UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, SAN DIEGO

Paint in the Can: Creating Art and Doing Gender in Prison

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the
requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in

Sociology

by

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The Dissertation of Laura Pecenco is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically:

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Blair-Loy, Mary, Laura Pecenco, and Erin Cech. 2013. *The Persistence of Male Power and Prestige in the Professions: Report on the Professions of Law, Medicine, and Science & Engineering.* Center for Research on Gender in the Professions, UC San Diego. March.

Cech, Erin, Laura Pecenco, and Mary Blair-Loy. 2013. *Science and Engineering Professions: The Status of Women and Men*. Center for Research on Gender in the Professions, UC San Diego. March.

Pecenco, Laura and Mary Blair-Loy. 2013. *Legal Professions: The Status of Women and Men*. Center for Research on Gender in the Professions (CRGP), UC San Diego. March.

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  "Gender Gap in STEMM"
- American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting "Educational Courses in Prison" Regular Session (November 19, 2014, San Francisco, CA)

"'As Long As We're Not on the Yard': Gender and Race in a Prison Art Studio"

- American Sociological Association Annual Meeting Masculinities Regular Session (August 17, 2014, San Francisco, CA)
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- San Diego State University Art/Crime Archive "Shadow Spaces from the Art/Crime Archive" Panel (March 20, 2014, San Diego, CA)
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- Western Society of Criminology Annual Conference (February 7, 2014, Honolulu, HI)
  "Creating Art and Doing Gender Behind Bars: Reframing the Discussion with a Critical Perspective"
- Western Society of Criminology Annual Conference (February 8, 2014, Honolulu, HI)
  "Conducting Research in the Belly of the Beast: A Critical Perspective"
- American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting: "Teaching Inside 'The Box': Innovative Prisoner Education Programs" Thematic Panel (November 20, 2013, Atlanta, GA)
  "IncARTceration: Art Programs and Prison Masculinities"
- American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting: "Meanings Matter: Interpreting Symbolic Displays and Their Implications" Panel (November 21, 2013, Atlanta, GA)
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  "The Multiple Masculinities of Prison Artists"
- American Society of Criminology Annual Meeting: Poster Session (November 21, 2013, Atlanta, GA)
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- American Sociological Association Annual Meeting: Sex and Gender "Art, Representation, and Images I" Panel (August 12, 2013, New York City, NY)
  "Gender and the 'New Sociology of Art': Prison Art"
- Cultural Studies Association Annual Conference (May 25, 2013, Chicago, IL)
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  "From 'Doing' to 'Done': Process and Product in Gender and Prison Art"
- City University of New York Prison Studies Group: Police, Prisons, and Power Conference (April 12, 2013, New York City, NY)
  "From 'Doing' to 'Done': Gendered Prison Art"
- UC San Diego Interdisciplinary Collaboratory on Gender Inequality "Gender Beyond Boundaries" Conference (February 22, 2013, San Diego, CA)
  "Focusing on the 'Done': Gender and Prison Art"
- Pacific Sociological Association: "Intersectionality and Identity Politics" Session (March 23, 2012, San Diego, CA)
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    - Race, Class, and Gender Section
    - Sex and Gender Section
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- Western Society of Criminology
- Pacific Sociological Association
- Cultural Studies Association
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Abstract of the Dissertation

Paint in the Can: Creating Art and Doing Gender in Prison

by

Laura M. Pecenco

Doctor of Philosophy in Sociology

University of California, San Diego, 2015

Professor Mary Blair-Loy, Chair

Scholars as well as the general public have pointed to the requirements of hypermasculinity within prisons, painting a picture of the inmate as a dangerous criminal. My dissertation analyzes how prison arts programs can reduce the hypermasculine imperative and create the possibility of a new and pro-social artist identity to emerge.

The overarching research question is: *What social and individual factors create the possibility for gender-transgressive artistic creation in the hypermasculine prison environment?* I examine three aspects of this question: how the inmates define their art and themselves in relation to their work, the art markets working around

prison art, and the enactment of gender within the prison. I triangulate multiple methods: participant observation in a prison arts program that I created in a medium/maximum security prison in California; interviews with currently incarcerated artists; interviews with formerly incarcerated artists, who had all participated in arts programs in other prisons; interviews with prison arts program staff members and volunteers; and an analysis of works of art publically displayed in online galleries created by men incarcerated around the country. I concentrate on both the "doing," or the process of creating art and performing gender, and the "done," or the completed cultural objects.

Overall, I found that the arts studio provides for a safer environment within the prison, allowing inmates to drop the hypermasculine imperative that is present in more public areas of the prison. Through the process of "artistization," they adopt an alternative artist identity, which encourages protecting the arts program and growing as an artist via sharing supplies, thoughts, and emotions across gender, racial, class, age, disability, sexual orientation, and other boundaries. The works created by the incarcerated artists represent a variety of iconography and media, incorporating traditionally feminized elements. I also address research ethics. Although human subjects protections are designed to prevent harm to research subjects, I argue that many of these blanket requirements result in further reducing the agency of vulnerable subjects. I conclude by offering policy suggestions.

Chapter 1: Introduction: "Gates to Gateways"

My interest in studying men who create art while incarcerated was piqued when I noticed a pattern emerge; in image after image of prisoner-created art, hearts, flowers, bunnies, unicorns, and a variety of other feminized iconography appeared. This also extended to feminized mediums, with many pieces utilizing colors of pinks and purples, glitter, stitching, paper crafts, etc. This seemed to contradict the image of the "prisoner" that had been previously painted for me. Through television shows such as *LockUp*, the mass media depicts the male prisoner as violent and unruly – traits associated with hypermasculinity.

However, this image is not only constructed by the mass media; it is also enforced by scholarly portrayals. The standard sociological portrayal of the inmate is one of a man who must remain hardened and tough at all times, for fear of victimization or retribution (Curtis 2014; Evans and Wallace 2008; Holmberg 2001; Rhodes 2001; Sabo 2001; Sabo, Kupers, and London 2001; Sim 1994). When there is recognition that hypermasculinity is not always practiced in prison, it is only acknowledged in completely separate spaces, "units" in which inmates are kept physically separate from other inmates (Dolovich 2012; Sim 1994) or in programs which specifically address masculinity (Karp 2010). Additionally, when prison art itself is publicized, it is often in a negative sense. The news coverage of a recent escape of two inmates from a prison in New York also highlighted one of the convict's art, sensationalizing the story with headlines such as "Well-hung convict bamboozled

guard with his paintings" (Sauchelli, Schram, and Rosenbaum 2015) and "New York Prison Guard Exchanged Contraband for Paintings, Authorities Say" (Tangel and King 2015). I came to understand that such portrayals were those of stereotyped and sensationalized "prison art" and that this is really only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to artwork created by people who are incarcerated.

This dissertation seeks to explain how this seeming transgression of gender boundaries happens in a hypermasculine environment. It also assesses the implications of such a gender transgression in the context of art creation for the prison institution and society broadly speaking. The male prison as a site of hypermasculinity (Evans and Wallace 2008; Rhodes 2001) or "dangerous masculinity" (Curtis 2014) provides a theoretically interesting backdrop for research concerning gender transgression through art-making. My overarching research question is: ***What social and individual factors create the possibility for gender-transgressive artistic creation in the hypermasculine prison environment?*** I focus on three types of factors: gender, art markets, and the creation process.

First, I analyze gender at the institutional, interactional, and individual levels of analysis (Risman 2004). To analyze gender from an intersectional perspective in the prison environment, I ask: What masculinities exist in male prison, and how are they "done" (or "undone")? Are artistic objects gendered in the same way in prisons as they are elsewhere outside of the prison? How does the visible absence of the "opposite" gender affect the way men view each other and women?

Second, considering how understandings of gender might affect the operation and effects of art markets, I ask the following questions: How do the various art markets at work impact the images employed and the media used in these works of art, affecting the gendering of both the artists and the objects they produce? Does the presence of an external market influence how the inmates view their creations and how the members of their immediate social environment view their creations? Where does the true legitimacy and authenticity of a piece exist – in "making it" in an external market[1] or in an internal market or simply in the production of art because of some internal "desire" or "need" to do so (i.e. art for the artist)?

Third, I consider how understandings of gender affect individual identity and conceptualization of artistic process: What type of internal dialogues do inmates have throughout the process of the creation of their pieces? How do others in the inmate's community also affect prison artists' process of art creation? How do inmates' creations impact the way they view their own identities, given the constraints placed upon them by the total institution (Goffman 1961)[2]? Does identity construction happen in artistic production in prison in the same manner as it does for other types of prison work?

This chapter now turns to outlining the theoretical and policy arguments that provide the backdrop for my research and justify my case and methodological

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[1] However, this could be considered a "tourist market" and therefore be less legitimate (Jules-Rosette 1984).

[2] Some scholars argue that prisons are "not-so-total" (Farrington 1992). They challenge the amount of constraint and goals of the prison overall, thereby holding that prisoners do actually have connections to the world outside of the institution.

approach. I follow with more in-depth analyses of the literatures that I used for my work, bringing together the studies of the "doing" of gender, organizations, and intersectionality. I then proceed to offer an overview of the entire dissertation, providing a brief synopsis of each additional chapter, which focuses on the artistic process, the art products, and the artists.

Overview of Theoretical and Policy Implications

The prison's status as an extreme case is useful because both the expression and consciousness of gender are more intense than they are in society outside of the institution. An extreme case is akin to Weber's ideal-type, an exaggerated, "pure" form of a social phenomenon, such that the picture it provides is clearest (Gerth and Mills 1946; Weber 1978 [1922]). In society, there are so many forces at work that it can be difficult to parse them apart. Understandings of masculinity are heightened in prisons. Male prison artists are hyper-aware that, as prisoners, they will be held accountable for their gendered behavior, and yet knowingly cross gender boundaries when they sometimes produce feminized objects using feminized techniques. Examining artists who are prisoners is therefore integral to my project, as the process of gender transgression becomes even more apparent and nuanced in a place where the expression of gender is more evident and regularly scrutinized. Such an extreme, exaggerated situation may provide the opportunity to view specifically when gender transgression becomes socially acceptable, which is not often apparent in the rest of society.

Studying such a population yields important theoretical and policy insights. Practically speaking, prison inmates make up a large, and growing, segment of the population in the United States. According to the U.S. Bureau of Justice, 2,292,133 adults were in prison or jail as of the end of 2009 (Glaze 2010). This means that the U.S. has a higher rate of incarceration than any other nation in the entire world. Part of the reason for such a high rate is that much longer prison sentences are imposed in the U.S. than in other countries. The mass incarceration here impacts the country both socially and economically. In addition, the U.S. has experienced an even greater shift away from rehabilitative programs in recent years. It may serve those in the nation well to reexamine both the mass incarceration and this shift away from rehabilitation given the very high rates of recidivism in the U.S. (Cavanaugh 2009).

Examining male prison artists is also important theoretically. Much of the work on gender focuses on the reproduction of gender boundaries and gender inequality. However, analyzing this extreme transgressive case, in which men in prison create art that American society generally views as "feminine," allows us to discover where small pockets of change may be happening and therefore potentially apply these new understandings to other areas in society. As Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep (2009) point out, extreme cases are not meant to provide statistical generalizations, but rather to establish and expand theory. The U.S. has a long history of policing sex and gender in everyday society (Heidenreich 2011), and the stringency within the prison is even more extreme. Conducting a study within a prison allows us

the opportunity to stretch the theoretical possibilities and pinpoint a site of actual change.

This gender transgression operates in various contexts, and can be affected in a variety of ways. Therefore, my study utilizes a multi-method approach, triangulating evidence and insight gleaned from ethnography, interviews, and analysis of art objects. The process that an artist goes through in creating a piece involves both an internal dialogue, which might involve consideration of what others will think about the work, and a cooperation or competition with other artists within the community.

Within a prison especially, because supplies are so limited, inmates often rely on others within an artist network to obtain supplies and receive feedback. This artistic community paves the way for the development of the identity of the incarcerated artist. The actual art markets themselves also affect the transgressions an artist is willing to make, or even what seems to be an outright transgression. I employ the theoretical frames of gender as a performance (termed "doing gender" by West and Zimmerman [1987]), the potential "undoing" of gender (Risman 2009), and intersectionality (as pushed forth by Baca Zinn and Thornton Dill [1996], Collins [1991, 2005], and McCall [2005]). Although the prison encourages the "doing" of hypermasculinity, the arts program allows for its "undoing," thereby reducing the negative effects of hypermasculinity.

I analyze this situation in three ways: the enactment of gender within such an extreme situation, the multiple art markets working around prison art, and how the men define their art activities and themselves in relation to their work. My dissertation

also has important policy implications. I hope the analysis will be a useful resource for policy makers, who can rethink the current workings of the penal system by promoting prison arts programs and other forms of rehabilitation.

Methodological Approach

To answer my research questions, I follow Wacquant's (2002) call to conduct intensive ethnographic research of prisons. As Lamont and White (2009) note, examinations of processes and interactions, along with inequalities, are often best conducted in a qualitative manner. Therefore, I immersed myself in this world, creating and directing a prison arts program and interviewing both participants of that specific program, as well as participants of other programs and those who make artwork outside of a formal program. These subjects create a variety of art types and are at varying stages of being established. Some of them are artists whose work has been publicly displayed and have become established and others produce items strictly for themselves and/or their own social networks (and some have only just begun at all). By founding and working in an arts program, I became a member of the "free staff," as compared to the prison's custody staff. Free staff provide medical services, counseling, instruction, rehabilitative programs, etc., whereas custody staff provide supervision and security to prisoners. As a member of the free staff, I have an insider-outsider position within the prison. I am able to move about freely and interact directly with prisoners, but I am not involved in routine supervision and am recognized as someone who is a professional outside of the prison environment. My methodology

also provides me with an insider-outsider perspective, as I hear from the inmate respondents themselves (insiders) and from the arts program staff members (semi-outsiders).

Restricting the sample to men gave me the chance to see how masculinities are at work in this environment, and how art may or may not play a role in transcending the ideals of hegemonic masculinity or hyper-masculinity that exist within prisons. In such an environment, masculinity becomes magnified; isolating my study to a male prison gave me insight into the seemingly minute variations of how masculinity can be performed, and how such expectations vary according to other variables.

My analysis examines how both the objects and the producers of the objects are gendered. The activity associated with the object need not be gendered necessarily, but often there will be cues associating an object with a particular gender (Oddy 1996). This particular comparison also allowed me to isolate a potential art world and to see the shifting boundaries regarding art and gender that is at work there. Interviewing inmates from one institution lets me control for the particular social/political climate of the institution, the various authority figures to whom they are exposed, etc. Studying an extreme case can provide insight into where the transgression and redrawing of gender boundaries can occur.

Incorporating inmates at varying stages of experience and recognition as artists provides another avenue to ensure diversity in my sample. Inductive research and deductive research have a reciprocal relationship (Glaser and Strauss 1967). Because it was not possible for me to obtain an entirely representative sample (there is no list of

all inmates who participate in creating art), the method of theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss 1967) made the most sense. Being able to make comparisons based upon the distinction regarding being a recognized artist and still being "underground" allowed me to analyze how much this affects an inmate's feelings about his work in regards to his gendered identity. This also increased the possibility that something I had not previously considered would arise – inductive research allowed me to keep such possibilities open. This indeed served me well, as Chapter 4 specifically focuses on observations that I made unintentionally while conducting my research.

Theoretical Overview

The literatures provided here are those that I rely on in multiple chapters. I explain them in more detail here, and provide brief recaps in the individual chapters in which they are used.[3]

Doing and Undoing Gender

The "doing" of gender is at the heart of this examination. Gender is embodied in individuals. Scholars of gender recognize how gender inequality is maintained on individual, interactional, and institutional levels (Risman 2004). Gender is constantly being performed, even in subconscious actions (West and Zimmerman 1987), and is a central element in our "presentations of self" (Goffman 1959). As such, doing gender

[3] Additional literatures are used in only one chapter, and are discussed there. Chapter 3 includes sub-contexts and idiocultures. Chapter 4 discusses work on the construction of identities, the prison-industrial complex, total institutions, reclaiming identities and agency, cultural capital and taste, and the debate about cultural omnivorousness. In Chapter 5, I bring in the analysis of cultural objects, jail and prison art, and art markets. Chapter 6 addresses the examination of Institutional Review Boards.

is part of doing time – American prisons are inherently masculine, where inmates are pushed to perform and conform to an extreme masculine ideal (see, for example, Curtis 2014; Heidenreich 2011; Rhodes 2001).

At the same time as gender is constantly "done," it can also be "undone" (Connell 2009; Deutsch 2009; Risman 2009). Everyday behavior can indeed change the gender system that we currently hold as "natural" in our society. An important example is in Ely and Meyerson's (2010) study of oil rigs; when management puts an emphasis on reducing risk taking and increasing safety, men find a new focus – they shift away from performances of bravado and hypermasculinity and focus on this new goal. The authors argue that in so doing, gender is "undone" in this hypermasculine space. The nascent literature on prison arts programs (Brewster 2010, 1983; Leibmann 1994) suggests that such programs may have a positive effect on behavior, similar to the shift away from bravado performance documented by Ely and Meyerson (2010). As I discuss in Chapter 3, "Undoing Gender While Doing Time," I argue that prison arts programs do in fact have positive effects by reducing hypermasculinity, but that this does not occur as the result of top-down directives from prison management, but bottom up through the inmates themselves. Prison arts programs should be understood as subcultures, where the participants create an idioculture (Fine 1973) wherein they hold one another accountable to a new set of expectations that are created through small group interaction (Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003). These new expectations encourage alternative gender performances.

Masculinities

Much of the work on gender in sociology has focused on the examination of the differences between men and women, as segregated groups, and how these perceived differences lead to inequality. While it is essential to recognize that women as a group have historically been subordinated to men, there is also much difference within the genders (as noted by Connell 2005 [1995]; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Kimmel 1994; Messner 2007; Schilt 2006). The normative cultural ideal for men is termed by scholars "hegemonic masculinity" (Connell 1987, 2000, 2005 [1995]; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005). This concept embodies the traits of physical strength, financial success, authority and prestige, and marriage/fatherhood. It is opposed to, and subordinates, femininity. As an ideal type, individual men do not necessarily adhere to all of these tenets of hegemonic masculinity as there are multiple, but also often subordinated, masculinities performed in society (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005) and hegemonic masculinity is not a fixed concept nor is it a unitary subject (Messerschmidt 2001; Sabo 2001).

When gender transgression does take place and is studied, scholars find that those with traits most resembling hegemonic masculinity tend to police the behavior of others (McGuffey and Rich 1999). This gender policing has a long history and can occur both via codification through law and through everyday interactions within local communities (both by men and women) (Heidenreich 2011). Hegemonic masculinity is tied to heterosexuality (Kimmel 1994). Pascoe (2012) talks about the "specter of the fag," the notion that heterosexual men and boys use epithets such as "fag" or "gay"

against other heterosexual men and boys to police their masculinity (called compulsory heterosexuality). Homosexuality is identified as un-masculine. This policing of masculinity is heightened within the prison environment, where there is widespread homophobia.

Prison as a Raced Organization

The prison is an organization structured by race and gender. Race plays a very significant role in American prisons, with a heavily disproportionate number of African American and Latino men being locked up (Alexander 2012). Gangs run much of the daily life within prison, and have become synonymous with racial and ethnic groups. In California prisons, men are housed with members of their same race, often attributed to gang membership: Blacks (Black Guerrilla Family, Crips, Bloods), Whites (Neo-Nazis, Nazi Lowriders, Aryan Brotherhood), Southern Hispanics (Surenos, Mexican Mafia), Northern Hispanics (Nortenos, Nuestra Familia), and Other. This is by no means an accurate representation of races and ethnicities within California prisons, but it demonstrates how integral race is to daily life, and how it is even explicitly used to control the prison population. Single races can be placed on lockdowns. Prison officials often justify this practice by saying that it reduces gang and racial violence, and that "they would self-segregate anyways," but others criticize this practice for continuing racial segregation and heightening racial tensions (Kaye 2006). In conversations with prison staff members, they have mentioned to me that it is more difficult to control inmates when they are not racially segregated, as there is no "self-policing" of gang members; this is a clear example of the vested interest the

institution has in maintaining boundaries based on race. This occurs for gender as well.

Prison as a Hypermasculine Organization

Many occupations are gendered, or structured with the assumption that somehow men or women are uniquely suited to perform the required tasks (Padavic and Reskin 2002). Oftentimes work itself is identified as masculine, which can be seen in the "separate spheres" ideology and in the notion of the "ideal worker" that have historically pervaded our society (Blair-Loy 2003).

The prison, as an organization, is often assumed to be masculine (Rhodes 2001).[4] The vast majority of prisoners are men (Carson and Sabol 2012) and prisons are associated with the masculine traits of crime and violence (Collier 1998; Newburn and Stanko 1994; Sabo et al. 2001). Gender norms are reinforced not only by the prisoners themselves, but by the criminal justice system and prison policy (Heidenreich 2011).

Literature on prison masculinities has often focused on "hypermasculinity" (Evans and Wallace 2008; Rhodes 2001) or "dangerous masculinity" (Curtis 2014).

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[4] Prisons themselves are gendered organizations and support particular performances of gender by inmates and staff. A useful comparison lies in the incorporation of women into the prison system. As detailed by Heidenreich (2011), historically, as dependents, women were disciplined by their husbands. If they were placed in prison, they were viewed as beyond repair because they did not adhere to proper gender roles, and therefore could be placed in men's prisons. During the reformatory movement of the mid-1800s, it was thought that people could be rehabilitated by teaching men masculine skills and women feminine skills: "Thus women who were sentenced to reformatories were taught to sew and knit, to cook and wait on tables" (Heidenreich 2011: 150). The practice of men doing such feminine activities within the prison seems all the more egregious in this context.

Prisons in the U.S. are a sex-segregated, or "homosocial," environment (Holmberg 2001), which "magnifies masculinity, taking it to the extremes of hypermasculinity" (Holmberg 2001: 89) through a subordinating sexual order (83). Typically, research suggests that prisoners must appear to be "manly men," with snitching, or telling on others, considered the worst offense (Toch 1998). The consequences of showing weakness can result in rape (Kupers 2001). Holmberg (2001) notes a "cult of muscularity," where masculinity is associated with physicality and the prison hierarchy is dominated by inmates convicted for having committed violence against the police. Evans and Wallace (2008), however, have found in their prison research a variation in masculinity, with one group fully conforming to hegemonic masculinity, another group adopting a more "balanced" view of masculinity, and a final group composed of "softer, gentler men" (498) who felt themselves to be outside hegemonic masculinity and negatively viewed by other inmates.

Understandings of gender become more complex through the recognition of the intersection of gender and race. Pitt and Sanders (2010) argue that hypermasculinity encompasses marginalized masculinities, while hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1987, 2000, 2005 [1995]; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Kimmel 1994) is the dominant white masculinity. In fact, the organization of the prison itself segregates by race, with different racial and ethnic groupings having variable understandings of masculinity.

A few recent studies have addressed issues of gender within prisons, but none have questioned how masculinity is negotiated and sometimes successfully

deconstructed. The concept of the male prison as a hypermasculine environment has been discussed by a number of researchers.[5] In her study of male inmates participating in fathering programs, Curtis (2014) describes the existence of a pervasive, gendered understanding of prisoners entrenched within the prison structure which she terms "dangerous masculinity." This means that male inmates are viewed as violent, hypersexual, predatory, and uninterested in or disconnected from their families. This dangerous masculinity is essential to the institutional logic regarding the organization of prison life, allowing the category of "prisoner" to become more salient than the category of "race." Given how salient masculinity is to being a prisoner, however, Rhodes (2001) has suggested that "'rather than looking at men as prisoners we might look at prisoners as men' (Sim 1994, p. 101; cf. Howe 1994, Naffine 1996)" (74). In short, within a prison, masculine gender performance subsumes all other identity performances, including race: "Such a perspective, so far barely visible in the expanse of prison literature, opens up questions of the prisons' various displays of masculine power, men as victims of violence in prison, the influence of gendered popular representations of crime and prisons, and the exploration of unconscious gender assumptions in criminology and penology (Naffine 1996, Sim 1994)" (74).

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[5] Comfort (2003) has also written on the experience of women in the waiting room at San Quentin. She finds that the women are subjected to what she calls a "second prisonization," in that they are "subjected to the masculinity (and masculinizing) authority of the prison" (Wacquant 2002: 390). This is very useful in setting the scene of the prison as itself a masculine institution, but does not analyze the transgression of gender boundaries within the prison itself. The acknowledgement that prison inmates have "loved ones," however, is a very important point, as it allows for some humanizing aspects of the traditional conceptualization of the "criminal" to peer through.

Just as unconscious gender assumptions have guided thinking about prisons and explicit gender expectations guide the identity performances of prisoners, art and artists have been associated with gender assumptions and performance, but as "distinctly feminine" (Garlick 2004). Thus, the participation of inmates in prison arts programs provides an important research locus for identifying and understanding alternative gender performances within prison.

