negatively correlated with agreement that "People like me don't have any say about what the government does"

*Table 2: results from regressions run on R, outlining dependent variable and salient control factors. Most significant factors from R were included, going from * (slightly significant), ** (significant), and *** (very significant). Other less significant factors were omitted due to their relatively small influence.*

As the table outlines, even with the multiple different measures for incarceration covering the different aspects of entering the criminal justice system (depth through arrest, weight through conviction, and tightness through long-term detention), lived experience with the criminal justice system still consistently does not show up as a significant factor. Race and gender tend to be significant factors on the aggregate, but they manifest in different ways depending on the policy question at hand, with gender appearing to be more steadily correlated with liberal criminal justice policy beliefs. The lack of consistent significant factors might suggest that identities do not cause similar impact across the board, or it might simply indicate the faults of surveying in taking into consideration specific governmental interactions on the basis of identity. Who do those surveyed consider to be "people like me," the "average citizen," and a "a person in need," and how might biases of racialized, gendered, and classed images change the way respondents react to the survey? Policy beliefs might be clear, especially on the extremes (like death penalty), but rationale and manifestations of identity are less so. To better understand the nuance underlying each decision, I now turn to long-form interviews.

Study 2:

Sample:

Given the drawbacks of surveying as a means to accurately represent thought processes going into policy voting, I coupled the representative GSS sample analysis with long-form interviews. The sample used was not representative of either the Michigan population or the national population, but it made use of engaging in open conversation to draw apart some of the nuances behind support for each policy. I interviewed six people who had lived experience with incarceration and three people who were not personally incarcerated, although some had family members currently incarcerated or had been in jail themselves. I aimed to match the formerly incarcerated interviewee sample in demographics to the non-formerly incarcerated interviewees; all interviewees were between the ages of 30 to 60 and grew up in working class or lower middle-class households. Race, gender, and education levels varied from interviewee to interviewee, as did sexual orientation. Due to the vast number of factors that might affect one's life experiences and criminal justice knowledge, these four essential characteristics were weighed, but race and gender were most vital for my analysis. I will discuss the reasons for focusing on these two demographic factors further in the analysis section.

Results:

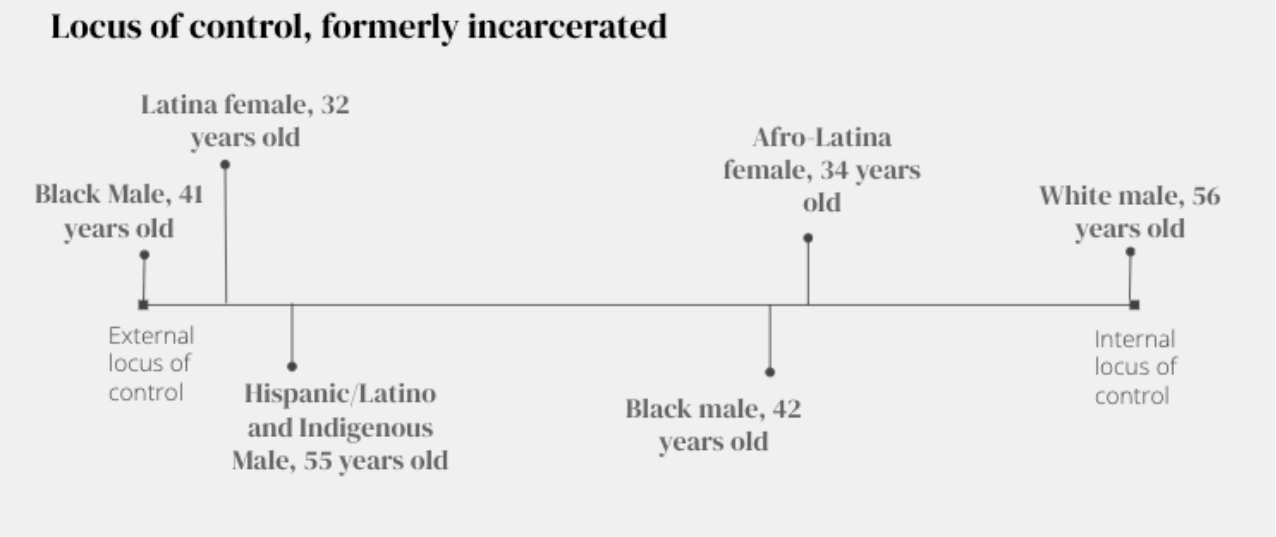


Figure 2: Range of locus of control for the six formerly incarcerated interviewees. Those tending towards the internal locus of control emphasized individual actions primarily, even when occasionally addressing larger influences such as that of unequal state resources, over-policing of certain communities, the influence of God or the devil, etc. External locus of control meant the individual was more likely to emphasize non-personal factors, though they often indicated accountability on both an individual level coupled with institutional, structural influences. Religious reasoning (such as pre-determination) has the possibility to cause an external locus of control but was not present in this sample – those who weighed religion highly still emphasized individual culpability primarily.

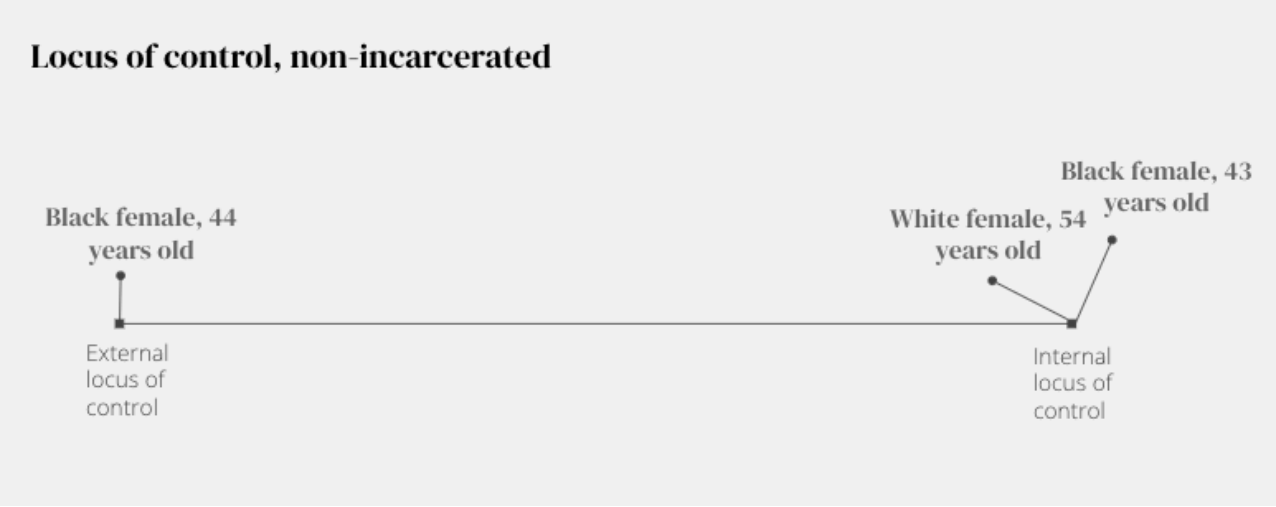


Figure 3: Range of locus of control for the three interviewees that were not incarcerated. Reference Figure 2 for a more thorough explanation of internal and external locus of control.

The results of the interviews suggest that my first hypothesis, formerly incarcerated individuals will tend to have an external locus of control when considering themselves, was not supported. The six interviewees held a wide range for their locus of control, with only one individual absolutely assessing outcomes of his life as influenced by external factors. Interviewees also generally leaned more strongly towards an internal locus of control when considering the micro-scale (themselves particularly) as opposed to when considering the more macro-scale (a wide variety of other individuals). I had expected the violence inside prison to cause people to be unable to fully rationalize outcomes as caused by their actions, and this idea might still be somewhat supported. Though individuals did not fully adhere to an external locus of control, all of those who were subject to solitary confinement also did not fully embrace an internal locus of control. They were not able to fully accept an external locus of control due to the violence too; many of those incarcerated separated themselves from an incorrigible other due to their reformed, non-violent ways. Experience with solitary confinement was also inextricable

from race in my sample, as all non-white people were subject to it, and the one white interviewee was not. The overlap of locus of control and race mean that it is unclear whether race led to violence within prison, which shifted an individual's locus of control towards external, or if race was already salient in pushing towards an external locus of control, causing an individual within prison to internalize the violence through this lens and thus reinforce their understanding of outcomes as impacted by external factors.

Results for the first hypothesis also had implications for hypothesis 2, which expected that all individuals interviewed would not have a steady locus of control on the macro level, meaning that incarceration does not shape understandings of the world outside of oneself. This hypothesis was partially disproved, once again, race interacted with incarceration (and often gender identity and/or sexual orientation) to shape an individual's macro understanding of the world. Incarcerated people actually appeared more likely to blame their individual actions alone for the outcomes of their life when considering themselves as opposed to others, depending on the circumstances of the other person. Many incarcerated people mentioned stories of domestic violence, child abuse, and mental illness as contributing factors that cause other people's incarceration around them. When considering "incorrigible" people, both incarcerated and non-incarcerated people alike blamed the individual alone for their circumstances, but the definition (and breadth) of those who were unreformable shifted depending on racialized, gendered, and classed experience with incarceration.

Cursory analysis of the third hypothesis indicates that it was also partially correct. All formerly incarcerated interviewees rejected tough-on-crime policies, and most also rejected prison abolition in totality. When tough-on-crime policies were pitted directly against prison abolition, more appeared to lean towards prison abolition, embracing services and a "humane"

setting for imprisonment. The third hypothesis will be better addressed in the discussion section, which talks about policy changes suggested by individuals.

