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Reel Images: Representations of Adult Male Prisons by the Film Industry

Melissa E. Fenwick
University of South Florida

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Reel Images: Representations of Adult Male Prisons by the Film Industry

by

Melissa E. Fenwick

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy
Department
of Criminology
College of Behavioral and Community Sciences
University of South Florida

Co- Major Professor: Michael J. Lynch, Ph.D.
Co- Major Professor: Wilson R. Palacios, Ph.D.
Lorie Fridell, Ph.D.
Jennifer Friedman, Ph.D.

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newsmaking, criminology

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Dedication

I dedicate this manuscript to my mother, Corinne F. Fenwick. You instilled in me a love of reading and of education. You are my light, and you always help me to remember to let my life speak. I miss you with all of my heart and my soul. I love you very much, and without you none of this would have been possible. Thank you for everything.

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I would also like to thank my family and friends. I never would have finished this extremely challenging experience without their help, patience and support. Dad: Thank you for everything. Words cannot begin to express the amount of gratitude and respect

that I have for you. Thank you for all the times that you helped me. You are an inspiration and an example. Because of you, I know not to take life too seriously, to laugh often and to be a good friend to many. I love you. Sarah: A girl could not ask for a better life-long friend. Who else would help drive a Honda full of junk and a sixteen pound cat from Florida to Connecticut? I can always count on you in a crisis and for that I am forever grateful. We have been friends for twenty years and I know we will be friends for at least twenty more – growing old together in Florida! Thanks for being my sister. You know how much I love you. Jen: Thank you for putting up with all of my graduate school and dissertation talk for the past ten years. You never gave up on me when sometimes I thought I would. A woman could never have a better friend, roommate and confidante. I love you. Michael: Thank for you your support in these past few months. Listening to me talk about my work, bringing me coffee and just letting me lean on your shoulders are worth more to me than you could ever know. I love you very much.

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as Department Chair. Thank you for listening to the new voices in the department.

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It is my sincere hope that this dissertation will serve to shed a little light onto the media conglomerates that are operating in the United States today. The First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States of America states: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or the press, or the right of the people peaceable to assemble, and to petition the Government for redress of grievance.” It is up to the next generation of crime scholars and activists to exercise our first Amendment rights by organizing and supporting independent media organizations. Remember the poignant words of John Mayer (2006) in his song *Waiting on the World to Change*, “Cause when they own the information, oh they can bend it all they want.”

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Melissa E. Fenwick

ABSTRACT

Research on the criminal justice system, punishment, and media continue to generate academic interest, particularly in the realm of social constructionism. The social construction perspective provides insight into the process through which media-controlled images are translated into social definitions of crime and justice. One new area of interest is the representations of prisons and penal culture by the entertainment media, namely the film industry. In this study, the author contributes to the area of social constructionist literature by administering a content analysis of eleven feature films on male prisons produced between 1979 and 2001. The author examines the frequency and context of several constructs of penal culture: drug use and trafficking, rape and sexual assault, violence, and gang affiliation. This research examines whether the representations of these issues in recent motion pictures are consistent with extant academic correctional literature.

The present study found that within prison films the amount of portrayal of drug use and trafficking, and rape and sexual assault is consistent with the academic literature.

Overall, when compared to the academic literature, prison movies under represent gang affiliation but within movies that portray gang affiliation, that portrayal is similar to the academic literature. Notably, heroin was the drug of choice depicted within prison films while academic correctional research in prisons shows marijuana as the drug of choice. The most significant finding was that the amount and type of violence, specifically murder, was overrepresented in prison films compared to the amount and type of violence reported within current academic research.

The over emphasis on violence and killing within prison films and the representation of heroin as the major drug consumed and trafficked could lead to public misunderstanding about the realities of prison life and living conditions of the prison institution. This study provides not only noteworthy information concerning the representations of prison life and penal culture by the film industry but also insight into the inconsistencies between the information presented on film and that within academic correctional literature that are transferred via this medium to the general public.

Introduction

The United States now has the largest prison system in the world. Today, approximately 2.3 million people are in prison and jail facilities in the United States of America (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2007). The combined inmate population in jails and prisons has grown five-fold from 333,000 inmates in 1974 to 2.1 million inmates in 2004 (The Sentencing Project, 2005). According to the recent PEW study (2007), between 1987 and 2007 the United States prison population nearly tripled. In 2005, more than three percent of all U.S. adult residents were under some form of correctional control (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005). This incarceration trend does not seem to be waning. Given the large numbers of individuals under some form of correctional control in the United States, interest in penal institutions and the daily life of the people who live and work in these institutions has created a massive body of literature, within both academic and popular literature. This literature addresses the causes of incarceration, the management and operations of penal institutions, the sociology and psychology of correctional officials and inmates, and the consequences of incarceration.

Individuals, families, and whole communities of people are affected by the recent widespread use of incarceration as crime control in America. In the United States, this

incarceration trend produces substantial costs that can be classified as social, economic, medical, sociological and psychological. The rise in the number of individuals housed in correctional facilities in the US has increased the number of individuals who must contend with daily life as an inmate. The daily living conditions of inmates and the experiences that occur during day-to-day living behind bars, such as interaction between inmates, guards, visitors, and so on, can be defined as penal culture. Research has shown that, regardless of custodial level, inmates must contend with similar hardships due to their incarceration experience such as health conditions, poor food, violence, and sexual assault (Ross, 2008). Penal culture and the specific indicators of this culture have been addressed by academics and the mass media. The portrayal of incarceration by mass media industries helps to reinforce to the public that incarceration is a useful means of crime control in the United States.

Historically, popular culture has had a long interest in the lives of the individuals who reside in carceral institutions. The mass media industries, including film, literature, television, newspapers and now the Internet, have all presented cultural images of prison to the public. The film industry has been producing films focusing on incarceration for almost 100 years. *Prison Time*, produced in 1910, is reportedly the first prison movie ever filmed (IMBD, 2009). There are close to 300 films with prison as their primary plot setting.

Fascination with the everyday lives of those incarcerated has long been a theme in literature from such classic works as Edgar Allen Poe's short story "The Pit and the

Pendulum,” written in 1842, to the more recent example of Jack Henry Abbott’s collection of prison letters *In the Belly of the Beast* (Abbott, 1981). In fact, prison literature dates back to Boethius’ *Consolation of Philosophy* in 524 AD (Boethius, 1902). References to imprisonment are made in both the Old Testament and the New Testament of the Bible. However, what makes the work of Boethius so influential is that it is the first known account of imprisonment and torture that appealed to both Pagans and Christians.

Recently, television has joined the growing media and public attention to incarceration. Two well-known television programs about prison in the United States are *OZ* and *Prison Break*. *OZ*, a television series aired on HBO, ran from 1997 until 2003. This television show highlighted the daily life of the inmates of the Oswald Maximum Security Penitentiary. *OZ* centered on the gang and racial tension experienced in prison institutions and portrayed violence throughout the series. The characters in this television series were divided into eight groups: Brotherhood, Irish, Others, Homeboys, Latinos, Muslims, Italians, and Gays (HBO.com, 2009). HBO states that *OZ* is its “first and longest running drama series” (HBO.com, 2009, p. 1). In addition, *OZ* has won several awards. It was nominated for two primetime Emmys and has won eleven times for various awards such as the ALMA and Cable ACE awards and has garnered 29 nominations for various other awards (IMBD.com, 2009).

Similarly, *Prison Break* has received several industry accolades. *Prison Break* won the People’s Choice Award in 2006 and was nominated for 21 other awards

including two Golden Globe awards (IMBD.com, 2009). *Prison Break* is about Michael Scofield, a man who purposely gets arrested and imprisoned in the same prison where his brother is on death row. Once on the inside, he develops a plan so that the two of them can escape the prison together. *Prison Break* includes the formulaic prison theme of the innocent victim of injustice that can be found in other genres such as film (Rafter, 2006), In *Prison Break*, Scofield's brother, one of the lead characters, is incarcerated for a crime that he did not commit. *Prison Break* premiered in 2005 by the Fox Broadcasting Company and was terminated in 2009. When *Prison Break* premiered, the Nielsen ratings ranked it fifth nationally among the top 10 new broadcast series in the US among viewers aged between 25 and 54 and third nationally among the top 10 new broadcast series in the US among viewers between the ages of 18 and 34 (Nielsen Media Research, 2005).

Prison Break is a very popular show. This is evident by the Web site devoted to the show on the Fox Television Web page¹ and even by show merchandise that is sold online on the same site². At this Web site the public can buy T-shirts, mouse pads, water bottles, DVDs of the television show, and a coffee mug with the penitentiary seal. The description that accompanies the coffee mug is particularly poignant as it beckons to the potential purchasers to “[s]ip the sweet taste of escape or the bitter taste of imprisonment” (Foxshop.com, 2009, p. 1). Fox Broadcasting does an excellent job of merchandising this program. While there are only two television shows about prison and prison life in the US as of the writing of this dissertation, clearly these television shows have garnered public acclaim, and this is evident in their ratings and in the popular awards given to these

shows by audience appeal (IMBD.com, 2009; Nielsen Media Research, 2005). For example, the People's Choice Award is voted on by the public online at pcavote.com, and the ALMA Award uses the program's Nielsen ratings to measure the public's choice among the American population (ALMA Awards 2008, 2009; People's Choice Awards, 2009).

The media reflect the American cultural fascination in, concern for, and interest in prison, prison life and the people who live behind the razor wire. Research has shown that often the only exposure that the general public has to the criminal experience and the prison population is gained through the representations and constructions perpetuated by the media industry (Bennett, 2006; Brown, 2003; Cheatwood, 1998; Wykes, 2001). The media is critical in shaping the public's views and perceptions of prisons and the lives of the people who live in these institutions (Wilson and O'Sullivan, 2004). While it is true that, historically, forms of mass media such as literature, television, newspapers, and the Internet, have examined prison life, research has found that the motion picture is the foremost source of public information about prisons (Bennett, 2006; Cheatwood, 1998; Freeman, 1998; Root, 1982). The film as a medium, through the use of visual imagery, is able to reach a large audience that is not limited by geography and literacy constraints. Television, too, has the potential for this reach. As previously discussed, as many as three hundred prison movies have been produced in the United States, but only two television programs have been produced in the United States that have focused solely on prison life. Motion pictures have become the foremost interpretive framework through which the

construction of cultural meaning and knowledge concerning prison life and incarceration is transmitted to the public. Accordingly, research has shown that public perception is influenced by the cultural constructions that are perpetuated by popular media; because the most influential media depiction of incarceration by the mass media to date is represented within prison films, it is crucial that criminologists examine the presentation of correctional institutions by the motion picture industry.

Further, it is important to acknowledge the owners of the mass media in the United States because these corporations are responsible for the construction of crime and punishment. The mass media industry in the United States has become an oligopoly as eight large conglomerates are responsible for the majority of all media influence (Freepress, 2006). Within the motion picture industry only six large corporations own the majority of production (Standard and Poor's, 2006). Research shows that the media is the medium through which Americans learn about social issues (Barak, 1994; Chermak, 1994; Muraskin and Domash, 2007; Potter and Kappeler, 1998; Surette, 1984; Sacco and Trotman, 1990; Welch, Fenwick and Roberts, 1998). Therefore, constructions and representations of crime and incarceration presented by the media are extremely important. The material produced by the motion picture industry serves to reproduce the dominant ideology set forth by its corporate owners (Herman and Chomsky, 2002). Consequently, the film industry, which is owned by a few corporate conglomerates, helps to decide what is socially thinkable about crime and incarceration in the United States.

Aims of the Current Study

As the following literature review will show, there is a need to better understand the relationship between the iconography illustrated within recent prison films and that presented in the extant correctional literature. It is well established within the criminological literature that the media is the single greatest influence on the public's perception of crime and justice (Muraskin and Domash, 2007; Surette, 1984). Additionally, research has established that the media are responsible for the production and reproduction of cultural images of crime and punishment and the construction of the social reality of crime that effects perceptions of crime and justice (Garofalo, 1981; Muraskin and Domash, 2007; Surette, 1992). Accordingly, it is important to elucidate the relationship between the images presented within recent prison films and the information contained within the current correctional literature.

Studies examining the film industry's presentation of prison culture are virtually nonexistent, and within the criminological literature there are very few studies that have attempted to examine prison films (Cheatwood, 1998; Crowther, 1989; Brown, 2003; Eigenberg and Baro, 2003; Leitch, 2002; Mason, 1998a, 1998b, 2003; Nellis 1988; Nellis and Hale, 1982; O'Sullivan 2001; Rafter 2006; Wilson 1993, 2003; Wilson and O'Sullivan, 2004). However, these few studies provide a framework for the current dissertation study. The extant correctional literature explores the definition of a prison film, the issue of authenticity in prison films, the historical and theoretical analyses of prison films, and the depictions of rape and sexual assault and analyzes themes among

prison films (Cheatwood, 1989; Brown, 2003; Eigenberg and Baro, 2003; Rafter, 2006; Wilson and O'Sullivan, 2004).

This dissertation study explores the relationship between the iconography of the prison film and the presentation of the information contained with the extant correctional literature. The two main purposes of the study are: (1) to examine the nature of film coverage of drug use and drug trafficking, rape and sexual violence, violence, and gang affiliation in adult male prison institutions and (2) to determine if this media coverage is consistent with the current scholarly literature on these issues. The four interrelated penal construct measures related to health conditions are examined. These constructs are drug use and trafficking, rape and sexual assault, violence, and gang affiliation. These constructs are identified as noteworthy concerns for all inmates regardless of custody level (Ross, 2008).

The current study seeks to add to the area of social constructionist literature by conducting a content analysis of 11 feature-length Hollywood films on male prisons produced between 1979 and 2001. This study will provide significant knowledge concerning the representations of penal culture by the film industry. The findings are expected to have important criminological implications. The current study is the first known study to utilize a theoretical sampling design to conduct a content analysis of the representation of drug use and trafficking, rape and sexual assault, violence, and gang affiliation in adult male prison movies in the United States. Further, the importance of the representations of penal cultural within the context of the dominant ideology will be

discussed. This study seeks to contribute to the criminological literature on penology as well as the social constructionist literature, which is concerned with the impact of the media on public opinion.

Organization of the Dissertation Chapters

Now that the goals of the current study have been presented, the structure of the dissertation will be explained. Chapter 1 provides an overview of the corrections industry in the United States, including a discussion of the causes of mass imprisonment and the consequences of the mass-imprisonment trend. Furthermore, chapter 1 also presents prisons as industry and describes the prison industrial complex.

Chapter 2 presents a discussion of models of how the public learns about crime and justice. It provides an overview of the media industry in the United States, with a specific focus on the motion picture industry. This chapter also explores the historical changes in the mass media industry, the mass media oligopoly in the United States, the motion picture industry as a subsidiary of the mass media industry, and a discussion of social constructionism.

Chapter 3 presents a thorough discussion of life inside a correctional institution. Four substantive integrative aspects of penal culture are discussed. These parts of penal culture are drug use and trafficking, rape and sexual assault, violence, and gang affiliation.

Chapter 4 offers a review of prison film literature, and a discussion of the authenticity of prison films.

Chapter 5 presents the data and methodology of this study. This chapter explores the data collection technique and discusses content analysis as the chosen methodology and the benefits and the limitations of the study. The research questions are presented in this chapter, also.

Chapter 6 provides a presentation of the results followed by a discussion of the results in Chapter 7. The conclusion and recommendations for future research are presented in Chapter 8.

Chapter One: Incarceration as Crime Control

Introduction

For the past 30 years the United States has been relying on incarceration as its predominant form of crime control. During this period, the US has built the world's largest prison system. According to Mauer and Chesney-Lind (2002), this social policy can only be described as mass imprisonment (2002), while Austin and Irwin (2001) refer to this as the "imprisonment binge." The sheer numbers of prisoners behind bars is more significant than any period of time in our nation's history, and as such the impact of this situation is noteworthy. The United States has become a nation divided among those who live behind bars and those who do not. There are now more persons residing in carceral institutions than working on farms and studying in institutions of higher education (Elsner, 2004).

Incarceration in the United States

Since the 1980s the United States has experienced an exponential growth in its correctional population. According to a recent report by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (2005), at yearend 2004 there were more than 7 million people under some form of correctional supervision including probation, in jail or prison, or on parole in the United

States. Over three percent of all U.S. adult residents or one in every thirty-one adults was under some form of correctional control (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005). The combined inmate population in jails and prisons has grown five-fold from 333,000 inmates in 1974 to 2.1 million inmates in 2004 (The Sentencing Project, 2005). In 2007, the Bureau of Justice Statistics reported that this number had grown to 2.3 million jail and prison inmates (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2007).

As of July 2008, 2,310,984 inmates were housed in United States federal or state prisons or in local jails (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2009). This number represents an increase of 0.8% from yearend 2007. According to a recently released report by the PEW Center on States (2008), the United States has become the leader in incarceration throughout the world, surpassing China. After three decades of growth, more than one in every 100 adults resides in a prison or jail institution in the United States (PEW Center on the States, 2008). Moreover, the numbers for some specific groups of individuals are particularly notable. Black males have been effected by this incarceration binge. One out of every 15 black males over the age of 18 in the US is behind bars, compared to one in 106 white men for the same age group (PEW Center on the States, 2008). Furthermore, while men are still 10 times more likely to be incarcerated than women, the female population of inmates is growing. Specifically, one in every 100 black women between the ages of 35 and 39 in the United States is incarcerated, compared to one in 355 for white women and one in 297 for Hispanic women (PEW Center on the States, 2008).

Causes of Mass Imprisonment

Researchers have attempted to explain what has accounted for the growth in the incarcerated population in the United States. According to Mauer (2001), the rise in the incarcerated population can be attributed to the complex relationship between politics and sentencing practices. Penologists James Austin and John Irwin also note the connection between politics and the rising rates of incarceration (Austin and Irwin, 2001). In addition, policy choices such as three strikes laws and sentencing enhancements have resulted in longer sentences (PEW Center on the States, 2008). Furthermore, Welch (2003) elucidates the importance of the market economic forces that fuel the American corrections industry and concludes that “the business of prisons responds to market cues predicated on expansion and consumption, whose dynamics, produce greater construction coupled with higher incarceration rates” (p. 228).

The reasons for prison growth in the United State are a complex phenomenon that has been addressed at length elsewhere. However, for the purpose of this discussion, the author will address a few of the most salient factors (see Lynch, 2007; and Austin and Irwin, 2001 for a more in-depth discussion). Austin and Irwin (2001) state that the most influential effect on the growth of prisons in the United States is the general public’s perception of a growing crime rate rather than the actual crime rate. Election campaigns throughout the 1980s helped to elevate the fear of crime and drug use (Austin and Irwin, 2001). The focus on street crime became a major issue as well as the focus on the crime-

drug connection. The “War on Drugs” was instituted as a political reaction, playing on the public’s fears and the menace of the drug user as the criminal.

Waging a War on Drugs

Arguably the single greatest policy change that affected the increase in the numbers of individuals behind bars was the waging of the "War on Drugs." Since the enactment in 1973 of New York's infamous “Rockefeller” drug laws, harsh penalties have been enacted for the possession and selling of small amounts of narcotics. New York's law has called for a 15-year prison sentence for anyone convicted of selling or possessing two to four ounces of narcotics, regardless of that person’s prior criminal history (Mauer, 2001). Determinate sentencing and sentencing guidelines became popular in the 1980s. Consequently, these policies in effect, tied the hands of the judicial system. Judges were no longer allowed to take into account mitigating and aggravating circumstances with regard to drug crimes. The drug war gained momentum in the 1980s. By 1989, federal funding for the drug war was \$6.6 billion, significantly up from \$1.5 billion in 1981 (The White House, 1992). There is no significant evidence that this war on drugs seems to be waning. The National Drug Control Budget in 2005 was \$12.6 billion (The White House, 2004). This is almost double the budget that was represented only 12 years earlier.

Law enforcement attention to drug crime also increased dramatically during this period. There was a doubling of drug arrests in the 1980s (Mauer, 2001). The combination of drug arrests and strict penalties had a devastating effect on the

correctional population. This is especially true among the federal correctional population. The Anti-Drug Abuse acts of 1986 and 1988 imposed harsh federal penalties for possession of controlled substances. For example, possession of as little of five grams of crack cocaine would net a five-year mandatory minimum sentence. According to The Sentencing Project (2005), "nowhere has the adoption of tougher sentencing rules and release policies been more evident than in the federal system where mandatory minimums, sentencing guidelines, and the abolition of parole have combined to create an extremely punitive system" (p. 1).

Criminologists and sociologists have concluded that the impact of the war on drugs has been a major factor in the increase in the incarcerated population since the 1970s (Lynch, 2007; Prashad, 2003; Welch, 2003). The impact of legislation and of law enforcement has far outweighed any other public policy initiatives that could account for such a dramatic effect on the imprisonment rate. Mandatory prison terms and truth in sentencing employed across the nation have accounted for the extension of the length of time that prisoners are spending behind bars (Austin and Irwin, 2001). Most inmates are now spending a significantly longer part of their sentence behind bars than ever before.

Criminologists have also addressed this issue by examining the effect of economic forces in a capitalist society on punishment. According to Welch (2003), economic marginalization restricts access to legitimate opportunity, which allows for unlawful industries, such as the illicit drug trade, to flourish. Market economic forces within the illicit drug industry contribute to the production of prisoners in a capitalistic

society. The drug market operates on a supply-and-demand basis. Harsher sentences for drug distribution and possession increase the risk of selling drugs. This increased risk leads to an increased demand in the market and therefore the criminal activity is more risky yet financially rewarding. Like legitimate businesses, the illicit drug trade operates according to principles similar to those in the free world market. Consequently, limiting the supply of drugs drives up the price and the associated risk of trafficking attracting more individuals to the business. The costs associated with the illegal drug trade are reflective of the risk associated with doing business rather than the actual cost of the production of the drug itself. These economic forces create an almost limitless supply of economically disadvantaged drug dealers (Welch, 2003). When these drug dealers are processed through the system, they become raw material for the corrections industry and thus contribute to its proliferation (Welch, 2003). These limitless supplies of drug dealers who have been processed through the system have been a major contributing factor to the recent increase in incarceration in the United States.

This war on drugs has focused on crack cocaine. This is significant because crack is sold and used in the inner city community by a disproportionately high number of African-American and Hispanic individuals (Austin and Irwin, 2001). Exacerbating the issue is the “100 to 1” quantity disparity affecting sentencing for powder cocaine and crack cocaine trafficking/possession instituted in 1986. For example, under the applicable sentencing guidelines, trafficking 100 times as much powder cocaine (500 grams) as crack cocaine (5 grams) resulted in the same mandatory five-year sentence under federal

law (U.S. Sentencing Commission, 2002). Since crack cocaine possession was more prevalent among minority populations and powdered cocaine possession more likely among white populations and because 5 grams of crack were likely to be possessed by users rather than sellers, the federal sentencing guidelines contributed to extensive racial disparity for cocaine-related offenses (U.S. Sentencing Commission, 2002). In addition to this disparity, the federal penalties for crack cocaine are more severe when compared to other drugs (U.S. Sentencing Commission, 2007). The U.S. Sentencing Commission has investigated this disparity in sentencing and submitted three reports to Congress in 1997, 2002, and 2007 that have recommended reforms. As a result of these reports, new sentencing guidelines went into effect in November 2007. Because this guideline was made retroactive, an estimated 19,500 prisoners will be able to apply for a reduced sentence subject to judicial review (U.S. Sentencing Commission, 2007).

Changes in crack-cocaine sentencing guidelines have alleviated some of the racial and ethnic disparity in sentencing long evident for this crime. For example, while historically the majority of crack cocaine offenders have been African American, the proportion of African Americans among crack cocaine offenders has declined from 91.4 percent in 1992 to 81.8 percent in 2006 (U.S. Sentencing Commission, 2007). Furthermore, changes in federal sentencing guidelines have also impacted Hispanic representation among those sentenced for cocaine-related offenses. As a result, the proportion of crack-cocaine offenders who are Hispanic experienced a decline over time from 9 percent in 2000 to 8.4 percent in 2006 (U.S. Sentencing Commission, 2007). It

should be noted that while these two groups are both on the decline of crack cocaine use, in 2006 together they accounted for 90.2% of federal crack-cocaine offenders (U.S. Sentencing Commission, 2007). Not surprisingly, while the proportion of minority crack-cocaine offenders has declined, the proportion of white crack-cocaine offenders has increased slightly from 3.2% in 1992 to 8.8% in 2006 (U.S. Sentencing Commission, 2007).

In contrast to crack-cocaine sentencing patterns stands the data on powdered cocaine. Powdered-cocaine use has remained relatively stable over the same period (1992 on) with one exception: Hispanic offenders now account for the majority of powdered-cocaine offenders. In recent years the proportion of Hispanics sentenced for powdered-cocaine offenses has increased from 39.8% in 1992 to 50.8% in 2000 and 57.5% in 2006 (U.S. Sentencing Commission, 2007). Thus, the small decline in minority over-representation among sentenced crack-cocaine offenders has been offset by the relatively large increase among Hispanic powdered-cocaine offenders.

Consequences of the Mass Imprisonment Trend

Research indicates that the consequences of this mass imprisonment have taken a significant toll on African American communities (Rose and Clear, 1998). The correctional literature in this area focuses on minorities and ethnic populations and does not extensively address the white community. According to the Bureau of Justice of Statistics at yearend 2004 in the United States, there were more than 3,000 black male sentenced prison inmates per 100,000, compared to just over 1,200 Hispanic males per

100,000 and 463 white males per 100,000 (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2005). According to Mauer and Chesney-Lind (2002), African American males ages 25 to 34 are the most vulnerable to incarceration, and it is significant that they are behind bars at a time when they would otherwise be starting families and careers. Unfortunately, due to the rapid influx of African American males into prisons, the African American community has experienced a great loss in its community. The loss of the young African American male has had a tremendous impact on the family unit in these communities. "For many young black men, prison is their college. Serving their first stretch has become a rite of passage some even look forward to and welcome" (Elsner, 2004, p. 13).

This is significant because as young African American men move into prisons they experience a loss of political power (Christie, 2000). The greatest impact that criminal justice policies have had on the African American community as a result of this mass incarceration is political disenfranchisement. An estimated 1.4 million African American males are not able to vote due to felony disenfranchisement laws (Mauer, 2002). While seemingly innocent on the surface, these laws can have a tremendous impact on the outcome of elections. A case in point is the 2000 U.S. presidential election in Florida, where several hundred thousand ex-felons, disproportionately African American, were barred from voting (Palast, 2004). Across the country during the 2000 presidential election, 13% of the male African American population was unable to vote due to ex-felon disenfranchisement laws (Elsner, 2004). Political pundits believe that this action alone greatly impacted the outcome of this election (Chesney-Lind and Mauer,

2002). Disenfranchisement laws have a tremendous political impact. The forced absence of these votes can potentially have an impact on the outcome of the political process. According to Christie (2000), it is extremely easy to lose your right to vote as most state disenfranchisement laws only use the requirement of a felony conviction as a basis for termination of voting rights, and it is extremely hard to restore these civil rights upon release.

Moreover, communities of color have traditionally experienced the loss of their young males. Recently these communities have also experienced the magnification of their problems through the loss of their female companions. The rate of growth of female inmates in prison has been nearly double that for men over the past two decades (Richie, 2002). The impact of the war on drugs has had a significant impact on the increasing numbers of women behind bars (Mauer and Chesney-Lind, 2002). As a result, in the African American community there is a significant portion of children who are growing up with one, if not both, of their parents under some form of correctional supervision. According to La Vigne, Davies, and Brazell (2008), African American children are approximately nine times more likely to have a parent in prison than a white child is.

Rose and Clear (1998) contend that this increase in incarceration has unintended consequences that makes the criminal an asset to the state. Before incarceration, the prisoner's economic resource is concentrated in the community through the family and neighborhood. His or her economic activities are localized in the course of legitimate and illegitimate activity in which they participate in their community. However, after

incarceration, their economic value is transferred into *penal capital* (Rose and Clear, 1998, p. 461). Money must now be spent to house, feed, clothe, and guard the inmate. The money that would have been spent in the home community of the offender is now being transferred into the community where the offender will now be incarcerated (Rose and Clear, 1998). Hence, prisoners have become commodities. Rose and Clear (1998) give the example of a resident of Bedford-Stuyvesant, New York, who is arrested and convicted, moving from a \$12,000 resource to a \$30,000 one in an upstate village where he is incarcerated.

Prisons as Industry and the Prison Industrial Complex

Today's prison boom is vested in the larger socio-political economy of America. Prisons expansion has become big business, generating income from prison construction, the leasing of prison space and prison systems, and the provision of services that have become privatized. The corporatization of the American correctional system coupled with citizens' political conservatism has helped propel prison expansion (Christie, 2000; Lynch, 2007). Some studies have concluded that trends in imprisonment are controlled by economic forces rather crime rates (Carlson and Michalowski, 1997; Dunaway, Cullen, Burton, and Evans, 2000; Lynch, 2007; Lynch, Hogan, and Stretesky, 1999; Welch, 2003).

Dyer (2000) describes the modern criminal justice system as a “perpetual prison machine”. The rise of the prison industry as an economic enhancement has become known as the prison industrial complex (Davis, 1997). Expenditures on prison

construction and operation costs has reached an all-time high. According to the recently released PEW study (PEW Center on the States, 2008), between fiscal years 1987 and 2007, total state general fund spending on corrections rose 315%, from \$10.62 billion in 1987 to \$44.06 billion in 2007. Furthermore, by 2011 state correctional expenditures, including bonds and federal contributions, are expected to add an additional \$25 billion to the total, bringing the projected costs to states to more than \$69 billion (PEW Center on the States, 2008).

The building of prisons bring with it jobs for local townspeople as correctional officers; clerks in restaurants, hotels, and retail establishments needed to support incoming visitors; construction companies; and contractors such as telephone companies and food service industry employees that fight for contracts with the new facility. It is exactly this economic fervor that reproduces the cycle of building that is evidenced by the recent growing expansion of the prison system. The corporatization of the prison system has perpetuated the building of larger and greater numbers of prisons; these institutions are consistent with the conservative ideology, touted by the media, of both politicians and citizens.