Prison Arts Programs

The research on prison arts programs rooted in sociology, criminology, and other disciplines is small. The majority of existing research on prison arts programs focuses on the products created (Bliss et al. 2009; Kornfeld 1997; Meadows 2010) and on inmate economies (Kalinich 1980). There is also a small literature on the rehabilitative potential of prison arts programs. California, for example, had the statewide Arts-in-Corrections program, until it was de-funded in 2003 and completely dismantled by 2010. The program provided for an Artist Facilitator in each institution, who was paid a salary to oversee the entire program. This Facilitator was a trained artist, and the programs centered on fine arts. Arts-in-Corrections was re-funded at a lesser amount as a "pilot program" in 2015, but the Artist Facilitator role has not returned. Multiple studies have noted the benefits of such prison arts programs. They reduce institutional violence, lower recidivism, increase prison safety (Brewster 1983, 2010; CDC 1987) and can also provide therapeutic benefits (Liebmann 1994).

These previous analyses, however, lack a sociological perspective. They miss the dimensions of gender (using a multi-level analysis), art markets, and the socially constructed creative process, which are my focus.

Intersectionality

Prisoners doing art highlights intersections within their identity. Not only do "inmate" and "artist" compete as master statuses, but both are gendered, racialized, and even class-specific identity frames. Intersectionality is a sociological approach which maintains that multiple domains of inequality (i.e. class, race/ethnicity, gender, etc.) need to be examined together, as all operate in relation to the others (Bettie 2000 and 2003; Collins 2005; Crenshaw 1991; Risman 2004). Collins (2005) focuses on actual experience, placing it within the middle-range theory category. As Collins (2005) maintains, "African Americans need different conceptions of femininity and masculinity that do not simply mimic those of White men and women, but that reflect the needs of actual lived Black experience and that contribute toward building a true democracy in the United States" (306). Theorists utilizing this approach actively seek change, and recognize the heterogeneity among men and women.

Crenshaw (1991) and Baca Zinn and Thornton Dill (1996) argue for a conceptual framework that examines the importance of race, and the interlocking ways in which race, gender, class, and sexuality operate, when looking at gender. Women (and not just women of color) cannot be treated as a homogeneous category. Collins (2005) argues that gender, race, and sexuality are "mutually constructing systems of power" (11). Women and men experience racism differently, but race and gender also

combine to create distinctive sexualities. Risman (2004) also cautions, however, that scholars cannot "only study inequalities' intersection and ignore the historical and contextual specificity that distinguishes the mechanisms that produce inequality by different categorical divisions" (443). As Bettie (2000) notes, women have often been treated as "without either class or racial/ethnic subjectivity" (5), even in some feminist treatments.

Even when dealing with white, middle-class women, it is important to note the importance of race and social class, and avoid the issue of gender reductionism (Bettie 2000). Bettie (2000) discusses class as a performance, in which there are "learned sets of expressive cultural practices that express class membership… institutionalized class inequality creates class subjects who *perform*, or display, differences in cultural capital" (11). Bettie's conceptualization allows for both structure and agency—Bettie does not consider the working-class white and Mexican American high school girls in her study to be "victims of a mass culture that promotes their subordination based on gender" (2000: 13). They align themselves with particular groups and make choices regarding their school track, even in the midst of structural inequality.

Collins (1991) distinguishes between intersectionality and the matrix of domination: "Intersectionality refers to particular forms of intersecting oppressions… Intersectional paradigms remind us that oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type, and that oppressions work together in producing injustice. In contrast, the matrix of domination refers to how these intersecting oppressions are actually organized" (18).

The intersectional approach allows for the deconstruction of homogeneity of the gender categories. Intersectionality theorists recognize that men and women are divided by class, just as they are divided by race, sexuality, and other characteristics. This emphasis on heterogeneity is fundamental to the breaking down of rigid gender categories. While the various theoretical approaches taken within the sociology of gender all bring up important aspects of studying gender that scholars must consider, many of them paint a far-too-static image of gender relations.

I argue that an intersectional approach, along with a focus on the doing (and potential "undoing") of gender, brings in the necessary element of recognizing the heterogeneity inherent in the categories of men and women. This awareness of diversity also allows us to acknowledge the overlapping of men and women's interests, which is visible in a number of arenas within the study of gender. Although prisons are sex-segregated, prison arts programs draw a diverse group of inmates together, cutting across lines of gender identity, race, social class, sexual orientation, and other characteristics, and both 'inmate' and 'artist' are master frames for identity. An intersectional perspective demonstrates that arts programs in correctional facilities provide the opportunity for inmates to overcome many of these perceived boundaries, and adopt a new "artist" identity.

Outline of Dissertation

Each chapter of my dissertation highlights specifics aspects of life for inmate artists and their performance of gender. I also use different types of data collection

methods, to fully explore these issues; Chapter 2 provides a detailed overview of my research methodology. I begin by presenting the process of arts creation within prisons, and specifically my research site, a medium/maximum security prison in Southern California. Chapters 3 and 4 rely on my participant observation in a prison arts program that I created, as well as in-depth interviews with currently incarcerated artists. These two chapters focus on the "doing," or the artistic process and community. Chapter 3 focuses on the performance of gender in the prison art studio; Chapter 4 complicates this analysis by looking at the intersections of gender with race, class, age, disability, and sexual orientation. In Chapter 5, I then move to an analysis of the products, the artwork that is created by prison artists; this I call the "done." This moves beyond the single prison site of my participant observation and utilizes a national database of artworks created by incarcerated men, bringing up issues related to the broader prison art market overall. I also argue for the importance of visual sociology. Chapter 6 takes the broadest focus, considering how research in prison does and should occur; it is a meta-critique of the process by which human subjects regulations seek to protect vulnerable populations and yet have the unintended consequences of making them more invisible and powerless as a group. Chapter 7 concludes the dissertation, providing an overview of the main arguments, discussing potential implications for public policy, and suggesting directions for future research.

Chapter 2: Research Methodology

Chapter 2 recounts each of the methods I used to collect data for my dissertation: participant observation in a prison arts program that I created; in-person

interviews with currently and formerly incarcerated artists, and prison arts program staff members; and an analysis of artworks created by men who are incarcerated.

Chapter 3: "Undoing Gender While Doing Time: Men in Prison Arts Programs"

Although there is a scholarly and institutional assumption that imprisoned men must maintain a hypermasculine image, this performance of gender does not extend to the prison art studio. Rather than buttressing the hypermasculine traits that are rewarded on the prison yard, incarcerated artists are rewarded for devotion to the arts program itself. In this chapter, I examine the experiences of male prisoner-artists through more than 450 hours of participant observation in a prison arts program that I created. I also analyze 52 interviews that I conducted with currently and formerly incarcerated artists and prison arts program staff. I report that respondents consider the art studio to be a "safe" space, a sanctuary within a dangerous environment. In the studio, these men are allowed, and even encouraged, to transcend rigid gender expressions and racial divisions in order to become true artists. They regularly socialize across racial lines, sharing supplies and offering encouragement. The men generally agree that they should protect the arts program, thereby safeguarding a "freer culture" that does not exist elsewhere in the prison. This has broader theoretical implications for the study of gender and organizations. Just as Ely and Meyerson (2010) found on oil rigs, getting individuals in masculine (and dangerous) workplaces to shift their goals and utilize a new reward system allows them to cast aside the rigid guidelines that formerly shaped their gendered behavior. Creating "alternative spaces" in heavily gendered organizations can reduce pressure on members to enact this

gendered behavior, thereby "undoing" gender. My findings support policy arguments that prison arts programs are beneficial for individual inmates, the prison institution, and broader society but add an important mechanism for how this is accomplished: these arts programs allow inmates to drop the hypermasculine imperative.

Chapter 4: "Intersections on the Inside: Gender, Race, Class, Age, Disability, and Inmate Identity in a Prison Art Studio"

Even though prisons are total institutions in which prison authorities work to standardize the personality of inmates, prisoners resist this standardization by managing their social status in micro-interactions concerned with social status and the presentation of self. This chapter explores the intersections of gender, race, class, age, disability and sexual orientation in total institutions in the context of a prison art studio, analyzing the wide range of identities that often go unrecognized. In particular, I demonstrate how artists and their art is a form of capital which helps inmates to undergo a process of "artistization," rejecting the master status of "prisoner" placed onto them by the prison staff and the outside world and adopting an artist identity; however, I recognize that this process works in different ways according to the intersections of gender, race, class, age, and disability.

Chapter 5: "From 'Doing' to 'Done': Prison Art as Cultural Object"

In this chapter I analyze the understudied area of prison art to understand masculinities. Previous scholarship has maintained that men's prisons are hypermasculine institutions, in which the gender of their inhabitants is constantly

policed. These scholars have often focused on the "doing" and "undoing" of gender rather than on what is "done." But art involves both process and product. Gendered performances produce gendered cultural objects, which can tell us a great deal about their creators and the social environments surrounding their creation. I use visual sociology to examine the objects created by men who are prison inmates, drawing from a survey of 264 images of art found in online sources. In contrast to earlier research on gendered jail art typologies, which oversimplifies according to common cultural understandings of gender essentialism, I find that many art objects created by men in prison depict feminized themes and utilize feminized media. This finding suggests that scholars must reconsider the assumption that hypermasculinity is always enacted within the prison environment; in fact, great variation exists in the gendered objects created by prison inmates.

Chapter 6: "Research Ethics in the Belly of the Beast: Studying Prison Arts Programs"

This chapter outlines the process involved in obtaining approval to research a prison arts program. Using the literatures from ethics and the sociology of gendered organizations, I argue that these difficulties in gaining research access can be attributed to a discrepancy between the goals of the prison institution and those of the individual research subject and society overall. This difficulty in access is further complicated by the Institutional Review Boards' (IRBs') concept of the "vulnerable human subject." Despite the best of intentions among Institutional Review Boards,

there is a disconnect between their legalistic understandings of potential risks and practical realizations of probable benefits.

My case study involves the creation of an environment that encourages art-making in prison, which affords inmates unique opportunities in terms of self-presentation and agency. Inmate art creation has the potential to defy the institutionalized image of the dangerous, hypermasculine inmate created by the prison administration to justify its standardization of prisoners and maintain control, creating a tenuous position for the art program as data source in terms of the prison's interests.

Chapter 7: Conclusion: "From the Inside Out: Connections Between the Prison and the Outside World"

Each chapter provides a particular angle to the issue of how to view male prisoners and their participation in art creation. Finally, the conclusion provides an overview of the dissertation argument. It then makes policy recommendations regarding prison rehabilitative programs. It also provides suggestions for how to apply my conclusions to institutions beyond the prison environment. It ends by suggesting avenues for further research, both in terms of comparative studies of various prison programs and also of applications of alternative spaces in other areas of society.

Chapter 2: Research Methodology

The importance of conducting ethnographic research has been noted by various researchers (Evans and Wallace 2008; Lamont and White 2009; Wacquant 2002). Wacquant (2002) is concerned with the dearth of current research on prisons, which he views as stemming from Foucault's erroneous claim in *Discipline and Punish* (1977) that the prison was going to be relegated to the outskirts of the "carceral archipelago" as more and more institutions incorporate social control into their workings (and thereby affecting all members of society). What happened instead was a boom in the prison system: "*The ethnography of the prison thus went into eclipse at the very moment when it was most urgently needed* on both scientific and political grounds" (Wacquant 2002: 385). As Wacquant asserts, Rhodes' (2001) review of literature relating to the prison system in the U.S. contains very few who conduct empirical research. Wacquant enthusiastically pushes for very in-depth observations: "…it is essential to *investigate the varied linkages between the prison and its surrounding institutions on the ground*, as they actually exist and operate, rather than from afar and above, from a bird's-eye view unsuited to capturing process, nuance, and contradiction" (387-388). My ethnographic research aims to help fill in this large gap.

Methods

I triangulated multiple methods – ethnography, interviews, and analysis of artistic objects. First, founding and teaching in a prison arts program allowed me to be

a participant observer, gaining the type of intensive ethnographic research that Wacquant (2002) encourages. Such research allowed me to view the artistic process, rather than solely the end-product, as often occurs in studies of prison art.

Second, in-person interviews with current prison artists provided me with the ability to give a voice to the inmates themselves and allow them to express how art functions in their lives. Interviews with former prison artists gave me access to a much wider population, and confirmed my findings from the ethnography and the interviews with currently incarcerated artists. Since the formerly incarcerated respondents had spent time in prisons across the state, I was able to test whether the prison itself that the currently incarcerated artists are in had a particular effect. These interviews with former prisoners also gave me insight into how art creation in prison affects people once they are released (possibilities for affecting recidivism) and helped me see whether the prison itself is the environment that changes the meaning of art for these individuals.

Interviews with both current and former prison art instructors gave me another perspective on how inmates treat their artwork and whether instructors and potential audiences change the nature of the artwork produced in prison.

Finally, examining the art objects themselves rounded out my study by providing me the opportunity to study these pieces as cultural objects. I detail the steps I took for each of these methods below.

Method 1: Ethnography

Ethnography gave me the ability to provide "thick" description of my cases and present a rich social context that can help explain the experiences of the individuals I studied. Such qualitative research gave me the opportunity to conduct "process tracking," or analyze how processes operate and change (Lamont and White 2009). I became a participant observer by founding a prison arts program. Beginning in early 2014, I spent six or more hours per week working in the prison arts program, leading to a total of over 450 hours of participant observation.

Method 2: Interviews with Inmate Artists

A study in which understandings of identity are examined requires in-depth interviews, such as those performed by Kornfeld (1997). Semi-structured interviews allow for the artists to answer particular questions but also to bring up what they find to be most important about their work, which is an inductive approach. Since many art programs have been cut, I wished to conduct interviews with both inmates currently participating in art programs, those who previously participated, and those who simply create art without any sort of formal art program. These individuals working outside of a program must provide all of their own supplies, and perhaps therefore have even more motivation and desire to create their works of art. Incorporating these three subgroups gave me a wide range of people, taking into account the various reasons why they might begin or continue their art practice in the first place.

As a young woman, I was concerned that it might be difficult to interview men in prison, as there could have been a chance that I would not be taken seriously.

However, I believe that my status in fact assisted me—because I was not viewed as competition in any way, the inmates seemed to speak very candidly about their activities and thoughts (Sprague 2005). They also tended to view me in a positive light, since I was recognized as having brought in arts programming, which they were all generally very supportive of (even if they themselves were not participants of the program). Before beginning this research, I had also read extensively about prison life, had worked with numerous organizations focused on the criminal justice system, and had volunteered in two prison programs. One was a GED tutoring program at a prison in Northern California and the other was a creative writing program in the same prison where I started the visual arts program. Working in these programs introduced me to different prison environments and provided me with some background on prison life. I had also run a book service program for prisoners, which meant that I had to engage with and learn the regulations of all types of prisons across the United States. Therefore, I had some exposure to the prison culture (Lamont and White 2009). This gave me currency in the prison, as I already knew much of the slang, routine, procedures, etc. that the subjects engaged in and so they could speak as they usually would. I also have a background in the arts, with an emphasis on jewelry-making and metal-smithing techniques. This provided me with a legitimacy in the arts program, as I could follow what the inmate artists were discussing about their work and identify techniques that their were incorporating in their pieces.

As a member of the "free staff," I have both an insider and outsider position. I am able to enter the prison and interact with the inmates, but am not a member of the

custody staff, meaning that I am not a part of any punishment (similarly to Goffman's position as assistant to the athletic director while he conducted participant observation in a mental institution [1961]). My triangulation of research methods also provides me with an "insider" view from the inmate respondents, and a "semi-outsider" view from the arts program staff members.

As an incentive to participate in my study, I offered a small amount of money ($10) to the formerly incarcerated artists and the arts program staff. This amount was offered as a symbol of appreciation for the up to two hours of each subject's time. The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Office of Research prohibits inmates from receiving any compensation for participation in research, so I was unable to offer them the $10 compensation. The interviewees told me that they welcomed the opportunity to discuss their artwork with me, and that they wanted to support arts programming overall.

I accessed the currently incarcerated interviewees first by posting sign-up lists in the prison. Each housing unit had a sign-up list posted inside. I signed up additional interviewees when inmates stopped by the program; everyone who asked what we were doing was told that there were opportunities to both sign up for the arts program (or be added to the wait list) and/or for an interview.

I recruited formerly incarcerated interviewees by sending out announcements to the groups on prison activism of which I have been a member. I also utilized snowball sampling; when individuals responded to my email announcement and I interviewed them, I asked them to see if any of their formerly incarcerated contacts

would be willing to speak with me as well. A number of additional individuals contacted me through referrals.

Current and former prison art instructors were recruited through contacts I already had as part of my prior work on prisons and through email announcements to organizations that run arts programs in prison.

Method 3: Examining Art Objects and Art Markets

Studying the works of art themselves as cultural objects, along the lines of the material culture approach, was another important method. The interviewees with whom I spoke create particular types of work for a variety of reasons. I reviewed the portfolios that some interviewees brought with them, but what I utilized for the art analysis was works that are publicly available. More information on this specific data collection method is explained in Chapter 4, "From 'Doing' to 'Done.'"

Further details of my methods are described in the Methodological Appendix.

Sample

I conducted participant observation and interviewed men who currently do various types of art in a California prison, and interviewed those who have done a variety of artwork in prisons across the state. As discussed in the literature regarding total institutions, prisons have a particular social climate. Following Farrington's (1992) call, scholars must of course take into account the "degree of bureaucratization" and permeability that exist within each specific institution (considering whether the setting of the prison is more rural, as if often the case in

modern prisons [see Gilmore 2007], or more urban), but as a whole, each prison within the U.S. could be said to share many of the same traits: "Some prisons are worse, and some are better, but all prisons are containers of lives contained" (Boudin 2011: xix).

I also interviewed former inmates and both current and former instructors of prison arts programs. There are many difficulties that exist in obtaining interviews from prison inmates and those who are formerly incarcerated; I spoke with 31 currently incarcerated men, 8 formerly incarcerated men, and 13 prison arts program staff members. Other studies utilizing ethnographic research concerning prisons vary in sample size, from Evans and Wallace's (2008) interviews with 9 men in a single London prison to Comfort's (2003) interviews with 50 women whose partners were incarcerated to Curtis' (2014) 118 interviews with 49 incarcerated fathers to Owen's (1998) approximately 300 face-to-face interviews with women in prison.

I also distinguished between artists who have multiple years of experience and/or have been recognized for their art and those who have little or no experience and/or are not well-known. Some of my subjects have had their work a) displayed in galleries outside of the prison (established as an artist "in their own right"), b) purchased or revered by prisoners (recognized as artists at least within the prison community), c) shared with family and friends, or d) created for personal use and enjoyment (making these individuals less established and not necessarily defined as "artists" by themselves or others).

For my study, I utilized mixed qualitative methods. I used participant observation in a prison arts program, interviews with three samples of participants of prison arts programs (see Table 2.1), and a cultural object analysis of artworks created by incarcerated artists.

Because California de-funded its Arts-in-Corrections program in 2010, I had to found a prison arts program to do this research. I have spent over 450 hours in 2014 and 2015 with the art program, which began with 20 inmate-artists in a collaborative mural project and then continued with two groups of 16 incarcerated artists in a drawing, painting, and sculpting class. My interviews come from three populations: I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews (1.5 to 3 hours) with currently and formerly incarcerated artists and volunteers in prison art programs. I completed a total of 52 interviews (31 with currently incarcerated artists, 8 with formerly incarcerated artists, and 13 with prison art program volunteers and staff members). These interviews were conducted in 2013 and 2014. All of these individuals worked or were incarcerated in California prisons; all of the former inmates were incarcerated in state-run facilities from a wide range of security levels, but one of the program workers has worked in both state and federal institutions. They engaged in a variety of programs (some state-funded, some volunteer-led), such as painting and drawing (acrylics, watercolor, pencil), bookbinding, block printing, music, etc. Many had been involved for years.

The currently incarcerated men had sentences ranging from a few years to Life Without the Possibility of Parole (known as LWOP). They ranged in age, from 22

years old to 78 years old and had spent from a few years behind bars to four decades. Most have been in multiple prisons throughout their time incarcerated, ranging from two to nine. Most of the sample identified as cisgender, but one identified as transgender, and had changed the name she used in the prison (although not her legal name) to reflect that.

To ensure that my findings were not created by simply participation in the one art program I had created, I compared the results from the participant observation study of my arts program to results from interviews with others. These include interviews with formerly incarcerated men who had participated in other arts programs (and not my program) and interviews with instructors of arts programs based in other California prisons. This comparison allowed me to corroborate my findings, and confirm that what I found in my research was not a creation of my specific arts program or simply an artifact of being the researcher and the founder of the program respondents were involved in.

The formerly incarcerated men had spent from 5 to 21 years (an average of 12 years among the eight of them) as participants, and the prison art program workers had spent 1 to 25 years (an average of 18 years among the thirteen of them) as volunteers or paid staff members, in various prison art programs. The majority of these individuals had spent time in multiple prisons. Therefore, they could speak to not only what they saw as their own work as artists, but also to the experiences of the other members of their classes. I spoke with each of the respondents about their own art practices, their beliefs about prison masculinities, and their experiences specifically

within the prison art studio as it compared to their other prison experiences. Each of my respondents has been given a pseudonym to protect their confidentiality.

Table 2.1: Characteristics of Incarcerated Respondents

Data Source	Number of Respondents	Race/Ethnicity	Age	Years Served
Ethnography with art program participants	56	17.86% Black 46.43% White 28.57% Latino 7.14% Asian/Pacific Islander 0% Native American	26.79% >50 46.43% 30-50 26.79% <30	3-38
Interviews with currently incarcerated artists	31 (25 are also art program participants)	22.58% Black 38.71% White 29.03% Latino 6.45% Asian/Pacific Islander 3.23% Native American	19.35% >50 58.06% 30-50 22.58% <30	5-38
Interviews with formerly incarcerated artists	8	0% Black 25% White 50% Latino 12.5% Asian/Pacific Islander 12.5% Native American	37.5% >50 62.5% 30-50 0% <30	7-25

The majority of the art program staff were involved in this work for decades, so they had the ability to observe multiple cohorts of artists, and to see artists grow over time (see Table 2.2). Many of them also worked in multiple prisons, providing them with an additional vantage point in order to speak to what they witnessed.

Table 2.2: Characteristics of Art Program Staff Respondents

Number of Respondents	Gender	Race/Ethnicity	Age	Years Worked
13	53.85% women 46.15% men	15.38% Black 76.92% White 0% Latino 7.69% Asian/Pacific Islander 0% Native American	46.15% >50 53.85% 30-50 0% <30	69.23% >10 15.38% 5-10 15.38% <5

Of course, there are limitations to my sample. I had to fill multiple roles in the prison art program, including director, facilitator, and researcher. The currently incarcerated artists who are in my program may feel the need to speak highly about the program. The formerly incarcerated men are reflecting back upon their time in prison, which may have been traumatic for them, and which they may not wish to talk about. However, the men in my sample often appeared very excited to talk about their work, which they saw as a symbol of their progress and their inherent goodness, despite what other members of society might think. Many of the men shared their artwork with me as well, and talked me through their process. The art program workers and volunteers are also often reflecting back upon their previous experiences, which they may not remember in their entirety. They also have to rely on assumptions, or what they talk about with inmates or overhear, but many felt free to say they could not speak to a particular question if they did not feel confident about understanding a prison situation entirely.

Chapter 3: "Undoing Gender While Doing Time: Men in Prison Arts Programs"

Just as prisons are places where inmates "do time," they are also places where inmates, especially male inmates, "do gender." Correctional facilities represent "extreme cases" (Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep 2009) where male inmates must constantly perform "hypermasculinity" and abide by other prisoner-enforced norms (i.e. racial segregation) or face sanctions from their peers, including violent and sometimes deadly attacks.[6]

While performing masculinity is a part of everyday life within the larger social system, masculinity within the confines and constraints of prison takes on a different character than it does on the outside (Kunzel 2008). The tedium of doing time makes even the smallest, most mundane details of daily life—making eye contact in public

[6] As Arenberg (2009) explains, eating a piece of food that a member of another race already took a bite from can result in being killed. One's personal possessions become all-important; fights break out if a Ramen soup goes missing. The prison art studio is crowded, so individuals can be protective over their work spaces at times, as Jurgen, one of the formerly incarcerated artists I interviewed, explained to me. Because these incidents, which would be perceived as relatively minor on the outside (and certainly not deserving of death), become heightened and have severe consequences, prison is a very violent place (Gibbons and Katzenbach 2006). In 2002, there were 68 homicides, 482 suicides, and 84 deaths of "other/unknown" cause in U.S. state prisons and jails (Mumola 2005). In 2000, 34,355 assaults among prisoners and 17,952 assaults by prisoners against staff were reported (Stephan and Karberg 2003); however, these statistics are likely conservative, as many incidences go unreported (Gibbons and Katzenbach 2006). Specter (2006) argues that prison conditions promote violence, rather than violent prisoners serving as the sole cause of institutional violence. These same conditions often lead to the return of inmates to such violent surroundings (Gibbons and Katzenbach 2006): in California, 47% of those who are released recidivate within one year and 63.7% return to prison within three years of their release (CDCR Office of Research 2012). Prison is a reflection of life on the outside, but in a much more extreme case.

spaces or eating lunch with someone from another race—important. Seemingly inconsequential actions garner much more serious reactions within the prison than could be imagined on the outside, making the gender expectations and performance much more explicit.

