

A Qualitative Analysis of the Impact of College-in-Prison Programs

On Incarcerated and Non-Incarcerated Students:

Perceptions of Self and Perceptions of Environment

An Honors Thesis for the Department of Sociology

Nora Luisa Maetzener

Tufts University, 2020

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my most sincere and heartfelt gratitude to all those who have supported me throughout writing this thesis and who have inspired me to follow my heart as it pulls me to and through this work. Thank you, Dr. Jill Weinberg, for keeping my head on straight through this process and for allowing Fenway and Pesky to brighten my days. Thank you, Dr. Hilary Binda, for introducing me to and guiding me through the work of prison education. Thank you, Dr. Daanika Gordon, for being such a strong and consistent source of support and knowledge.

This thesis is dedicated to all of my fellow students and learners, inside and beyond the walls. I am with you, as someone told me during my own Inside-Out class, *in strength and struggle*.

Table of Contents

Abstract	1
Introduction	2
Literature Review	5
Sociology of Prison Education in the United States	5
History of Prison Education in the United States	18
Methods	27
Samples	28
Instrument and Aims	31
Strengths and Limitations	37
Hypothesis	38
The Impact of College-in-Prison on the Two Relevant “Total Institutions:” Prison and College	39
Incarcerated Student’s Experiences	40
Former Outside Students’ Experiences	54
Conclusion	76
College-in-Prison Programs as Understood by a Control Group of Non-Incarcerated Undergraduate Students	78
Conclusory Remarks On the Impact of College-in-Prison Programs	97
The Impact of College-in-Prison Programs on the Involved Total Institutions: Prisons and Colleges	98
Perceptions of College-in-Prison Programs from a Control Group of Non-Incarcerated Undergraduate Students	101
Recommendations for Future Directions	102
References	109
Appendix	114
Table 1: Summary of Study Participants	115
Table 2: Description of Coding Scheme by Theme [Sample of Former Inside Students]	116
Table 3: Description of Coding Scheme by Theme [Sample of Former Outside Students]	117
Table 4: Description of Coding Scheme by Theme [Control Group]	118
Table 5: Example of Interview Questions	119
Table 6: Description of Interview Schedule	119

Abstract

This paper focuses on addressing the following research questions: Do programs of higher education have an impact on how incarcerated students view themselves and their environment? If so, how does this influence compare to that experienced by their non-incarcerated counterparts? These questions were answered through interviews conducted with a sample of formerly incarcerated students who participated in college-in-prison while serving time, a sample of non-incarcerated students who participated in college-in-prison, and a control group of non-incarcerated students who have not participated in college-in-prison. The findings suggest that programs of higher education *do* have an impact on both incarcerated and non-incarcerated students' perceptions of themselves and of their respective environments, as well as their perceptions of the institutions to which they are introduced through college-in-prison programs. This is contextualized and analyzed through Goffman's framework of total institutions and reveals that programs of this sort operate as a "bridge" between the involved institutions. Further, this study suggests that the intervention of participation in college-in-prison programs has an influence on how non-incarcerated students understand and view education, especially as expressed through subtle hints in language regarding self-perception and perception of crime and incarceration. This study encourages future directions and research to expand upon the continuing impact of the prison as a total institution upon a person's release to their home communities.

Introduction

Education and incarceration. College and prison. Tassels and shackles. These terms are rarely associated with one another in popular contexts and perceptions, despite existing partnerships between institutions of corrections and institutions of higher education to provide and develop college-in-prison programs. The history of college-in-prison programs (which will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, “History of Prison Education in the United States”) is interwoven with the supposed original purpose of the “correctional” system. The presence of this programming has been shaped by different political moments, such as the dissolving of the federal Pell Grants. These developments have led to the majority of college-in-prison programs being formed through partnerships between elite institutions of higher education and correctional facilities, such as the well-known Bard Prison Initiative. Another example of a partnership of this sort is the Inside-Out Prison Exchange ProgramTM, which was piloted at Temple University in the late 90’s (Pompa, 2011). The Inside-Out Program structure is a college course which consists of equal numbers incarcerated (Inside students) and non-incarcerated students (Outside students) and is taught at a correctional facility. This arrangement makes Inside-Out the ideal case for what this study seeks to understand more deeply, especially as it enables a more in-depth comprehension of a balance between learning for intrinsic value (for both Inside and Outside students) as well as the benefits upon reentry, especially for the Inside student group.

Although there is research on the effect of programs of this sort (which will be discussed in detail in the literature review section of this paper), this thesis will be narrowing the gap of research by including more data on the experiences of non-incarcerated students who participate in programs of this sort (specifically Inside-Out as former Outside students) as well as those of a

control group of non-incarcerated students who have not engaged in college-in-prison. Further, the majority of past studies on participatory secondary education programs in prison have focused primarily on basic metrics of the impact of programming, such as quantitative recidivism rates (Bryom, 2018; Lagemann, 2011; Maclaren, 2015; Pompa, 2011; Ryang & Clark, 2013; Werts, 2013). Studies of this sort have been outcome-driven and concerned with creating policy recommendations and future directions around the role of the incarcerated student. Although these contributions are certainly very valuable and informative, and should not be understated by any means, this paper recognizes and seeks to fill an important research gap regarding the presentation and consideration of college-in-prison program participation as an intervention. Further, this study frames the influence of college-in-prison programs as a qualitative experience expressed by students of all varieties, including those who are not incarcerated, which allows for a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of the full impact of programs of this sort, and the ways in which aspects of an experience, which may normatively be overlooked, such as language and word choice, can actually be indicative of a larger shift in perception.

This thesis will focus on addressing, through analysis of qualitative interviews conducted with samples of relevant populations, the following questions: Do programs of higher education have an impact on how incarcerated students view themselves and their environment? If so, how does this influence compare to that experienced by their non-incarcerated counterparts? In order to answer these questions, the Principal Investigator conducted interviews with participants from three relevant samples: people who participated in college-in-prison while incarcerated, people who participated in college-in-prison and have not been incarcerated, and undergraduate students who have never participated in college-in-prison nor have been incarcerated. The hypothesized answer to this question was that incarcerated and non-incarcerated participants in programs of

higher education would describe programs of this sort as having an impact on how these students view themselves and their environment. In addition, it was hypothesized that incarcerated students would experience this influence in a more drastic and conscious fashion than their non-incarcerated counterparts will. It was also hypothesized that this impact would be dependent on the qualitative assessment of the participants' involvement in the program, and that more positive experiences would be characterized by continued support from various involved parties. A negative experience, on the other hand, was hypothesized to be characterized by significant frustrations with the program in question, which may result from difficulties with access to the materials and other class texts, as well as an unsatisfactory amount of academic support.

The structure of this paper is as follows. This essay begins with a literature review of analyses of college in prison. It focuses first on the sociology of prison education, and then will discuss the history of prison education. Following, the methods used to address and study the above-stated research questions guiding this study will be described in detail. Finally, the discussion and analysis of the results of this study will be addressed in two respective chapters: "The Impact of College-in-Prison on the two relevant 'total institutions:' Prison and College" and "College-in-Prison as Understood by a Control Group of Non-Incarcerated Undergraduate Students."

Literature Review

Sociology of Prison Education in the United States

The Function of Prison

Critical discussions of prisons and correctional facilities may uncover a pivotal question: what function do these institutions serve, and how has this function developed or changed over time? Michel Foucault, a French philosopher, sought to propose an answer in his Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison (2008). He argues that a noteworthy turning point in the history of prisons can be identified as taking place in the 18th century, which involved a marked change in the structure and objective of punishment. Further, considering through a sociological lens the evolution and understanding of what is deemed by society to be “deviant” or “illegal” and thereby worthy of punishment reveals critical information about the society’s values and attitudes. Instead of focusing solely on punishment of the body (such as torture and/or mutilation) of those who disobey society’s laws, which often took place in public arenas, those in positions of power devised a new method of exerting social control through deterrence, rather than public displays of revenge. This modernization also brought with it an emphasis on impacting criminals’ minds, rather than their bodies. Consequently, the physical location of correctional facilities is often extremely remote and isolated from the rest of society, thereby reinforcing the “out of sight, out of mind” approach to the criminal justice system.

Upholding “justice” in response to behaviors that violate the social and/or penal code is argued to ensure and protect the public from “deviant” people worthy of punishment by confining them in correctional facilities (especially those who participate in criminal conduct, not only civil conduct, thereby revealing a supposed tendency towards violence) (Simon, 2007). Although popular notions may naively assume that laws and consequences are applied equally

and fairly across all, this application of justice inherently involves and fortifies power dynamics and structures, most obviously between those applying justice and those who are deemed to have participated in deviant behavior. In other words, crime “actively reshapes how power is exercised throughout hierarchies of class, race, ethnicity, and gender” (Simon, 2007, p. 18). The American “War on Drugs” in the 1980’s is an oft-cited example of discrepancies of consequential punishment across people from different racial/ethnic and economic statuses, as “politicians began to turn to crime as a vehicle for constructing a new political order” (Simon, 2007, p. 25) through extremely harsh “legal punishment of drug use” (Goodman & Baney, 2018, p. iv) that ultimately resulted in significantly disproportionate consequences for communities of color. Although the legislature of this time did not explicitly condemn marginalized groups, the “racially-sanitized” language was a critical vehicle in the “subjugation” of racial/ethnic minorities (Goodman & Baney, 2018, p. iv). This highlights the extent to which a society’s values, as expressed through legislation and justice, reflects the “worthiness of punishment” of a specific group in relation to others. Another way of understanding this phenomenon could be to identify the oppressors as framing legal justice, especially criminal justice, as an avenue through which to maintain the social order and continue oppressing and/or controlling minority communities in a seemingly appropriate manner.

As is evidenced, combining incarceration with programs of education, especially critical higher education, seems to combat and almost work in opposition towards the function of prisons as stated above and as outlined by Foucault. As will be further discussed, a groundbreaking study in 2013 by the RAND Corporation revealed that participation in educational programming while incarceration significantly decreases a person’s risk of recidivism, or re-incarceration, upon release (Davis, Bozick, Steele, Saunders & Miles). Additionally, in a more theoretical sense, by

providing educational programming to incarcerated populations, institutions of higher education are creating opportunities for members of the prison population to think not only beyond their confinement, but also in spite of it and other similar external forces. This effect becomes especially potent in programs designed in ways that increase incarcerated peoples' contact with those on the "other side" of the totalizing walls (according to Goffman, which will be further discussed), such as the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, Bard Prison Initiative (BPI), and the Tufts University Prison Initiative at Tisch College (TUPIT), all of which encourage critical classroom discussions and create environments intentionally structured to create spaces for people on both sides of incarceration to come together and learn. Therefore, it becomes necessary to consider how higher education in prison may have a significant ripple effect that extends beyond the immediate classroom surroundings and may even affect the very foundation and core principles of this social institution.

Racial Disparities in Incarceration

Discussing and analyzing the modern American penal system would not be complete, responsible, or honest, without an inclusion of the role of race. According to the U.S. Declaration of Independence and one of our country's Founding Fathers, Thomas Jefferson, "all men are created equal." These words served as the foundation of our nation and continue to permeate the American way of life through both conscious and unconscious avenues. However, the virtue of this phrase may be limited to idealistic notions, as analysis of the history (both recent and dated) of our country reveals significant trends and tendencies of fallacies in the application of this expression, as is evidenced by rates of incarceration of minority populations. In 2002, following a significant "six-fold" increase in the prison population, statistics reveal that "12 percent of black men in their twenties were" incarcerated (Pettit, 2004, p. 151). Further, for the purposes of

this paper, it is necessary to include the intersection of race and educational attainment in the prison population, as “30 percent of [black men] without college education and [almost] 60 percent of high school dropouts” were incarcerated by 1999 (Pettit, 2004, p. 151). Although there may be various explanations and justifications for these extreme discrepancies and trends, a sociological perspective will serve as most relevant.

As researchers and scholars in the field of sociology and law, such as David Garland, attest, these statistics are evidence that the criminal justice system and its consequences are not applied and/or distributed equally across groups. Nor are people held responsible for their actions as individuals, isolated from their identities and social categories in which they may fall. Rather, “whole social groups defined by their race, age, and class” were, and are, targeted and criminalized by the system as it was founded and as it currently operates (Pettit, 2004, p. 151). When one considers and evaluates America’s history, which is fraught with and built upon policies of explicit racism (such as slavery and the Jim Crow laws), the initial shock of these statistics may subside and be replaced by an unsettling sense of expectation. This juncture is where applying the perspective of critical race theory is extraordinarily useful, if not absolutely necessary.

Historical evolution of institutions of racialized social control

The premise of incarceration as a mechanism of social control, as detailed by Foucault, can be analyzed one degree further through the ideology of *racialized* social control that has continued from a legacy of other social institutions that have historically operationalized social control of marginalized populations. Sociological theorists have developed several mechanisms and approaches through which to view and understand the above-described racial discrepancies in the prison and carceral population. One such theory is critical race theory (CRT), which is

grounded in the idea that America has deep roots in racism, and the lasting legacy of these origins can be traced throughout the folds of our contemporary society. Therefore, the racism present in America is much more deep-seated than an individual person's racist ideologies or commentaries and can be identified in and attributed to the constitution of central societal institutions, such as educational practices, the criminal justice system, and correctional facilities. According to CRT, "racism is endemic, institutional, and systematic" (Sleeter, 2017, p. 156). Therefore, to properly handle and address the problems that arise due to racism (such as the aforementioned disparities in incarcerated populations), it is necessary to implement initiatives that recognize the origins of the issue at hand, rather than the superficial symptoms. Especially when considering the aforementioned racial/ethnic makeup of the teaching force in comparison with the incarcerated population, incorporating a CRT-informed context and perspective is instrumental.

This connection of America's history of marginalization and subversion among racial lines to its contemporary counterpart and manifestation of similar, if not the same, objectives, has been further theorized by Loïc Wacquant, who is accredited with the theoretical criminological ideology of the "peculiar institution" in his 2000 publication. For Wacquant, the longstanding racial disparities behind bars across American prisons is far from a coincidence, but an attempt by the powerful social majority (white people) to continue "controlling" and dominating marginalized minority groups, specifically the African American population (2000, p. 377). America's correctional facilities, which are referred to by Wacquant as "*remnants of the dark ghetto and the carceral apparatus*" are the fourth in line in a series of "peculiar institutions" designed to maintain a semblance of the explicit manipulation and "racial domination" over African-Americans that "*chattel slavery... the Jim Crow system... [and] the ghetto*" all

intentionally provided and protected (2000, p. 378). Today's social pipeline and socioeconomic structural barriers leave few legitimate (as deemed by the government) economic opportunities and professional prospects for African-Americans, leading many members of this community to participate and engage in "the illegal street economy," thereby significantly increasing the odds of these individuals being arrested (Wacquant, 2000, p. 378). This pattern is a critical component of prisons as the most recent peculiar institution and their function as reproductions of severe social inequality.

Peculiar institutions, such as the carceral state, fulfill their role as "vehicles for labor extraction and caste division" very successfully (Wacquant, 2000, p. 379). Slavery may have done so along racial lines in a much more distinct and explicit manner, however, as evidenced, the Emancipation Proclamation did not simply result in equality, nor do it undo the longstanding "racial caste line separating ... 'blacks' and 'whites'" (Wacquant, 2000, p. 379). Rather, the abolishment of one peculiar institution (slavery) was accompanied by a large question for the "southern white society," namely "how to secure anew the labor of former slaves, and how to sustain the cardinal status distinction between whites and 'persons of color'" (Wacquant, 2000, p. 379-380). Initially, the solution to this dilemma was to institute the Jim Crow laws, which explicitly continued the highly stigmatized racialized line between 'blacks' and 'whites' by separating these groups in everyday realms of life and society. Some of these separations may initially seem more benign than others, such as distinct water fountains and restrooms, while others had much more immediate and severely deleterious consequences, such as different schools (if education was offered to non-whites at all). These restrictions were extremely effective at achieving the goals of those in power and ensured that society did not produce

reparations for the insurmountable intergenerational trauma and horror catalyzed by slavery, but instead augmented these intentionally deleterious consequences.

With the rise of the Civil Rights movement, the black community fought and gained some of the rights that had been taken from them by those in positions of power, such as the right to vote. This social change once again surfaced the above-described dilemma for the white elite. In response to the growing problem of 'integration' and fear of true equality, the wealthy fled the cities to sheltered suburbia, leaving behind ghettos consisting of under-financed public schools and housing for those who were not fortunate enough to enact the same escape (Wacquant, 2000, p. 382). The phenomenon of under-resourced schools and their relationship and role in the creation and maintenance of a resultantly under-resourced class (which is disproportionately composed of minority communities) has not dissipated over time, and is still very prevalent in today's society. In fact, this connection and relationship is so pervasive and severe that a unique term has been forged to describe it: the school-to-prison pipeline, which refers to the "convergence between schools and legal systems" and describes the "tracking [of] students out of educational institutions... and... into the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems" (Heitzeg, 2009, p. 1). Statistics demonstrate that those most affected by this pipeline are marginalized communities, including "the poor, students with disabilities, and youth of color, especially African Americans" (Heitzeg, 2009, p. 1-2). This pattern demonstrates how access to education, and a respective lack thereof, can be used as political tools of control in maintaining power over certain communities, and the ways in which these mechanisms can be traced throughout different institutional policies, regulations, and funding.

Returning to Wacquant's analysis, the demise of this solution he presents (namely the ghetto, or "ethnoracial prison") led into the institution that serves as the focus of the paper:

prison (Wacquant, 2000, p. 382). As Wacquant describes, these two peculiar institutions are inextricably linked, and their four characteristic elemental commonalities can be identified as the following: “stigma, constraint, territorial confinement, and institutional encasement” (2000, p. 383). However, there is a critical distinction between past peculiar institutions and the contemporary carceral state, as the consequences of former institutions extended beyond pure economic advantage and growth for those at the top of the social pyramid, and the existence of modern-day prisons effectively simply “warehouse” those deemed by the dominant social forces to be dangerous to others or unworthy of freedom (Wacquant, 2000, p. 385). Further, as other scholars have divulged and as will be analyzed, there is a significant and powerful aftermath of incarceration that extends beyond and continues following a person’s eventual release from the physical walls of a correctional facility.

The carceral system as a tool of racialized social control can also be understood as a “racial caste system,” according to Michelle Alexander in her groundbreaking work *The New Jim Crow* (2010, p. 12). A racial caste is “a stigmatized racial group locked into an inferior position by law and customs” (2010, p. 12). Using a historical analysis similar to that employed by Wacquant to defend his sociological theory of peculiar institutions, Alexander argues that the race and class disparities in incarcerated populations are not a sheer coincidence, nor are they the result of people of color engaging in more criminal activity than their white counterparts (statistics actually reveal that “people of all colors *use and sell* illegal drugs [the leading conviction responsible for mass incarceration] at remarkably similar rates)” (Alexander, 2010, p. 7). Rather, the institutions that comprise America’s carceral state serve an eerie additional function of ensuring that the marginalization of people of color in the U.S. remains a permanent condition. The mechanisms securing this objective manifest and are maintained through

restrictions placed on those labeled “felons” or “ex-convicts.” The people in this population are prohibited from engaging in many of the civil rights reserved for and provided to the general population, such as the right to vote and the right to apply for subsidized housing (Wakefield & Uggen, 2010). These legal prohibitions allow the interaction between racial identity and privilege to remain status-quo, thereby ensuring that people of color will face considerable barriers in their attempt to move up through the social order (as is suggested and repeatedly societally enforced by the mantra of the American Dream and “pulling yourself up by your bootstraps”). Without experiencing the same benefits as the privileged general population, in addition to the stigma of being formerly incarcerated, it is *extremely* difficult, if not impossible, to achieve the same professional and economic progress or status as others who do not have the shadow of incarceration looming over them. This structure -- and its tangible consequences -- is not latent or innate to criminal justice, but to America’s contemporary powerful racial caste system.