With 2.3 million clients in the U.S. correctional system, structures must be built to house these individuals (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2007). The details, such as where, when and how much money is spent on this construction process, is richly debated among policymakers. State and local officials often present prison construction as one remedy for struggling economies, especially in rural communities (Hooks, Mosher,

Rotolo, and Lobao, 2004). While expensive lobbying campaigns and prison construction advocates share the assumption that prison construction has aided in the expansion of the local economy, a recent study by Hooks, Mosher, Rotolo, and Lobao (2004) found no evidence of this effect. In fact, prison construction actually was detrimental to the local economic structure, slowing growth in counties where prisons were constructed (Hooks et al., 2004).

Dyer has found evidence that the perpetuation of the prison machine, or the prison industrial complex, is based upon the war-on-crime rhetoric first espoused by the media agencies in the 1980s as a means to increase their ratings (Dyer, 2000). He indicates that while one would believe that the rising incarceration rates would be related to rising crime rates, this is not the case. Other researchers have come to similar conclusions (Christie, 2000; Lynch, 1999; 2007; Welch, 1999). Welch found that “rates of incarceration vary independently from those of crime” (Welch, 1999, p. 271). In an empirical test of the deterrent effect of imprisonment, Lynch (1999) found that “there appears to be no statistically significant relationship between imprisonment rates and crime rates” (p. 347) and that the deterrent effect of imprisonment has been overstated. In recent years, incarceration rates have increased while crime rates have stabilized and even decreased. This raises the question, Why would incarceration rates increase as crime rates decrease? (Lynch, 2007).

The answer, at least according to Dyer, is that the war on crime is obviously not rooted in the reality of rising crime rates but is entrenched in the rise in the public’s

concern over the crime problem (Dyer, 2000). According to Christie (2000), “the explosion in the number of prisoners in the USA cannot be explained as ‘caused by crime’. It has to do with penal policy” (p. 107). The rise in the public concern over crime is a complex issue that has many facets including but not limited to politics, the economy, public policy, and the fear of crime.

One of the best examples of corrections as industry is the rise of the private prison industry in the United States. Privatization in the corrections industry refers to the process through which part or all of the responsibilities of the care of offenders is shifted from the public sector to the private one. This can include partial privatization through the use of contract services such as medical, mental health, food, laundry, and so on, or complete privatization in which whole correctional institutions are run by corporations. In conjunction with the rapid rise in the number of inmates, the use of private prisons has expanded (Austin and Irwin, 2001; Lynch, 2007). Two companies, Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and GEO (formerly Wackenhut), account for 75% of the world’s private prison industry (Austin and Irwin, 2001). CCA is the largest corporate owner of privatized correctional facilities in the United States (Corrections Corporation of America, 2008). It operates 65 facilities with a capacity to house 78,000 inmates (Corrections Corporation of America, 2008). CCA (2008) states: “Only the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) and three states operate a system larger than CCA’s” (p. 3). In 2007 CCA reported total earnings of \$1.5 billion, which was an 11.7% increase from the previous year (Corrections Corporation of America, 2008). In addition, the growth

potential as well as the issue of inmates as commodities (beds) is addressed in CCA's recent annual report (2008):

CCA houses inmates and detainees from all three federal agencies, and we believe that segment of our business will continue to grow. At year-end 2007, the BOP had nearly 200,200 inmates in their system; however, only 11% of their inmates were housed in private facilities. The President's proposed 2009 Federal Budget seeks \$50 million in new funds for the BOP to expand prisoner space in contract facilities. Although the BOP currently plans to bring nearly 8,000 beds on-line within the next three years, their current population projections exceed that new bed development by nearly 7,000 inmates over the same time period. Challenges in finding space to accommodate this growth are compounded by the fact that BOP facilities were already operating at 137% of their rated capacity at year-end 2007. (p. 4).

The second largest private corrections corporation in the US today is GEO. Like CCA, GEO reported record earnings in 2007 (GEO Group Inc., 2008):

Our companywide revenues increased 19 percent and broke through the \$1.0 billion mark for the first time in our company's history. Our adjusted EBITDA increased 57 percent to \$143.2 million, and our pro forma net earnings grew 59 percent to \$51.5 million. (p. 2)

This annual report speaks specifically to the growing issue of the expansion of the number of inmates in the United States (GEO Group Inc., 2008):

In February 2008, researchers at the Pew Charitable Trusts reported that more than 2.3 million individuals were incarcerated in the United States at the beginning of 2008, an increase of approximately 1.5 million inmates over the last twenty years, and the outlook over the next five years points toward increasing correctional bed needs for federal and state agencies throughout the country. (p. 6)

Again, private correctional corporations are interested in the number of beds and keeping a steady supply of clients to fuel their profits. GEO owns a total of 54 institutions in the United States: 14 federal and 40 state facilities that have a total operating capacity of 50,621 inmates (GEO Group Inc., 2008). It owns 17 facilities in Texas alone and is responsible for the operation of the migrant operations center in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba (GEO Group Inc., 2008). While there are many legal, moral, ethical, economic and political issues to expose when debating the merits and pitfalls of the movement to privatize the correctional system, what remains clear is that there are no signs that the private prison industry is waning. In fact, CCA and GEO reported record profits in 2007 (Corrections Corporation of America, 2008; GEO Group Inc., 2008). Incarceration has become a profit-driven industry.

While academics have begun to explore the effects of economics on punishment, they have neglected several critical issues. For example, no study has examined the issue of how or whether media images impact and reflect political images and crime control policy. In addition, few studies have tackled the issue of assessing the accuracy of media images of criminals, punishment, and criminal justice system operations presented by the

media. The premise of this dissertation is based upon the idea that the media—specifically the motion picture industry—presents the public with manufactured images. Since the mass media is a major mechanism through which Americans learn about social and political issues, the way it presents crime and punishment is extremely important. As will be described further later in this dissertation, the mass media, including the motion picture industry, replicates the dominant ideology of its corporate owners. Therefore, the mass media industry and a few corporate conglomerates decide what is socially thinkable about the crime and punishment issue in the United States.

The study seeks to further the social constructionist perspective with respect to the media and punishment. The study is a content analysis of 11 feature films on male prisons produced between 1979 and 2001. The analysis consists of an examination of the frequency and context of four constructs of penal culture: drug use, sexual coercion, violence, and gang affiliation. In addition, the study will examine whether or not the representations of these issues in recent Hollywood motion picture films are reflective of the extant correctional literature and official data in their respective areas.

Conclusion

The United States now incarcerates more individuals in its penal system than any other country in the world. For the first time in history, one out of every 100 United States citizens is living in a jail or a prison cell. Changes in law enforcement, public policy initiatives, fear of crime, sentencing practices, economics, and opinion have contributed to this growth in the incarcerated population. Changes in sentencing such as

mandatory prison terms and truth in sentencing have accounted for the extension of the time that prisoners are spending behind bars. Inmates are spending significantly more of their sentence behind bars than ever before. Furthermore, the focus on the war on drugs since the 1980s has contributed significantly to the increase in the incarcerated population. This war on drugs has had an impact on specific groups who have already been marginalized economically. In addition, the connection between the increase in the incarcerated population and the corporatization of the corrections industry cannot be denied. As evidenced by the private prison industry, CCA and GEO, two of the largest private corrections corporations in the US, reported record profits in 2007. This growth trend does not show any indication of coming to an end. The corporatization of the corrections industry, the prisoner as profit, is based in the larger concern over the crime problem in general which gets translated to the public through the mass media.

Few studies have examined the issue of the cultural meanings of the images of punishment as presented by the media. The motion picture industry presents the public with manufactured images, and it is through these images that the public gains knowledge about punishment in America. By examining aspects of penal culture in prison movies and comparing what is presented to the extant academic literature, the author hopes to gain an understanding of the manufactured images of modern penal culture that Hollywood presents to the American public.

Chapter 2 expands upon the discussion of the union between economics and the punishment industry in the United States by discussing the economics of the mass media

industry. Furthermore, a discussion of models of how the public learns about crime and justice, historical changes in the mass media industry, the oligopolistic structure of the mass media industry, the motion picture industry as a subsidiary of the mass media industry, and the social constructionist perspective follows.

Chapter Two: Learning, the Mass Media Industry, and Social Construction

Introduction

To gain a better understand of the economic-punishment nexus discussed in the previous chapter, this chapter addresses the mass media industry. Americans are bombarded on a daily basis by the mass media industry in the form of television, film, magazines, newspapers, books, radio, and, most recently, the Internet. While some may argue that it is a choice to be exposed to these various forms of media influence, it has become nearly impossible to isolate oneself from its reach. The mass media industry and its byproducts are significant because the messages it translates reach a large number of individuals. This chapter discusses various models of how the public learns about crime and justice, the recent historical changes in the mass media industry, the mass media oligopoly in the United States, the motion picture industry as a subsidiary of this industry, and the significance of this media exposure from a social constructionist perspective.

Learning about Crime and Justice

Current research has found that the media has the greatest influence on the public's perception of crime and justice today (Muraskin and Domash, 2007; Surette, 1984). As Surette (1985) points out:

Perhaps the most important effect of the media lies in providing a prime information base for the public concerning justice issues. A relatively small percentage of people deal directly with the justice system, and therefore the general public's knowledge of justice is drawn significantly from the media. The portrayal of crime and justice in the media has been forwarded as also influencing the public agenda for justice by sensitizing the public to particular issues. (p. 5)

Further, the media are responsible for the production and reproduction of cultural images of crime and justice and the construction of the social reality of crime that affects perceptions of crime and justice (Garofalo, 1981; Muraskin and Domash, 2007; Surette, 1992). Many criminologists have studied the impact of the portrayal of crime in the media on the public (Barak, 1994; Potter and Kappeler, 1998; Sacco and Trotman, 1990). Criminologists have found that the depiction of crime, criminality, and the seriousness of crime do not correspond to actual crime statistics (Muraskin and Domash, 2007).

Various types of media serve as sources of information about crime and justice. Film and television are important types of media because they are sources of entertainment and utilize audiovisual technology that overcomes the obstacle of literacy that other forms of media have to contend with. In addition, with the advent of videotape technology, film is as readily accessible to home audiences as television. This means that individuals can watch these films and television programs at their leisure in the comfort of their own houses, making the messages that are transmitted through television and film accessible to a large number of people across the world. In an article referring to the

social impact of television Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, and Signorelli (2002) state: “[T]elevison has become the primary common source of socialization and everyday information (usually cloaked in the form of entertainment) of otherwise heterogeneous populations)” (p. 44). One could argue that film could also be included with television, especially with the growth of the video industry, which has made movies into home entertainment fare on quickly released DVDs and over the Internet.

Several theories have been posited about the process through which the public learns about crime and justice issues. Social learning theory states that individuals learn through the process of observation (Bandura, 1977). Individuals frame conceptual ideas regarding behavior and ultimately translate these conceptual models into actual behavior. Social learning is a complex process through which behavior is based on the modeling of symbolic verbal cues and observational inputs (Bandura, 1969). These observationally learned inputs can be behavior learned from parents, teachers, or representational symbolic events. Significantly, Bandura (1969) refers to representational symbolic events that can be “[M]odels presented mainly through television and films” (p. 215).

Gerbner posits cultivation theory to explain the learning process that takes place through the media. While Gerbner conducted his research with the medium of television, researchers have pointed to his theory in reference to the study of film (Dempsey and Reichert, 2001). Gerbner studied the extent to which television viewing contributed to viewers’ beliefs about gender, minority, and age-role stereotypes; health; science; the family; educational achievement and aspirations; politics; religion; the environment; and

other topics (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, M., and Signorelli, 2001). He also examines the way that television viewing contributes to viewers' behaviors. Cultivation theory is based on the notion that television cultivates, or contributes, to attitudes and beliefs of audiences over time. Those who spend more time watching television are more likely to see the world in relation to the constructed images, depictions, values, mores, and ideologies that are presented on television than those who do not spend a lot of time watching television. Regardless of specific theoretical beliefs about how the media impacts perception and behavior, we know that the media does influence the public's perception of crime in the United States. The media's production and reproduction of the social reality of crime is potentially hazardous if it often distorts that reality into a fiction.

The mass media influence on the social reality of crime was noted by Quinney (2001) in his infamous work, *The Social Reality of Crime*. In this work he highlights that "among the most important agents in the diffusion of criminal conceptions are the media of mass communication" (Quinney, 2001, p. 281). Quinney places emphasis on the mass media preoccupation with the topic of crime and notes that conceptions of crime by the public are created, to a certain extent, by the images presented by the mass media. The mass media is selective in the presentation of images of crime to the public, choosing to present the most sensational aspects of crime (Quinney, 2001). He contends that "coverage of crime in the mass media, therefore, is not only selective but is a distortion of the everyday world of crime" (Quinney, 2001, p. 284).

It is almost impossible to isolate oneself from the reach of the mass media and the information it relays. The mass media industry and its byproducts are significant because the messages that get translated through it reach a large number of individuals. Recently there have been some significant historical changes to the mass media industry that have repercussions in regard to who controls the production and reproduction of crime and justice information.

Historical Changes in the Mass Media Industry

Over the past two decades, we have seen a dramatic and telling change in the mass media industry. The number and variety of media choices available to most Americans has changed significantly (Sterling, 2000). In the late 1970s there were only a few television stations from which to choose, and only 20% of the American public had access to paid cable systems comprised of only a dozen more stations (Sterling, 2000). Three national television networks—ABC, NBC, and CBS—dominated prime-time viewing, attracting 90% of the audience. Today, television networks have to compete not only with a variety of cable television stations but also with the Internet for their audience. During the 1970s, Americans typically could choose from between 10 to 15 radio stations. They could also see a movie at a downtown or suburban movie theater. Americans would often read one daily newspaper, although some larger towns and cities had two daily papers, and they could choose from an assortment of magazines that they could buy at a local newsstand or bookstore. Today, the number of daily newspapers continues to decline while television, radio stations, and magazine outlets continue to

expand (Sterling, 2000). These media industries have changed in terms of production, but what is more significant is that two decades ago one could speak of these media industries as separate entities. Now, however, we are seeing these industries merging both technologically and economically (Sterling, 2000). Since the 1980s the mass media has become subject to an emerging phenomenon—the global commercial system that is dominated by a small number of extremely powerful corporations based in the United States (McChesney, 1997).

The Mass Media Oligopoly in the United States

For-profit corporations control almost all of the mass media in the United States. As an aspect of large-scale mergers, fewer and fewer corporations own the majority of the mass communications in the country. Furthermore, these controlling corporations have reached into the international market. According to McChesney (1997), changes in the political and economic landscape, such as pressures from the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, and the U.S. government to deregulate and privatize the mass media, have helped fuel the rise of the few global media giants.

As of 2006, eight media conglomerates control the majority of the mass media industry in the United States. Listed in ascending order by 2005 revenues, these corporations are: General Electric (\$157.2 billion), Time Warner (\$43.7 billion), Walt Disney (\$31.9 billion), Vivendi Universal (\$25.1 billion), News Corporation (\$23.9 billion), Bertelsmann (\$22.2 billion), CBS (\$14.5 billion), and Viacom (\$9.8 billion) (Freepress, 2006). To place these figures in another context, General Electric was the

world's 11th largest revenue-producing company in 2006, according to *Fortune* magazine. The remaining media corporations that were in the top 500 largest corporations in the world in 2006 in terms of revenue include: Time Warner (122nd); Walt Disney (180th); Vivendi (239th); News Corporation (256th); Bertelsmann (287th); and CBS (468th). The only media conglomerate not in the top 500 highest revenue producing companies in the world in 2006 was Viacom.

General Electric has holdings in television, publishing, online communications, military production, theme parks, and consumer products as well as various other areas such as the insurance and the finance industry. General Electric controls a significant portion of the television viewing audience. It owns the NBC Universal Television Stations Division, which is made up of 10 NBC television stations in the U.S. market as well as 15 Telemundo stations and one independent Spanish speaking station that accounts for thirty percent of the nation's television viewing household (NBC Universal, 2006). In addition to NBC television, General Electric owns several cable channels such as Bravo, and Sci-Fi. It is also heavily invested in the production and distribution end of the television industry. It produces shows such as *Meet the Press* and *The Today Show*. General Electric also has significant holdings within the film industry. On the production side of the industry, it owns 80% of NBC Universal as well as 100% of the holdings in Universal Pictures, Focus Features, and Rogue Pictures. General Electric also has a significant financial investment in the following companies because NBC Universal has production agreements with Imagine Entertainment, Jersey Films, Tribeca Films, Shady

Acres, The Kennedy/Marshall Company, Playtone Company, Strike Entertainment, Type A Films, Depth of Field, Stephen Sommers, and Working Title Films (Europe) (Freepress, 2006).

Second on the list of the top corporate media giants is Time Warner. While General Electric made twice as much in revenues in 2005, Time Warner is the largest multinational media corporation based on the size of its holdings. They have holdings in television, the Internet, film, publishing, sports, business marketing, and the video gaming industry (Freepress, 2006). The most significant part of Time Warner's holding is its television interests. In addition to owning the new CW network (formally the WB network) with CBS television, Time Warner owns: Kids' WB, Telepictures Productions; Home Box Office, Inc. (HBO, Cinemax, HBO Sports, HBO Pay-Per-View, HBO Video, HBO Independent Productions, HBO Multiplexes, HBO on Demand, Cinemax Multiplexes, Cinemax on Demand, HBO HD, Cinemax HD, as well as HBO channels around the world); Court TV (50% Time Warner, 50% Liberty Media); TBS; Boomerang; Cartoon Network; Cartoon Network Europe; Cartoon Network Latin America; Cartoon Network Studios; Cartoon Network Asia Pacific; Cartoon Network Japan (Turner owns a 70% share in Japan Entertainment Network K.K., the company that runs Cartoon Network Japan); NBC/Turner; Williams St. Studio, New Line Television, Turner Classic Movies, TCM Europe, TCM Asia Pacific, TCM ; Classic Hollywood in Latin America; Turner Network Television; Turner South; TNT; TNT HD; TNT Latin America; TNT CNN / US; CNN Airport Network; CNN International; CNN Headline

News; CNN.com; CNNStudentNews.com; CNN Headline News in Asia Pacific; CNN Headline News in Latin America; CNN en Español; CNN en Español Radio; CNNj; CNN+; CNN Turk; CNN-IBN; CNNRadio; CNNfn; CNN International; CNN Mobile; CNN Newsource; CNN Pipeline; CNNMoney.com; CNN to go; CETV (China); n-tv (a German news network of which Turner owns interest); and BOING, a family channel in Italy that is a joint venture with Mediaset. (Freepress, 2006, p1).

It also owns several cable television stations and television programming and on-demand services. Even though Time Warner has significant fiscal interests in the television industry, it is probably most recognized for what has been deemed the merger of the century—the 2001 unification of Time Warner and America Online (AOL).

The Walt Disney Corporation reported earnings of \$31.9 billion in 2005 (Freepress, 2006). Known for its movie production studios and theme parks, the Walt Disney Corporation also has significant holdings in the television industry. It owns 10 television stations, including the ABC Television Network; several cable channels, including ESPN; The Disney Channel; and Lifetime (Freepress, 2006). In addition, it owns 72 radio stations and music and book publishing companies. The Walt Disney Corporation makes a good deal of their profits from consumer products such as toys and games. In recent years it has have even expanded its interests into resorts and a cruise line (Freepress, 2006).

Fourth on the list is Vivendi Universal, which has significant investments in the music industry in the United States. It owns 50 U.S. and international music record

labels, including Geffen Records, Universal Records, and Def Jam Recordings (Freepress, 2006). In addition, Vivendi owns cable television stations in Europe. It also has holdings in telecommunications operations in France and Morocco (Freepress, 2006). Vivendi owns Vivendi Universal Games, including Blizzard Entertainment, Sierra Entertainment, Radical Entertainment, Massive Entertainment, and Swordfish Studios as well as 20% of NBC Universal (Freepress, 2006).

In 2005, News Corporation's reported annual revenue was \$23.9 billion. News Corporation owns Fox Broadcasting and is the partial owner of 25 television networks and 37 American television stations in 28 markets. It also has partial ownership in satellite TV in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and the US. \Also, it produces news entertainment broadcasting programs such as *Special Report with Brit Hume*, *The O'Reilly Factor*, and *Hannity and Colmes* (Freepress, 2006). Its print publications include 13 magazines, including *TVGuide*, and newspapers in several markets. It controls 110 newspapers in Australia and Asia, nine in the United Kingdom, and two in the United States—*The New York Post* and *Nursery World* (Freepress, 2006). News Corporation owns three book-publishing companies: HarperCollins Publishers, ReganBooks, and Zondervan (Freepress, 2006). However, it is perhaps most widely known for its ownership of film distribution and production companies that include 20th Century Fox, Fox Searchlight Pictures, and Blue Sky Studios. It also own radio stations and, notably, online holdings including Fox Interactive Media, a newly formed division of News Corporation (Freepress, 2006).

Another of the largest media conglomerates is Bertelsmann, which possesses major holdings in both Europe and North America. These holdings include the book publisher Random House, which itself owns more than 100 imprints. Bertelsmann also possesses investments in radio and cable television. It has several international film production companies in other countries, including Germany, France, the Netherlands, the UK, Belgium, Luxembourg, Croatia, Spain, Hungary, North America, Latin America, Australia and Italy. Most notably, it produces music under the label Sony BMG Music Entertainment (Freepress, 2006)

Probably best known for its television holdings, CBS is also on the list of the eight largest global media giants. However, the CBS National network is only one of 41 television stations that the CBS conglomerate owns. In addition, CBS owns book publisher Simon and Schuster as well as Infinity Radio. CBS has some online holdings and owns theme parks such as Paramount's King's Dominion (Freepress, 2006).

Rounding out the big eight media conglomerates is Viacom. In 2005 it reported \$9.8 billion in revenue (Freepress, 2006). Viacom has holdings that include MTV, Nickelodeon, VH1, BET, Comedy Central, Paramount Pictures, Paramount Home Entertainment, and the publishing company Famous Music (Freepress, 2006). Viacom owns three radio stations, three music production companies, one magazine, and several online interests (Freepress, 2006).

Although these eight large media conglomerates are separate entities, they are remarkably similar. Currently they control the majority of the mass media in the United

States, and they are reaching into international domains. The United States has not always been a country dominated by the corporatization of the mass media. Expansion of most mass media by corporate domination is the result of an important change in the relationship between the government and the media. Recently, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulations have been relaxed or in some instances eliminated (Sterling, 2000). One of the areas of the media to be effected by these recent historical changes is the motion picture industry.

The Motion Picture Industry

The motion picture industry is no longer a media entity unto itself. As previously discussed, the movie industry, like other types of mass media including newspapers, magazines, radio and the Internet, is controlled by major corporations that have holdings in other media interests. There are six film distribution companies that account for almost 70% of all box office revenues in the United States. Listed in ascending order of revenue for 2005, they are: Time Warner Inc. (\$1377 million); Fox Entertainment Group Inc., which is primarily owned by News Corp. (\$1354 million); NBC Universal, which is primarily owned by GE (\$1010 million); Walt Disney Co. (\$922 million); Sony Pictures Entertainment (\$918 million) and Viacom Inc. (\$832 million) (Standard and Poor's, 2006).

Several mergers within the motion picture industry took place in 2006. According to the latest industry survey by Standard and Poor's (2006), Disney acquired Pixar for \$7.4 billion in stock; and Paramount Pictures, a division of Viacom, bought DreamWorks

SKG. The buyout of DreamWorks SKG was valued at more than \$1.61 billion (Standard and Poor's, 2006). At the same time, other companies slipped into smaller entities. Standard and Poor's report speculates that this is perhaps due to concern about antitrust regulations or pressure from investors (Standard and Poor's, 2006). Viacom, for example, separated into two companies: Viacom and CBS Corporation. The new Viacom Company consists of the Paramount movie business, Republic Pictures, DreamWorks, and Paramount Home Entertainment Operations, BET Networks, and MTV networks (Standard and Poor's, 2006).

The motion picture industry is in the midst of a change as a result of recent technological advances. In recent years, consumer spending on home videos has exceeded movie theater ticket sales. Therefore, if a company wants to compete in today's market, it must be willing to release its movies onto home video. In fact, some movie distribution companies, such as Disney, never release some titles in the theater, opting instead to release these features directly to video. To enhance profits to their fullest, Hollywood studios release films in a specific order. In this way, the studios can garner as much money as possible from each window before that it closes and they move onto the next. The movie is released in this order: theater, home video, pay-per-view, pay cable, broadcast, and basic cable (Compaine and Gomery, 2000).

Social Constructionist Perspective

It is important to understand the context in which media images are produced. In order to examine this context further, researchers have begun to examine the ownership

of media organizations from a social constructionist perspective (Gamson, Croteau, Hoynes, and Sasson, 1992). This perspective contends that media-generated images are used to create meaning about political and social issues (Gamson et al., 1992). The lens through which images are focused are not impartial but are influenced by the political agenda set forth by the privileged few who construct these images. Gamson et al. (1992) state that the genius of this system is to make the process seem fluid so as to not raise suspicion and to suggest that “that the very art of social construction is invisible” (p. 374).

The oligopolistic structure of the media industry means only eight very wealthy and powerful corporations are controlling the majority of American media construction. Control of the motion picture industry is even smaller, as only six film-distribution companies account for the majority all box office revenue in the United States (Standard and Poor's, 2006). Bagdikian (2004), a leading researcher in the field of media studies, compares the few media corporations to the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in that while each corporation is technically competing with each other, they all share a common cause, as OPEC does in its interest in oil. The lack of diversification results in highly duplicative manufactured media content (Bagdikian, 2004). These repetitive media images account for a lack of representation of multiple viewpoints. Sharing ideology and values results in the homogenization of imagery that seamlessly replicates corporate power interests (Gamson et al., 1992). While the media industry is not the only oligopolistic industry, it is unique because it is in the business of

manufacturing images that affect the social and political world (Bagdikian, 2004). In effect, “media power is political power” (Bagdikian, 2004, p. 25). The concern is that a few corporations own the majority of the media and are determining what is socially and politically acceptable for the majority of American consumers (Bagdikian, 2004; Gamson et al., 1992; Welch, 2003).

How then does this process apply to crime and punishment? The media is the platform on which Americans learn about social and political issues. Several scholars have examined the mechanism by which crime, the criminal justice system, and most relevant to the current study—punishment, are chosen among other relevant topics of interest by the media (Kappeler, Blumberg, and Potter, 2000; Merlo and Benekos, 2000; Welch, 2004; Welch, Fenwick, and Roberts, 1998). Scholars have outlined a three-step process: (1) Crime is chosen from among various issues and elevated in status, (2) Once selected, the crime issue is narrowed in scope to street crime, and (3) The solution to the crime problem is seen as one that can be addressed by investing more money into the criminal justice system (Kappeler, Blumberg, and Potter, 2000; Merlo and Benekos, 2000; Welch, 2003; Welch, 2004). According to Welch (2003): “[U]nderscoring the role of the media and politics in producing popular images of crime, news organizations and governmental leaders together determine what is socially thinkable about crime” (p. 229). This argument can be extended to encompass not just news media but also the entertainment industry. In this way, the media in all of its forms serves a particular

function--to generate propaganda for the state's ideological machinery (Herman and Chomsky, 2002). According to Herman and Chomsky (2002):

[T]he mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interests, to fulfill this role requires systematic propaganda. (p. 1)

Other scholars have added to this discourse on the media and crime. In 1988, Barak's landmark theoretical article in *Justice Quarterly* introduced the concept and practice of news-making criminology (Barak, 1988). *Newsmaking criminology* refers to the process through which criminologists use mass communication to interpret, inform and alter images of crime, criminals, and victims (Barak, 2001). Barak (1988) defined news-making criminology as:

attempts to demystify images of crime and punishment by locating the mass media portrayals of incidents of "serious" crimes in the context of all illegal and harmful activities; strives to affect public attitudes, thoughts, and discourses about crime and justice so as to facilitate a public policy of "crime control" based on structural and historical analyses of institutional development; allows criminologists to come forth with their knowledge and to establish themselves as credible voices in the mass-mediated arena of policy formation; and asks of

criminologists that they develop popularly based languages and technically based skills of communication for the purposes of participating the mass-consumed ideology of crime and justice. (p. 566)

Barak's news-making criminology primarily focuses on such mass communications such as newspapers, magazines, and television. His work serves as a call to arms as he advises criminologists to redefine and realign the focus that is perpetuated in the media (for a more lengthy discussion of news-making criminology see Fox and Levin, 1993 and Barak, 1994). One way that criminologists can counter the perpetuation of the media bias is to alert the public to the realities of crime and the processes that take place within the criminal justice system. However, first researchers must be able to speak to the biases that are being perpetuated by the media to the public. To do this, academics must evaluate the media's perspective on crime and punishment and assess whether or not it reflects reality.

This study, a content analysis of 11 feature films on male prisons produced between 1979 and 2001, will add to the social constructionist literature on the media and punishment. This study examines the frequency and context of four constructs of penal culture: drug use, sexual coercion, violence, and gang affiliation. It also analyzes whether or not the representations of these issues in recent motion picture films are consistent with the extant correctional literature and official data.

Conclusion

It has become nearly impossible to isolate oneself from the overreaching influence of the mass media industry. Television, film, magazines, newspapers, books, radio, and, most recently, the Internet surround Americans. Research has shown that the public relies upon the mass media for information. The media are responsible for the production and reproduction of cultural images of crime and justice and the construction of the social reality of crime that effects perceptions of crime and justice. The depictions of crime, criminality, and the seriousness of crime are not true to actual crime statistics.

Researchers have started to study the owners of the mass media in the United States because these corporations are responsible for the construction of the social reality of crime. In recent years, the mass media industry has become an oligopoly. Eight large conglomerates own the majority of all media influence in the US. In addition, only six corporations are responsible for the ownership of the majority of the motion picture industry. This shift in media ownership likely has a major influence on the information that is being relayed to the public. Unless the American public seeks alternative media outlets, it is left without much choice but to accept the information that is presented to it by the mainstream media.

As the media is the stage on which Americans learn about social and political issues, the way crime and punishment are presented by the media is extremely important. The media, including the motion picture industry, serves to reproduce the dominant ideology set forth by its corporate owners. In this way, the mass media industry and a few

corporate conglomerates decide what is socially acceptable about crime and, more important, punishment in the United States.

The notion that punishment and incarceration are pervasive issues in the United States today has been addressed in previous chapters. Chapter 3 will present the extant correctional research literature concerning punishment in the United States. Specifically, four substantive features of penal culture will be examined. These particular aspects of prison life will be discussed because they represent aspects of the daily living conditions that all inmates experience as a result of being incarcerated. The four areas that are discussed are drug use and trafficking, rape and sexual assault, violence, and gang affiliation in adult male prisons in the United States.