However, within a social system where Carl, one of my incarcerated research subjects stated "You gotta throw your toughness around" and, in the words of Jurgen, another inmate, where you must constantly try to be the "biggest and baddest," inmates voluntarily get together and show one another watercolors of flowers or pencil drawings of family members or favorite childhood places, attentively listen to lectures and lessons given by young and middle-aged women on art history and artistic technique, and openly discuss their deep feelings and repressed emotions in small groups. They also tell one another to "sit up straight," encourage one another to "go [emotionally] deeper," and heap praise on one another's work. Prison arts programs are racially integrated, despite the mandates of racial segregation elsewhere in the prison. Jurgen explained to me, "It's still the 1950s in there [prison]," referring to the institutional racial segregation. Carl, who is Black, said, "You can't fight a white boy without starting a riot." Yet Carl, Jurgen, and dozens of others prisoners weekly check their "big, bad, tough, and hypermasculine" selves at a state prison art studio's door and instead perform the alternative identity of an artist. What is more, they validate and hold one another accountable for sincerely performing the role of artist, co-creating an alternative social system and group culture (Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003; Fine 1979; Fine and Hallett 2014) that offers major individual and society-wide

benefits. In short, while the larger prison social system forces inmates to "do gender," prison arts programs provide opportunities where that hypermasculine gender can be "undone" (Connell 2009; Deutsch 2009; Risman 2009), reducing institutional violence within the prison facility and increasing the chances for released inmates to successfully reintegrate into the larger society (Brewster 1983, 2010; CDC 1987).

The research questions I explore in this chapter are as follows: How do understandings (or unconscious beliefs about imperatives) affect presentations of masculinity within prison art studios? How are performances of hypermasculinity and racism tempered within prison art programs? How can we use that knowledge to reduce such gender imperatives within the prison?

This chapter relied on the methods of participant observation in the prison arts program and interviews with three samples: currently incarcerated artists, formerly incarcerated artists, and prison arts program staff members. Chapter 2 explains how I triangulated the methods of participant observation in a prison arts program, interviews with currently incarcerated artists, and interviews with formerly incarcerated artists and prison art program staff members. I founded a visual arts program at a medium/maximum security state prison, which gave me access to incarcerated artists of a wide range of skill sets and arts education backgrounds. The interviews with currently incarcerated artists provide insight to those who are presently engaged in arts practice, either within the art program I run, in another art program, or on their own. Some of them also have experience in multiple arts programs, in prisons throughout the state. The interviews with formerly incarcerated

artists and the volunteers or paid workers who lead these programs allow me to access their personal experiences working inside the prison, subject to the constraints of such a life. It gives me both an "insider" (from the inmates themselves) perspective and a semi-"outsider" (from the art program volunteers and leaders) perspective. The formerly incarcerated and staff interviewees have worked in prisons across the state; some have experience at the prison at which I am a participant observer, but most have worked elsewhere. This allows for comparison among arts programs in different facilities. Additional specifics on these methods, including tables that provide aggregated demographic information on the four samples, are available in Chapter 2.

In this chapter, I argue that prison arts programs allow inmate participants to successfully develop alternative gender identities. My analysis takes into account three aspects of prison arts programs. These programs: 1.) take place in separate, non-public spaces (i.e. studios); 2.) select participants according to a cross-cutting, shared interest (i.e. learning and developing artistic skill); and 3.) systematically validate a substitute identity (i.e. "the true artist"). These three characteristics work in tandem to create a "safe space," form an intentional community, and promote new norms that develop into a mutually reinforcing micro-system or "idioculture" (Fine 1979) that participating inmates continuously renew through their group interactions (Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003).

The findings of this chapter suggest that it indeed would be beneficial for prisons to once again regularly institute art programs. Providing an alternate primary identity for individuals within particular contexts gives them a new focus, a new way

to reestablish themselves in a pecking order. This chapter suggests that such programs will help in both reducing the negative aspects of hypermasculinity and overcoming racial barriers.

Theoretical Framework

As I discussed in Chapter 1, the foundation for much of my research is the work on the "doing," or everyday performance, of gender. The corollary to the "doing," or reproduction of gender norms and gendered relationships, is the "undoing," which allows for change in these taken-for-granted performances. The study of masculinities has recognized the existence of multiple masculinities, but it has assumed that prisoners exhibit hypermasculinity. It is true that prisons are gendered organizations and encourage hypermasculine behavior, but much more variation exists. Although there has been work done on prison arts programs as therapeutic, as I discuss in Chapter 1, none of these past studies, however, examine how gender is performed within prison arts programs nor do they apply a small group sociological perspective (Fine and Hallett 2014) to arts programs. I believe that a focus on prison arts programs as small groups is essential for understanding how gender is "undone" within prisons as hypermasculine environments.

Sub-contexts and Idiocultures

Prisons are composed of a number of smaller microcosms; one's identity changes in different sub-contexts of the prison environment. As this chapter addresses, inmates negotiate their gender identities differently as they traverse the spaces of the

prison, including when they enter into the space of a "small group," such as an arts program. I specifically focus on the art studio, which my respondents regularly compare to "the yard," which is the most public space within the prison. While "the yard" requires hypermasculine behavior of male prisoners, the art studio permits transgressive gender behaviors. Using dramaturgical analysis, Goffman (1959) not only argued that people are constantly undergoing gender performances, but that those performances may vary according to context. His most important contextual distinctions were "front stage," where people gave more public, conscious performances, and "back stage," where people gave a more private, unconscious performance of identity. Art-making is interesting in that it can be both conscious and unconscious, wherein individuals may realize that their art work can be reflective upon them, and therefore may consciously consider what potential audiences may think about them as artists. However, the art production itself often takes place in non-public settings, such as a studio. Prison arts programs, whether taking place in a formal studio or not, always take place in semi-private spaces.

In light of the major role programs play in bringing individuals together, especially in prisons, to learn about and explore interests and participate in individual and collaborative projects with other inmates and with free staff, I argue that these small groups are "where the action is" (Harrington and Fine 2006). Participation in a prison program, where members learn and keep alive shared ideas and practices through everyday, face-to-face interactions, can be a very important variable in explaining alternative identity and norm creation.

Prison programs provide the link between macro-level, prison- and society-wide discourse of masculinity and the micro-level gender subjectivity of individual inmates. They are central sites where understandings of identity are mediated and individual and group action is determined. In short, small groups are important in explaining "variation, conflict, and change" (Harrington and Fine 2006: 6) in the interactions between individuals and the larger society. The reason for this is that face-to-face, formal and informal organizations each have their own "group cultures" (Lewin et. al. 1939) and "group styles" (Eliasoph and Lichterman 2003) that determine the ways in which new ideas mix with old ones and pressures to change are balanced against the desire to stay the same. Small groups, thus, develop "idiocultures," or "system[s] of knowledge, beliefs, behaviors, customs shared by members of an interacting group to which members can refer and employ as the basis for further interaction" (Fine 1979: 734). Participants in small groups reinforce meanings and practices, socializing members into roles and identities that they perform to one another within the small group environment and sometimes in the larger social environment. Prison arts programs, as small groups, have the potential to change gender performance in the larger prison environment.

Findings

To preview my results, I find that the art studio in prisons has become a "safe space," where inmates come together for the express purpose of creating art and enact an alternative values system that celebrates the "serious artist" as the group ideal. The

creation and maintenance of this subculture is based upon the art program taking place in a separate space, where inmates unaffiliated with the art program are kept at bay. Course admission requirements ensure that participants value art and are willing to make a significant commitment to the course, in effect creating an intentional community where membership is something that the participating mutually share and protect. Lastly, a curriculum that combines art history with skills development teaches inmates that artists are valorized members of society whose contributions result from individual dedication, thus introducing a new identity for program participants to aspire towards. As a result of these three elements, inmates are able to enact an alternative value system where they are able to form intimate relationships and develop positive practices wherein they bond with one another as artists, but also hold each other accountable towards taking the class and their individual projects seriously.

In the sections below, I analyze the importance of space, group membership, and alternative identity, using data drawn from my participant observation and interviews with inmate-students. I also supplement my findings with interviews I conducted with former inmate-participants and instructors in other prison art programs and I make connections between my research and the findings, inferences, and conclusions drawn from similar cases.

Safe Spaces

Art programs develop and maintain studios in a multiplicity of spaces within the prison, but regardless the location, the space is always separate. In some prisons, the studio is a dedicated room; in others it is in a multi-purpose room. The essential

element, however, is that it is removed from the most public areas of the prison, such as the yard. The art studio in my case study is set up inside of the gym, which is a large, cold room made almost entirely of concrete. At one time, before the federal court mandated that California redress overcrowding in prison, the gym was used to house over one hundred inmates in a dormitory style setting. Today the gym is used for basketball or volleyball during the day and as an art studio two nights of the week. The studio-gym is across the yard from the housing units and directly next to the chapel, the medication distribution area, and the program office. The gym door is kept propped open during the art classes (it locks automatically and cannot be opened from the inside, and therefore must remain open), but is set off 30 feet from where the main yard area begins and inmates hang out, exercise, or line up for their medication after dinner.

At the beginning of one class, the inmates and I had a short discussion about the program. Rodel, one of the participating inmates, spoke up, explaining, "This is the comfort zone here [the studio]. We come here every week. The dayroom is not like that." Kevin, another inmate, added, "In the dayroom there are a lot of 'personalities' and people are always standing over your shoulder, making you feel uncomfortable. Here it's more relaxed; you can relax and have a good time." During a one on one interview with Jose, another member of my art program, he explained that he had actually tried to do one of our class exercises in the dayroom, a space where inmates are able to spend time outside of their cells. "I tried to do the still lifes in the dayroom, but I can't. I can't do it outside of the program… It's too crazy in there. Everyone

wants to know what I'm doing." The interest of others had made him so uncomfortable that he never tried to do an art project again outside of the privacy of his cell or within the studio.

The comfort within the studio allows the inmates to engage in activities that were socially unacceptable because they would be considered unmasculine if done in the more public parts of the prison. For example, in the art program one night, the men were assigned to do portraits of each other in pairs. This meant that they needed to sit still for ten minutes while another man drew them; then they would switch places and draw their partner in the following ten minutes.

At the beginning of the next class, one of the participants, Jermaine, referred back to this assignment and made a connection between the project and his masculinity: "You don't really see what someone looks like until you do a portrait of them. It's like that saying, 'You don't know someone until you walk a mile in their shoes, you know?' And, and I'm secure enough in my masculinity to say this, you can see the beauty of another human being."

This comment prompted another inmate, Andrew, to explain that simply looking at someone else within prison was a breach of prison norms and could lead to a confrontation. "In prison, eye contact is a challenge. It wasn't like that for me out there [outside prison] – I used to look people in the eye. Here it didn't work out so great. It's who is going to break first." Finally, Eddie joined in, making an explicit connection between the activity and the art studio space: "It didn't mean anything for

me to do it [stare at another man] in here, so it was no problem. If I was out there [pointed out the door, to the yard], it would be a big problem."

The finding from participants in my arts program that an art studio is a safe space where inmates can engage in non-hypermasculine behavior was confirmed in my interviews with formerly incarcerated inmates who had participated in prison art programs and program instructors and volunteers who had worked in other prison art programs. Sam, a formerly incarcerated man, responded to an interview question about the use of feminine iconography or media within the prison art studio by stating "What happens [in the studio], stays in there… You can pretty much do whatever you want [in the studio], but not on the yard. People will say, 'What are you doing?' It's all about where you do it and who you do it in front of." Sam's explanation shows that social norms and sanctions within prison depend on both space, but also how its occupancy is regulated. The safety of the art studio as a space depends on it being populated by others who are equally engaged in and value art. Fernando, another formerly incarcerated interviewee who participated in a prison art program,, explained to me: "You can create art anywhere. The art program is something else."

This sentiment regarding the freedom of the art studio was shared across my interviews with art program workers throughout the California prison system. Linda, one of my interviewees, who had spent over 25 years as an art program staff member within California state and federal corrections institutions affirmed my observations and findings. Drawing from her decades of experience, she explained "The art studio is a refuge, a kind of sanctuary, from the outside, the rest of the prison. You can relax

a bit more in the art studio, do something wacky, something unconventional. It's a collegial environment… it's all about the culture."

Dennis, an art program worker in a facility in southern California talked about the freedom of the art studio in an interview with me. I pressed him on the limits of this freedom, asking whether or not someone would be chided for coming in with a pink feather boa. Dennis responded that "no one would even raise an eyebrow." In interviews with workers in a northern California prison, interviewees regularly mentioned the jovial vibe of the room; artists would joke around with each other, poke fun in a gentle way, or provide supportive commentary on works.

The safety of the art studio not only allows inmates to engage in behavior that would be considered unmasculine, but to also subvert the racial segregation that is common throughout the prison system. Jurgen, one of my inmate informants in the art program that I organize, told me that there are some white supremacist gang members who were in the art class as well, yet he was able to point out that during class they had no problem working with the African American, Hispanic, and Asian American students. Jurgen went on to joke that "things would be different outside the [art studio] door."

Race, like hypermasculinity, is something that can be left in the prison yard when participants enter the safe space of the art studio. The safety that comes from removing participating inmates from the "panoptic" monitoring of the prison "shot callers" and their peers—the leaders and members of racially segregated prison gangs—allows inmates participating in the art program to create relationships that

would be sanctionable within the larger prison social system. Identity performances associated with gender and race can be reduced or entirely dropped in the "backstage" (Goffman 1959) of the art studio, allowing space for a community to develop. This new community, however, is not something that is created by accident, but through the selection (or gatekeeping) process art program directors and volunteers use to ensure that only serious students enter the space.

Intentional Community

Admission to the prison arts program that I organize at my field site is based on best practices drawn from similar programs and prison regulations that limit class size to sixteen students at a time for a total of thirty-two students across the two classes. Interested inmates are required to fill out a very short application (only slightly modified from one used by a well-established prison arts provider) that records basic biographical information, including their name, security status, time left in the facility (to ensure they are not released during the program), and what they are interested in getting out of the program; and requires that they attach a sample of their art work, such as a pencil drawing or sketch. The admission application, including the sample art work, is not a test for ability, as drawings that show little or no skill are perfectly acceptable. The admission process is instead a test of serious interest and a willingness to commit. As such, sexuality, race and ethnicity, age, and so forth play no role in deciding who will participate and who will not. By making art the foremost criterion, the art program brings together a diverse group of men who would not otherwise interact with one another. By doing so, an intentional community is

established where membership is based on a shared interest rather than pre-set identity.

Todd, one of the inmates participating in the art program I organize, explained to me the importance of being surrounded by others who are equally interested in art, when he stated "I like that you can get lost in the art. And then when you come out of it, you're surrounded by this good group. It's comfortable." The comfort in doing art also allows men to build relationships that are not governed by hypermasculine norms.

Jurgen, one of the formerly incarcerated participants, told me that there were multiple men who were openly gay and transgendered individuals enrolled in and participating in the program, but this was not a "big deal." In fact, one participant is openly transgender, having changed her name to Viviana, regularly wearing makeup and growing her hair long, and using her transgender experience as the basis of her art. For example, one of the art projects was for inmates to create a shadow box. Viviana's shadow box is divided into three parts, depicting a very masculine man (bearded, etc.) on one side as a starting point, then the man beginning his transition in the middle of the box, and finally a beautiful woman as the final outcome. In my observations, Viviana, who often shows up early and is thus one of the first seated, sits among other inmates, with no indication of other participants avoiding open seats next to her. The other participants also share materials with her, discuss her project and theirs, and in all other observable ways participate on an equal basis with her.

The heterosexual men, however, do make gender-based jokes with one another, but it remains lighthearted and does not lead to observable changes in

behavior. In the art program one evening, Eddie was working on his metaphorical self-portrait, which includes a drawing of a young man in prison blues (the blue denim uniforms the men are required to wear). Hann came up behind him and joked, "Why are you wearing skinny jeans?" Hann clearly indicated mock disapproval in his voice and raised an eyebrow, meant to communicate that Eddie's sexuality was suspect. Eddie and Hann both laughed and Eddie continued his drawing unchanged. This sort of joking is something observed in other prison art programs. Linda, a veteran of such programs, told me in an interview that "They [participating inmates] are constantly laughing about being 'in the closet' when they go to get materials out of our supply closet." But again, this joking did not lead to heterosexual men aggressively harassing one another or not pursuing projects that might be or were jokingly called "gay," nor did it isolate or ostracize openly homosexual participants. These observations confirm Pascoe's (2012) findings that teenagers sometimes "jokingly" called each other gay, but this did not translate into bigoted ideas more broadly speaking.

There are also limits to the degree by which participants can imagine subverting the hypermasculine norm. Currently incarcerated Jose said to me in our interview, "I wouldn't take a dance class because the guys would think I was being girly." He went on to explain that he believes the dance class would attract a lot of homosexual inmates and would cause him to develop a bad reputation within the larger prison population. The art class, however, did not strike him as having the same risk.

What is considered "gay" or nonmasculine is also something that can be racially or ethnically specific, meaning that different identity groups are held to different standards of masculinity. Tom, a former prisoner who specializes in painting pastoral scenes, told me in an interview that "What is 'feminine' depends on who makes it. For example, [American] Indians [making jewelry] aren't seen as feminine, but rather spiritual." Here we can see that Tom recognizes how race and ethnicity change understandings of masculinities. Sam, another participant in my art program, told me, "There's no blanket rule about it [masculinity and homosexuality]… it all depends on race. There are different by-laws in each section…" Currently incarcerated Carl concurred: "For Blacks, respect is important, you know 'excuse me.' You better be polite. Southsiders [Hispanics], they do their own thing. Whites too."

Jurgen followed up on this same point. When I asked him how masculinity and manhood are defined within prison, the first thing he told me was that it's about how many tattoos you have, how big your muscles are, and how long and how many times you've been in prison. Then he stopped and said, "Well, it varies among races. For African Americans, it's manly to have a baby mama. They're really proud to be pimps. I had a hard time relating, because I thought that would be embarrassing. Whites are more concerned about child molesters and rapists. They check paperwork [i.e. find out why people are incarcerated]."

The differences in racialized gender expectations were one aspect of the larger segregation common in prisons. Chapter 1 points out how influential gangs are in prisons, and how they affect the organization of the prison institution itself.

In my ethnography, however, I saw that the participants would work together across racial lines. Not only did they sit by one another, they supported each other throughout the process. It was not that there was never any tension though – one particular member of the program was sometimes ignored, and I learned that he was considered lower on the prison hierarchy because of his conviction, which was for pedophilia. Linda, the art program staff member for the past quarter century, told me that race still does come into play in the art studio, but in a very different way than on the yard: "Thinking about race is part of the process inmates go through in exploring their identities and cultures. It's this personal experience about connecting with where you come from and then bringing it to the studio with a diverse group of people. It fosters a cultural understanding, and a lot of openness. It's a safe space." The men in her program would use their art to express racial or ethnic pride and use their backgrounds as sources of artistic inspiration, but not as a means of excluding or denying recognition to others; thus, it could be something that participants of other races and ethnicities would be interested in. She went on to say that the studio is by no means "paradise" though, pointing out a recent incident she witnessed. At a prison in northern California, there was a slight racial confrontation, in which an individual had been upset by a racially-charged comment that another inmate made. The following week they had a discussion about it; a white inmate brought up the point that people wanted to be able to joke around and have a light-hearted atmosphere within the studio, while an African American inmate explained that he wanted to feel comfortable in the space and felt like he should be able to speak up if he felt

uncomfortable. They were able to get past the comment and ended up shaking hands. Linda talked about this as the inmates "speaking up for the culture" of the studio, meaning that they felt it was more important to preserve good relations within the class than to promote the racial divisiveness that governed the larger prison social system. Here the inmates are actively negotiating and structuring this particular space of the art studio, of which they feel protective. They are constructing the atmosphere, making it one that is both jovial and one in which serious issues can be discussed, which is indeed a delicate balance. The fact that these inmates can find a space in which to discuss such charged events is very special, however, and Linda attributed this ultimately to their "policing within participants to preserve the sanctuary." She also recounted her experience working with multiple overt members of white supremacist gangs; however, they did not bring any such activity in to the studio, avoiding the usage of any racist imagery in their pieces and regularly interacting with artists of other races.

Andrew, one of the inmates in my class who is serving a sentence of life without parole, referred to the art program class or group as "the denim wolves"; he continued, "When you come here [prison], you decide if you're going to be a sheep or a wolf. I chose a wolf. I can't ever change that." The men in the class began nodding their heads, but said that they did not feel the need to act like that in the studio; Steve followed up, "Growing up I was always told to 'be a man.' Ya know, my dad told me to fight guys. But I realized in here that's really negative and just brings a lot more negative. This project [the metaphorical self-portrait drawing] is really making me

rethink all that. Art kinda encourages us to embrace that emotional side that we were always told to hide."

New Value System

In addition to creating a safe space and bringing together an intentional community, prison arts programs introduce the ideal of the artist as an identity to be aspired towards. In the program that I administer, for example, each class has a set curriculum that includes a discussion of an artistic movement or historical development related to the project we are doing (i.e. sculpting, shadow boxes, portraiture, etc.). These lessons in art history feature short biographies of artists, stressing their contributions to art and the larger society, often through lives of dedication, sacrifice, and emotional expressiveness. We then offer lessons in skills and techniques as a class and individually as the participants begin their projects. Projects themselves occur over a series of classes, usually beginning with discussion, planning, first and second drafts, and then final products. This curriculum is something that the participants themselves have developed into a distinct value system where they praise one another for communicating something honest (and emotional) about themselves, push and praise one another to become more skillful, and make a contribution to others, either distinct individuals or an imagined audience. The artists themselves enact the value system in a way that allows them to justify or "explain away" what might be perceived as gender-transgressive behavior. I have drawn the following three themes from the value system: 1) "the piece leads," 2) "he's just skilled like that," and 3) "it's not for me."

Listening to the Piece

Some of the decisions are portrayed as actually being out of the artists' hands. Mateo, a currently incarcerated artist, told me, "I feel so much peace working on drawings. I am so addicted… It's like something comes from nowhere... I can express the moment." During our art program, Mateo has often seemingly gotten lost in his work – he has been the last person working on many occasions. He explains, "I can't help it!"

Similarly, Sam, one of the formerly incarcerated artists, told me, "You've gotta listen to the piece, listen to the canvases… it can be weeks or months. Something will come to mind – it can be anything or it can be several things… The piece chooses me to represent it." John, another formerly incarcerated artist, said, "Art is doing more than being something to sell… It's not about me. I want to help other people appreciate it… It's less about money and more art for art's sake."

It's About Skill

Sam said, "There are a lot of artists within prison, but if you're really skilled, you will stand out." Tom, another former inmate-artist, said, "What you're allowed to do really depends on how good you are." Jurgen, a man who was sentenced to seven years, talked about the distrust he faced when he first joined the program. Some of the veterans of the program were lifers, and saw him as not as much of an artist originally because he specialized in block printing, rather than painting. He told me that in fact he stayed away from the painting class because it had more of a competitive feeling. In the block printing class, he said he was easily able to prove to the older guys that he

had what it took to be a true member of the program; he regularly produced beautiful linocuts that brought in a lot of money for the program, which he explained really felt good to him. One of the things that most helped Jurgen was that he was good friends with an individual who had been a long-time member of the arts program; this friend encouraged Jurgen to get involved, and helped ease his way into the class.

Even Christina, a less seasoned art program volunteer, recognized how strong artistic skills allowed individual artists to act how they wish: "There is a hierarchy in the studio, based on skill level. There is some teasing, mostly about being gay or liking someone, but it's a really communal, friendly, and open environment."

It's For Someone Else

Currently incarcerated Eddie explained to me that he most liked making art for others: "I usually like to surprise people… If I just hand it to them, they say 'you did a really good job' and that makes me feel really good. It makes me want to do more." Eddie has put this into practice many times. Not only has he donated many works of art to the program (to display and sell for fundraising), Eddie has brought in art he is creating for his friends and family. During class one evening, Eddie pulled out a portrait he was working on of one of his close friends; he regularly creates pieces for her. Ron, one of Eddie's friends, told me, "I tried to explain to Eddie that she is his muse." Eddie responded, "She has always been there for me. I like to make her smile." Bobby, another current prisoner, said in his interview, "My wife and daughter are my biggest fans. I love the 'oohs' and 'ahs' I get from her. It's the approval I had been wanting." Tom, a formerly incarcerated artist, agreed, saying, "I want to paint for that

person, to make other people happy. I don't like painting for myself, but rather for the love of art." Tom continued, "If you teach someone else, it becomes a commodity. Then it's no longer feminine. Capitalism reigns." Both Jurgen, another artist, and Linda, a program staff member, said that inmates would regularly draw pictures of "girly" things, such as fairies, flowers, and cats, but that people would say they were for their wives, girlfriends, mothers, daughters, nieces, etc. As Jurgen said, "You paint something that the other person likes. It's nice to be able to give a gift."