Discussion:

Knowledge increase:

As hypothesized in the literature review, the general public knows little about the criminal justice system, nor do they try to learn about it. Knowledge of government processes often comes from lived experience in or with systems, especially from carceral contact. It is not shocking to see that those who spent long periods incarcerated are much more informed with the process of incarceration and policies related to imprisonment. Even those who were not incarcerated gained their understanding of the system through their relatives in prison, their personal experiences with other branches (CPS, jailing, juvenile justice, police), and community understanding. Those who were in contact with the system through family members or personal intervention, often due to residing in a community of color, also learned more about the procedural aspects. Those who did not have personal experiences with the system appeared more likely to trust policy makers and the media in their understanding of how procedures work, leading to a more tough-on-crime stance.

The greater knowledge might not necessarily mean that individuals with a history of incarceration will vote more in upcoming elections. Though they had a greater knowledge, all of them expressed a jaded view of the system, indicating participation only when it came to the issues closest to their heart; these issues often required them to advocate for someone who is likely disenfranchised (due to their incarcerated status) or unable to vote (due to health concerns). Weaver and Lerman (2014) provide an explanation for the reduction in voter

participation for those with experience in the system despite increased knowledge of government practices with their theory of "custodial citizenship." Following interactions with criminal justice authorities, people come to understand the government as focused on "control, authority, and dominance," causing them to feel that the state is unresponsive to their needs. This view of the state causes their citizenship to feel marginalized, discouraging them from politically participating. Interviewees did express their understanding of the prison and criminal justice system as one hinged on control and dominance of individuals and also expressed their political participation as unnecessary due to the inflexibility of government practices.

Along with the expected drop in voting participation in people who experience incarceration themselves, the communities which they belong to mirror this voting drop. Burch (2013) finds that in neighborhoods in Georgia and North Carolina with a high concentration of imprisonment, voting turnout was 2 to 6 percentage points lower. She hypothesizes that neighborhoods with high rates of imprisonment form less formal social networks and have fewer financial resources, both contributing to less formal political involvement. In contrast to Burch (2013)'s findings and the wealth of literature that supports her conclusions, all the formerly incarcerated people interviewed were well connected to the political process and to more formal communities where they could disseminate political information. While the lack of financial resources was still ever present, those interviewed expressed family support, church memberships, and robust organizational involvement — this may suggest greater voter turnout compared to the literature discussed. It is unclear whether the discrepancy occurred due to changes in the formerly incarcerated population at large or is simply a result of bias in the interview sample due to university affiliation. Further, since I did not explicitly measure their voting behavior, it is unclear whether the increased understanding of the criminal justice system

revealed in interviews will directly translate into voting in policy that reflects their beliefs, given such a policy has been proposed.

Race as a factor:

None of the questions in the interview explicitly asked about racial identity and how it factored into experience. Despite the lack of direct questions targeting race-specific responses, all of the non-white interviewees invoked race within the first three introductory questions. Given that race factors heavily into rates of carceral contact and the nature of those interactions, race can be seen as a necessary component but not sufficient to explain policy beliefs. In other words, race contributed towards prison-abolition-leaning beliefs if individuals faced unfair carceral interactions due to their race, and they acknowledged the salience of race in imposing the violence. Since people tend to internalize deprivations differently based on their current needs and circumstances, people who recognized their race as a determinant of outcomes, as opposed to other identities like class or gender, were more likely to point out institutional changes to be made. Both those who faced incarceration and those who did not discussed their strong history with government branches intervening in their lives, identifying racial differences either due to familial affiliation with incarceration or with early contact with CPS and/or the juvenile justice system.

Inability to shield oneself:

The dominance of race in deciding outcomes in an individual's life meant that many protective measures were negated by the systematic targeting. Non-white people residing in either majority white or majority non-white communities discussed the ways that race made

them vulnerable to suspicion and targeting, increasing their chances of adverse outcomes. Higher socio-economic class status and increased education levels largely did not seem to mitigate the presence of the criminal justice system in their lives since both these advantages were nullified by racial rhetoric that made them subject to suspicion. The violence faced by those in and out of prisons, often due to their racial and gender presentation, meant that these individuals were more likely to perceive a lack of control over their lives and be more sympathetic towards others' unique circumstances, feeling that systematic factors often shape individual responses.

Whether living among others that looked like them or placed in a community unlike them, it was made clear that the boundaries of community and familial protection could only go so far:

> When referencing his experience as a mixed-race child from an extramarital affair living with the white side of his family:
>
> *"I am actually a brown person who grew up in a white family. So, going to church as a young person, being a brown bastard child in the Baptist church where my mom attended and my grandparents attended was one of those things that became church-hurt for me. And that was probably the beginning of the identity crisis for me."* – J, 55-year-old Hispanic and Indigenous male, formerly incarcerated

> *"I've been in situations where my friends have been targeted because [of] their race, and I'm Native American and Hispanic, but people generalize me and look at me because I'm the lightest person in my group of people, [they say,] 'Oh, that's a white girl.' Being racially profiled has been something I've always dealt with, and I've always had darker*

> *friends to say the least, so as far as like the police injustice, where if you call the police you're probably going to be the victim. That doesn't just resonate with my friends and family, that resonates with me too."* - B, 32-year-old Hispanic and Indigenous female, formerly incarcerated

Describing how her mother followed the conventionally pushed pathway to success, by achieving higher education, putting her children in private schools, and getting married, one interviewee discussed how even going by the book was not enough to protect her family from violence, mostly due to the criminal justice system and external processes (like the trauma of being a person of color in America and fighting for equality).

> *"So when I see that and then I'm like, no, you could do everything perfect. You ain't gotta break no laws. You gotta do nothing and the world will still screw you."* - DP, 44-year-old Black female

Similarly, race was explicitly referenced when respondents explained how systems affected and interacted with their identity. The unequal effect of race was acknowledged by all people of color, regardless of their locus of control and policy support, but individuals internalized the difference in a variety of ways. While some felt that racial disparities meant that more emphasis should be placed on the ability of institutions, chance, or other factors in shaping an individual's life over their own personal actions, others felt that racial disparities simply required an individual to work harder and make more careful choices. The latter group invoked differences among races, but then advocated for those belonging to the racial category to make

individual change, feeling that they knew of better ways to function successfully despite disparities:

> *"There's so many people unbeknownst to us that have mental illnesses and all types of situations going on and they're not getting the proper help. And I noticed that especially in the Black and Latino community and the reason being is because there's this taboo that we're taught, don't ask, don't tell, just drink about it, just smoke about it, just sex about it, throw it under the rug. There's this big ass elephant in the room and everybody sees it and everyone smells it, but we're just gonna keep ignoring it and, and that needs to change."* – M, 34-year-old Afro-Latina female, formerly incarcerated

> "*I guess at the end of the day, ultimately, especially as an adult, it is your choice. Unless it was some type of unavoidable situation, maybe self-defense or something. I feel like a lot of people that end up [in prison] are partially victims of circumstance, but mainly poor choices that usually eventually add up. The criminal system is full of a lot of lower-class Black men who have grown up in drug infested neighborhoods, were in gangs, you know, different things like that. So I feel like for a lot of the young Black males, it's very hard to choose to do the opposite and so that sometimes does lead to them breaking the law, doing crimes that they know are wrong. But that is what they have done and that's how they've ended up there. I don't think that they're all necessarily bad people, but people make bad choices.*" - L, 43-year-old Black female

Though all people of color, regardless of gender or sexual orientation, discussed an increased targeting by branches of the criminal justice system, gender presentation affected which branch was most concerned with them. The prison system specifically was described as one targeting Black men, implementing adverse outcomes onto them as compared to others entering the system. When it came to discussing the chance of re-incarceration due to parole violations, Black men both detailed close calls due to factors outside their control, like proximity to others with a felony record due to community targeting, or proximity to the possibility of infraction. On the other hand, the one white interviewee on parole discussed how he faced a technological infraction outside his control and was met with an understanding response from his parole officer. While it is obviously possible that it was a matter of difference between parole officers, the combination of this discrepancy with the prevalence of punitive measures taken against the people of color in the prison setting — namely the fact that only non-white people faced (multiple instances of) solitary confinement against them — suggests that race specifically leads to an assumption of criminality that increases the chance of facing harsh sentences. When it came to imprisonment specifically, two of the Black women interviewed discussed how the criminal justice system affects Black women and Black men separately. One talked about how Black men are much more likely to go to prison for the same acts, even between Black men and women.

> "*I want to add in gender to it because I think that, for Black women, I think we more get things like Child Protective Services and stuff like that. I have a son and a daughter, like I mentioned, and my daughter did very similar things that my son would do, like they did stupid stuff. I did a lot of stupid stuff. I would do more like jail time. Other people like me*

that were male – oh, you going to prison. Period. So I think there are gender and racial differences that come up too." – DP, 44-year-old Black female

"So I can just speak from my experience as a Black male. A lot of the stigmas, a lot of the general outlook on how high we could climb, what we should do, what we probably will do are kind of already built into the psyche of our general public based on history, All from what you watch, what you read, lack of representation, how you're taught to act or feel about certain things or not act and feel about certain things. How your path is laid to reach your maleness or masculinity in America is a whole list of barriers and hurdles that you go through trying to get to that desired destination." – T, 41-year-old Black male, formerly incarcerated

As compared to the violence faced by Black men during imprisonment and by branches of the state feeding into prison, Black women faced the pain of not being supported as victims and facing obstacles as mothers. With little trauma support, Black women were often faced with the job of protecting not only themselves, but any family or community members proximate to them. Rowe (2011) discusses how prison can actually provide women a reprieve from violence inflicted upon them from an abusive partner, allowing them greater freedom to express themselves and a growth in confidence from their increased friendships with other women. The relative safety of women in prison as opposed to the difficulties faced in the free world were discussed by two of the Black women interviewed. One Black interviewee discussed how her friend was involved in a domestic violence relationship and she had to take on the role of protector for her, though her necessity to step up to the role was coded under her extra-caring

personality rather than systemic failures. Another interviewee explained how CPS was quick to involve itself with her Black mother, despite her hearing similar (or worse) stories of physical punishment from her white friends' parents.