Chapter Three: Measures of Penal Culture

Introduction

The microlevel operations of the correctional institution are the daily life of the inmate as represented by the inmate subculture and penal culture in general. As a consequence of their incarceration, inmates live their lives very differently from free citizens. Goffman (1961) described this closed, single-sex, physically separate environment as a *total institution*. All inhabitants of a total institution have each and every one of their decisions made for them, and, because of their confinement, they share all of their daily life with other inmates who are housed within the institution. One unique aspect of this inmate subculture is that all prison inmates experience similar aspects of penal culture. Because of the exponential growth in the number of individuals incarcerated today, the inmate subculture, or penal culture, has become a part of life for a significant portion of Americans today, and there is no indication that this incarceration trend is slowing.

The inmate culture is characterized by the language, norms, values, and mores and a common hierarchical structure that is present in prison institutions. The culture of the inmate is characterized by a set of social interactions and communications that are

distinctive. In fact, “prisons have a ‘unique culture’ that is not found in any other institution in our society” (Wilson and O’Sullivan, 2004, p. 13). In 1970, Irwin noted that inmates adhere to a strict convict code of conduct that is part of the norms of the inmate culture. According to Terry (2003), a convict-turned-criminologist, the longer individuals spend in prison, the more likely it is that they will become part of the inmate culture and call themselves a convict.

The inmate culture is also characterized by the everyday living conditions that inmates experience. Research has shown that while specific living conditions can vary across institutions, there are several salient issues that all inmates are concerned with regardless of the institution in which they are housed. Poor health conditions, poor food, violence, and sexual assault have all been identified as significant issues for today’s inmate (Ross, 2008). The current study focuses on health conditions—specifically drug use and drug trafficking—and rape and sexual assault, violence, and gang affiliation as various dimensions of penal culture. A review of the current literature of these four aspects of these living conditions and penal cultural indicators follows.

Drug Use Behind Bars

There is a consensus among criminal justice practitioners and researchers that drug trafficking and drug use are widespread in correctional institutions throughout the United States (CASA, 2002; Inciardi, Lockwood, and Quinlan, 1993; Mumola, 1999; Simpler and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2005). Surveys suggest that somewhere between 50% and 75% of prisoners have used drugs while incarcerated (Simpler and

Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2005). Previous literature notes that ex-prisoners reported using a variety of drugs while in prison. In order of frequency they are: cannabis, valium, amphetamines, LSD, ecstasy, cocaine, and heroin (Simpler and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2005). According to The U.S. Department of Justice National Drug Intelligence Center (2007), prison gangs are responsible for the majority of drug trafficking within prisons. In addition, the control of the drug trade is often related to prison violence. The academic research in this area often speaks of inmate drug use as it relates to institutional prison violence (Bowker, 1980; Hawkins and Alpert, 1989). Inciardi, Lockwood, and Quinlan (1993) conducted a comprehensive study of Delaware inmates in 1992. They found that all of their respondents agreed that drugs were readily available in prison with marijuana, cocaine, and alcohol being the most prevalent. Similar results were reported in a national study (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1991). LSD, PCP, methamphetamines, the intravenous use of cocaine, and crack cocaine use were also reported, though respondents said they used these drugs in smaller amounts than the other drugs (Inciardi et al., 1993). While no official estimates of the percentage of inmates involved in drug trafficking exist, a 2003 report by the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Justice found illegal drugs in almost all 102 federal prison facilities. The majority of drugs were brought into the prison institution by visitors and staff and through the mail. The trafficking of drugs was done between inmates and between correction officers and inmates. According to Inciardi et al. (1993), the price of prison drugs is inflated compared to the going rate on the street. The

cost in prison for drugs is three to five times the cost of a comparable quantity of goods on the street (Inciardi et al., 1993).

Inmates use drugs in their cells, in the yard, or while on work detail. However, they usually conceal their drugs on their person (Inciardi et al., 1993). This is done because, according to the inmates, cells are searched more thoroughly and frequently than inmate body searches, which are rare.

Official information concerning the prevalence of drug use in prison institutions presents a somewhat complex picture. Unfortunately from a research perspective, there is no uniform procedure by which prison institutions conduct drugs screenings of inmates. Vigdal and Stadler (1989) report that in a random sample of 4,800 inmates in Wisconsin in 1984, 26.9% tested positive for drug use. Again, marijuana proved to be the most prevalent drug found. However, cocaine, opiates, amphetamines, barbiturates, and benzodiazepines were also detected (Vigdal and Stadler, 1989). Other researchers have found “official” urine screening rates ranging from 0% to 8% (Inciardi et al., 1993). According to the latest available Bureau of Justice Statistics report (1991) on state prison facilities, 3.6% of the tests for cocaine, 1.3% for heroin, 2.0% for methamphetamines, and 6.3% for marijuana were positive. In federal prisons, 0.4% of the tests for cocaine, 0.4% for heroin, 0.1% for methamphetamines, and 1.1% for marijuana were positive (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1991).

While all federal prison facilities conduct drug testing, not all state facilities do so (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1991). In 1991, the Bureau of Justice Statistics (1991)

reported that 83% of all state facilities conducted drug tests of inmates. Some prison institutions only conduct testing when drug use is suspected, and some test only once during confinement (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1991). Therefore, it is not surprising that the inmates in Inciardi et al.'s (1993) study reported considerably more drug use than the officially reported number of "official" positive drugs tests. It becomes common knowledge when an official drug test is going to take place and, in some institutions, since the corrections officers are part of the drug trade, they are likely to inform the inmates when the drug screening is going to happen (Inciardi et al., 1993).

Regardless of state or federal reporting procedures, criminologists and substance abuse researchers consistently indicate that inmates experience a high level of substance use and dependence (CASA, 2002; Inciardi, Lockwood and Quinlan, 1993; Mumola, 1999; Rounds-Bryant and Baker, 2007; Simpler and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2005). In a 2007 study, Rounds-Bryant and Baker found 72% of their sample of 752 inmates met the criteria for a high probability of substance dependence. Findings such as these indicate that while a high percentage of inmates are utilizing drugs behind bars—some to the point of dependency—this presents a potential custodial issue for administrators. Most certainly the presence of drugs in prison presents issues for the inmate as a component of penal culture with which the inmate will inevitably come into contact. Another component of prison life that inmates must contend with is the lack of heterosexual contact, which lack some believe can lead to rape behind bars.

Rape Prevalence Rates

Sex behind bars has always been a taboo topic, and the dearth of research literature in this area is reflective of this fact. Not only have there been very few research studies that have examined coercive sexual behavior in male prisons, but the few studies that have been conducted have reported great discrepancies in prevalence rates. Unfortunately, what remains clear after decades of research on this topic is that there is little consensus about exactly how many inmates experience coercive sexual contact. Researchers report rates of rape affecting anywhere between 0.3% and 22% of the male inmate population (Davis, 1982; Hensley, Koscheski, and Tewksbury, 2005; Hensley, Tewksbury, and Castle, 2003; Hensley, 2000; Lockwood, 1980; Nacci and Kane, 1983; Saum, Surratt, Inciardi, and Bennett, 1995; Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson, 2000; Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson, Rucker, Bumby, and Donaldson, 1996; Wooden and Parker, 1982). Some criminologists have concluded that homosexual rape in prison is rampant and epidemic (Davis, 1982; Gilligan; 2000; Weiss and Friar, 1974).

The most comprehensive recent study of this issue was conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006). In 2003 the President signed the Prison Rape Elimination Act (P.L. 108-79). As part of this legislature, the Bureau of Justice Statistics was required to develop and implement data collection procedures aimed at the gathering of information concerning the incidence and prevalence of sexual violence in correctional facilities (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006). The Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, *Sexual Violence Reported by Correctional Authorities*

2005, found that allegations of sexual violence were 0.28% in 2005 up from 0.25% in 2004. Of these allegations of sexual violence, only 0.04% was substantiated (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006). The rates reported by the Bureau are substantially lower than those reported by other researchers, even those at the low end of the continuum (Davis, 1982; Hensley, 2000; Lockwood, 1980; Nacci and Kane, 1983; Saum, Surratt, Inciardi and Bennett, 1995; Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson, 2000; Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson, Rucker, Bumby and Donaldson, 1996; Wooden and Parker, 1982).

The claim that rape in prisons is epidemic is not substantiated by the empirical findings. Unfortunately due to the sensitive subject matter, gaining accurate data is difficult. One major problem in conducting this type of research is definitional. Depending upon the research study, the operationalization of sexual aggression, sexual assault, and rape can vary over time and jurisdiction (O'Donnell, 2004; Saum, Surratt, Inciardi and Bennett, 1995). Variations in definitions make it extremely difficult to draw comparisons between research studies.

Most of the research on this topic has been conducted using victimization surveys (Eigenberg and Baro, 2003). There have been two approaches to sampling this population: (1) Researchers draw from a pool of inmates who have been identified by prison officials as victims (Wooden and Parker, 1982), or (2) Researchers choose a random sampling of inmates (Davis, 1968; Hensley, 2000; Nacci and Kane 1983). There are problems with both sampling designs. All research in this area is difficult as sexual

assault victims are highly likely to underreport rape in general. Sexual assault reported to correctional officers is underreported due to fear of revenge or being labeled a snitch or a homosexual (Alarid, 2000; Saum, Surratt, Inciardi, and Bennett, 1995; Struckman-Johnson, and Struckman-Johnson, 2000). Researchers have tried to combat this problem by conducting anonymous surveys or interviews, which allow for more complete disclosure. In these cases, inmates report higher rates of assault than those reported in studies that rely on official institutional data (Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson, 2000; Struckman-Johnson, Rucker, Bumby, and Donaldson, 1996; Wooden and Parker, 1982). Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (2000) found 7% of their sample of 1,788 inmates in seven midwestern prison facilities had been raped. Struckman-Johnson et.al. (1996) conducted an anonymous survey and found that 12% of 486 men in the Nebraska state prison system in 1994 had been raped. Hensley, Koscheski and Tewksbury (2005) found that 8.5% of the inmates in a southern maximum security prison had been the victim of an inmate sexual assault. However, caution should be used in interpreting these results as they are based on an 18% response rate (Hensley, Koscheski, and Tewksbury, 2005). On the high end of the continuum, Wooden and Parker (1982) conducted an anonymous survey in a California prison and found 14% of their sample had been raped while incarcerated. Given the host of methodological issues with this research, there is no clear-cut answer as to exactly how many inmates experience unwanted sexual contact behind bars. According to Saum, Surratt, Inciardi, and Bennett (1995), the difficulties in discerning the prevalence rate of male rape behind

bars is due to methodological issues, definitions of assault, and the types of facilities studied.

Predictors of Rape

Some research has suggested that certain demographic variables predict one's likelihood of victimization behind bars. Being white, physically small, homosexual, or possessing effeminate qualities have all been found to increase one's likelihood of victimization (Dumond, 2000; Dumond, 2003; Lockwood, 1980; Hensley, Koscheski, and Tewksbury, 2005; Human Rights Watch, 2001; Nacci and Kane, 1983; Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson, 2000; Weiss and Friar, 1974; Wooden and Parker, 1982). Some criminologists have also identified the following factors that increase the likelihood of victimization: (1) mental illness and/or development disabilities; (2) a middle-class background and a lack of street wisdom; (3) a lack of gang affiliation; (4) conviction for sexual crimes; (5) being a snitch and violating the inmate code of silence; (6) being disliked by staff and/or other inmates; and (7) having a previous history of sexual assault (Dumond, 2000; Dumond, 2003; Human Rights Watch, 2001). Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (2000) also found that barrack-type housing, inadequate security, a large prison population, and a high proportion of violent offenders in the facility were all contributing factors.

One theme that has clearly emerged from the literature is the racially biased nature of sexual victimization behind bars. Interestingly, the majority of victims of rape behind bars are white (Davis, 1970; Knowles, 1999; Lockwood, 1980; Human Rights

Watch, 2001). Lockwood (1980) found that 83% of the victims in his study were white while 80% of the perpetrators were black. Human Rights Watch (2001) has stated that not much has changed in recent decades, indicating that white inmates are disproportionately targeted for abuse and that black-on-white abuse is the most common form (Human Rights Watch, 2001). Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson (2000) found similar results: 60% of the victims in their sample were white, and 74% of the perpetrators were black. Hensley, Koscheski, and Tewksbury (2005), in their study of male sexual assault targets in a southern maximum-security prison found 73% of the victims in their sample were white and 75% of the perpetrators were black.

However, the variable of race was called into question in a case study conducted by Chonco (1989), wherein he found

[the] chances of a weak inmate—black or white—being victimized are very high when he is young and attractive, a first offender, a first imprisonment offender, belongs to no gangster groups, or is frightened and greedy. (p. 78)

Therefore, he concluded, that it was actually the characteristics thought to be associated with weaknesses rather than race that were predictors of victimization.

While rape behind bars is not a frequent occurrence, research has shown that fear of sexual assault is a defining characteristic of the prison experience. Perhaps Smith and Batiuk (1989) said it best when they stated:

the threat of sexual violence actually dominates the prison environment and structures much of the everyday interaction that goes on among inmates. In fact,

the threat of sexual victimization becomes the dominant metaphor in terms of which almost every other aspect of “prison reality” is interpreted. (p. 30)

This body of literature contends that perception and fear of sexual assaults are more relevant than actual rates of sexual victimization (Chonco, 1989; Jones and Schmidt, 1989; Smith and Batiuk, 1989; Tewksbury, 1989). The fear of sexual assault occurs in a prison environment wherein the inmate feels powerless due to a loss of independence. When the inmate arrives in the prison facility, the inmate is faced with an immediate loss of liberty and restrictions on movement that promote a loss of autonomy. The prisoner is now subject to a large body of rules and regulations that are designed with custody in mind (Sykes, 1958; Welch, 2004). Inmates often express this loss of autonomy through the use of violence within the facility.

Violence

To be sure, violence behind bars is a significant issue, but it is not endemic, as the public seems to believe (DeLisi, 2003). Although homicides and rapes are relatively rare events, prisons are nonetheless dangerous places (DeLisi, 2003). The controlled custodial prison environment does not stop certain inmates from committing violent acts. DeLisi (2003) found the following rates of offending per 100,000 in a sample of inmates in the southwestern US: murder, 11.1; male-male rape, 14.8; aggravated assault, 537.1; arson, 107.4; and theft, 1,155.6. In the general population, the rates for similar offenses are: murder, 5.7 (48.7% less); aggravated assault, 287.5 (46.5% less); arson, 26.8 (75.1% less); and theft, 2,206.8 (91% higher) (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2007).

Arguably the most severe of all violent offenses in prison is homicide. However, despite the fact that homicide occurs more often in prison than on the outside, homicide is still a relatively rare event. For example, a homicide rate of 11.1 per 100,000 means that homicides affect 0.0111 percent of the inmate population. According to the most recent Census of State and Federal Correctional Facilities, 51 homicides occurred in the year 2000 among inmates in all state and federal facilities. This number was down from a reported 82 in 1995 (Stephan and Karberg, 2003). Given the population that resides in prison, and considering that for the same years there were 1.3 million and 1 million inmates in state and federal facilities respectively, homicide is a relatively rare event in prison despite the fact that it is twice as likely to occur inside as compared to outside of the prison environment (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2007). Additional evidence also suggests that not only is homicide a rare event within prisons but also that it is on the decline in recent years. The Bureau of Justice Statistics's *Special Report on Suicide and Homicide in State Prisons and Local Jails* reported a dramatic declining trend in homicide deaths among state inmates from 54 per 100,000 inmates in 1980 to 8 per 100,000 inmates in 1990 to 4 per 100,000 inmates in 2002 (Mumola, 2005). These official figures, it should be noted, are significantly lower than those noted by DeLisi, perhaps because DeLisi's study focused on the southwest, where rates of violence and homicide tend to be higher than the national average.

DeLisi also discovered that certain serious offenses are quite common. These include rioting, aggravated and simple assault, weapons possession, drug possession and

trafficking, and threatening the correctional staff. For example, official reports found that for every 1,000 inmates in a state or federal correctional institution in 2000, 28 reported being physically assaulted by another inmate (Stephan and Karberg, 2003). Moreover, several less serious offenses occur with frequency as well, such as disobeying officers, being in unauthorized areas, refusing to work, stealing and possessing contraband (Edgard and O'Donnell, 1998; DeLisi, 2003; Hewitt et al., 1984; Morris, 1995).

Predictors of Violence

Researchers have found that violence is not universal across types of correctional facilities. In a comprehensive study of 13 adult male prisons and one female prison in a single mid-Atlantic state, Wolff, Blitz, Shi, Siegel and Bachman (2007) found variances in the degree of inmate violence and weapon usage based on the size of the correctional facility. Inmate-on-inmate violence was more likely to occur in smaller facilities; however, inmates in smaller facilities experienced less staff-on-inmate violence (Wolff et al., 2007). In larger facilities, the opposite was found. Violent incidences in larger facilities were more likely to involve the use of a weapon (Wolff et al., 2007).

Several demographic correlates have been linked to violent misconduct in prison. Researchers have found that age is a significant predictive factor in violent misconduct incidences, with younger inmates disproportionately responsible for the majority of events (Delisi, 2003; Flanagan, 1980, 1983; Goetting and Howsen, 1986; Ireland, 2000; Light, 1991; Simon, 1993; Wooldredge, 1991). There is also evidence of racial and ethnic differences in prison violence. The majority of correctional literature suggests that racial

and ethnic minorities account for a disproportionate amount of prison infractions and violent misconduct (Craddock, 1996; Delisi, 2003; Flanagan, 1983; Goetting and Howsen, 1986; Harer and Steffenmeier, 1996; Poole and Regoli, 1980, 1983; Wooldrege, 1991). However, these results should be examined closely as these disparities could possibly represent biased reactions in rule enforcement or charging inmates linked to correctional officer discretion (DeLisi, 2003).

Research has found that gang or a security-threat group affiliation is linked to a greater number of violent misconduct incidences when compared to inmates who are not aligned with a gang (DeLisi, 2003). MacDonald (1999) found that inmates who were previously associated with a gang were 30% more likely to engage in acts of violent misconduct than unaffiliated inmates. The next section discusses the extant literature on gang affiliation in prisons.

Gang Affiliation

Forced confinement with other dangerous criminals leads to the deprivation of security. Due to their incarcerated state, the individual inmate maintains close contact with other inmates who often express violent and aggressive behaviors. The fear of aggressive attacks can be anxiety-provoking for the inmate (Sykes, 1958). Inmates have responded to the threat of victimization by aligning themselves with gangs either because they were a gang member prior to coming to prison or after incarceration (Pollock, 2004).

Inmate gangs have become a pervasive issue for correctional institutions (American Correctional Association, 1993; Camp and Camp, 1985; Gaes, Wallace,

Gilman, Klein-Saffran, and Suppa, 2002; Knox, 2005; Zaitzow and Houston, 1999).

Prison gangs are established criminal entities with an organized chain of command and an established code of conduct that are governed by inmates (DeLisi, Berg, and Hochstetler, 2004). Also termed a security-threat group (STG), most jurisdictions define the prison gang as a group of three or more individuals who engage in disruptive behavior that represents a security risk (Knox, 2005). The gang density level of the prison gang problem across the United States is estimated to be 16.7% (Knox, 2005). Thus, almost 17% of all prison inmates in the US are gang members, and this percentage represents, in the official definition of security-threat groups, the threshold level for a severe gang problem (Knox, 2005).

Some inmates come into prison institutions as members of gangs while others become affiliated with gangs only after incarceration (Griffin and Hepburn, 2006; Knox, 2005). In a recent study, Knox (2005) found that approximately one fourth of newly arriving male inmates in prison institutions in the US were gang members prior to incarceration, while 94.2% of the 49 correctional institutions surveyed in Knox's (2005) study acknowledged that inmates are recruited into gangs after being incarcerated when they were not affiliated with an outside gang. Knox states that one out of every 10 prison inmates first joins a gang in prison (Knox, 2005). Moreover, most of the prison gangs that exist today also exist outside the prison in the form of street gangs (Knox, 2005).

Therefore, gangs are a prevalent part of the modern prison, and 63.6% of the inmates

surveyed in Knox's (2005) study "felt that gang members have significantly affected the correctional environment" (p. 65).

Prison gangs are aligned along racial, ethnic, and geographic lines. While prison gangs vary depending upon state, there is some general consensus about the most prevalent gangs within the U.S. prison system considered as a whole. Knox (2005) identified 71 prison gangs throughout the US. The top 10 prison gangs, all of which are also street gangs, are: the Crips, Gangster Disciples, Bloods, Latin Kings, Vice Lords, Aryan Brotherhood, Folks, White Supremacists, Surenos, and Five Percenters (see Appendix A, Table A1, for a description of each gang). All of these gang are particularly violent and require a "blood-in, blood-out" ritual wherein a recruit must kill to become a member and can only leave the gang by being killed.

The handling of gangs and the issues associated with them in prison institutions is a major issue for correctional officials. Research has found that compared to non-gang members, gang members are most likely to commit serious disciplinary violations, including acts of murder, rape, assault on correctional staff members, and the use of weapons (DeLisi, 2003; Fleisher and Decker, 2001; Fong and Vogel, 1995; Gaes et al., 2002; Huff and Meyer, 1997; Knox, 2005; MacDonald, 1999; Maghan, 1999; Ralph and Marquart, 1992). For example, in a survey of prison officials from 33 states, Camp and Camp (1985) found that while gang members made up only 3% of the prison population, they accounted for more than 50% of institutional violence. Another more recent study found that 31.5% of all inmate assaults involved gang members (Knox, 2005). In

addition, 20.4% of the 49 correctional facilities surveyed by Knox reported a problem with gang member assault on staff members and more than one third of the facilities reported that gang members' threats on the staff are a problem (Knox, 2005). In the same study, Knox (2005) reports gang members accounted for 20.6% of all management problems within correctional facilities in the US and 26.3% of all inmate violence. A 1997 survey of North Carolina prison inmates found that 87% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed that gangs frequently sexually assault inmates (Stevens, 1997).

Gangs are a pivotal feature of prison life and as such they control several different facets of the daily operation of the correctional facility. Gang affiliation serves as a means of social support, a security measure, and a way to access contraband such as drugs within the facility (Griffin and Hepburn, 2006; Kalnich and Stojkovic, 1985). Drug trafficking, protection, gambling, and extortion are the most common industries that prison gangs control (Cox, 1986; Knox, 2005, Stevens, 1997). Loan sharking is also dominated by prison gangs (Knox, 2005). Recent research has shown that traditional rackets are increasingly controlled by prison gangs (Knox, 2005). For example, Knox found that 56.7% of the food trade, 45.1% of the sex trade, and 40.2% of the clothing trade was run by prison gangs. Recent estimates indicate that there are increasing numbers of gang-affiliated inmates. Therefore, it would be reasonable to expect the number of violent incidences associated with these inmates to increase as well (Griffin and Hepburn, 2006; Knox, 2005).

Conclusion

The United States has experienced an exponential growth in the number of individuals who are housed behind bars. There are now approximately 2.3 million prison and jail inmates in America (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2007). To adequately address this growth, one must assess the situation at both the macro and the micro level. The micro level operations of the penal institution as represented by the daily life of the inmate is an essential line of inquiry as it serves to enlighten the systematic understanding of the function of the correctional institution in the social structure of society. As there is no evidence that this incarceration trend is waning, this micro level analysis becomes even more appropriate and necessary as more and more individuals become inmates over time.

Through the daily life of inmates the inmate culture becomes refined and defined. Examinations of penal culture have found that there are noteworthy issues that all inmates experience as part of their shared penal culture. The current study addressed four interrelated conditions of confinement or aspects of penal culture—specifically, drug use and drug trafficking, rape and sexual assault, violence and gang affiliation. In this section, the recent correctional literature was summarized.

Drug use behind bars is a prevalent phenomenon in the modern prison (CASA, 2002; Inciardi, Lockwood and Quinlan, 1993; Mumola, 1999; Rounds-Bryant and Baker, 2007; Simpler and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2005). Recent research suggests that between 50% and 75% of all prisoners have used drugs while they have been incarcerated

(Simpler and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2005). The most frequently reported drug of choice behind bars was marijuana (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 1991; Inciardi et al., 1993; Simpler and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2005).

Another aspect of penal culture that inmates experience is rape and sexual assault. Researchers have reported that between 1% and 22% of the prison population has experienced coercive sexual assault. This wide range of rates is a product of methodological variation, variation in the definitions of sexual assault, and differences in the types of facilities studied. Despite this broad range in prevalence rates, what can be gleaned from these lines of inquiry is that fear of sexual assault dominates the everyday interactions of the inmate in the prison setting.

Prisons are relatively violent places. It has been found that younger inmates and racial and ethnic minorities have been reported as more likely to be involved in violent misconduct incidents while incarcerated (Craddock, 1996; Delisi, 2003; Flanagan, 1983; Goetting and Howsen, 1986; Harer and Steffenmeier, 1996; Poole and Regoli, 1980, 1983; Wooldrege, 1991). Most violent events behind bars are inmate-on-inmate assaults; homicides are rare events. Inmate-on-inmate violence is more likely to occur in smaller facilities, and these events are less likely to involve a weapon.

Approximately 17% of all prison inmates in the US are gang members. The recent increases in gang affiliation have greatly affected the daily life of inmates. Inmates affiliated with gangs are more likely to be involved with violent incidents behind bars compared to unaffiliated inmates. Most of the top 10 prison gangs that exist today also

exist outside the prison in the form of street gangs (Knox, 2005). These gangs contribute significantly to penal culture because they control drug trafficking, protection, gambling, extortion, loan sharking, the food trade, the sex trade and the clothing trade behind bars.

Chapter Four will present information pertaining to the presentation of everyday life of inmates by the entertainment industry by examining the extant literature on the presentation of prisons on film.

Chapter Four: The Constructed View: Prison Films

Introduction

There is a dearth of academic literature that has explored prison films. However, what little research that has been done provides a foundation for the current study (Cheatwood, 1998; Crowther, 1989; Brown, 2003; Eigenberg and Baro, 2003; Gonthier, 2006; Leitch, 2002; Mason, 1998a, 1998b, 2003; Nellis 1982, 1988; O’Sullivan 2001; Rafter 2006; Wilson 1993, 2003; Wilson and O’Sullivan, 2004). In general, the extant literature explores the definition of a prison film, which is commonly accepted as a film that is “wholly or mainly set in a prison or takes imprisonment and its consequences as a primary theme” (Bennet, 2006, p. 98). Chapter Four will discuss the largest and most inclusive prison film study conducted by Rafter (2006), explore the issue of authenticity in prison films, and discuss the current research study.

Rafter’s Shots in the Mirror

The largest and most comprehensive study of prison films is presented in the book, *Shots in the Mirror: Crime Films and Society* by Nicole Rafter (2006). In this book Rafter (2006), discusses 61 prison and execution films as part of a larger exploration of 458 crime films. Rafter utilizes the Internet Movie Database (IMBD) to calculate the total

number of crime films that were cataloged by this database. She eliminated some categories of films from her final analysis, including courtroom films that focus on civil cases, historical films, westerns, war movies, science fiction, and made-for-television films. After eliminating these broad genres, she developed four criteria to choose the final sample. Each film was chosen based on: (1) its critical reputation and audience appeal, (2) the degree of significance it placed on the relationship between crime and society, (3) the significance of the film's place in history, and (4) its providing "useful points of entry for discussing crime films' implications for the politics of everyday life, particularly for constructions of human value on the basis of gender, ethnicity, race and sexuality" (Rafter, 2006, p. 8).

Rafter argues that one of the primary attractions of prison films to viewing audiences is that they offer viewers a way to escape the miseries of daily life (Rafter, 2006). Compared to the drudgeries of everyday life, prison life and the hardships inmates face seems substantially worse. Thus, rather than the sheer "entertainment value" other film genres sometimes offer, prison films impact viewers' feelings of self worth.

Rafter claims that all prison films can be examined in terms of stock characters, plots and themes. The stock characters portrayed in the prison film include convict buddies, a paternalistic warden, a cruel assistant warden or guard, a craven snitch, a bloodthirsty convict, and the young hero, who is either absolutely innocent or at most guilty of a minor offense that does not warrant prison. (Rafter, 2006, p. 164)

The goal of the prison film is to enable the viewer to identify with the lead character. While the majority of the formulaic characters have remained constant over time, the character of the warden has changed from a paternalistic figure to a cruel bully.

Plot and Theme

Similarly, stock plots can also characterize prison films. Rafter found that prison films are traditionally focused around one major incident such as a riot or escape attempt. A majority of the film footage prior to the event is spent planning this incident. The overarching stock theme in all of the prison movies is that good will triumph over evil and that order will be restored. There is evidence that these stock plots are manifest in prison films across generations. Rafter (2006) discusses several themes that prison films embody: (1) rebellion against justice; (2) control and oppression; and (3) appearance versus reality. These themes are described in detail below.

Rebellion.

Inmates are often forced to rebel against injustice. The injustice to which the inmates react is the result of an inmate's innocence in some cases. In other cases, the injustice stems from being punished through the use of incarceration as well as the actions of brutal convicts and sadistic correctional officers. To provide a remedy for injustice, inmates are often depicted as taking over the prison to restore justice. In other cases, an outside force may be necessary to come to their aid.

Control.

A second stock theme is control. The prison institution is seen as a metaphor for the government, also known as the man, the ultimate oppressor. The prison becomes the battleground for the struggle of control. These struggles may occur among inmates or between the inmates and the guards as the instruments of the state.

Appearance versus reality.

The third theme that Rafter discusses is the difference between appearances and reality. Prison movies are full of characters who appear to be enemies but who are actually friends or vice versa. Role reversal is used quite frequently in the prison film genre. Prison films thus highlight the tension between appearances and reality.

Rafter also discusses why the genre of the prison film has survived over the years despite its formulaic nature. First, the prison movie allows the viewing public the opportunity to identify with the heroes in the film. The central character is often an innocent man who has been wrongfully accused of a crime. The viewing audience is then taken on a journey as the hero deals with the trials and tribulations of inmate life.

A second theme that allows for the prison film's endurance across time is it allows the viewing audience to fulfill a desire to participate in a "perfect friendship" (Rafter, 2006). This theme of the perfect friendship is seen in the prison movie perhaps due to the many hardships that inmates have to face and the effect that facing these hardships has on the development of friendship ties between inmates. These friendship ties may include portrayals of fantasies of sex and rebellion that help to sustain that

prison film genre. She states that male prison films often have a homoerotic subtext.