However, ultimately, whatever one created would be accepted; perhaps the individual might feel the necessity to justify the particular piece, if he felt like it crossed too far into feminine territory, but he was still able to create what he wanted, without repercussions of any kind. And, in fact, he might even be rewarded for it, for stepping outside of his comfort zone and exploring emotion (as indicative of an "artist"), for demonstrating impressive skill or sharing a new technique, or for showing care for the recipient of the piece.

Many of the volunteers mentioned art creation itself as being inherently personal, and therefore providing the ability for individuals to be more free in their self-expression. In fact, the more you explore with your art, and move away from what some would call "obvious" or "standard," the more the veteran inmate artists (and the free artists) respect you. Paul, a long-time prison art photographer, told me, "Fine arts needs a part of the artist. There's a lot of growth that happens." Lou, who has witnessed art programs in prisons across all of California, said, "There is absolute respect for those willing to be personal." Anna, another long-term prison art program

staff member, said, “They’re vulnerable as artists. Artists are revealing something personal and special to themselves – it’s more sensitive and emotional.” Because art pushes individuals to look deep within themselves, this becomes one of the criteria for becoming a “true artist” and being at the top of the hierarchy within the art studio. This type of emotion, honesty, and exploration is in fact often not rewarded in hypermasculinity; however, within the art studio, it is viewed as necessary for fine arts.

Discussion

This analysis shows that there are more masculinities being performed in prison than is often assumed in the scholarly literature. The “doing” of masculinity in prison very much depends upon the sub-context, just as it does in oil rigs (Ely and Meyerson 2010). When the men have a new focus, which in our case is the protection of their prized art program (and which allows them to fill up some of the copious amount of time they have in prison), they can overlook slight, and sometimes even more serious, transgressions of gender norms. This is not to say that men no longer care about masculinity at all – there is still a loose hierarchy in the prison art studio, based upon skill, and there is slightly unequal access to resources based upon this. But the notion that bravado and machismo will get you ahead does not hold sway in the art studio like it does on the yard; this is a reconstruction (and deconstruction, or “undoing”) of gender norms. No longer are men required to be violent to prove themselves; rather, their dedication to the program is of the utmost importance. The

men are far more concerned about protecting their ability to relax in a safe environment than they are about upholding a hypermasculine image, and will therefore break the "code" that rules the prison yard if they are in the confines of the art studio.

Part of what makes the space of the art studio so special is that art is already seen as being personal; being able to create art is already a step toward vulnerability. This was pointed out by the newer art instructor, who noted that art requires at least some amount of vulnerability on the part of the artist.

Overall, the men are more willing to discuss and overcome issues of race than they are issues of sexuality; my findings corroborate those of Pascoe (2012), who argues that usages of derogatory terms regarding non-heterosexual sexualities is really a demonstration of compulsive heterosexuality. This means that heterosexuality is assumed to be a proxy for masculinity, which is indeed of prime importance in prisons.

Prison programs are sites where participants are exposed to "free staff" (those who run programs but are not custody staff), individuals who are seen as conduits to the larger public outside the prison walls, while still existing within the prison culture, which has its own set of norms governing inmate conduct. Free staff may introduce new ideas and ideals, such as artistic integrity, and arts programs provide a safe space, where new cultures develop that validate performances that would otherwise be sanctioned within the prison social system. Prison arts programs, therefore, reveal the extent of the social construction of identities, especially regarding gender and race. I

argue that such extremes make the study of gender in prisons important for all scholars of gender; it can teach us something about the practice of gender (and specifically its fluidity) across society, not solely within the world of the prison itself. Prison arts programs allow individuals to reclaim time and space, to use it in a positive way, and inmate artists become very protective of this space. In short, I argue that membership in prison arts programs can explain why individuals develop divergent gender identities. While many may still conform to the norms of hypermasculinity when in the "yard" and the larger prison population, within the small group of the arts program, they are encouraged and rewarded for rejecting the hypermasculine imperative and embracing an alternative gender identity. This ability to learn and enact an alternative gender performance may, in turn, have positive effects both within prison and outside for inmates who are eventually released.

Reducing Issues within Prisons

Knowing that art programs can have this positive effect can potentially help to reduce the negative aspects of hypermasculinity within the prison itself, which leads to institutional violence, gang activity, and further crime (Collier 1998; Newburn and Stanko 1994; Sabo et al. 2001). Small changes within the prison itself could potentially vastly reduce institutional issues, and save taxpayers money. It could also improve the safety of the prison; unfortunately, California's prisons have a reputation as violent places. It might also be able to reduce the amount of solitary confinement that is currently used (Gibbons and Katzenbach 2006). Art therapy has noted benefits for confined individuals (Liebmann 1994).

By providing the men an alternate emphasis, in this particular case art, they can focus on "getting the job done" by whatever means necessary, rather than maintaining a particular hypermasculine image, which they might need to do in a gang subculture. This also explains the shift away from focusing on race, which is all-important within the public prison sphere. Prison politics are run by gangs, but this has no bearing whatsoever in the hierarchy in the art studio.

Many of the interviewees emphasize the process of art creation, or letting the piece lead, or having to complete it in a particular way for the customer, which does allow the inmate to give up some agency. Regardless of how the men explained it though, they were very much allowed to *do* it no matter what. This shows that this artistic process that allows them to transcend gender and other boundaries takes on a sacrosanct character, a sort of holiness. If individuals can easily justify non-gender-normative acts, then they can very easily institute a new norm.

Protecting the Program

A common theme discussed by the program participants and interviewees was that men remained calm and worked together, despite perceived differences (and differences that indeed caused trouble on the yard) in order to protect the program. They were all very aware that the program could be shut down at any moment, if even what might appear to be the slightest issue arose. The reason they were so concerned about this is because the art studio created this safe space for them, and the last thing they wanted to do was to be "on guard" 24 hours a day. For these men, the art studio was a "life raft," as Jurgen called it.

Jurgen, the artist who had a relatively short sentence, explained to me why the white supremacist gang members were friendly to individuals of other races within the confines of the art studio, but openly acknowledged that they might act differently outside of this safe space: "You're in a different mode within the art studio. When you step inside, it's like a sanctuary, or a church. Otherwise they're not going to be welcome. They joke about it, 'It's going to be different out there.' It's about survival. Their livelihood is in jeopardy too." Jurgen explained to me that a lot of the racial politics are not actually about racism; rather, various races and gangs have various business ventures within the facility, and they are protecting their ability to make money.

Another part of the reason for this is that a few of the men in my art program told me that this was their first time actually being in a place where they were put in the position of being in prison and around people who are not of their race. As Kevin put it to me, "They just put me with all of the whites before. I've never hung out with people of different races before."

From the Prison to Other Organizations

Realizing spaces in which individuals can drop the gender accountability and imperative in these extreme cases (Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep 2009) can help men to refrain from acting in ways that are dangerous to themselves and others. This is also found by Acker (2006) who notes that workplaces can be the sites of changes for what she terms "inequality regimes," considering how inequalities tend to persist in organizations.

Ely and Meyerson (2010) studied oil rigs, realizing that men felt freed from exhibiting stereotypically masculine behavior when the organizational context supported safety and effectiveness. Proving "manliness" no longer became a primary concern for the men on these oil rigs. My findings are very similar, replacing the oil rig with the context of the art studio.

In contrast to prisons and oil rigs, which are all-male environments, there are also implications for mixed-gender sites. Reducing hypermasculine imperatives can increase safety overall by minimizing destructive behavior and harassment. For Vandello et al. (2013), such masculine expectations create stigmatization of male workers who take advantage of flexible workplace opportunities by other men, thereby reducing the chances that men will utilize such policies. Berdahl and Moon (2013) show that men who defy gender stereotypes by providing a caregiving role for their children face increased harassment at work. Masculine imperatives are problematic for men in a wide variety of settings; limiting negative hypermasculine behavior could increase productivity and comfort for both men and women. Providing new ways to have individuals shift their focus within hypermasculine institutions can lead to positive benefits overall. It is especially useful that these programs do not explicitly set out to change men's notions of masculinity – such an explicit purpose might deter many of the men who would most benefit from such a program.

Chapter 4: "Intersections on the Inside: Gender, Race, Class, Age, Disability, and Sexual Orientation in a Prison Art Studio"

Although prisons are often depicted as isolated, homogeneous, cold, and rigid institutions, much of this portrayal is due to the physical separation of prisons from the rest of society. Individuals lack awareness because they have little regular access to these institutions (Gilmore 2007), while prisons as institutions work to standardize their inmates to justify their treatment and ensure their pliability (Curtis 2014). Although the prison is a seemingly standardized institution, filled with standardized occupants, there is much more complexity to the lives of prisoners. As I explain in Chapter 3, masculinity in prison is much more complex than it is often portrayed in popular media and scholarly publications; art creation allows for the creation of an alternate identity. Now, Chapter 4 makes the focus on gender more complex by also examining the intersections of gender with race, class, age, disability, and sexual orientation. The prison itself is a gendered, raced, and classed institution, and inmates experience the world in varying ways based upon their backgrounds. Prisons are much more diverse social worlds than the general public is often led to believe.

"The prisoner" is a trope that conjures up the image of someone identified by purely one characteristic – criminality. This label standardizes people who vary

according to a wide variety of characteristics[7]. Just as Brubaker (2002) critiques "groupism," or the tendency for scholars to reify groups (specifically in his case for ethnicities, races, and nations), I wish to critique groupism of prisoners. Scholars and members of the general public tend to assume that prison inmates are as a group, in fact, "discrete, sharply differentiated, internally homogeneous and externally bounded… as substantial entities to which interests and agency can be attributed" (164). Prisoners are actually extremely heterogeneous, with intersecting identities that are performed in different groups at different times.

For example, one arts program participant, Andrew, explained one night in class, he saw a clear distinction among "types" of inmates: "Very early on when I came to prison I figured out you either gotta be a sheep or a wolf." Complex intersections of any institution would be overlooked without an intersectional perspective, but prisons are often perceived as especially homogenous because there is usually very little contact between prisoners and the general public. As one of my formerly incarcerated respondents Felipe, told me, "Prisons are really just like the outside world." He was responding to the sensationalized perception that prisons are somehow completely cut off from the outside world and involve entirely different people and relationships.

The majority of this dissertation focuses on people who are incarcerated as men. This chapter explores the male prisoner as merely one set of characteristics of an identity that intersects with numerous other categories, such as race/ethnicity, social

[7] Although of course we know that prisoners are disproportionately male, poor, and of color (Alexander 2010).

class, sexual orientation, age, and disability. Previous research has critiqued the assumption that the prisoner is male, and that many rehabilitative programs have been targeted toward prisoners as men (yet are often labeled "gender-neutral"). Studies of these programs have often only included male subjects in research, leading some to doubt whether the findings will apply to women (Van Voorhis et al. 2010). However, such a critique still overlooks the variation amongst both women and men as categories. I ask how the experience of the male prisoner varies in a place that is often considered homogeneous.

The argument that I set forth in this chapter is twofold:

1) Although the general public and scholars consider the "prisoner" as a unitary subject, prisoner identity varies along several axes, and their performances of gender subsequently can vary substantially.
2) Prison arts programs confront this wide variety of masculine performances, and can mitigate the negative effects of the hypermasculine imperative.

In addition to the broader literatures discussed in Chapter 1, this chapter uses a theoretical framework that draws on the literatures regarding identities, social class, and intersectionality. My analysis here relies on data I collected in over 450 hours of participant observation of a prison arts program that I created, as well as from 31 in-depth interviews with currently incarcerated artists. (Please see Chapter 2 for an in-depth discussion of data and methods.)

Theoretical Framework

Identities

Identities are of course multifaceted; at any on time, people occupy numerous social positions (e.g. child, spouse, parent, worker, etc.). These statuses may be ascribed (assigned at birth or involuntary) or achieved (voluntary). People may exit certain statuses and adopt new ones over time, so there is some fluidity to this aspect of identity. Cornell and Hartmann add that individuals can assert identities that may in fact differ from those ascribed to them by others; there is often an interplay between these two identities.

As conceptualized by Becker (1963), a master status is a social position that takes on immense significance for a person's social life. The doing gender approach sees gender as a master status. Using studies of cognitive psychology, Deutsch, however, argues (against Ridgeway and Correll [2004]), that in some situations, gender may not be relevant and is not considered. Gender by no means disappears in the prison environment, but understandings of hypermasculinity are actually built into the master status of "inmate," which is enforced regularly in the prison environment through the "mortification of the self" (Curtis 2014; Goffman 1961).

Prison-Industrial Complex Literature

Previous research on the prison-industrial complex frequently takes an activist stance, even calling for the eradication of prisons (Davis 2003; Gilmore 2007). R.W. Gilmore (2007) details the rapid, widespread expansion of the California prison system since 1980, connecting it to surpluses of finance capital, land, labor, and state

capacity. Prisons have become a way to remove certain groups of people from the rest of society and have shifted the community focus from rehabilitation to incapacitation.

Scholars note the importance for legislators to act "tough on crime," despite stagnant or declining crime rates: "Legislators of both parties trample one another in the rush to put their names at the top of tough new 'anti-crime' measures, while ignoring their impact on prison capacity" (Davis 2009 [1995]: 24). California's Proposition 184, popularly known as the "Three Strikes" law has contributed to the huge increases in the prison population of the state (Davis 2009 [1995]; Gilmore 2007). Under the law, those convicted of a second felony face a doubled sentence and those convicted of a third automatically receive a twenty-five years to life sentence.

Acting tough on crime often entails discarding therapeutic or rehabilitative programs, such as arts programs, even if they have been shown to be effective at reducing recidivism and pacifying potentially tumultuous populations.

Wacquant (2009 [1999]), however, argues that the concept of the prison-industrial complex is a myth. In *Prisons of Poverty*, Wacquant details the shift from the welfare state in 1970s to the penal state of today in the United States. This shift affected those in poverty, "namely, the colored subproletariat of the big cities, the unskilled and precarious fractions of the working class, and those who reject the 'slave jobs' and poverty wages of the deregulated service economy and turn instead to the informal commerce of the city streets and its leading sector, the drug trade" (Wacquant 2002: 382). Scull (1984) details the decline of the mental institution during the 1970s, which meant that many people were then handled by very different

agencies. The great growth of the prison and jail system accompanies this shift in policies.

Organizations Literature: Total Institutions

The creation of the modern incarceration nation is particularly relevant because prisoners are held in total institutions. Total institutions are those structural situations in which an institution dictates nearly all aspects of an individual's life. Goffman's 1961 classic study *Asylums* examines patients in a mental institution. He describes the total institution as destroying the individual identities of those within, imposing uniform dress and uniform behavior. Total institutions also focus on organizing physical space (Coser 1974; Goffman 1961). As Goffman writes, "A total institution may be defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time together lead an enclosed formally administered round of life" (11). Farrington (1992) notes that Goffman includes total control, total structuring, total submergence, and total isolation and separation as the main elements of the total institution.

Davies (1989) holds that the concept of the total institution as envisioned by Goffman has been misapplied in numerous instances, but that Goffman's definition should acknowledge variations in the degree of formal administration that actually occurs in institutions that scholars can still consider to be "total," often dependent on the institution's size. He argues that Goffman fails to elaborate on the variation in the amount of role differentiation and the various goals of total institutions (88). Total institutions also vary in the extent to which individual identities are standardized and

to which inmates "organize an 'under-life' outside the control of, and possibly subverting the purposes of, the total institution" (92) (as in the case of the art markets I discuss that potentially operate for prison artists).

Farrington (1992), instead of wanting to soften the rigidity of Goffman's definition as Davies does, adheres to the original definition and argues that today's prisons do not truly fit into the model of a total institution as dictated by Goffman. Instead, he maintains that modern prisons should be considered "somewhat-less-than-total," as they still have contact with the world outside. One reason for this is related to the fact that prisons have to be placed within communities and therefore have both social and institutional connections to the outside society. Both Farrington (1992) and Gilmore (2007) note that prisons are often placed in relatively isolated, economically struggling rural communities, appealing to residents' desire for employment while glossing over social problems that develop once the prison is built. Ultimately, however, this leads to the creation of indignation among the local community when the problems surface, viewing themselves as "dumping grounds" (Farrington 1992: 12). This then means that prisons are also part of economic and political systems, which is the subject of the prison-industrial complex literature above and is also discussed by Rothman (1971). Another point of permeation between the prison and the outside world is that those working within the prison move back and forth across the boundary. The experiences of each individual inmate also come into the prison upon an inmate's entry, which prevents the complete standardization of each individual's identity. Most of the inmates in prisons also are only held within the institution for a

temporary period, rather than serving a lifetime. Farrington argues that modern prisons cannot be true total institutions because there has been increased concern regarding the treatment of inmates and because the ideology behind the total institution is antithetical to such American values as "freedom, inalienable human rights, and the importance of family" (15) [see also Foucault 1977]. Davies (1989), however, allows the concept of total institution to include scenarios which are more compatible with family life (91).

Farrington also argues that the current American correctional philosophy focuses on the eventual return of inmates to society; he cites the development of programs toward this end and the pervasive belief of the malleability of the human character as evidence. I, however, would posit that the widespread willingness of politicians to cut such programs (and programs aimed at the "betterment" of inmates, such as art programs) and the lack of public outcry regarding such cuts actually demonstrate the skepticism many Americans have regarding the actual ability of offenders to "change their ways." Therefore, although prisons may not be perfect total institutions, they do indeed share many such characteristics – but prisoners may still try to exert agency within such a structure.

Reclaiming Identities

Even within a total institution, prisoners have some control over their identities. In an interview with Lizbet Simmons (L.S.), photographer Deborah Luster (D.L.) discusses her work taking portraits of prison inmates: "L.S.: It seems that in so many ways inmates lose control of their identities. They're a number, they're in a

uniform, they're homogenized, they're contained, they're restricted, they're isolated. But there are certain ways even within this totalizing context that the power of identity can be re-initiated, and it seems that your portraits were able to do that. D.L.: I think they were valuable for many of the inmates. I was surprised and somewhat overwhelmed at the extent of the images' impact" (qtd. in Bliss et al. 2009: 39). In this situation, it is not the inmates themselves creating the art, but rather being subjects; and yet, Luster describes them as "performing," still noting the collaborative process at work here. What Luster strove to do was to remove the prison as the subject and focus on the inmate as a person, draping a piece of cloth over whatever portion of the prison was visible in the frame:

> L.S. Inmates are represented so negatively in the prison system and in the larger society, and yet, here's this opportunity to construct their identities differently.
> D.L.: I believe the success of many of these portraits lies in the fact that the inmates were not posing for me. They were posing for a sister they hadn't seen in thirty years, or the mother or son or daughter, or the lover at home or in another prison. And for a few minutes, they had some freedom to create themselves anew.
> LS.: So they had constructed their subjectivity differently. They were a subject, but not at every instant your subject.
> D.L.: The prisoners and the photographer were collaborating. Each brought his or her personal desires to the photographic performance. Photographer and prisoner each respected the other's right to those desires. And in the best of the images from *One Big Self* there is a combination of chance and choice that creates a kind of sympathetic magic. It is a convergence (qtd. in Bliss et al. 2009: 39).

However, prisoners do not just control their identity; they also maintain and create varying degrees of cultural capital.

Cultural Capital and Taste

Following Bourdieu (1984), cultural capital refers to the education and "legitimate" social skills and knowledge that a person possesses and therefore embraces know-how extending beyond art. Cultural capital works with economic capital and social capital to place individuals within a societal hierarchy, resulting in gradations of social status and power. The cultural capital that a person has is legitimated within a particular field, or a set of social relations. Cultural capital can come from one's habitus, or the dispositions that come from their family. Knowledge of and attendance at various art activities is one form of cultural capital: "It makes it possible, moreover, to construct the system of social conditions for the production of the consumers of the museum, the theatre, the concert, the art cinema, and, more generally, of all the symbolic wealth that constitutes 'legitimate' culture" (Bourdieu 2006 [1973]: 265). Bourdieu is describing the way people talk, rather than their actual aesthetic experience. A person can enter certain conversations based on knowledge they have about the "right" forms of intellectual information, art, cuisine, etc. (DiMaggio 1987). These are often seen as indicative of "sophistication."

What is considered "legitimate" cultural capital varies from field to field. While having and displaying knowledge about the "high arts" can be very beneficial in certain social circles, it can be viewed as "hoity-toity" or "snobbish" in others; knowledge of "outsider art" or "craft" can bring people status in other social circles.

Cultural capital functions in prisons just as it does in the world outside. In examining the consumption of cultural goods, DiMaggio (1994) notes that the

microsociological view considers consumption to be the constitution of identity. Entering a total institution certainly takes a toll on the inmate's identity (which plays a role in understanding one's status position): "Once the inmate is stripped of his possessions, at least some replacements must be made by the establishment, but these take the form of standard issue, uniform in character and uniformly distributed" (Goffman 1961: 19). However, inmates do try to recoup this lost identity in a variety of ways, sometimes by altering the goods given to them by the institution. Not just internal, but also external self-presentation, or the possession of certain goods, may increase one's cultural capital within such an institution, separating some inmates by this status marker. However, not just consumption, but also production, may be a factor of one's identity.

An inmate's status may potentially be raised through their exhibited behavior toward those supposedly in power: "Through this orientation and engagement of attention and effort, he visibly establishes his attitude to the establishment and to its implied conceptions of himself. To engage in a particular activity in the prescribed spirit is to accept being a particular kind of person who dwells in a particular kind of world" (Goffman 1961: 186). Perhaps also such an attitude has a kind of cultural capital, a "legitimacy," or a "sign of authority."

DiMaggio (1994) writes that, in sociology, tastes are viewed as alterable, looking to "symbolic qualities of goods" (43). Members of a particular social class tend to "like" (or pretend to like) similar items.

Following Douglas and Isherwood (1996 [1979]), DiMaggio (1987) considers taste as a matter of communication and the formation of social networks: "Taste, then, is a form of ritual classification and a means of constructing social relations (and of knowing what relationships need not be constructed)" (443). Having the "right" tastes can open up doors in elite social circles (or even constitute those social circles), which then enable people to remain in a high status position or gain ground in a higher social arena (see also Lamont 1992). Traditional "high art" forms include classical music, ballet, etc (Bourdieu 1984; DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004): "Because the arts have been deeply institutionalized by states and institutions of higher learning, they constitute the most recognized forms of prestigious culture throughout Europe and the Americas" (DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004). Although these categories may change throughout time (i.e. from "movies" into "cinema" in the 1960s [Baumann 2007]), these "classic" art forms have maintained their high regard.

With audiences of people outside of the institution, inmates may be more concerned with relating to the "average" person. Art program instructors may convince inmates that the public wants to see (or not see) particular images. On the other extreme, they may play up their "outsider" status to try to appeal to collectors of "murderabilia[8]."

However, inmate art is not necessarily the "high art" that others often think of when considering "art" in general. Kornfeld (1997) notes that inmate art tends to have

[8] This term was coined by Andy Kahan, director of Houston's Mayor's Crime Victims Office, to refer to items sold as prison memorabilia. "Murderabilia" can include any item that an infamous inmate used or made (Hylton 2007). See also Tucker (2008).

particular characteristics: “Mainstream artists (within the prison culture) use and reuse standard symbols to illustrate their condition, vent their frustrations, and communicate to others that they are loving, sensitive, strong, and noble…” (25). Cardinal (1997) views the artist as being very much swayed by the wishes of the buyer: “Arguably, work made on commission, such as a greeting card produced for another prisoner, will be constrained by the taste of its ‘patron.’ Similarly, work made for sale to a nonprison clientele will tend to be emblematic and decorative rather than autobiographical and expressive: intimacy is incompatible with mass circulation” (xxi). So here we can see prison artists as very aware that their various clients have different tastes—those in prison, tending to be in the lower class, rely on symbols understood within their particular social space, along with images of tattoos, women, etc. These pieces are not traditionally considered “high art,” but are rather viewed as “popular.”

However, the art produced with this distribution in mind may indeed be affected by what inmate artists believe others want to see. It is possible that the instructors of art programs may encourage inmates to choose themes interesting to the instructors themselves. Inmates may feel that an environment of fellow prison artists allows them to better express their feelings about prison life. This “popular” art should be situated within a broader frame. Is there a “high art” market within the penitentiary? What meanings do artists and buyers imbue into these works?

As in other art worlds, prison art maintains the legitimacy of particular styles of art throughout time and across institutions. But, just as we see in other places as well, there is a certain evolution of taste, with certain items emerging as more popular

than others for a time period. For example, one of the latest trends in tattoo art is realistic portraits (Kornfeld 1997: 27), but this does not take away from the fact that "flash" tattoo art has maintained its centrality and importance for decades.

Hierarchy in Existence?

The debate within the literature regarding cultural omnivorousness is applicable to the prison art example. DiMaggio (1987) argues for examining art in relation to both consumption and production. Prison artists often create art based on requests by fellow inmates (Kornfeld 1997). They also consider what images other inmates want (and will judge the artist by—reputation is very important in penal institutions) and what potential customers "on the outside" will want. But even more must be taken into account—all of this consumption and production occurs within a particular environment.