Education plays a critical role in this intersection between incarceration and the labor market, as people “who are undereducated and ill-prepared for the labor market are more likely to” be arrested (Wakefield & Uggen, 2010, p. 395). An additional result of being incarcerated is that it decreases the already-vulnerable job skills of those confined to its walls, as well as creates “gaps in inmate employment histories” (Wakefield & Uggen, 2010, p. 395). However, if incarcerated folks were able to dedicate time while confined to learning and making progress towards a degree, their resumes would look significantly different upon release. Because our society values education, especially higher education, (as is evidenced by the relationship between economic attainment/income and education level/degree) (Coady & Dizioli, 2017) it is possible that having participated in programs of this type would combat or mitigate some of the stigma associated with having a formerly incarcerated status, and might be extremely

instrumental in successfully entering the job market (and therefore ultimately regaining stable financial footing) upon release. Therefore, understanding the full impact of providing educational programming for incarcerated populations with the expectation that these classes will likely do more than simply result in degrees, and might disrupt a deeply-embedded social institution that carefully maintains and protects the status quo, is necessary to understand the broader framework and environment within which these classes take place.

As a significant portion of the research and scholarly work on interaction of education and incarceration is considerably dated (much includes data from programs funded during the Pell Grant era), it is critical not only to apply the deeply racialized history of this topic, but also to appreciate the modern manifestations of this past as well. Therefore, viewing Wacquant's "peculiar institution," Foucault's function of prisons, and Goffman's "total institution" through a perspective that employs the modern principles of critical race theory is a necessary step to properly situating and understanding existing literature in an updated framework. This focused analysis will also create opportunities to recognize and study the intricate inter-workings (both latent and manifested) that exist within the identified structures. The Principal Investigator hopes to utilize this foundation of sociological theories to code and analyze this study's data in a way that will meaningfully bridge the works of various scholars and lead to a comprehensive understanding of the impact of higher education on incarcerated individuals.

The Potential Impact of Prison Education Programs on the Racial Dynamics of Mass Incarceration

With the above-described scholarly analysis of incarceration as a mechanism to exploit and contain certain marginalized "others" in mind, it becomes critical to consider the potential disruption of this mechanism through offering prison education programs. Because restriction of

educational programming has the potential to disrupt this more sinister function of the carceral state (as defined by Wacquant, Foucault, Alexander, and Goffman), this capacity for disturbance in the realm of stratified educational attainment is key. By reintroducing prison education, especially programs of higher education, in correctional facilities, colleges and universities are challenging the precise social order of racial/ethnic groups that is otherwise carefully maintained by these very correctional institutions, as viewed through a critical sociological lens. As knowledge and educational attainment have long been linked to and almost synonymous with power (Douglass, 1995), there is a possibility that incarcerated people will view their participation in college-in-prison programs as an opportunity to regain some of the power and agency that has been intentionally voided from their lives through their involvement in the criminal justice system. This restoration of agency and self-efficacy may challenge the latent (or intentional, depending on one's grounding framework and perspective) function of incarceration, namely increasing and maintaining social control over marginalized populations. One possible manifestation of this consequence is that, statistically, the risk of recidivism, or re-incarceration, for formerly incarcerated people who participated in college-in-prison programs is significantly decreased compared to the general population of formerly incarcerated people (Davis et al., 2013). Therefore, college-in-prison programs may serve as an avenue through which incarcerated people are able to regain their footing and power, simultaneously disrupting the societal structures and hierarchies designed to minimize the potential and power for this marginalized group.

Prison as a Total Institution

In his 1961 publication, the renowned sociologist and scholar Erving Goffman introduces and discusses the phenomenon of “total institutions” (p. 313). As he describes, these are unique

social institutions in that they possess a certain identifiable field of characteristics. These “features” include “all aspects of life” and activities occurring in one place, “under the same single authority,” following a strict schedule, and being carried out by groups of members of the institution, rather than individually (Goffman, 1961, p. 314). This group mentality is significant, as there exists a critical and clear distinction between people belonging to the institution and those whose lives unfold beyond said constraints. Goffman identifies five broad categories of total institutions;

First, there are institutions established to care for persons thought to be both incapable and harmless... *Second*, there are places established to care for persons thought to be at once incapable of looking after themselves and an [unintended] threat to the community... *Third*, ... [those which are] organized to protect the community against what are thought to be intentional dangers to it... *Fourth*... institutions purportedly established the better to pursue some technical task and justify themselves only on these instrumental grounds... *Finally*... those establishments designed as retreats from the world or as training stations for the religious (Goffman, 1961, p. 313)

For the purposes of this paper, the third grouping of total institutions will be most relevant, as the carceral state and its correctional facilities exist under this definition. One of the most tangible consequences of the structure of total institutions is the “tension” between the “institutional world” and that of the home, which is produced and maintained through the construction and environment of the establishment in question (Goffman, 1961, p. 317). This tension can be identified in incarcerated populations and is often intensified due to the experiences with and knowledge of the outside world which incarcerated people had prior to their detainment. This strain is often incorporated further into the dynamics of the institution by those in positions of

control (for the purposes of this paper, these roles are filled by correctional officers and employees of the Department of Correction) as forms of “strategic leverage in the management of” those who are incarcerated (Goffman, 1961, p. 317). The normative and ingrained language used to refer to incarcerated people, including the repeated use of the terms “convicts,” “offenders,” “inmates,” and “prisoners” illuminates and reinforces not only ways in which those involved are constantly reminded of this distinction, but also of the external world that exists beyond the confines of the facility, to which those who are incarcerated no longer belong. As Goffman elaborates, the aforementioned tension adds a “special meaning” and association to the terms “in” and “out,” bolstering a chronic and subversive objective of “getting out,” which has both literal and figurative significance, and is in turn utilized to maintain order and structure within the walls of the prison. Traditionally, incarceration is also accompanied by symptoms of isolation and stigmatization (as Foucault describes), as well as cessation of academic and/or professional endeavors, all of which contribute and play significant roles in the totalistic nature of correctional facilities.

The potential impact of implementing and increasing access to prison education programs on the characteristic totalistic nature of correctional facilities is not yet fully understood, yet should not be undermined, and therefore will serve as a fundamental framing question of this study. One possible latent result of participation in programs of higher education while incarcerated is that the categories of “in” and “out,” as outlined by Goffman and described above, may actually become *strengthened* through the increased access to the world that exists beyond the walls of confinement for incarcerated students. This heightened exposure to what is understood as “out,” while ultimately still remaining “in” (at the very least throughout the duration of participation in prison education programs), may create an enlarged distinction and

separation between the two sides of the total institution. However, college-in-prison might also have the opposite effect and may be viewed as an opportunity to break down and deconstruct the rigid boundaries between “in” and “out.” Further, when considering a broader structural frame of reference, the impact of higher educational programming for incarcerated people might threaten and permanently alter the notion of prison as a total institution, as contact with and knowledge of the outside world continues to grow. These possible avenues of change should not be considered as an exhaustive list of potential impacts, but rather should highlight the necessity of considering how participants discuss and consider their experiences. Therefore, for the purposes of this research, adapting Goffman’s portrait of prison as a total institution to include educational programming such as the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, is a valuable and worthwhile adjustment. This will allow for a more comprehensive understanding of the full impact of higher education on the incarcerated students whose narratives will be used, especially as this compares to their non-incarcerated counterparts. The necessity for this perspective becomes increasingly evident as one considers the aforementioned development and modernization of prison education.

History of Prison Education in the United States

The Background of Prison Education

The etymology of the term “correctional” department, or “Department of Corrections,” reveals the societal motivation and objective behind this program - namely, to correct, or fix, those who are identified by their community as in need of altering due to deviant behavior. A major aspect of changing a person in a permanent and/or meaningful way is to introduce them to new ideas and knowledge, otherwise known as educating them. Therefore, an understanding of how prison education has changed and developed since its inception is a critical foundation to

properly assess contemporary programs. Not unlike other prominent social institutions, the inauguration of education in correctional facilities was heavily intertwined with and influenced by religious ideologies and motivations. When education was first properly introduced to and incorporated in the American carceral system in the 19th century, it was done through the Auburn model, which was rooted in predominantly Protestant philosophies of punishment, leading to the widespread implementation of defined goals of “disciplined work habits [and] ... religious instruction” (Thomas, 1995, p. 26). However, leading “into the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries,” despite the overarching terminology of this social institution, most correctional facilities did not offer academic resources or programs to incarcerated people (Thomas, 1995, p. 26). Rather, the induction of proper educational programming designed to truly “transform... social deviants” into proper citizens was shadowed by the introduction of “vocational and industrial” programming in the early 20th century (Thomas, 1995, p. 26).

Beginning in the 1950’s, state-sponsored educational programming flourished across most correctional facilities in the United States. Programs offering higher education were funded primarily by federal Pell Grants, which allowed incarcerated students to receive the financial support necessary to complete degrees and participate in higher education while completing their sentences. Educational programming was offered in the vast majority of state facilities, and the requisites of these systems were overwhelmingly focused on the fundamental basics of learning, such as literacy. To illustrate the consequences of this system, if a person incarcerated in Illinois could not demonstrate a “sixth grade reading proficiency” level in 1995, they were mandated to participate in the same repeated school curriculum until this standard was achieved (Thomas, 1995, p. 27). One result of such structures is that the statistics of overall educational participation among incarcerated individuals were deceptively high, albeit resulting primarily from “coerced”

cooperation rather than voluntary engagement (the current 2018 crime bill in Massachusetts, where the Tufts University Prison Initiative of Tisch College [TUPIT] operates returns us to this coercion through mandated participation in educational programming for incarcerated people) (Thomas, 1995, p. 27; An Act Relative to Criminal Justice Reform, 2018). The numbers reflecting intentional engagement in secondary or higher education, on the other hand, were significantly lower across correctional facilities. This discrepancy reveals the priorities of the carceral state, especially with regard to what forms and degrees of education are deemed most worthy and/or deserving of focus, as well as funding.

In 1994, “America’s retrograde notions about incarceration and education” were further manifested and exemplified through the passing of the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, which dramatically and permanently impacted the intersection of higher education and incarceration (Pompa, 2011, p. 254). This act is potentially the single-most impactful piece of legislation for higher education in prison, as it made applying and/or receiving Pell Grants impossible for incarcerated people, thereby essentially eliminating all government-funded programs of higher education in prisons across the country (Karpowitz, 2017, p. 160). The repercussions of this legislation were severe; just in the state of New York, the number of higher education programs in correctional institutions “fell from 70 in the early 1990s... to just four in 2004” (The Editorial Board, “A College Education for Prisoners,” 2017).

Under the Obama Administration, the pilot program “Second Chance Pell Program” was created in 2015 an attempt to address the ramifications of this prior legislation, and provided funding for incarcerated students through “a mix of [67] two-year and four-year” [colleges and universities] across the country” (Wexler, 2016). The first “Second Chance Pell Program” was funded through 2019 (Smith, 2018), at which point, responsive to the results and success of this

initiative, as assessed by its impact on recidivism rates of those who participated, additional funding and financial support has been allotted to institutions of higher education to grow the participant population (Smith, 2018). Even with the new Second Chance Pell programs, the 1994 withdrawal of adequate federal funding left a severe gaping vacancy and dire need for privately funded programming in the field of higher education in prisons.

Further, acknowledging the racial/ethnic demographics of the teaching force that serves the incarcerated population is critical to forming a comprehensive understanding of this topic. In evaluating how education affects opportunity for disadvantaged communities in America, it is important to consider the racial background and demographic of the teaching force. In 2010, “people of color represent[ed] 40.0% of the student population in public schools, whereas only 17.0% of public school teachers [were] people of color” (Achinstein, Ogawa, Sexton & Freitas, 2010, p. 71). This racial misrepresentation of the teacher : student ratio is, at least in part, a result of the high-profile *Brown vs. Board of Education* (1954) court case, which ruled that school segregation is unconstitutional (Steinbaum, 2017). One implicit consequence of this ruling was that white, mostly female, teachers flocked to less affluent public schools with a high concentration of minority students in an attempt to equalize the school experience and education for black and white students (Taylor, 1993). The legislature produced during this time period, such as the “changes in teacher-qualifying testing,” favored white teachers (Oakley, 2009, p. 10). The consequences of this prioritization are still in effect today, as evidenced by the statistics revealing that white test-takers are more likely to pass the qualifying tests than their minority counterparts (Oakley, 2009, p. 10). The impact of this systemic preferential treatment results in fewer teachers of color across the country, especially in schools with higher proportions of minority students.

This historical disproportionate representation of people of color within the public school teaching body is mirrored in the prison education programs across the country. According to data released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 2017, 63.4% of “probation officers and correctional treatment specialists” are white, and 82.8% of “directors” and educators employed in the field “community and social service” are white (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2017). These demographics do not align with the racial representation of those behind bars. Although white teachers in correctional facilities may be well-intentioned and prepared, they must recognize the impact the social and racial hierarchy has on the teacher-student dynamic. These “hegemonic... norms” are aggravated in the carceral system, and therefore require specific attention (Hyland, 2005, p. 431). Racism is rooted in power, and power relations are magnified behind bars. Therefore, the white teacher standing in front of a student body of color must acknowledge “the limitation of his role and a willingness to work within that limitation” (Shephard, 1970).

The Intersection of Correctional Education and Purpose of Punishment

Understanding the development of educational programming in correctional facilities requires an analysis of this evolution in conjunction and comparison with that of the purpose of punishment (as demonstrated and enforced by the carceral state and the justice system). As discussed earlier, social definitions and executions of punishment and crime have been used as avenues to maintain control over certain groups throughout time. Evidently, as the philosophies governing motivations behind and justifications for specific models of punishment changed in response to political climates and developments, as did the presence and quality of educational programs that were offered in correctional facilities. As mentioned in the section of this chapter “Sociology of Prison Education,” at least some of the criminal justice legislature can be mapped onto racially motivated decisions by those possessing social power (white wealthy people)

(Alexander, 2010). As access to education can be understood and treated as a tool of social power, it logically follows that those seeking to maintain and increase their social control over marginalized communities by decreasing and limiting educational opportunities. This analysis of the political background of educational programming in correctional facilities will serve as an introduction into maintaining a critical sociological perspective when reviewing historical achievements and developments, such as the dissolving of the Pell Grants. Continuing to consider the aforementioned sociological theories of punishment (including but not limited to the ideologies of Wacquant, Foucault, and Goffman), applying the building blocks of these academic outlook may critically alter the significance and impact of certain historical milestones.

The Development of Privatized Prison Education Programs

This significant void was accordingly filled independently from internal educational programs by pilot initiatives and partnerships with elite institutions of higher education, such as the Bard Prison Initiative, which is housed at Bard College. The Bard Prison Initiative (BPI) was erected in 1999 “in response to the [national] decimation of college-in-prison” by a group of undergraduate students (“About,” n.d.). Since its inception, BPI has grown significantly from offering its first associate degree in 2005 to providing bachelor’s degrees to its students (since the first classes were offered in 2001, “BPI has issued roughly... 450 degrees”) (“About,” n.d.). Based in New York State, BPI offers college-level programming across six prisons, and mirrors many of the “progressive” and liberal characteristics of the overall college, such as placing a “strong emphasis on writing” and small “discussion-based” classes (Lagemann, 2011, p. 15). As of recently, the Initiative has extended its resources and impact to provide additional vocational support for participants during the reentry process, such as “job-focused preparation” for various fields, including “technology” and “public health” (Lagemann, 2011, p. 18). Since the start of

BPI, various private elite institutions of higher education have been motivated and inspired to found initiatives and programs of similar nature, such as the Tufts University Prison Initiative at Tisch College (TUPIT), which will serve as the primary program of interest and basis of analysis for this body of work.

The majority of privately-run and privately-funded prison education programs take place in state-run correctional facilities, which may seem contradictory at first glance. However, further inspection of this tendency may reveal critical information about how prison education fits within (or breaks the mold of) the purpose of the carceral state, especially in public versus private sectors. One of the most encouraging and widely cited benefits of investing in educational programming for incarcerated individuals is the significant decreases in recidivism rates of those who participate. A 2013 “propensity score matching” study revealed that the recidivism rate for incarcerated people “who did not participate in college programs” as compared to those who did “complete prison-based college programs” was “35.9%” or “3.8 times higher” (Ryang & Clark, p. 203; Davis et al., 2013). This statistic highlights and suggests the potential impact of college-in-prison programs on decreasing the likelihood of returning to prison upon release for participants, which would hinder the profits for those benefiting from the privatization of correctional facilities, as those stakeholders have financial incentives to maintain, if not grow, the incarcerated population. Therefore, as it is not in the personal interest of those in leadership positions in private prisons to invest in or encourage educational programming, public correctional facilities, which are funded by taxes, are significantly more likely to allow and/or encourage the implementation of educational programming behind bars.

The Development of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program

In 1997, Temple University offered a course designed to educate undergraduate students on “crime and justice by going behind the walls” of a Philadelphia jail for the first time (Pompa, 2011, p. 254). The original structure of the class was for the students to meet in the correctional facility “every other week and on campus during the alternate weeks to debrief the experience,” but this organization was altered when students expressed feelings of “isolation” and “segregation” between the two groups of students (inside and outside), which aggravated some of the very “problems” that this course was hoping to address (Pompa, 2011, p. 256). This class marked the creation of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, which has had an astounding impact on the current status of higher education in prisons. A couple of years later, in 2000, two other professors designed their own classes that were based on the same model. This development gradually led to Inside-Out becoming a nation-wide program in 2003, which was officially marked by the “first Inside-Out National Instructor Training Institute” which took place in July of 2004 (Pompa, 2011, p. 259). This annual training continues to be an extremely critical and fundamental aspect of the overall program, as college professors are trained by a group called the “Think Tank,” which is comprised of exclusively incarcerated Inside students. This reversal of traditional roles and statuses demonstrates an imperative quality of the larger program, namely that people and institutions on both sides of the barbed-wire fence can, and should, learn from one another.

This vision is replicated and reinforced throughout all stages and aspects of the program, as the founder, Lori Pompa, describes how the motivation and inspiration behind this unique classroom structure is heavily influenced by a responsibility to “restore the basic tenets of democracy to a severely underrepresented voice” (2011, p. 255). By doing so through a class equally comprised of Inside and Outside students, the impact of these courses not only stimulate

a positive change within the prison environment, but also stimulates those interested in prison justice and/or reform to recognize the value and importance of listening to the perspectives of those most seriously impacted by social institutions such as the carceral state. This awareness is intended to catalyze a shift in people's "postprison trajectory" that places an emphasis on individual promise and narrative, as well as encourages participants to recognize the power in "reconsidering dimensions of themselves" and critical issues such as prison justice "from multiple perspectives," which is a "precursor" to individuals recognizing themselves as "agents of social change" (Pompa, 2011, p. 255-2614). People who have taken part in Inside-Out courses describe this "experiential learning" as a "practice of freedom" and "transformational" (Shay, 2012, p. 207; Maclaren, 2015, p. 371; Werts, 2013, p. 135). A barebones expression of the "preconceived notions" that participants describe as being challenged by their Inside-Out experience includes "who counts as a student," a stance which, if altered, influences a person's overall understanding and attitude towards education and who is worthy of increasing their knowledge (Byrom, 2018, p. 94-97). Awakening such awareness and confronting fundamental principles in participants and students alike will increase their longitudinal civic engagement and dedication through avenues that are not supported to the same degree in traditional pedagogical classroom settings and isolated academic exposure. This classroom setting and organization will serve as the avenue through which this study's sample of non-incarcerated people who have participated in educational programming behind bars gained access to do so. Therefore, appreciating and recognizing the unique impact of this structural environment and its contextual implications is a critical foundation for this work, especially when situated in comparison with existing literature on the longitudinal impact of the structural inner workings of the traditional prison system and environment on those whose lives unfold behind bars.

Methods

This research study was undertaken with and motivated largely by an assumption that the experience of participation in programs of higher education would vary for incarcerated and non-incarcerated individuals. Therefore, to properly address and understand the impact of participation in programs of higher education as experienced by incarcerated versus non-incarcerated people, it is necessary to obtain data from a sample of individuals who experienced college while incarcerated (former Inside students), one that was exposed to college-in-prison programs as non-incarcerated students through the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program (former Outside students), and a control group of non-incarcerated students who have only experienced college in traditional non-correctional settings. Participants in these three samples were interviewed about their experiences with higher education (about the impact of their participation on their view of themselves and their environment, about the most important characteristics of their educational programming, and about the impact of their participation on their perception of their classmates). The interviews conducted with the sample of former Inside students were part of a previous study (“TUPIT Degree Program”), which is forthcoming in the *Journal of Prison Education and Re-entry (JPER)* and was conducted by the Tufts University Prison Initiative of Tisch College (TUPIT). The Principal Investigator of this thesis worked as a Research Assistant and was on the Institutional Review Board (IRB) application and approval on the earlier project (study number #1806012). For the remaining data collection and study procedures, the PI applied for and received approval from the Tufts University Social, Behavioral, & Educational Institutional Review Board (SBER IRB) before commencing data collection. The study number is #1910019 and IRB approval was received on November 15, 2019. The Notice of Exempt

Status received from the office of the Vice Provost for Research is attached in the Appendix for further review.