Rafter only offers a cursory exploration of the male/male relationship seen in all prison films as touching on the issue of platonic and sexual relationships. Unfortunately, what is egregiously missing from Rafter's analysis is an examination of coerced sexual assault.

Finally, Rafter (2006) identifies the prison film's claim to authenticity as a theme that aids in its ability to sustain popularity. The prison film is one of the only genres that allows the viewers an inside look at a world that is still shrouded in mystery. According to Rafter, almost half of the prison films claim that they are fictionalized accounts of an actual event or are based upon a true story. These claims of authenticity add to the influence that these films have concerning the development of perceptions of prison life by the viewing public and thus serve as powerful mechanisms for constructing public perceptions of not only prison life and culture but also of criminals as well. Prison movies, in effect, have become powerful teaching tools that demonstrate what it is like to live in prison. Thus, the question this observer raises is: "Do these prison films present an accurate representation of prison life?" Is the public receiving an accurate message? Is this message reflective of the reality of prison life? Or is prison life made to appear in a different light? Also, if prison films offer an image of prison life and prison inmates that is different from what is known about prison life from scholarly research and even inmate accounts, why are such appearances created?

Prison Films and Authenticity

It has long been established that the media industry affects what individuals view as important issues and the context in which individuals view these issues. For these reasons it is important to examine whether the images presented in prison films are accurate presentations of prison life. There has been very little research that has examined the accuracy of the prison film. Rafter (2006) claims that approximately 50% of all prison films are based on a true story or are a fictionalized account of an actual event. From this summary, one could conclude that the majority of prison films will tend not to reflect actual prison life and culture but to suggest some media-influenced version of prison life and culture.

In an effort to determine the authenticity of prison films, Nellis and Hale (1982) examined the extent to which prison films employed or relied upon people who had insider knowledge of the penal system. They concluded that early prison films made in the 1920s and 1930s utilized wardens as consultants. In addition in this era, wardens also served as a source for screenplay ideas and even appeared in the films (Nellis and Hale, 1982). In addition, Nellis and Hale stated that some prison films have been based on books written by people who have actually been inmates in a correctional institution and thus base their claim to authenticity and reality on the personal experience of inmates. Whatever the origins of the prison film, Rafter concluded that when translated into film the original work is dramatically transformed, reducing its claim to authenticity. Nellis and Hale (1982) concur when they state that prison films are uninformative about prison

life. Wilson and O’Sullivan (2005) point out that the problems of authenticity stem from “the artificiality of the medium, the constraints of the genre, processes of formal and informal censorship and regulation, commercial pressures and popular tastes and demand” (p. 478).

Other criminologists have chosen to address whether or not prison films are theoretically reflective of the period in which they were released. These studies have addressed whether representations of prisons have changed over time (Cheatwood, 1989; Wilson and O’Sullivan, 2004). Cheatwood (1989) conducted a study of 56 prison films released between 1929 and 1995. He found that prison films were reflective of the correctional ideals prevalent during the era of their release. He classified the films into the following correctional eras: Depression Era (1929-1942), Rehabilitation Era (1943-1962), Confinement Era (1963-1980), and Administrative Era (1981-Present) (Cheatwood, 1989). Crowther (1989) agrees about the problems of authenticity of the prison film genre, specifically prison films that claim to be based on true stories:

It is justifiable to paint a true story with a layer of fictionalization in order to improve its dramatic structure, but there is no excuse for the frequent appearance of movies so changed from reality as to make one wonder why they pretend to be true stories — unless, perish the thought, the makers of the movies concerned were motivated by just plain greed. (p. 4)

The Current Study

Based upon the above literature review, it is clear that very few broad studies of prison films have been conducted. At the same time, “public attitudes toward criminals in general, the types of people who are or should be incarcerated, and prison conditions that should be tolerated become evident through the treatment of criminal characters in film,” (Munro-Bjorklund, 1992, pp. 56-57). In effect, this observation implies that knowledge of prison life is gained through exposure to media representations, including prisons films, and perhaps with respect to prison life, especially prison films. Moreover, prison film depictions are particularly important areas to research as film is the dominant form of media used to portray prison life (Bennett, 2006). Thus, by studying prison films, researchers are able to assess the type of information about prison life and culture to which the public is being exposed.

Penal Culture Themes in the Current Study

The themes presented in prison films can be numerous, and extracting all themes from prison films would be difficult and would involve a length research process. To restrict the focus of this research to an achievable outcome, this research study focused on the representations of four themes in prison movies: (1) rape and sexual assault; (2) drug use and drug trafficking; (3) violence; and (4) gang affiliations.

There has been only one study to date that has examined the portrayal of sexual assault in prison films (Eigenberg and Baro, 2003). Eigenberg and Baro utilized a deconstructionist approach to analyze a sample of 15 male prison films for incidents

and/or references to rape. Their sample was chosen based on the circulation rate of the films within that past 30 years. They included one television program in their study, the HBO miniseries *OZ*. According to the endnotes included in the study, the first season of *OZ* was included because it had just been released onto video and was widely available, meaning that the series “almost becomes a movie in the sense of how viewers consume the material” (Eigenberg and Baro, 2003, p. 87). Eigenberg and Baro limited their sample to drama and action films, thus eliminating comedies, musicals, and futuristic films. Unfortunately, the Eigenberg and Baro, study does not outline the methodology employed in their analysis. The inability to examine the methodology makes it nearly impossible to replicate this study or even to hold a lot of stock in the findings that are presented. While the efforts of Eigenberg and Baro should be commended for embarking on an exploratory study, a much more methodologically rigorous study is needed. The present study builds upon the work of Eigenberg and Baro by expanding the sample of films, utilizing a methodological design which utilizes the film as the unit of analysis, and adheres to strict definitional guidelines which allow the gathered data to be compared to extant research. The current study adds to the current literature in the fields of criminology, penology, and media studies.

Chapter 5 will present specific details concerning the research design and methodology for the study.

Chapter Five: Methodology

Research Objective

The primary objectives of this study are twofold: (1) to examine the nature of media coverage, specifically by the film industry, of drug use, sexual assault, violence, and gang affiliation in adult male prison institutions in the United States; and (2) to determine if this media coverage is similar to official reporting and extant research on these aspects of penal culture. The purpose of the study is to gain insight into the presentation and depiction of penal culture in adult male prison institutions in 11 purposively selected recent motion pictures utilizing content analysis.

Sampling

The majority of the previous studies on prison films have been limited to a few films over a relatively short period or with reference to specific national events (Cheatwood [1998] being a known exception). As a result of these research limitations in existing studies, few solid inferences can be made about penal culture as expressed in films.

Sampling issues, as noted, have tended to limit the usefulness of prior studies of prison films. To address this problem, a non-probability sampling procedure dependent

on indentifying the universe of prison films within a particular period and excluding movies that failed to meet specific criteria described more completely below was employed. The period restriction was employed based upon prior research that has illustrated that prison film themes tend to reflect era-specific issues (Cheatwood, 1998). For the purposes of the present study, the era selected for study began in 1979 and continued through 2001. The films selected for study were previously identified by the prison filmography. The filmography is described more completely in the next section.

Sampling Procedure.

The filmography database gathered by *The Prison Film Project* (2006) was utilized to determine which motion pictures comprised the universe of prison films from which the sample was to be selected. *The Prison Film Project* is a publicly available database maintained by David Wilson and Sean O'Sullivan, two of the leading experts in this area of research, and serves as the sample frame.

One of the goals of *The Prison Film Project* is to promote the analysis of prison films by establishing a film-based database list that is consistent with respect to the definition of what constitutes a prison film. Researchers often fail to agree upon the definition of a prison film and have in the past tended to employ different definitions of this term. *The Prison Film Project* database has its own inclusion and exclusion criteria.

The database

lists a wide range of films which deal, in whole or in part, with the imprisonment of adults or juveniles in civilian or military prisons. The filmography excludes

prisoner of war movies, but includes military detention. Death penalty films are included in the filmography as a subgenre of the ‘the prison film.’ (The Prison Film Project, 2006, <http://www.theprisonfilmproject.com/filmographies.php>).

The focus of the current study is the celluloid representation of contemporary adult male prison culture in the United States. Given this focus on American culture, only films produced in the United States were retained in the sampling frame. Additionally, the current research concentrates on the iconography of *adult male prisons*. Therefore, several subgenres of prison films identified within *The Prison Film Project* database were excluded. The subgenres included male juvenile, women in prison, death penalty, escaped and released, musical, documentary, sci-fi, and comedy. A benefit of utilizing *The Prison Film Project* database was the ability to search and limit the list of films to be included within the final sample. The advanced search feature provided by *The Prison Film Project* was a useful tool for constructing the sampling frame for the current study. Using this advanced search feature, the researcher could limit the search by genre = adult male and country = US.

There were several pragmatic reasons for the limitations being placed on the search of the database. The primary issue is conceptual in nature in that the concern with prisons in America has been widely discussed as an important social issue (see chapter 1 for this discussion). Additionally, while there are quite a few films concerned with women behind bars, these films mainly take the form of sexploitation and are rarely major film productions and are placed in the “B” film category (Cheatwood, 1998;

Rafter, 2006). Furthermore, there are so few films that concentrate on other correctional areas such as probation, parole, and boot camps that these films cannot necessarily be considered a genre unto themselves (Cheatwood, 1998). While other areas of concentration are legitimate and deserving of analysis, they are beyond the scope of the present study and were therefore excluded.

Exclusion Criteria.

Considering these sampling limitations, a preliminary advanced search of *The Prison Film Project* filmography database generated a list of 57 movies produced from 1955 to 2005 in the United States with “adult male prisons” as their central defining topic (see Appendix B, Table B1). However, for the current study, other exclusionary criteria were also utilized (see Table 1). A discussion of each of the exclusion criteria as well as a rationale for their elimination follows.

Table 1

Sample Exclusion Criteria

Criteria:

1. Not a film production (a made-for-television movie or miniseries)
 2. Does not fit the definition of a prison film
 3. Does not depict an American prison
 4. Miscellaneous (does not depict a prison institution, is a comedy, the setting is a prison but the movie is not about penal culture)
-

Only major film productions formed the final sample, excluding made-for-television movies and miniseries. This criterion was selected because the majority of presentations of prison life take place in the motion picture format (Bennett, 2006; Cheatwood, 1998; Freeman, 1998; Root, 1982). In addition, television movies and miniseries are produced with different considerations of audience, ratings systems, duration, financial backing, and artistic production qualities. Television movies and miniseries also may not be as readily available for analysis as film productions (i.e., may not be available in a legally attainable, public-access format). From the original list of 57 films, eight films were excluded based on this criterion (see Appendix B, Table B2), leaving 49 films. Combinations of sources such as the Internet Movie Database (IMDB) as well as additional online reviews were employed to exclude these movies. IMDB is the largest, most comprehensive, well-known, and publicly available database of motion pictures available at this time (IMBD.com, 2009).

One of the most salient of issues that needed to be addressed with respect to the sample was the definition of a prison film. Even Wilson and O’Sullivan (2006) admit that “there is no clear cut agreement as to what constitutes a prison film” (*The Prison Film Project*, 2006, <http://www.theprisonfilmproject.com/filmographies.php>). The lack of a precise definition of prison film becomes problematic when one begins to review the list of prison films contained in *The Prison Film Project* database. The definition of a prison film for the current study is as follows: (1) a motion picture film in which (2) a major portion of the action takes place in an adult male prison institution and (3) portrays the

daily life of inmates and includes interaction between the inmates. Ten films were eliminated from the sample of 49 films due to their lack of representation of penal culture, leaving 39 films in the sample (see Appendix B, Table B3 for a list of excluded films due to lack of representation of penal culture). For example, while the movie *the 25th Hour* is considered a prison film according to Wilson and O’Sullivan’s definition, this film was excluded from the current study because it failed to meet the second element of the definition of a prison film used in the study; a prison is never depicted in the entire 135 minutes of this movie. This movie chronicles the last hours before the main character, Monty Brogan, begins to serve a seven-year prison sentence for drug dealing.

Moreover, while the advanced search feature of *The Prison Film Project* filmography was utilized to limit the original sample to films produced in the United States, the current study is additionally concerned with films produced in the United States that depict American prisons. Therefore, any movie that depicts a prison outside of the United States was also eliminated from the final sample. Six films were excluded based on this criterion (see Appendix B, Table B4 for these titles), reducing the sample size to 33 films.

Finally, some films on the original list were excluded for other relevant reasons. These reasons included the portrayal of juvenile detainees, an escape film, a film based on the concept of a prison plane, a boot camp film, a movie set in Alcatraz but not about prison, a Marine Corps prison film and several comedies (see Appendix B, Table B5 for these titles). These various criteria did not fit with the basic premise of the research study,

which is to examine the representations of inmate culture within adult male prison institutions in the United States within major motion picture film productions. For a complete list of film tables see Appendix B, Table B1 through Table B5.

The final sample for the present study consists of 11 films. These films represent all films that fit the definition of a prison film used in this study that were released between 1979 through 2001. While the prison filmography is limited to film production ending in 2005, 2001 contained the last film that fits within the criteria of the study. The year 1979 is the lower limiter of the dataset and was selected based on the premise that films produced later than 1979 are significantly different than those produced prior to 1979. Film is a historical byproduct of the generation in which it is produced (Cheatwood, 1998). This is most evident in the blaxploitation films of the 1970s and the film noir of 1960s. While these are significant issues that should not be ignored, they are not the topic of this particular research.

The final sample (N = 11) is exhaustive and time-bound as it represents all of the known major motion pictures produced with male prison institutions as a setting that met the selection criteria between 1979 and 2001 and thus constitutes a sample population. The final sample of 11 films spans 22 years. The sample consists of all known prison films in this genre during this period and therefore, the results are not generalizable with respect to other historical time periods. However, these 11 movies represent the most recent major motion picture films that take place in an adult male prison that Hollywood has produced. Thus, it can be reasonably argued that members of the public viewing

audience who watched prison films during the period from 1979 to 2001 were likely to have seen at least one of the movies within this sample.

The objective of the research study is to examine and understand the cultural images and messages presented to the public through the motion picture format; therefore, in this vein, evaluation of recent major films that have a relatively large viewing audience are examined. The benefit of this theoretical sampling allows this researcher to address how American films produced from 2001 to 1979 frames U.S. adult male prison culture (Ferrell, Hayward, and Young, 2008). While the sample size is relatively small, these results are unique in that they represent an era in prison cinematic history.

Table 2

Film Sample 1979-2001

Title	Year	Director	Star	Rating
<i>Down Time</i>	2001	Sean Wilson	James Cotton	R
<i>Animal Factory</i>	2000	Steve Buscemi	Willem Dafoe	R
<i>Lockdown</i>	2000	John Luessenhop	Richard T. Jones	R
<i>Unshackled</i>	2000	Bart Patton	Burgess Jenkins	PG-13

Table 2 (continued)

Film Sample 1979-2001

Title	Year	Director	Star	Rating
<i>American Me</i>	1992	Edward James Olmos	Edward James Olmos	R
<i>Death Warrant</i>	1990	Deram Sarafian	Jean Claude van Damme	R
<i>An Innocent Man</i>	1989	Peter Yates	Tom Selleck	R
<i>Lock Up</i>	1989	John Flynn	Sly Stallone	R
<i>Brubaker</i>	1980	Stuart Rosenberg	Robert Redford	R
<i>Escape from Alcatraz</i>	1979	Don Siegel	Clint Eastwood	PG
<i>Penitentiary</i>	1979	Jamaa Fanaka	Leon Issac Kennedy	NR

Research Questions

To aid in the investigation of the issues described above, multiple research questions will be addressed. There are a total of 12 research questions in four substantive integrative areas of inquiry that have been identified as facets of penal culture for the purposes of this study. These are described below. In each area, a set of questions that identifies the qualitative data collected from each film is identified.

Drug Use and Drug Trafficking Behind Bars

Q1: What is the frequency of drug use and drug trafficking presented in prison films?

Q2: What is the nature of the drug use and drug trafficking presented in prison films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which drug use and drug trafficking is portrayed within the film?

Q3: Is the portrayal of drug use and drug trafficking depicted in motion picture films similar to the portrayal presented in extant correctional literature?

Rape and Sexual Assault

Q4: What is the frequency of rape and sexual assault presented in prison films?

Q5: What is the nature of the rape and sexual assault presented in prison films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which sexual assault is portrayed within the film?

Q6: Is the portrayal of rape and sexual assault depicted in motion picture similar to the portrayal presented in extant correctional literature?

Violence

Q7: What is the frequency of violence presented in prison films?

Q8: What is the nature of the violence presented in prison films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which violence is portrayed within the film?

Q9: Is the portrayal of violence depicted in motion picture films similar to the portrayal presented in extant correctional literature?

Gang Affiliation

Q10: What is the frequency of gang affiliation presented in prison films?

Q11: What is the nature of the gang affiliation presented in prison films?

Specifically, what are the contextual components in which gang affiliation is portrayed within the film?

Q12: Is the portrayal of gang affiliation depicted in motion picture films similar to the portrayal presented in extant correctional literature?

Data Collection

Primary data consists of descriptions of the variables described above extracted by viewing the 11 videotaped motion picture films in which the majority of the action takes place in adult male prison institutions from 1979-2001 designated above. These videotaped films provide both visual images and verbal text.

Data Analysis

All research questions are analyzed with the use of content analysis. Generally speaking, content analysis is a method used to determine the presence of words or concepts within a text or a series of texts (Krippendorff, 2004). Content analysis can be used with the specific purpose of “identifying themes, patterns, or biases” (Dowler, 2004, p. 577). The focus of the current study is the presentation of a visual form of communication—that is, film.

This research focuses primarily on quantitative content analyses that utilize the counting of specific manifest content (drug use, sexual violence, violent misconduct, and

gang affiliation) and classifying latent coding into distinct categories. Manifest coding is the coding of visible or surface content. This process is based upon the coding of subject matter by predetermined and precisely defined definitional characteristics. However, part of the study analysis utilizes qualitative content analysis techniques. Latent coding seeks to determine the underlying meaning or the context of the communication. Reaching beyond a basic quantification of whether specific themes exist in prison movies, this study utilizes the latent coding technique to explore the in-depth content of the actual incidences within the film. For example, this study does not simply report whether or not a prison rape occurs in a particular film but gives insight into the specific incident. This approach allows for additional interpretation about the presentation of prison life on film and the cultural meanings conveyed by these representations.

One of the methodological issues encountered in this research was constructing useful comparison measures for drug use and trafficking, rape and sexual assault, violence and gang affiliation for prison films and the correctional literature. Prison films depict a limited portion of prison life, making direct comparisons between film and correctional literature difficult. For example, prison rape and sexual assault data are based on the percentage of victimized inmates. Within prison film depictions, the size of the inmate population is unknown. One could measure the number of main characters victimized or the time devoted to rape and sexual assault scenes that take place within prison. However, neither measure is directly comparable to existing data on the prevalence of rape and sexual assault in prison. Therefore, the comparisons between

prison films and the correctional literature should be interpreted with caution (see Appendix D, Table D1 for an explanation of the comparison of the constructs in film and the correctional literature).

All 11 films are available in DVD format. This allows the researcher the ability to go back to the original data should coding problems arise. Furthermore, DVDs have additional features such as captioning that are often not available on films presented in VHS format. The use of captioning is especially useful because it can be used to provide additional contextual verbal information in addition to the imagery presented on film. The captioning feature available on the DVD format proved to be extremely useful with the coding of data. Partial transcripts were created as necessary, and these aided the researcher in the assignment of content to appropriate categories. The creation of partial transcripts contributed to the reliability and validity of the data and the subsequent findings.

Note the complexity of the validity issue. This concept refers to whether a particular element is actually measuring what it is purporting to measure. The following practice will be utilized to minimize the conceptual validity issues that may arise. The researcher will err on the side of caution, choosing to place elements in an “other” category if clear-cut parameters are not met. This conservative strategy will possibly yield higher “other” categorizations and fewer numbers of elements on respective variables, but this strategy keeps specific variable categories undiluted and therefore easier to interpret.

Procedure

A sample of 11 full-length motion picture prison movies produced from 1979-2001 was analyzed. A code sheet was utilized to gather information from each of the 11 movies (see Appendix C for a the code sheet and the codebook). In addition to the main researcher, one additional coder also coded the movies. This coder is a 35-year-old college-educated woman. Several variables were tested for intercoder reliability. To assess intercoder reliability, following the training of the coder, one movie was assessed to gauge initial intercoder reliability. The main researcher picked a difficult movie to code for the first movie. After the two individuals coded the movies separately they met and discussed the results. The codebook was then adjusted as appropriate. The most difficult of all of the variable categories to code was violence, and this is reflected in the intercoder reliability results. Upon completion of the initial movie, all movies were coded by the two individuals. The total scene type and time of the total scene type across movies was tested for intracoder reliability. The following table is a summary of the intercoder reliability analysis results. Agreement and covariation were measured for each of the most significant variables in the study. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 3

Table 3

Intercoder Reliability

Variable	Percent agreement	Pearson correlation (r)
Number of drug scenes	1.00	1.00
Drug scene time	1.00	1.00
Number of rape scenes	1.00	1.00
Rape scene time	0.64	0.99
Number of sexual assault scenes	1.00	1.00
Sexual assault time	0.91	1.00
Number of violence Scenes	0.82	0.99
Violence scene time	0.09	0.95

Overall, across variables, reliability was high (81%, $r = 0.99$). However, reliability was only 82% for the number of violent scenes and 9% for violent scene time. This is not a surprising finding considering that intercoder reliability is expected to drop as the size of attributes rises. Across all films, violence as a scene type was the most difficult category to code. (see Neuendorf, 2002, for a detailed explanation of intercoder reliability.) The intercoder reliability for the number of violent scenes was 82%, which is relatively high. However, the 9% reliability for violent scene time reflects the difficulty the coders had agreeing on the length of violent scenes. Across all films the numbers of violent screens were able to be identified by the coders with relatively high agreement. It should be noted

that the lower level of reliability for violent scene time could have an adverse effect on the study outcome with respect to the depiction of frequency of violence within prison films.

To conduct the final analysis, a code sheet was created, tested, and revised after both coders watched one movie separately and compared notes. While watching the films, variables were coded at the scene and character level. Additional information was recorded for the movie as a whole. Depending on the length of the movie and the amount of scenes that needed to be coded, work on a film ranged from 10 hours to four hours. Furthermore, all 11 movies were previewed for content in addition to being watched for coding purposes. Some particularly intricate movies were viewed up to five times. Detailed field notes were kept while viewing and are available for further analysis.

Variables were coded and entered into both SPSS and Excel files. While text data can be analyzed through the use of KWIC (key word in context), this is not the case for image data. All 11 films were watched and coded by hand without the aid of a computer identification program. However, with the use of DVD technology, researchers were able to use the stop, slow down, and pause features available in order to aid in the coding process. Most significantly the use of DVD technology allowed the coder to record in seconds the length of each drug use, drug trafficking, rape, sexual assault, and violent scenes in the movie. The use of captioning was also utilized when available as this serves as an on-screen transcript of the film. After the coding was complete and the reliability analysis was finished, the author and the additional coder conferred about the films.

Variable Construction and Measurement

A total of 12 research questions were analyzed using the content analysis technique. A discussion of the operationalization of these variables follows. It should be noted that for coding purposes, a scene was defined as a section of film in which action takes place that signifies a unit of development in the storyline which is made up by a number of frames. Furthermore, only prison scenes were coded. Action that took place outside of the prison was not coded and subsequently not analyzed.

Drug Use and Drug Trafficking

Drug use and drug trafficking were measured by a series of variables. The total number of prison drug scenes was identified for the film. A drug scene was coded as consisting of either the use or trafficking of drugs (1 = Use, 2 = Supply or exchange of drugs). If a drug scene was recorded, the type of drug was noted if possible (1 = Alcohol, 2 = Marijuana, 3 = Crack, 4 = Powder cocaine, 5 = Heroin, 6 = LSD, 7 = PCP, 8 = Methamphetamines, 9 = Inhalants, 10 = Other, 99 = Don't know). In addition, the name of the character(s) who either used the drugs or engaged in the exchange incident was recorded. The time of the drug scene was recorded in seconds. Finally, a description of the drug use incident, including coping techniques, was recorded in detail using the latent coding technique so that comparisons between films could be made.

Rape and Sexual Assault

The current research seeks to identify the presence or absence of sexual violence in each prison movie in the sample. In the interest of consistency and to make beneficial comparisons, the following definition of sexual violence was adapted from the Bureau of Justice Statistics Study (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006) derived from the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003. A nonconsensual sexual act is an implied or depicted sexual act that includes a failure to or refusal to consent to the depicted or implied sexual act including any forms of forces, nonconsensual contact between sexual organs, the anus, or mouth, including the use of hands, fingers or other objects (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2006). The coders assessed whether or not a nonconsensual sexual act has occurred through a combination of visual, auditory, and contextual cues.

After previewing approximately 25 sexual assault scenes, it was decided that there was a significant difference between the celluloid representation of prison rape and sexual assault. Therefore, in addition to rape scenes, sexual assault scenes were also recorded. Sexual assault was defined as an implied or observed forcible sex act that does not include intercourse or sodomy.

The total number of rape scenes and sexual assault scenes for each individual film was recorded. The presence of rape was recorded (0 = No rape is observed or implied, 1 = presence of rape). If a rape scene was observed, the time of the scene was recorded in seconds. The character name(s) of the perpetrator and the victim(s) of the rape were recorded. A description of the rape incident was recorded in detail using the latent coding

technique so that comparisons between films could be made. Additionally, the presence of sexual assault was recorded (0= No sexual assault is observed or implied, 1=presence of sexual assault). The time of the sexual assault scene was recorded in seconds. The character name(s) of the perpetrator and the victim(s) of the sexual assault were recorded. To allow for comparison between films, descriptions of each sexual assault incident were recorded using latent coding techniques.

While rape and sexual assault could also be considered violent (see next category), for the purposes of the current study, a distinction was made between types of violence. Rape and sexual assault are considered specific types of violence and therefore analyzed as categories unto themselves. These acts have specific cultural meanings for inmates that make them unique compared to the other types of violence depicted in the following violence category.

Violence and Gang Affiliation

The presence of violent scenes was measured. For each violent scene the time was recorded in seconds. The current study adapted the definition of a violent scene from the CHAMP (2009) study. The CHAMP project is a multi-year quantitative content analysis of health risk behaviors and positive measures portrayed in movies, TV, music, music video and on the internet. The project's purpose is to "track trends in risk behaviors as portrayed in the media over time so the potential positive or negative impact on adults and youth can be evaluated" (CHAMP, 2009, <http://www.youthmediarisk.org/Menuitem.aspx?Id=1>).

A violent scene was considered an uninterrupted display of violence by a character or a group of characters. For example, if an inmate hits another inmate while using one method of violence continuously, that was considered one sequence. Only actual harm was coded. Intent to harm was not coded.

Further, the level of violence for each violent scene was coded. These measures were adapted from the CHAMP (2009) study and were slightly modified to fit the prison movie genre. Violence level ranged from 1 (the scene depicted the consequence or aftermath of violence but not the violence directly) to 5 (the most explicit, direct representation of violence [see Appendix C for full description of coding].) For each violent scene the initiator(s) character's name, the perpetrator(s) character's name and the victim(s) character's name(s) were recorded. The initiator was identified as the character who provoked the violence but who was not the perpetrator of the violence. The perpetrator was identified as the person who started the physical altercation. The victim was identified as the first person to receive the perpetrator's violence.

The initiator action was also recorded (0 = None, 1 = Verbal threat, 2 = Non-threatening physical act—could be accidental, 3 = Threatening nonviolent act (such as brandishing a weapon), 4 = Attempted violent physical act). Borrowing again from the CHAMP (2009) study, the injuries that resulted from the violent act were recorded and ranged from 0 to 3 (0 = No representation of injuries in the scene; 1 = Mild representation of bruises, lacerations, or broken bones; 2 = Moderate representation of bodies maimed, blinded, impaired, or disfigured; 3 = Extreme representation of fatally wounded bodies).

Fatalities were also recorded. Fatalities were measured as the number of deaths that resulted as a direct or indirect consequence of the violent act. A body must be present in order to be recorded as a death. Acts of prior violence that are not demonstrated but result in a dead body were counted.

Due to the close association of gang presence and violence behind bars, gang affiliation was coded as several measures during the violent scene recording. Researchers recorded whether or not the perpetrator(s) and victim(s) of violence were members of a gang. If they were a member of a gang, the affiliation was also noted (1 = Crips, 2 = Gangster Disciples, 3 = Bloods, 4 = Latin Kings, 5 = Vice Lords, 6 = Aryan Brotherhood, 7 = Folks, 8 = White Supremacists, 9 = Surenos, 10 = Five Percenters, 11 = Unidentified African American gang, 12 = Unidentified Hispanic gang, 13 = Unidentified White gang, 14 = Several gangs, 15 = Other, 99 = Don't know). Specific gang-related incidences were coded using the latent coding technique.

Demographic Variables

Finally, basic descriptive variables including character name, principal/supporting actor, gender, race, age, socioeconomic status, marital status, education, and gang affiliation were recorded for each of the main characters in the film. Coders were asked to record the character's name or write in a brief description of the character if no name was given. In addition, the status of the character was documented by recording whether or not the character was a principal or a supporting character. The gender of each character was documented as well. Race was measured by the recording of the apparent racial

characteristics of the character. Content was also used to assign characters to the following categories: 1 = Caucasian; 2 = African American; 3 = Asian; 4 = Hispanic; 5 = Native-American; 7 = Other (write in); and 9 = cannot tell. Age was measured at the ordinal level by the following categories: 1 = Infant; 0 = 2 years old; 2 = Child; 3 = 12 years old; 3 = Adolescent; 13 = 18 years old; 4 = Young adult; 19 = 39 years old; 5 = Middle-aged adult; 40 = 54 years old; 6 = Mature adult; 55 = 64 years old; 7 = Senior adult; > 65 years old; and 9 = Cannot tell. Socioeconomic status was measured as follows: 1 = Upper/upper middle class: well-to-do with a high-level job or no job, not dependent on monthly income to live; 2 = Middle class, working for a living and having all necessities and some luxuries, 3 = Working class/lower class, lacking some necessities, lacking luxury items, possibly unemployed and/or on public assistance; 9 = Cannot tell. Marital status was measured at the nominal level. Coders were instructed to use 1 = Single, if the character is unattached and if it is not indicated that the character is divorced, separated, or widowed. The following is the coding schemes for marital status: 1 = Single; 2 = Married; 3 = Separated; 4 = Divorced; 5 = Widowed; and 9 = Cannot tell. The apparent education level of the character was measured at an ordinal level from 1 to 5 with 9 as cannot tell. The following was the coding scheme that was utilized: 1 = Less than high school graduate, 2 = High school graduate, 3 = Some college; 4 = College graduate; 5 = Graduate (Masters or Ph.D.), and 9 = Cannot tell. Cannot tell was also used for characters whose level of education was not observable or stated. For example, a doctor or lawyer would have obviously had to go to medical or law school, respectively,

at the graduate level to practice. Finally, gang affiliation was measured for each character. The following codes were used for gang affiliation: 0 = none; 1 = Crips; 2 = Gangster Disciples; 3 = Bloods; 4 = Latin Kings; 5 = Vice Lords; 6 = Aryan Brotherhood; 7 = Folks; 8 = White Supremacists; 9 = Surenos; 10 = Five Percenters; 11 = Unidentified African American gang; 12 = Unidentified Hispanic gang; 13 = Unidentified white gang; 14 = Several gangs (write in); 15 = Other (write in); and 99 = Unidentified.