> *"My uncle is a Black man. My son is a Black man. Now my mother is a Black mother. I do not believe that if I had been in a Black community, the things that we experience would even be a thing [unlike] in Washtenaw County, which is a predominantly white space. The things my uncle did as a teenager would have been a slap on the wrist… If something happened in one of the [white] counties, it seems like they just wanna strip you of everything and they don't look at nothing else. So again, my son has two parents that are professionals. Can we try anything else? My mom. Nobody tried to provide services for my mom."* - DP, 44-year-old Black female

> *"So I don't necessarily agree with the people that think that when you go to prison it makes things worse. To be honest, I think that might be the case for men but not for women. And I say that because men, I think their prison system is more violent and more clingy as far as people being in different cliques and feeling like they have to prove themselves and a lot of shady characters … in a men's prison you gotta worry about getting raped. That's not really the case in a women's prison. And the reason being is because women are really emotional creatures. I think a lot of women in prison, they get lonely, they want that companionship, they want that love. So you don't have to force yourself on them or, or rape them or do anything to them."* — M, 34-year-old Afro-Latina female, formerly incarcerated

> *"There's this old lady in there. She works in the law library and she killed her husband. She had spent 31 years being beaten by this man. 31 years of police contact, all of that, [and] restraining orders. All of that. Then one time she snapped and killed him. And she was sent to prison for the rest of her life."* - 32-year-old Hispanic and Indigenous female, formerly incarcerated

Race continued to shape each interviewees' interactions with and perspectives on the system, even if not explicitly racially coded. Thus, turning to analysis on the dynamics within prison, an environment which heightens racial association due to the explicitly racial physical separation and policies, can help extract how race might prevail over and work with the factor of lived experience with incarceration. This analysis of racial aspects of the prison system based on interviews is not a comprehensive one — there are many more racial dynamics within the system that are not covered here. In this analysis, I simply attempt to cover some of the main themes of racial aspects of imprisonment that were brought up during interviews.

Prison Culture:

Given the prison system's foundational reliance on race, it is vital to pick out how racialization leads to imprisonment and shapes survival due to prison's physical, emotional, and mental isolation tactics. Through the process of incarceration, a specific sub-culture is developed based on adaptive responses to the "pains of imprisonment" or the "array of material and moral deprivations" due to imprisonment, causing a development of different social roles and guiding specific behavior (Cunha, 2014). Young, Meyers, and Morse (2023) argue that prison culture can

be broken into two separate realms – prison code, broadly characterizing one's role as an incarcerated person, and racial code, or the more specific rules drawing on one's race/ethnicity. Prison culture is not uniform across the board in its applications to each individual and to each space within the prison. Young et al. (2023) develop prison culture as varying based on pre-prison experiences, formal interactions within the prison system, and the specific institution/prison at hand. Situational interactions also shape the amount that an individual adheres to prison culture, and it is often adopted especially when dealing with correctional officers or institutional oppressions, such as deprivation of healthcare, proper food, poor housing, and interpersonal conflict.

The balance of prison code vs. racial code in producing a unique prison culture varies across institutions and time. The racial code both reinforces correctional policies and challenges them, and top-down correction influences how the racial code is carried out. Some researchers argue for voluntary social groupings along racial lines as a means of protecting power and control within institutions and distributing scarce resources. Other researchers argue that formal, institutional policies are more responsible for sorting on the basis of racial lines, likely due to segregation to units on the basis of race, and a continued use of racial classification to subsequently place individuals in a number of roles. Further, the gang-like social groupings are often used by correctional officers to maintain order by negotiating with the "shot caller" as a way of conveying messages to the group (Young et al., 2023). Based on interviews, it appears that racial sorting comes about from a number of dynamics: pre-prison racial segregation in the free world that carries over due to the communities translated directly into a prison setting, similarities among people of a similar racial and religious group that arise from navigating the

system through their identity, a norm that arises through others doing the same, and formal policy-enforced separation on the basis of race.

> *"You got rules and guidelines and rule books and code of conduct and what's an infraction from the MDOC [Michigan Department of Corrections] and then you have the yard, and they conflict with each other… Now I have the Suit and Tie[4] and then I have the Orange and Blue inmate. Suit and Tie saying don't do this but you got these inmates over here telling me to do that and I'm spending way more time with the inmate than I am with the Suit and Tie. A model inmate from the MDOC standard is someone that has separated themselves from the prison politics… but that is an impossible task. I can say that I did not follow every single rule, but I found out what rules I needed to follow so the Suit and Tie wouldn't be on my head, and then I had to find out how to be – please forgive me for saying this like this – but I had to figure out how to be a worse animal than the animals around me so those animals didn't fuck with me. Now, when I became that animal, I grew up and I was still that animal, but now I stood on a particular mode of values that I was refusing to break, and religion had a lot of things to play with that, but I just wasn't scared to die anymore … Now the MDOC clearly knows of prison politics. So when things happen on the yard or big riots or big fights or things of that sort, I was like one of the 10 guys that they would come talk to."* - A, 42-year-old Black male, formerly incarcerated

The benefit of the prison code in setting up a specific "status criteria" that is possible for people incarcerated to meet is a precarious role, given the different strains of norms coming from

[4] Reference to MDOC officials

the struggle of power between correctional officers and other prison groups (Young et al., 2023). With little space for atonement, heightened trauma and exposure to violence, and constant deprivations, each person adapts goals of behavior to their unique perception of the environment.

> *"But, me on the other hand, I also created a standard for myself, come over here, they're not gonna fuck with me. And if you're over here with me, I guarantee you, they're not gonna fuck with you. And the Sunni Muslim religion, me as an individual, the Muslims around me, and our own, we created a safe haven that, religiously, these are the rules of conduct, follow those rules of conduct, stay away from that prison politics shit, if you wanna do it [play into prison politics], we can't help you, but if you don't wanna do it, you wanna get your shit together, ain't nobody gonna fuck with you while you're doing that."* - A, 42-year-old Black male, formerly incarcerated

When discussing what led him to alcoholism and his general view on how to gain control over one's own life:

> *"But when your power is taken from you, your automatic defense mechanism is to control. To be in control of your situation, whatever means necessary, you're in control, whether it's a negative or a positive, but to be in control allows me to manipulate and push myself around as to not be controlled and have somebody exert power over me. And that becomes a lifelong goal when you've been abused at that age. You just have to be in control of the situation."* - J, 55-year-old Hispanic and Indigenous male, formerly incarcerated

Correctional Officers and CJS officials:

Beyond explicitly racial situations, correctional officers (COs) continue to complicate the prison environment and the racialized picture of who belongs in prison. Khan (2022) outlines how prisons are often constructed in rural, primarily white areas and draw employees from those same regions, while those who are incarcerated are disproportionately Black and brown people who resided in urban areas. A clear majority of correctional officers, 61.4% of the population, are non-Hispanic white people (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2024). In comparison, only about 31% of the imprisoned population in 2022 was non-Hispanic white (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2023). In comparison, 21.2% and 13.8% of correctional officers are African-American and Hispanic, respectively compared to 32% and 23% of imprisoned people (Federal Bureau of Prisons, 2024; Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2023). Thus, class overlap between correctional officers and incarcerated people is often overpowered by the difference in power and status attributed to correctional officers as opposed to those incarcerated. The racial tensions reproduced in prison often encourage correctional officers to justify their position of power by inflicting violence onto incarcerated individuals, or punish non-white incarcerated people due to negative racial associations.

> *"The guys who don't have it so great at home, you can just tell they don't have no authority at home, but they come in into the prison system, they come on the rock and now they're in control and they just want to be a complete prick the whole day and, and treat people the way they do as a release for them so that they can feel that power and control. And that's a very criminal behavior. That's the same thing that a criminal does. They don't have that power and control or it has been taken from them when they were*

younger or in their living situation when they get to another situation and get on top of things. It makes them kind of ruthless the way they rule." – J, 55-year-old Hispanic and Indigenous male, formerly incarcerated

Depending on the prison setting at hand, dynamics between correctional officers and incarcerated people can vary greatly. As outlined in the literature review, there are a number of different prison models which come into place when considering the difference of power dynamics. Understanding the reputation of individual correctional officers can then be a vital part of the prison environment, tailoring one's own actions to meet the demands of the person in charge.

"That was his job, but no supervision there, it's, here's the keys, here you go. Here. That was it. We used to feed ourselves, clothe ourselves, make all of our own furnitures, all that stuff. That's when we had control. Prisons were a little bit rougher then obviously, but for the most part with the prisoners running it, it actually went smoother than it does now, a lot smoother. I mean, now it depends on what prison you go to and what rules you have to follow. You have to watch the COs, get to know the COs to find out what you can do when a particular CO is working. You've got some COs, that, they do their count round and you can get up and run to the bathroom if you need to. You have other COs, you get up and run to the bathroom, you got a ticket[5]*. There's no constant in any prison. There's no constant in any unit in a prison. Every unit can be run differently."* - TB, 56-year-old white male, formerly incarcerated

[5] A misconduct writeup that can be brought up at parole hearings and resentencing hearings and may prevent release from facility at the earliest possible date.