This methodology is designed with the following theoretical and empirical research questions in mind: Do programs of higher education have an impact on how incarcerated students view themselves and their environment? If so, how does this influence compare to that experienced by their non-incarcerated counterparts? The particular methods take into consideration the fact that certain topics of discussion may be difficult and sensitive to talk about, such as personal growth, frustrations, and family history. Therefore, conducting interviews of this sort, especially with a vulnerable population, is most responsibly and carefully performed in an environment in which the participants feel as though they can freely and comfortably express themselves. This level of comfort and expression may not be replicated and sustained through other forms of methodology, such as surveys. In addition, large-scale studies on prison education are logistically constrained due to a relatively small pool of potential participants and restricted access to this population due to their categorization as a vulnerable population.

Samples

Through semi-structured interviews with a sample of eight formerly incarcerated individuals who participated in college while incarcerated in medium- and maximum-security correctional facilities in the eastern and primarily northeastern United States, the impact of higher education in this environment is addressed and analyzed. These interviews were conducted in an already-approved and conducted study (“‘You’re almost in this place that doesn’t exist’: The Impact of College in Prison as Understood by Formerly Incarcerated Students from the Northeastern United States”), to which the researcher and Principal Investigator has

access as a research assistant and Study Coordinator on that article. In this sample of eight, four participants identified themselves as exclusively Black or African American, one identified as Black and African, one as Black and Hispanic, one as Black and Native American, and one as exclusively Caucasian. All of the participants in this sample identified as male, which is due to correctional facilities being segregated by gender and the study's restrictions of access to only individuals who were incarcerated in men's facilities. The level of educational attainment of these participants prior to their incarceration ranged from grade 9 to community college involvement. The ages of participants at the time of interview (which took place in the summer and fall of 2017) ranged from 25 to 67 years old. Time spent incarcerated varied from participant to participant from 2 to 24 years, and the number of incarcerations for each participant ranged from 1-3 (with most participants experiencing only one incarceration). At the time of the interviews, the time that participants had been released from prison beforehand ranged from 22 days to 14 years. All participants had taken classes through a degree-granting program while incarcerated, and one participant took enough classes to earn his degree while incarcerated (two other participants came close as well). Those who did not receive their degrees did not do so based on their own choice, but rather were unable to complete enough courses as a result of prison-related, sentence-based, and/or college program logistics.

The data obtained from this first formerly incarcerated sample of individuals was then complemented with data obtained from interviews conducted with two samples of non-incarcerated individuals. The first sample of fifteen individuals had participated in a college-in-prison program (Inside-Out) as non-incarcerated students alongside incarcerated students. In this sample, eight participants identified as white, two participants identified as white and Chinese, one person identified as Asian, one person identified as white and Hispanic, one person

identified as South Asian, one identified as black, white, Haitian, German and Jewish, and one person identified as Black and Haitian. Five participants identified as male, and ten participants identified as female. The age range for participants at the time of the interview was 18-25 years old. In order to avoid a cohort effect, as previously explained, the PI attempted to recruit and interview people who had participated in different cohorts of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. There were four iterations of the course, and the distribution of the participants in this study across class offered was as follows: 5 people in the first class, 3 people in the second class, 3 people in the third class, and 4 people in the fourth class.

The second sample of fifteen individuals had never taken any college-in-prison courses and served as the control group in order to draw critical comparisons for the study conclusions. In this sample, 11 participants identified as white, one person identified as Indian, one person identified as Asian, one person identified as South Asian, and one person identified as South Asian American. Fourteen of the participants identified as female, and one of the participants identified as male. The age range for the participants in this sample at the time of the interview ranged from 18 to 23 years old.

These samples allowed the research to investigate the impact of higher education as narrated by samples of individuals of the following three populations: formerly incarcerated college students, non-incarcerated college students who have taken college-in-prison classes alongside incarcerated students, and non-incarcerated college students who have had no prior exposure to college-in-prison courses. A table “Table 1: Summary of Study Participants” that describes and identifies the similarities and differences of the participant characteristics across the three samples included can be found in the Appendix. It is important to note that the Principal Investigator expected that the incarcerated and non-incarcerated samples would have different

characteristics due to the nature of college-in-prison programs, as well as higher education more generally. Elite institutions of higher education that contemporarily participate in college-in-prison programs were initiated and reserved for members of the privileged ranks of society, whose racial/ethnic identities tend not to resemble those whose lives are intricately interwoven with the criminal justice system (as described in the literature review section). Therefore, rather than overlook this distinction, considering how these differences may impact how the two groups (incarcerated and non-incarcerated) view and understand one another, is a productive and constructive addition to this project.

Instrument and Aims

The sample of formerly incarcerated individuals was recruited through previous personal connections and through referrals by participants or by staff members from other college-in-prison programs. Interviews were all conducted by the same researcher and took place in a public place (usually in a library conference room). The interviews conducted with the group of formerly incarcerated individuals who participated in college-in-prison programs while incarcerated were structured to obtain information and data on the themes outlined in Table 2: Description of Coding Scheme by Theme [Sample of Former Inside Students] which can be located in the Appendix.

The sample of non-incarcerated individuals who participated in Inside-Out as Outside students was the first group recruited by the Principal Investigator (PI), as this allowed for the PI to see the demographics of the sample so that, in case of a surplus of interested participants in the control group, the PI could try and select a sample of individuals whose demographics would most resemble those of the Inside-Out group. Participants in this sample were contacted through an initial email sent by the Inside-Out class professor about this study. The individuals who

participated in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program at the same university received information about this study and the PI's contact information and were encouraged to contact the PI if they were interested in becoming involved in the study as participants. Potential participants were all BCC'd so as to ensure confidentiality.

Participants in the control group who did not participate in Inside-Out were recruited through social media web postings in the university's undergraduate class pages on Facebook. These postings included brief information about the study topic and what participants could expect to do if they agreed to participate, explaining that interested potential participants should contact the PI via email or phone, and would receive more information about doing so. The PI re-posted this recruitment information twice until 15 participants were recruited. There was not a surplus of interested potential participants, so it was not possible to select which participants to include in order to best reflect the demographics of the first group.

If there were an overflow of interested potential participants (as determined by comparing the sample size to that of the formerly incarcerated sample), the Principal Investigator would attempt to produce a sample that would allow for collection of the most reliable data. This would be done by considering the demographic characteristics of the formerly incarcerated sample and constructing a group of participants whose demographic characteristics most closely resemble those of the formerly incarcerated sample. Further, if possible, the Principal Investigator attempted to avoid a cohort effect, which might occur if the non-incarcerated sample of individuals who participated in Inside-Out were from the same class, as that would allow for a certain group's experience with the nature of college-in-prison programs (including possible security issues and hurdles) to shape their answers and perspectives of their involvement. Therefore, including as many participants from various cohorts of Inside-Out as possible would

decrease the risk of the data being compromised or impacted by a cohort effect. There have been four iterations of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program at this university, and the class has been taught at three different correctional facilities (the course was taught twice at one of the facilities).

The interviews that were conducted with the group of non-incarcerated students who participated in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program were structured to obtain information and data on the themes outlined in Table 3: Description of Coding Scheme by Theme [Sample of Former Outside Students] which can be located in the Appendix. The interviews that were conducted with the control group of non-incarcerated students who did not participate in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program were structured to obtain information and data on the themes outlined in Table 4: Description of Coding Scheme by Theme [Control Group], which can be located in the Appendix.

The purpose of these interviews was slightly different for each sample, especially in terms of the limited population of possible students and participants. The sample of former Outside students was comprised of individuals who all attend the same elite university, who are statistically very likely to be from higher income status. Therefore, understanding and anticipating that these individuals' experiences will differ largely from former Inside students allowed the PI to consider how these identities allowed the students (Inside and Outside) to view and think about both themselves and each other before, during, and after their experience of education in prisons. Additionally, the PI was interested in 1.) asking how the participants understand the nature of the Inside-Out program and 2.) using this data to draw conclusions about if and how prison education looks and is talked about differently across these groups. For these reasons, acknowledging and accepting that the samples of former Inside and Outside

students will not be an “apples-to-apples” comparison is important and, in some ways, a major strength of the research.

There was significantly more geographical diversity among the sample of formerly incarcerated students, as their non-incarcerated counterparts (both those who took part in Inside-Out and the control group) all attend the same university, while the location of the formerly incarcerated students’ experiences with higher education had far more locational differences. Further, self-selection among those who chose to participate in this study was a critical component to be aware of and incorporated into the interview structure, as it is unlikely that individuals who had an unfavorable and/or unenjoyable experience as an Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program student would agree to participate in this study. With regards to recruitment practices, the PI referenced the sample of formerly incarcerated individuals as a model off of which to attempt to replicate demographic characteristics in both of the non-incarcerated samples. This was the one condition that impacted the PI’s acceptance of interested potential participants in the study, until the sample for each population was fulfilled.

An example of the questions that most participants were asked and addressed can be found in the Appendix in Table 5: Example of Interview Questions.

For all samples, the interview schedule was divided into the following three time periods, which are depicted in Table 6: Description Interview Schedule.

All of the interviews were audio-recorded (with each study participant’s consent), to protect and ensure accuracy of the interview transcriptions and overall data. These audio recordings were then transcribed and coded to draw conclusions about the data.

For the first sample of formerly incarcerated participants, the following themes were identified and coded in the interview transcripts:

1. Personal development outcomes of college program involvement
2. Frustrations with college-in-prison experiences
3. Perception of impact of involvement on prison culture
4. Suggestions for program design and development

These variables and themes were constructed in part through inspiration derived from the questions posed and researched by existing literature on prison education, as well as by the gaps in existing research. For example, the themes of personal development and perception of impact of program involvement have been investigated and discussed by other scholars (Bryom, 2018; Maclaren, 2015; Pompa, 2011; Ryang & Clark, 2013; Werts, 2013). However, suggestions for programs of this sort, as described by experts in the field and key stakeholders (namely those who have participated in college-in-prison programs as students), have not been directly researched before to the same extent, thereby creating a gap in research waiting to be filled. In an attempt to further the success and effectiveness of the course of higher education in correctional facilities, it is important to value, amplify, and consider the perspectives and opinions of those whose lives are most impacted by the structure and impact of these very programs. From the research questions motivating this study, the Principal Investigator was curious to discover how the classroom experience translated and impacted everyday life for both Inside and Outside students (especially through a sociological lens and perspective), as well as how this impact influenced the process of personal growth as a result of education.

For the sample of non-incarcerated participants who participated in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, the following themes and variables were identified and coded in the interview transcripts:

1. Challenges

2. Class dynamic
3. Expectations for the class
4. Motivations for class participation
5. Perception of college
6. Prison imagery
7. Reaction to experience
8. Value of the class

The method of coding utilized in this study is understood as a-priori coding, as the basis and framework for the themes and variables came from the pre-existing literature and prior study conducted with former Inside students. These variables and themes are central to this study, as previous articles that include data collected from non-incarcerated individuals who have taken part in prison education programs have used samples primarily composed of educators (Byrom, 2018; Lagemann, 2011; Maclaren, 2015). Although these studies are certainly valuable and important, they have seldom focused on the experiences and themes identified through focusing on non-incarcerated students who have experienced the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. Therefore, conducting a study that specifies the experiences of non-incarcerated students, rather than educators, who are involved in programs of higher education in prisons, and highlighting the themes (and variables within these themes) is significant. For this reason, intentionally coding the data obtained through these interviews with this research gap in mind will be a critical addition to the literature on this topic.

For the sample of non-incarcerated participants who have not participated in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, the following themes were identified and coded in the interview transcripts:

1. Bubble
2. Challenges
3. Change in self
4. Perception of college
5. Perceptions of prison
6. Value of college

The method of coding utilized in this study is understood as a-priori coding, as the basis and framework for the themes and variables came from the pre-existing literature and prior study conducted with former Inside students. In addition to the above-mentioned studies, previous articles published on the impact of participation in higher education in prisons have not conducted a comparison with a control group of non-incarcerated students who have had no involvement in prison education. It is important that the themes and variables identified in the population sample of incarcerated students who have participated in higher education while incarcerated, as well as that of non-incarcerated students who have participated in programs of this sort, is understood in reference to the broader population in question, namely non-incarcerated students of higher education. Therefore, intentional analysis and coding of the obtained data with the expectation of comparing the themes and/or variables across the interviewed samples in mind will be a significant addition to the literature of prison education and will allow for a more robust understanding of programs of higher education in the carceral state.

Strengths and Limitations

One major strength of the study is that, due to the structure of qualitative interviews, the participants were able to share their experiences and answer the researchers' questions in their

own words. As compared to other research styles, such as surveys, this allows participants to express their answers in a more independent, detailed, and varied manner. This strength is especially useful for this research topic, as participants might find describing the impact of their experiences with higher education difficult to describe through avenues other than in-person interviews. Further, in-person interviews allow the researcher to observe, notice, and/or include additional cues and signs of participant answers, such as body language, which would get lost in other research styles (such as surveys), and may help the researcher further understand the multifaceted and complex answers of the participants.

Hypothesis

As a result of a review of existing literature on the topic of prison education, the Principal Investigator has developed some hypotheses for the results and conclusions of this study. It is hypothesized that programs of higher education *will* have an impact on how incarcerated students view themselves and their environment. In addition, it is hypothesized that this influence will be more drastic and conscious than that experienced by their non-incarcerated counterparts. Further, this impact is dependent on whether their involvement in the program is deemed by the participant to be overall a positive or negative experience. It is hypothesized that a positive experience would be characterized by continued support, from the professors, institution, family members and friends, and classmates. A negative experience, on the other hand, is hypothesized to be characterized by significant frustrations with the college-in-prison programs, which may result from difficulties with access to the materials and other class texts, as well as a lack or deficit of academic support. The availability of these factors are likely to be influenced and dictated by a participant's incarceration status and history.

The Impact of College-in-Prison on the Two Relevant “Total Institutions:” Prison and College

In order to address the research questions guiding this study (do programs of higher education have an impact on how incarcerated students view themselves and their environment? If so, how does this influence compare to that experienced by their non-incarcerated counterparts?), an analysis of college-in-prison programs that incorporates and relies upon Goffman’s introduction of total institutions will be useful. As previously discussed in the literature review section of this paper, Erving Goffman’s 1961 publication defined correctional facilities as an example of a “total institution.” The unique aspects of total institutions, according to Goffman, include the fact that “all aspects of life” occur in one place “under the same single authority” and are carried out institutionally, rather than individually (Goffman, 1961, p. 314). Further, the “group mentality” that connects those who live within the institution and serves as a barrier between those whose identities and experiences are not dominated by the institution in mind (the prison, for this paper). This tension creates a distinction between what exists and belongs “in” the institution and what exists beyond it, or “out” of the institution. It is possible that college-in-prison programs have a significant effect on the totalistic nature of the prison institution, either as an inadvertent consequence or an intentional feature of the programming. As hypothesized earlier, this impact can result in (but is not limited to) the following experiences: a strengthening of the labels and understandings of “in” and “out,” or a deterioration of the societal borders largely separating those who are personally and directly affected by the carceral system and those who are not. Through interviews conducted with formerly incarcerated people who participated in college-in-prison while serving time and interviews with non-incarcerated college students who participated in college-in-prison programs, the impact of college-in-prison on the

totalistic nature of correctional facilities and universities, as experienced through individuals in the above samples, was qualitatively deducted and analyzed. The participants' experiences of college-in-prison programs were situated within the context of exploring whether programs of this sort contribute to and influence the students' perceptions of themselves and their environment, utilizing Goffman's framework to construct this analysis.

Incarcerated Student's Experiences

[College-in-prison] changes the whole thing. It changed the whole dynamic, and prison is a society within a society, within a society. Okay. And you know, you have your family. They're the outside in society. But you're inside. And everything that you do matters to the inside of that society. So... your whole dynamic, as an individual, as an individual, your whole dynamic shifts from one of being, um, a prisoner, which you are, but as I said, you become a collegiate.

This vignette, described by Eessa, a participant who was a college student while incarcerated, reveals the potential for students enrolled in college-in-prison to identify as someone other than a "prisoner" to a "collegiate." Considering the totalizing nature and repressive culture of prisons and correctional facilities, the ability of college-in-prison programs to offer even a moment of distraction and new identity formation as it applies to the way that an incarcerated person views and perceives themselves and their environment should be considered remarkable and worthy of further analysis and discovery.

A formerly incarcerated man who participated in college-in-prison remarked with surprise during class one day, while making "prison-grade" coffee during the class break, that "the class made me forget I was in prison" (Binda, et al., n.d., p. 1). This sentence is evident of a larger shift that is prompted, encouraged and fostered by college-in-prison programs. While in

the class, this student did not feel defined by his confinement within the medium-security facility to which his days are mandated by the state and statute to unfold. For a little while at least, he was no longer defined simply by being someone “in” the total institution of the prison. College on the inside allowed him to look past and beyond the concrete walls and barbed wires.

The college-in-prison experience: “You’re almost in this place that doesn’t exist”

In order to address the research question concerned with understanding whether college-in-prison programs have an impact on how incarcerated students view their environment, considering the environment in which these programs take place is crucial. The culture within total institutions such as prison is remarkably distinct from the culture of the “outside world.” For this reason, one of the framing questions in the initial study, conducted by Binda et al., included exploring whether students who were incarcerated during their studies perceived a shift in the prison culture due to their participation in college-in-prison programs (n.d.). Understanding the prison culture, as explained by these formerly incarcerated individuals, included learning more about use of time and relationships with others within the institution.

To understand the ways in which college-in-prison programs impacted the prison culture, one should work to uncover the initial perceptions of the programs by those who would eventually enroll in the programs. One of the participants, Jamal, described his initial reaction to learning of the possibility enroll in college-in-prison after being transferred to a new correctional facility after having been in “the box,” or “extreme solitary confinement:”

But I get [transferred to another facility] and decide to quit everything even though I already had extensive criminal involvement from being in these institutions since I was young... then I hear about the [college-in-prison] thing. It was like an orientation. Of course when you hear the whole [University] thing and nerds all around the world, you

hear of that and it's like there's no way they come here! ... I was like 'I thought it was [University name]!' and it is them but... they are like another world. So that was strange, but I decided to give it a shot. I decided to enroll; they're supposed to be the smartest people ever coming here. I went for it and studied extremely hard for the entrance exam... unnecessary, but studying right up until the last minute. I got in. And then, here I am in front of you.

This excerpt reveals how, at the onset of the college-in-prison program, the very idea of educators and college-affiliated people entering the correctional facility was unbelievable to someone who had "extensive involvement" in and therefore a prolonged identification with the justice system and other related total institutions. The premise that college-in-prison could cross the walls and fences that separate the "inside" from the "outside" was inconceivable to this participant.

This discussion by Jamal exemplifies the nature of both prison and college as total institutions, as people affiliated with the university are "from another world." Although the totalizing characteristics of correctional facilities are more subversive and understated in institutions of higher education, extending the definition of total institutions to include college will be a fundamental component of this paper's findings and will be further discussed in the following section. In addition, it is probable that Jamal's reaction was especially intense due to having been segregated in "extreme solitary confinement" and experiencing one of the most intense, torturous and punitive measures enforced in correctional facilities. Therefore, having recently become familiar with the most extreme end of the spectrum of prison as a total institution, namely "the box," the possibility of a program that would work to deteriorate the institutional barriers was particularly unthinkable. As he states, the college program was "like

another world.” Later in his interview, it was Jamal who explained his college experience, saying, “you’re almost in this place that doesn’t exist.”

Additionally, it is critical to acknowledge that many of the incarcerated students scrutinized and carefully considered the motivations driving institutions of higher education to provide programming in prisons. This was exemplified by a comment from one of the participants, William, who stated:

[I]f [the program’s] orientation and their ethos is one of justice, one of not like charity or philanthropy or, you know, ‘these guys deserve a second chance,’ but understanding social ills in a way that people don’t have the same opportunities at birth given their zip code, given their race, given a bunch of things. There is a particular group of people who have a higher propensity to end up in prison and this is something that we have to correct in society and this what, this is what this prison program is about.