DiMaggio looks at the differentiation of art into genres and how the genres are hierarchically ranked. However, the same artwork can at different times or in different places be ranked differently or re-categorized. For example, within a prison, a portrait can simply be run-of-the-mill and worth a pack of cigarettes, but outside of the institution it may be considered "murderabilia" and be considered to be worth much more. Just as in the recent studies examining omnivorousness (Bryson 1996; DiMaggio 1987; Johnston and Baumann 2007; Sanderson 2008), here again we can see the incorporation of a "low-brow" art form (prison art) into the elite sectors of society. However, I would argue that this incorporation simply adds another item to the list of "high-status" items and makes it more difficult for members of the lower

classes to gain the positive associations of enjoying certain art forms (see Sanderson 2008 for an explanation of the positive effects of art on education), much less cultural capital.

Here we can see the "authentic" and "exotic" frames described by Johnston and Baumann (2007) working.[9] These frames do allow for new forms of art to enter the high-status arena, but are still only available to certain people—not everyone can afford to pay for collectible art. But, if some prison artwork made it into the hands of family members (or anyone who is not a professional art dealer), there is a potential for them to make some additional money or become more well-known.

Intersectionality

An intersectional approach, as discussed in Chapter 1, is key to this analysis. It is only through the framework of intersectionality that we can see the complexity of

[9] This pattern appears in a number of contexts, demonstrating the connection between prisoner art and other areas. An additional example involves the Pueblo Indians. Frank (1991) explains that the production of pottery saw many changes from 1780 to 1820, part of the late colonial period in New Mexico. Many of the Indians began producing items for the Spanish settlers and for a tourist market, while retaining their own ideas of what is "good" art among themselves, apart from the world of the tourists. As Jules-Rosette (1984) points out, responding to an external market constrains the creativity of the creators. Therefore, conflicting and hidden meanings can be conveyed (among the artists themselves, between the artists and the middlemen, and between the artists and the tourists). Meaning is also created among tourists themselves and between tourists and those "back home." Petersen argues that the reason for the production of art by the Plains Indians during their Fort Marion captivity may provide a basis for which to examine current prison art. The expression of meaning was one such reason – Petersen (1971) suggests it could be considered a "pictorial language" (17). Recognizing the ways in which meanings are conveyed in various ways is essential to the study of art created in contemporary prisons, as prison art can be framed very differently by different audiences. As previously discussed in Chapter 3, these multiple art markets exist in the prison as well, with an inmate potentially making items for himself, for others within the prison, and for those in the outside world.

the experiences of those who are incarcerated. Such a perspective also allows for the fluidity that I witnessed amongst my respondents, in that they often embodied the artist identity within the space of the art studio (and sometimes used other aspects of their identity to enrich their artistic experience) but then recognized that they might assert other identities first in other situations in the prison.

Methodology

The data for this chapter mainly came from the fifty-two interviews I conducted with both currently and formerly incarcerated arts program participants, as well as the over 450 hours of participant observation that I completed as the Founding Director of a prison arts program. It was also supplemented by my original arts content analysis, as that provided me with broad trends in the world of publicly available prison arts that then provided me with some context for the more in-depth work that I did inside of the prison. Much of the findings presented here were phenomena I did not explicitly set out to research in my dissertation. A lot of it really only came to light by being immersed in this environment, especially in a longitudinal sense; I have been collecting data for my dissertation over a period of three years. This process is based in grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967), which allows for an inductive engagement with data collection.

Findings

The Intersection of Social Class and Gender

Cultural Capital and Access to Art

The irony of art in prison is that, although many of the men describe their lives in prison as "sucking" (to quote one of the prison arts program participants, to the nodding of some of his fellow inmates), the majority acknowledge that they would likely not have ever encountered art practice without having been locked up. They had often not encountered formal arts courses on the outside, nor saw it as part of their working-class ethic of manual labor and starting a family.

Art itself is classed. Many incarcerated men have never had the opportunity to engage with arts classes, often seen as part of the realm of the elite. And if they have encountered art before, it is often through a can of spray paint or an airbrush. Forms of artwork display a number of intersections – they are both gendered and classed (Garlick 2004).

Mediums and Color

When the men explained their backgrounds in art to me (and the application to join the class included a question regarding past experience with artistic practice), those who had any past experience tended to center around pencil and pen drawings and tattooing; a few also noted their experience with carpentry, painting houses or cars, etc. Eddie, a very active member of the program, told me one night during a class, "When I got locked up I was a baby; I was 17." He went on to say that, although he had experience with drawing and has an uncle who is a sculptor (and with whom he

now identifies), he had a relatively limited introduction to different mediums within art: “I like to do pencil because I’ve been doing it for a long time. I learned watercolor in this class, so it’s new for me. I’m enjoying it, but I prefer pencil.” In our interview, Eddie also demarcated the mediums he utilized on the outside as compared to what he was exposed to while incarcerated: “In school, when like somebody would draw they kept it in a notebook. Before I didn’t do shading. In prison I learned a lot more [about art].” Eddie’s quote demonstrates that for his social group, art was not necessarily highly rewarded – in fact, it was almost something to be hidden, something not to be taken seriously. Much of the “art” he was doing before prison he and his friends might previously have classified as “doodling.” One can also see that Eddie focused on hard lines in his drawings; that the “softer” and more nuanced usage of the pencil was not introduced to nor utilized by him until receiving his sentence and spending some time behind bars.

Usage of color was another dearth for many of the men coming into the arts program. Roberto and Brandon and I actually separately chatted one evening; both of them explained that they were intimidated by using color in their pieces. They are both very skilled portrait artists, doing very fine pencil and pen work; however, they both separately acknowledged that they had no experience in color mixing and had just really never tried incorporating color. Many of the arts program participants wanted to learn about color theory, as they had no prior history of using color. Watercolor was a very new, and often frustrating, medium for many of them because it requires very subtle usage of color and a lot of color mixing. Stark lines are generally the status quo

in prison, where a good tattoo artist can often make decent money. Since tattoo supplies are limited, much of the tattoo work that is done is black and white, without shading.

Another area where you can see a class hierarchy apparent in terms of art is not just in iconography and medium, but also in access to supplies. In the arts program, we ensure that everyone has equal access to our supplies; no project requires the usage of student-purchased supplies. However, many of our participants do indeed have their own supplies. One participant in our mural project had access to an amazing variety of arts supplies; in fact, he had been in prison so long that he had been able to purchase oil paints, which were grandfathered in (inmates are no longer able to purchase oil paints). He would loan out supplies to many other budding artists, and became somewhat of an instructor within the prison – other participants would tell us that they would meet with him in the dayroom to go over various techniques. Even during class, men would come over and ask him for advice on how to move forward on the murals they were working on at the time. Some of the men were also able to provide the program with supplies; for example, for water containers for painting we often utilize empty coffee containers. Some of the men go through quite a bit of instant coffee, or work in a job were they have access to such supplies. And some of the men have money in their commissary accounts which they are able to use to purchase very basic supplies from the prison store or packages with more options directly from vendors.

One evening a participant, Taylor, showed me part of the letter he was sending to his mother; it listed an array of art supplies, which he had requested that she

purchase from Blick. Blick is a company that has a contract with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation; only approved vendors and selected supplies within these catalogues are allowed to be owned by inmates (and must be bought directly from the vendor). Taylor's mother was able to purchase and get the items sent to him right away, but many of the inmates are unable to do this. Therefore, access to art supplies, and the quality of these supplies, can vary tremendously within the prisons; some men have access to quality oil paints and sable brushes and others clip their own hair to fashion makeshift brushes themselves.[10]

Gender, Class, and Work

One of the recurring themes that the men I speak with tell me is that many of them never practiced art until they went to prison – and often, it's for the same reason. They explain that they were far too focused on their jobs, often involving manual labor, to even consider art making. Many of them also did not grow up in households where art was practiced, nor consumed in any regular fashion, either through the purchase and display of fine art, but also in the attendance of museum or gallery exhibitions. Many participants as well attended schools that did not necessarily have burgeoning arts programs, and, even if they did, that was not their primary focus. Behavior that is rewarded varies sometimes dramatically according to social class (Barber 2008; Harvey Wingfield 2010; Harvey Wingfield and Alston 2012). Garlick (2004) recognizes that art itself is feminized, but there is a lot of nuance and

[10] Now, this creativity can itself be rewarded, as in the "murderabilia" phenomenon [see my discussion of this in Chapter 5: "From 'Doing' to 'Done'"], but in terms of understandings of class hierarchies in the arts program, it is less pertinent.

complexity in understandings of what type of art is feminine versus masculine, and how context can dramatically change one's understanding. But prison changes their routine and gets them to explore other options. As interviewee Anselmo explain, "Now I have time; I've got life. I've got TV, but sometimes I want to do something. I like work all the time, keeping my mind busy… We're not going nowhere so we have time to learn." Anselmo was illiterate and had never attended school when he entered prison, but he has taught himself to read and write (in both Spanish and English) and has picked up sewing and paper crafting as well. Anselmo told me that he is now happy and feels blessed, and wants to be able to share that with others, both on the inside and on the outside.

Many of these men derive their identities from their work, and not having access to a job makes them feel less-than. As arts program participant Adam explained to me one evening before the start of class, "Here you've got the working class and the lazy ass." Adam did not mean a class category (in the sense of identifying as a member of the working class as compared to the middle class, for example), but as a member of a subgroup in the prison who work hard trying to better themselves.

Bobby was present as well, and as Adam talked, Bobby began nodding, and then joined in the conversation to confirm what Adam was saying. They both identify as hard workers, and said that they surround themselves by men who want to work and apply themselves on a daily basis; they separated themselves from what they described as the majority of inmates who try to avoid working (in a legitimate fashion at least). Bobby mentioned that they choose to fill their days and evenings up with a variety of

programs, from the art program to work to religious programs and more. They portray the "lazy ass" as uninterested, and unwilling to reform; however, Adam and Bobby, and those they identify with (members of the arts program [Bobby actually made a sweeping motion with his arm to indicate the men who would be joining them but had not yet arrived that night]) are in fact capable of being rehabilitated, as different from the rest of the inmate population.

This is also demonstrated by a response program participant Jacob provided to a question I posed one night, before an upcoming event. I asked everyone present, "If you could say anything to the audience at the upcoming exhibition event, what would you say?" Jacob responded, "I hope that this exhibition shows all of you that while society defines us as criminals and prisoners no one should create expectations for us based solely on those words." They accept the imputed identity of criminality for the larger prison population, but explicitly construct their subgroup or personal identity in contradistinction to that, while at the same time constructing their identity according to the norms of "working hard," "being sensitive," etc. that are rewarded in the outside world. We see three identities at play here: the subgroup identity (artists) consciously bypasses the group identity (inmates) to connect to the overarching group identity (society).

Interestingly, work is tied to custody status at the prison, so men who could be working or going to school but choose not to are ineligible to participate in extracurricular programs; therefore, the arts program participants are already part of a sample of individuals who are working and/or going to school, are on a waiting list to

work (jobs are not always available), or have a medical exemption. However, even those who do work may not necessarily enjoy the work that they are assigned to; there is a very apparent hierarchy in terms of workplaces.

The criteria for placement on the hierarchy often involves type of work, who one works with, location, amount of pay, and perks of the job (such as having access to a photocopier, etc.). Location is important because it signifies whether an inmate can move to other areas in the prison, and it also often implies what kinds of tools they can handle. The occupation that is highest on in both respects is Inmate Day Labor, which involves construction projects; the common view of construction work is that it is skilled, blue-collar work, and is viewed as very masculine. IDL is also seen positively because it often happens outside of the yard in which the inmate is housed. IDL affords inmates the opportunity to handle tools that would be considered contraband if found on the yard itself. IDL also pays over $1 per hour, which is very high in terms of prison pay[11].

Kevin, one of the arts program participants and an interviewee, said that many other inmates refused to perform the work at his job; he is an "Inmate Personal Care Attendant," and assists with those inmates who are elderly and/or disabled. For example, he accompanies the inmates who qualify for the program to the cafeteria,

[11] Inmates make very little money (if they have a prison job at all)—federal prisoners make between $0.23 and $1.15 per hour, but about "80% is withheld for restitution, to offset incarceration costs, and to support their families, among other things" (Singleton and Boushey 2002). So the average "take-home" pay for federal inmates is about $0.18 per hour. State inmates make between $0.23 and $7.00 per hour (depending on the state and the company they work for)—just as with the federal inmates, they only take home about 20% of this wage.

helping them walk over or pushing their wheelchair and then getting them a tray with food and bringing it back to them to eat at the table. I had thought that perhaps other inmates did not want to participate as attendants because care work is feminized and, in the hypermasculine environment, this would not be supported. However, Kevin said that, although he signed up for this work and enjoys it, the reason that many other inmates are unwilling to do this job is actually based on the perception of who the recipient of the assistance is: "There's an assumption that old guys are here because they are cho-mos [child molesters], but I am not here to judge people for their crimes. That doesn't bother me." Many of the men who are incarcerated are fathers, and perhaps they would actually like the opportunity to care for someone else who requires assistance, but the conviction hierarchy trumps this greatly. As corroborated by a number of inmates, the workplace hierarchy places such personal care attendant work towards the bottom.

However, these attendants are deemed higher up on the hierarchy than program office clerks, who are automatically considered to be snitches. This work happens inside of an air conditioned office, which might seem to be a perk (and I had thought that overhearing staff conversations might be valued on the yard), but the downsides are that other inmates perceive that you are "buddies" with the staff (who are very much othered – both the staff and inmates identify as being "green" versus "blue" [based on their uniform color]) and you do not leave the yard (and are in fact increasing the amount of time surrounded by correctional officers).

So they try to recuperate that feeling of workplace authority and satisfaction in a variety of ways, often including art. Rogelio told me that he does not actually enjoy drawing cartoons, "but my daughter loves it." Anselmo, who used to work with sheet metal, beamed when I asked him how he felt when he was able to send money home, after selling some artwork: "Oh it feels great to send money to my people. So many people here have nothing, no family, no money, nothing. I try to find 1 soup, 1 toothpaste, 1 deodorant, and say 'here.'… We have to help too. We need to deserve [be deserving of] that blessing."

And yet many of the men would comment on how little time they had available to them, with their very busy schedules of work, school, and groups. Numerous men would brag how they could not take on custom art work because they were already too busy. Rogelio said he is seven months behind on a project for his daughter. Anselmo said he sometimes has to pass on work to other guys. Jeffrey told us he might need to drop out of our program because he was getting a promotion and needed to take a full course load as well (however, he ended up sticking around, even requesting to enroll in multiple classes once we broadened the course offerings available during the second year); after all, he had already dropped another of his recreational programs.

Taste and the Art Market

Discussions with the participants about what constitutes "good" art are very telling. Very few inmate artists use abstract iconography in their work; they explain that it does not sell and many of them told me that they do not really see how it

demonstrates skill. For many of them, "good" art is that which is representational, and even photorealistic.

However, prison arts programs have to work to deconstruct these previously held notions of "good" art that run rampant on the yard (and that might even be encouraged by collectors of the genre deemed "prison art" [skulls, motorcycles, naked women, etc.] or "murderabilia" [art and other objects that are valued because of the notoriety of their creators]).

The men who participate in these programs are also embedded in multiple spaces within the prison, having to move in and out of spaces in which different definitions of "good art" are used; for example, what is considered "good" in the studio might be mocked on the "yard," where the inmate economy favors cards with cartoon characters, drawings of skulls, and photorealistic portraits of family members. However, the men are very capable of existing in these multiple worlds. Many of them are aware that perhaps the art created in the class may not sell on the yard, but that if it gets them positive attention in a museum exhibition or gallery, then it is worth it not being rewarded in one space (while being rewarded in another).

It is also fascinating that these spaces may not hold equal value, and that their values may change over time. For example, one participant, Jose, had brought in a pencil portrait he had done of three people sitting at a dinner table. I asked him about it, inquiring who the people were and if this work had been commissioned by someone. He smiled and responded, "Yes, it's my first commission!" I expressed surprise, as I have seen him work on numerous portraits for others and followed up on

this point. He replied, “Well yeah I’ve done a lot of portraits but they’ve always been for other inmates. This one was commissioned by someone on the outside.” He felt like having his work requested by someone not in prison gave it a new currency.

They also recognize that art has a way of speaking to a larger public, one who might not accept them otherwise (or at least who often approach them with stereotypes). In a reflection assignment, Kevin wrote, “I’ve always wondered how my artwork might effect [sic] people that see it. It’s one thing to draw something or paint something for a friend or family member, but when I read the feedback from the exhibit that I gratefully got to participate in, I was brought to tears. I thank you for giving me the opportunity to express myself. The ladies that run this class have seen me at my best, as well as my worst, and I credit this program and the support & love from our teachers in saving my life.” Another inmate, Brandon, told me he wanted to donate some artwork to a silent auction we were having. He said, “You know in here, I’d sell something like this for $5 or $10. The guys in here don’t have a lot and I want them to have it. But out there I know people can spend more and it can help you with the program.” Brandon desired to share his art with consumers of all social classes, so he kept his prices for inmates low. These inmate artists were very aware that there are different economies and different audiences in these different spaces.

Another way in which the inmate artists showed their concern about the outside world was through wanting to receive responses from the audience outside of the prison (even when the men knew they were going to be spending the rest of their lives incarcerated); when I asked in class one evening what the participants would

most like to see in terms of interactive elements in the exhibition we had coming up, the most cited suggestion was to ask for feedback from the viewing public. Many of the inmates want to know if those on the outside think that their work has merit; this is also tempered by their concern that they will be automatically dismissed based on knowledge that they have criminal convictions. Jeffrey wrote in his reflection response to the question I posed about what they would want to tell museum goers, "This is the best part of my life. I look forward to this like nothing else. I hope you see your [sic] not that different than me." They very much want to be viewed as legitimate artists, by both the audience inside the prison and especially the one outside of the prison.

Those who are selling their work outside of the prison often acknowledge that they are relying on family members (almost always their mothers) to photograph, list, and mail their artwork. They are often maintaining websites for them. One inmate mentioned that his daughter does all of this for him, but that it gives him great pleasure to be able to help her pay for her college textbooks. Kevin was able to get his work shown in a gallery space due to a connection his mother had, and he sold some pieces while they were on display.

Brandon also subtly hinted to me that he was able to sell some artwork and help his mother out a little bit through the use of a smartphone inside of the prison (this is illegal contraband). A correctional staff member informed me that cell phones are rampant in prisons today, and that a smartphone can run someone $850. This is obviously not going to be accessible for all inmates, so perhaps participation in the outside art market is not all that accessible. Social class matters here; inmates who

have a family with the means to help them out and gain access to an external art market can help them in being viewed as a "legitimate artist," with the corresponding potential cultural, social, and economic capital.

There were a few men who specifically explained to me that they chose not to sell their artwork. When I asked why, they would say it was too personal, that they would be selling a piece of themselves. While I certainly believe that they feel emotionally connected to their artwork, I also feel that part of the reason for this feeling is really the financial ability to refrain from commodifying their artwork. Mateo proudly told me that he had been able to purchase a home and a car from the dealership before he had been incarcerated, and told me that he never considers selling his artwork. He does have two children who he potentially could be supporting with his art, but it seems that it is not essential for him to continue caring for them. He does not need his art to fulfill his provider, breadwinner role, and therefore can allow it to take on a different function. For him, even his cartoons are personal – he explains that they are for his children, and that they prove his love and devotion for them. He explained to me, "Anyone can say 'I love you' or 'I'm thinking about you,' but you *prove* it by doing something." John, a formerly incarcerated artist, also explained that he did not sell his artwork while incarcerated. He also had a support system, and returned, after a very lengthy incarceration, to his wife in a home they had already bought in a nice area in Northern California.

Eddie reiterated this sentiment, saying that he did not feel right selling his artwork. He said that his family takes care of him, and that he sees his art as part of

him. He said he felt very good being able to give gifts to people, especially to surprise them with a portrait.

For all of these individuals who chose to not sell their work, they were relatively financially comfortable. This afforded them the choice in the first place, and allowed them to ask themselves questions about how they wanted to view their artwork.

Likes and Symbolic Exclusion

Masculinities differ according to social class. Prisons are disproportionately filled with young men of color, which means that many of the men incarcerated in American prisons lack extensive education. Almost all of the men who I interviewed told me that they had not received any formal art training; many of them had never even picked up a paintbrush until going to prison. I argue that because of this lack of formal training, many of the men are more likely to express interest in only certain, more "accessible" forms of art.

During the interviews, I asked all of the men what type of art they liked, and what they considered to be good art. Most replied that if a piece of artwork looked like the item that it was reproducing, then it would be classified as good. I followed up the question with, "What about if I did an abstract rendition of the piece? If, for example, I wanted to get an emotional reaction instead of an exact replica of the object?" Many acknowledged that this complicated things, but wrinkled their noses at the mention of the word "abstract."

Only a few inmate respondents said that they liked abstract art and/or created it themselves. One man (white, middle-aged) in particular had done an extensive amount of research on his own into art history (he regularly participates in educational courses in general); he had serious appreciation for a wide range of art styles and forms, but was very aware that this is not necessarily rewarded in his current environment. Another man (Latino, middle-aged) told me he liked abstract art but said no one in prison really goes for it, so he stopped producing it. I asked why he thinks there is no market for it in the prison, and he replied, "Well, I think they have no class." However, during our next class session, he came up to me and said, "Laura, I've been wanting to talk to you all week. I didn't say the right thing last time. It's not that they don't have class. It's that they've never seen it before."

Regardless of their own personal preferences, all of the interviewees agreed that the market for abstract art is very, very small inside of the prison. This is indicative of Bryson's (1996) argument about "symbolic exclusion"; she is part of the camp that argues that those in the upper classes practice cultural omnivorism, stating that they "like everything, except" specified categories of art (in this particular case, those in the upper classes might indicate that they like all types of art, except tattoo art, non-original art, specific imagery such as skulls, guns, etc. [all of which are widespread in prison art]).

Embodiment

For the most part, there is a lack of sweeping gestures, such as long brush strokes while painting larger pieces or animated waves of the hand while talking in our

class discussions, used in the art program. This seems to be for multiple reasons. One is that bodies are very literally under control and constraint in a prison environment. Sudden movements are frowned upon, resulting in a stern look from an officer or perhaps even a write-up. Running is never permitted on institutional grounds.

Many of the program participants are hyper-aware that they could get in trouble even for the misconstruing of a movement that they make, so many of them announce their presence or their movement around the room. For example, Joaquin, a very active participant of the mural project and a member of the drawing, painting, and sculpting class for the first few months, always called out notifications like "behind you" as he walked past, so as to not startle us and provide a comfortable distance for everyone. A formerly incarcerated man at a conference panel discussion that I attended (June 2015) told a story about how he had to ask the instructor for a college class that he had been enrolled in while in prison to take a few steps back when they spoke one-on-one; he explained to the panel attendees that the issue for him was that he had not had someone stand that close to him (and he made a point to mention that it was especially strange to him because the instructor was female) in years and that it made him uncomfortable.

Many formerly incarcerated people also mention that they do things like sit with their backs to the wall when going out to eat after being released, because that way they can keep an eye on the entire setting and see everyone who walks into the restaurant. So this then translates to the tendency of the inmate artists to hold themselves very close to their papers as they are working; Kornfeld (1997) made a

similar observation in her art classroom. This is especially interesting in the arts studio environment, which is often portrayed as messy and free-flowing, with supplies strewn about and artists taking up a copious amount of space.

However, I have witnessed an inmate in particular, Antonio, who tends to move his arm vigorously back and forth on the wooden board that we are using for one of our landscape scenes. He does this as he is painting large areas, such as water. I believe that this is because Antonio sees himself as a fighter, and cannot get this aggression out elsewhere in the prison. In his interview, he said, "I like to fight. I'm a boxer." He saw himself as both a boxer and dancer, and because he believed both of those activities were not allowed in the prison, he found another avenue to display similar movements. He also told me, "I draw like if I'm possessed." He and one other participant approached me one evening to say thank you for coming in, which seemed very heartfelt and genuine. His friend said, "I'd probably be in the hole if it wasn't for this program." Antonio nodded knowingly, saying that he would have gotten into a fight.

Taylor is also known for his physical movements; the other program participants are constantly joking about needing to tie everything down in case Taylor flips it over by bouncing in his seat. Taylor told me he speaks with his hands, which he learned from his mother. Interestingly, he brought up to me that he thinks it might be because he grew up in academia (he mentioned this specifically to me, as he wanted my opinion because he sees me as part of the academic world); he thought perhaps it was being really excited and needing to convey information in an

intellectual world. This then suggests that there is a class-based element to this embodiment.

I argue that another part of the reason for this embodiment is in terms of control, of having control over something else. The men in prison often feel like they have lost some power, some agency, and one way they can regain some of this lost empowerment is through control over objects. So when they can picture something, and execute it exactly as they imagined, they feel a sense of accomplishment.

A white man in his forties, Jeffrey picked up a tack cloth in his hand, squeezed it, smelled it, and turned to me: "Laura, I've got to tell you that I haven't felt this good in awhile. Holding this in my hand is really big for me. There is nothing like the smell of wood on a tack cloth." For him, it was not just about the end product, but about the process of creation, of working with his hands. In fact, he actually was in the process of being transferred to another yard at the prison so that he could participate in a burgeoning agricultural program. He said, "If I can work with my hands, it's one step closer to what I'd be doing on the outside."