Correctional officers often come from similar circumstances as incarcerated people due to class overlaps, which could lead to feelings of personal connection if class status is not mitigated by racial and ethnic differences. Khan (2022) argues that Black and brown people have a "presumed identity" of "criminal," regardless of citizenship status and legal system contact, forcing onto them the negative stigmas associated with criminal deviance that draw from a long history of racialization. Non-white correctional officers might be encouraged to dispute their perceived criminality by becoming strict arbiters of prison rules, often imposing greater pain on those incarcerated under them in the process, especially non-white people. White correctional officers might also be prone to using their power to reinforce racial differences and carry forward racial articulations to overcome socioeconomic class similarities.

Even while these oppressive possibilities hold true, the mutual suffering and stigmatization imposed by the prison environment could push COs and incarcerated people to form connections. Khan (2022) argues that prison employment often comes with a "psychological wage," contesting the typical emotional comfort reserved for white people under white supremacy. "Prison guards and local whites" could see their proximities to prison as "brutish, warping one's sense of humanity" and find greater connection to non-white incarcerated people regardless of negative racialization. Non-white COs might also find connection with incarcerated people (especially non-white people) due to their mutual hardship at the hands of a white supremacist institution. Racialization manifests in complex relationships between those who tend to have institutional power versus those who do not, influencing prison culture in differing ways depending on the situation at hand.

Even with the potential for connection, the overwhelming power of correctional officers that allows them to impact sentencing length and living circumstances creates a cautionary gap between imprisoned people and officers. A "good" correctional officer in a bad mood can be just as harmful as a correctional officer who is consistently harsh, meaning that prison code factors in social distance, strategic survival, and the cover of masculinity for incarcerated people (Young et al., 2023). It is better for those incarcerated to maintain distance from correctional staff, staying invisible when possible and prioritizing other incarcerated people over relationships with COs. (Young et al., 2023). To further avoid the possibility of alliance between those with explicit power and those without, prisons often warn of "overfamiliarity" between incarcerated individuals and volunteers or higher-ups. Being accused of "overfamiliarity" can lead to steep consequences for all parties involved, including dismissal or suspension for officers and solitary confinement, movement, or other repercussions for incarcerated people.

> *"If, for example, you have an officer of the same descent as you or you are cool with, an officer of like, an ethnic background, or, whether it be African American or, you know, non-white, automatically, if you're too cool with them, it's over-familiarity. Or, say, a group of people are cool with this officer, because you're not, you get targeted."* - B, 32-year-old Hispanic and Indigenous woman, formerly incarcerated

The dynamics between correctional officers and incarcerated people is reflected in that of many other criminal justice officials, including parole officers and judges. Parole officers have the ability to send individuals back to prison at any point, meaning surveillance and insecurity of position continues long past imprisonment, and mistakes outside of prison walls will often be

met with harsh punishments. A person on parole is often met with incredibly high standards to protect their freedom from detention. Parole violations, in the eyes of the institution, are seen as validating that the formerly incarcerated person is incorrigible and unchanged, necessitating even more punishment to drill reform into them. Parole boards and probation officers also rarely have direct oversight, allowing them to make sentencing decisions at their personal discretion.

> *"So when I was going through my hearing, they say, 'Were you around drugs and guns?' I says, 'No. I was in a video shoot. That's fake. Those are props, that's a prop gun.' They didn't have any physical evidence, all they had was pictures and an email. So technically, it's not my word against anybody's, it's an email, but recidivism court, or the parolee violation court — we call it a kangaroo court — it isn't innocent to proven guilty. It's the preponderance of evidence. So with the preponderance of evidence, what they told me at the hearing [was], 'ok, we hear you but it COULD be real.' But it's NOT… I did everything. Everything they wanted me to do, I did and then some, and the picture gets me back in there for nine months... But another parole board member or the season of whatever the MDOC wanna do, I could have been back in there for 60 months for something so frivolous."* - A, 42-year-old Black male, formerly incarcerated

Lifetime of Violence:

Pre-prison violence:

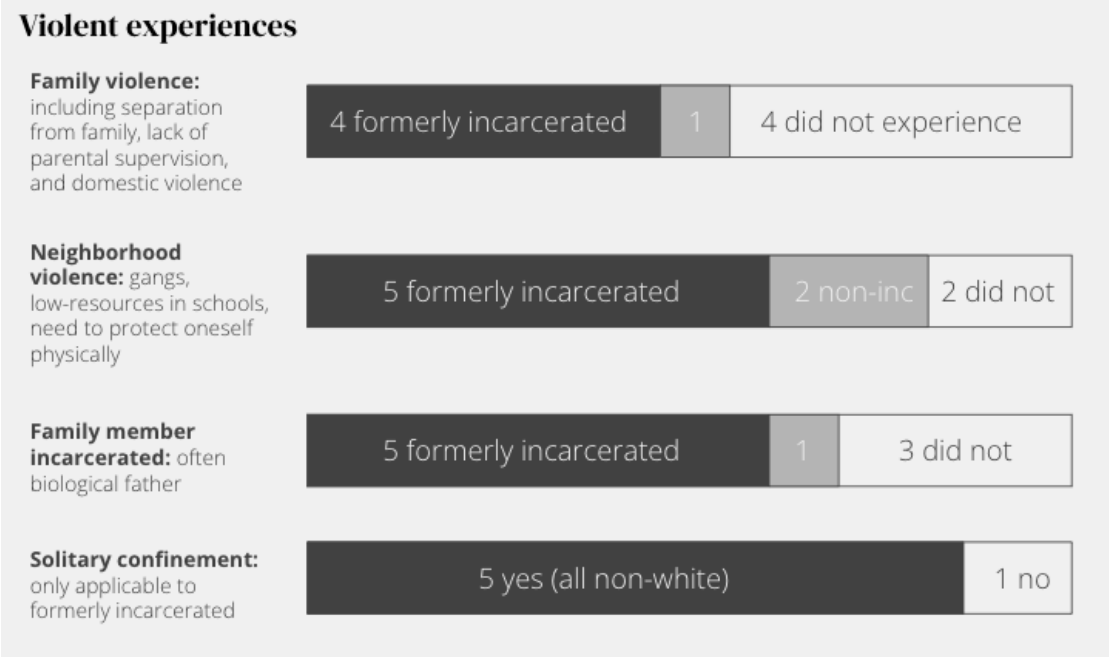


Figure 4: Confirmed number of violent experiences (possible unconfirmed or undisclosed experiences). Race played a significant role in neighborhood violence and solitary confinement, in which only the non-white respondents answered no.

Carceral Society:

Though life inside prison is subject to extreme violence and the will of correctional officers above incarcerated individuals, a similar pattern exists in ghettoized societies outside of the prison. Poverty tends to collide with violence, whether in or out of the prison system. This is partially due to the presence of other branches of the systems in impoverished communities and due to violence as a survival and normalized tactic within these communities. In an environment where reoccurring, warm parental/family interactions might not be sustainable due to work

conditions or other interferences, children began to turn to the larger urban community for safety and stability.

> *"I got out there pretty early — age probably around 12 or 13 — with the neighborhood and the influences of the neighborhood. It wasn't the worst of neighborhoods, but it wasn't the best either. I have to say as a child, I was very impressionable. I think I was trying to look for a family unit or what I believe the family unit was from like TV, and things of that sort. Just going out in the neighborhood with the kids, you can do what you wanna do out there so it was just more appealing, and I just tried to create my own family out there as a child. When I was growing up, although I worked, I still took to the riff-raff of things which, to me, led to my incarceration at the age of 19."* – A, 42-year-old Black male, formerly incarcerated

Whether through intentional institutional presence or the abandonment of the social welfare state, life inside prison tends to recreate the violence and instability of low socio-economic environments. Struggles with poverty often strain family and community bonds, creating chaotic and unpredictable settings due to a lack of regulated social order (Western, 2015). This chaos can manifest in several different ways, including sensory overload from noise or overcrowding, low levels of routine due to the carceral reach, and unstable employment. Violence becomes a way to meet dangerous challenges and get things done in an already difficult environment. Thus, those who can make use of violence in an efficient manner are met with respect and positive attributions to their identity. Violence can be a tool used for one's own benefit at the same time it harms oneself; people play multiple parts including victim,

perpetrator, participant, or witness to this violence throughout their lifetimes. What starts as "family violence in the childhood home and adolescent fighting in the neighborhood were ultimately eclipsed in adulthood by assaults, often in prison" (Western, 2015). The violent prison system is thus nothing new, since most incarcerated are used to being surrounded by trauma since their early childhood.

> *"You know, before I went to prison, I tried to commit suicide. I used to cut myself as a kid because I was so hurt and broken inside, and that was the only way for me to get rid of my pain. My inner pain. Fighting was a like drinking a cup of water, like, I had to do it every day in order to feel better, and it got to a point where I'm like, 'ok, well I can just cut myself and instead of hurting anybody else, I just hurt myself.' That was my thought process back then."*- B, 32-year-old Hispanic and Indigenous female, formerly incarcerated

> *"So, growing up poor, like I did watch the rich kids, you know, not having the issues that I did. I didn't understand. In my mind I was seeing success in other people and judging it by the accomplishments of other people, but they didn't have the same set of circumstances. They weren't growing up poor in the ghetto, you know, with a broken family and drugs and abuse and this and that and all that stuff."* – J, 55-year-old Hispanic and Indigenous male, formerly incarcerated

It is important to emphasize that the conditions created in ghettoicized societies are intentionally structured and are often due to a lack of state presence where needed and an

overabundance in areas of criminalization. The lack of social welfare state often leads to absent parents, a tightly packed setting, or constant moving of community members due to housing insecurity. Histories of racial and gendered exclusion mean that employment is often unstable and family members are often unable to access the necessary tools to address addiction or mental illness. Further, the same racial and gendered patterns destabilize families by removing valuable community/family members for prolonged time periods, either through incarceration or removal of children from their home, leading to cycles of violence due to the high turnover of people contributing to an uncontrollable environment (Western, 2015). With little informal sources of social order that urge non-violence and high levels of institutional influence through schools, police, and prisons, violence becomes almost an inevitable part of people's lives.