Study Limitations

No research study is without its limitations. One limitation of the current research study is the use of *The Prison Film Project's* filmography (The Prison Film Project, 2006: <http://www.theprisonfilmproject.com/filmographies.php>). As has been stated, there are many benefits to using this filmography, but there are also many disadvantages. It is possible that Wilson and O'Sullivan might have missed several films in constructing their database.

Another limitation of the study is the decision to limit the sample to films from 1979-2005. While this allows the author to make conclusions about one era concerning prison films, it also limits the study. A possible future study could expand the sample to examine another period, thereby allowing for a trend analysis. The present study allows the author to make conclusions only about one period and does not allow for any type of comparative analysis. The expansion of the sample of prison films for future research would add to the literature.

Finally, the content analysis technique has come under scrutiny for not being objective. The research study utilizes both quantitative and qualitative content analysis techniques. The quantitative content analysis collected information on variables or message attributes that are set a priori by the author. This is a limitation in that messages can mean various things to different individuals. For example, the author must choose several dimensions through which to measure violence within a film. However, there is a possibility that there could be more factors that are indicative of violence in prison but are not being measured. Furthermore, how individuals view violence will be contextual and can be interpreted differently. For example, a killing that occurs in a war film might not be considered murder by some people. Because strict quantification can sometimes be misleading, the research study includes a qualitative content analysis component.

Conclusion

A content analysis of eleven feature length films on male prisons produced between 1979 and 2001 was conducted. This research systematically examines the frequency and context of several constructs of penal culture, including drug use, drug trafficking, rape and sexual assault, violence, and gang affiliation. Moreover, this study examines whether or not the representations of these issues in recent motion picture films are consistent when compared to the extant correctional literature and official data. This study provides not only noteworthy information concerning the representations of prison life and penal culture by the film industry but also gives valuable insight into information

that is potentially transferred via this medium to the general public. Chapter 6 will discuss the results of this analysis.

Chapter Six: Results

Introduction

This chapter presents the quantitative and qualitative research findings in the context of the research questions that were set forth in the previous chapter. A summary of the portrayal of the frequency of drug use and trafficking, rape and sexual assault, violence, and gang affiliation within the prison scenes presented on film is discussed. These quantitative results are presented in tabular format. In addition to the quantitative analysis, supplemental information about the context of drug use and trafficking, rape and sexual assault, violence, and gang affiliation within the prison scenes presented on film is also presented. Prison scenes depicting drug use and trafficking, rape and sexual assault, violence, and gang affiliation are compared to the extant literature and a discussion follows.

Drug Use and Trafficking Behind Bars

To examine the representation of drug use and drug trafficking within prison films the study asked the first research question: What is the frequency of drug use and drug trafficking presented in prison films?

Table 4

Frequency of Drugs in Prison Films 1979-2001

Title	Year	Drug		Prison time (seconds)	Drug scenes as a percentage of prison time:
		Drug scenes	scene time (seconds)		
<i>Down Time</i>	2001	6	239	2734	8.74
<i>Animal Factory</i>	2000	6	268	5023	5.34
<i>Lockdown</i>	2000	10	347	4664	7.44
<i>Unshackled</i>	2000	0	0	5471	0.00
<i>American Me</i>	1992	5	260	2406	10.80
<i>Death Warrant</i>	1990	3	271	3787	7.16
<i>An Innocent Man</i>	1989	1	17	2756	0.62
<i>Lock Up</i>	1989	1	76	5945	1.28
<i>Brubaker</i>	1980	0	0	6394	0.00
<i>Escape from Alcatraz</i>	1979	0	0	6376	0.00
<i>Penitentiary</i>	1979	0	0	5373	0.00
TOTALS		32	1478	50929	2.90

Prison drug use and drug enterprise scenes were recorded while viewing each film. The presence of drug use and/or trafficking was depicted in 8 of the total 11 films (72%). There were a total of 32 scenes that depicted drugs. Films ranged from no drug scenes (*Unshackled*, *Brubaker*, *Escape from Alcatraz*, *Penitentiary*) to 10 scenes within one film (*Lockdown*). Within films that included images of drugs, the scenes ranged from 17 to 347 seconds and averaged 134.4 seconds—just over two minutes—in length. In comparison to the other types of scenes measured in the study—rape and sexual assault and violence—two minutes is a relatively long scene. Additionally, drug scenes were computed as a percentage of the total time that each film depicted prison on screen. Across the films, drug scenes accounted for 2.9% of the total time depicted in prison.

To study the contextual components that surround drug use and drug trafficking within prison films, the study examined the second research question: What is the nature of the drug use and/or drug trafficking presented in prison films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which drug use and/or drug trafficking are portrayed within the film?

Table 5

Pattern of Drugs within Prison Films 1979-2001

Title	Year	Use scenes	Trafficking scenes	Use and	Total drug scenes	Drug type
				trafficking scenes		
<i>Down Time</i>	2001	2	3	1	6	5(6)
<i>Animal Factory</i>	2000	3	3	0	6	1(1), 2(1), 5(3), 9(1)
<i>Lockdown</i>	2000	3	7	0	10	2(1), 5(9)
<i>Unshackled</i>	2000	0	0	0	0	0
<i>American Me</i>	1992	3	2	0	5	1(3), 5(2)
<i>Death Warrant</i>	1990	3	0	0	3	1(2), 2(1)
<i>An Innocent Man</i>	1989	1	0	0	1	1(1)
<i>Lock Up</i>	1989	1	0	0	1	1(1)
<i>Brubaker</i>	1980	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Escape from Alcatraz</i>	1979	0	0	0	0	0
<i>Penitentiary</i>	1979	0	0	0	0	0
						5(20), 1(9), 2(3),
TOTALS		16	15	1	32	9(1)

Note: For the purposes of this table please refer to the following coding scheme: 1 = alcohol; 2 = marijuana; 5 = heroin; and 9 = unknown. The number in parenthesis represents the number of scenes in which that drug was found. The totals in the drug type column do not add up to the total in the total drug scene column as one case is both a use and a trafficking scene.

In addition to the presence of drug scenes within the films, several other contextual components were coded. To begin, films that illustrated drug scenes were also coded for the type of drug behavior that was presented in that particular scene. These scenes were categorized as either drug using or drug trafficking scenes. Drug using scenes were those that depicted inmates or guards ingesting drugs. Drug trafficking scenes were those scenes that illustrated the parts of the drug industry in prison, such as drugs coming into the prison institution, the movement of drugs between inmates, or the transport of drugs between inmates and guards. There were 16 drug use scenes and 15 drug trafficking scenes. Additionally, there was one scene in which both use and trafficking was depicted within the same scene. This was coded separately and does not factor into the final totals of the use and trafficking numbers stated above.

Secondly, in addition to whether or not a drug scene could be categorized as a drug use or trafficking scene, the type of drug that was visible in the scene was also recorded. All drug scenes had one distinct drug type that was portrayed on film during the particular scene. In the 32 drug scenes, heroin was the most prevalent drug depicted, appearing in 4 of the 8 films in which drug scenes were present (50%) and 20 of the 32 total scenes (62.5%). Alcohol was the second most prevalent drug shown in 5 of the 8 films (62.5%) and 9 out of a total of 32 scenes (28.1%). This was followed by marijuana, which was present in 3 of the 8 films (37.5%) and in 3 of the total 32 drug scenes (9.3%). There was one scene in which the drug type could not be identified (3.1%).³

The study examines a third and final research question concerning drug use and drug trafficking to compare the representations on film to the extant correctional literature: Is the portrayal of drug use and drug trafficking depicted in motion picture films similar to the portrayal presented in extant correctional literature?

Previous research contends drug use, abuse, and trafficking are widespread in prison facilities throughout the United States (CASA, 2002; Inciardi et al., 1993; Mumola, 1999; Simpler and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2005). It has been reported that between 50% and 75% of prisoners use drugs while they are incarcerated (Simpler and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2005). Furthermore, the most popular drugs utilized behind bars in order of frequency are cannabis, Valium, amphetamines, LSD, Ecstasy, cocaine, and heroin (Simpler and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2005). Other studies have also found alcohol to be among the most prevalent of the drugs available (Inciardi et al., 1993).

With respect to the frequency of drug use presented in prison films, the current study found that drug use was a prevalent theme in prison films. Drugs use was depicted in 8 of the 11 films (72%). However, the total time spent on screen depicting drug use was relatively small; the drug scene time as a percentage of prison time on film was only 2.9%. The study finding of almost equal importance placed on drug use and drug trafficking as depicted in prison films is similar to the correctional research findings that a significant proportion of inmates behind bars are involved in both drug use and drug trafficking.

Significantly, the most prevalent drug depicted within the drug scenes was heroin. This is in stark contrast to the current correctional literature on drug use and trafficking in prison. The second most prevalent drug depicted within the drug scenes was alcohol. This finding is similar to the findings of Inciardi et al. (1993). Overall, the results of the study with respect to drug use and trafficking find that prison films portray drug use and trafficking representatively in terms of frequency. However, with respect to the type of drugs used and trafficked, prison films depict heroin as the drug of choice whereas the literature cites marijuana as the drug of choice.

In conclusion, with respect to drug use and trafficking behind bars, the constructed reality of prison life as depicted in prison films mirrors that which is reported by criminologists and experts in the field who study prison institutions. Drug use and trafficking occur both on the movie screen and within prison institutions in the United States. Equal importance was placed on the portrayal of the ingestion of substances and the trafficking of drugs within prison movies. Nevertheless, there is evidence of a disparity in the type of drug portrayed on film compared to the type of drug reported within the correctional literature. The current study found heroin to be the most prevalent drug within prison films while marijuana is the most frequently reported drug in the literature.

Rape and Sexual Assault

The second penal construct category examines the depiction of rape and sexual assault in prison films. In order to examine the representation of rape and sexual assault

within prison films the study examines the fourth research question: What is the frequency of rape and sexual assault presented in prison films?

Table 6

Frequency of Rape in Prison Films 1979-2001

Title	Year	Rape scenes	Total rape scene time (seconds)	Prison scene time (seconds)	Rape scenes as a percentage of total prison scenes
<i>Down Time</i>	2001	0	0	2734	0.00
<i>Animal Factory</i>	2000	0	0	5023	0.00
<i>Lockdown</i>	2000	1	30	4664	0.64
<i>Unshackled</i>	2000	0	0	5471	0.00
<i>American Me</i>	1992	1	135	2406	5.61
<i>Death Warrant</i>	1990	0	0	3787	0.00
<i>An Innocent Man</i>	1989	1	44	2756	1.60
<i>Lock Up</i>	1989	0	0	5945	0.00
<i>Brubaker</i>	1980	1	15	6394	0.23
<i>Escape from Alcatraz</i>	1979	0	0	6376	0.00
<i>Penitentiary</i>	1979	0	0	5373	0.00
TOTAL		4	224	50929	

Table 7

Frequency of Sexual Assault in Prison Films 1979-2001

Title	Year	Sexual assault scenes	Total sexual assault scene time (seconds)	Prison scene time (seconds)	Sexual assault scenes as a percentage of overall movie time
<i>Down Time</i>	2001	0	0	2734	0.00
<i>Animal Factory</i>	2000	1	15	5023	0.30
<i>Lockdown</i>	2000	1	44	4664	0.94
<i>Unshackled</i>	2000	0	0	5471	0.00
<i>American Me</i>	1992	0	0	2406	0.00
<i>Death Warrant</i>	1990	0	0	3787	0.00
<i>An Innocent Man</i>	1989	0	0	2756	0.00
<i>Lock Up</i>	1989	0	0	5945	0.00
<i>Brubaker</i>	1980	0	0	6394	0.00
<i>Escape from Alcatraz</i>	1979	0	0	6376	0.00
<i>Penitentiary</i>	1979	0	0	5373	0.00
TOTALS		2	59	50929	

Across the 11 films, there were a total of 4 rape scenes (36%). No film had more than one rape scene and these scenes were relatively short. Films that included rape scenes were: *Lockdown*, *American Me*, *An Innocent Man*, and *Brubaker*. The rape scenes in the films ranged from 15 to 135 seconds and averaged 56 seconds in length. The film

American Me had the lengthiest rape scene at 135 seconds. Rape scenes were computed as a percentage of overall prison time shown within each film. Across the films, rape scenes accounted for 0.44% of the total time depicted in prison.

In addition to rape scenes, sexual assault scenes (not including rape) were also identified. There were 2 sexual assault scenes within the 11 movies (18%). One of these scenes occurred in a film that did not have a rape scene (*Animal Factory*) and one occurred in a film that did also have a rape scene (*Lockdown*). These 2 scenes were 15 seconds and 44 seconds in length, respectively. Sexual assault scenes accounted for 0.12% of the total time depicted in prison on film.

To study the contextual components that surround rape and sexual assault within prison films, the study examines the fifth research question: What is the nature of rape and sexual assault presented in prison films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which rape and sexual assault is portrayed within the film?

Four rape scenes were illustrated across the 11 prison films sampled. Three of the 4 victims of these rapes were white. The other victim was African American. There was a single victim in each incident. However, within the 4 rapes, a variety of numbers of perpetrators were depicted, ranging from one perpetrator to a group of individuals. Two of the 4 rape scenes (50%) were gang rapes.

The intensity of these scenes varied from mild—implied rape with the darkening of the screen accompanied by sounds—to intense visuals, such as the tearing off of clothing, naked buttocks, tying up of hands and the squeezing of a tube of lubrication.

Perhaps the least intense scene takes place in *Brubaker* when an older white male is seen grabbing a young white male in a dorm scene. The older male states, "Come on boy. Why are you playing hard to get?" The scene goes black, and screams are heard. It is obvious that the young boy is being raped; however, no precise visualization is depicted on screen. The most intense of all of the rape scenes is in *American Me*. This scene is considered a drug scene, a rape scene, and a violent scene. In this scene, a group of La Eme (Mexican Mafia) gang members, lead by a character named Puppet; have lured Tony Scagnelli into a pantry in the prison kitchen. They proceed to get Scagnelli drunk on prison hooch. The gang then proceeds to stuff a bandana into his mouth, tie up his arms and legs, and take turns sodomizing him. The viewer also sees Scagnelli's clothes being ripped off, his naked buttocks exposed, and a tube of lubrication being squeezed into a perpetrator's hand. Adding to the intensity of this scene is an editing technique used by filmmakers called parallel editing. Parallel editing allows for two events to be portrayed simultaneously within a single film sequence. At the same time that Scagnelli is being raped, Santana, the protagonist of the film, is having sexual intercourse with a woman. This is Santana's first time having intercourse outside of a prison environment. Toward the end of the simultaneous scene, Santana turns over his lover, Julie, and attempts to sodomize her, as she screams and pulls away. As this occurs, Mundo, one of the gang members, pushes a knife inside the bowels of Scagnelli, killing him. This scene starts out as a drug scene, turns into a rape scene, and ends as a violent scene. The parallel editing process greatly enhances the intensity of this rape scene.

In addition to the 4 rape scenes, there were 2 sexual assaults illustrated in the 11 films. The perpetrators of the violence were white in each case. One sexual assault scene has a white victim and the other has an African American victim. In *Lockdown*, Dre is assaulted by Graffiti. Graffiti forces Dre to perform fellatio on him while they are in a forced lockdown. This scene lasts a total of 44 seconds. Compared to the other sexual assault sequence, this is a relatively long scene. During the scene, Graffiti repeatedly beats Dre until he is forced to comply. This is part of a pattern that is set forth in the beginning of the prison scenes in this movie when Graffiti and Dre are introduced as cellmates. Dre is raped by Graffiti and Lefty, who are both members of an unidentified white supremacist gang. Dre becomes Graffiti's property from the very beginning of the movie.

The second sexual assault scene takes place in *Animal Factory*. Buck Rowan assaults Ron Decker, the protagonist, in the bathroom. Compared to the scene in *Lockdown*, this scene is much shorter, lasting 15 seconds. Buck corners Ron in the bathroom and says a few sexually suggestive remarks, including: "I'm going to loosen you up a little before I give you the jackpot." At this point, Buck licks his finger and he inserts his finger inside Ron's rectum. This gesture is implied but not seen on screen. A school teacher comes inside the bathroom and breaks the two up and the scene ends.

Finally, the study examines the sixth and final research question concerning rape and sexual assault to compare the representations on film to the extant

academic correctional literature: Is the portrayal of sexual assault portrayed in motion picture films similar to the portrayal presented in extant correctional literature?

Prior research on rape and sexual assault in prison reports occurrence rates of 0.3% to 22% (Davis, 1982; Hensley, Koscheski, and Tewksbury, 2005; Hensley, Tewksbury, and Castle, 2003; Hensley, 2000; Lockwood, 1980; Nacci and Kane, 1983; Saum, Surratt, Inciardi, and Bennett, 1995; Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson, 2000; Struckman-Johnson, Struckman-Johnson, Rucker, Bumby, and Donaldson, 1996; Wooden and Parker, 1982). Overall, the current study finds rape and sexual assault to fall within the current estimates of rape prevalence rates within prison today. However, the current study finds the depiction of rape and sexual assault on film to be at the low end of these rates. When rape and sexual assault scenes are combined, the total percentage climbs to just above one half of one percent (0.56 %). Equally important is the analysis of rape and sexual assault scenes as separate entities. One of the methodological problems encountered in this research was constructing a useful comparison measure for rape and sexual assaults for films and prisons. Prison rape and sexual assault data are based on the percentage of victimized inmates. In film depictions, the size of the inmate population is unknown. The alternatives are to measure the number of main characters victimized or to measure the time devoted to rape and sexual assault scenes. However, neither measure is directly comparable to existing data on the prevalence of rape and sexual assault in prison. Therefore, the comparisons that follow, which relate time of rape and sexual

assaults to rape and sexual assault prevalence rates in prison, should be interpreted with caution.

When addressed separately, the study finds that the percentage of time for rape scenes as a percentage of the total prison time is less than one half of one percent (0.44%). For sexual assault, the percentage of time of sexual assault scenes on film as a percentage of the total prison time is even lower at 0.12%. The study finds that the results for rape and sexual assault combined rise just above the bottom threshold of the prevalence rates reported in the correctional literature. This leads to the conclusion that the depictions of rape and sexual assault combined in prison films are representative of the prevalence rates reported in the literature should be addressed with caution. Future research needs to more adequately address the differences between the depiction of rape and sexual assault within prison film perhaps by conducting a separate analysis on just this issue.

Research has suggested that certain demographic variables are linked to victimization behind bars. Criminologists have identified that being white, of small physicality, of homosexual orientation, or possessing effeminate qualities will increase an inmate's likelihood of victimization (Dumond, 2000; Dumond, 2003; Lockwood, 1980; Hensley, Koscheski, and Tewksbury, 2005; Human Rights Watch, 2001; Nacci and Kane, 1983; Struckman-Johnson and Struckman-Johnson, 2000; Weiss and Friar, 1974; Wooden and Parker, 1982). Not being streetwise and lacking a gang affiliation have also been linked to victimization (Dumond, 2000; Dumond, 2003; Human Rights Watch,

2001). Researchers have found that the majority of victims of rape behind bars are white whereas the perpetrators are African American (Davis, 1970; Knowles, 1999; Lockwood, 1980; Hensley, Koscheski, and Tewksbury, 2005; Human Rights Watch, 2001).

The current study found that the majority of rape and sexual assault victims portrayed in the films were white. This is representative of the current correctional literature. With respect to perpetrators of sexual violence and rape, minorities were underrepresented in comparison to the correctional literature. In the 6 rape scenes, 4 perpetrators were white, one was African American, and one was Hispanic.

On film, small physicality or stature was not found to be a determining factor in whether or not sexual victimization occurred. However, the lack of street sense and the lack of gang affiliation were accurate depictions of victims in prison films. None of the victims portrayed on film were affiliated with any gang. The film *Lockdown* portrayed a new inmate who was almost immediately raped when he entered the prison institution and was sexually assaulted later in the movie. The protagonist in *Animal Factory*, Ron Decker, was a young inmate convicted of a minor marijuana charge who was sexually assaulted by an older, wiser, and hardened inmate named Buck Rowan. *American Me* showed a group of La Eme gang members raping a vulnerable young man who was invited to a “party.” An *Innocent Man* illustrated a gang rape of a victim who tried to go against the established inmate culture. In this movie, viewers were told: “That bitch was sold to us by the Muslims for 10 cartons and some drugs. That made him ours. Only he didn’t want to be sold. He wouldn’t give it up to us. So we decided to rough it off, you

know?” Finally, the rape scene in *Brubaker* depicts an older inmate raping a young inmate in a dorm.

In conclusion, the depiction of rape and sexual assault on film appears to be representative of the prevalence rates reported in the literature. Also, the depiction of rape and sexual assault on film is representative of the victims reported in the correctional literature with respect to race as the majority of rape and sexual assault on film portrays white victims. Rape and sexual assault on film is not representative of the correctional literature with respect to the perpetrator of this victimization. Rape and sexual assault scenes depicted on film portrayed a range of races with the majority being white perpetrators. Finally, the study found that rape and sexual assault on film portrays victims as unsophisticated, not streetwise, and having no gang affiliation. This is similar to the current correctional literature on victimization behind bars.

Violence

The third penal construct category measures the depiction of violence in prison films. To examine the representation of violence within prison films the study asks the seventh research question: What is the frequency of violence presented in prison films?

Table 8

Frequency of Violence in Prison Films 1979-2001

Title	Year	Violent scenes	Violent scene time (seconds)	Prison time (seconds)	Violent scenes as a percentage of overall movie time
<i>Down Time</i>	2001	3	19	2734	0.69
<i>Animal Factory</i>	2000	9	176	5023	3.50
<i>Lockdown</i>	2000	9	507	4664	10.9
<i>Unshackled</i>	2000	9	188	5471	3.44
<i>American Me</i>	1992	5	140	2406	5.82
<i>Death Warrant</i>	1990	17	513	3787	13.5
<i>An Innocent Man</i>	1989	3	102	2756	3.70
<i>Lock Up</i>	1989	18	630	5945	8.98
<i>Brubaker</i>	1980	12	328	6394	5.13
<i>Escape from Alcatraz</i>	1979	3	131	6376	2.05
<i>Penitentiary</i>	1979	8	566	5373	10.5
TOTALS		96	3300	50929	

Violent prison scenes were found across all 11 films and were found to be the dominant prison scene depicted among the type of scenes analyzed in the current study in both numbers of scenes per film and in average length of scene. Across the 11 films,

there were a total of 96 violent scenes. The number of violent scenes for any one film ranged from a low of 3 scenes (*Down Time*, and *Escape from Alcatraz*) to a high of 18 scenes (*Lock Up*). The total violent scene time in any one movie ranged from 19 seconds (*Down Time*) to 630 seconds (*Lock Up*) and averaged 300 seconds (5 minutes) in length per scene. Furthermore, violent scenes were computed as a percentage of the total time that each film depicted prison on screen. Across films, violent scenes accounted for 6.48% of the total time depicted in prison.

To examine the contextual components that surround violent prison incidents depicted on film the study examines the eighth research question: What is the nature of the violence presented in prison films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which violence is portrayed within the film?

Table 9

Pattern of Violence in Prison films 1979-2001

Title	Year	Violent	Average	Average	Fatalities
		scenes	violence level	injuries	
<i>Down Time</i>	2001	3	3	1	2
<i>Animal Factory</i>	2000	9	2	1	6
<i>Lockdown</i>	2000	9	3	2	20
<i>Unshackled</i>	2000	9	3	1	2
<i>American Me</i>	1992	5	4	1	5
<i>Death Warrant</i>	1990	17	4	2	7
<i>An Innocent Man</i>	1989	3	4	1	2
<i>Lock Up</i>	1989	18	3	1	4
<i>Brubaker</i>	1980	12	2	1	5
<i>Escape from</i>					
<i>Alcatraz</i>	1979	3	3	1	0
<i>Penitentiary</i>	1979	8	2	1	1
TOTALS		96			54
AVERAGES		8.7	3	1	5

Note: Average violence level and average injuries have been rounded. Fatality numbers include one suicide in lockdown.

In addition to the presence of violent scenes within the films, several other contextual components were coded. To reiterate the violence scale that was discussed in the previous chapter, violence level was measured on a scale from 1 to 5. The range was from 1, the least modeled depictions of violence to 5, the most modeled. The following coding scheme was adapted from the CHAMP (2009) study and was slightly modified to fit the prison movie genre:

01. *Consequence/Aftermath Sequences*. A body is shown or the result of violence is shown, but the act of violence itself is not shown in the scene. There are representations of injuries, maimed, disfigured, or dead bodies, characters bleeding, pools of blood, splattered blood.

02. *Somewhat Modeled*. Violence is portrayed in the scene, but a murder is not portrayed. There is a minimal amount of bloodshed or none at all, and a weapon isn't shown hitting a body. For example, one character striking another would be coded as somewhat modeled. Poisoning is also included at this level.

03. *Modeled*. Violence, including the use of weapons and the portrayal of murder, can be shown, but without bloodshed if a weapon is used.

04. *Very Modeled*. Sequences coded as very modeled usually including murder, weapons, and bloodshed. The primary difference between modeled and very modeled is the presence of blood. The idea of penetration—by a bullet, shotgun shell, knife, or anything else—is key, but the penetration will not be accompanied by bloodshed.

05. *Most Modeled*. Sequences that combine attributes from the preceding categories are coded as most modeled. Of primary importance is the combination of penetration and bloodshed. Included in this category are the severing of any body part and extreme torturous acts that result in death.

Overall, the study found violence was depicted at the average level (3 = modeled) within prison films. Notably, this depiction of violence included the portrayal of weapons hitting the body and could also include murder while little to no bloodshed was seen within these depictions. The study found above-average levels of violence within 3 films (*American Me*, *Death Warrant*, and *Innocent Man*).

While the average violence scenes within prison films were of the modeled category, it should also be noted that a significant amount of time was measured at the somewhat modeled level. The depictions of violence on screen at this level were typified by characters striking one another. Little or no blood was seen in these scenes. Murder is not seen on the screen, and poisoning is included at this level. Ten out of the 11 films (all except *American Me*) in the study depicted an act of violence at this level that could be characterized as a fight between inmates.

At the end of the violence level scale, there were several significant most modeled scenes that are worthy of mention as they present violence contextually specific to the prison institution. Several films showed inmates being burned to death. This explicit act of violence was a result of the inmates' failing to comply with parts of the inmate code by snitching on another inmate or failing to pay back a debt or by stealing, for examples.

The film *Death Warrant* has two burning scenes. In one scene, a snitch named Myerson is soaked with gasoline and set on fire. In this scene, the perpetrator of the violence is not visible to the audience. This scene is particularly graphic because the visual representation of Myerson's burning to death in his cell is accompanied by his pleas for help while the other inmates cheer within the cellblock. The second burning scene in this movie takes place at the end of the film. The villain, Sandman, is burned to death by the protagonist, Louis Burke (played by Jean Claude van Dame), when he is pushed into an open incinerator. In *An Innocent Man*, Robbie, a seemingly knowledgeable convict, gets burned to death in the yard because he owed two inmates 10 cartons of cigarettes from the last time he was incarcerated. Finally, in *American Me*, an unnamed African American male inmate is burned to death by two of the La Eme gang members because the African American male "copped their wire," meaning that he stole part of the gang's drug supply.

In addition to the violence level, the injury level for each violent scene was measured. Again, this measure was based upon the one utilized in the CHAMP (2009) study. The injury scale applied in the study ranged from 0 (none) to 3 (extreme). The following coding scheme was utilized: 0 = None (there were no representations of injuries in the scene); 1 = Mild (there were representations of bruises, lacerations, or broken bones); 2 = Moderate (there were representations of bodies being maimed, blinded, impaired, or disfigured); 3 = Extreme (there were representation of fatally

wounded bodies and the bodies were shown). The study found that within prison films, the average injury level was mild, depicting bruises, lacerations, or broken bones.

The study found that the illustration of injuries was mild across prison films. However, for two films, *Lockdown* and *Death Warrant*, the average injury level across violent scenes within these films rose to the moderate level depicting maimed, blinded, impaired, or disfigured characters as a result of the violence within the film.

The number of fatalities was also recorded for each violent scene. For a fatality to be recorded, a body must be present. Fifty-four deaths were recorded across the 11 films. This is an average of 5 fatalities per film. The film with the largest number of deaths was *Lockdown*, with 20 fatalities. This high number can be accounted for by a significant riot scene that takes place at the end of the film. In this lengthy scene (almost 5.5 minutes), 16 bodies can clearly be counted on the screen. This riot scene skews the numbers of fatalities across films. Removing this outlier decreases the average number of fatalities per film to three.

Several films depicted major sporting events between inmates. Many sports include as part of the sport itself planned or accidental acts of violence (e.g., tackling and blocking in football, boxing out and picking in basketball, the hit and pitch in baseball, and so on). Violence associated with normal sports routine occurred during any of the prison films were not counted as violence. The sports depicted on film were basketball (*Lockdown Unshackled*), football (*Lock Up*), polo (*Brubaker*), and boxing (*Penitentiary*).

Various measures of victims and perpetrators of violence were taken across films. Across the 11 films, there were 96 scenes that involved violence.

Table 10

Victim Offender Pairings of Violence in Prison Films 1979-2001

Victim-offender pairing	Number of violent scenes across films	Violent scenes as a percentage of total
Inmate-on-inmate	73	76.0
Guard-on-inmate	16	16.0
Inmate-on-guard	6	6.25
Guard-on-guard	1	1.0
TOTALS	96	99.25

Note. Total does not add up to 100% due to rounding.