This illuminates the ways in which the former Inside students understood their identities, including along racial and socioeconomic lines, within the context of their confinement and incarceration status. With this description in mind, it becomes evident that those whose lives are confined to and defined by prison as a total institution view and perceive their class and race statuses as being exaggerated in some ways within the environment, especially in terms of college-in-prison programs being framed as or motivated by “charity or philanthropy” missions. As described during the literature review section, the incarcerated population is severely disproportionately composed of minority and marginalized communities, and this demographic makeup is absolutely fundamental to situating and providing context to this comment. With this in mind, William’s discussion suggests that although the norms and values within total institutions are self-contained and self-defined, they resonate and in some cases may mirror the

social expectations and relationships that exist beyond the walls of the prison, especially along power dynamics as they relate to and are magnified through race and class dynamics.

Increased agency: “these are human beings that are behind a wall”

Exploring whether college-in-prison programs influence how incarcerated students view and perceive themselves (another question guiding this study) is linked and related to the analysis of the role that programs of this sort play on the prison and carceral environments. Another participant, Ralph, remarked on the different conversations that people in his college cohort began to have in the yard (which is typically a place for socialization in prison). He described:

[O]ur books were unseen in the prison. Everybody reads fiction and Stephen King, and here we are in the yard discussing different topics you never hear in the yard. It’s always... “Who got stabbed in B-block? Uh... Did you hear that the latest legal proposal, they’re gonna take away our trailer visits?” ... But now we’re out in the yard, but we’re amongst ourselves. But it’s kinda like society.

As this student describes, the distinction between the college students and the “general population”¹ of the prison could be perceived even just from the reading material digested by those enrolled in college and those who were not. The conversations had by those who were not in college revolved around the prison institution, such as discussions about violent incidents and retributive punishment enforced by the administration, while those enrolled in college learned about and explored educational pursuits and events unfolding beyond the walls of the prison.

¹ In this paper, the population of incarcerated individuals who were not enrolled in college-in-prison programs will be referred to as the “general population.” Throughout this paper, unless otherwise indicated, this terminology should be considered distinct from the institutional utilization of the term “general population” or “gen pop,” which within the confines of a correctional facility, is used to indicate the areas and units of the prison that do not constitute the specialized or protective housing units.

This quotation reveals the way in which a shift even in seemingly minor aspects of culture, such as small conversational topics and reading material can be indicative of a larger cultural development that was bolstered through participation in college-in-prison and therefore a development in terms of how students in the college program adopted a different view of themselves and their environment.

Further, one of the underlying themes alluded to in this short vignette is that of the group dynamic of incarcerated students within the larger prison, which was created and fostered by the college-in-prison program. This cohort model enabled college students who were incarcerated at the same facility to connect with one another and undergo the college experience together. As this participant describes, the impact of this group dynamic was very powerful: his identification with the group of college students was so strong that it offered an opportunity to identify beyond the master status of an incarcerated person: an identity that was supported as beyond (or perhaps in addition to) that which was experienced by those in the general population at the institution. As he describes, “it’s kinda like society” - the identification with his cohort of college students was so powerful that it offered a separate group within the total institution. This is a critical insight into the influence of college-in-prison programs on the culture of correctional facilities, especially in their existence as total institutions and as perceived by incarcerated college students.

Other participants described similar experiences of the power innate in the newfound ability to identify with something beyond and/or in addition to their incarcerated status and history. For one participant, Dave, the ways in which offering college-in-prison programs could work to reduce some of the societal walls constructed around those who are incarcerated through

the connections and experiences offered by programs of this nature was especially potent. He remarked:

I think the prison population and prisoners, they can help, you know, break down certain negative stereotypes people may have of prisoners and understand that, you know, these are human beings that are behind a wall. Despite, you know, the bad choices they may have made, this is who it is. It's not always who's [projected] on you know, the local news.

This comment reveals the way in which college-in-prison offers incarcerated students an opportunity to regain some of the agency that is stripped from them in correctional facilities. This participant's expression supports Goffman's assertion that "a stigmatized status is submitted" to incarcerated people in prisons (1961, p. 318). Due to the isolated geographical locations of correctional facilities as well as the severe reduction in contact with people on the outside of the prison system (as described in the literature review section), incarcerated people are often unable to actively engage in addressing and changing some of the negative social stereotypes and judgments put forth about people with this social status, as ascribed by the dominant majority. However, college-in-prison programs offer a rare and critical opportunity for incarcerated people to interact with people from the "outside" of the institution and, as the participant describes, "break down certain negative stereotypes." Further, because colleges and universities of higher education can also be viewed through the lens of total institutions, the potential for college-in-prison to allow for people affiliated with the institution of higher education to learn about the "human beings that are behind a wall" effectively begins to dismantle the totalizing character of college.

This sentiment was reinforced by the former Outside students, and the value of human connection as assessed by non-incarcerated people who took part in college-in-prison will be further discussed. One participant from that sample, Melanie, explained that “sharing personal narratives, especially in a one-on-one setting... being able to hear about the things that happened to my classmates and what shaped their identity, that was super powerful.” This highlights the ways in which the ability to take ownership over explaining “what shaped [one’s] identity” is recognized as salient for both Inside and Outside students within the college-in-prison setting. Further, it is necessary to recognize that for non-incarcerated students, the environment and setting in which this course took place was associated with a *decreased* sense of agency and individuality. This was alluded to by one of the former Outside students, Vanessa, who stated that “we need to walk on eggshells around the COs and the deputies and really make sure that everything seemed perfect so that they would allow the course to continue and that they would allow future courses to occur.” This illuminates the relative nature of agency and how the environments to which one is accustomed largely determine the ways in which one interprets and understands the correctional setting as a total institution.

In addition to the complex relationship between power and education, and the historical ways in which the dominant white majority has prevented marginalized communities from learning (Douglass, 1995) in order to preserve their social power, this analysis reveals the power for college-in-prison programs to reinstate in their incarcerated students a sense of autonomy and agency in society’s understanding and perception of people who are directly impacted by the justice system. Even the clothing and material possessions in correctional facilities amplify the loss of individuality and agency: upon admittance to prison, an individual’s “[p]ersonal identity equipment is removed, as well as other possessions with which the [incarcerated person] may

have identified himself, there typically being a system of nonaccessible storage from which the [incarcerated person] can only reobtain his effects should he leave the institution” (Goffman, 1961, p. 317-8). Therefore, the potential for college-in-prison programs to reinstate a sense of agency in their incarcerated students illuminates another avenue through which programs of this nature influence how enrolled students perceive their self-conceptions and the prison culture in the total institutions in which this programming operates.

Relationships with Correctional Officers: “we’re just two guys talking”

Another aspect of understanding the role that college-in-prison programs play in incarcerated students’ perceptions of themselves and their environment is other actors and parties relevant to the context. As Goffman describes, a key characteristic of total institutions is people who are in positions of power and control, who are responsible for “strategic leverage in the management of” those who are incarcerated (1961, p. 317). The relationships and dynamics between the correctional staff, who occupy these positions of power in prisons, and those who are incarcerated, are often fraught with tension. As Goffman further describes,

Each grouping tends to conceive of members of the other in terms of narrow hostile stereotypes, staff seeing inmates as bitter, secretive and untrustworthy, while inmates often see staff as condescending, high-handed and mean. Staff tends to feel superior and righteous; inmates tend to in some ways at least, to feel inferior, weak, blameworthy and guilty. Social mobility between the two strata is grossly restricted; social distance is typically great and often formally prescribed... these restrictions on contact presumably help to maintain the antagonistic stereotypes (1961, p. 315).

Exploring the ways in which implementing college-in-prison programs in this environment has the potential to impact the relationships between correctional staff and incarcerated students is

key to developing a comprehensive understanding of the influence of college-in-prison programs on prisons as total institutions. As put forth by Foucault in his essay “Panopticism,” surveillance plays a critical role in the creation and maintenance of institutions designed to uphold discipline and punishment, such as the prison (2008). Correctional officers and prison staff are a crucial agent in the production and reproduction of surveillance and therefore play a crucial role in the culture and expectations in prison. Their role in college-in-prison programs was also remarked upon by the Outside students (their perception of correctional staff will be further discussed later on). One of the non-incarcerated students, Colleen, recognized the special circumstances and environment offered by these college-in-prison programs, describing “the ability to talk with [the Inside students] without having any COs in the room was really helpful, too... I feel like if the CO were present, not only would they interfere a lot in what we were talking about, they probably - and not that we were saying anything too crazy in the classroom, um, but I feel like it would have made the incarcerated students feel like there's no trust.” This illuminates that the traditional relationship between incarcerated individuals and correctional staff is usually one that does not include trust, and may even be rooted in distrust, and the extent of this normative expectation influenced even those who enter the facility but are not confined to the institution.

The formerly incarcerated participants had varying explanations and analyses for how college-in-prison affected their relationships with correctional staff. This variation in experiences can be understood by recognizing that “[t]he opportunities for developing mutually respectful and thus productive relationships between prisoners and prison staff are different in every institution given that each facility has its own culture, rules, and traditions” (Binda et al., n.d., p. 29). Another participant, Zahir, demonstrated and expanded upon this possibility for variation:

[S]ome [correctional officers] said I cannot, I cannot humanize him, I cannot see him as a man, I definitely can't see him as my equal, I can't see him as someone who is intelligent who could... have a good conversation with me and show me things... And then there are some who are just there to do their job and they would... converse with you and... you would realize wow... except for the fact that he's in a uniform and I'm a prisoner... we're just two guys talking about... a subject that just warrants this kind of discussion.

Another significantly illuminating explanation of this relationship was also illuminated by Zahir's recantation of conversations he experienced with correctional officers who "resent" prisoners for receiving free education through these programs (Binda et al., n.d., p. 30). He explained:

I've had [correctional officers] tell me... 'I have to pay this amount for my kids to go to school [and you get it for free].' And I said, 'You know what, you're right. ... [T]he idea that you have to pay that amount for your kids ... to go to school, that's another issue that needs to be dealt with at a higher level ... but the second thing is, this is not free; some of us are paying for it with our lives.'

Although this experience does not suggest that college-in-prison simply resolved any of the tension that likely exists between correctional staff and incarcerated individuals, it does illuminate another extremely significant finding relating to "equality, [as] Zahir does not simply oppose the COs' position here but acknowledges and identifies with him, enabling the CO to feel understood and consider a different perspective rather than feeling the exclusive need to press his own point" (Binda, et al., n.d., p. 30-1). The potential for programs of this sort to encourage and allow for empathy-building, rather than resistance and "othering" as is normatively expected and fostered in correctional facilities, as put forth by Goffman, should not be understated or

overlooked. Further, this finding is a critical addition to the paper's discussion and assessment of how participating in college-in-prison alters incarcerated student's perceptions of their environment, because correctional staff are a fundamental and key aspect of the prison complex. This reveals the pivotal role that involved parties in prison as the relevant institution plays, as well as illuminates the ability for higher education to influence the relationships between people affiliated with said parties.

Prison Culture: "What is our code, what is our creed?"

Although these findings are immensely valuable and useful in forming an understanding of the impact that college-in-prison can have on incarcerated students' perceptions of themselves and their environment, it is necessary to re-ground the analysis within and recognize the totalizing culture of the prison. Assuming that the prison classrooms in which college courses are taught are immune or completely isolated from the total institution looming beyond the classroom door would be irresponsible and naive. As another participant, Andy, explained in his interview,

[j]ust because you're in a classroom, it doesn't change the prison rules. If I don't like you because you're a child molester, I don't wanna sit next to you. Oh by the way, teacher, don't ask me to get up and be involved and do a project with this guy. Now, I may not say that in class, but that's the thought. And, cause prison is still prison, and they have a pecking order of who they wanna associate with... It doesn't, I use that as an example. It could be... opposing gang members, which is something that the teachers don't know because that's prison code. So when you get inside, there's another thing you're navigating.

This quotation illustrates the innate and unique power in the coming together of two total institutions (namely, the institution of higher education and the correctional facility) in college-in-prison programs.² The rules, both written and unwritten, that govern prison as a total institution are not necessarily common knowledge and may not be considered legitimate or be respected in the same way on the outside of the barbed wires surrounding the facility. Further, as the participant describes, educators are often not privy to some of the information regarding their students, such as gang affiliation, sentence length, and crimes (because crimes are related to social acceptance or exclusion within the institution, as described in the participant's comment). Most educators who are involved in prison education, as explained in the literature review section, are white females who have not had personal experience with the justice system, and although they are academically inclined, are unlikely to be familiar with and/or knowledgeable about the intricacies of prison culture. In fact, many programs have explicit rules and regulations forbidding educators in this setting from knowing the conviction and sentence length for the incarcerated participants (the implications of this policy and disjunction will be further discussed in the following chapter). The rationale for professors not being allowed access to this information is likely grounded in the assumption that categorization by crime is part of the "prison culture" and the technique of the total institution in this sense. Therefore, by remaining uninformed of these identifications, professors will presumably not be able to divide and hierarchize the lines of power in particular ways that serve to reinforce the institution. However, it is possible that, in practice, this lack of information and resultant disconnect will unknowingly cause or allow for uncomfortable, if not dangerous, situations for incarcerated students. For this reason, it is crucial to recognize the potential disjointing of the cultures of the two relevant total

² The analysis of colleges and universities as total institutions will be further discussed.

institutions (the college and the prison) and for college-in-prison staff and faculty to remain mindful of the pervasive impact of the totalizing correctional facility and how this phenomenon can translate and seep into the classroom culture.

It remains important to acknowledge that, although, as described in this chapter, college-in-prison programs do have an influence on the prison culture through their ability to encourage individuality and agency in their incarcerated students, as well as an increased connection with people from the “outside” world, they do not have the power to protect or insulate their incarcerated participants from the reality of “prison code.” Andy further explained this during his interview, stating:

[I]deally, if you weren't in prison, that would work. But it's a different society, because the consequences for me doing that, when I get back outside of your room could be deadly. [For] example: opposing gang members. So, we don't associate with these others for no reason whatsoever. None. I walk into English class, and I'm up here roleplaying with an opposing gang member who I don't even have the right to speak to, in a scene from Othello. And when I walk outside of the classroom, those who aren't involved in the educational program, those in gang prison life “what were you doing with so and so? What were you doing?” “Well, I was in school.” “Oh, really. Really. Like we care about that? What is our code, what is our creed?”

As previously stated, this quotation exemplifies and concretizes the intricacies and complex nature of the prison environment. As Goffman theorizes, the culture of total institutions such as correctional facilities is markedly distinct from that which governs the “outside” world, and the consequences of disrespecting or ignoring the “creed” or “code” that dominates life within prisons are likely to be unknown to prison educators, thereby placing incarcerated students in a

potentially threatening situation. As this participant explains, “it’s a different society.” Although he did not explicitly utilize Goffman’s theoretical terminology, this concept can be grounded in the participant’s language and explanation of how pervasive and invasive the “prison gang life” “creed” is, and the ways in which some classroom etiquette and expectations for college on the outside can be difficult, if not dangerous, to replicate within the facility. In this way, the rules of prison as a total institution leave institutions of higher education as markedly subversive and subject to the prison culture. This analysis highlights the finding that although college-in-prison programs do have the potential to offer an avenue through which incarcerated students can view and regard themselves and their environment through a different lens, this possibility is limited and ultimately can be restricted by the “code” or “creed” of prison as a total institution. With this in mind, the intensely pervasive nature of the totalizing characteristics of correctional facilities becomes recognizable and of concern, which will be elaborated upon in the conclusory chapter.

Former Outside Students’ Experiences

It was actually really weird to see [my non-incarcerated peers] around the [college] campus because when I saw them, we were together in a van and going to a prison. So to see them not in clothing that we would wear to the prison, to see them talk about things differently... we would go through a shift when we entered the prison walls.

This vignette, as described by Megan, one of the former Outside students, is an effective initiation into analyzing the experience of participating in college-in-prison as non-incarcerated students. The van rides, which Megan alludes to, serve as the Outside group’s connection to the world and space beyond the correctional facility and the college. The spatial awareness that is raised and encouraged in the commute to and from the prisons, by the very nature of the time spent travelling from one location to the other, illuminate the potential for this transportation to

act as a liminal point in the experiences of those involved, as well as heighten the group's awareness of distance in this context.³ The reader is advised to utilize and incorporate Megan's interpretation of and reflection upon the van rides as they continue to read and process the multifaceted nature of college-in-prison programs as explored and explained by those who have been involved.

Situating the experiences of non-incarcerated college students who participated in college-in-prison programs through the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program within the conceptual framework of correctional facilities and institutions of higher education as total institutions is another avenue through which one can begin to form a more comprehensive framework of the full impact of higher education behind bars. This analysis will serve to bolster the argument that college-in-prison programs, in their ability and potential to break down some of the characteristics of total institutions, serve as a "bridge" between the two respective "total institutions," namely the college or university and the correctional facility. Further, it is important to recognize that all of the participants in the sample of former Outside students had finished the semester during which they were enrolled in the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. With this in mind, considering the ways in which temporal distance may alter how these students view and understand their experiences is important, especially in reference to developing a conceptualization of the longstanding and continued impact of participation in educational programming in correctional settings.

It is important to recognize that these conclusions are not necessarily directly applicable and may have a reduced generalizability to the experience and impact of inside-only college-in-prison programs that do not include co-learning with non-incarcerated students, due to the

³ The role that distance plays in the control group's experience and perception of college-in-prison programs and prisons at large will be discussed in the following chapter.

relative decrease in contact with non-incarcerated individuals, as the only non-incarcerated people entering the facility for these programs are professors and educators). However, the relevance of these findings is maintained, as they illuminate the value of Inside-Out, as well as the power of and rationale for incorporating more outside students and non-incarcerated people generally into a college-in-prison program.

Prison Imagery: “Just going inside a system like that physically changes you”

Because this study was intended to explore how non-incarcerated students involved in college-in-prison programs are affected by the experience, and whether programs of this sort influence their perception of their environments, it is necessary to include their interpretation of the environment in which the classes take place, which is the correctional facility. All 15 of the non-incarcerated participants who are former Outside students illustrated vivid descriptions of prison imagery during their interviews. Because prison, in the past and present, has intentionally been removed and isolated from the rest of society (Foucault, 2008), it is perhaps unsurprising that the imagery of confinement was interpreted as salient for non-incarcerated students. One of the former Outside students, Oliver, described this phenomenon, explaining “I passed [the facility] freshman year too but I did not know there was a prison in here. It’s kind of eerie, like, you think it’s just a factory... the cement wall and then kind of like the brick entrance, and you’re like ‘why is it brick? Is this like a school?’... but there’s also barbed wire, and, like, smoking coming everywhere.” The particular facility Oliver is referencing is unique in that it is located directly by a major road and is therefore hidden in plain sight from the majority of society. None of the 15 students in this sample had had any personal experience with prison prior to their participation in college-in-prison, with the exception of four students who had entered

correctional facilities as tutors through the Petey Greene Program⁴ to work with incarcerated students who were pursuing their high school diploma. Therefore, college-in-prison programs, by bringing people who otherwise are unlikely to see the other side of that “cement wall” and “barbed wire,” serve a critical function of exposure to the reality of confinement, especially when viewed through Goffman’s theory of total institutions. As one of the former Outside students, Kristen, expressed, “anyone who’s been into any sort of correctional facility once can tell you, like just going inside a system like that physically changes you.” The introduction to the lived reality of the carceral system, for many of the Outside students, was the mandatory orientation led by the Department of Correction (DOC) staff, which took place at the prison where their class would take place. One of the participants, Vanessa, described her reaction following the “tour” of the facility that was led by the DOC during this orientation:

After that first tour, when the CO was walking us around Seg and being like ‘this guy’s been in here for four months,’ and the guys were screaming ‘oh my god you guys have [college] shirts on, are any of you law students? Can you help me?’ It was horribly unsettling, and we all left it and we all got back in the van and everyone was silent because we all were so shaken by it and were so angry.

This initial training was described as salient by another participant, Nadia, who recalled:

[The correctional staff was] saying things along the lines of... don 't give them any information about yourself because then maybe they will contact somebody on the outside who will hunt you down and find you and like, blackmail you... and so I remember... after that was done there... were a couple of students who were like ‘should

⁴ The Petey Greene Program is a national non-profit organization that provides tutoring to incarcerated students who are usually pursuing their high school diploma or GED - equivalent. There are various chapters of the Program at different universities and colleges, and traditional non-incarcerated volunteer students go to the correctional facility to which they are assigned once a week to work with the non-incarcerated students with whom they are paired.

we not give them our names...?’ I was like okay, some of this feels like it was just fear mongering but then there is a small part of you that is like what if this is actually true?