> *"Well, I believe the system was designed for me to get there, just from birth. So whether it's drugs being planted in my community, whether it's a lack of resources being planted in my community, whether it's something that might not seem applicable, but like the lack of healthy foods, liquor stores and things of that nature, being in my community. The way my educational system and my public school setting is set up in my community. Everything along the path that I walk as a child, I would suggest was more leading towards incarceration as opposed to, let's just say education or some thriving system."*
> - T, 41-year-old Black male, formerly incarcerated

In reference to the interviewee being in the room when a shooting occurred, leading to her incarceration:

> *"That split moment, it literally was a split moment, where I had the chance to leave or help him, and I chose to help him. Because in in my mind, what I've grown up with [is] loyalty and we don't fuck with the police. Excuse my language. We don't call the cops because we don't [want to] end up dead. You know, all of that stuff plays in your mind when you're in a situation. Granted, I should have been at school that day. I went to to his house, to braid his hair, to make some money for gas so I could make it to school."* - B, 32-year-old Hispanic and Indigenous female, formerly incarcerated

The revolving door:

Re-entry, the process of leaving prison and returning to (carceral) society, does not mark the end of carceral contact. As individuals begin resettling, agencies meant to support their reintegration turn into avenues for additional control, interference, and surveillance (Cracknell, 2023). As described by Cohen (1985), deviancy control by the state is akin to a giant net cast out by a fisher; once "deviants" are caught in the system, they are thrown back out to the sea with tags and labels, marking them ripe for recapture in the same net. In this sense, parole/probation can be seen as widening the net of penal control since it expands the carceral supervision system into communities and often re-incarcerates people due to minute violations (Cracknell, 2023). Navigating the rules of parole/probation becomes a full-time job itself, sucking away precious time and resources from individuals already in a vulnerable state. Cracknell (2023) highlights how services that seem to be welfare-based or supportive on the surface actually serve to trap women (and all "carceral citizens") as "institutional captives" who are unable to exit the ultra-surveillance required to access help, often to their own harm.

.

"Technically they separate you from your support system. They came to check out my house. I just think that was redundant. They came with 12 police officers and five cars. Like, my mom's not a thug." – A, 42-year-old Black male, formerly incarcerated

"*So it's a revolving door because they don't have those resources. Me personally, I just came home from prison after being in prison for 10 years. I had no money. I had no job. I still don't have a job. I had no car. I had to do everything on my own. I had to go get my license there. These are things that they're supposed to help provide assistance with. I'm still waiting on the bridge card. I've gone days without eating because I had to. I had to choose whether or not I was going to put gas in my car or eat something. Gotta make it to school.*" - B, 32-year-old Hispanic and Indigenous female, formerly incarcerated

Policies

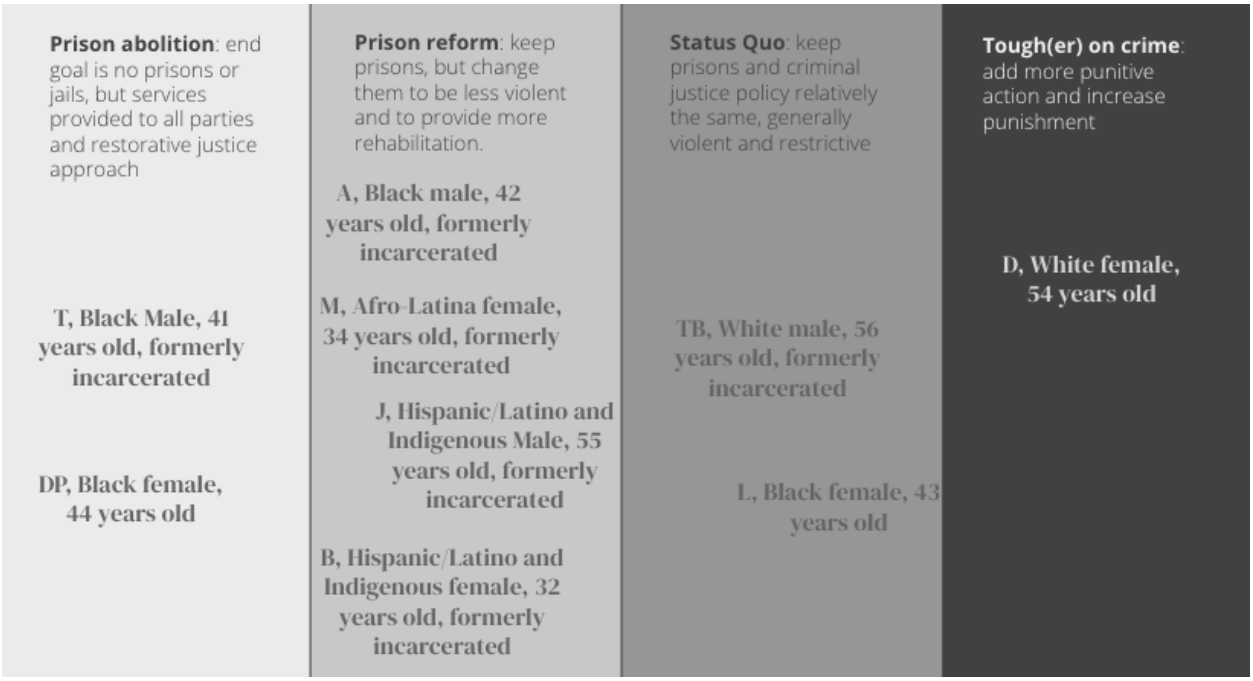


Figure 4: Spectrum of policy beliefs of interviewees, sorted into the four schools outlined in the literature review. All of those in the prison abolition and prison reform schools had lived experience with incarceration (personally or through family) and are non-white. Those in the status quo and tough on crime schools either did not have lived experience with incarceration or were white, suggesting that incarceration has a subtle effect that is amplified by racial identity to become an indicator of policy beliefs.

An appalling healthcare system:

The policy change to prison that was brought up most often, on interviewees' own volition, was the horrific healthcare system within prisons. Almost all of the formerly incarcerated either mentioned watching someone die from horrible healthcare or their own stories with the system. Many of them were politically involved in prison reform due to the pain of losing a friend from the apathy of the healthcare system inside.

> *"We don't even call it health care. We call it death care. Because you could be literally on your deathbed and they'd be like just drink some water and lay on your left side and take some Tylenol, you should be ok. I literally watched someone die like that — the lady [that] lived right across the hall from me. She went to health care because she was coughing up blood; she had been coughing [up blood] for days. This was before COVID. She went to health care [and] they gave her two breathing treatments and some Tylenol, told her to drink some water and go get some rest. She went at count time[6] at 9 that night. She was dead by 6:30 in the morning. She was dead. In her room. They could have sent*

[6] At certain times of the day, incarcerated people must be in their cells so that correctional officers can account for them. These count times happen on a routine daily and stop all activity until correctional officers make their way through the whole prison.

her to the hospital right then, and they probably could have saved her life. But because they have so much disregard for us in there, she died in her room alone." - B, 32-year-old Hispanic and Indigenous female, formerly incarcerated

"He was in his seventies and had horrible health problems and the lack of healthcare in there was killing him. And they shipped him up to Marquette and stuck him in a closet basically because you know, him being a lifer, he was in a level two prison[7] that was very comfortable for him. And he got put on oxygen, so they had to put him somewhere where he could have oxygen. Their idea for that was to send him to a level five security and lock him in a closet where he couldn't get his JPays [8], his phone calls, none of that stuff. And he ended up dying in there…" - J, 55-year-old Hispanic and Indigenous male, formerly incarcerated

Changes, not reform, have been made to the healthcare system since the onslaught of the COVID-19 pandemic. The prison system has come under closer watch, so it makes an on-the-face effort to show that proper procedures were followed. Prisons will often deal with infectious viruses by shutting down all activity, placing people in solitary confinement for quarantining, and pausing programming. This means that individuals might go weeks without leaving their cell, causing a greater mental impact at a purported health benefit. Impacts from the lack of prison healthcare stretch far beyond the period of incarceration, and are often heightened by the economic debilitation of years without a proper income.

[7] Prisons in Michigan are Level 1 through Level 5, each corresponding with "management level" of those incarcerated inside. Generally, lower levels contain people with shorter sentences (left)
[8] Prison communication service

> *"I was 127 [pounds] when I got out. I went all the way down to 123 [pounds] by the time I made it to Ann Arbor finally. I mean, I was skin and bones. I had things happening to me. I had no idea what was going on and couldn't get to a doctor because I didn't know one. You can't just go to an oncologist. You have to have your doctor refer you to an oncologist. I can't – you can't just go to one. .. My left leg ended up twice the size of my right leg and I woke up that way one morning. No idea what's going on. You know, that scares the piss out of you. Everything swells up and you just kind of like, don't know what's going on and you can't get a hold of a doctor."* – TB, 56-year-old white male, formerly incarcerated

What instead?

Those who experienced the prison system, either due to their direct incarceration or due to close contact with incarcerated family members, were all in favor of reform on multiple fronts. Whether or not an interviewees tended towards an internal locus of control or an external one for the issue of crime, the violence of the prison system made people believe that it was inefficient regardless. The main difference causing a disparity in policy beliefs was a lack of knowledge of systemic and institutional violence, either caused by a lack of personal incarceration or due to racialized and gendered differences in experiencing the world that led to institutional ignorance.