Within prison films inmate-on-inmate violence was far more prevalent than inmate-on-guard or guard-on-inmate violence. Inmate-on-inmate violence accounted for 76% of the violent scenes, being shown in 73 of the 96 violent scenes. Guard-on-inmate violence accounted for 16% of the violent scenes (N = 16). Inmate-on-guard violence was depicted in 6 of the 96 scenes and accounted for 6.25% of the violent scenes. Finally, guard-on-guard violence was the rarest type of violence depicted; it accounted for 1% of the violent scenes, being depicted only in one scene across all films.

The study explored the ninth and final research question concerning violence to compare the representations on film to the extant academic correctional literature: Is the

portrayal of violence portrayed in motion picture films similar to the portrayal presented in extant correctional literature?

Recent correctional research has found that the most violent offenses in prison facilities include assaults, drug crimes, and threats (DeLisi, 2003). Further, inmate-on-inmate assault is quite common (Stephan and Karberg, 2003). However, the most severe of all offenses, homicide, is a relatively rare event inside prison institutions and has been declining on recent years (Mumola, 2005; Stephan and Karberg, 2003).

In general, the depiction of violence was more prevalent in prison films compared to that which reportedly takes place in U.S. prisons, according to academic correctional literature. According to the literature assaults, drug crimes and threats are the most pervasive types of violence found within prisons. The study found that without exception all prison films in the sample depict violence. Additionally, the level of violence depicted in prison movies was more severe compared to the level of violence that occurs within prison institutions in the US that has been reported by academics. The clearest demonstration of this disparity between violence portrayed in prison films and prison reality is the overrepresentation of murder within prison films. Murder in prison films is a frequent and grisly event. Ninety-one percent of the films in the sample depicted at least one fatality. The study coded 113 inmate characters as part of the character analysis. Across 11 films, there were 53 homicides for 113 inmate characters.

For identifiable characters, the prevalence of homicides was high at nearly 47%. By design, prison films focus on a limited number of identifiable characters.

Consequently, a measure of homicide employing only main characters overestimates the frequency of homicides within a prison setting. It is likely, however, that the audience's perception is based on the frequency of homicides among the primary characters depicted in a film, not an estimate of the size of the prison population within prison depicted in a given film.

Research has examined demographic correlates of violence within prisons. Studies have found evidence of racial and ethnic patterns in prison violence. The majority of correctional literature suggests that racial and ethnic minorities account for a disproportionate amount of prison infractions and violent behaviors behind bars (Craddock, 1996; Delisi, 2003; Flanagan, 1983; Goetting and Howsen, 1986; Harer and Steffenmeier, 1996; Poole and Regoli, 1980, 1983; Wooldrege, 1991). This was not the case with respect to prison films. The study found white inmates were responsible for the majority of violence within prison films. Fifty-eight of the 96 violent scenes in the prison movies had a white character as the perpetrator of the violence. This finding accounted for 60% of the violence across the films. African American perpetrators were the second most represented group at 26%, followed by Hispanics at 9.4% and Asians at 1%. (Numbers do not add up to 100% because one scene was a riot scene and two scenes had unknown perpetrators).

In conclusion, the frequency and degree of violence illustrated on film was not proportionate to the amount and degree of violence that is reported by academics in the correctional literature. Most significantly, murder on film was overrepresented.

Additionally, prison films portrayed white perpetrators of violence more often than other racial groups. This discovery varies from the current correctional literature that finds that racial and ethnic minorities account for the majority of violence behind bars.

Gang Affiliation

The final construct of inmate culture the study examines is gang affiliation. To examine the representation of gang affiliation within prison films, the study asks the 10th research question: What is the frequency of gang affiliation presented in prison films?

Table 11

Frequency of Gang Affiliation in Prison Films 1979-2001

Title	Year	Gang presence	Number of		Gang affiliation
			gang characters	Total number of characters	
<i>Down Time</i>	2001	Yes	3	8	Aryan Brotherhood and Unidentified Hispanic
<i>Animal Factory</i>	2000	No	0	14	

Table 11 (continued)

Frequency of Gang Affiliation in Prison Films 1979-2001

Title	Year	Gang presence	Number of		Gang affiliation
			gang characters	Total number of characters	
<i>Lockdown</i>	2000	Yes	7	14	Unidentified White and Unidentified African American
<i>Unshackled</i>	2000	No	0	9	
<i>American Me</i>	1992	Yes	8	9	La Eme and La Nuestra Familia
<i>Death Warrant</i>	1990	No	0	9	
<i>An Innocent Man</i>	1989	Yes	3	6	Black Guerilla Family
<i>Lock Up</i>	1989	No	0	6	
<i>Brubaker</i>	1980	No	0	17	
<i>Escape from Alcatraz</i>	1979	No	0	11	
<i>Penitentiary</i>	1979	No	0	10	
TOTALS			21	113	

Gang affiliations were recorded for each overall film and the characters while viewing each film. The majority of the prison films did not show gang activity behind bars or identify inmate characters as affiliated with gangs. However, 4 of the 11 prison films depicted gang affiliation (36%). A character analysis was conducted to identify individual gang affiliation.

There were 113 inmate characters recorded across the 11 films. Twenty-one gang members were identified among these 113 characters (18%). La Eme gang members were the most prevalently featured gang members, approximately 6% of gang members depicted were associated with La Eme. All depictions of La Eme gang members, however, occurred in one film, *American Me*.

The second most frequently occurring gang association among inmates on film was portrayed in *Lockdown*. The five gang members (4.4% of all depictions) depicted in this film were members of an unidentified African American gang. All Black Guerilla Family gang members were depicted on screen in *An Innocent Man* (3 of 113 characters). Unidentified white gang members and Aryan Brotherhood gang members accounted for 2 inmate characters (1.8%) across all films. Lastly, one La Nuestra Familia gang member and one unidentified Hispanic gang member was depicted and accounted for less than 1% of total inmate characters.

To explore the contextual components that surround the depiction of gang affiliation within prison films the current study examines the 11th research question: What

is the nature of the gang affiliation presented in prison films? Specifically, what are the contextual components in which gang affiliation is portrayed within the film?

The gang portrayed most frequently in prison films was La Eme in the film *American Me*. The plot of this film is centered on the gang, its leader Santana, and the cultural components of gang life. *American Me* is a biographical sketch of Santana's life growing up in East Los Angeles and a depiction of the correctional system there. The movie chronicles his formation of the clica, the gang. He quickly moves from juvenile detention center to Folsom prison. Throughout the movie Santana and other gang members are portrayed committing violent behaviors as well as controlling the drug trafficking at Folsom. A key message of this movie is that prison gangs are connected to street gangs. This is made apparent when JD, a main character in the movie and one of Santana's fellow gang members, states: "Inside and outside go together, brother. "Control the inside and you own the outside."

Another significant area of penal culture that gangs have control within the prison is the sex trade. The most significant portrayal of the sex trade behind bars takes place in the film *An Innocent Man*. For example, in once scene, Jingles, a member of the Black Guerilla Family, and his fellow gang members approach Jimmy Rainwood, the protagonist played by Tom Selleck, at the gym. They escort Jimmy down the hall into the weight room. Jingles and his two fellow gang members hold Jimmy as they make him watch the gang rape of an inmate. As the unidentified white male is being raped, Jimmy is told that the man was sold to the Black Guerilla Family from the Muslims for 10

cartons of cigarettes and some drugs. However, the man did not want to be part of the transaction and therefore the Black Guerilla Family members had to force him to comply.

This gang-sex trade connection as well as the gang as a source of protection is seen in the film *Lockdown*. Graffiti and Lefty, members of an unidentified white neo-Nazi gang, quickly rape Dre when Dre is introduced to his new cellmate, Graffiti. Dre does not have time to align himself with a gang and immediately becomes Graffiti's property. When speaking about Dre to Avery, the protagonist in the film, Malachi, the old and wise inmate, states: "Your boy done had his manhood taken. Messing with him now is like taking on Graffiti." Malachi is referring to the fact that if Avery were to come to Dre's aid, Avery would be interfering with Graffiti's gang's business, and this would cause Graffiti and his gang members to take retributive action against Avery.

There is evidence that prison films portray drug trafficking and use by gangs. *Down Time*, *Lockdown*, and *American Me* show gangs trafficking drugs within the prison facility. *Down Time* portrays the movement of drugs between inmates. *Lockdown* shows the majority of the drug movement between inmates and also depicts the exchange of drugs between inmates and guards. This is the only film that portrays the involvement of the custodial staff in the exchange of contraband. Both *American Me* and *Lockdown* show the introduction of drugs into the prison from outsiders, visitors to the prison institution. In both films, members of the gang have female visitors come to the prison and either swap a balloon filled with heroin during a kiss (*Lockdown*) or pass a balloon filled with heroin during a bathroom visit (*Lockdown* and *American Me*).

Finally, the current study examines the 12th and final research question concerning gang affiliation to compare the representations on film to the extant academic correctional literature: Is the portrayal of gang affiliation portrayed in motion picture films similar to the portrayal presented in extant correctional literature?

Recent research has found that almost 17% of all prison inmates in the US are gang members (Knox, 2005). Prison gangs are often aligned on racial, ethnic and geographic lines. While prison gangs vary by state, there is some general consensus as to the most prevalent gangs within the prison system. The top 10 prison gangs in the United States are the Crips, Bloods, Latin Kings, Vice Lords, Aryan Brotherhood, Folks, White Supremacists, Surenos and Five Percenters (Knox, 2005). Behind bars, gangs have been held responsible for drug trafficking, protection, the sex-trade and sexual assault (Cox, 1986; Knox, 2005, Stevens, 1997).

The current study found that the majority of prison films did not show gang activity behind bars or identify inmate characters as affiliated with gangs. Four of the 11 prison films depicted gang affiliation (36%); and within these 4 films, 21 gang members were identified among these 113 characters (18%). Therefore, prison movies in general under represent gang affiliation, but within movies that do depict gang affiliation, that portrayal is representative of the current frequency rate reported by correctional researchers.

Within the movies that portrayed gangs, the La Eme gang, or the Mexican Mafia, was the most prevalent gang affiliation. The second most prevalent affiliation was an

unidentified African American gang. The third most prevalent was the Black Guerilla Family. An unidentified white gang and the Aryan Brother brotherhood were the fourth most prevalent. Lastly, one La Nuestra Familia gang member and one unidentified Hispanic gang member were depicted and accounted for less than 1% of total inmate characters. This finding is in contrast to the current correctional literature on the top 10 prison gangs. Only one prison gang depicted on film—the Aryan Brotherhood—was on the top 10 list of prison gangs, and it was one of the least represented gang affiliations within prison films. Prison films that depicted gang affiliation were similar to the portrayal of types of gang activity behind bars. Most significantly, violent behavior, sexual assault, the sex trade, and drug trafficking are all components of penal culture that are represented in prison films.

In conclusion, prison movies in general underrepresent gang affiliation compared to the correctional literature but within movies that portray gang affiliation, that depiction is representative of the current frequency rate reported by correctional researchers. With respect to gang affiliation type, only prison gang depicted on film—the the Aryan Brotherhood—was on the top 10 list of prison gangs and it was one of the least-represented gang affiliations within prison films. Films that depicted gang affiliation were similar with respect to their portrayal of types of gang activity behind bars compared to the correctional literature.

Summary of Results

The results of the 12 research questions analyzed in the present study indicate that the celluloid depiction of drug use and trafficking within prison reflects the frequency of drug use and trafficking that occurs in prison institutions in the United States as reported by academics in the correctional literature. However, the current study finds heroin to be the most prevalent drug illustrated on film while marijuana is the most frequently reported drug used and trafficked by prison inmates in the correctional literature.

Additionally, the depiction of rape and sexual assault on film is similar to the amount of rape and sexual assault reported in the correctional literature. The depiction of victims of rape and sexual assault within prison films is similar to the depiction of victims reported in the correctional literature with respect to race as the majority of rape and sexual assault on film portrays white victims. However, there is a disparity with respect to the race of the perpetrator of sexual assault depicted on film compared to the depiction in the literature. In contrast to the correctional literature, rape and sexual assault scenes depicted on film portray the majority of the perpetrators of these assaults as white. Further, the study finds that rape and sexual assault on film portrays victims as unsophisticated, not streetwise, and lacking gang affiliation. This is similar to the current correctional literature on victimization of rape and sexual assault behind bars.

Moreover, the study finds that violence is a significant theme in prison films. The frequency and degree of violence illustrated on film is out of proportion to the amount and degree of violence that is reported by academics in the correctional literature. Not

only is there more violence seen in prison films than reported in the literature but there is a substantially higher degree of violence portrayed within films as well. For example, murder is the most significant category of violence within prison films. Additionally, prison films portray perpetrators of violence as white more often than they do from other racial groups. This finding varies from the current correctional literature that suggests that racial and ethnic minorities account for the majority of violence behind bars.

Lastly, prison movies in general do not reflect the correctional literature with respect to the portrayal of frequency of gang affiliation. Prison films illustrate few of the gang affiliations that have been reported in the correctional literature. With respect to gang affiliation type, only one prison gang depicted on film—the Aryan Brotherhood—was on the top 10 list of prison gangs and it was one of the least represented gang affiliations within prison films. Films that depicted gang affiliation were similar to the information reported in the academic correctional literature with respect to the types of gang activity that takes place bars such as violent behavior, sexual assault, the sex trade, and drug trafficking. A discussion of these results will be presented in Chapter Seven.

Chapter Seven: Discussion

Introduction

Chapter 7 provides a discussion of the results reported in Chapter 6. The objective of the current study is to identify the presentation of prison life on film and to explore the cultural meanings expressed through these images. First, a brief discussion of the key findings and the limitations of the study will be presented. Second, the focus will turn to a discussion placing the study in the larger context of the significance of the production of iconography by the media industry and the consequences of this process. This discussion will include the following areas of examination: social constructionism, the propaganda model and the entertainment industry, political images of crime control and crime control policy, the prison industrial complex, and the diversion of attention from other inmate issues. Recall that the overarching goal of the study is to answer the following question: What do the images of incarceration and the lives of the people who live in the celluloid world of the prison film tell the public about incarceration and the daily life of inmates?

Summary of Key Findings

The present study is unique in that it is the first known study to apply a theoretical sampling structure to compare the relationship between the iconography illustrated within recent prison films and that presented in the extant academic correctional literature. The current study draws on the existing literature to guide the selection of relevant penal constructs that all inmates are concerned with regardless of the institution in which they are housed. These constructs are drug use and trafficking, rape and sexual assault, violence, and gang affiliation. A discussion of the key findings within each construct of penal culture follows.

Drug Use and Drug Trafficking Behind Bars

To reiterate, the current study found the amount of drug use and trafficking presented on screen is similar to the information that is reported within the academic correctional literature. Criminological research has found that drug use and drug trafficking are part of the underground economy behind bars and therefore it is not surprising that film producers would choose to utilize images of drug use and trafficking within prison films (CASA, 2002; Inciardi, Lockwood, and Quinlan, 1993; Mumola, 1999; Simpler and Langhinrichsen-Rohling, 2005). Importantly, the emphasis on drug use and trafficking in both prison films and the academic correctional literature suggests to the public and to academicians that drug use and trafficking among inmates is an important and relevant issue worthy of further examination.

Moreover, the imagery of the inmate as drug user and drug trafficker should be analyzed in the broader context of the war on drugs. According to a recent report by Ryan S. King of The Sentencing Project (2008):

Overall, between 1980 and 2003, the number of drug offenders in prison or jail increased by 1100% from 41,100 in 1980 to 493,800 in 2003, with a remarkable rise in arrests concentrated in African American communities. (p. 1)

In the current study, several of the main characters were sentenced to prison as a consequence of the commission of drug crimes. In 4 of the 9 movies that have inmate protagonists, the protagonists were sentenced to prison for drug crimes. In *Down Time*, Slim was a heroin addict who is seen committing a violent drug deal at the beginning of the film. In *American Me*, Santana was sent to prison the second time for possession of heroin. Jimmy Rainwood in *An Innocent Man* was sentenced for a drug crime and for threatening the police with a gun, both crimes he did not commit. *Animal Factory*, a film released in 2000, depicted Ron Decker, who was sentenced for the crime of possession with intent to sell \$200,000-worth of marijuana. During the trial, the defense attorney rarely was heard from but the prosecutor made the following lengthy speech (*Animal Factory*, 2000):

He is from a good family which gives him less excuse since he's had every opportunity. The facts don't indicate that this was a hobby which counsel seems to imply. The amount of drugs with which he was caught was \$200,000. This is a serious offense and if someone with this level of involvement who has every

advantage and opportunity our society provides doesn't go to prison then it would be unfair to send someone who hasn't has the opportunity.

Throughout these films the use of prison as punishment for drug crimes is not questioned and, as the example above shows, was clearly supported by agents of the criminal justice system. The message that is provided to the public through the constructed messages within the films is that the consequence for the commission of a drug crime is - imprisonment. This upholds the current crime-control model and supports the war-on-drugs model in place in the United States.

Further, the message presented to the audience through the imagery of drug use and drug trafficking within prison movies is that drugs are readily available within the modern American correctional system and that just because an individual is sent to prison does not mean that drug use will stop. The message conveyed here to the public is that the war on drugs must continue and in fact must now be expanded because drugs have infiltrated prison facilities. Given the emphasis on drug use and drug trafficking depicted throughout the prison films it is notable that drug treatment is not represented in any of the current study sample of films. A thorough discussion of drug treatment will continue below.

The use of moral panic analysis is another relevant consideration given the emphasis on drug use and trafficking imagery in prison films found in the current study. According to Stanley Cohen (2002) societies are subject to periods of moral panic in which "a condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a

threat to societal values and interests” (p. 1). The mass media and moral entrepreneurs such as editors and politicians are responsible for initiating, offering resolutions to, and reigniting the panic of these episodes or conditions (Cohen, 2002). The moral panic concerning the use of psychoactive drugs has been in existence for approximately 100 years (Cohen, 2002). According to Cohen (2002, p. xiii) these panics have taken several forms: “the evil pusher and the vulnerable pusher; the slippery slope from ‘soft’ to ‘hard’ drugs; the transition from safe to dangerous; the logic of prohibition.” (p. xiii) New substances are added to the growing list of concerns as patterns of psychoactive drug use change over time. For example, in the 1930s the United States experienced a growing panic about marijuana, which is best exemplified in the classic 1938 film *Reefer Madness*. It is possible that the iconography of drug use and trafficking within prison films is reflective of a historically simultaneous moral panic concerning drug use in the United States. Recall that prison films, as a measure of popular culture, are a historical byproduct of the generation in which they are produced (Cheatwood, 1998). Therefore, it could be argued that the significant drug depictions within prison films are historically reflective of a moral panic. Cohen states that the mass media are primarily responsible for the proliferation of moral panics. In this vein, it is possible that the proliferation of drug images by the film industry might serve to fuel or reignite the moral panic about drug use in the United States.

The most significant finding with respect to drug use and trafficking in the current study is the evidence of a disparity in the most frequent type of drug portrayed on film

compared to the most frequent type of drug used and trafficked in prison as reported in the correctional literature. The current study finds heroin to be the most prevalent drug used and trafficked on film, but marijuana is the most frequently reported drug that is used and trafficked among inmates.

The choice to use the cultural image of the heroin user is an interesting and significant one. To the public, heroin represents one of the more harmful drugs that an individual can use. Heroin can be taken orally, insufflated (snorted/sniffed), smoked, or injected. Heroin is a euphoric depressant and an analgesic. Depending on the quality of the heroin, the method of ingestion and the amount taken, the effects can include but are not limited to relaxation, sedation, pain-relief, nausea, vomiting, constipation, dizziness, blackout and death. While heroin can be taken many ways, the majority of the films show inmates using heroin by injecting the substance intravenously. In the movies in which the inmates are using heroin, the audience is given the chance to see the whole process that the inmate utilizes to inject the heroin, such as preparing the arm by creating a tourniquet out of a belt, cooking the solid form of the substance to turn it into liquid, drawing the liquid into the needle, inserting the needle into the arm, drawing blood into the needle (flushing), and injecting the drug. Through the use of this vibrant imagery there is no doubt to the audience that the inmate is using heroin. The use of the injecting imagery allows the producers of these films to express to the audience that drug-abusing inmates are hardcore drug users addicted to drugs and relying on needles to produce their much needed fix. For most of the public, heroin use represents one of the most addictive drug

choices that can be made within the spectrum of illegal drugs. While one might expect that in prison dangerous, hardcore drug users are living behind the bars, in the US the majority of offenders are held in minimum and medium security level facilities while only approximately one fifth of all facilities are maximum security (Stephan, 2008). Part of the problem lies with the fact that the majority of prison movies are set in maximum security institutions (Wilson and O'Sullivan, 2004).

Further, heroin-using scenes depict the aftermath of the heroin use. There are several scenes in *Down Time* that show inmates who have used heroin and then fall asleep. A dominant physiological reaction to heroin is lethargy and states of unconsciousness. However, other films depict inmates becoming violent as a result of heroin use. This portrayal does not reflect the pharmacological consequences of heroin in the body's system. The current study finds that prison movies portray negative consequences associated with this type of hardcore drug use on film. For example, in *Lockdown*, the character Dre is portrayed using heroin in several scenes. The final drug scene that the viewer is shown of Dre shooting heroin depicts Dre becoming hostile after he injects the drugs into his arm. He moves immediately from the bathroom where he is doing the drugs to the auditorium where he takes out a shank and stabs his rapist, Graffiti. Consequently, a guard kills Dre by hitting him in the head with a nightstick.

The emphasis on heroin coupled with negative consequences as a result of the use of this drug send a clear message to the audience that prisons are dangerous places.

Prisons hold inmates who are hardcore drug users and who sometimes commit violent

acts, such as murder, as a result of this drug use. The message here is to be fearful of prison because inmates in prison are heroin addicts who will kill because they become out of control when they are on heroin. Consider what might be the consequence if a film portrayed heroin use by an inmate as a pleasurable act? The public could possibly find this offensive. The stigma associated with heroin use extends to the prison depiction of this use. While the suggestion by prison movies is that heroin use in prison is normative it is also stigmatized by the general public.

Rape and Sexual Assault

The study finds that the depictions of rape and sexual assault on film are similar to the reported amount of rape and sexual assault by academics within the correctional literature. However, the study found that while the amount of rape and sexual assault was similar in film and the correctional literature, the amount of rape and sexual assault depicted on film was at the low end of this reported amount in the correctional literature because the correctional literature reports a range of 0.3% to 0.22%. Therefore, the study findings should be interpreted with caution. Also, the small sample size should also be a consideration when interpreting these results.

While there are few rapes and sexual assault scenes within the prison film sample (4 and 2, respectively), the study did find that victims of rape and sexual assault illustrated on film are similar with respect to the categories of race, naivety, and having no gang affiliation compared to the correctional literature. However, the study found a disparity in the comparison between the race of the perpetrator of rape and sexual assaults

on film and the race of the perpetrator in the correctional literature. The prison films in the study depict the majority of rape and sexual assault perpetrators as white while correctional research has found that African American inmates are the most likely to commit these acts in prison. Is this a significant trend within prison films or is this an anomaly of the data? With a small sample size it is difficult to discern the answer to this question. Further research should examine this question with a larger sample size however because this preliminary finding could contain significant implications concerning the media's constructions of race, sexual relations, and power structure among inmates within prison.

While there are few rape and sexual assault scenes across the prison films sampled in the current study, there is no lack of sexual innuendo in prison films. However, this innuendo rarely escalates to rape and sexual assault. No direct measures were made of sexual innuendo in the current study. Future research should explore this line of inquiry further because sexual innuendo has implications for the fear of sexual violence in prison, which is a daunting issue for inmates (Chonco, 1989; Jones and Schmidt, 1989; Smith and Batiuk, 1989; Tewksbury, 1989).

It is worthwhile to mention that the small number and length of rape and sexual assault scenes within the prison film do not make them any less important than other types of scenes throughout the prison film. In fact, one could argue that the power, drama and strength of these scenes lie in the fact that film producers use them sparingly. Film producers know that male-on-male sexual assault and rape scenes do not appeal to most

viewers. However, it is precisely these scenes that audiences remember. For example, the author showed *American Me* twice in two separate Criminological Theory undergraduate classes. After quizzing the students on two separate occasions about what they learned from the movie, students could barely recall the theory of social disorganization that had been the goal of the lesson. However, students could recall detailed descriptions of the graphic prison rape scene of Tony Scagnelli Jr., including characters' names and the sequence of events. This example shows that rape and sexual assault scenes in prison films, though short in duration, are powerful and can have a lasting impression on those who watch these films. Prison films with scenes of rape and sexual assault instill fear into the viewer that rape and sexual assault do in fact occur in prison and that if a person goes to prison, this could be his or her fate. For the purposes of this study, rape and sexual assault were categorized as unique types of violent incidents that take places within prison. Violence in general will now be discussed.

Violence

The severity and frequency of violence illustrated on film is disproportional compared to the amount and levels of violence reported in the correctional literature. Prison films depict frequent, severe acts of violence. Among the acts of violence, murder stands out as an act depicted much more frequently on film than in the correctional literature. Prison films depict frequent murders. Additionally, the study found that prison films portrayed white perpetrators of violence more often than perpetrators from other

racial groups. This discovery varies from the current correctional literature, which finds that racial and ethnic minorities account for the majority of violence behind bars.

Specifically, the study found the highest levels of violence within three films, *American Me*, *Death Warrant*, and *Innocent Man*. This finding was not surprising since these are all major Hollywood productions, and there is a belief that violence sells movies. *American Me* starred Edward James Olmos (director) and was produced by Universal Pictures. *Death Warrant* featured Jean Claude Van Dame and was produced by Pathé Pictures International and distributed by MGM. *An Innocent Man* starred Tom Selleck and was produced by Touchstone Pictures, which is owned by Disney. These films are major Hollywood productions with particularly well known stars as their lead characters. The production and reproduction of violence are in the hands of the media industry (Potter, 2003). The argument put forth by the producers of film as a justification for the reproduction of violence within films is that they are responding to market demands (Potter, 2003). This argument is based on the economic principle of supply and demand. Producers of films are giving audiences only the amount of violence that they want. However, regardless of what Hollywood assumes, public opinion polls consistently report that the general public believes that the media depict too much violence (Potter, 2003).

Given the findings of the current study, some questions still remain—the largest and most pertinent being, How do one evaluate violence? It is common practice among researchers of violence and television to sum the number of coded acts of violence per

show and compare this number to an hourly rate per program. The higher the hourly rate the more violent the program (Riddle, Keren, Mahood, and Potter, 2006). However, it is imperative to assess not just the number of acts committed but the context in which the violence was committed. Researchers need to assess the type of violent acts that are actually committed. For example, one of the most interesting additional findings discovered in the process of completing this study was the use of sports within prison films. Sporting events were depicted in *Lockdown* (basketball), *Unshackled* (basketball), *Lock Up* (football), *Brubaker* (polo), and *Penitentiary* (boxing). The violence that took place during these events was not counted in this study as part of the violent scenes. However, one could go back and evaluate whether or not these scenes fit a strict definition of violence and in what context this would apply. Future research should expand upon this contextualization of violence model and add other dimensions to these contextual measures of violence because this is an important measure within prison film and crime film in general.

Gang Affiliation

The study found that prison movies tend to underrepresent gang affiliation compared to the type of gang affiliation among inmates as reported within the correctional literature. However, within prison movies that depict gang affiliation, the portrayal of gangs is similar to the current levels of gang affiliation reported by correctional researchers. Only one prison gang depicted on film—the Aryan Brotherhood—was on the top 10 list of prison gangs; however, among gangs depicted on

film, this was one of the least depicted gang affiliations. Prison films that depicted gang affiliation depicted similar types of gang activity behind bars as those gang activities reported in the academic correctional literature. These gang activities include violent behavior, sexual assault, the sex trade, and drug trafficking

Four of the 11 films in this study depicted gangs. Films that did not identify gangs per se did, however, identify race-relations issues. For example, the movie *Unshackled*, is based on a true story of the integration of the Georgia State Penitentiary. The white protagonist, Harold Morris, is placed in a cell with an African American inmate named Doc. While this movie does not examine the iconography of the gang, it does give insight into race relations. One scene depicts protests that lead to an organized riot by the African American inmates over the imposed changes to the segregation policy. This is an example of violence related to race relations issues that is closely aligned to the gang issue but significantly different.

Other films follow suit. In *Death Warrant*, Jean Claude Van Dame portrays a police officer who goes undercover in a prison to find out why inmates are dying. In the beginning of the movie, his character, Louis Burke, tries to befriend an older, more experienced African American inmate, Hawkins. After an altercation in the dining hall during which Burke comes to Hawkins's aid, Burke tries to sit with Hawkins at his table, which is occupied by African American men. He is quickly chastised by Hawkins, who asks, "What's the matter with you? Do you want to get yourself killed?" (*Death Warrant*, 1990). A young white inmate sees the situation and offers him a seat. Throughout the rest

of this movie, it is quite clear that the line between African Americans and whites is drawn. However, no gang affiliations are recognized.

Future research should expand upon this area of racial conflict and its connection to gang affiliation behind bars. An example from *Down Time* of this race gang connection is seen when Slim, the protagonist enters prison. He is not a member of a gang but gains approval from Sammytown, the leader of the Aryan Brotherhood: “Sammytown basically gave me his blessing. He knew that I was a stand up white dude. That made things a hell of a lot easier right off the bat” (*Down Time*, 2001). It may not be possible to isolate the two issues of gang affiliation and race relations, but to examine them together makes for more comprehensive and robust studies and subsequent analyses.

Limitations of the Study

The current study is not entirely without limitations. For methodological purposes the current study borrowed measures of violence and injuries from the CHAMP (2009) study. Despite the methodological advantages of categorizing violence in this manner some drawbacks do exist. It is possible that that the categories may have been too broad. Violence was by far the hardest of the penal constructs to code. This was evident by the intercoder reliability analysis (see Table 3). Interpretation of violence is a difficult variable to operationalize; hence, the use of the CHAMP (2009) study coding with modifications. While the two coders in the study were able to agree on the number of violent scenes in the films with relative accuracy (82%), it was much harder to agree

upon the length of a violent scene. This is important because according to media researchers who support theories such as Gerbner's cultivation theory (Gerbner et al. 1994), the more time that violent images of prison are presented on screen and viewed by the public, the more the symbols and messages of violence in prison get translated into world views by the audience. In short, according to this theory, the more prison violence seen on film, the more the public believes that prisons are violent places.