When one considers Goffman’s analysis and theoretical explanation of the role that Department of Correction staff and Correctional Officers play in upholding and maintaining the totalizing nature of prisons, viewing Nadia’s experience in conjunction with the frame of total institutions becomes especially potent. Nadia’s description, as viewed through Goffman’s perspective, reveals how people in positions of power perpetuate and reinforce the “negative stereotypes people may have of prisoners” (as Dave, one of the formerly incarcerated participants described) through “fear mongering” when orienting individuals for whom total institutions such as prisons are very foreign. Therefore, entering these establishments with an open mind that is not influenced by preconceived notions or expectations that have been repeatedly reinforced through society at large, as well as direct influences such as correctional staff, is very challenging, if not impossible. This illuminates another avenue through which the pervasive nature of the total institution influenced college-in-prison, as experienced by former Outside students. With this assessment and analysis in mind, it becomes evident that the way in which Outside students in this context perceive and interpret the environment in which the classes take and place (and to which their Inside counterparts are confined) is heavily influenced by the totalizing characteristic and nature of the correctional facility.

Security Experience: “going through the trap”

In order to expand upon the discussion of prison imagery, it is critical to consider how the process of gaining entrance to the prison is a key element of how the Inside-Out experience influenced the former Outside students’ depiction and perception of the facility (the relevant environment in this context). As Goffman analyzes, people who enter total institutions do not do

so without previous life experience or identities. Rather, they enter as “members... of a *home world*” which includes “a way of life and a round of activities taken for granted up to the point of admission to the institution” (1961, p. 317). Although through the college-in-prison program, the Outside students were not admitted to the institution in the same way as incarcerated people, the ways in which these experiences with the “outside” world (and even their label as Outside students, it can be argued) influenced their entrance to the institution. The security experience was especially impactful for many of the participants. Before entering any correctional facility, visitors and volunteers are subject to an intense security screening and search process. Metal detectors, pat-downs, and routine bodily checks (such as showing the Correctional Officers one’s bra straps, opening one’s mouth, and shaking out one’s hair) are all required phases of this security checkpoint.

People who are familiar with this experience refer to the motions as “going through the trap.” Kristen explained that, to her, going through the security process “always felt more uncomfortable” than being in other spaces in the prison, such as the school building in which the Inside-Out class takes place. Once she got inside the classroom, she described feeling that “all this tension released. It was like okay, these are my friends, this is just a normal class and [we are] doing normal class things.” Another participant, Steve, reinforced this notion, explaining “after class, it was really hard to want to do anything else the rest of the day, and it was also, like, the whole waking up early but just all of the physical barriers and the, like, kind of surveillance and the kind of state-ness that you had to pass through just to go to class was really hard and it took a bigger toll than I imagined it would.” As described earlier during the analysis of the former Inside students’ experiences. Situating the incarcerated students’ perceptions of surveillance within the college-in-prison setting in comparison with former Outside students

such as Steve reveals the ways in which levels and degrees of surveillance (which is especially critical within prisons, as stated by Foucault [2008]) within a particular environment (especially total institutions such as prison) have a lasting impact on how a person understands and perceives the world around them. This also suggests a concrete reinforcement and reminder that, although there is certainly some value and justification to describing colleges and universities as another form of total institutions, those whose lives take place within these educational institutions experience a profound level of privilege and protection in doing so. With this in mind, Steve's comment highlights the extent to which the influence of the security experience, or "the trap," continues to resonate with and impact those who walk through the metal detector even after they exit the facility and return to the outside world.

These narratives highlight the extent to which the security measures serve not only to keep incarcerated people inside the facility, but also to keep the public out, and once connections are formed between incarcerated and non-incarcerated people, the totalizing walls of the facility begin to dissolve into a "normal" environment. Although this data does not explicitly answer the research question framed at understanding the impact of the college-in-prison experience on how Outside students view their environment, it can be argued that these findings are actually *more* valuable in that they support conceptualizing the prison environment as a total institution in a more comprehensive way.

Professor as "conductor": "if I cannot really trust this person, I can't do this class"

As described in the previous section, including the descriptions and assessments of relationships with other people pertinent to the college-in-prison process and environment is critical to conceptualizing how programs of this sort influence the perceptions of former Outside students. For the former Inside students, this interpersonal perception was discussed in terms of

their relationships with the Correctional Officers. In the sample of former Outside students, every participant described their relationship with the Professor for the college-in-prison program as being distinct from the professor-student relationships that were cultivated in other college classes, as well as being an essential component of the course. Vanessa attributed the catalyst for this unique relationship as being due in part to the logistical and environmental variations that accompanied this course, stating “I think you cannot deny that you are going to form a different relationship with a professor when you’re sitting next to them in a car for two hours. So it was an hour there, an hour back, it also was 6 am, so everyone was tired, everyone was cranky... and you don’t have that experience typically, and so it was a very interesting opportunity to get to know a professor in a way that was a lot deeper than relationships I have to other professors.” Vanessa was not the only person to contextualize the professor-student relationship in terms of the “van ride”: 11 of the 15 students mentioned this during their interview. This explanation offers a strong foundation off of which to continue analyzing the nature of the professor, and the relationships that the former Outside students developed with her, in this context.

One participant, Austin, intensely associated his relationship with the professor with the level of trust he placed in her, explaining:

The biggest difference... is how deeply I did and still do trust her. I think [in] other classes there's an underlying trust in the Professor because hopefully they're teaching in a way that is going to be thorough, fair, challenging, maybe provocative. But from the first day with [the Professor for Inside-Out] I felt like I was really putting trust in her. I remember that from the first meeting we had before we even, weeks before even going to [the correctional facility], that I remember thinking like, if I cannot really trust this

person, I can't do this class. And I remember feeling how much I trusted her the first time that we went to the prison and going through the metal detector, going through the whole security process, walking to the classroom, and then... relying upon her to facilitate the experience. It wasn't a matter of safety. It wasn't a matter of being safe. It was a matter of trust that she was a person conducting the entire experience.

This reveals a critical difference between the college-in-prison experience and that which transpires on traditional college or university campuses, as well as how this difference impacted the relationship with the Professor. Because, as described previously, for many of the students this course was their introduction to the lived reality of prisons and the first step into this total institution, trusting the person responsible for "conducting the entire experience" and leading the course was absolutely crucial and necessary. As Austin describes, this need for trust was not founded out of the students' fear of danger or safety. Rather, in this context and situation, the professor is granted the responsibility of introducing and guiding the Outside students to and through an entirely unfamiliar environment. With this baseline of trust and distinct environment, the author would like to frame the role and responsibility of the professor in the college-in-prison setting experience as a "conductor" of the intersecting of the two institutions. In order for the work and dissolution of both prison and the university as total institutions, an individual who is trusted on both sides/total parties is pivotal to the success of the program and growth of connections and relationships between the incarcerated and non-incarcerated students). Although the professor's status is more closely aligned with that of the Outside students, due to her status as being non-incarcerated, it is possible that this alliance can undergo changes as the professor's years of experience in this work increase. Further, the student-professor relationship was contextualized within each person's individual motivations and drive to participate in and engage

with prison education. As one participant, Lydia, described, she felt as though “this shared experience forges [a deep understanding] in a way [that] being in a class with another professor where you share interests but are not kind of challenging any structure together doesn't do.” Again, this reveals the extent to which the prison environment in which the class and experience unfolded influenced the perspectives of the former Outside students, as well as the immensely valuable relationship that they developed with their mentor, or program “conductor.”

Language: “language can be so alienating”

The socially ingrained and normative language used to refer to incarcerated people, including the use of the terms “convicts,” “inmates,” and “prisoners” reinforces not only ways in which those involved are reminded of this distinction, but also of the external world that exists beyond the confines of the facility, as put forth by Goffman. For this reason, including language as an indication of former Outside students’ perceptions of themselves and their environment is particularly tactful. Although most of the Outside students described feeling an intense closeness with the Inside students (as will be further described later on), one student, Oliver, did not share this experience. During the interview, he explained, “I guess over the time in the class you ... seep into like figuring out like, why they were in prison. And I think like, once I found out that it was like much, like, crazier stuff than possession of weed, I was like ‘oh I don’t feel bad.’ I don’t know. It felt weird. I don’t know how that feels, if that’s okay.” This excerpt exemplifies the way in which Oliver struggled to view his incarcerated classmates in a manner that extended beyond their deviant histories, and how their status as incarcerated seemed to permeate his understanding of and relationship with them. Further, Oliver’s lack of articulateness in this situation with regards to describing his sentiments perhaps signals discomfort with this feeling and realization. However, it is important to note that despite Oliver’s strong association of Inside students and

crime, he at no point during the interview used any of the terminology normatively utilized when referring to people who are incarcerated, such as “convict,” “felon,” “offender” or “inmate.” This phenomenon is consistent with all of the former Outside student participants - at no point during any of the interviews did any of the participants refer to their Inside classmates with any of the above-described normatively-engrained language, but elected to use terminology such as “incarcerated person,” “incarcerated student,” “Inside student,” or “prisoner.”⁵ This alteration of the pervasive language that serves to reinforce the barriers around prisons and between those who have been directly impacted by the justice system and those who have not, despite Oliver’s noted struggle in making sense of the experience, reveals another way in which college-in-prison programs begin to dissolve the totalizing walls, both figuratively and metaphorically, built around the carceral state. This suggests that college-in-prison programs serve a critical function in altering the way in which Outside students perceive their environments.

This analysis illuminates the unique value and impact of an environment in which those who are incarcerated are granted the opportunity to be regarded and viewed in a different light than that which is usually applied to this community (as described by Dave in the previous section), and which is further symbolized through the language used by people in this shared space. Further, the former Outside students also remarked upon another way that language in the college-in-prison classroom differed from the more traditional institution of higher education. A common reaction to this difference was to draw comparisons between the traditional college classroom environment and that of the Inside-Out classroom. One participant, Nadia, indicated this in her interview:

⁵ Although “prisoner” is used colloquially, people with lived experience in the correctional system argue that this is not an isolating term, as it places the “blame” and “responsibility” of warehousing on the state, rather than the individual. This was explained by both currently and formerly incarcerated individuals with whom the author has had discussions about terminology and language in this setting.

[O]ver my four years at Tufts, when we talked about sexual violence, we would talk about it in a very specific way and then when I went into this classroom, it was very differently talked about... [F]or example, I don't use the words, like "rape" ... frequently. I would rather... say "assault," "violence" whatever but that isn't always the case... I think those were weeks that were kind of challenging... but also good because I feel like higher education language can be so alienating, the, really academic-y jargon, so I think it was just a good reminder to be like, "what are you actually saying?" because you're just using a bunch of big words.

This illuminates how college-in-prison and learning alongside and from people who were not necessarily accustomed to some of the cultural norms pervasive in institutions of higher education, such as the "academic-y jargon" that traditional college students are trained to utilize and incorporate in the classroom, especially while discussing sensitive topics such as "sexual violence." Another participant, Nina, echoed similar experiences:

[B]eing in a class talking about the same [topics as on the traditional campus] with some people that had, you know, never academically studied [for example] gender equality.... [T]hat's a challenge because... it's different from a lot of the conversations you would have with people who already thought some similar things to you.

This reveals another feature of institutions of higher education, which will be further discussed in the following chapter, namely that non-incarcerated students at traditional colleges and universities are primarily learning alongside "people who already thought some similar things." This lack of exposure to people who are less likely to share the same viewpoints as oneself (which is often the liberal perspective at the majority of elite institutions of higher education), and even the lack of exposure to people who may not utilize the same "jargon" that is

encouraged and expected on college campuses, results in what is described as “bubble,” or “echo chamber” which will later be argued to represent a modernization of the phenomenon of the total institution. This was further exemplified by another participant, Vanessa, during her interview.

She elaborated:

[T]hose conversations would not have occurred in the context of a Tufts classroom because so many people tend to be on the same page about things, particularly like if you’re taking a gender studies class where you’re reading short stories about gender, most people are going to agree that gender is a form of confinement, versus it was really productive and interesting in my opinion to have people push against that and [ask] ‘what are you talking about? How is being a woman confining? What do you mean there are gender norms?’ It’s just interesting because Tufts can sometimes be an echo chamber and it was a really refreshing way to break that up even if I disagree with their points.

This excerpt illuminates the ways in which students attending traditional universities and colleges have grown accustomed to a lack of disagreement or challenging of ideas and perspectives, which will be argued serves as a fundamental feature of the institution of higher education as a total institution. Although not all universities and colleges share the same physical isolation as is dominant in the case of correctional facilities (although some institutions of higher education are also physically removed from cities), this phenomenon permeates the educational and academic experience of people enrolled in the institution. Therefore, the environmental and ideological “bubble” in this context functions as a symptom of the total institution, a phenomenon which will be further explored in the following chapter that focuses on the experiences of students in the control group who have not participated in college-in-prison programs. With this in mind, it is evident that introducing former Outside students in a

productive and engaging manner to people who either do not share the same worldview or are not familiar with the expected/engrained vocabulary is a way in which college-in-prison programs contribute to the deterioration of colleges and universities as total institutions. Further, this analysis highlights the power of language, especially in this unique setting, through a dual lens, as it offers incarcerated individuals the opportunity to be viewed as beyond their societal label of “convict” or “inmate,” as well as encourages their non-incarcerated counterparts to critically engage with academic studies and human connection without the reliance on “academic-y jargon” that is perpetuated in the “echo chamber” of college campuses and privileged normative college classrooms. Additionally, this discussion illuminates the ways in which language use, especially in this context, contributes to and exemplifies how college-in-prison programs influence Outside students’ perceptions and perspectives of themselves and their environments.

Connections: “a mutual relationship”

In addition to one of the previously-discussed necessities in this analysis, namely that of including the relationships that students form with other involved parties, it is important to consider the relationship between the two groups of students (Inside and Outside) and how these connections influence how the participants’ view themselves and/or their environment. One of the mechanisms through which the nature of total institutions such as correctional facilities are upheld and maintained is the “bureaucracy [that] operates within the” institution, which “requires a rigid set of rules and regulations” that “systematically exert control over the residents” (incarcerated people, in this case) (DeWard & Moe, 2010, p. 119). Further, those who are subjected to the total institution understand that the expected and enforced reaction to breaches of this hierarchy is “punishment through a variety of means” (DeWard & Moe, 2010, p. 119).

Therefore, another avenue through which college-in-prison programs diminish or contradict a totalizing feature of correctional facilities is by enabling the two groups of students (Outside and Inside) to view each other as humans, beyond and in addition to their life experiences. This human connection was cited as the most important and/or valuable aspect of the college-in-prison program by more than half of the sample of former Outside students.

For some of the students, these connections were grounded in a relation and recognition of the ways in which their identities either related to or diverged from the Inside students. Oliver described how his identity as “half white half Chinese” resonated throughout his experience, stating “I’m this white kid who gets away with shit. I just felt so sick about the whole thing.” This revealed the ways in which, through his participation in college-in-prison, his identity and related privileges were confronted and even made him feel “sick” about the things he may not be incarcerated for due to his relative privilege as maintained by race. Another former Outside student, Lydia, expanded upon her identity as a white woman in this environment, stating:

I think being white and entering a prison... being white and financially comfortable and not having... family history of major trauma associated with prisons... or group history of major trauma allows me to enter there and to feel hatred for the place and resentment towards the people that are making it the way that it is. But to also feel safe and personally safe if not ideologically safe.

This explanation of perceived protection and safety associated with and produced by her racial and class identities, especially in regards to trauma “associated with prisons” highlights the ways in which the connections Lydia formed with her incarcerated classmates were based in her ability to express and feel “hatred for the place and resentment towards the people” enabling and allowing the institution to operate as it does. Both Oliver and Lydia’s comments relate to and

lend themselves to encouraging a multifaceted understanding of William's comment in the section on former Inside students, when he described the ways in which a person's racial identity and/or presentation may increase or decrease their likelihood of being incarcerated and how this ability is magnified within the college-in-prison setting and in the interpersonal relationships/connections formed in the classroom.

Vanessa, another student in the group of former Outside students, elaborated upon the role of human connection during her experience in the Inside-Out course. She explained:

It became clear to me that the care was something on both sides. It wasn't just us being invested in them or them being invested in us, it honestly was... and I think this is one of the strongest things that Inside-Out provides, a mutual relationship. It's not like one is a teacher, one is a learner, one is a college student and the other is not, there are a lot of things that make it an even playing field in the way the course is structured that allow there to be the development of relationships that are genuine.

In addition to being a fundamental and immensely impactful aspect of the course, the relationships between Inside and Outside students that were fostered during this course continued to influence Outside students following the culmination of the course. Because there is a no-contact policy between the Outside and Inside students, which is enforced and mandated by the Department of Correction, these "genuine" relationships are confined to exist and unfold within and during the length of the course. This is a critical and concrete distinction between normative college courses and the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program experience, as normally, students are not forbidden from interacting with and contacting one another following the last day of classes. This was notable for the participants. As Nina described,

I think [the relationships are] something really really unique in that class and I think relationships are something that you can kind of hold on to, that can motivate you to do other things moving forwards.... I feel like... writing your typical papers, you know, I'll sit there and I'll write it and then I'm gonna forget half of it. I feel like feelings and relationships... are easier to hold onto and I feel like will be something that you can use going forward.

This reveals the way in which the connections and relationships that were created in the college-in-prison classroom environment were unique and distinct from the products of other classrooms, such as "typical papers," especially in that they can continue to motivate inspire people as they go "forwards," even though literal contact between both parties of the relationship is banned. This further illuminates the incredible potency for college-in-prison programs to resist and dissolve some of the characteristics of prison as a total institution, as the human connections fostered within the classroom will extend beyond the end of the semester and therefore, by its very existence, is subversively and implicitly un-abiding to the regulations of the facility in a very powerful way. One of the participants, Kristen, illustrated this power in a very moving anecdote:

[O]ne guy inside who I was really good friends with, and one day we were talking about how I was like planning to go to medical school, and he said to me, "I hope one day I walk into the doctor's office and you're the doctor that I'm there to see." Oh my god, it literally kills me... [I]t's my dream that I would be able to treat a family like this, a family like this guy's family... I want nothing more than one day to walk into a patient room and to see him and his daughter sitting on the patient table waiting for me. Like, that's literally all I want in life.

This narrative reveals the way in which Kristen's experience in Inside-Out affected her so much that a chronic motivator for her studies and career endeavors (she will be attending medical school) was her relationship with this particular Inside student. Further, at the time of the interview, Kristen had completed the college-in-prison course two years prior, thereby revealing the longitudinal nature of this influence. The weight and significance of this relationship should not be understated, and should serve as evidence of the power held by college-in-prison programs to bridge and deconstruct the total institutions through human connection that transcends the physical barriers, limitations, and constructions that surround both the college and the prison as respective institutions. Further, the influence of this phenomenon on the self-perception and perception of environment as experienced by the non-incarcerated students is principal. Additionally, these experiences and the nature of Kristen's connection to the Inside student allude to and illuminate the importance of another common theme raised by former Outside students in regard to their college-in-prison experience: empathy.

Empathy: "I'm starting to build connections to these people as people"

Another very prominent theme that was discovered in the analysis of former Outside students' experiences was that their participation in college-in-prison encouraged and fostered an empathy for others in a way that other college courses had not done. Especially when viewed through the lens of the temporal nature of the influence of college-in-prison programs, this pattern reveals that, upon reflection and after the culmination of a semester-long involvement in college-in-prison programming, former Outside students acknowledge the ways in which their thinking was altered through this experience. This is another key feature of assessing how programs of this nature influence the views (of themselves and of their environment) of those involved as students. Even Oliver, who, as previously discussed, had difficulty with dismantling

the connection between his Inside classmates and their crimes, described that the program bolstered an “unshakeable faith in humanity and in people... the kind of unshakeable... hope for people. Something about it was just like, mind-blowing for me.” This excerpt suggests that even for a person who struggled to avoid associating “incarcerated person” with “criminal,” the program allowed him to discover and explore the power of “unshakeable faith” and “hope for people.”