> *"I believe that criminal justice now is just a system of punishment and a system that's built on economic gain. I believe on the surface, if you're very kind of naive or if you want to just kind of have this blind faith, it's painted as a system of safety and*

rehabilitation. But being a part of that system, I know that's 100% furthest from the truth." - T, 41-year-old Black male, formerly incarcerated

"A part of me wants to have faith in our criminal justice system that they, you know, put people through a trial and all that to determine that they did something. They made a choice that was wrong. Whatever wrong means… I definitely don't think that the judicial system is perfect. It's made up of human beings and we're not infallible. I have never really walked with someone through… I can definitely see that the system itself could be broken. I just don't know for sure how broken it is compared to – I haven't studied criminal justice long enough to know like, where the broken parts are." - D, 54-year-old white female

When it came to full prison abolition, however, the reoccurring belief of the elusive evil person continued to pop up. Each individual identified problems within the prison system, and ultimately felt that prisons provided little productive power to those inside of them. Even while believing that there are many people who had robust justifications for their crime, or that there are larger factors (like mental illness or poverty) that might cause someone to act in a certain way, many of those interviewed had difficulties fully condemning prison as an institution. They told increasingly gory stories about the types of people who were also in there, and "lacked empathy" or had "demonic forces involved," for whom prisons must remain for the purpose of incapacitation.

“So there's a lot of mental problems going on that stem from other things, again, could have been childhood traumatization. It could be something that's just inherited. But you got some stone-cold schizophrenic people. You got people in there who have no emotion whatsoever. Like sociopath. They don't feel, they don't have that capability.”
- J, 55-year-old Hispanic and Indigenous male, formerly incarcerated

"A bad apple would be like how I mentioned earlier, someone that keeps getting out and coming back and getting out and coming back. Those types of people are the ones that they put the beaming light, the flashlight, on and they make policies and things off of those people, and it's not fair because it affects everybody else. Why am I being treated and punished like the person that did something multiple times when this is my first time?” - M, 34-year-old Afro-Latina female, formerly incarcerated

“Although we made choices that landed us in there. If you're not — I’m kinda caught in the middle because spending so long in prison, I do honestly side with and believe that there are people that need to be incarcerated, dealing with incarcerated individuals for so long for so many years. I also believe that some people do not want to change.”
- A, 42-year-old Black male, formerly incarcerated

Though incapacitation did prove compelling for some, deterrence did not come up as a justification for prisons. This appears to align with longstanding prison research, as the deterrent effect of extreme punishment has been disproven, leaving retribution and rehabilitation as the most well-known discourses on how to determine severity of punishment. I will return to views

on retribution, starting with rehabilitation due to the unanimous agreement over this goal. Though all supported providing services to those struggling from substance abuse or mental illness, those who lived in prison or were highly familiar with its mechanisms were quick to identify rehabilitation as an unattainable task in prisons as they are now, which tried inefficiently to provide services but ended up heightening trauma and pain instead due to its violent methods.

> *"I'm not a scholar or anything like that, but if my memory serves me correctly, the word rehabilitation means to go back to the way something was. Like, I hate that word as an incarcerated individual and for people incarcerated. Because what are we going back to? This is what brought us in here. I like reform better. Because [if] you're reforming old behavior and replacing it with a new behavior and the thought process and things of that sort. So if the system is working properly, if society put me in the system, for the system to work properly and then I pay that debt, those individuals should be able to come back out and reintegrate back into society. unless you're just writing everybody off that makes a mistake or they break the law and you're just throwing them in there."* - A, 42-year-old Black male, formerly incarcerated

> *"I learned that some of the issues. Yeah, it was their fault. They definitely did it. But then there also was some people, they did what they did because they had no choice. It's because of their environment, the people around them, they had no choice. And then there was some people that are mentally unstable that did some things and they needed the proper care and unfortunately how things are in Michigan, we used to have so many institutions and asylums and now I think it might be maybe one or two. So the first thing*

> *that they do is send people to prison and they're not getting the proper care and medication and things that they need. Prison has basically become an adult daycare. No one is really getting properly rehabilitated. You have to rehabilitate yourself."* - M, 34-year-old Afro-Latina female, formerly incarcerated

The precarious balance of rehabilitation/reform as opposed to incapacitation or retribution continued to be a difficult question for those who experienced and did not experience incarceration alike. When considering themselves and others, those who were incarcerated often felt that retribution was a fair justification for their prison time, and they took full accountability for their crime. The subgroup of incarcerated people with an internal locus of control, who supported prison reform, tended to focus on the fact that the majority of offenders would eventually be released, meaning the burden fell partially on society to provide them with the resources so as to not push them into a life of crime for survival. They felt that accountability would best be achieved in a more humane setting, one that also contributed to rehabilitation even while individuals faced retribution. Support for prison reform while holding an internal locus of control was also likely caused by the knowledge-based split: many with an internal locus of control leaned towards prison reform rather than tough-on-crime due to their knowledge of the disproportionate harm of prison onto an offender, not due to disagreements on the underlying values of each policy. All of those with an internal locus of control agreed on the potential for a 'monstrous other,' a person which had to be quarantined away from society in a prison, even as there were disputes on how many of these people existed.

"It is hard for me to hear someone talk about how there are some people who are just so incredibly mentally ill and so incredibly unstable that they probably should be behind bars for the rest of their lives. That's hard for me to hear, but I can believe that it exists and I'm not going to tell them that [former correctional officers'] lived experience supervising these people is invalid. I don't know what that punishment would look like. I mean, we're not in medieval times here. We're not like, tying and quartering people. I don't know what the balance of punishment versus remediation– is that the word – I don't know what the balance should be. I don't know. Like how they determine when a particular individual is just too far gone and it's not worth working on them anymore. I don't know." - D, 54-year-old white female

"My decisions when I was growing up were horrible. I wouldn't wanna be my neighbor. But everybody isn't like me as far as looking in the mirror and saying, look, I have to do something different. What is the guidelines and protocols for the system? Like I feel like you're just pushing people out. It's the same for inmates like me when we come out, like the system looks, it's a number game, like you're gonna be back. And the statistics and the numbers show that like so that you're failing, if all of these people are coming back, what is your job? Your job is to make sure that you got the resources that you needed in order not to be sitting back in front of me." - A, 42-year-old Black male

Those with an external locus of control, who supported prison abolition, also agreed on the importance of accountability for one's crimes or harm, but felt that restorative justice best addressed this portion by providing tools for victims and perpetrators to move forward. They did

not highlight the importance of retribution or incapacitation, finding that systems tend to create dangerous people and maintain unsafe situations rather than individuals themselves. They highlighted how prisons tended to create more hurt people, and that "hurt people hurt people," so the community harm continues to amplify.

> "*So I will also say, I'm a victim of domestic violence and my daughter is a survivor of a child molestation. I, honestly, to this day. Do I have ill feelings about the person? For sure I do. Do I have any desire for them to be incarcerated? No. Why? Because I don't think it helps. It just, it doesn't, it doesn't help. I like to have options to keep me protected right, so like can you say that this person can't come into her vicinity? You know, can we have a personal protection order? Can we do things like that? I wanted those things in place from the justice system. But to be like, Oh well, lock him up for 10 years. But what is that gonna do in 10 years when he get out? And now you've put them in a place where people who have all been convicted of crimes that have got no support, no help, no nothing. And that's not going to change what my baby went through."* – DP, 44-year-old Black female

If rehabilitation is the goal, then people with knowledge of the system suggest changing healthcare, levels of violence, and amount of services available. All of the formerly incarcerated people highlighted how they were only able to access programming in their last five years, arguing that if rehabilitation is the goal, they should be able to start the process right as they enter prison rather than sitting around for years at a time. Further, they shed light on the current

aspects of prisons that make rehabilitation almost impossible, whether it be the torturous use of solitary confinement for any difficulties, the constant fear of violence from others, the separation from community, or the lack of mental health and substance abuse support. As long as prisons continue to be predicated on the use of violence, they will continue to perpetuate trauma and exacerbate or create substance abuse and mental illness problems.

> *"Mind you, there are overdoses in the prison all the time, whether it be fentanyl, Suboxone, pills, whatever it is people do it. Needles, all type of stuff, ok? [The prison's] method of helping is let me throw you in [solitary confinement] and give you a charge. One of the ladies that I was incarcerated with, she's been incarcerated back and forth for about 18 years now. She was in there with me twice — since I've been in there 10 years — she's been there twice since I was there, and way many times before I came. And I just found out that on Friday she died of a Fentanyl overdose. She was found in a cemetery with a pocketful of money. All her jewelry owned, fully clothed, in a cemetery. This lady, while she was in prison, she wrote a book, was back talking to her family again, she got married. All in all, she was still getting high…. And if she would have had help with that? There and when she came home, she might have been ok."*- B, 32-year-old Hispanic and Indigenous female, formerly incarcerated

> *"I've realized that, because I know people in the army and some of the similarities are the same, but each individual is different and I consider myself a very strong-minded, strong-willed man, but the mental health side of it, the PTSD side of it, what I've seen, what I experienced, what I was involved in, those things that really left a mark on my, my*

mental health. I'm working on it. I'm pretty sure there may have been resources through [the system], and that's another thing I'm scared of too. Like, I haven't necessarily talked to my parole officer about these things because I've heard stories, I can't say for a fact, but other formerly incarcerated inmates would, you know, like go to their parole officers, but their sickness may have been a little bit more than mine, but for one reason or another they found themselves the way back an order, just being pumped up with medication religiously." - A, 42-year-old Black male, formerly incarcerated

"You'll hear a lot of these stories in the solitary confinement thing, where they just tuck you in a, in a little five-by-eight room, a little nine-by-six room and leave you there, you know, for months on end. I'm a victim of that myself. I spent quite a bit of time in the beginning of my time locked away. In the mental aspect of that, it does not prepare you to be in population with other people. In fact, it traumatizes you and you get PTSD from it, and it makes you unable to socialize. So, I mean, to this day when I'm speaking to somebody, if something moves behind that person, I have to apologize to people because I have to see what it is that's moving. I don't mean to lose eye contact with somebody, but I'm so fearful of my life from living in those situations that I have to see. You know, you walk into a room, you sit in the corner with your back against the wall, that's just natural for somebody who's been in that environment." – J, 55-year-old Hispanic and Indigenous male, formerly incarcerated

The current system conveyed a very clear message to those with racialized identities who had lived experience with incarceration, either personal or through their community. It outlined

to them who deserved to live or die, and how much they would be seen as worthy of forgiveness, reparation, and restitution in the grand scheme. Even while taking on accountability for their personal actions, there were larger stakes in who was seen as individually culpable.