Additionally, some other issues surfaced with regard to violence. The prevalence of sport within prison films was noted. For the interest of consistency, violence that took place within the context of a sporting event was not coded as violence for the purposes of this study. However, some of the sporting events in and of themselves were particularly violent. For example, a central theme in the film *Penitentiary* is boxing. Including these scenes as violence would have increased the total level of violence across films. Other sporting events included basketball, football, and polo. The exclusion of the violence within the context of sporting events served to lower the measured levels of violence within prison films. It is recommended that future studies code sporting event violence either as a separate violent category similar to rape and sexual assault or as a measure of violence on the violence scale. The possibility exists to explore the role of sport and the meanings of masculinity within prison films as well.

Furthermore, one film, *Down Time*, included scenes that took place in a jail. These scenes were excluded because they did not take place in a prison facility. Jails and prisons are distinct facilities that possess unique inmate subcultures. Jails hold both

pretrial detainees and inmates sentenced to not more than one year while prisons are long-term detention facilities. The exclusion of jail-related events based on the technical differences between jails and prisons, however, may not matter to the general public. It is quite likely that the public perceives jail and prison locations as similar. Thus, it may make sense to code jail locations as well. These data could be coded in their independent setting, and treated separately or aggregated with prison data for analysis.

Having addressed the findings and limitations of this research, the remaining discussion examines several key criminological and sociological concepts addressed in the literature review such as social constructionism, the propaganda model and the entertainment industry, political images of crime control and crime control policy, the prison industrial complex and diverting attention from other inmate issues.

Social Constructionism

The film industry paints a very specific picture about life behind the razor wire. After watching prison films, what exactly does the public know about life in prison? The following images represent some of the themes discovered in the research. First, violence among inmates is prevalent. Through film, the public is exposed to the idea that prisons are places where inmates are likely to kill other inmates because homicide is the most common violent offense committed by inmates. Also, inmates have access to drugs, specifically heroin, marijuana and alcohol, especially homemade alcohol known as pruno. In addition, drug trafficking is a typical pastime of inmates, and the economy associated with drugs encompasses the daily life of the inmates as well as the guards that

work in these institutions. Further, gangs are part of life and they control most of the illegitimate industry behind bars, such as drug trafficking and the sex trade. The sex trade and the drug trade are part of the underground economy that is present in these institutions. A hierarchy of power exists among the inmates, with gang leaders at the top of this power structure. New inmates must align themselves with older, more experienced inmates or become part of a prison gang. If not, it is likely that new inmates will be taken advantage of either through physical violence or by rape. Additionally, inmates who cross the path of the gang in power are likely to meet an unfortunate demise. The harshest expression of violence behind bars is being burned alive. This type of violence is usually reserved for snitches, the most despised of all inmates.

This view of the prison constructed by the film industry gives the audience a glimpse into the cruel reality of incarcerated life. However, given the current study and the few studies that have come before this one (Rafter, 2006; Nellis, 1982; Cheatwood, 1989; Wilson and O'Sullivan, 2004), prison films do not appear to construct the same images of prison life as the correctional literature. Rafter (2006) remarked on this difference when she stated: "notwithstanding their assertions of authenticity, however, traditional prison movies are incapable of providing a true picture of life behind bars" (p. 175). This is precisely why prison films warrant much needed criminological inquiry.

The constructed view of prison life by the film industry is as important as the reality of prison life. In fact, it could be argued that the constructed view of prisons or the representation of the prison presented to the public by the media industry is perhaps more

significant than prison life because this iconography of the prison touches so many more lives than incarceration itself. Film, as a vehicle of popular culture, serves as a stage on which the daily life of the prison is presented to the public. As the general public has a limited direct knowledge of daily prison life, film and the iconography that it illustrates becomes of significant value.

According to the Thomas theorem, “if men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences” (Thomas and Thomas, 1928, p. 572). Thomas indicated that actions only make sense to someone when a person becomes aware of all of the definitions through which the mind interprets. In short, definitions organize experience. The power of the human mind to translate belief into action has tangible consequences. How is this observation relevant to the current study and the construction of incarceration by the media industry? This needs to be examined a bit more. Prison films present a specific, and one might argue purposeful, image of incarceration to the public. The definitions of a situation including beliefs and expectations presented through the film industry are then interpreted by the public, which makes those images a fundamental part of their daily lives. These definitions can effect subsequent actions. For example, on film once the prisoner becomes a heroin addicted violent individual, that human being has been transformed through the media-prescribed situational definition into the *other*. The *othering* of the defined prisoner allows the prisoner to become the target of prejudice, discrimination, apathy, and aggression. This othering allows for the marginalization of this particular group of people, a class of people that it is acceptable to denigrate because

it has become objectified. The translation of these beliefs into actions comes when individuals who view these films believe that the images of the criminals presented on screen are similar to criminals who are housed in the U.S. correctional system.

An alternate perspective concerning the media's impact on crime images on the public is the notion that perhaps the public's interest drives demand for these images. From this point of view, not only is the media not purposeful in its construction of images of crime and punishment but viewer demand is actually driving production of crime images. Is the process of mass media influence on crime image construction cyclical wherein demand drives more imagery? Public demand is the rationale for violent imagery used by the media industry. However, research has found that the public chooses nonviolent films over violent ones (Gerbner, 1994; Williams, 1999). Similarly, would America's appetite for crime imagery change if given an alternative? This remains to be seen. We know that the public enjoys images of crime and punishment but recall Gamson et al. (1992) stated that the brilliance of the process of social constructionism is that the method is fluid, seamless and invisible.

In light of these observations, it is appropriate to examine an application of a theoretical perspective to the entertainment industry that addresses some of these issues. This model will explain how the film industry, through the use of the imagery of crime and incarceration, perpetuates the crime control ideology which is part of the shared hegemonic ideals of crime and punishment in America today.

The Propaganda Model and the Entertainment Industry

One of the predominant theoretical approaches to the study of the mass media is the propaganda model. The propaganda model was proposed and detailed by Herman and Chomsky (2002) in their now infamous book *Manufacturing Consent*. According to Herman and Chomsky (2002),

the mass media serve as a system for communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interests, to fulfill this role requires systematic propaganda. (p. 1)

Herman and Chomsky present a propaganda model that focuses on the inequality and power of the mass media. The propaganda model has primarily been applied to the mass media and the construction of news (Dowler, 2004). Herman and Chomsky's model contains five stages or "filters": (1) the large size, ownership, profit orientation of the mass media; (2) the primary income source of the mass media is money generated by thorough advertising; (3) the media reliance on "experts" who are funded and approved by agents of power such as the government or big business; (4) "flak" or negative criticism as a means of controlling the media; and (5) "anticommunism" as a control mechanism of the media. These five filters act together to construct news discourse and determine what issues become newsworthy. Herman and Chomsky argue that the mass

media distorts issues in very specific ways in order to support the interests of the capitalist economy. Why does the mass media do so? The answer, in this view, is simple – the media is part of the corporate conglomerate, the power structure, and it has a stake in maintaining the status quo.

Applying the propaganda model to the motion picture industry allows us to analyze how the media frames crime and punishment issues. Herman and Chomsky's filter 1—the large size, ownership, profit orientation of the mass media—is very easily applied to the motion picture industry. In chapter 2, media corporatizations were discussed. The majority of the mass media industry in the United States is controlled by only eight large conglomerates (Freepress, 2006). In addition, the oligopoly of the motion picture industry was previously discussed, and a very few large corporations own the market share of the motion picture industry. For example, 70% of all box office revenues in the United States are accounted for by only six film distribution companies (Standard and Poor's, 2006). Taken together, these data indicate that the film industry qualifies under Herman and Chomsky's first filter.

According to the second filter, advertising must be a primary source of income. While the film industry is not influenced by advertisers in the same manner as other areas of the mass media, advertisement is still a primary principle in the motion picture industry. Large amounts of money are spent to advertise a film to the American public. In addition, and sometimes more importantly, the film industry uses its ties with other

industries such as the restaurant industry (for example, McDonald's Corporation) or the toy industry to capitalize on the popularity of a film.

The third filter is a reliance on "official" sources. Herman and Chomsky (2002) maintain that newsmakers engage in a symbiotic relationship with official sources of information. Welch, Fenwick, and Roberts (1998) found that with respect to the social construction of crime in the news, newspaper journalists repeatedly cited "state managers" (politicians, criminal justice officials, and practitioners) as official sources. In the same vein, one can apply the propaganda model to the film industry and the construction of the representation of the prison on film. The film industry relies upon "experts" to inform them about what life inside prison is like. In addition, prison movies are also filmed primarily at actual prison institutions. In some productions actual prisoners are used as extras on the set and appear in the final film. Each of these outcomes illustrates how prison films rely on official sources and images, and, as a result, appear to present believable images about life in prison.

The fourth filter is "flak," or the negative responses of interest groups to the media. Herman and Chomsky argue that flak organizations can manipulate the media if they hold enough power and that the government can be one of the largest producing flak organizations. With respect to the motion picture industry, the best example of flak is the history through which the motion picture industry developed its rating system. The Roman Catholic Church and its very influential agency, the National Legion of Decency, pressured the motion picture industry into the adoption of self-regulation manifested in

the form of the rating system that is still present today (Skinner, 1993; Walsh, 1996). This rating system was originally established in 1968 as a joint venture between the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) and the National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO) (Federal Trade Commission, 2000). The censorship of the film industry can be seen as a particularly onerous form of flak.

The fifth and final filter in the propaganda model is anticommunism (Herman and Chomsky, 2002). However, during today's political context with the end of the Cold War, this filter is best understood, as Dowler (2004) suggests, as the dramatization of evil. Views that rival western hegemony are labeled evil and in this vein, lines are drawn between good and evil, right and wrong, thus encouraging, the public to support the side defined as good, which is typically the status quo. In recent years the United States has created the largest prison system in the world. Government officials, corporations, media, and public opinion have contributed to the reliance on the prison as the paradigm of social control in the United States.

Political Images of Crime Control and Crime Control Policy

Gerbner et al. (2001) observed that "as television seeks large and heterogeneous audiences, its messages are designed to disturb as few as possible" (p. 54) Could this be the case for film as well? Producers of film are trying to increase profits by appealing to the average film-going member of the public. To "disturb as few as possible" film producers must produce films that fit within the confines of acceptable knowledge about crime and punishment in the United States. The film industry does this by perpetuating

stereotypes about crime, criminals, and specifically, inmates and inmate culture. For example, prison movies reinforce the notion that individuals who commit drug crimes should serve long prison sentences. This war on drugs rhetoric fits within the current crime control agenda in the United States. The presentation of the criminal on film in a specific manner, as drug abusing individuals, reinforces the current crime control correctional ideology that is present in the United States.

Furthermore, the current study found that the presentation of violence within prison movies was overwhelming, more so than any of the other constructs of prison culture measured in the study. The undeniable portrayal of violence in prison films reinforces the ideal that prisons first and foremost house violent criminals. The majority of the violent scenes in prison movies take place between inmates (76%). The presentation of the perpetrator of violent acts behind bars is important because it serves to justify to the audience that the inmates are violent people who will commit acts of violence against each other even within the controlled prison environment. The solution to this violence problem is clear—more control of the inmates through the use of special housing units or administrative segregation more affectionately known as the hole. In this way, the image of the violent inmate fits within the current crime control agenda that is evidenced by the growing incarceration trend in the United States. The rhetoric says inmates are violent, and they will commit more violent acts when they go to prison; therefore, prisons should be detention facilities concerned foremost with management

and control of the inmate population. There is evidence that prison films reflect this rhetoric. In fact, evidence of rehabilitation is lacking within prison movies.

Prison Industrial Complex

The film industry through its production and reproduction of hegemonic images of incarceration helps to reinforce the war on crime in the United States. Support for the war on crime means support for the building of more prisons. Recall that the United States has, in the last three decades, built the largest prison system in the world. Prison expansion in the United States is vested in the larger socio-political economy of America. Prisons expansion has become big business, generating income from prison construction, the leasing of prison space and prison systems, and the provision of services that have become privatized. Public conservatism, crime control rhetoric, and the corporatization of the correctional system have helped fuel prison expansion (Christie, 2000; Lynch, 2007).

The film industry, operated by six large corporate conglomerates, funnels specific knowledge about crime and punishment to the general public. The information about the incarceration experience serves to reinforce crime control ideals promulgated by corporate America that in turn perpetuate the correctional machinery. It is in the film industry's best interests to support the same ideology and hegemonic ideals as corporate America, the same ideals as those supported by the prison industry. The American public has supported the proliferation of prisons in America through its support of state spending on prisons to the tune of \$44.06 billion in 2007 (PEW Center on the States, 2008). Therefore, it is not surprising that film makers, knowing that the American public

supports the building of many larger prisons, has produced films that reproduce images that support crime control ideology such as inmates as drug users and traffickers, violent offenders, and sexual deviants. Interestingly, as the film industry profits from the images of criminals and the depiction of inmates behind bars the corrections industry and its subsidiaries profit off of the process of locking up individuals.

The film industry picks and chooses what it wishes to present to the public about incarceration in the United States. Research has found that the American public often chooses to rely on the constructions that are presented by the film industry about crime and punishment rather than the information found in academic literature. As more disparities between the constructions by the film industry and the information reported by academics surface, we are likely to see that the public is obtaining a view about crime and punishment that is very different than the one that academics have constructed. The fact that film producers emphasize particular themes such as violence within prisons over other themes diverts attention from other important inmate culture issues.

Diverting Attention from Other Inmate Issues

The issue of the media's specific emphasis on particular parts of the inmate subculture is that this focus serves to divert attention away from other serious inmate issues within the correctional system. Rafter (2006), in her introduction in *Shots in the Mirror*, explains that it is not only the value of what the media presents that is important to recognize and analyze but also the importance of what is not presented. The missing information is often as informative as what is depicted. For example, the current study

found that violence was overrepresented in prison films compared to the extant academic correctional literature. This study has already discussed the function of the depiction of violence in the prison movie, but does this violence distract the audience from other, perhaps more important, issues that have not been discussed? Does representation of violence serve as a smoke screen for other issues that are relevant to the discourse on punishment in the United States omitted by producers? Prison films are limited in terms of inmate issues depicted on screen. While not all issues can be explored due to the time constraints of the motion picture format, it should be noted that, in the sample of films within this study, several serious inmate issues are poorly addressed.

The depiction of inmates with serious medical disorders such as HIV, AIDS, TB and Hepatitis is lacking. Correctional research has shown that, as the inmate population grows, the number of inmates with communicable diseases swells (Mays and Winfree, 2002). The film industry has been slow to portray this trend in prison films. Not only is there a lack of depiction of inmates with communicable diseases, but also there is a lack of depictions on film of precautionary measures taken by guards or inmates to prevent infection. Inmates on film are portrayed biting, punching, hitting, cutting, spitting on and wrestling with other inmates as well as guards. Bodily fluids are exchanged in rape scenes as well as in violent scenes. However, within the sample of films in this study, there was no depiction of precautions taken by either the correctional management or other inmates to protect themselves from the transmission of disease.

As mentioned earlier, with the depiction of so many inmates with serious drug use and addiction difficulties as well as trafficking in drugs, there is a neglect of the depiction of drug treatment on film. In addition, while the current study finds that drug use and drug trafficking are depicted on film, there is a failure to depict a common type of drug use and trafficking that takes place behind bars—the exchange of prescription drugs. The fact that the prison films examined in the current study do not explore this issue is quite telling. Only one film in the current study, *Unshackled*, has a pill line scene. This scene, while seemingly about prescription medicine, is actually a violent scene. In this scene the inmate handing out prescriptions hits another inmate in the head with a hammer as he receives his medicine. In all of the other films in the study, the focus on the drug exchange is on the inmates receiving illegal drugs from outside sources. Guards who might participate in this exchange are depicted as outside the norm or not straight.

However, prescription pills that inmates are given within the context of the prison environment are provided within generally accepted parameters set out in the medical model of correctional treatment ideology which supports the belief that criminal justice professionals are prescribing chemicals to help inmates. Any depiction on film of an economic exchange based on prescription drugs might perpetuate for the audience a belief that criminal justice professionals cannot manage the dispensing and processing of pharmaceuticals in a prison environment. The black market in prescription pills as well as the social exchanges that take place along the pill line is a significant part of the culture of the prison institution, and the failure of the depiction by prison movies is significant.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding its limitations, the current exploratory study elucidates the roles of the media in the social construction of the images of incarceration as presented on film. The prison film as a product of the film industry constructs a very specific picture about life behind the razor wire. As most people in the United States will never serve time behind bars, the iconography of the prison film and the picture of prison life that is painted by these films maybe more important than the reality of daily life behind bars with respect to the average person's perception of life behind bars. The following chapter will provide conclusions and recommendations for future research within the academic field of criminology with respect to the media, crime and justice.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

The purpose of this dissertation is to underscore the importance of studying the iconography of the prison with an emphasis on the celluloid images of prisons on film. Incarceration in the United States has reached epic proportions. Never before have we had so many people behind bars in the US. The growing correctional system in the United States is becoming controlled by private corporations. Corporatization of the correctional sector and the connection between punishment and profit are concerns within the broader context of controlling crime.

Few studies have compared media depiction of imprisonment and scholarly research on imprisonment. It is important to examine the media's depiction of prisons, prison inmates and prison condition because this information is often the only source of public information on these issues. As noted in the previous chapter, how the media constructs its image of imprisonment has profound consequences for the construction of prison ideology.

The motion picture industry presents the public with manufactured images, and it is through these images that the public gains knowledge about punishment in America.

The current study examined aspects of penal culture in prison movies and compared those images to the extant academic correctional literature. In doing so, the current study helps clarify the understanding of the manufactured images of modern penal culture in America by Hollywood that are being presented to the American public. The purpose of this final chapter is to discuss violence and censorship, the reproduction of the crime control ideology, the commodification of the prison, teaching critical media viewing and to recommend the recognition of popular criminology as a criminological discourse.

Violence and Censorship

One of the key findings from the current study is the emphasis on violence in prison movies by the film industry. This study found that compared to the amount and types of violence reported in the correctional literature, prison films depict more intense violence more frequently. There is an overemphasis on the portrayal of homicide within prison films that is not similar to the numbers reported within the academic correctional literature.

The lessons from the research on violence on television can be applied to the film. According to Jean Kilbourne in *The Killing Screens: Media and the Culture of Violence* (Jhally, 1994): “depiction’s of violence in any culture are never simply depictions of a physical act” (p. 8). Therefore, what do the images of violence within prison films tell us about the way Americans view violence? Researchers are just beginning to ask and analyze this question. However, it is known that violence has become an essential part of the storytelling formula that producers rely upon as a convenient habit. Writers have

come to rely upon this formula in order to get the story told and to generate interest by the audience (Potter, 2003). Violence is easy to write, requires little creativity, and is relatively cheap to recreate on screen (Potter, 2003). The rationale for the use of violent imagery by media industries is public demand. However, if this were the case, violent media should always have high ratings, but this is not always the case. Gerbner (1994) found that the ratings for nonviolent television shows from 1988 to 1993 were higher than the ratings for violent shows. Additionally, Williams (1999) in a study comparing 2,380 major movie releases from 1987 to 1997, found that while more R-rated films were released during this time compared to G-rated films, the G-rated films had the highest profit margin per film.

The prolific use of violent imagery in prison movies calls to question the issue of what, if anything should be done about violence on film? Are there particular types of images that the government should censor and if so, what types of images? The debate over censorship within entertainment media industries is highly controversial. Producers of film and television are quite adamant that artistic value outweighs any governmental intervention. In an interview about the censorship of violence by the government, television producer and writer Steven Bochco stated that “censorship by any other name remains censorship” (Jhally, 1994, p. 11). Producer Diane English felt similarly: “I think that if we don’t watch out we’re going to wind up being forced to produce television that doesn’t portray our world realistically, and I personally don’t want to work in that medium” (Jhally, 1994, p. 11).

Compromises can be made between the producers of entertainment media and the critics who call for censorship. One way to compromise is to reduce the amount of violence shown on film without eliminating the contextually relevant violent scenes. The elimination of gratuitous violence would go a long way to change the expectation of violence within entertainment mediums. Additionally, another strategy that entertainment media could use is to present violence in a different framework so that the damage to viewers is reduced (Potter, 2003). Regardless of future censorship issues, what remains is that the images portrayed on film aid in the construction of crime and punishment in America.

Reproduction of Crime Control Ideology

The connection between the growing incarceration trend and punishment for profit has previously been discussed within the context of controlling crime. However, the question still remains: What role, if any, do the popular cultural images of the prison produced by the mass media play in this process? The media conglomerations in the United States allow for the productions of these media industries to become quite significant. The film industry, with its production of images, is especially significant because this industry is forming constructions of criminal justice issues through the use of not only words but visualizations. Arguably, these images of incarceration have an impact on public policy because they are not merely benign entertainment images but are indeed political.

Pictures are political as such; it is not merely that some pictures, because of their subject matter, are more obviously public and political than others. Consequently, because they circulate in the domains that are traditionally deemed private, both commercial and domestic, pictures take public politics into the private and personal realm, where contemporary politics is in fact conducted. (Hartley, 1992, p. 28).

Accordingly, the images of crime and punishment on film are not just an important source of the general public's understanding of incarceration but can also be seen as a measure of the media's political views and ideology about crime and punishment in America. Moreover, stock themes and scenes within prison films are used to replicate the belief in the use of incarceration for crime control purposes. In this way, the public film viewer becomes familiar with and comes to expect the prison film formula that is repeated within the genre. The current study found the following stock scenes and themes within the sample of prison films: (1) the depiction of new inmates entering prison and/or intake; (2) protagonists that are not guilty; and (3) the depiction of a sadistic warden or guard.

Almost all of the prison movies depicted new inmates, usually the protagonist, coming into the prison. The standard scene is the new inmate in his street clothes shown in an unmarked prison bus driving through the countryside past images symbolizing freedom, such as fields of green, children playing, and people working. As the bus drives up to the prison gate, the audience sees the prison, a large, often brick, building with razor wire and gun towers, all characteristics typical of maximum security institutions in

the US. With the prison in view or just inside the gate, the warden or the lieutenant in charge repeats the same standard line, “Welcome to X prison,” in a tone that is meant to invoke fear in both the audience and the inmates. After entering the prison grounds, new inmates are processed during intake. Some prison movies show this degrading process with a particular emphasis on the control by the guards and the emasculation of the new inmates through the strip-search process. Inmates are stripped of their identity by exchanging their street clothes for prison uniforms and a name for an inmate number. Some level of nudity is depicted on screen as part of this intake process. In the beginning of *Escape from Alcatraz* (1979), Clint Eastwood’s character Frank Morris is seen walking fully nude down the cellblock on his way to his cell after he has been processed.

In many prison films, the fact that the protagonist in the film has not committed the crime that sent him to prison is presented to the audience. This identification as the “perfect man” (Rafter, 2006) allows the audience to feel that the protagonist is a hero. The fact that the hero of the film has not committed the crime for which he is incarcerated allows the audience to align itself with him when he becomes the victim and feel empathy when he is threatened, beaten, raped, intimidated, or taken advantage of in some other way. If the protagonist is guilty of the crime that he committed, then the audience has to view him as a criminal and thus not worthy of empathy. This image of the wrongfully convicted man is important because it allows the audience to separate the true criminals deserving of punishment from the hero. Wilson and O’Sullivan (2004) warn that a negative image of criminals is problematic and suggest that “unless the public

can be encouraged to see offenders as people, who have a life before and after the crimes they have committed, it may be hard to convince people of the value of alternatives to custody” (p. 21).

The hero of the prison film embodies stereotypical gender role identifications. The protagonist that overcomes adversity in the face of danger from a sadistic warden or guard or a member of a gang shows the audience that there “are still real men, men who can lead without pettiness or manipulation and who can walk through the yard...as if they were out for a stroll, unruffled and unafraid” (Rafter, 2006, p. 170). The perpetuation of the stereotypical image of the real man is illustrated in the movie *Lock Up* (1989) starring Sylvester Stallone as Frank Leone. Throughout the movie, Frank is seen as the tough guy who refuses to be beaten down by the sadistic Warden Drumgoole and his henchman Captain Meissner. For example, Frank and several of the inmates work for months on restoring an old Mustang in the prison auto repair shop only to have it completely destroyed as ordered by Warden Drumgoole. However, this act against inmate morale does not deter Leone from coming back stronger and enacting revenge on Drumgoole later in the movie.

As seen in *Lock Up* and other prison movies, the sadistic warden or guard is a typical theme in prison movies. The use of the sadistic warden or guard as an agent of government authority shows the audience the draconian potential of prison. The message to the audience is that inmates should experience the cruelties of incarceration at the hands of correctional authorities. Inmates are often depicted as being subjected to cruel

behavior such as long periods in the hole, as seen in *An Innocent Man* and *Animal Factory*, at the hands of correctional authorities. Rafter (2006) points out that in many depictions of prisons on film the prison itself is a metaphor for state control.

The prison film, with its stock scenes and plots, has flourished since the very first prison movie in 1910. Prison movies offer the viewer a chance to escape into a world that is familiar. Film reproduces the crime control ideology that is presented in other forms of media such as the news. Prison movies also cling to historically established gender stereotypes and most significantly reproduce violence and drug images and themes which the public is accustomed.

Prison Film and the Commodification of the Prison

As the use of incarceration in the United States grows as a form of crime control, the corrections industry also grows. The profit-making process of the corrections industry and its subsidiaries has been discussed. In a discussion of the cultural commodification of the prison, Wright (2000) stated that “the prison as commodity is where prison culture itself is marketed and sold for mass consumption” (p. 17). Accordingly, the prison movie as a product of the film industry can be seen as a place where the framing of cultural meanings, situations and representations of incarceration are constructed and replicated for mass consumption by the public. Therefore, while the prison industry profits from the use of incarceration as a crime control method, the film industry profits from the imagery of incarceration.

The prison movie is a significant piece of popular culture about crime and punishment. According to Wright (2000), “pop culture is about acculturation more than it is about culture. It is about defining the norms and parameters of society” (p. 15). The dissertation analysis of prison iconography addresses not only the representations of prison life and the mores depicted on film but also how those images serve to fit within the hegemonic correctional ideology in the United States today. Marx identified that commodities in a capitalistic society are objects that possess use-value through the process of exchange (Marx, 1867). There is no doubt that the film industry produces movies to make money and that the production of these popular movies may be connected to the proliferation of the use of incarceration in the US. Lynch (2007) addresses the increased reliance on prison in his recent book, *Big Prisons, Big Dreams*:

[P]rison expenditures are highly visible, produce large prison buildings, consume extensive physical space, secure the world’s largest prison population, and generate other forms of communication, such as news stories, that may contribute to spreading images of the system’s excessive consumption and grandeur. (p. 222).

In addition to news stories, other forms of popular media such as film can contribute to the dissemination of images of the correctional system that contribute to and fit within the current crime control ideology. The fact that this process takes place within the entertainment media allows the public to view it as seamless as the public feels that they are just being entertained while viewing a movie. Invisibly, the film industry utilizes the

image of the prison for monetary gain while also perpetuating the crime control ideology that is part of the shared hegemonic ideals of crime and punishment in America today.

Mass imprisonment and the consequences of the use of incarceration are made socially acceptable by commodifying the prison with popular culture arenas. As entertainment media continue to produce and reproduce the imagery of the prison, incarceration as a solution for the crime problem is brought to the forefront of the public consciousness. Few Americans question the ideas of building new prisons, of spending more money on prisons or of the social justice issue of holding more than 2 million people behind bars. The more than 300 prison films and two television programs illustrating prison to date are just the beginning of the commodification of the prison by the entertainment industry.

Teaching Critical Media Viewing

Knowledge about crime and punishment is influenced by the constructions presented by the media that reflect the dominant crime control ideology (Chermak, 1994; Potter and Kappeler, 2006; Welch, Fenwick, and Roberts, 1998). Critics argue that crime and punishment representations presented by entertainment media, in this case the prison film industry, are for entertainment purposes only. Prison movies use the world of fantasy and hyperbole to attract audiences while alleging “to reveal the brutal realities of incarceration while actually offering viewers escape from the miseries of life through adventure and heroism” (Rafter, 2006, p. 163). However, regardless of why people go to the movies, one cannot discount the influence constructions produced by the film

industry of crime and punishment have on the audience. Research on media and learning has found that the majority of information about crime and punishment that the public learns comes from mainstream media (Barak, 1994; Chermak, 1994; Muraskin and Domash, 2007; Potter and Kappeler, 1998; Surette, 1984; Sacco and Trotman, 1990; Welch, Fenwick, and Roberts, 1998).

Criminologists, as experts on crime, have a responsibility to teach critical media viewing. One way to enhance critical media viewing is to draw attention to the issue within the university setting. The criminal justice and criminology curriculum in colleges can integrate media classes into their curriculum or portions of crime media education into other classes. As the public often gets their information concerning crime and punishment from the media it is crucial to address the media as an area of academic inquiry in the college classroom. Ideally whole classes on constructions of crime, punishment and the media could be devoted to this line on inquiry. However, if resources are not available to devote a whole class on constructions of crime, punishment, and the media, discussions about this topic could take place in criminological theory classes. Discourse on this topic leads to awareness about the constructions by the media that effect public perception of crime and punishment. College students are tomorrow's criminal justice professionals. A good majority of criminal justice majors at leading American universities go on to graduate school to become police officer's, social workers, probation/parole officers, correction officials, lawyers, and politicians. Targeting this segment of the population for an open dialog about the constructions of

crime and punishment by the media has the potential to affect future criminal justice policy decisions.

Additionally, criminologists can aid in the examination of the constructions of crime and punishment by the media industries by alerting the general public to this issue. Barak's work on newsmaking criminology encourages criminologists to move outside of academia to share information about criminal justice issues with the American public by publishing information not just in peer-reviewed academic journals that the majority of the public has little access to but to publish in other places such as newspapers, mainstream magazines, and the Internet. Barack (1988) states:

A newsmaking criminology invites criminologists and others to become part of the mass mediated production and consumption of 'serious' crime and crime control. It requires that they share their knowledge with the general public. (p. 566).