Part of this seems counterintuitive to me, however, as for the most part, men who are poor or in the working class are usually much more aggressive with their bodies. Sports are a perfect example of this; in elite sports such as polo or golf, physical touching is mitigated by some type of club. People do not physically touch one another, and certainly do not run into each other. This is vastly different from popular sports such as football, basketball, or wrestling, where people are in direct contact with one another and often engage violently.

Dancing

Something that surprised me somewhat was that a number of the interviewees brought up dancing. My first introduction to it was by Earl, who said that there was no way that he could dance on the yard, because the institutional context would not allow it. He explained that this was just not a place that should make anyone want to dance, and that dancing would therefore certainly make others view the dancer in a negative light. Antonio had a similar reaction; he said he really enjoyed dancing on the outside, but that he did not dance in prison. He just kept laughing and saying he wouldn't do it. The only person who said he thought nothing of dancing was Bernard, a man who was already self-described as "more emotional." However, I would argue that he can "get away" with such behavior because he is older. Masculinities differ by age, just as they differ by social class and race, and so he was able to have a bit of an extension in the boundary of acceptable behavior. These boundaries are constantly in flux, depending upon varying identities, spaces, and time.

Emotion

Expressing emotion can also be done physically, and although prison is portrayed as a place where crying can turn you into a victim, art itself is often emotional; one of my arts program staff interviewees pointed that out and said that may help in the breaking down of masculine requirements. At the end of our eight-month drawing, painting, and sculpting class, we were able to display many of the pieces created during the course of the class in a museum. As part of the exhibition, we included a comments book, in which museum visitors could write anything they

wanted, either generally about the exhibition, prison arts writ large, about the work of specific artists, etc. I typed all of these comments in and brought them into class so that the artists themselves could actually hear some of the feedback from viewers of their exhibition. I prefaced the reading of the comments by saying that they moved me to tears, and that I hoped they enjoyed them. At the end of the class, after everyone had a chance to read the comments, I semi-jokingly called out, "So did anyone else cry?!" To my surprise, three men raised their hands. No one joked about it, nor called them out; in fact, many of those who did not raise their hands said things like, "Wow, those are amazing." And Rodel, the person who is always ready with a joke (and who I was sure was going to make a snarky comment), simply said, "Those are very powerful" in a quiet voice as he was leaving class that night.

The fact that the program participants wanted such feedback in the first place shows their interest in learning about the views of the members of the public who see the exhibition and in understanding the identity ascribed to them as prisoners. The participants are also skipping over the "inmate" group identity, and seeing themselves as potentially being viewed by people outside the prison as redeemable (as they view themselves).

A few of the men also dealt with very difficult situations throughout the course of my ethnography. Some of them shared what they were going through, very much rejecting the assumption of the always hardened, tough exterior. Adam, in his early thirties, lost his mother and subsequently was fired from his job; he was visibly distraught and hardly spoke for a few weeks. However, I continued to let him know

that if he wanted, we could talk at any time. After about four weeks, he explained the situation to me. He was willing to share that and explain his actions in the program the past few weeks. He actually apologized and said that he would be more engaged from that point on.

Adam also used his shadow box project to work through his crime, which involved hurting his best friend. He opened up so much about it that he told the entire class that he was using this project to work through it, as he knew that he had so much left unresolved. He later wrote, in a reflection assignment that asked the program participants what they would say to visitors to the museum exhibition, "I would tell them I found a way to vent within myself, found a way to cry with no tears. And a way to fight my own battles without a fear of losing."

Jeffrey physically displayed frustration at the metaphorical self-portrait project that we assigned near the beginning of the class; he threw his pencil on the table and said, "But you don't understand. This is introspection, and I don't do introspection." He refused, for that first session, to even sketch anything. However, by the end of the project, he could not tear himself away from it. He jokingly said to me, "Damn you Laura! I now can't think of anything besides this project. I think about it all day, while I'm at work, when I'm gardening, while I'm eating. I am doing less well at work because of you!" His final product was an amazing, self-reflective piece, and he ultimately told me that it really helped him turn inward.

Gender, Social Class, and Sexual Orientation

Willingness to participate in the arts also varies according to class and background. One prisoner who I interviewed said dancing was absolutely off limits in the prison environment, while another said he would gladly engage in a dance class (and some inmates do in fact take such classes). For example, one of our participants, Jeffrey, also regularly attends a yoga class that is offered at the prison. Yoga itself is a classed activity, and potentially gendered as well. He really enjoys the practice, but actually told me that he was wary of attending in the future because it is held in the gym and other inmates are allowed in there while the class is going on and that he witnessed "amorous activities" while he was in class. This type of homophobia is more prevalent among men who are working class and poor, as tolerance tends to increase with education (with is correlated with increases in social class).

Social Class and Education

When Sheena, one of the art program staff members, brought up that odd numbers tend to be "aesthetically pleasing" Antonio made a joke that she was using really big words. He did not understand what she was saying, so she repeated her statement by saying that grouping objects in odd numbers tends to look good to people, that it's pleasing to the eyes.

Education seems to be used in two different ways in prison. On the one hand, it is something that takes you away from gang life, and something that makes you try to be above others – i.e. the making fun of inmates who use "$50 dollar words," as one

female inmate told me on a prison tour I took. She said she learned very quickly to stop using her college education in the prison.

The second way though that education is used is to show that an inmate is not like the "other" inmates. Charlie explained to me, when he was telling me that one of the men in the program, who was standing in the far corner of the room, had taken offense to me telling him to move and join the group (as I was exhibiting authority in that moment), that, "You know, some of the guys in here have just as much education as you. They're not dumb. Me, I'm working on two master's degrees." He was responding to their perception that people on the outside think prisoners are uneducated. While it is true that prisoners on average have less education than the general population, there is of course a huge amount of variation in the extent of formal education completed by prison inmates. The intersection of gender becomes very important here though, as this inmate also acknowledged that they were not used to a young woman telling them what to do. They were upset at the potential of being viewed as both uneducated and un-masculine at the same time.

Gender and Education

Antonio twice used the word "woman" to address Sheena, another female volunteer in the mural project. The first time she let it go, in case it was a one-off situation. However, the second time, Sheena did not want to allow such behavior to continue, so she pulled Antonio aside and told him using that word was inappropriate. Antonio seemed to authentically not know that calling Sheena "woman" was a derogatory term. She explained to him the issue in addressing her this way, and he

seemed very willing to listen. He then apologized and did not call her, nor me, that for the remainder of the time in the arts program.

Language

Some of the participants in the program do not speak English. I tried to get a translator to interview Anselmo, whose first language is Spanish. However, after waiting for over an hour for a translator to arrive, the staff told me I might just want to "figure it out myself." Anselmo had learned some English after spending decades incarcerated, and I do speak a little Spanish, so we made it work. However, it shows the lack of resources available to those whose first language is not English. During the arts program classes, we have always had other inmates volunteer to serve as translators. Cesar, who speaks almost no English, still completes his homework assignment every week! I read the prompts out loud in English at the end of every class, and he takes the time to ask another participant to translate the prompt for him into Spanish. He then shows up the next week with his homework written in Spanish.

Yard Type: The Mainline vs. Sensitive Needs Yards

The men I interviewed and worked with in the art program were in Sensitive Needs Yards, or SNY yards, as they are typically called. Once a number of interviewees brought it up, I started asking inmates about whether their experiences with art creation and art programs differed at all from mainline yards to SNY yards. It seemed that they did, sometimes quite drastically.

As Dino, an inmate who spent seven years on the mainline before transitioning to SNY told me, "I used to pray for a lockdown. That's the only way I'd be able to

work on my art." I heard this over and over again from inmates who had previously been on the mainline and were involved in gang politics. Artwork was viewed as a distraction by gang leaders. And yet the art program was a safe place, and in fact even encouraged by these very same leaders.

The respondents acknowledged that race and county (what inmates call "cars") were two very important identifiers on the mainline yards, but that these characteristics were not nearly as salient on the SNY facilities. They also told me that space inside of the prison becomes very important, as in a public space such as the yard or the chow hall, they would not be allowed to associate with members of another racial group, but in the arts program they could freely engage with people of all races. Here we see the importance of viewing the prison as a complex institution, and prisoners as people with identities that are in flux; context can completely change the master status and identifiers that are deemed important.

When inmates in the Pelican Bay State Prison Security Housing Unit (SHU) [a mainline unit] organized the hunger strike in 2011, they overcame strict racial and gang lines to adopt a general "inmate in solitary confinement" identity, fighting for the rights of all those in a similar position regardless of racial identity (which had previously been the most important identity to them).

Men's vs. Women's Prisons

Barbara and Sonya are two prison art program staff members who have experience working with both men and women. Sonya has also worked with transgender inmates. We had one transgendered individual who came in to get put on

the waiting list and later had another transgender prisoner join the program and become a regular arts program member.

A difference that is highlighted by a former prisoner in a women's prison in Maryland, who critiques the wildly popular Netflix series *Orange is the New Black*, is regarding whether or not inmates want to "one up" each other. Susan K., as she is called in the article, says, "It was really adversarial, even among crews of people. And, like, the worst thing you could possibly do was to be good at something in front of everybody. That was the same thing as saying that you were better than everybody else, and nobody tolerated that shit for very long. Whether it was real or imagined, you couldn't make people think you were above them. So you just sort of stayed shitty at everything. Like, nobody was painting, or writing, or drawing, or anything creative. I mean, people would sing, but everybody sucked at that, so that was ok" (qtd. in Dawson 2014). This is similar to the incident I described earlier in the chapter, in which a female inmate changed her language.

This seems very different from the men's environment, in which the hierarchy that is created calls for inmates to demonstrate their abilities in certain areas. Men show off their work, when they believe that it will be viewed positively by the prison populace. This is not to say, however, that the men use lofty, elitist language; some of them do, at least, point out when we're using "big words" in class. But for the men, advantages are good, as they allow you to secure you a spot away from the bottom of the prison hierarchy.

Gender and Age

The prison population overall is aging, due to a shift in policy that happened during the 1980s. “Tough on crime” approaches, including mandatory minimum sentencing and three strikes penalties, led to a significant increase in the prison population (Belluck 2012; Donaldson et al. 2012; Faryon 2010; Heisler 2012; Horwitz 2015; Osborne Association 2014). A spike in life sentences, both with and without parole, had led to many inmates who spend decades in prison.

Disabilities

A number of the inmates in the program are older, and many of them wear bright vests that indicate that they are disabled in some way (reading “Mobility Impaired,” “Hearing Impaired,” etc.). The vests are used to identify the specific type of disability, so that staff can be notified, especially in situations in which an announcement is made that all prisoners are supposed to comply with (such as alarms, which require all inmates to sit or lie down on the ground). However, these vests not only identify to correctional staff that their wearers are disabled. They also allow inmates to not only see disabled inmates from a very far distance, but they also clearly identify their specific disability. This clearly labels these inmates as different, which is fascinating in a world in which inmates are standardized and meant to look as much the same as possible.

There is a stereotype in the prison that men who are older are pedophiles. Because there are many older inmates who also have disabilities, there is the corresponding assumption that inmates who are disabled are pedophiles. The

stereotypes are not only held by inmates; some officers seem to support such ideas as well. During an interview, an inmate who works as a Personal Care Attendant informed me that his boss (a correctional officer) actually told him that he should not help many of the inmates that he was signed up to assist; as an explanation, the officer said that they did not really need assistance. Some of the correctional staff members are not administering the institutional policies that are designed to provide accommodations to the disabled, and encourage inmates to reject such policies as well.

There seems to be a general belief that men should not need assistance. This very much comes through in discussions about the disabled. So here we see the intersection of gender and beliefs about disability, but also possibly about class. Kevin, one of the regular arts program participants and also a Personal Care Attendant, talked about how he has no problem helping the inmates who are disabled, and that he in fact feels a connection because a girl he communicates with on the outside has a disability and requires a personal care attendant and he would want to help her too. However, he actually had an injury during the course of our class, but stated that he felt like he could not ask for help and wanted to show everyone that he could handle the situation himself. His situation also seriously affected him, as he injured his dominant arm; we utilize our dominant arm for so many basic tasks, and his daily routine was severely impacted by this injury. When I asked him about this seeming contradiction, he smiled sheepishly and said that he realized it was counter-intuitive, but that he grew up believing that men take care of themselves. So even in cases in

which someone legitimately needs assistance, the hypermasculine code calls for a rejection of the assistance.

However, the caregivers may also adopt a caring, nurturing attitude toward the inmates assigned to them. A video made by Donaldson et al. (2012) about prisoners with dementia and the "Gold Coats" who take care of them (the California Men's Colony version of the orange vest) shows the bonds created between caregiver and patient; one inmate tears up and describes feeling "helpless" when his patient is locked inside his cell and he cannot get access when he is having an episode. Another inmate explains how trust between caregiver and patient is essential for the relationship to work. Another states that "it humbles you" to help a "grown man" shower, shave, etc.; here he is reflecting on the need for a man to be helped, which he is acknowledging is contrary to what he has been taught, but yet wants to help. A caregiver explain this is not "just a job… we live with these dudes. You gotta care about them."

The other individuals who wear vests are those who are classified as Personal Care Attendants. These attendants were bright orange vests, clearly labeling them as well. Although these may be helpful for the inmates who are disabled and to staff who need to be aware who is working and is supposed to be assisting the disabled inmates, they also serve to visibly label certain inmates. Unfortunately, as many of my respondents indicated to me, the Personal Care Attendant position is not necessarily one which is revered. The assumption exists within the prison that the elderly disabled inmates are pedophiles (this is certainly not always the case) and are therefore not deserving of help; those who are willing to help them are viewed negatively.

Disability is often correlated with age, but not always. For example, we had an inmate named Lenny who was both deaf and illiterate in our program for a few months, until the staff removed him because they said he was not the proper status to participate (he was classified as an inmate who was not working nor going to school – however, I do not know if workplaces nor the educational classes had the accommodations necessary for him to participate). Lenny was not fluent in American sign language, but was still able to communicate with us through an interpreter. However, although the Department of Corrections is supposed to provide accommodations, our interpreter was another inmate who volunteered to help, which was very helpful. When Lenny first joined the program, we assumed that we could communicate with him via writing; however, we were informed that this would not be possible and we would have to find an alternate method of communication. One can see her the intersections of disability and lack of education; Lenny has access to very few resources in the prison, and yet he was still able to truly participate in the mural project. He worked with a team of 5 inmates to create one of the landscape scenes.

Although I had heard in the interviews with formerly incarcerated men that older men are generally given more of a free pass in terms of proving their masculinity (especially by John, who mentioned that he knew he was given some slack as "since I was white and older"), a correctional officer told me that she has responded many times to incidences in which younger inmates had attacked older inmates because they were incapacitated in some way and made easy targets. Donaldson et al. (2012) also

note that inmates with dementia specifically can become targets for predators, as they may be confused and unaware about their surroundings.

Age and Yard Type

The interviewees who were currently incarcerated drew a large boundary about such behavior in mainline versus SNY yards. Although they said that for the most part SNY yards were much safer overall, the older inmates explained that a lot of the younger guys on the SNY yards had not been properly "taught" how to behave in the prison environment. It almost seemed like a mentorship role that they were explaining to me. This is part of what prisoners often refer to as the "convict code." Although this set of unwritten rules is not applicable to (and often conflicts with) the "rules" of social norms that exist on the outside (both in terms of folkways/mores and laws themselves), this code does structure daily life for inmates – and sometimes severe sanctions can occur for those who disobey the code. Sometimes more seasoned inmates ("convicts," who view themselves as part of the criminal world and believe the convict code is important) take new inmates ("fish" or "inmates," who will break the convict code to get ahead as individuals) under their wing and explicitly explain to them about the rules they must follow. However, much of the convict code is learned through observation and practice, akin to a process of socialization. Being a "convict" is a learned status, something that must be achieved and proven; "inmates" are those who snitch, break, etc.

Discussion

The literature as well as the popular discourse on prisons and prison masculinities tends to view the prison as a single space, and the prisoner as a standardized mass of people. The outside world tends to portray inmates as a singular and monolithic group, who share a similar set of interests and identity; however, as Brubaker (2002) argues, this type of groupism is problematic.

Although the inmate population is viewed as singular from the outside, an insider view shows the complexity of identities involved. Each of several social categories (e.g. social class, education, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, and disability) provides a more comprehensive view of prisoners as gendered beings. This type of intersectional view works against the notion of the singular prisoner, as often depicted in the mass media and even in some sociological accounts. Although prisons work to create such a standardized view, inmates work to reclaim their own identities. The "prisoner" identity in fact varies along numerous axes; their subsequent performance of gender also thereby varies.

Despite the large amount of variation that exists among the incarcerated men, and the spectrum of masculine performance, their participation in the arts program leads to an increasing salience of the "artist" identity. Many of these participants use their artworks as evidence of their own redemptive possibilities and of an alternative identity to "criminal" or "prisoner." And some of the artists rely on the "not-so-total" aspects of the total institution (Farrington 1992) to bolster this identity, such as the individual who affirmed his artist identity through obtaining his first commission from

a client who was not incarcerated. In his case, being able to communicate with the outside world encouraged him to embrace the artist role. This alternative "artist" identity assists in reducing the problematic requirements of hypermasculinity.

These identities are also context-specific, and can be utilized differently in varying situations. For example, some of the men discuss how race is a salient characteristic while they are in mainline facilities, yet this fades in importance (and as a part of their identity) when they transition to a Sensitive Needs Yard. Although many of the men I spoke with agreed that they feel labeled as prisoners, a number of them said they do not identify as criminals and that they in fact have very different perspectives from those with whom they are housed. The participants of the arts program identify as people who are and have the potential to be further rehabilitated, while they distance themselves from "trouble-makers." This asserted identity is very different from that which is ascribed to them by the general public.

In this chapter, I have argued that the hypermasculine imperative that exists within prisons is far more complicated than a surface analysis leads one to believe. The performance of and expectations of the performance of gender can vary dramatically based on one's race, social class, sexual orientation, disability, age, and many other characteristics.

Each intersection that I have identified is worth of future study. These intersections are rarely studied within populations separate from general society, especially the prison population. For example, due to mandatory minimum sentencing and the three strikes law in California, the inmate population is aging (Belluck 2012;

Donaldson et al. 2012; Faryon 2010; Heisler 2012; Horwitz 2015; Osborne Association 2014); as more and more inmates get older and develop disabilities, does the perception of prisoners as disabled (by other inmates, correctional staff, and the public) change?

There are of course limitations to my study, as there are many characteristics that I was unable to include in my analysis. My sample is also of course limited, in that I obtained the bulk of my data from those inside one facility in one prison; however, it is bolstered due to my extensive research in secondary analysis and my corroboration through interviews with formerly incarcerated people from a wide variety of types and locations of prisons in California.

Chapter 5: "From 'Doing' to 'Done': Gender and Prison Art"

Art involves both the process of creation and the end product. The tendency in the sociology of gender is to focus on the process of "doing gender." However, much can also be learned from the objects that are created, or the "done," as they are part of the process of production and reception that occurs against a backdrop of social relations (Griswold 1986). Objects are produced by an individual or group of individuals embedded within a vast social world (Becker 1982). Art is created by a member of a culture, or subculture, and is another method of communication (Griswold 1986; Yogan and Johnson 2006). Although we often rely on an artist's explanation of his or her own work to analyze it, sociologists study the art object itself, looking for clues about the artist and the social world of which he or she is a part. Without examining the product created, sociological analysis of art production loses the effect of mediation that the product has on the producer (Jenks 1995; McDonnell 2010; Strandvad 2012).

This chapter broadens the analysis I present in the previous chapters in three ways: 1) I expand from the "doing" (the artistic process and community, as described in the past two chapters) to the "done" (the works of art themselves, which I analyze in this chapter). 2) I compare the data I collected at a single prison to a national arts database. As I discuss below, the artworks I saw created in my arts program broadly reflect similar themes and gendering as in the national database; in fact, there is an even slightly higher percentage of artworks in my arts program containing additional

feminized iconography, which I argue is because the formal arts program provides a safe space for such expression. I saw similar work created in other arts programs (not part of this analysis, as here I analyzed only publicly available artworks). 3) I broaden the theoretical discussion to encompass the importance of visual sociology.

I argue that visual sociology can be used to examine gender relations within prison art. Most sociological studies of gender in prison tell us that prisons as masculine institutions that require the performance of hypermasculinity by inmates (Curtis 2014; Heidenreich 2011; Levit 2001). The central research question for this chapter is: How does an analysis of art complicate our understanding of the gendering of inmates within the homosocial environment of the prison?

Cultural objects can be decoded to reveal aspects of the culture and social relations in which they are produced (Becker 1982; Bourdieu 1984, 2006 [1973]; Cerulo 1993; Dauber 1992; Griswold 1986). I am studying one particularly interesting type of art: art produced by male prisoners. I use prison art as an extreme case. As Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep (2009) point out, extreme cases are not meant to provide statistical generalizations, but rather to establish and expand theory. Male prison artists are considered hyper-aware, as prisoners, that they will be held accountable for their gendered behavior, and yet knowingly cross gender boundaries when they produce feminized objects using feminized techniques. Just as Caldwell and Mestrovic (2008) point out, institutions such as the military (and the prison) rely on gender stereotypes that may seem outdated in dominant society. If we can isolate processes in magnified situations, in which experiences are heightened, we should be

able to apply our findings to more general situations in the future. Art, or the "done," is an empirical reservoir that allows us to measure gendered content. The artwork that I examine in this chapter is public, and therefore viewable by other inmates, prison staff, and those in the general public outside of the prison. This leads to the possibility of their art being scrutinized and stigmatized as violating accepted gender norms.

Previous pioneering research on the substantive topic of gendered jail art (Yogan and Johnson 2006), which uses content analysis to study differences in the content of wall drawings produced by male and female jail inmates, has two serious limitations. First, in addition to not focusing on the cultural object itself (what is "done"), their analysis overlooks variation and subtleties in the artwork itself, as it is shaped by the social world, artists, and consumers. Second, their analysis oversimplifies according to common cultural understandings of gender essentialism (Charles 2011; Kimmel 2000).

Scholars studying the "doing" and "undoing" of gender (Deutsch 2007; Risman 2009; West and Zimmerman 1987) have made essentialist assumptions that have put men and women in binary categories. However, the performance of gender remains salient in homosocial prison environments. In fact, the absence of the "opposite" gender may change the way men perform gender.

This is especially pertinent within the prison environment, in which scholars discuss the presence of "hypermasculinity" (Evans and Wallace 2008; Rhodes 2001) or "dangerous masculinity" (Curtis 2014). These terms exaggerate stereotypically masculine traits that emphasize aggression and the suppression of weakness for fear of

victimization (Holmberg 2001). However, without women present at the prison, men may express different masculinities, which usually go unacknowledged. This literature on prison masculinities, while acknowledging and highlighting the constraints individuals within the prison environment face in terms of the performance of gender, they largely ignore the variation that indeed exists among any population of individuals. As Blair-Loy (2010) found, the assumptions made by many dominant scholarly arguments "miss much of what happens in social life" (23). I argue that art is one way in which such expression occurs. We see "tough" men creating artwork that is traditionally considered "feminine;" it seems that much more is going on here than previously thought.

Much of the work on gender in sociology has focused on the examination of the differences between men and women, as segregated groups, and how these perceived differences lead to inequality. While it is essential to recognize that women as a group have historically been subordinated to men, there is also much difference within the genders (as noted by Connell 2005 [1995]; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Kimmel 1994; Messner 2007; Schilt 2006). In fact, scholars can examine particular arenas in which the transgression of gender boundaries occurs, if not frequently, at least occasionally. Everyday and taken-for-granted behavior of groups of individuals can point out (both to sociologists and to the general public) the ways in which people in the U.S. often do not abide by gendered expectations. It is not enough

to merely look at where the naturalization of gender differences occurs[12]. Scholars must also examine the pockets of change, where people transgress gender boundaries. This is a way to potentially bring about real change in the traditional, hierarchical gender order.

Art is both a process and a product. The creation of art provides the artist with a sense of agency (Naji 2009), and is a process in which gender can be expressed. The product itself is also an expression of gender identity and location within a social world. This chapter focuses on the gendered product. The next section provides an overview of previous work in analyses of cultural objects, jail and prison art, and the "doing" of gender in prison. I then turn to an explanation of my methodological approach and an overview of my data. In part 1 of my argument, I hold that the art work itself, like words, can be seen as a form of communication (Yogan and Johnson 2006). In part 2, I argue that we can see gender "transgression" occurring through the creation of artworks. While scholars are quick to point out the "hypermasculinity," "dangerous masculinity" (Curtis 2014), and "hegemonic masculinity" (Connell 2005 [1995]) that exist among men in prison, what we find when examining prison art is a much broader range of accepted gender identities in this homosocial environment, rather than the sole acceptance of the "myth of hypermasculinity."

[12] See, for example, Acker 2006; Cha 2010; Connell 2009; Correll, Benard, and Paik 2007; Deutsch 2007; Epstein 2007; Glauber 2008; Padavic and Reskin 2002; Reskin and Bielby 2005; Risman 2009; Schilt and Westbrook 2009; West and Fenstermaker 1995; West and Zimmerman 1987; West and Zimmerman 2009.