> *"I remember being in school in government history classes and everybody talking about capital punishment, and everybody saying things like, if somebody kills someone that is unforgivable. And I'm sitting here as this kid, that's like, so that would mean my uncle would be [unforgivable]. You think he deserves to die?"* – DP, 44-year-old Black female

Limitations and further research:

Though the combination of the two studies attempted to overcome the shortcomings of each, there was still room for improvement in understanding how lived experience with incarceration changes policy beliefs. Ultimately, I found that race and incarceration factor together to create the most significant results, suggesting an area for further research in political science. Though there are a number of studies on racial discrepancies within the criminal justice system, few factor these racial discrepancies into individual voting behavior and policy actions. How do people act and participate in government if they feel that their race causes them differential treatment? There is a rising acknowledgment of the criminal justice system and imprisonment specifically as a fundamental influence on political science, and my research adds to this field of study. Few concentrated efforts have been made to understand how incarceration changes the way a person systematically views the world and politically acts upon those views. Further studies should look into policy proposals from those currently incarcerated, along with

generally gathering more information about the less quantitative aspects of the massive imprisoned population.

There was still room for improvement in my present research, which should be considered in the implementation of further studies. Study 1 used approximations for incarceration in GSS analysis, combining lockedup and arrest or convictd and arrest. Though these proxies did work, previous political science work shows that there is a different impact from jail versus imprisonment for voting practices, and thus a specific incarceration question that also factored in length of sentence could cause an instrumental change (White, 2022). Further, as previously mentioned, the questions themselves were limiting, with references to "people like me" or a "person in need" which might activate other biases and change the way an individual responds. Further research on this field might benefit from crafting a new survey that takes into consideration racially charged language, biases about criminality, and asks specifically about more progressive policy.

Though Study 2 attempted to supplement and overcome some of the weaker points of Study 1, it also had room for improvement. Due to my limited time in conducting an undergraduate thesis, I was not able to gather the expected 12 interviews. Thus, I did not factor in the views of non-incarcerated (working class) Black men, a population highly targeted by the prison system. Further research should include the long-form answers and nuanced explanations for policy given by this population specifically. A large variety of interviewees would be beneficial on both sides — there are a number of other factors that might come into play in violence of imprisonment, such as age incarcerated, different state policies, nuances within race such as colorism and featurism, and more. Though I tried to control for a number of factors, further analysis should take into consideration the many small aspects that might fundamentally

shift criminal justice interactions. Most of my interviewees were also affiliated with the University in some way, meaning that there is a possible bias towards those who are activists or are more involved in institutions to cause change.

I focused on how views of criminal justice policy might change after incarceration, not measuring the actual political activism levels in the sample at hand. Though it is important to understand the values of individuals to see what types of policy they might want (that is not currently in public discourse), further research should look into actual political activity of the currently or formerly incarcerated. Contact with the carceral system has typically been seen to cause political withdrawal, but it is also possible that individuals engage in political activism by "advocating for deep community engagement, consciousness, and power-building" (Weaver, Prowse, & Piston, 2020). While voting might drop off, that is not to say that individuals do not engage in political activism elsewhere, making a stronger framework about political involvement important, one that considers constraints of the carceral state, race, and gender in its conceptualization. It is also unclear whether incarceration specifically leads to lower voting participation, though jail time does (White, 2022). Further, though I focused on incarceration, interactions with carceral institutions in and out of prison walls are tied to political change, meaning there is room to research the way that carceral interactions on the whole shift policy beliefs and actual voting practices (Weaver et al., 2020). The breadth of the carceral state and its intertwined nature with race, gender, and class means that it should be factored into a larger range of political science research.

Conclusion:

In this honors thesis, I examine whether lived experience with incarceration causes individuals to change the way they conceptualize the state, and thus vote in a different way on criminal justice policy. I find that though incarceration does generally seem to cause more liberal ideas on the prison system, the greatest impact occurs by combining incarceration with race. Lived experience with the prison system, either through one's own incarceration or through family or community members, combined with strong identification with one's own race appears to significantly influence individuals to sway towards prison reform or prison abolition centered policy.

Long-form interviews with formerly incarcerated people and a comparable non-incarcerated population revealed that the prison system is highly racialized, but this racialization is not contained to just within the prison walls. Those in the community highlighted how the carceral net widened to capture them, starting from their childhood to far after their prison sentence officially terminated. Many highlighted the prevalence of violence in their lifetime, regardless of criminal justice policies and experience incarcerated. The difference between those who support punitive criminal justice policy and those who want more liberal policies does not seem to be a matter of violent experience alone, but rather, a view that their group identity causes mal-outcomes with state enterprises, or that people are punished to an unreasonable point (arising from knowledge of the actual prison mechanisms). A better understanding of this dynamic comes from Soss and Weaver (2017), who explain that for policing of race-class subjugated communities, youth express a belief that the system is both closed to them and out to get them, tying into policy voting as they grow into adulthood. Being targeted by race, class, and gender (and internalizing this difference) thus was a key factor in

seeing the role of the state and one's own place in politics. lThose who were involved with prison policy suggested better healthcare, living circumstances, and shorter sentences regardless of their understanding of criminality; those who were more apathetic about prison policy tended to leave discretion to public officials, causing an acceptance of more punitive mechanisms.

Ultimately, past criminal justice research suggests that imprisonment is never truly beneficial, and the level of violence outlined by interviewees further validates this conclusion. Even in the small sample, racial discrepancies were overwhelmingly present, leading to destructive outcomes such as solitary confinement, disproportionately long prison sentences, harsh parole treatment, and a general inability to be free of carceral intervention. Further understanding of the carceral state and uncovering of the experience of prison is thus vital to lowering the physical and emotional barrier that obscures one of the most widely implemented government programs of the time.

Acknowledgments:

A huge thank you to Professor Vincent Hutchings, without whom none of this research would have been possible. Thank you for your constant support and for making me a stronger researcher along the way.

Thank you to my family and my friends who had to listen to me talk about the thesis for the last 8 months and supported me through my difficulties.

Thank you to Professor Ashley Lucas, Shea Streeter, and Ava Purkiss, all of whom donated their time and expertise along the way.

And of course, a huge appreciation to all my interviewees, who shared with me some of the most difficult experiences of their life. Your insight wrote the thesis.

Works Cited:

Barak-Glantz, I. L. (1981). Toward a Conceptual Schema of Prison Management Styles. The Prison Journal, 61(2), 42-60. https://doi.org/10.1177/003288558106100206

Bottoms, A. E. (1999). Interpersonal Violence and Social Order in Prisons. Crime and Justice, 26, 205–281. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147687

Buchanan, K. S. (2007). Impunity: Sexual Abuse in Women's Prisons. Harvard Civil Rights-Civil Liberties Law Review, 42(1).

Burch, T. (2013). Trading democracy for justice : Criminal convictions and the decline of neighborhood political participation. University of Chicago Press.

Bureau of Justice Statistics, "Preliminary Data Release - Prisons (2022)," Sept. 2023, bjs.ojp.gov: https://bjs.ojp.gov/preliminary-data-release-prisons

Burstein, P. (2003). The Impact of Public Opinion on Public Policy: A Review and an Agenda. Political Research Quarterly, 56(1), 29–40. https://doi.org/10.2307/3219881

Carson, A.E. (2022). Prisoners in 2021 — Statistical Tables. Bureau of Justice Statistics. https://bjs.ojp.gov/library/publications/prisoners-2021-statistical-tables

Carroll, J. S., Perkowitz, W. T., Lurigio, A. J., & Weaver, F. M. (1987). Sentencing goals, causal attributions, ideology, and personality. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 52(1), 107–118. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.52.1.107

Cohen, S. (1985). Visions of social control : crime, punishment, and classification. New York: Polity Press. https://search.lib.umich.edu/catalog/record/990005642990106381

Cracknell, M. (2023). The resettlement net: 'revolving door' imprisonment and carceral (re)circulation. Punishment & Society, 25(1), 223-240. https://doi.org/10.1177/14624745211035837

Crewe, B. (2011). Depth, weight, tightness: Revisiting the pains of imprisonment. Punishment & Society, 13(5), 509-529. https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474511422172

Cullen, F. T., Fisher, B. S., & Applegate, B. K. (2000). Public Opinion about Punishment and Corrections. Crime and Justice, 27, 1–79. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147662

Cunha, M. (2014). The Ethnography of Prisons and Penal Confinement. Annual Review of Anthropology, 43, 217–233. http://www.jstor.org/stable/43049572

Davies, E.J., Jackson, J.M., & Streeter, S. (2021). "Bringing abolition in: Addressing carceral logics in social science research." Social Science Quarterly. https://doi.org/10.1111/ssqu.13022

Davis, A.Y. (2003). Are Prisons Obsolete? Seven Stories Press.

Davern, M. et. al. (2012). General Social Survey, 1972-2024. National Science Foundation, NORC. gssdataexplorer.norc.org.