This theme was movingly contextualized when Vanessa described one of her favorite moments in the class:

People were arguing about their favorite kinds of muffins, it was during the coffee break. At this moment I was like ‘I’m starting to build connections to these people as people, not as prisoners, not as Inside students, not as incarcerated people, but as humans. We are here, we are talking about muffins, and that is the only thing that’s on the table right now.’ The thing I was most excited about when we got to that point and I felt like our relationships shifted, and we were able to talk about other things. That in turn led to more of them being comfortable opening up about their personal experiences, being comfortable writing and sharing with class things that were more personal, and in that of course developing a level of care for each other that obviously was appropriate but was care for the person.

This narrative illuminates the way in which a moment, or conversation, that would be considered relatively simple or mundane on the Outside, signified a much larger and deeper “shift” in the relationships cultivated between the Inside and Outside students in the class. The extent to which this conversation would be considered “normal” and would be overlooked in any context other than the one in which it unfolded offers an intensely poignant conceptualization of the totalizing

nature of correctional facilities - even a conversation as “simple” as breakfast food options stood out to Vanessa in this context. Although this “shift” was symbolized by the students’ abilities to engage with one another about muffin preferences, this development in their connections was rooted in pure empathy, or as Vanessa described, “care for the person.” Further, as is evidenced, this “care” for one another enabled each student to feel more “comfortable opening up” and allowed for more comprehensive class discussions, and therefore should be considered as an absolutely fundamental aspect of the course and of the influence of college-in-prison on prison as a total institution.

Isolation: “that semester, there were literally only nine other human beings who knew what Inside-Out was like for us”

One of the challenges that was most addressed by 10 of the 15 former Outside students during their interview was feeling isolated from people who had not participated in college-in-prison programs or who had not engaged in prison education. This finding directly furthers the understanding of how involvement in college-in-prison programs can influence the ways in which people view their environments. Nadia depicted this phenomenon very simply and plainly, stating “that semester, there were literally only nine other human beings who knew what Inside-Out was like for us.” Austin also described feeling isolated during his Inside-Out experience, and explained:

[I]t's impossible to fully describe the sensory experience of being there. It's impossible to really talk through what it feels like to engage with the DOC officers. It's impossible to describe what it was like seeing our Professor, in a way that I respect and admire, but I felt like she had to alter her tone and aspects of personality in order to engage with the DOC officers and to understand that that was a necessary piece of the experience... It

marked the time in the class... in the prison versus the time on campus. It wasn't possible to really explain what it was like to be in the classroom and stand up to have everybody come in and to fumble into class starting end and then have class end and everyone just... go separate ways, essentially. That was the hardest thing and I don't think it felt so much like a need for... going to therapy because it would have been the same issue of trying to explain to a psychologist or therapist what was happening. It's so hard to explain anything in there to someone who was not in the room with us, in the experience of us.

Austin's depiction of the isolation he felt in response to his participation in college-in-prison experience, even from mental health professionals and practitioners, such as therapists, due to their lack of knowledge of the reality of the situation, as they weren't "in the room" and couldn't possibly understand various aspects of the experience, such as engagements with correctional staff and/or reminders of privilege and social status enforced by watching the Inside students file out of the room before the Outside students.

One reaction and coping mechanism in response to this isolation was growing closer with the other Outside students. After one especially challenging class, one student, Melanie, reached out to one of her friends (who had never participated in any prison education experience), and was disappointed by his reaction. Melanie described "I felt much more at home with people I was taking the class with than with someone I usually always feel at home with... [I]t was definitely eye-opening... I just needed some space and needed to spend time with people who I knew would understand what was going through my mind." This highlights the way in which Melanie recognized that someone who would normally provide comfort in response to an upsetting situation was not able to do so in this context, due to his lack of experience with the reality of college-in-prison. Another participant, Hannah, described feeling angry at her friends

for the same reason, explaining “I just get mad at them cause they don’t know what’s going on. And I realize that I can’t expect them to, but it’s just hard.” This description can be used as evidence that even for students who were aware and reflective that they couldn’t “expect” their friends to understand.

One participant, Megan, situated and contextualized her isolation from people who had not participated in Inside-Out or other college-in-prison programs within the environment and space outside of the prison. She explained, “my relationship with people who were not taking the class definitely changed. Because my perspective on my privilege changed, and I was becoming much less tolerable of people undervaluing their educational privilege and complaining about things... a lot of things that seemed stupid to me before seemed even more stupid, like parties... and these things that we do or commonly that university students do just seemed so mindless and, quite frankly, idiotic... [H]ow can you be getting high when there’s a criminal justice issue in this country?” Here, Megan’s reaction to her isolation can be analyzed as being grounded, at least in part, in her aversion to the things that “university students” “commonly” engage in, such as recreational drug use. Further, Megan described, “I became a little bit more difficult with people. I was more selective about people I would spend time with. And I felt ok with that, I felt that if I ended up alone, that was ok. Because maybe I’m not in an environment where the people around me can support me that way.” That she selected to prioritize people who she felt would be “capable” of supporting her in “that way,” even if this “selectivity” resulted in her being “alone” further reveals the potential for isolation as a result of college-in-prison that was experienced and described by former Outside students. This analysis addresses part of the original research question, which was aimed at understanding how college-in-prison programs influenced non-incarcerated participants’ perceptions and understandings of their own

environment. Situating the university environment within the framework of total institutions, this suggests that students like Megan began to question and object to the cultural expectations maintained within colleges and universities.

An aspect of Megan's reflection that should not be overlooked is the ways in which she recognizes that her removal from social circles and personal distinction from the pervasive culture of her college is that it was an *intentional* process. This illuminates the ways in which the potential for college-in-prison programs to allow for and encourage the deconstruction and dissolution of total institutions is not a passive process. Rather, the people involved in this phenomenon are aware and cognizant of these changes, and even though some of the side effects and/or symptoms are uncomfortable or even distressing (such as isolation), this does not diminish the value of participation in this program or the value thereof. This shift in a willingness to value struggle signifies the weight and impact of participation in college-in-prison programming, thereby revealing another example through which college-in-prison begins to dismantle and dissolve totalizing features of college and prison alike and influence their perceptions of themselves and their surroundings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the analysis of the experience of participating in college-in-prison as described by samples of these two groups (former Inside students and former Outside students) reveals that college-in-prison serves as a unique bridge between the two relevant total institutions (the correctional facility and the college/university). According to the former Inside students, this potential was described in that these programs can create a new "space," allow for increased agency among incarcerated students, and make room for a different relationship with correctional officers and prison staff. The experiences of the former Outside students revealed

the impact of their introduction to the prison environment and the intense security experience. This sample also illuminated their perception of the course professor as a “conductor” and central throughout the class experience and discussed the use and implications of language. Their reflections on connections they formed with Inside classmates revealed another avenue through which programs of this sort allow for the dissolution of the totalizing characteristics of the respective institutions. The former Outside students also cited the ways in which the class enabled an increased sense and awareness of empathy and explained the sense of isolation that accompanied the course experience.

In regard to the preliminary research question that designed and framed this study (Do programs of higher education have an impact on how incarcerated students view themselves and their environment? If so, how does this influence compare to that experienced by their non-incarcerated counterparts?), this section reveals that programs of higher education *do* have an impact on how incarcerated and non-incarcerated students view themselves and their environment. The ways in which college-in-prison programs allow for and enable the dissolution of the barriers surrounding and upholding the correctional facility and the college/university as total institutions suggest that students’ perceptions of their environments are altered through their participation in these programs. With these analyses and explorations in mind, they suggest a confirmation of the initial hypothesis that college-in-prison programs can result in a deteriorating of societal borders and blurring of social identities that largely separate and form a distinction between those who are directly impacted by the correctional and/or justice systems and those who are not.

College-in-Prison Programs as Understood by a Control Group of Non-Incarcerated Undergraduate Students

I think you can't be experiencing college in a bubble because the whole point is that... what you learn at college should help you to be a good citizen and that means that you need to see how what you're doing here applies to the external world and can be used outside this bubble and make sure you're seeing how people live. [Because] this is a super-privileged, also very white, high socioeconomic institution and it's important to get out of it what you can.

This vignette, described by Madeline, one of the participants in the control group, can be used as a foundation off of which to build a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of college-in-prison programs on how students view themselves and their environments. To achieve this comprehension, it is necessary to consider and include the experiences and perceptions of non-incarcerated undergraduate students, such as Madeline, who have *not* participated in programs of this sort. If, as is posited in the previous chapter, college-in-prison programs behave and operate as a “bridge” between the total institutions of college/university and correctional facilities and therefore serve to deconstruct and dissolve the total quality of these respective institutions, understanding the experiences of people who have only engaged in one side of this bridge is fundamental to building a more well-rounded framework of secondary prison education programs and their impacts on those who take part in them.

Perception of College-in-Prison Programs: “it feels like a very concrete way to just to start to disassemble these systems of power and privilege”

In order to begin the analysis and discussion of the findings of interviews conducted with participants in this control group, who have not taken part in college-in-prison, it is essential to

consider their personal perceptions and understandings of college-in-prison programs. With the exception of one student who had tutored incarcerated individuals towards attaining their GED equivalent, and another who had interviewed formerly incarcerated people about their experiences for a high school project, none of the participants had any prior experience with the intersection of incarceration and education. It is necessary to recognize that, because all of the participants were open to the idea of participating in Inside-Out in the future (some people cited this as their motivation and interest to participate as interviewees in the study), it is likely that the sample that this analysis will be formed upon may be heavily influenced by self-selection and therefore might be not generalizable or representative of the experiences of people who would not be willing or likely to participate in college-in-prison programs and may have a different outlook towards the criminal justice system.

The participants described recognizing the value of college-in-prison programs, some contextualizing this worth in terms of the significance for the Inside students, the significance for the Outside students, as well that for each institution (the college and the prison). One student, Emily, explained that “it is good for you as a person to step outside of your comfort zone and your boundaries, like what you see as your boundaries. But also... being incarcerated is such an othering thing that can happen and I feel like it might be good for people to feel like they have a community and are connected still to other people outside of their correctional facility.” This illuminates the way in which Emily recognized the value in the ability and potential for college-in-prison programs to decrease some of the stigmatization or “negative stereotypes” (as described by Dave during his interview) which people may have of people who are incarcerated, as well as the potential for these programs to serve as an opportunity for non-incarcerated college students to have an experience that is “outside of [their] comfort zone.”

Another participant, Nicole, viewed the power and potential of college-in-prison programs through a more institutional and system lens. She explained that she considers [programs of this nature are] part of the work that universities need to do... the prison system is... our legacy of slavery still existing so it feels like a very concrete way to just to start to disassemble these systems of power and privilege because, yeah college is... just such [a] bottleneck... 'cause a lot of people can access public education in high school but then college is just so different...really exclusive, especially like such elite private universities like [university name], so I think it's so important to be able to be open to new communities... I mean knowledge is power and it's the key to escaping these systems of... like the cycle of poverty, education takes you out of that.. absolutely just more and more needs to happen.

Nicole's critical analysis of the value and potency of programs such as the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, as a student who has not participated in prison education, reveals the way in which undergraduate students are able to apply a systemic framework to understanding the precipitants and repercussions of institutions such as the criminal justice system, and the way in which educational opportunities can serve as a tool to dismantling the maintenance of oppression in this realm. These descriptions and explanations of the value of college-in-prison programs, especially when compared to the patterns of discussion put forth by the former Outside students, illuminate that participants in the control group applied a more social justice oriented lens through which to understand education within correctional settings, while those who actually participated in the programs grounded the value and importance of this involvement in the experiential learning opportunities provided, such as through the empathetic connections fostered between Inside and Outside students. This highlights the qualitative nuanced differences between

participants in either group as a result of their participation, or lack thereof, in college-in-prison programs.

One participant, Francesca, described that she would have “seriously considered” applying to the course, had it not been for the long commute (one hour each way) to the facility once a week. This description serves to reinforce Foucault’s critical analysis of the physical location and isolation of prisons, and the role that the remoteness of prisons serves in maintaining the totalistic nature of these institutions. This analysis reveals that although institutions of higher education are not total institutions in the same explicit way as correctional facilities, and do not have barbed wire and walls around the campus, students express their likelihood to engage with spaces outside of their college as being limited due to time constraints. This interpretation will be helpful in the discussion of colleges and universities as “bubbles.”

The connection between colleges and universities, especially small elite private institutions, as “bubbles” and the implication of the very existence and practice of college-in-prison programs for “branching outside” of this bubble was drawn out by another participant, Angela:

Especially at a school like [university name] which is really small, I think it’s a really good opportunity to branch outside of the higher education bubble, and I think there are definitely other colleges that could benefit from it, cause I see how it benefits students [here], and then also the Inside students also obviously benefit from it.

Angela’s experience of her university as a “higher education bubble,” as well as the related perception of the potency of college-in-prison to counteract some of the symptoms of this bubble, lays the groundwork for the argument that the modernization of Goffman’s total

institution can be modified to a “bubble” or “echo chamber,” as briefly introduced in the “Former Outside Students’ Experiences” section in the previous chapter.

In addition, it is very revealing that only one of the participants, despite the sample’s lack of participation in college-in-prison programs, referred to incarcerated people with any of the societally engrained and “othering” terms, such as “inmate,” “convict,” or “offender.” As previously mentioned, contextualizing this change and shift in language in Goffman’s analysis of labels and their role in maintaining total institutions highlights the way in which offering and sustaining a college-in-prison program at a university can have an influence on even people who are not direct participants, even if just through their language and word choice. Although, as previously described, there is a high potential for self-selection in this sample and therefore the generalizability of this finding is limited, it should not be understated or overlooked.

Further, it is important to acknowledge that the participants comprising the control group are all students attending a liberal arts institution in the Northeast and likely already identify with a liberal/social justice drive. Therefore, rather than necessarily framing college-in-prison programs as a fundamental shift in perspective or ideology for the majority of these students, it could be more constructive and realistic to focus on increasing accessibility to these initiatives for both Inside and Outside students. As will be described in this chapter, even students who have not participated in programs of this sort seem to recognize and appreciate the value and importance of these classes. Therefore, understanding that the current nature and impact of these programs might be constrained due to their limited offering, as well as the previously identified commuting issue. Recommendations in face of and in response to these realities will be expanded upon in the concluding chapter upon more comprehensive analysis and discussion of the participants’ experiences but will likely highlight the necessity for flexibility in these cases.

The “Bubble” as a total institution: “every interaction is insular”

All 15 of the participants in the control group described their experience in higher education as feeling like a “bubble.” For the purposes of this paper, the concept of the college “bubble” will serve as an extension and modernization of Goffman’s “total institution.” As Angela explained, this could be attributed, at least in part, to the relatively small school size. In addition, Melissa’s assessment of higher education at large as resembling or symbolizing a “bottleneck” due to the public’s decreased access to higher education, even in comparison to high school. Further, as described in the literature review section, higher education, especially in elite private institutions (which are usually those funding and housing college-in-prison programs) are historically and contemporarily reserved for individuals with privileged socioeconomic statuses. Therefore, those who attend schools of this nature are significantly less likely to have first-hand contact or experiences with individuals who do not come from similarly privileged backgrounds. The lived implications of the phenomenon of college and/or university resembling a “bubble” were laid out by Melissa:

I think it’s added pressures... we spend, 24 hours a day with each other, 7 days a week.

We live in a bubble and that intensifies the feelings and the pressures... every interaction is insular and... you don't have as much perspective...if something bad happens in school, you can't go home and be removed from it because your home is at school. And especially like for girls with body image [issues], you live with other girls and have communal bathrooms. And for people who have mental illnesses, sometimes not having a single can be really difficult cause you don't have your alone space... I think it's just the constant togetherness of college.

Melissa’s narrative of her lived experience of college as “insular” reveals ways in which undergraduate students can feel the repercussions of and consequences of this social phenomenon in a negative way. As she describes, these impacts might be more likely to affect those who are more at-risk, such as women who struggle with “body image” and students who have a history of mental illness. Due to the added pressures and decreased opportunity and access to engage with people who are not affiliated with one’s university or college, the likelihood for these reactions increases. However, it is very important to recognize that the college or university as a total institution exists and is manifested in a way that is far more privileged than the circumstances that define prison and other correctional environments as total institutions. This is evidenced plainly in that students at said universities are able to engage in spaces and with people outside of the environment just through community participation and extracurricular involvement that expanded beyond curricular opportunities and even prison education. This possibility was described by many of the participants as central and very valuable to their college experience.

Melissa’s experience was echoed and reinforced by another participant in the control group, Madeline, who situated her assessment of college as a bubble in terms of the “mission” or “motto” of her school, which informed her motivation to enroll in school, as well as her expectations for college. She explained:

I think you can’t be experiencing college in a bubble because the whole point is that... [our school’s] motto is... something regarding active citizenship and the point is that what you learn at college should help you to be a good citizen and that means that you need to see how what you're doing here applies to the external world and can be used

outside this bubble.... Cause this is a super-privileged, also very white, high socioeconomic institution and it's important to get out of it what you can.

Madeline's aspiration to ultimately utilize the educational opportunities and privileges afforded to her in the "very white, high socioeconomic institution" that she attends to encourage her to become a "good citizen" through the application to the "external world" is a theme that was coded in the interviews conducted with six other participants in this sample. Further, the language utilized by Madeline in this description reveals her acknowledgment and sentiment that her school is not necessarily a part of the "external world," thereby reaffirming the conceptualization of the college "bubble" as an amendment of Goffman's total institution. In addition, this awareness and analysis can be expanded upon to reveal the implications and role of the elite institution of higher education to perpetuate a particular version of the class structure, especially through economic class divisions. It could be extrapolated from Madeline's assessment of the value of college that people who do not have access to such "very white, high socioeconomic institutions" will not gain the resources and knowledge necessary to become a "good citizen" - this, in a certain capacity, reserves the role of "good citizen" for people who identify and can fit in with the "very white, high socioeconomic" population that experiences higher education within these elite settings. An analysis of this sort illuminates the extensive impact of Goffman's total institution, as well as the longitudinal influence that exposure to these institutions can have on people and societies at large.

Many of the participants in the control group also expressed feeling frustrated and/or dissatisfied that their classes and academic pursuits did not feel connected to the "real world." For this reason, some students described prioritizing their extracurricular activities over their classwork at times and felt conflicted about this. One student, Magdalena, explained this, stating:

I remember sophomore year when I solidified the [extracurriculars] that were important to me and let the other ones fall away, it felt really good to be like ‘these are the things that I could see myself doing like for the rest of my time here...’ they’ve added a lot to my experience here and I feel like...so many times, especially before I started to be really interested in my classes [it felt] so much better to devote my time to this than my classes and I would always want to spend time on my club stuff [rather] than classes, and I felt all messed up... it felt pointless.

The extracurriculars that Magdalena is involved in include a mentoring program that pairs female college students with school age girls in nearby underserved communities, the biannual blood drive organizing committee, and a consulting group that financially advises nonprofits. These activities and responsibilities all have one critical feature in common - they involve interacting with the larger community (outside of the college “bubble”). In terms of Goffman’s total institution, Magdalena’s reflection reveals the way in which engagement with the broader environment and not being confined to the total institution in question (the college) is valuable and can even make the predominant responsibilities of college (classes) seem “pointless.” One mechanism through which the “bubble” and this frustration in regard to the lack of real-world application is through the exercises and assignments required in some classes. As Angela described, “I’m in a class right now... and every project is coming up with a new product...but it just seems like it’s just to check the box. We’re never presenting it to the class, we’re never discussing it, we’re just working with the group and then turning it in and then nothing ever happens. And it just feels like a waste of time.” This sentiment of completing work to “just check the box” was echoed and reinforced by six other participants, even to the level of completing courses, especially degree or distribution requirements, thereby demonstrating the extent to

which undergraduate students feel unmotivated and unsure of the purpose of their studies at times.

Another participant, Nicole, who expressed a similar frustration about the lack of real-world applicability, explained that her attitude towards college was that it was a space for her to explore “learning more about [herself]” so that she can eventually become “the person [she] can be and the most equipped to give back as much as [she] can to society.” This illuminates the way in which Nicole wasn’t necessarily excited or motivated to learn academically within the bubble, but for the opportunity to capitalize upon the time for self-improvement so that she can apply it to the “real world” and “society” once she graduates and leaves the “bubble.” However, this analysis, which assumes that upon graduation, college graduates exit or pop the “bubble” neglects to take into consideration the ways in which social class and privilege continue to bolster an ideological protection or bubble around the individual in question and thereby continue to influence, albeit in a potentially modified capacity, the interactions that people have with larger society.