Theoretical Framework

The "Done": Cultural Object Analysis

Many scholars have historically shied away from examining material objects in sociological academic work. The "doing" of gender often involves the creation of a tangible object, but sociologists focus on the "doing" and not on the "done." However, the "new sociology of art" (de la Fuente 2007) has emphasized the importance of examining the art objects themselves. Rothenberg (2012) utilizes an analysis of art works to argue that artists' responses to 9/11 represent a "critical response to historical events." Following from Adorno's notion of "dual-art," Rothenberg argues that art can still be critical even within a capitalist market. Art can oppose normative conditions while still being commodified. One of the artists discussed, Tina La Porta, created a piece composed of 6 Polaroid images of media representations of men and women veiled in different ways specifically to question gender coding. This emphasis on analysis of the art work is a part of this "new sociology of art."

Griswold (1986) argues that "archive and activity, or what is saved and what is done, are two aspects of the same cultural system, and comprehensive cultural analysis should look at both" (6), holding that both the "new literary" and the "art-worlds" schools are both concerned with how people collectively understand and represent their experience. To accomplish this, she develops the cultural diamond, a heuristic used to examine the links among the social context, a cultural object, the artists/creators, and the audience. Understandings of artworks emerge through a

variety of factors: “The existence, persistence, and prestige of ‘works like that’ are understood by both the art-worlds approach and the new literary historicism to be functions of the interplay of institutions and ideologies, conventions and common sense, inert artifacts and interested actors” (Griswold 1986: 7). She defines a cultural object as “shared significance embodied in form,” making it capable of telling a story (1987). To study any cultural object, one must take into account both the social agent (intends and receives) and the analyst (comprehends and explains). Intention and comprehension entail considering the internal meaning of the cultural object; reception and explanation place the object within a broader social context. Griswold uses plays to show how cultural objects are responding to the cultural environment in which they are created; any performance is an interplay of the artist, their art, the audience, and the social context. She also argues that text must be a part of the analysis of literature (1989). This multi-dimensional view of examining art objects is important for analyzing the created pieces themselves.

Jail and Prison Art

There has not been much work done on prison art from a sociological viewpoint. Both Kornfeld (1997) and Bliss et al. (2009) describe those who have experience working with inmates in prison art programs. Thielen brings up the ability of prison art programs, and potentially simply the prison environment itself, as encouraging activity that is not necessarily “natural” for some people. However, I argue that it is potentially simply the prison environment itself that may create a space for those to take on an artist identity, or at least participate in the artistic process. The

institution, by either its provision of a program or perhaps its lack of alternative activities (existence of an arts program or not), may provide an impetus for some to begin art-making activities.

Yogan and Johnson (2006) conducted a study of jail art, in which they argue that the art drawn on the walls of jail cells is a form of communication. Their typology includes graffiti (words), secular common images, religious images, fantasy images (non-violent), hate/violent images, cartoon-like images, life-like images of body parts, and scenes involving buildings/rooms. They find marked differences in the art produced by men in prison: men produced all of the "angry" images, while women created all of the "optimistic" pieces. To explain this, they utilize gender socialization theory, drawing from cognitive development theory, social learning theory, gender schema theory. This is a useful approach, but they assume a gender binary, rather than looking at variation within each gender. This is absolutely essential within the prison environment, given that it is homosocial and that gender is so salient within a hyper-policed space. They also cannot determine the race of the artist, nor the crime committed. Their typology, while perhaps fitting their observations for jail wall art, does not cover the breadth of art seen in prisons (see Data section below).

The Art Market

Because money is often scarce within penal institutions[13], the art market serves a vital role within prison life. Zelizer (1989) notes that "special monies" exist, that identical quantities of money are not necessarily equivalent. Not only do relatively

[13] As discussed in Chapter 4, inmates typically make less than $1.00 per hour (Singleton and Boushey 2002). See page 86 for more details.

small quantities of money get one much farther in prison than on the outside, but, because of the dearth of money and materials, it seems that what appear to be simple images are highly prized: "'Anything with a biker on it is worth four or five packs [of cigarettes]'" (qtd in an interview with Phyllis Kornfeld, Kornfeld 1997: 25). Motorcycles are often correlated with "outlaw status" to many inmates, and especially since they do not have access to the real thing, they often utilize the art as a symbol of their own outlaw status and a reminder of "who they are." Kornfeld goes on to note that skillful color portraits can fetch about one hundred dollars, which is a very large sum of money behind bars. So within this market, we do need to realize that absolute prices cannot be compared to those on the outside. However, relatively speaking, some artwork within prison is definitely a luxury good, in the sense that very few people can afford it. This creates social distance between those who are in possession of such goods, and those who earn the money for creating such goods.

Prison art does, though, sometimes make its way into the outside world, as noted. It then can fetch a price far higher than can the same item within the prison. On murderauction.com, a painting of Elvis done by executed serial killer John Wayne Gacy is listed for $1,500.00 (2010). Prison artists therefore are partially outside the capitalist labor market, but also partially within it. Those who might actually be able to partly escape the alienation of labor (to use Marx's term) are those who are not invested in making their artwork into a money-making (or status-building) enterprise (both within the prison and outside of it).

The "Doing" in Prison

The "doing gender" approach views gender as a performance. Gender is embodied in individuals. Scholars of gender recognize how gender inequality is maintained on individual, interactional, and institutional levels (Risman 2004). Unfortunately, however, many scholars assume that gender is dichotomous and essentialized. One way that we see this is in scholarly work on gender within prison.

Men are in prison at a rate 14 times that of women (Carson and Sabol 2012). For this reason, as Rhodes (2001) realizes in her review of anthropological and sociological research regarding prisons, there has historically existed an unquestioned assumption of prisons as being masculine. As I describe in Chapter 1, the prison itself is a gendered organization, with policies implemented that encourage the performance of hypermasculinity by inmates. Levit (2001) describes the reinforcement of masculinity through various legal institutions, in which men's aggressiveness is assumed. As Heidenreich (2011) describes, the penitentiary has a history of encouraging conformity to gender norms, going so far as to incorporate sewing and knitting as part of the program for women offenders.

It is possible that the prison environment simply has different "rules" regarding what is masculine and what is feminine. Because a total institution is designed to strip an inmate of his or her identity, the inmates may have developed a new system in which behaviors inside of prison are perceived differently than they are on the outside merely in order to maintain some kind of identity. The lack of an "other" as a constant reference point may make the notion of "women's work" lose some of its novelty; this

lack of the "gaze" by women may provide the freedom necessary to act in whatever manner deemed necessary. Evidence points to this conclusion, as "feminine" images and materials in art are not generally seen as taboo. This might be similar to the ability of men to have sexual relations with other men in prison without taking on a "homosexual" identity (Kunzel 2008).

Methodological Approach

According to Griswold (1987), cultural objects provide information about the environment in which they are created and should be studied in their own right, just as text must be studied to understand literature (1989). There have been several successful studies that analyzed the gendered dimension of artwork created in confinement or the effects of audience in art creation in a historical context (Frank 1991; Jules-Rosette 1984; Penney 1992; Petersen 1971), but these studies do not address the constant presence of gender policing that is assumed to occur in the modern prison.

Visual sociology is a burgeoning field within the discipline, with its roots in the work of Howard Becker (1974, 1982) and Pierre Bourdieu (1972, 1984). These theorists realized that art and other objects are produced within a vast social world, which connects many actors together. However, they tend to emphasize the networks in which these actors are embedded, focusing on external factors of the art and contextualization, rather than on the art itself (de la Fuente 2007).

My approach to the sociology of art falls into the "new sociology of art," as defined by de la Fuente (2007), which argues that the art itself should be analyzed. The new sociology of art utilizes the cultural object argument, but argues that the art product is an active participant in art creation (de la Fuente 2007; DeNora 2000, 2003; Hennion 2000; Strandvad 2012). I adopt this socio-material approach, but I focus specifically on the gendering of the objects. Just as the creators of works of art are gendered, the objects themselves are as well. Objects convey meaning, and this meaning can change over time, depending on how the artist's and audience's relationship to the associations made with the object change. The activity associated with the object need not be gendered necessarily, but often there will be cues associating an object with a particular gender. Oddy (1996) uses bicycles as an example of the gendering of objects. An "open" or "dropped" frame denotes a "female bicycle," as it allows for the bicyclist to wear a long skirt. Bicycles are invisibly gendered as "male," however, because the assumption exists that a bicycle is made for men unless otherwise specified. This material culture approach reads such objects, including art, as a social and cultural history.

Data and Methods

I modeled my content analysis of images on a popular discourse analysis of articles written about music. Cheyne and Binder (2010) selected two publications, considered to be elite among news sources: the *Los Angeles Times* and the *New York Times*, between the years 1991-2005 (starting just after Binder's [1993] work on a national controversy surrounding rap lyrics and ending just before the Smithsonian

curated an exhibition of hip-hop artifacts). They used the ProStaff and LexisNexis databases to search "rap," "rapper," and "hip-hop," which created a portfolio of about 3500 articles. They reduced this portfolio by deleting articles from an "objective" perspective (eliminating articles that answered the "5 Ws," including of course the "where," or place that any news event happened), focusing on opinion pieces. This then means that if place is mentioned, it is because the author decided it was important to note. Their portfolio included album and concert reviews, artist interviews and profiles, editorials, and openly opinionated commentary, about both American and foreign rap. They deleted articles having to do with art, dance, and other "artistic forms," maintaining their focus on music. The shortened portfolio had a total of 2187 articles (1074 from the Los Angeles Times and 1113 from the New York Times). They conducted a discourse analysis, regarding elite ideas about hip-hop, looking for themes the reviewers and commentators utilized and the explanations they provided for their opinions. Because this sample was too large to conduct an in-depth analysis of each piece, they randomly sampled ten percent of the portfolio. The final portfolio contained a total of 218 articles. They then reread these pieces and analyzed them using codes created by the authors through induction, using Atlas.ti. They created a compendium of the arguments authors used to bolster their opinions. Each of the two authors created a separate code list, without seeing the other author's codes. They then joined their codes to create a full list. After completing the list, Cheyne coded each article, recoding articles coded while the list was being created, to ensure standardization. This is how they are demonstrating qualitative data on how critics'

discuss their tastes, along with quantitative data that details how often critics use certain discursive strategies. They argue that elite music critics' works on hip-hop are particularly useful because they illustrate how these actors both sit in the field of culture and within the subfield of hip-hop music. This "dual positioning" also illustrates how both the context of production, and of reception, "inform critics' taste of hip-hop."

Content Analysis

To determine what images can teach us about gender performance in prison, I conducted a content analysis of works of art created by men while in prison. I collected images for my sample on selected dates in 2014; all of these works are available in public forums, featured on easily viewed websites. These works are publicly available, which means that the incarcerated artists are aware that their work may be viewed by a wide variety of potential audiences. Because they may be judged by others, they may refrain from showcasing any works which they believe would not flatter them. Therefore, any images that are "feminine" are created and displayed with the awareness that other inmates, prison staff, and individuals outside may view them. This is an example of "front-stage performance" as described by Goffman (1959).

I selected prison art websites that appeared in a Google search, using the Google Chrome web browser. Google is currently the most popular search engine (and website) both globally and in the United States (Alexa 2014) and Google Chrome is currently the most popular web browser in the U.S. (Christie 2014). I argue that these websites are the "most public" of all of the publicly available websites of prison art.

These individuals might very well be aware of the popularity of these sites, and the higher chances of their artwork being seen there. This means that, if they are at all concerned with how potential audience members might interpret their work (them being "unmanly" or "girly," etc.), they would be less likely to submit them to these sites.

An example of more "hidden," less publicly available artwork (while still technically being publicly available) includes sites that showcase prison artwork without identifying the names of authors, or pages that show up further down on a Google search. PrisonerLife.com features the complete works of three prison arts, but their website does not show up until page seven of a Google search, so someone would have to look through numerous prior listings before encountering this particular site.

I selected the top five websites listed on the first page of search results, that focused specifically on prisoner-created art. Although the list changes slightly each day depending on site traffic, I checked the results every single day for a period of four weeks, and the results stayed relatively consistent.

I selected only the artworks created by men. To determine gender, I used the artist name and institution, since prisons are sex-segregated (relying on whichever piece of information is provided). In cases in which the name is gender-neutral and I could find no information on the incarcerated artist online, I did not use the image.

When one searches "prison art" using Google, the first website that comes up is Prison Arts Coalition (and the second is a direct link to PAC's gallery), an

organization that has compiled information on various prison art programs throughout the U.S., and which also has an online gallery of prisoner-created artworks. PAC has a national focus. I utilized only images from artists who are or had previously been incarcerated, as the online gallery does also feature artwork by those who are providing a commentary on the criminal justice system. There are 28 such images.

The third website is the Prison Creative Arts Project, an art program run out of the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. They have an online gallery as well, featuring images of works from their past art shows from 2007-2011. They hold art shows annually, and are recognized for having the largest prisoner art show in the entire world. All of their artwork is from inmates in Michigan state prisons. Because the PCAP website showcases images from numerous art shows, I chose the album that contains all of the pieces from their 2011 show, the most recent year listed. I could have used the album that features selected works from their past five exhibitions, but that does not provide the holistic view of what it is like to visit each show. There are 180 images that I used; I removed 8 that were either attributed to artists who are female, or artists whose name was gender neutral and whom I could find no information about online.

The fourth and fifth listings are for the Safe Streets Foundation, which is also an online store of prison art. Names of artists and title of images are displayed. The Safe Streets Foundation is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and is a registered non-profit organization located in Washington, D.C. There are 56 images on this website attributed to male artists.

The next listing is for news stories featuring prison art in the *Huffington Post*. Since I am searching for the most accessible websites for prison art, I ended my search here. Combining each of the above online sources creates a total of 264 images. The three sources are from different areas in the United States and feature works both created within and outside of formal arts programs.

Typology

My final portfolio consisted of 264 images. I coded each image based upon features of the iconography and media. I inductively created a code list by writing down various aspects of each piece, such as the dominant color scheme, the featured image, whether the featured image fell into a greater category (such as landscapes, portraits, etc.), overtly gendered objects or images (per the argument made by Oddy [1996], and items generally perceived to be masculine or feminine), and the medium used in the image (if obvious or if listed in the description). I then mapped this onto a typology utilized to distinguish jail wall art.

Previous Typologies

Yogan and Johnson (2006) created a typology for feminine and masculine art, based upon their research on wall art in a single jail. They were able to isolate the art created by male and female artists because the jail was sex-segregated. Yogan and Johnson's (2006) typology of art included graffiti (words), secular common images, religious images, fantasy images (non-violent), hate/violent images, cartoon-like images, life-like images of body parts, and scenes involving buildings/rooms. Yogan and Johnson (2006) found that men produced all of the hate/violent, fantasy, cartoon-

like, and Christian images; that their secular images were of guns, cars, tattoo art, gang symbols, and drug references; and that their life-like images of body parts included naked women and hands with the middle finger raised. Women's secular images were deemed child-like and innocent, and their life-like images were of a single eye or a detailed face with tears running down the cheeks

Findings

By examining artwork created by men in all-male prisons, and viewing such art as a subject as well as an object, we can interrogate the notion that art created by men and women in captive environments is drastically different (Yogan and Johnson 2006), and that artwork created by men will automatically be "hypermasculine" in nature.

In fact, I found something very different. Eighty-three of the images (31.4%) in my portfolio did not fit Yogan and Johnson's typology of "masculine" art. Many of these images were what they deemed "feminine" art, such as an image of birds, flowers, a single eye, or detailed faces, often with tears. Of course, because some of the images were much more complex than the wall images studied by Yogan and Johnson, I had to classify based upon general subject matter; Yogan and Johnson also were unable to analyze color and its effects on the gendering of art works. I also found that their typology is problematic in some ways in terms of prison art, since paintings or sculptures use different mediums than sketches drawn on jail walls; however, in terms of iconography, much of their typology can be applied.

This is not to say that male inmates do not produce traditionally "masculine" art. Although the majority of the images in my sample (68.6%) are categorized as traditionally masculine (cars, motorcycles, skulls, and jail cells)[14], much of the art works veer obviously into the "feminine" art categories. The three examples below represent different categories of gender boundary crossing.

Example #1

Figure 5.1: Source: Prison Creative Arts Project Gallery: 16th Annual Exhibition (2011); Lus Ybarra, K.T.'s Dancing

The first piece is an painting of a ballerina surrounded by a multiple vibrant shades of pink. The ballerina is dancing posing next to a tree, and appears to also be growing roots, with what look to be stars surrounding her with a halo effect. This piece was created by inmate Lus Ybarra, who also had one other piece in the show in 2011, the year of this exhibition.

This image could indeed be classified as "life-like images of body parts," but it contains an entire person, including a downcast face (what Yogan and Johnson

[14] I included landscapes as "masculine," as Yogan and Johnson did not account for "scenes depicting 'real life'" including nature and my interviews with currently and formerly incarcerated artists, as well as with prison art program staff members, informed me that landscapes are not viewed as feminized subject matter within prison.

deemed feminine). The ballerina image is also rather "child-like" and "innocent," part of their criteria for feminine work. This image is a far cry from what one might expect from someone whose masculinity is constantly policed.

Example #2

Figure 5.2: Source: Safe Streets Arts Foundation; Curtis Anthony Dye, Inner Image

The second image is of an image created by Curtis Anthony Dye, titled "Inner Image." It is featured on the Safe Streets Arts Foundation website, which sells artwork produced by incarcerated artists. The image itself features a woman, indicated by the bow and long hair. The fingernails are also painted red, which is often associated with femininity. We often associate bows with not just femininity, but with childhood and adolescent femininity. The image is also colorful, heavily drawing on pastels, which are also seen as demure and feminine. The hair is also long and devoid of grey, indicating that the woman is young. The woman is also looking into a mirror, which is reflecting back a snake-like figure, more along the lines of what Yogan and Johnson would consider to be masculine.

Although we do not see the young woman's face, which Yogan and Johnson would consider a feminized feature, many aspects of the image seem feminized. Contrary to Yogan and Johnson's findings, this image could be classified as both

child-like and innocent, yet also containing a subversive element in the snake reflection, again pointing us to the importance of examining art objects and questions our assumptions regarding gender in prison.

Example #3

Figure 5.3: Source: Prison Creative Arts Project Gallery: 16th Annual Exhibition (2011); Kevin Allen, Missing You

The third image is an example of a painting that features not only a child with his entire face showing, but one showing intense emotion. Yogan and Johnson (2006) found that all images displaying eyes with tears were created by women. We also tend to view children as innocent. The title of the painting, *Missing You*, indicates an emotional bond; this possibility of vulnerability is often overlooked within the confines of the "hypermasculine" institution.

Discussion

The sociology of art should indeed concern itself with the study of actual art objects, and not just their producers. This art is agentic, rather than static. By doing this, we notice the wide array in art created by men in prison. Without looking at the objects themselves, we might assume that men in prison automatically need to adhere

by a certain set of rules that dictate allowable behavior, based upon notions of "hypermasculinity." However, the examples explained above show otherwise. Art that is created, and that has garnered enough respect to make it to an online or brick-and-mortar gallery shows more diversity than we might have previously thought.

The "new sociology of art" (de la Fuente 2007) recognizes the importance of examining objects as cultural artifacts, with their own stories to tell, apart from those told by their creators. I argue that we must consider the objects, viewing them as interactive; when we do, we discover much more complexity within gender than has previously been assumed in environments of extreme constraint.

From the examples provided above, I argue that art demonstrates the potential allowance of the transgression of assumed norms of prison masculinity. There is often the institutional assumption of the hypermasculinity of inmates; correctional officers treat all prisoners the same, as dangerous, to delineate boundaries and legitimize security measures (Curtis 2014). There is also often public concern with prison arts programs, with the public believing that dangerous people should be kept confined, in isolation, rather than rewarded with activities (Kornfeld 1997). This assumption of hypermasculinity, however, appears to be imposed by the institution and the public more so than by the inmates themselves.

The constraint of the prison environment provides a unique surrounding for the creation of an art product. By having an understanding of the potential supplies available to the incarcerated, and the environment which surrounds them, the viewer can develop an understanding of the meaning conveyed by the pieces and perhaps

learn something of the artists themselves. By examining the work of the often-underserved population of the incarcerated, we also provide them with a sense of "voice," instead of seeing value only in the work of "artistic geniuses" (Becker 1982; de la Fuente 2007).

I argue that outsider understandings of art do not necessarily work in the context of the prison; what is understood as "feminine" and "masculine" can vary according to context.[15] For example, a heart in American society is generally viewed as feminized, but in the prison environment inmates recognize that it can make a fair amount of money because it can be sent home to loved ones and therefore may not

[15] Previous empirical research has found shifting ideas concerning what types of art are viewed as masculine and as feminine. The ledger art done by the Plains Indians can potentially provide a parallel for prison art. Fort Marion was a military prison in which many Native Americans were held captive, beginning in 1875. Richard Henry Pratt was put in charge of the inmates, and encouraged them to create art as part of his efforts to bring American culture and education to the Indians.

Petersen (1971) explains that the artwork of the Plains Indians is often viewed as "primitive" because it does not adhere to the conventions of European art. Prison art also has the potential to be dismissed because it often employs unorthodox materials and imagery. In both cases as well, the public utilizes master status (either "prisoner" or "Indian") to make assumptions about the creator. Petersen argues that "[t]he Fort Marion art affords a unique opportunity to observe the impact of acculturation upon a group of artists in a limited time and under known conditions" (1971: xi); part of this acculturation, however, is the transition from warrior art being in the domain of men to it being socially acceptable to be produced by women as well. What we have here is both a switch in the gender considered appropriate of the producers of particular kinds of art, along with the material used in its construction.

Historically, Plains Indian women were not allowed to draw representational images (Petersen 1971: 15-16). They used more functional materials, such as rawhide to create storage containers with geometric patterns on them (Penney 1992: 167). Only much later, in the 1890s, did women begin to use representational images in their own work, but in porcupine quill embroidery rather than in sketches. These images stemmed from the warrior images previously only drawn by men, as in their ledger art (187-188). This historical example of women doing artwork previously considered masculine is an interesting parallel to my own work on men doing what can be viewed as traditionally feminine artwork.

automatically label the artist in a negative way. Gender performance is complicated – our understandings of "femininity" are socially constructed, and in fact mean something very different in the confines of the prison, where the presence of a majority of men may actually allow for more fluidity in terms of gender expression. What is considered feminized is completely dependent upon context, and is much more complicated than we might assume in an environment that is perceived as hypermasculine.

Much work remains to be done on this topic. Interviews with the artists can further elucidate the clues provided in the works themselves. It would also be worthwhile to see if there are parallels between art and other aspects of life. Is art the only place in which gender transgression is allowable? That seems to not be the case. For example, sexuality behind bars also involves a huge spectrum; what is deemed "homosexual" on the outside is not necessarily considered the same within the prison (Kunzel 2008). More work should also be done on the media used in the art itself; inmates, and other artists living in constrained environments, often have to use nontraditional supplies, and this may also have an impact on the pieces created.

The topic of prison art also has important policy implications. Prison inmates are seeing their rehabilitative programs cut across the country, due to budget constraints; the formerly incarcerated are legally discriminated against in jobs, housing, and voting (Alexander 2010). Prison artists have a marketable skill. At San Quentin State Prison, the Last Mile program allows inmates to take an entrepreneurship course and propose their own startup; one of their recent graduates

proposed an e-commerce site for prison artists (Shih 2013). In society more broadly, the gender-transgressive behavior of individuals can indicate how both researchers and members of society can encourage the destruction of such rigid gender categories in the future.

Chapter 6: "Research Ethics in the Belly of the Beast: Studying Prison Arts Programs"

Wacquant (2002) calls prison the "belly of the beast" for good reason. The United States is notorious for having the most extensive prison system in the entire world, and the system is tightly controlled. Getting access to any prison is a very long and arduous process. Many bureaucratic agencies are involved in this process, and each has their own set of rules; unfortunately, often these rule sets conflict, making their reconciliation difficult.

Prison arts programs hold a tenuous position in our society. On the one hand, prisons are viewed as places of punishment, where individuals unfit for interacting with the rest of society are socially isolated. In such a space, many people believe that residents should not be given any of the "luxuries" available for the decent members of society, such as television, tasty food, cigarettes, and paint brushes. But on the other hand, since the vast majority of incarcerated individuals will indeed return to society (Hughes and Wilson 2015), it is in the best interest of society to rehabilitate these inmates.

Prison, then, is an extreme case (Kreiner, Hollensbe, and Sheep 2009) with which to explore issues of gender, race, and sexuality. An extreme case provides researchers with the ability to expand theory – if we can observe an often unconscious, nuanced societal process in an exaggerated, heightened way, then we can apply what we learn from the more obvious case to understand the conditions occurring in the

more nuanced, less observable case. Although I believe that studying prisons is important in and of itself, my research is also applicable to a much broader set of issues – gender, race, sexuality, art, and organizations.