Dugan, A. (2018). Gallup Vault: Executing Drug-Dealers Unpopular in 1987 Poll, https://news.gallup.com/vault/231230/gallup-vault-executing-drug-dealers-unpopular-1987-poll.aspx

Engel, R.S. & Calnon, J.M. (2004). Examining the Influence of Drivers' Characteristics During Traffic Stops with Police: Results From a National Survey. https://www.ojp.gov/ncjrs/virtual-library/abstracts/examining-influence-drivers-characteristics-during-traffic-stops

Enns, P. K. (2014). The Public's Increasing Punitiveness and Its Influence on Mass Incarceration in the United States. *American Journal of Political Science*, *58*(4), 857–872. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24363530

Federal Bureau of Prisons (2024). Staff Ethnicity/Race. https://www.bop.gov/about/statistics/statistics_staff_ethnicity_race.jsp

Harris, A. P., Walker, H. L., & Eckhouse, L. (2020). No Justice, No Peace: Political Science Perspectives on the American Carceral State. The Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics, 5(3), 427–449. doi:10.1017/rep.2020.21

Hurwitz, J., & Peffley, M. (2005). Playing the Race Card in the Post-Willie Horton Era: The Impact of Racialized Code Words on Support for Punitive Crime Policy. The Public Opinion Quarterly, 69(1), 99–112. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3521605

Justice, B., & Meares, T. L. (2014). How the Criminal Justice System Educates Citizens. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, *651*, 159–177. http://www.jstor.org/stable/24541699

Khan, A. (2022). The Carceral State: An American Story. Annual Review of Anthropology, 51: 49-66. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-041420-013930

Kreager, D.A. & Kurttschnitt, C. (2018). Inmate Society in the Era of Mass Incarceration. Annual Review of Criminology. 1, 261-283. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-criminol-032317-092513

Iles-Caven, Y., Gregory, S., Ellis, G., Golding, J., & Nowicki, S. (2020). The relationship between locus of control and religious behavior and beliefs in a large population of parents: An observational study. Frontiers in Psychology, 11, Article 1462. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.01462

LeCount, R. J. (2017). More Black than Blue? Comparing the Racial Attitudes of Police to Citizens. Sociological Forum, 32(S1), 1051–1072. http://www.jstor.org/stable/26626005

Lowry, D.T., Nio, T.C.J. and Leitner, D.W. (2003). Setting the Public Fear Agenda: A Longitudinal Analysis of Network TV Crime Reporting, Public Perceptions of Crime, and FBI Crime Statistics. Journal of Communication, 53: 61-73. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2003.tb03005.x

Lu, R. (2015). Public Perceptions of Crime. The Encyclopedia of Crime and Punishment. https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118519639.wbecpx132

Lydon, J. et al. (2015). Coming out of Concrete Closets: A Report on Black & Pink's National LGBTQ Prisoner Survey. Black & Pink. http://arks.princeton.edu/ark:/88435/dsp018p58pg71d

Mascini, P., & Houtman, D. (2006). REHABILITATION AND REPRESSION: Reassessing their Ideological Embeddedness. The British Journal of Criminology, 46(5), 822–836. http://www.jstor.org/stable/23639634

McQuade, B. (2018). Histories of Abolition, Critiques of Security. Social Justice, 45(2/3 (152/153)), 1–24. https://www.jstor.org/stable/26677654

Muenster, B.; Trone, J. (2016). Why is America So Punitive? A Report on the Deliberations of The Interdisciplinary Roundtable on Punitiveness in America (excerpted). Federal sentencing reporter. New York: University of California Press.

Murakawa, N. (2014). The first civil right : How liberals built prison america. Oxford University Press, Incorporated.

Nagin, D.S., Cullen, F. T., & Jonson, C.L. (2009). Imprisonment and Reoffending. *Crime and Justice,* 38., 115-200. https://doi.org/10.1086/599202

Nagin, D. S. (2013). Deterrence in the Twenty-First Century. *Crime and Justice*, *42*(1), 199–263. https://doi.org/10.1086/670398

Ortet-Fabregat, G., & Pérez, J. (1992). An assessment of the attitudes towards crime among professionals in the criminal justice system. British Journal of Criminology, 32(2), 193–207. https://www.jstor.org/stable/23638331

Paris, J. (2007). Decarceration and the Philosophies of Mass Imprisonment. *Human Studies*, *30*(4), 323–343. http://www.jstor.org/stable/27642806

Prison Policy Initiative (2023). Michigan Profile. https://www.prisonpolicy.org/profiles/MI.html#health

Rehavi, M. M., & Starr, S. B. (2014). Racial Disparity in Federal Criminal Sentences. Journal of Political Economy, 122(6), 1320–1354. https://doi.org/10.1086/677255

Roberts, J. V. (1992). Public Opinion, Crime, and Criminal Justice. Crime and Justice, 16, 99–180. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1147562

Rotter, J. B. (1966). Generalized expectancies for internal versus external control of reinforcement. Psychological Monographs: General and Applied,80(1), 1–28. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0092976

Rowe, A. (2011). Narratives of self and identity in women's prisons: Stigma and the struggle for self-definition in penal regimes. Punishment & Society, 13(5), 571-591. https://doi.org/10.1177/1462474511422151

Sampson, R. J., & Laub, J. H. (2005). A Life-Course View of the Development of Crime. *The Annals of*

the American Academy of Political and Social Science, *602*, 12–45. http://www.jstor.org/stable/25046139

Schleiden, C., Soloski, K.L., Milstead, K., Rhynehart, A. (2020). Racial Disparities in Arrests: A Race Specific Model Explaining Arrest Rates Across Black and White Young Adults. Child and Adolescent Social Work Journal, 37, 1–14 . https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-019-00618-7

Sered, D. (2019). *Until we reckon : Violence, mass incarceration, and a road to repair.* The New Press.

Smith, P. S. (2006). The Effects of Solitary Confinement on Prison Inmates: A Brief History and Review of the Literature. Crime and Justice, 34(1), 441–528. https://doi.org/10.1086/500626

Standing, G. (2015). The Precariat and Class Struggle. *RCCS Annual Review*. https://doi.org/10.4000/rccsar.585

Soss, J. & Weaver, V. (2017). Police Are Our Government: Politics, Political Science, and the Policing of Race–Class Subjugated Communities. *Annual Review of Political Science,* 20(1), 565-591, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-060415-093825

Sparks, R., et al. (1982). Stumbling Toward Justice: Some Overlooked Research and Policy Questions About Statewide Sentencing Guidelines. School of Criminal Justice, Rutgers University. https://www.ojp.gov/pdffiles1/Digitization/101393NCJRS.pdf

Thompson, H. (2011). Rethinking Working-Class Struggle through the Lens of the Carceral State: Toward a Labor History of Inmates and Guards. *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*, 8: 15-45. https://doi.org/10.1215/15476715-1275226.

Tonry, M. (2011). Less imprisonment is no doubt a good thing. *Criminology & Public Policy*, 10: 137-152. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-9133.2010.00692.x

U.S. Census Bureau (2021). Educational Attainment in the United States: 2021. https://www.census.gov/data/tables/2021/demo/educational-attainment/cps-detailed-tables.html

Wacquant, L. (2000). “The New ‘Peculiar Institution’: On the Prison as a Surrogate Ghetto.” Theoretical Criminology, 4(3), 377-389. https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480600004003007

Wacquant, L. (2009). “The Criminalization of Poverty in the Post-Civil Rights Era", Punishing the Poor: The Neoliberal Government of Social Insecurity.” https://doi.org/10.1515/9780822392255

Wang, L. (2023). Punishment Beyond Prisons 2023: Incarceration and supervision by state. Prison Policy Initiative. https://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/correctionalcontrol2023.html

Walmsley, R. (2016). World Prison Population List (11th edition), Institute for Criminal Policy Research, London.https://www.prisonstudies.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/world_prison_population_list_11th_edition_0.pdf

Warr, M. (1980). ‘The accuracy of public belief about crime’, Social Forces, 59: 456-470.

Weaver, V., Prowse, G., & Piston, S. (2020). Withdrawing and Drawing In: Political Discourse in Policed Communities. The Journal of Race, Ethnicity, and Politics, 5(3), 604–647. doi:10.1017/rep.2019.50

Western, B. (2015). Lifetimes of Violence in a Sample of Released Prisoners. RSF: The Russell Sage Foundation Journal of the Social Sciences, 1(2), 14–30. https://doi.org/10.7758/rsf.2015.1.2.02

White, A.R. (2022). Political Participation Amid Mass Incarceration. Annual Review of Political Science, 25: 111-130, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051120-014809

Widra, E. & Herring, T. (2021). State of Incarceration: the Global Context 2021. Prison Policy Initiative. https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2021.html

Wolff, N., Huening, J., Shi, J., & Frueh, B. C. (2014). Trauma exposure and posttraumatic stress disorder among incarcerated men. Journal of urban health : bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine, 91(4), 707–719. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11524-014-9871-x

Wooldredge, J. (2020). Prison Culture, Management, and In-Prison Violence. Annual Review of Criminology, 3, 165-188. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-criminol-011419-041359

Wooldredge, J. (2016). The Oxford Handbook of Prisons and Imprisonment. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199948154.001.0001

White, A. (2022). Political Participation Amid Mass Incarceration. Annual Review of Political Science,

25: 111-130. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-051120-014809

Young, Jacob T. N., Meyers, T. J., Morse, S. J. (2023). What is “prison culture”? Developing a theoretical and methodological foundation for understanding cultural schema in prison. *Criminology*, 61, 421–448, https://doi-org.proxy.lib.umich.edu/10.1111/1745-9125.12335