In providing this framework of total institutions through which to analyze institutions of higher education as total institutions, it remains critical to acknowledge the ways in which the college or university environment differ from Goffman’s definition of this concept. Importantly, although the characteristics of college and university outlined above do resemble and reinforce these totalizing features, other central criteria put forth by Goffman are limited or absent in the college or university. For example, the factor of people in the institution being confined to the environment is challenged in the college, such as by students who engage in work external from the campus and/or who commute to school from home. These individuals are less bound to the institution in a physical and temporal way, which effectively reduces the bold distinction

between “inside” and “outside” the institution, which is a central facet of Goffman’s framework. Further, another central aspect of the total institution, as outlined by Goffman and as explained in the both the literature review chapter and previous section about the experiences of incarcerated students, is the explicit role that authority figures play in the institution. Although the power dynamics between students and professors is not even, students are not required to adhere to the professor in the same way or to the same extent as incarcerated individuals must obey correctional staff. This reveals the ways in which configuring the “bubble” of higher education as a “modernization” of Goffman’s total institution must be conscious of the ways in which this adaptation is bounded by the reality of the institutions in question.

Learning objectives: “you can really only learn so much about the lives of incarcerated folks from a classroom”

One of the participants in this sample, Francesca (who also described the commuting frustration as a hindrance to her enrolling in the college-in-prison course), described the role that she sees universities and institutions of higher education playing in this larger goal and responsibility to learn more about the criminal justice system and mass incarceration. She stated:

I mean, as an outsider I can only speak [so] much [to] the effects of the program on all of the populations that are involved. But even just sitting exactly where I am... universities in general... provide opportunities to create inter-community connections... they can create a lot of connections between a lot of other institutions that are otherwise really, really challenging [and tend to be] really hard to facilitate... it’s just kind of difficult to make connections especially with vulnerable populations. And to do those in an ethical way, and to do those in a respectful and collaborative way. And so, definitely I think, universities are a really great place for starting to make that sort of connection, especially

if students are interested in doing research or working in advocacy or something like that... also having the firsthand access is... you can really only learn so much about the lives of incarcerated folks from a classroom, or on your hill campus. And so providing access in this way and humanizing an area of study in this way is incredible - it's a powerful thing to just think about.

This reveals that even students who haven't participated in college-in-prison programs recognize that the classroom experience varies between the "firsthand" correctional setting and that of the environment of the "hill campus," where traditional post-secondary learning takes place. The "hill campus" in this context and explanation is worthy of further analysis, as it demonstrates a removed attitude towards the subjects taught at elite universities, even in the physical depiction of the setting. Applying a comparative approach to understanding the perceived framework of the classroom as executed by participants in the control group and those in the sample of former Outside students suggests that there are important variations in these constructions.

One important perception that can be extracted from Francesca's comment is that she understands the value of college-in-prison programs along the terms of how much non-incarcerated students, as outsiders to the criminal justice system and this "vulnerable population" could learn from this group of people. This varies, to a large extent, from the value that the former Outside students placed on this experience and on the role of college-in-prison programs at large, as well as the value of these programs as put forth by former Inside students. As discussed in the previous section, the sample of former Outside students acknowledged that while these programs did provide space and opportunity to learn more about the realities of incarceration and the lived implications of confinement in our current carceral system, the value of college-in-prison was rooted more in the sense of empathy and human connection offered and

fostered in the course. As Austin, one of the former Outside students, described, he appreciated the unique nature of Inside-Out and attributed its value to the sense of “tangible practical bearing witness in some ways by, rather than just thinking about prisons in concept, actually going and being the inside of a prison and meeting people who are living inside of a prison.” Further, Melanie, another former Outside student, elaborated:

being in the class [and] thinking about it allowed me to be brought back down to earth and think ‘why am I at [college] and why am I pursuing a degree? what [do] I have the power to do? what kind of changes... do I want to make?’ So that’s been a big part of my reflecting... our professor always emphasized to us that when school kind of felt meaningless in contrast to this class, that school is so important for this class. Because, once we get our degree we’ll be given the power to make the kind of changes that we want to make on our society.

Melanie’s perception of the college-in-prison course she took part in suggests that she situates the value of the experience in conjunction with the longitudinal impact that the class will have on her worldview and justice-oriented missions as she graduates and continues to navigate the world and “society.” This reveals that those students who participate in college-in-prison understand the value of programs of these sorts to be grounded in something beyond and in addition to the unique experiential learning allowed and enabled by these courses. Rather, the empathy that is fostered through the connections that are conceived within the bridging of these total institutions is humanizing and, ultimately, the baseline motivation for these programs to exist.

Further, although the ability to increase agency and destigmatize the social conceptions and statuses of those who are incarcerated through college-in-prison (as described by Dave, a former Inside student, in the previous chapter) was cited as one of the impacts of college-in-

prison, this was not the crux or most important aspect of the value of this experience for the sample of former Inside students. Rather, formerly incarcerated individuals attested that the opportunity for participation in programs of this sort to allow them entry into a rare “place that doesn’t exist” (as beautifully put forth by Jamal). This comparative analysis reveals that, for students who haven’t participated in postsecondary education inside correctional facilities, even those who are liberal and open to the idea and see these programs as valuable, such as Francesca, there is a critical variation in perception between the samples included in this article that can only be explained by the role and impact of participation in college-in-prison programs, and which should not be understated or overlooked.

Disconnect Between Educational and Experiential Perception: the “violent” versus “nonviolent” spectrum

The comparative approach applied to the study of people’s conceptions and perceptions of crime along the distinction of having or having not participated in college-in-prison programs suggests that critical discussion and analysis of the disjunction between intellectual and experiential motivation and experience, especially within the settings of college-in-prison and traditional institution of higher education is necessary. This is especially relevant in consideration of the ways that people associate crimes with safety, which is materialized in the societal narrative surrounding violent versus nonviolent crimes and is upheld by the facility regulations instituted in college-in-prison programs.

As previously described in an earlier chapter, many correctional facilities in which college-in-prison programs take place have restrictions on instructors and professors from knowing and being privy to the convictions and/or sentence length of the incarcerated students. This presumably stems from an inclination to allow people with all criminal backgrounds to be

eligible for college programming (assuming all other criteria are met) and is thought to reduce the potential for the professors to exercise stigma in the program at all stages, including admissions and the courses themselves, such as grading processes. In addition to the potential safety implications of this policy (as outlined by Andy in the previous chapter), this policy exacerbates the disconnection and disjunction with female faculty teaching a demographic that they can only understand intellectually and with whom they are unlikely to have shared identities. Not only are these identities distinct from one another, but in this context, discussion and acknowledgement of these personal identities are forbidden by the total institution (reaffirming the previous application of Goffman's work in this analysis). Situating this dynamic within the conceptualizations of people who have not participated in college-in-prisons is an avenue through which to understand, in a more comprehensive lens, the narratives of crime and criminal history that are perpetuated by society and influence the perceptions of people who are unlikely to have any lived experience or personal connection to the carceral system.

Sarah, one of the participants in the control group, explained that her willingness to take the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program course would be contingent on her level of safety in the course. She associated safety with crime and described that she wouldn't be willing to take part in a class alongside someone who was convicted of "sexual assault against a woman." She explained that if she discovered that an Inside classmate was "in there for 20 or 30 years, then [she]'d be like, oh no, they murdered everyone, goodbye." However, "if someone was caught dealing weed, that wouldn't really make [her] uncomfortable" because her "neighbor down the street could easily be... a weed dealer." Sarah's specifications for the crimes and manifestations of deviance that she would not feel comfortable encountering are helpful in understanding how societal judgments of illegality and offenses are portrayed and perpetuated, and the ways in

which these perceptions exist along the continuum of “violent” versus “nonviolent” crimes (a popular spectrum of deviant activity which will be further discussed and dissected).

In addition, Sarah’s reasoning for finding it more plausible to learn with people convicted of certain crimes than others was grounded in what she perceived as the likelihood that someone “down the street” could engage in the same form of deviance. Positioning this analysis in Goffman’s lens of total institutions, Sarah’s respective discomfort and comfort levels are correlated with and based upon her perceptions of which crimes might occur within her environment at college, or within the college as a total institution. Although this explicit dichotomy of “violent” versus “nonviolent” crimes was not necessarily a theme across participants in the control group, it is likely that there was a high chance of self-section within participants in this sample and therefore is not likely to be representative of or generalizable to the general public. In addition, there is a high risk that social desirability bias skewed the qualitative responses, as participants were aware that the interviewer and Principal Investigator had long been involved with various prison justice and prison education initiatives at their institution. Therefore, they may have been hesitant to disclose any feelings, thoughts, or sentiments that they thought the interviewer would disagree with or look down upon them for expressing.

With this in mind, it is intriguing that among the former Outside students, who studied on the same campus as Sarah, only one student, Oliver, described experiencing a difficulty in separating his perceptions of and attitudes towards his Inside classmates from the crimes for which they were serving time. Interestingly, Oliver was also the only student in the former Outside sample who also presented his analysis along the lines of “violent” versus “nonviolent” crimes when he explained that “once I found out that [the Inside students were incarcerated for]

much, like, crazier stuff than possession of weed, I was like ‘oh I don’t feel bad.’” This raises questions regarding the narratives that our society believes and continues to rely upon, especially in regard to the social acceptance of certain crimes over others. Additionally, because Oliver was the exception within the former Outside student sample by describing and adhering to this narrative, this suggests that the experience of learning, within the prison environment, alongside and from people with lived experience of the carceral system, college-in-prison programs begin to tackle and dismantle unproductive social perceptions of this nature.

The apologetic and forgiving focus on nonviolent drug offenses, while continuing to stigmatize and defame acts of deviance that fall within other categories, as exhibited by Sarah’s interview, is an incomplete and irresponsible manner of perceiving and thinking about people involved in the criminal justice system. Although this perception, especially when expressed through the narrative that the “violent offenders” is the population that will be affected and benefit from prison reform, is “a view that has long had public support” (Lind, 2015). This perpetuates a public social belief that “‘nonviolent drug offenders’ are just a different kind of person than real criminals” thereby exaggerating a very blurry “distinction” between these groups of incarcerated people and worsening the hierarchical notions of incarceration history, as well as qualifying some acts of deviance as better or more worthy of forgiveness than others (Lind, 2015). Additionally, because this portrayal of crime is a relatively easy one for the public masses to support, it is a narrative that is repeated and institutionalized by policymakers and politicians. Unfortunately, not only does this version of history and incarceration have negative implications for the societal perception of “violent” crimes, but it also has a regressive effect on the potential and progress of prison reform. In 2015, it was estimated that only 12% of America’s prison population consisted of “nonviolent drug offenders” (Lind, 2015). Therefore, by focusing

the prison reform movement on this very small subgroup, the majority of the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated community will be overlooked and ignored in these efforts, as well as further stigmatized and othered by our society at large.

Sarah's description reveals that her conceptions of incarcerated people are dominated and represented exclusively by the crimes for which they were convicted, and, to her, these crimes exist on the dichotomy of "violent" and "nonviolent" (with "nonviolent" crimes being perceived as less of a safety or security concern as compared to "violent" crimes). Further, she qualifies this distinction by grounding it in her belief that people in her vicinity and whose lives unfold within the same institutions and environment as her own, such as her neighborhood and her university, would be incapable of committing a "violent" crime (but might be "weed dealers," which is a forgivable offense in her eyes). This differentiation and identification of "violent" crime with people outside of her close circle has a very othering and distancing effect for those who do not fall within that class and enables Sarah to feel safe and protected within her "in-group" of the safe university while viewing people in the "out-group" who do not have access to that social class as "violent," or at least with the potential to become "violent." This serves to further the analysis of the elite private university as a total institution and the perpetuation of a particular class structure by this phenomenon, as described during the analysis of Melissa's interview. Additionally, this discussion suggests that college-in-prison programs serve yet another critical function by actively dismantling and addressing negative, unfounded societal stereotypes such as those described by Sarah in her interview. The power for college-in-prison programs to dissolve harmful stigmatizing perceptions of crime and associated levels of violence is further exemplified through the more nuanced understandings of crime and sentencing that were expressed by the former Outside students in the previous chapter. The potential for college-

in-prison programs, especially the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, to have reactions of this sort is exemplified in the analysis of former Outside students in the previous chapter.

Conclusion

In conclusion, as the analysis of the control group of people who have not participated in college-in-prison programs reveals, institutions of higher education can be analyzed as a modernization of Goffman's total institution, which was fortified by their noted frustration with a lack of real-world applicability in their college coursework. Further, there exists a critical difference between experiential and intellectual perceptions, as evidenced by the "nonviolent" versus "violent" discussion and which is perpetuated within the student-professor relationship by certain facility regulations in which programs of this sort take place. With this analysis in consideration, situating the conclusions drawn from the former Outside students and the formerly incarcerated participant groups will allow for a more comprehensive framework through which to form a holistic analysis of the experiences of people who participate in college-in-prison programs, especially when compared to people who do not.

Conclusory Remarks on the Impact of College-in-Prison Programs

This chapter restates the most broad and relevant themes identified during the interviews conducted with the three samples of participants (former Inside students, former Outside students, and the control group). The research question guiding this study was: Do programs of higher education have an impact on how incarcerated students view themselves and their environment? If so, how does this influence compare to that experienced by their non-incarcerated counterparts? In response, the findings put forth in this paper encourage a more comprehensive understanding of college-in-prison programs by analyzing the experiences of people who take part in programs of this sort in comparison to those who do not.

By building upon existing literature previously published on the topic of the impact of college-in-prison programs, this study fills critical research gaps and empirical voids by including a control group of undergraduate students who do not have experience in college-in-prison across which comparisons of findings can take place, which will allow for a more substantial and grounded conclusion regarding the impact of the nature of this kind of programming. Additionally, the majority of previous research on college-in-prison programs focused on “Inside-only” courses, which do not follow the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program model of including equal numbers of incarcerated and non-incarcerated students. Therefore, because this study included interviews with a sample of non-incarcerated students who experienced the intervention of participating in college-in-prison through the Inside-Out model, future research can incorporate and apply these findings in the creation and modification of other college-in-prison models/designs while keeping the experiences of both the incarcerated and non-incarcerated student groups in mind. Further, this study’s detailed focus on and analysis of subtle qualitative and holistic markers of experience, such as language, rather than strictly

quantitative measures of program effect, such as recidivism statistics, will encourage a more nuanced understanding of secondary education in prison.

The Impact of College-in-Prison Programs on the Involved Total Institutions:

Prisons and Colleges

This paper used Erving Goffman's framework of total institutions as a grounding base from which to begin the analysis of the experience of college-in-prison (1961). As described in the previous chapter dedicated to this analysis, total institutions are unique environments that are distinct from other realms of life due to a variety of distinguishing characteristics, including that "all aspects of life" take place in one place and are institutionalized rather than individualized, as well as by a strong "group mentality" within those whose lives are regulated by the institution in question and which serves to build identities that correspond with either being controlled by the institution or not (Goffman, 1961, p. 314). Goffman identifies correctional facilities as a category of total institutions, which makes the environment in which college-in-prison programs take place of special interest through this lens of analysis and encourages the researcher to consider the ways in which programs of this sort interact with the carceral setting. This study was especially interested in uncovering, in a more on-the-ground manner informed by nuanced personal explanations, the experience of entering a total institution and the associated shifts (including but not limited to physical and mental shifts) that people undergo during this process. Honing in on subtle indicators of this experience, such as language and word choice, the analysis of this data allows for this shift to be contextualized on a deeper level. The methods used in this study are especially conducive to forming an understanding of this experience, as the analysis of a control and treatment group (the findings of which will be further discussed in the following

section) allows for the tracking, in a more empirical way, these changes and personal developments.

The sample of former Inside students (people who participated in college while incarcerated) in this study described that college-in-prison offered the opportunity to challenge some of the defining characteristics of prison as a total institution, and even described college education within prison as experiencing a “place that doesn’t exist.” Engagement with higher education also created increased individual agency and developments in relationships with correctional staff. However, the students described that not all unique aspects of prison and prison culture were dissolved in the presence of this program, and that being a college student did not exempt someone from not abiding by “prison creed.” Additionally, these interviews revealed that one of the most salient aspects of college-in-prison programs on the total institution of prison is that people (namely professors) who are not affiliated with the correctional facility enter the institution and interact with those who are incarcerated, thereby beginning to dissolve some of the most isolating and defining totalizing features of the prison.

With this interpretation of the impact of college-in-prison programs for former Inside students in mind, it is important to consider how participation in programming of this sort is assessed by non-incarcerated students who are involved as former Outside students through the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program model. Participants in this sample expanded upon the notion that college-in-prison programs encourage a dissolution of prison as a total institution, and provided critical information suggesting that this dissolution is not limited to the institutions of prison but can also be noticed in the total institutions of colleges and universities as well. This was contextualized in the vividly described experience of entering prisons, especially in terms of going through the required security measures to gain entrance to the facility. The relationship

with the professor for this course was markedly distinct from relationships with professors in other contexts, especially more socially normative classroom settings, thereby encouraging a unique framework for the instructor in this setting as a “conductor” of the college-in-prison experience.

Further, the use and impact of language within the college classroom was cited as distinct and impactful within the prison setting and offered an immeasurable opportunity to face the isolating aspects of the culture of traditional higher education. Also, the power of relationships fostered within this classroom experience, especially between incarcerated and non-incarcerated students, was repeatedly invoked as one of the most valuable features of the course and was contextualized and described within the power of empathy encouraged and developed by those involved. Finally, another critical pattern described by the majority of the former Outside student participants was a sense of isolation from people who did not have firsthand experience with educational programming in incarceration settings. These findings depict a comprehensive way to begin furthering the understanding of college-in-prison programs as a valuable and unmatched avenue through which to dismantle the totalizing characteristics of colleges, universities, and prisons alike.

Considering the above analysis of college-in-prison programs as put forth by students who take part in them both while incarcerated and while non-incarcerated suggests a need for comparing these findings with people who have only experienced college and higher education through the more traditional socially-normative model (in other words, have not experienced incarceration or the intersection of incarceration and education). A comparative approach has, to the researcher’s knowledge, not been conducted across students who have participated in college-in-prison and students who have not. For this reason, interviews were conducted with a

control group of non-incarcerated college students who have not taken part in any participatory secondary education programs that partner with correctional facilities, thereby contributing a valuable addition of data and analysis on this topic.

Perceptions of College-in-Prison Programs from a Control Group of Non-Incarcerated Undergraduate Students

Analysis of interviews conducted with non-incarcerated students who have not participated in college-in-prison enables this study to be viewed and considered as an intervention study to understand, in a more direct way, the impact of the intervention (which in this case is participation in college-in-prison programs). The goal of applying a comparative approach across the findings and patterns in the participant samples included in this study is that research of this sort will allow for more informed implementation of college-in-prison programs, especially as the impacts and influences of these programs are perceived and exist in comparison to those experienced by people who are familiar only with traditional higher education settings and programming.

Through this investigation, it was discovered that undergraduate students who are not involved in postsecondary educational programs in prison settings, at least those at the liberal university in the Northeast (the setting where this study was conducted), recognize the academic and theoretical value of programs of this sort. Further, participants in this sample discussed their experience with normative higher education as existing within a “bubble,” (particularly in terms of a perceived lack of connection to real-world value and learning through assignments and classwork), which was analyzed to serve as and represent a developed modernization of Goffman’s traditional total institution. Additionally, there was a pattern of students who described being aware that learning objectives within the removed and/or isolated college

classroom and campus are limited without the addition of experiential and firsthand learning, which was cited by former Outside students as one of the most valuable aspects of the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. This disconnection or disjunction between these avenues or forms of learning was further materialized and expanded upon through a participant's comments in regard to their comfort level respective to a person's crime, specifically along the lines of violent versus nonviolent convictions.

This suggests that for non-incarcerated undergraduate students, engagement or application of the intervention or treatment, which for the purposes of this study was participation in college-in-prison programs, resulted in a more nuanced understanding and association of vocabulary related to prison and incarceration. Further, the treatment allowed and enabled students to uncover the more experiential side of learning about issues related to the criminal justice system, especially as they relate to the lived experiences resulting from being directly impacted by said systems. This opportunity also challenges and provides a critical additional dimension the "bubble" of isolated higher education, as was described by participants in the control group. This suggests that, from a theoretical standpoint, this study provides a significant theoretical contribution to the literature and approach via postsecondary educational opportunities, especially as they concern the inclusion and prioritization of experiential versus strictly academic avenues in institutional spaces, both in what are considered traditionally correctional and educational environments.