Growing use of the Internet has allowed criminologists and their research findings to reach out to the public without mainstream media filters. Criminologists now use publically available blogs and personal websites to publish research information. For example, the Web site www.paulsjusticepage.com is written by Paul Leighton, a professor in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology, and Criminology at Eastern Michigan University. In addition to his curriculum vitae on this Web page, there is a link to his blog, where he discusses current crime and justice issues such as current court rulings, and provides links to several of his current books, to a critical criminology

journal, and to the stopviolence.com Web site. This is just one of the many criminologists who are now utilizing the internet to spread information about criminal justice issues without corporate media editing.

While utilizing the Internet is useful for disseminating information, it still does not have as much power as the large corporate media outlets. As the media is crucial in shaping public perceptions about crime and punishment, criminologists must learn to work together with corporate media organizations by producing pieces on crime and punishment that not only entertain the public but also are informed by current criminological research. This notion harkens back to Barak's (1998, p. 566) call to arms when he asked "of criminologists that they develop popularly based languages and technically based skills of communication for the purposes of participating in the mass-consumed ideology of crime and justice". In this way, perhaps in the future, the depictions of crime and punishment within popular forms of entertainment media such as films and television will more closely resemble the information about crime and punishment that criminologists have gained from the research they have conducted.

Popular Criminology as a Criminological Discourse

Although previous research as well as the present study contribute to the growing body of popular culture, media, and criminological literature, more work still needs to be done. To reiterate, as researchers, we are aware that public perceptions are shaped by the media. However, criminology as a discipline has been slow to include the study of crime and justice within the media as an area for serious academic inquiry. Nevertheless, there

is some evidence that this tide is slowly changing. Recently, Garland and Sparks (2000) recognized this need when they stated that academic criminology should not monopolize “the representation and disposition of crime” (p. 3). Further, “at least some of the intellectual strategies and institutional assumptions that served earlier generations of criminologists well may be becoming less appropriate today” (Garland and Sparks, 2000, p. 3). Specifically, the image of crime and justice issues on film as an aspect of popular culture was recently put forth by Rafter (2007), who

recommended that we conceive of crime films as an aspect of popular criminology, and of popular criminology as an aspect of criminology itself. If we define *criminology* as the study of crime and criminals, then it becomes clear that film is one of the primary sources (albeit an unscientific one) through which people get their ideas about the nature of crime. (p. 417)

By including the crime film as an aspect of popular criminology and consequently popular criminology as an aspect of criminology itself, researchers are saying that these lines of inquiry are important and valid areas of inquiry. Taking Rafter’s work one step further, one could argue that popular criminology and its research should be placed within a new theoretical area of criminology—cultural criminology. Ferrell, Hayward and Young (2009) state:

[C]ultural dynamics carry within them the meaning of crime. Given this, cultural criminology explores the many ways in which cultural forces interweave with the practice of crime and crime control in contemporary society. It emphasizes the

meaning, representation, and power in the contested construction of crime—whether crime is constructed as videotaped entertainment or political protest, as ephemeral event or subcultural subversion, as social danger or state-sanctioned violence. (p. 2)

As Ferrell, Hayward and Young recently stated (2008): “[T]here is after all so much to be done. We need to understand better the cultures of the prison” (p. 211). Prison film not only serves as a source of entertainment but also as a vehicle for inquiry into the culture of the prison through the eyes of the entertainment industry and consequently through the eyes of the public.

The need to understand the constructed view of crime and justice is genuine regardless of whether the depictions are or not. As images of crime and justice continue to infiltrate our everyday lives, this area of criminological inquiry will continue to expand.

Endnotes

1. See <http://www.fox.com/prisonbreak/info> is the Web address of *Prison Break*.
2. See http://foxshop.seenon.com/index.php?v=fox_shows_prison-break for the *Prison Break* online shop.
3. The total percentages for drug type do not add up to 100% due to rounding.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Prison and Street Gangs

Table A1

Top 10 Prison and Street Gangs

Name	Description
1. Crips	African American gang founded in Los Angeles, CA. Gang colors are blue and black. It is mostly known for violence and extortion related to drug trafficking. It is aligned with the Gangster Disciples and its primary rival is the Bloods.
2. Gangster Disciples	The GDs is an African American gang which was formed in 1974 in Chicago. It is aligned with the Crips and has the same gang colors, blue and black. The GDs operate through a very formal structure that includes a membership application form (in addition to a background check), formal written rules and regulations, and a constitution.
3. Bloods	The Bloods, an African American gang, was founded in 1972 in Los Angeles, CA. The gang color is red. Bloods gangs across the country may share the same name, but there is no organized leadership structure that binds the groups. The Bloods gang is known for its involvement in drug trafficking and its rivalry with the Crips.

Table A1 (continued)

Top 10 Prison and Street Gangs

Name	Description
4. Latin Kings	<p>The Latin Kings was formed in 1964-65 in Chicago. The gang colors are black and gold/yellow. One characteristic that separates this gang from the others is the ruthlessness and violence that members express to outsiders and gang members. It is considered the most violent gang in the US today. Ethnically, the LKs are predominantly Latin in origin (Mexican and Puerto Rican, and Cuban) however, they do not discriminate racially.</p>
5. Vice Lords	<p>The Vice Lords is an African American gang that was formed in Chicago in the 1950s. The gang colors are black, gold, and red. VLs have a specific organizational hierarchy that includes a general, minister, lieutenant, and foot soldiers.</p>
6. Aryan Brotherhood	<p>The Aryan Brotherhood is a white supremacist group. ABs have been found in 50 states. It is allied with the Mexican Mafia (La Eme).</p>
7. Folks	<p>The Folks is actually an alliance of several gangs based in Chicago. This alliance was formed in 1978. Folks wear their identifiers such as hats, jewelry, etc., on the right side of the body. Folks gangs affiliate with the number 6, and the Star of David, a six-pointed star. Its graffiti includes images such as an upward pitchfork, winged heart, and a rabbit head with a bent ear. It is rivals with People gangs and will represent that with drawings of an upside down five or a crown.</p>

Table A1 (continued)

Top 10 Prison and Street Gangs

Name	Description
8. White Supremacists	This is a generic term for all other white racist extremist gangs including but not limited to Aryan Nation, Skinheads, Ku Klux Klan, Peckerwoods, Aryan Circle, White Aryan Resistance, Neo-Nazis, Dirty White Boys, and United Aryan Brotherhood. These gangs are direct rivals with AfricanAmerican gangs. Uses of racist symbols are present such as the brandishing of the Confederate flag or the Swastika.
9. Surenos	The Surenos was formed in California. The term was originally used to refer to gang members who were part of the Mexican Mafia (La Eme). Sureno gang members will identify themselves with the number 13 as this represents the 13 th letter of the alphabet (M). Surenos and the Mexican Mafia are two separate groups, but the Surenos often identify with this affiliation as its foundation. The gang color is blue.
10. Five Percenters	The Five Percenters, also known as the Nation of Gods and Earth, was founded in Harlem in 1964. Members are African American and believe that there are groups of people in the world 5% of which are enlightened. The Five Percenters claims that it is are not a religious organization yet organizational thought is based mostly on the works of Elijah Muhammad. However, contrary to the Muslim belief in Allah, Five Percenters believe that the Black Man is the true and living god.

Note. Data in this table has been compiled from several sources (see Cox, 1986; Knox, 2008a; Knox, 2008b; Knox, 2005:36).

Appendix B: Filmography Data

Table B1

Total Original Filmography Sample

	Title	Year	Director	Starring
1.	<i>Shackles</i>	2005	Charles Winkler	D.L. Hughley
2.	<i>25th Hour</i>	2002	Spike Lee	Ed Norton
3.	<i>Down Time</i>	2001	Sean Wilson	James Cotton
4.	<i>Proximity</i>	2001	Scott Zeihl	Rob Lowe
5.	<i>Animal Factory</i>	2000	Steve Buscemi	Willem Dafoe
6.	<i>Lockdown</i>	2000	John Luessenhop	Richard T. Jones
7.	<i>Unshackled</i>	2000	Bart Patton	Burgess Jenkins
8.	<i>The Visit</i>	2000	Jordan Walker-Pearlman	Obba Babatunde
9.	<i>The Hurricane</i>	1999	Norman Jewison	Denzel Washington
10.	<i>American History X</i>	1998	Tony Kaye	Ed Norton
11.	<i>Con Air</i>	1997	Simon West	Nick Cage

Table B1 (continued)

Total Original Filmography Sample

	Title	Year	Director	Starring
12.	<i>Face/Off</i>	1997	John Woo	John Travolta
13.	<i>First Time Felton</i>	1997	Charles S. Dutton	Omar Epps
14.	<i>The Rock</i>	1996	Michael Bay	Nick Cage
15.	<i>Murder in the First</i>	1995	Marc Rocco	Christian Slater
16.	<i>Against the Wall</i>	1994	John Frankenheimer	Samuel L. Jackson
17.	<i>American Me</i>	1992	Edward James Olmos	Edward James Olmos
18.	<i>Death Warrant</i>	1990	Deram Sarafian	Jean Claude van Damme
19.	<i>An Innocent Man</i>	1989	Peter Yates	Tom Selleck
20.	<i>Lock Up</i>	1989	John Flynn	Sly Stallone
21.	<i>Tango and Cash</i>	1989	Andri Konchalovsky	Kurt Russell
22.	<i>Six Against the Rock</i>	1987	Paul Wendkos	David Carradine
23.	<i>The Man Who Broke 1000 Chains</i>	1987	Daniel Mann	Val Kilmer

Table B1 (continued)

Total Original Filmography Sample

	Title	Year	Director	Starring
24.	<i>Runaway Train</i>	1985	Andri Konchalovsky	Jon Voight
25.	<i>Missing</i>	1982	Constantin Costa-Gavras	Jack Lemon
26.	<i>Escape</i>	1980	Robert Michael Lewis	Timothy Bottoms
27.	<i>Brubaker</i>	1980	Stuart Rosenberg	Robert Redford
28.	<i>The Ordeal of Dr. Mudd</i>	1980	Paul Wendkos	Denis Weaver
29.	<i>Escape from Alcatraz</i>	1979	Don Siegel	Clint Eastwood
30.	<i>Penitentiary</i>	1979	Jamaa Fanaka	Leon Issac Kennedy
31.	<i>The Jericho Mile</i>	1979	Michael Mann	Peter Straus
32.	<i>Midnight Express</i>	1978	Alan Parker	Brad Davis
33.	<i>Brothers</i>	1977	Arthur Barron	Bernie Casey
34.	<i>On the Yard</i>	1977	Ralph Micklin Silver	John Heard
35.	<i>Short Eyes</i>	1977	Robert M. Young	Bruce Davison
36.	<i>Leadbelly</i>	1976	Gordon Parks Sr.	Roger E. Mosely

Table B1 (continued)

Total Original Filmography Sample

	Title	Year	Director	Starring
37.	<i>Breakout</i>	1975	Tom Gries	Charles Bronson
38.	<i>The Mean Machine (aka The Longest Yard)</i>	1974	Robert Aldrich	Burt Reynolds
39.	<i>Papillon</i>	1973	Franklin J. Schaffner	Steve McQueen
40.	<i>Rolling Man</i>	1972	Peter Hyams	Denise Weaver
41.	<i>Souder</i>	1972	Martin Ritt	Cicely Tyson
42.	<i>The Glasshouse</i>	1972	Tom Gries	Alan Alda
43.	<i>Fools' Paradise (aka The Dynamite Man from Glory Jail UK)</i>	1971	Andrew V. McLaglen	James Stewart
44.	<i>Fortune and Men's Eyes</i>	1971	Harvey Hart	Wendell Burton
45.	<i>There was a Crooked Man</i>	1970	Joseph L. Mankiewicz	Kirk Douglas
46.	<i>The Traveling Executioner</i>	1970	Jack Smight	Stacey Keach
47.	<i>The Fixer</i>	1968	John Frankenheimer	Alan Bates

Table B1 (continued)

Total Original Filmography Sample

	Title	Year	Director	Starring
48.	<i>Riot</i>	1968	Buzz Kulik	Gene Hackman
49.	<i>Cool Hand Luke</i>	1967	Stuart Rosenberg	Paul Newman
50.	<i>The Brig</i>	1964	Adolfas and Jonas Mekas	A1
51.	<i>Pressure Point</i>	1962	Hubert Cornfield	Sidney Poitier
52.	<i>Reprieve (aka Convicts Four UK)</i>	1962	Millard Kaufman	Ben Gazzard
53.	<i>The Birdman of Alcatraz</i>	1962	John Frankenheimer	Burt Lancaster
54.	<i>The Devil at 4 O'Clock</i>	1961	Mervyn LeRoy	Frank Sinatra
55.	<i>Revolt in the Big House</i>	1958	RG Springsteen	Gene Evans
56.	<i>House of Numbers</i>	1957	Russell Rouse	Jack Palance
57.	<i>Crashout</i>	1955	Lewis R. Foster	William Bendix

Table B2

Excluded Made for Television Films

	Title	Year	Director	Starring
1.	<i>Against the Wall</i>	1994	John Frankheimer	Samuel L. Jackson
2.	<i>Six Against the Rock</i>	1987	Paul Wendkos	David Carradine
3.	<i>The Man Who Broke 1000 Chains</i>	1987	Daniel Mann	Val Kilmer
4.	<i>Escape</i>	1980	Robert Michael Lewis	Timothy Bottoms
5.	<i>The Ordeal of Dr. Mudd</i>	1980	Paul Wendkos	Denis Weaver
6.	<i>The Jericho Mile</i>	1979	Michael Mann	Peter Straus
7.	<i>Rolling Man</i>	1972	Peter Hyams	Denise Weaver
8.	<i>The Glasshouse</i>	1972	Tom Gries	Alan Alda

Table B3

Excluded Films due to Lack of Representation of Penal Culture

	Title	Year	Director	Starring
1.	<i>25th Hour</i>	2002	Spike Lee	Ed Norton
2.	<i>The Visit</i>	2000	Jordan Walker-Pearlman	Obba Babatunde
3.	<i>The Hurricane</i>	1999	Norman Jewison	Denzel Washington
4.	<i>American History X</i>	1998	Tony Kaye	Ed Norton
5.	<i>Face/Off</i>	1997	John Woo	John Travolta

Table B3 (continued)

Excluded Films due to Lack of Representation of Penal Culture

	Title	Year	Director	Starring
6.	<i>Murder in the First</i>	1995	Marc Rocco	Christian Slater
7.	<i>Tango and Cash</i>	1989	Andri Konchalovsky	Kurt Russell
8.	<i>Runaway Train</i>	1985	Andri Konchalovsky	Jon Voight
9.	<i>Souder</i>	1972	Martin Ritt	Cicely Tyson
10.	<i>Pressure Point</i>	1962	Hubert Cornfield	Sidney Poitier

Table B4

Excluded Films Representing International Prisons

	Title	Year	Director	Starring	Country
1.	<i>Missing</i>	1982	Constantin Costa-Gavras	Jack Lemon	Chile
2.	<i>Midnight Express</i>	1978	Alan Parker	Brad Davis	Turkey
3.	<i>Breakout</i>	1975	Tom Gries	Charles Bronson	Mexico
4.	<i>Papillon</i>	1973	Franklin J. Schaffner	Steve McQueen	French Guiana
5.	<i>The Fixer</i>	1968	John Frankenheimer	Alan Bates	Russia
6.	<i>The Devil at 4 O'Clock</i>	1961	Mervyn LeRoy	Frank Sinatra	Tahiti

Table B5

Films Excluded for Other Reasons

	Title	Year	Director	Starring	Reason
1.	<i>Shackles</i>	2005	Charles Winkler	D.L. Hughley	Juvenile detainees
2.	<i>Proximity</i>	2001	Scott Zeihl	Rob Lowe	Escape film
3.	<i>Con Air</i>	1997	Simon West	Nick Cage	Prison plane
4.	<i>First Time Felon</i>	1997	Charles S. Dutton	Omar Epps	Bootcamp
5.	<i>The Rock</i>	1996	Michael Bay	Nick Cage	Not about prison
6.	<i>The Mean Machine (aka The Longest Yard)</i>	1974	Robert Aldrich	Burt Reynolds	Comedy
7.	<i>Fools' Paradise (aka The Dynamite Man from Glory Jail UK)</i>	1971	Andrew V. McLaglen	James Stewart	Comedy
8.	<i>There was a Crooked Man</i>	1970	Joseph L. Mankiewicz	Kirk Douglas	Comedy
9.	<i>The Traveling Executioner</i>	1970	Jack Smight	Stacey Keach	Comedy
10.	<i>The Brig</i>	1964	Adolfas and Jonas Mekas	A1	Marine Corps prison

Appendix C: Coding Form and Codebooks

Film Analysis Coding Form

1. Name of Film _____
 2. ID Number of Film _____
 3. Year of Film's Release _____
 4. Total Running Time of Film (Sec) _____
 4. Box office gross _____
 5. Diegetic time in months _____
 6. Time Period (ex. 1950s) _____ Primary Time
_____ Flashbacks
- | | Females | Males |
|------------------------------------|---------|-------|
| 7. Number of Principal Characters | _____ | _____ |
| 8. Number of Supporting Characters | _____ | _____ |

Character Analysis Coding Form

1. Name of Film _____
2. I.D. Number of Film _____
3. Character Name _____
4. Character I.D. _____

5. Principal/ Supporting	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Gender	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Character I.D.	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Race	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Age	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. SES	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
10. Marital Status	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
11. Education	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
12. Gang Affiliation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Scene Analysis Coding Form

Drugs

Scene ID	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
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A. Drug Use	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
B. Type of Drug Used	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
C. Drug Character Name	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
D. Drug Use Time (Sec)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Rape and Sexual Assault

Scene ID	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
A. Rape	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
B. Rape Time (Sec)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
C. Perpetrator(s) Character Name	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
D. Victim(s) Character Name	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
E. Sexual Assault	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
F. Sexual Assault Time (Sec)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

G. Perpetrator(s)
Character Name _____

H. Victim(s) Character
Name _____

Violence and Gangs

Scene ID _____

A. Violence Level (1-
5) _____

B. Violence Time
(Sec) _____

C. Initiator(s)
Character Name _____

D. Initiator Action (0-
4) _____

E. Perpetrator(s)
Character Name _____

F. Perpetrator(s)
Member of a Gang _____

G. Perpetrator(s) Gang Affiliation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
H. Victim(s) Character Name	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
I. Victim(s) Member of a Gang	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
J. Victim(s) Gang Affiliation	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
K. Injuries (1-3)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
L. Fatalities (#)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Film Analysis Codebook

Items 2 through 4 are to be filled out by the principal coder for each film.

For the purposes of this study, a Prison Film (PF) is a film in which the majority (at least half) of the content (a) takes place in a prison institution and (b) focuses on the inmates' daily life, including interaction with other inmates.

1. Name of film:
2. ID# of film: (Three-digit number beginning with 3, 4, or 9 depending on the decade.)
3. Year of film's release:
4. If able to identify, box office gross:

Items 5 through 8 are to be filled out by any coder for each PF film as defined in Appendix A.

5. Diegetic time in plot of film: Write in the estimated time in months that has passed in the plot of the film

Use 999 for Cannot determine

6. Time period in which film takes place:

Write in year/decade in which the film takes place (e.g. 1970s, 1980s, 1990s).

(Primary time)

If there are flashbacks in the film, estimate the time period (year/ decade) in which each flashback takes place. (Flashback time)

Use 9999- Cannot determine

7. Number of principal characters: Write in the number of principal characters, male and female.

8. Number of supporting characters: Write in the number of supporting characters, male and female.

Character Analysis Codebook

All items are to be filled out for each principal and supporting character.

1. Name of film: Write in the name of the film.

2. ID# of film: To be filled in by the principal coder. (Two digit number 00-11).

3. Character name: Write in character's name or a brief description of the character if no name is given.

4. Character ID: To be filled in by the principal coder.

5. Principal or supporting character: Write in the corresponding number

01-Principal

02-Supporting

6. Gender: Write in the corresponding number with the gender of the character.

01-Female

02-Male

7. Race: Write in the number corresponding with the apparent racial characteristics of the character.

01-Caucasian

02-African-American

03-Asian

04-Hispanic

05-Native-American

07-Other (write in)

09-Cannot tell

8. Age: Write in the number corresponding with the apparent age of the character.

01-Infant, 0-2 years old

02-Child, 3-12 years old

03-Adolescent, 13-18 years old

04-Young Adult, 19-39 years old

05-Middle-Aged Adult, 40-54 years old

06-Mature Adult, 55-64 years old

07-Senior Adult, > 65 years old

09-Cannot tell

9. SES: Write in the corresponding number to the apparent socio-economic status for the character

01-Upper/upper middle class: Well-to-do, high-level job or no job, not dependent on monthly income to live.

02-Middle class: Works for a living, has all necessities and some luxuries.

03-Working class/lower class- Does not have all necessities, does not possess luxuries, may be unemployed, and/or on public assistance.

09-Cannot tell

10. Marital Status: Write in the corresponding number to the apparent marital status of the character.

Use 01-Single, if the character is unattached and if it is not indicated if the character is divorced, separated, or widowed.

01-Single

02-Married

03-Separated

04-Divorced

05-Widowed

09-Cannot tell

11. Education: Write in the corresponding number to the apparent education level of the character.

Use 9-Cannot tell, if the character's level of education is not obviously observed or stated. For example, a doctor or lawyer would have obviously had to go to medical or law school at the graduate level to practice.

01-Less than High School Graduate

02-High School Graduate

03-Some College

04-College Graduate05-Graduate (Masters or Ph.D.)

09-Cannot tell

12. Gang Affiliation: Write in the corresponding number to the identification of the gang to which the character is affiliated.

- 00- None
- 01- Crips
- 02- Gangster Disciples
- 03- Bloods
- 04- Latin Kings
- 05- Vice Lords
- 06- Aryan Brotherhood
- 07- Folks
- 08- White Supremacists
- 09- Surenos
- 10- Five Percenters
- 11- Unidentified African American gang
- 12- Unidentified Hispanic gang
- 13- Unidentified White gang
- 14- Several gangs (write in)
- 15- Other (write in)
- 99- Don't know

Scene Analysis Codebook

A scene is defined as a section of film in which action takes place that signifies a unit of development in the storyline which is made up by a number of frames.

Drugs

Drug Use: Code for drug use versus trafficking of drugs within a sequence.

01- Drug use

02- Supply or exchange of drugs

A. Drug Type: Write in the corresponding number to the type of drug(s) used by inmates during the scene.

01- Alcohol

02- Marijuana

03- Crack

04- Powder Cocaine

05- Heroin

06- LSD

07- PCP

08- Methamphetamines (crank)

09- Inhalants

10- Other (and write in)

99- Don't know

- A. Drug character: Write in character's name who uses drugs or who supply drugs or a brief description of the character if no name is given.
- B. Drug Use Time (Sec): Record in seconds the duration of the drug use scene.

Rape and Sexual Assault

- A. Rape or non consensual sexual activity is defined as forcible sexual intercourse or sodomy. This can either be observed or implied. Record whether or not a rape occurs within a scene.
 - 00- No rape is observed or implied
 - 01- Presence of rape.
- B. Rape time (Sec): Record in seconds the duration of the rape scene.
- C. Sexual Assault: Sexual assault is defined as a forcible sex act not including intercourse or sodomy (ex. fellatio). This can either be observed or implied. Record whether or not a sexual assault occurs within a scene.
 - 00-No sexual assault is observed or implied
 - 01- Presence of sexual assault.
- D. Sexual assault time: Record in seconds the duration of the sexual assault scene.
- E. Perpetuator(s) Character name: Write in character's name or a brief description of the character if no name is given.
- F. Victim(s) Character name: Write in character's name or a brief description of the character if no name is given.

Violence and Gangs

Based on the CHAMP (2009) study, this study will utilize several adapted measures of violence. Violence is defined as an intentional act of physical aggression by the perpetrator against a victim causing injury or death. In addition, a sequence or scene of violence, as adapted from the CHAMP (2009) study, will be defined as “an uninterrupted display of violence of a character or a group of characters engaged in an act of violence.” For example, if an inmate hits another inmate uses one method of violence continuously that is considered one sequence. When coding a riot scene code the sequences as “riot scene”. If there are a large number of people in a scene, be as descriptive as possible such as about 100 people in the yard in a riot. Only count actual harm. Do not count missed punches or attempts to harm.

A. Violence level: Write in the corresponding number based on the following modeled scale of violence.

01-“Consequence/Aftermath Sequences” – Body is shown or the result of violence is shown, but the act of violence itself is not shown in the scene.

Representations of injuries, maimed, disfigured, or dead bodies, characters bleeding, pools of blood, splattered blood.

02-“Somewhat Modeled” – “Violence is portrayed in the scene, but a murder is not portrayed, a minimal amount of or no blood is shed, and a weapon isn’t shown hitting a body. One character striking another would be coded as “somewhat modeled”. Poisoning is also included in at this level.

03-“Modeled” – “Violence, including the use of weapons and portrayal of murder, can be shown, but without bloodshed if a weapon is used.

04-“Very Modeled” – “Sequences coded as very graphic usually including murder, weapons, and bloodshed. The primary difference between “Modeled” and “very modeled” is the presence of blood. The idea of penetration – by a bullet, shotgun shell, knife, or anything else – is key, but the penetration will not be accompanied by bloodshed.

05-“Most Modeled” – “Sequences that combine attributes from the preceding categories are coded as “most modeled”. Of primary importance is the combination of penetration and bloodshed. Included in this category is the severing of any body part and extreme torturous acts that result in death.

- B. Violence time (Sec): Record in seconds the duration of the violent scene.
- C. Initiator(s) Character Name: Write in name of the character that is the initiator of the violence or a brief description of the character if no name is given.
- D. Initiator Action: Record the type of initiator action that provokes the violence.

This action must be directed to the aggressor or the attacker of the violence, not a third party.

00-None

01-Verbal threat

02-Non-threatening physical act (can be accidental)

03-Threatening nonviolent act (such as brandishing a weapon)

04- Attempted violent physical act

E. Perpetrator(s) character name: Write in character's name or a brief description of the character if no name is given.

F. Perpetrator(s) member of a gang: Record whether the perpetrator(s) is a member of a gang.

00-No

01-Yes

02-Both Yes and No (if more than one perpetrator)

09-Unknown

G. Gang Affiliation: Write in the corresponding number to the identification of the gang to which the perpetrator(s) is affiliated.

00- None

01- Crips

02- Gangster Disciples

03- Bloods

04- Latin Kings

05- Vice Lords

06- Aryan Brotherhood

07- Folks

08- White Supremacists

09- Surenos

10- Five Percenters

11- Unidentified African American gang

12- Unidentified Hispanic gang

13- Unidentified White gang

14- Several gangs (write in)

15- Other (write in)

99- Don't know

H. Victim(s) character name: Write in character's name or a brief description of the character if no name is given.

I. Victim(s) a member of a gang: Record whether the victim(s) is a member of a gang.

00-No

01-Yes

02-Both Yes and No (if more than one victim)

09-Unknown

J. Gang affiliation: Write in the corresponding number to the identification of the gang to which the victim(s) is affiliated.

00- None

01- Crips

02- Gangster Disciples

- 03- Bloods
- 04- Latin Kings
- 05- Vice Lords
- 06- Aryan Brotherhood
- 07- Folks
- 08- White Supremacists
- 09- Surenos
- 10- Five Percenters
- 11- Unidentified African American gang
- 12- Unidentified Hispanic gang
- 13- Unidentified White gang
- 14- Several gangs (write in)
- 15- Other (write in)
- 99- Unidentified

K. Injuries: Write in the corresponding code for injuries that occur. Only code for representations of injuries not implied injuries. The injury must be depicted on the screen separate from the violent action.

00- None – no representation of injuries in the scene.

01- Mild – representation of bruises, lacerations, or broken bones

02- Moderate – representation of bodies maimed, blinded, impaired, or disfigured

03-Extreme – representation of fatally wounded bodies (body shown)

- L. Fatalities: Write in the number of deaths that result as a direct or indirect consequence of the violent act. A body must be present in order to be recorded. Acts of prior violence that are not demonstrated but result in a dead body are counted.

Appendix D: Comparisons Between Prison Films and Correctional Literature

Table D1

Comparisons between Prison Films and Correctional Literature

Concept	Film Indicator	Literature Indicator
Drugs – 1	Number of drug use scenes across films	Percentage of inmates who use drugs reported in surveys
Drugs – 2	Total drug scene time across films	Percentage of inmates who use drugs reported in surveys
Drugs – 3	Prevalence of drug types across films	Drugs use type reported in surveys
Rape – 1	Number of rape scenes across films	Percentage of inmates raped reported in surveys
Rape – 2	Total rape scene time as a percentage of total prison time across films	Percentage of inmates raped reported in surveys
Rape – 3	Demographic correlates of rape across films	Demographic correlates of rape in prison reported in surveys

Table D1 (continued)

Comparisons between Prison Films and Correctional Literature

Concept	Film Indicator	Literature Indicator
Sexual Assault – 1	Number of sexual assault scenes across films	Percentage of inmates sexually assaulted reported in surveys
Sexual Assault – 2	Total sexual assault scene time as a percentage of total prison time across films	Percentage of inmates sexually assaulted reported in surveys
Sexual Assault – 3	Demographic correlates of sexual assault across films	Demographic correlates of sexual assault in prison reported in surveys
Violence – 1	Number of violence scenes across films	Rates of violence in prison reported in surveys
Violence – 2	Total violence scene time as a percentage of total prison time across films	Rates of violence in prison reported in surveys

Table D1 (continued)

Comparisons between Prison Films and Correctional Literature

Concept	Film Indicator	Literature Indicator
Violence – 3	Average violence level across films	Violence level in prison reported in surveys
Violence – 4	Average injury level across films	Violence level in prison reported in surveys
Violence – 5	Average number of homicides across films	Average number of homicides reported in surveys
Violence – 6	Demographic correlates of violence across films	Demographic correlates of violence in prison reported in surveys
Gang Affiliation – 1	Number of gang affiliated scenes across films	Percentage of gang affiliated inmates reported in surveys
Gang Affiliation – 2	Number of gang members among main characters	Percentage of gang affiliated inmates reported in surveys
Gang Affiliation – 3	Prevalence of gang type across films	Top 10 gang affiliation reported in surveys

About the Author

Melissa E. Fenwick received a Bachelor's degree in Psychology from Rutgers College at Rutgers University in 1996 and a Master's degree in Criminal Justice from University of North Carolina at Charlotte in 1998. She is currently an assistant professor at Western Connecticut State University in Danbury, CT in the Division of Justice and Law Administration. She teaches classes in criminology and research methodology. Her research interests include the media and crime, race, class and gender, qualitative research methodology and corrections.