Recommendations for Future Directions

Research and scholarship on the role and influence of educational programming within correctional facilities, especially college-in-prison programs, is far from comprehensive or complete. Utilizing and expanding upon the findings of this study, it would be useful to

incorporate Goffman's theory of total institutions in understanding the longitudinal impact of incarceration and confinement through the criminal justice system. Especially when considering different programmatic approaches and possible avenues through which to encourage and/or foster more partnerships between correctional and educational institutions, efforts should be put forth and dedicated towards framing an understanding of how a person's understanding of self and environment may be altered through their experiences in prison. Research on this subject would be especially useful and constructive in terms of organizing and implementing effective programs for people who are releasing from prison and who seek to pursue their education upon reentry to society, because, as this study reveals, programs of higher education in carceral settings do impact how students view themselves and their environment.

Expanding upon the conclusions and findings of this study, especially in regards to the analysis of the interviews conducted with people who participated in college-in-prison programs while incarcerated, it becomes evident that there are different approaches to understanding the impact of prison as a total institution along the spectrum of the prison pipeline, especially through the reentry process. If the findings put forth in this paper suggest that institutions, particularly total institutions, shape and inform a person's view of themselves, there follow three avenues through which to apply this finding to the reentry experience: 1) can the institution (the prison) be re-shaped to allow for positive good? 2) if the institution cannot be reshaped, can the implementation of college-in-prison programs offer opportunities to dissolve some of the negative totalizing characteristics and impacts of the total institution? 3) once people are released from said total institution, how can researchers, policy makers, and other key stakeholders think about ways to reshape and support positive perceptions of former Inside students?

Goffman's definition of total institutions included a focus on the "consequences" of these spaces on those who experience life within them (1961, p. 328). Specifically, Goffman described ways in which people are still impacted through their absorption of the institutional culture in their consciousness and "self-regulatory mechanisms" through which they navigate and interact with the daily world around them while still "maintain[ing] the standards of the establishment" (Goffman, 1961, p. 328). With these findings serving as a baseline framework, it becomes important to expand this discussion to include people who are releasing from prison and who seek to further their educational attainment, especially in the college setting. Additionally, as previously discussed in this study, surveillance and resultant paranoia within prison environments (Foucault, 2008) may continue to be an influential factor in how someone navigates the world upon release from a correctional facility.

Existing literature on the lived experiences of people who are released from prison reveals that "the effects of institutionalization prisonization" do continue to influence people who have served time in the criminal justice system when they are released (Haney, 2002, p. 86). Some of the manifestations of this phenomenon include "social invisibility" which can influence formerly incarcerated people's "social and intimate relationships," as well as a "diminished sense of self-worth" that most likely results from the "negative aspects of the exploitative prisoner culture" (Haney, 2002, p. 86). In terms of expanding upon the approach taken and applied in this study, it would be worthwhile to focus on the extent to which the radiating influence of the total institution of the prison can dissolve upon the reentry process. As described, being released from a house of corrections and re-entering the society outside of the walls of a prison is a difficult process, and people in this experience are likely to encounter stigma, psychological and bureaucratic barriers, and an economic strain (Haney, 2002). The breadth of this paper and this

study was not able to include the extension of these experiences and the phenomenon of the total institution upon reentry. For this reason, dedicating future research towards understanding if and how the findings of this study map onto and relate to people who participate in college-in-prison programs as incarcerated students and who seek to continue their educational pursuits upon reintegration to their home communities would evidently be a discipline worthy of more concentrated and explicit focus. In addition to research efforts focused on the longitudinal quantitative measures of participation in college-in-prison programs, this added area of focus and measurement, concerned with the effect of total institutions, would contribute to the critical theory-building component of research and study.

Supplementing this recommended future direction with critical further analysis of the findings of this study would be relevant. This paper's conclusions reveal that both former Outside students in the experiential group and students in the control group recognize the value of continuing and encouraging conversations regarding the importance of education and the ways in which it can and should intersect with incarceration. However, college-in-prison programs that focus solely on providing schooling to people while incarcerated in semester-long periods may have the (likely unintentional) consequence of leaving non-incarcerated students who are involved in a position in which they do not remain engaged in the intersection of education and incarceration. As the interviews with the former Outside students reveal, these are very impactful experiences, and a relatively abrupt conclusion to programming of this sort, without providing an infrastructure or tools on how to remain engaged in programs of this sort may result in a fractured interruption in what could otherwise be a long-term dedication to work of this sort. For this reason, focusing on reentry efforts for people releasing from prison who would like to pursue higher education would be impactful for all involved parties. Additionally, this would encourage

and foster people on remote isolated college or university campuses, who have become accustomed to the totalizing institutional nature of the college “bubble” to continue remaining civically engaged in a realistic and responsible manner. Incorporating the framework of college-in-prison programs serving and behaving as a “bridge” between the two involved total institutions (the college and the prison), education-focused reentry programs could work to mitigate and minimize some of the characteristics of college campuses that may accompany, if not catalyze, their definition as a total institution, such as the lack of recognition of inherent educational inequalities.

Further, as put forth and discussed in the literature review chapter, the prison operates as one of many in an evolving trajectory of racialized social control, especially as understood through the lens of critical race theory. Although the analysis of the findings in this study do include a discussion of race, it is largely limited to the experiences of the non-incarcerated students, or the former Outside participants, and how they understand and navigate their privilege throughout the college-in-prison experience. Further research should consider grappling with racial identity and its relation to perception of self in these contexts and throughout programs of this sort. In addition, because the researchers conducting the interviews with all of the samples included in this study were white females, future studies designed with the objective understanding the impact of college-in-prison programs should consider exerting all possible efforts to have the identity of the researcher/interviewer mirror and represent those of the populations most represented by the sample, as this shared identity may encourage and allow for the participants to discuss the ways in which a shift in self-perception and environment through this program occurs along the lines of race and ethnicity.

While these theoretical contributions and future research directions and engagements findings are useful to framing and developing new frameworks through which to perceive and consider the role of higher education, it is also crucial to dedicate initiatives and energy towards providing a tangible and practical approach to implementing these more abstract considerations. As the literature review and history of prison education chapter discuss, the availability of prison education programs, especially higher education programs, deteriorated significantly with the eradication of Pell Grants. Although the number of college-in-prison programs has recently grown, the rates of incarceration have also increased. By increasing access to college-in-prison programs through larger institutional changes, the shifts in perception of self and perception of one's environment may begin to allow for the prison institution and the criminal justice system to take on a new form, one that encourages agency and fosters empathy and human connection. Further, as past research has shown and as was discussed in the literature review section, educational programming (especially post-secondary education) in prisons significantly reduces the rate of recidivism, or re-convictions upon release. With this in mind, the broader institutional structure of prisons may begin to be permanently altered in a more efficient and constructive manner.

With this in mind, it is important to acknowledge that many liberal universities and colleges have college-in-prison programs constructed similarly to the one focused on in this study in place, and a good portion of students at these institutions are open to encouraging, if not participating directly, in programs of this sort because they recognize the value of these initiatives (as described in the control group section of this paper). This raises important questions in reference to how accessible programs of this nature should be, especially due to the high level of self-selection in non-incarcerated student participation in college-in-prison

programs. If at least part of the mission and goal of college-in-prison programs is to shift popular conceptions regarding incarceration and the criminal justice system, to what extent is this self-selection and limitation of student involvement hindering these goals? How might these findings and impacts change if programs of this sort would be transformed into normative, perhaps even mandatory, standards of education? By developing robust agendas around college-in-prison program experience and participation, program directors and researchers can begin to understand how to improve the quality of and increase access to curricular opportunities, knowledge and confidence for those who will be impacted by their experience in college-in-prison programs, both as incarcerated and non-incarcerated individuals, during and following their course participation. This concentrated effort to understand the ways in which college-in-prison participation can have longitudinal effects for student populations will enable a shift in the popular conceptions of education, and hopefully will allow the terms education and incarceration, prison and college, and tassels and shackles to become modern associations.

References

- About. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://bpi.bard.edu/about/>
- Achinstein, B., Ogawa, R.T., Sexton, D., & Freitas, C. (2010). Retaining teachers of color: A pressing problem and a potential strategy for "hard-to-staff" schools. *Review of Educational Research*, 80(1), 71-107.
- Alexander, M. (2010). *The new Jim Crow: Mass incarceration in the age of colorblindness*. New York, NY: New Press; Distributed by Perseus Distribution.
- Binda, Rubin, Weinberg & Maetzner. (n.d.). "You're almost in this place that doesn't exist": The Impact of College in Prison as Understood by Formerly Incarcerated Students from the Northeastern United States."
- Byrom, B. M. (2018). *Turning teaching inside out: A pedagogy of transformation for community-based education* eds. by Simone Weil Davis and Barbara Sherr Roswell (review). *Community Literacy Journal* 12(2), 94-97. *Community Literacy Journal*. Retrieved June 26, 2019, from Project MUSE database.
- Coady, D., & Dizioli, A. (2017). Income inequality and education revisited : Persistence, endogeneity, and heterogeneity (IMF working paper; WP/17/126).
- Davis, L., Bozick, R., Steele, J., Saunders, J., & Miles, J. (2013). *Evaluating the effectiveness of correctional education*. RAND Corporation.
- DeWard, S. L.; Moe, A. M. (2010). Like prison: Homeless women's narratives of surviving shelter. *Journal of Sociology and Social Welfare*, 37(1), 115-136.
- Douglass, F. (1995). *Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass*. New York: Dover Publications.
- The Editorial Board. 2016. "A College Education for Prisoners." *The New York Times*,

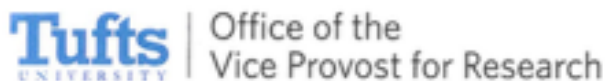
- February 16. Retrieved November 12, 2017.
(<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/16/opinion/a-college-education-for-prisoners.html>).
- Foucault, M. (2008). "Panopticism" from "Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison".
Race/Ethnicity: Multidisciplinary Global Contexts, 2(1), 1-12. Retrieved from
<http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/stable/25594995>
- Goffman, E. (1961), "On the characteristics of total institutions: The inmate world" In:
Donald R. Cressey (ed.), *The prison: Studies in institutional organization and change*.
New York: Holt, Rineheart and Winston, Inc.
- Goodman, S., & Baney, Matthew. (2018). The "War on Drugs," mass incarceration, and the
underlying legally conspirator labelling process that has modernized slavery and yielded
dire population-wide health consequences in the United States (and what society should
do about it), ProQuest Dissertations and Theses.
- Haney, C. (2003). The psychological impact of incarceration: Implications for post-prison
adjustment. *Prisoners once removed: The impact of incarceration and reentry on
children, families, and communities*, 33, 66.
- Heitzeg, N. A. (2009). Education or Incarceration: Zero Tolerance Policies and the School to
Prison Pipeline. In *Forum on public policy online* (Vol. 2009, No. 2). Oxford Round
Table. 406 West Florida Avenue, Urbana, IL 61801.
- Hyland, N. (2005). Being a good teacher of black students? White teachers and unintentional
racism. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 35(4), 429-459.
- Karpowitz, D. (2017). Replication and conclusions: College, prison, and inequality in America.

- In *College in Prison: Reading in an Age of Mass Incarceration* (pp. 159-176). New Brunswick; New Jersey; London: Rutgers University Press. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/stable/j.ctt1m3p05w.9>
- Lagemann, E. (2011). What can college mean? Lessons from the Bard Prison Initiative. *Change*, 43(6), 14-19. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/stable/23568283>
- Lind, D. (2015, August 18). Stop thinking nonviolent drug offenders are better than people who committed other crimes. Retrieved February 27, 2020, from <https://www.vox.com/2015/8/6/9101129/nonviolent-drug-prison>
- Maclaren, K. (2015). The magic happens inside out: A reflection on the transformative power of self-expression and dialogical inquiry in inside-out prison exchange courses. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 22, 371-385. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10749039.2015.1075045>
- Oakley, D., Stowell, J., & Logan, J. (2009). The impact of desegregation on black teachers in the metropolis, 1970-2000. *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 32(9), 1576-1598.
- Pettit, B., & Western, B. (2004). Mass imprisonment and the life course: Race and class inequality in U.S. incarceration. *American Sociological Review*, 69(2), 151-169. <https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240406900201>
- Pompa, L. (2011). Breaking down the walls: Inside-Out learning and the pedagogy of transformation. In Hartnett S. (Ed.), *Challenging the Prison-Industrial Complex: Activism, Arts, and Educational Alternatives* (pp. 253-272). University of Illinois Press. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/stable/10.5406/j.ctt3fh4zd.23>

- Ryang, K., & Clark, D. (2013). The effect of prison-based college education programs on recidivism: propensity score matching approach. *Journal of Criminal Justice* 41.3 (2013): 196-204. Web.
- Shay, G. (2012). Inside-Out as law school pedagogy. *Journal of Legal Education*, 62(2), 207-217. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/stable/42894279>
- Shepard, R. (1970). The non-black teacher, black literature, and black students. *English Journal*, 59(8), 1071-1073.
- Simon, Jonathan. (2007). *Governing through crime : How the war on crime transformed American democracy and created a culture of fear* (Studies in crime and public policy). Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press.
- Sleeter, C. E. (2017). Critical race theory and the whiteness of teacher education. *Urban Education*, 52(2), 155–169. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0042085916668957>
- Smith, A. A. (2018, November 6). Momentum for prison education. Retrieved July 15, 2019, from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2018/11/06/colleges-push-more-resources-support-prison-education-programs>
- Steinbaum, M. (2017, September 1). A Brown v. Board for Higher Ed. Retrieved March 3, 2020, from <http://bostonreview.net/education-opportunity/marshall-steinbaum-brown-v-board-higher-ed>
- Taylor, J. (1993). *Paved with good intentions: The failure of race relations in contemporary America*. New York, NY.: Carroll & Graf Publishers.
- Thomas, J. (1995). The ironies of prison education. In Davidson, H. S. (1995)., *Schooling in a "total institution": Critical perspectives on prison education* (p. 25-41). Westport, CT: Bergin & Garvey.

- U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. (2017). Labor force statistics from the current population survey. Retrieved November 30, 2017, from <https://www.bls.gov/cps/cpsaat11.htm>
- Wacquant, L. (2000). The new 'Peculiar Institution': On the prison as surrogate ghetto. *Theoretical Criminology*, 4(3), 377–389. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362480600004003007>
- Wakefield, S., & Uggen, C. (2010). Incarceration and stratification. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 36, 387-406. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org.ezproxy.library.tufts.edu/stable/25735084>
- Werts, T. (2013). Tyrone Werts: Reflections on the Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. *The Prison Journal*, 93(2), 135–138. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0032885512472483>
- Wexler, E. (2016, June 24). Prisoners to get 'Second Chance Pell'. Retrieved July 15, 2019, from <https://www.insidehighered.com/news/2016/06/24/us-expands-pell-grant-program-12000-prison>

Appendix



Title: Senior Thesis: The Critical Intersection Between Higher Education and Incarceration

November 15, 2019 | Notice of Action

IRB Study # 1910019 | Status: EXEMPT

PI: Nora Maetzener
Faculty Advisor: Jill Weinberg
Review Date: 11/15/2019

The above referenced study has been granted the status of Exempt Category 2ii as defined in 45 CFR 46.104 (d). For details please visit the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) website at: [http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html#46.104\(d\)](http://www.hhs.gov/ohrp/humansubjects/guidance/45cfr46.html#46.104(d))

- The Exempt Status does not relieve the investigator of any responsibilities relating to the research participants. Research should be conducted in accordance with the ethical principles, (i) Respect for Persons, (ii) Beneficence, and (iii) Justice, as outlined in the Belmont Report.
- Any changes to the protocol or study materials that might affect the Exempt Status must be referred to the Office of the IRB for guidance. Depending on the changes, you may be required to apply for either expedited or full review.

IRB Administrative Representative Initials:

Handwritten initials in black ink, appearing to be "ASB" with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Table 1: Summary of Study Participants

Sample	Participant (Pseudonym)	Racial/ethnic identity	Gender identity	Age at time of interview
Former Outside Student	Lawrence	African American	male	44
Former Outside Student	Zahir	Black and African	male	37
Former Outside Student	Eessa	African American	male	49
Former Outside Student	Morris	African American	male	33
Former Outside Student	Ralph	Caucasian	male	54
Former Outside Student	Jamal	Black and Hispanic	male	25
Former Outside Student	David	Black and Hispanic	male	37
Former Outside Student	Andy	Native American and Black	male	67
Former Inside Student	Oliver	White and Chinese	male	21
Former Inside Student	Vanessa	White	female	24
Former Inside Student	Harry	White and Hispanic	male	19
Former Inside Student	Colleen	Black and Haitian	female	19
Former Inside Student	Melanie	White	female	19
Former Inside Student	Kristen	White and Chinese	female	23
Former Inside Student	Nina	Asian	female	23
Former Inside Student	Kaitlin	White	female	23
Former Inside Student	Nadia	South Asian	female	23

Former Inside Student	Steve	Black, White, Haitian, German and Jewish	male	25
Former Inside Student	Hannah	White	female	18
Former Inside Student	Lydia	White	female	20
Former Inside Student	Austin	White	male	23
Former Inside Student	Megan	White	female	23
Former Inside Student	Adam	White	male	19
Control Group	Claire	White	female	21
Control Group	Rebecca	White	female	20
Control Group	Magdalena	Indian	female	21
Control Group	Ethan	White	male	23
Control Group	Emma	White	female	22
Control Group	Francesca	White	female	21
Control Group	Sarah	White	female	21
Control Group	OT	Asian	female	19
Control Group	Elena	White	female	20
Control Group	Melissa	White	female	19
Control Group	Nicole	South Asian	female	18
Control Group	Tracy	White	female	21
Control Group	Emily	White	female	21
Control Group	Angela	South Asian American	female	21
Control Group	Madeline	White	female	21

Table 2: Description of Coding Scheme by Theme [Sample of Former Inside Students]

Theme	Concepts and Codes
-------	--------------------

Personal Development in College Program	Self-concept Relationships with faculty Relationships with family and friends outside Outlook on personal capabilities and future possibilities Experiences of re-entry and the role of college experience
Perception of Impact on Prison Culture	Relationships with classmates Relationships with correctional officers and administrators Changes in ways time was spent outside of class.
Frustration with College in Prison experience	Access to text and materials Academic Support
Suggestions for Improvement	Pedagogy or curriculum Classroom Experience Institutional Support
Perceptions over Time	Background and Pre-Program Program Experience Post-Program Reflection

Table 3: Description of Coding Scheme by Theme [Sample of Former Outside Students]

Theme	Concepts and Codes
Challenges	Difficulty understanding experience Fetishization of carceral experience Isolation No-contact policy Regret
Class Dynamic	Confidence in the class Perception of assignment

	Professor relationship Relationship with Inside students Relationship with Outside students Comparison to traditional classes
Expectations for the class	
Motivations for class participation	
Perception of college	
Prison imagery	Correctional Officers Pre-program perception Security experience
Reaction to experience	Change in self Impact of identity on experience Perception of outside environment Relationship with people outside of the class
Value of the class	

Table 4: Description of Coding Scheme by Theme [Control Group]

Theme	Concepts and Codes
Bubble	Application to real world
Challenges	Frustrations
Change in self	Confidence in college Impact of identity on experience
Perception of college	Perception of assignments Perception of environment Professor relationship Relationship with others

	Comparison
Perceptions of prison	Experience with incarceration Inside-Out perception
Value of college	Motivations for enrollment

Table 5: Example of Interview Questions

1. Tell me a bit about your life story: your childhood and family
2. What were your impressions of college before you enrolled? Did you hear things from others?
3. What were some of your favorite assignments, books, exercises in classes, lectures?
4. What did you do if you had questions about an assignment?
5. What are your experiences, if applicable, with the intersection of incarceration and education?
6. Do you ever find yourself looking back and reflecting on this experience and can you tell me about that? What do you think about most? Why?
7. Can you describe the changes in yourself that occurred as a result of your participation in college?
8. Looking backwards, what do you think was the most valuable and important aspect of the college experience for you?

Table 6: Description of Interview Schedule

1. Background and pre-program involvement in education
2. Experience with participation in higher education
3. Impact of participation in higher education