In this chapter, I begin by providing a theoretical framework for my discussion of research ethics. I utilize the sociology of organizations, focusing on gender and organizations and then considering how prison is a gendered and raced organization. I then outline some of the foundational work done on research ethics, considering the construction of the human subject and informed consent. I proceed to weigh risks versus benefits in research and focus on prisoners as a "vulnerable population." I then bring all of these fields together by analyzing the overlap of gender, prisons, and the state, considering the cyclical relationship in which state conceptualizations of gender affect prison policies, and societal understandings of gender affect state policies. Then I outline each of the methods used in my dissertation: art analysis, interviews with formerly incarcerated artists, interviews with prison art program staff and volunteers, interviews with current prisoner artists, and participant observation in a prison art program. Then I discuss my experiences in gaining access to this population, and how the various agencies involves in ensuring ethical treatment of this vulnerable population operate. Although research ethics is of the utmost importance, and these agencies are doing their very best to protect these subjects and acknowledge the horrendous wrongs of the past, there are a number of ways that they actually prevent the accrual of additional knowledge that could potentially help both the subjects themselves and society at large.

Theoretical Framework

Prison as a Gendered and Raced Organization

It is important to understand that, when a researcher wants to gain access to a prison, the prison is an organization structured by race and gender. As I discuss in Chapter 1, both prison officials and inmates use gender and race as tools for structuring their everyday lives. The prison "code" encourages hypermasculine performance amongst inmates themselves. The prison is a patriarchal institution built on racism and beliefs about masculinity (Kann 2001; Levit 2001; Sabo, Kupers, and London 2001).

Institutional Review Boards

"Human Subjects" and "Vulnerable Populations"

In order to study prisons and prisoners, contemporary researchers must receive permission from Institutional Review Boards (IRBs). These ethics committees are a relatively new creation, formed in response to historical studies which are now considered atrocities and violations of human rights (Brandt 2009). Institutional Review Boards are committees designed specifically to review proposals of research protocols. They were put in place to ensure that the research subject is not being taken advantage of, and is providing informed consent for their participation. The concept of "informed consent" means obtaining approval from individuals who have been asked to participate in a research study, before their part in the study begins. The idea is that individuals know all of the possible risks and benefits of the research before determining whether they should participate.

IRBs provide multiple degrees of review, depending upon the specific research study. When a proposal presents "minimal harm," an expedited review is possible. Full committee review is left for proposals that have a higher chance of causing harm to subjects ("significantly greater than minimal risk"), and is immediately used any time a "vulnerable population" is being studied. Prisoners, children, pregnant women, and the mentally disabled are all part of the "vulnerable" category. These individuals are not seen as having the same power that other individuals do.

A specific person, known as a "prisoner representative," is assigned to represent the interests of prisoners when research protocols indicate that prisoners will be a part of the sample in the study (Gostin, Vanchieri, and Pope 2007). This individual is supposed to be an expert in the field, attuned to the needs and risks of prisoners as research subjects. In my case, a prisoner representative was indeed present at the full committee review; however, he did not work primarily with prison inmates, nor was formerly incarcerated.

As Epstein (2007) demonstrates, medical researchers have never been unanimous in their views on what populations should be studied (privilege versus vulnerability), how generalizable such results are (generalizability versus specificity), and how similar different social groups are (sameness versus difference) (31). Determination of "significantly greater" or "minimal" also requires some amount of subjectivity. And there is some concern about whether subjects are required to provide written consent, or whether they are permitted to provide verbal consent. It might seem logical for inmates, particularly those who are concerned with privacy and

confidentiality, to not have to provide their signature and name on a piece of paper; however, vulnerable populations are required to provide written consent. More recently, there has been concern regarding the overreliance on informed consent, rather than considering the risks and benefits of the study (Emanuel et al. 2000 and Kahn, Mastroianni, and Sugarman 1998 qtd. in Gostin, Vanchieri, and Pope 2007).

Potential Risks vs. Probable Benefits

Much of the work of Institutional Review Boards is to weigh individual and collective risks and benefits. In a 2014 talk I attended, a visiting professor discussed his ethnographic research with those living in extreme poverty. Considering the ethical implications of such research, he posited the question, "Did I make things worse by being there?" As an audience member brought up, this question addresses the issue of *individual* harm versus benefit – did the research subjects have harm inflicted upon them by being watched, chatted up, and followed around by an academic, a graduate student? An alternate question could be, "What benefits does the world of academia, or even public policy, receive by being there?" This question addresses the issue of *collective* harm versus benefit – does the public benefit by having a subset of the population living in extreme poverty observed? Of course this can be weighed, as individual harm versus collective benefit, but it could also be posed as another scenario – by choosing to *not* do a study, is the public good losing out to salvage a few individuals from minor discomfort? As the audience member pointed out, that kind of question would likely be posed in a society not as individualistic as ours – Americans have a tendency to privilege the individual over the collective, and many people feel

that it is wrong to us to put the collective good above an individual. This way of looking at research may indeed be evidence of our own ethnocentrism.

The speaker's question was posed after the fact, however, once he had completed his research and was reflecting back on the experience – the IRB considers these questions before any research takes place, so they ask these questions in the hypothetical. Of course, the members of the IRB can rely on past research and their own experiences, but they cannot know for sure the outcome of any particular study, or any risk-benefit ratio.

In the IRB protocol for my study, I argued that there would be probable benefit (at the very least, the creation or re-establishment of what has been a defunct-for-years but very successful prison art program) with very little risk (maybe someone would be annoyed at sitting for over an hour), but the IRB seems to assume that researchers are taking advantage of research subjects.

Prison Research and Prisoners as Vulnerable Subjects

One of the biggest quandaries in studying prisoners is that there has been concern over the lack of incorporation of test subjects who do not fit the perceived "standard," the thirty-something white male, while at the same time others are concerned that captive populations have been overly used as test subjects because of their easy accessibility, need to please their captors, and lack of power. Historically, prisoners have been exploited as research subjects, as they were in fact viewed as ideal subjects because of their confinement. Pharmaceutical drugs, cosmetics, and more were tested on prisoners. Some of these test subjects later filed lawsuits. During the

1940s, prisoners at Stateville Penitentiary in Illinois were bitten by mosquitoes carrying the malaria virus, and then were given antimalarial drugs to test their effects. The study was run by the University of Chicago Department of Medicine, the U.S. Army, and the State Department.

Much of the concern about prisoners as vulnerable subjects is that they may be coerced to participate in a study. The worry is that, even if inmates provide consent, their participation is not entirely voluntary since they are not free subjects. How do we measure degrees of consent though?

There are a number of populations overrepresented in prisons, providing an additional concern regarding "vulnerability": those who are racial and ethnic minorities, gender non-conforming, poor, and those without much formal education.

One of the other issues is that prisons are designed to punish, and research studies can be at odds with this intended goal. As Gostin, Vanchieri, and Pope (2007) write, "…correctional institutions are closed facilities that are designed to confine and punish. Medical care is designed to diagnose, comfort, and cure. These are mutually incompatible purposes from which flow many of the ethical dilemmas of care and, secondarily, of research in these settings" (Anno and Dubler 2001 qtd. in Gostin, Vanchieri, and Pope 2007).

Incentives also do not operate the same way for incarcerated individuals and free subjects. Incentives that seem mundane on the outside have a new meaning, and new value, on the inside, especially when they are not regularly available for the prisoners. This is one of the reasons a requirement of IRBs is that parole be unaffected

by participation in any study. However, this requirement can be very difficult to fulfill when the researcher does not intend for the study to have any effect yet cannot really be sure there will be no effects. For example, if the study is seen as something positive by the subjects, it may have the effect of fostering a sense of pride or wellbeing in the inmate. I would argue that it is against the spirit of human subjects protection law for the researcher to tell subjects that they cannot notify anyone of their participation, or that an activity that might help them earn parole cannot be recorded.

Gender, Prison, and the State

Social understandings of gender, race, and sexuality influence, and are influenced by, state organizations, such as the prison. In turn, these social understandings affect the policies implanted in prisons. This analysis provides the background for the creation of IRB policies. As Epstein (2007) writes, "…the operations of state organizations crucially reflect and reshape the social dynamics of these forms of difference. We should consider how distinctive gender and racial regimes become crystallized within state agencies, as well as how the state actors help to regulate the operations of gender and race" (26). Prison is an agency of the state, and therefore reflects, and is a site of, the institutionalization of state beliefs about gender, race, and sexuality. For example, prisons, as well as punishment regimes, are sex-segregated (Lawston and Lucas 2011). There was also legislation passed recently to address prison rape, the first of its kind – the Prison Rape Elimination Act of 2003. No previous legislative moves were made to deal with sexual assault of prison inmates, so the passage of this act is indicative of society, and the state, considering

prison rape a social problem that needed to be addressed. Part of what this Act accomplished was create a new commission, called the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission, which was tasked with data gathering. Here we see how the passage of such an act can shape the way the state and the public label an issue, and can change the structure of the government by creating new agencies. It also changed the way the prison system works slightly, by mandating that the U.S. Department of Justice prioritize the reduction of prison rape.

Understandings of gender, specifically how men behave, influence the policies used within prisons themselves, and also how individual correctional officers treat the inmates whom they are overseeing (Curtis 2014). Correctional officers often view inmates as dangerous, regardless of their particular personal characteristics. This provides a sort of "shield" for them, a way of standardizing everyone for purposes of safety and helps correctional officers maintain their guard. Understandings of race also influence these policies. One way that we can see different conceptualizations of dangerous masculinity is through arrest rates for minority men, which vastly exceed those for white men (Alexander 2012).

We can also see how the state defines sexuality through the incarceration of transgender inmates. CeCe McDonald, who received a 41-month sentence for the stabbing death of Dean Schmitz outside a bar, is a recent case; although McDonald identifies as a woman, she was incarcerated in a men's prison. The state's role is apparent: "…the state will make its own determination of McDonald's gender, an assessment that will involve 'any and all collateral documentation and a physical and

psychological evaluation,' said [Minnesota corrections spokesperson Sarah] Russell" (Simons and Walsh 2012).

Although the concern is often that gay and transgender inmates have a greater likelihood of being attacked, and there indeed is widespread homophobia in men's prisons, others report that transgender inmates are appreciated in prison because they fill feminine roles in prison facilities. There is also often a respect for women within prisons, at least in a certain sense, with those who have been convicted of crimes against women and children being lowest on the prison hierarchy (Kupers 2001). Of course, ideas about what makes a man truly a "man" differ somewhat, in part by race, as discussed by multiple of my interviewees. Gender is also always raced.

Prison reform can also be brought by inmates themselves, in a show of agency. One show of this was in the recent hunger strike by prisoners in California prisons, to protest the usage of solitary confinement, especially in Pelican Bay State Prison (Gross 2014). This is another example of how it can work to the prison institution's advantage to maintain race and gang lines. The hunger strike was organized by alleged leaders of four warring gangs: Sitawa Jamaa, of the Black Guerrilla Family; Todd Ashker, of the Aryan Brotherhood; Arturo Castellanos, of the Mexican Mafia; and Antonio Guillen, of Nuestra Familia. These four individuals were able to mobilize a statewide strike of 30,000 inmates. In an interview with Terry Gross on NPR's *Fresh Air*, journalist Benjamin Wallace-Wells explains how the four men came together: "The impact for Ashker was to kind of highlight that they were members of a prisoner

class, that the racial divisions among them were artificial and had been coached along by the guards" (2014).

There are also changes introduced by or directed at the institution itself. Multiple prison staff members have talked about changes that have occurred since their tenures began. One prison staff member told me that the prison I conducted my research at handles cases of "Gender Identity Disorder," something that was instituted in the relatively recent past. However, "gender identity disorder" was replaced with "gender dysphoria" by the American Psychiatric Association in 2013. It is interesting that prisons often are unsure how to handle gender non-conforming individuals, even though they are disproportionately incarcerated. Part of what this uncertainty may stem from is the reliance on gender and racial boundaries to maintain the standardized view of inmates' "dangerous masculinity" and racial segregation.

Methodology

I triangulated multiple methods to collect data for this project: an analysis of art works created by incarcerated men; interviews with prison art program staff members and volunteers, formerly incarcerated artists, and currently incarcerated artists; and participation observation in an art program that I created. To receive permission for each of these data collection methods, I had to submit protocols to two human subjects review boards. I had previously planned to also conduct written interviews with currently incarcerated artists, to be able to interview prisoners across California; however, the approval process for this was too huge of an undertaking. See

the Appendix for a full discussion of the steps I took to secure approval for my program.

Art Analysis

I began with an analysis of publicly available works of art created by men who are incarcerated; this was the first step in my data collection process because I was able to receive IRB approval for it first, as I was not required to obtain approval from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, nor consent from individual incarcerated artists. It was imperative that the artworks be publicly available, or I would have been required to identify individual artists and collect informed consent forms from each of them – even in cases in which only a first name is listed for the artist, or their location is absent.

For the art analysis, I collected a portfolio of publicly available artworks produced by incarcerated men. My final portfolio has 264 works of art. I found these pieces by searching "prison art" in Google. I selected materials that were publicly available because that meant that the artist needed to give consent – the artist was aware that their works could potentially be viewed by a wide range of audiences, including other inmates; prison staff members; their family, friends, and community on the outside; and the whole of society potentially. These artists must then be confident about their works, which they are willing to display for others to see. I assumed that meant that, if it indeed was so important to maintain a "hypermasculine" appearance within the prison, they would not be likely to consent to release works that might conflict with such an identity. So it could potentially be a conservative estimate

of the amount of gender transgression occurring in prison art creation if I were indeed to find "feminized" images and media used in these works.

Once I culled the works from these various websites and established the portfolio, I coded each image with a variety of labels. I created umbrella categories regarding the image itself, the medium in which the work was created, the artist, and the institution in which the artist was housed. Unfortunately, there was missing data at times – since these different sources had varying amounts of information about the work and artist, I had to use whatever was available. In order to determine the sex of an artist if the institution was not stated, or they were not otherwise identified, I relied on names; when names were non-gender-specific, I did not include the work in my portfolio. However, I have complete data on the image and media, on which my art analysis is focused.

To create the categories and codes, I relied on the typology created by a pioneering work on gender and jail wall art. Yogan and Johnson (2006) conducted a study of jail art, in which they argue that the art drawn on the walls of jail cells is a form of communication. Their typology includes graffiti (words), secular common images, religious images, fantasy images (non-violent), hate/violent images, cartoon-like images, life-like images of body parts, and scenes involving buildings/rooms. They find marked differences in the art produced by men in prison: men produced all of the "angry" images, while women created all of the "optimistic" pieces. To explain this, they utilize gender socialization theory, drawing from cognitive development theory, social learning theory, gender schema theory. This is a useful approach, but

they assume a gender binary, rather than looking at variation within each gender. This is absolutely essential within the prison environment, given that it is homosocial and that gender is so salient within a hyper-policed space. They also cannot determine the race of the artist, nor the crime committed.

Interviews with Formerly Incarcerated Artists and Prison Art Program Staff and Volunteers

In the second stage of my project, I interviewed men who were previously incarcerated artists and the individuals who run these programs: the program staff members and the volunteers they oversee. I began this part second because I was unable to secure IRB approval for the entire project at once; I had to break up my protocol into sections. The art analysis was approved first, as it involved the least amount of human subject involvement. The interviews with formerly incarcerated artists also had a less arduous process because the formerly incarcerated are not considered to be "vulnerable subjects" if they are no longer under the watch of the State; however, individuals who are on parole are still considered to be vulnerable subjects. Overall, I have a sample size of 21 for this portion of the dissertation (8 formerly incarcerated men and 13 program staff members or volunteers). I completed these interviews in 2014. Each interview was semi-structured and lasted approximately 1.5 to 2 hours.

Each of these individuals had worked in a state prison in California, and some had visited multiple California prisons (and in one case, a program staff member had

overseen the implementation of art programs in both state and federal facilities throughout the United States).

They engaged in a variety of programs (some state-funded, some volunteer-led), such as painting and drawing (acrylics, watercolor, pencil), bookbinding, block printing, music, etc. Many had been involved for years. The formerly incarcerated men had spent from five to twenty-one years (an average of twelve years among the eight of them) as participants, and the prison arts program workers had spent one to twenty-five years (an average of nineteen years among the thirteen of them) as volunteers or paid staff members, in various prison art programs. The majority of these individuals had spent time in multiple prisons. Therefore, they could speak to not only what they saw as their own work as artists, but also to the experiences of the other members of their classes. I spoke with each of the respondents about their own art practices, their beliefs about prison masculinities, and their experiences specifically within the prison art studio as it compared to their other prison experiences. Each of my respondents has been given a pseudonym to protect their confidentiality.

The majority of the art program staff were involved in this work for decades, so they had the ability to observe multiple cohorts of artists, and to see artists grow over time. Many of them also worked in multiple prisons, providing them with an additional vantage point in order to speak to what they witnessed.

Of course, there are limitations to my sample. The formerly incarcerated men were recalling their experiences while in prison, which might have been a difficult time for them. However, the men in my sample were often pleased to have the

opportunity to discuss their artwork, which they saw as a sign of their progress and their potential for redemption, despite their awareness that many in the public had labeled them as nothing more than "criminals." Many of the men brought their art portfolio to share with me as well, and explained their creative process. The art program staff members were also often remembering their previous experiences, which they may not have recalled entirely accurately. They also sometimes acknowledged that they relied on what inmate program participants had told them, rather than first-hand observation. However, many of these respondents had worked in prisons for years, and even decades, and so felt competent to speak to a majority of the issues. For these reasons, I decided to complement these interviews with interviews with currently incarcerated artists, and with participant observation in a prison art program.

Interviews with Current Inmate Artists

To conduct interviews with currently incarcerated artists, I had to obtain approval from both the UC San Diego Institutional Review Board and the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Office of Research (who then also referred me to the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects, the state-wide human subjects review board). The purpose of conducting interviews with current inmates was to get the insights of those currently engaging in art creation in prison. Although former prisoners can reflect on their experiences in the past as prison artists, there has been research done that indicates that individuals may not always remember details of their past experiences, and may sometimes even incorrectly remember what

happened. Current inmates can speak to the process of art creation, and the kinds of decisions they make along the way.

There were 31 interviews done with current prison artists. Some of these inmates had participated in formal arts programs, while others had not had the chance, since the Arts-in-Corrections program had been cut. All of these inmates were housed in a Southern California prison, and were of varying security levels. These men ranged in age, from 23 to 74. They were also of varying races and ethnicities. Because this research took place inside of a prison, it required a very high degree of review by the IRB. Interestingly, the formal, official processes were not always the source of delays in my data collection; sometimes the issue occurred in how such processes were implemented.

Tape recording the interviews was very important to me, as I wanted to make sure that I could use direct quotes and in the proper context (and hear the inflection in each individual's voice), as inmates already generally have less voice than the average member of society. But the process to obtain approval to use a tape recorder even just inside the prison itself (completely apart from the process required by the university's IRB) is an arduous one. I first received some flack from a prison administrator, who told me I would need to get approval from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation's (CDCR) Office of Public and Employee Communications (OPEC), although they only deal with the media. I informed him that I do not deal with OPEC, and that I had already obtained approval from the Office of Research, but he said I would not be allowed in without OPEC approval. I went ahead and spoke

with OPEC, who told me there was no need for their approval. However, when I informed the prison administration that I was cleared to use a tape recorder by OPEC, I learned that another prison official had outright denied the tape recorder of her own accord. I again explained that my tape recorder was in fact allowed and wrote an email directly to the Warden, who signed the memo to approve its use. However, when I brought in the memo for the second round of interviews, the officer at the entrance told me my memo would not be accepted because it did not have the exact dates and times I was approved to come in with the recorder. The Warden had purposely kept the memo open because I have to arrange the dates and times of interviews the week before with the Lieutenant on the yard, and it would be very difficult to get a new memo each week (and I usually have to give the Warden a week's lead time to sign any memo). So although I had obtained approval to use a tape recorder weeks prior to the interview, there were numerous roadblocks along the way and I was unable to actually begin the interviews with currently incarcerated artists until much later.

When I originally designed the interviews, I intended them to be completely confidential. Of course, the prison administration would know who was in the room with me, the clerk who created the ducats (passes used to allow inmates to move about their facilities for programs, appointments, etc.) would know, etc., but the content of each particular interviewee's responses would be anonymous. However, on the first day that I came in to do the interviews, I was told at the entrance to wait a moment, as a prison administrator was on his way. I was surprised, as no one had told me that anyone needed any further information. However, I assumed that perhaps he wanted to

inspect my tape recorder, as it took a long time to secure its approval. However, when he walked up, he explained that he would be coming in with me and escorting me to the yard where I conducted my interviews. For some reason, they had arranged an escort from the yard as well, which is very unusual, as I have permission to walk unescorted throughout the prison. I told the administrator that the interviews were supposed to be confidential, and he said that he could listen in whenever he wanted and that nothing there was confidential. He was also adamant that I was not allowed to ask about anyone's crime; this was fine, because I did not intend to ask anyone, but seemed a bit strange, as this was not something that the Office of Research seemed very concerned about. The concerns of the various entities within and outside the prison often conflict, as demonstrated by the above scenario.

The administrator never actually came in to the interview, but instead brought in the first interviewee and had him sign a Media Release Form. This was the only interviewee who he did this for however; I brought a stack of media release forms with me and had each inmate sign one just in case, but I was not checked on at all after that point. However, in each of the first ten interviews, an officer sat and listened. At some points I was glad that an officer was there; at other points, I was furious, because I was worried that it would change the respondents' answers. I was most upset during the first interview, when the interviewee said that he would never be called "Mr." in prison, that officers always referred to him as "inmate." The officer spoke out, saying "That's not true. I call you [last name].'" I could not believe that this officer had the audacity to do that – it made me concerned that the interviewee would no longer feel

comfortable speaking his mind. I thought I did a decent job flashing the officer a look that indicated that he was not welcome to participate but that I did not make a scene, but the inmate later approached me in the art class and acknowledged that he was surprised that there was anyone else there. The only other times that an officer intervened was when an inmate started talking about his crime; the officer told him to stop. Another interviewee seemed to talk to and look at the officer quite a bit. He would say something and turn to the officer saying, "You know how it is." After the tenth interview, no officers ever sat in on an interview again, so twenty-one of the interviews were conducted one-one-one with the incarcerated artists.

One issue that I had not accounted for was that some inmates took issue with when and where the interviews were being conducted. For the most part, the interviews happened in the college classroom on the yard, which is located near the gym where we do our mural painting each Monday and Wednesday. One Sunday evening I had an inmate, who I had scheduled for 7:15 pm, refuse to show up for the interview. I was surprised, since we had agreed upon the time. I heard the officer getting obviously annoyed and frustrated on the phone; he said, "Tell him he's full of shit!" to the officer in CO's housing unit. I later learned that he found out he would have to come to the area of the yard where the program office is; many of the inmates associate this area with snitching, or telling on each other, during the evening hours.

The IRB cannot foresee many such issues that occur once a researcher is inside the prison, where even multiple sets of rules are used in different situations.

Participant Observation in a Prison Arts Program

Much of my interest in ethnographic research is that I feel like it is required to truly attempt to grasp what is going on in a population that is often speculated about, but that often does not actually get to represent itself to the general public regularly. Wacquant (2002) called for more prison ethnographies in this era of mass incarceration, and I want to be a researcher who adds to this very important field.

California used to have a thriving arts program within its prisons, known as Arts-in-Corrections. However, AIC was partially de-funded in 2003 and entirely dismantled in 2010. This meant that by the time I began my dissertation research in 2012, there were only a few remaining prison arts programs staggered around the state (more were created after I began my work, when the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation again released some funding for AIC). Therefore, if I wanted to see the inner workings of a prison arts program on a continual basis, I would need to create the program myself.

I began the process in 2012 and had the first day of the visual arts program in early 2014. I have now logged over 450 hours of participant observation research working with twenty inmates on a mobile mural project and then working with more than forty inmates in two drawing, painting, and sculpting classes.

Creating a prison art program is by no means an easy process. First of all, I do not have a degree in art practice. I create jewelry and have extensive experience in metalworking, but I do not specialize in visual arts or art history as subject disciplines. However, the inmates have an extensive amount of knowledge among them and

ultimately I decided that the arts program could absolutely used skilled artists from the free world in addition to my own experience, but it could also heavily rely on the expertise available within the prison itself.

The prison arts program ended up taking far longer than I had hoped to get off the ground. Part of this was practical: I needed to find volunteers, have them undergo their training and orientation, find a name, secure funding, etc., but much of it was related to my research, and needing to obtain approval from multiple organizations. Thankfully, the Warden was incredibly patient in waiting for me to get this approval.

However, other issues were circumstantial to my project. The long-time Community Resources Manager retired at the end of 2013; he was incredibly supportive of the arts program, as is the new Community Resources Manager (I have now worked with four individuals in this position), but it was difficult to re-hash past discussions and get on the same page in the same way. One of the CRMs also told me that the Department of Mental Health had mandated that arts and music programming be provided, and that now I needed to incorporate that into my teaching method. Since I was providing a program for free, I thought that I would be able to start right away, rather than wait to hear (and gain approval) from additional departments before beginning. Thankfully I never actually had to consult with the mental health department, but discussions such as these were a regular occurrence and delayed the process overall. When I asked to talk about details about the program (the first yard we would start on, forms for donations, etc.), I was told this would be done later. But after two years of planning, I was ready to start and did not want to wait any longer.

However, I still had to wait to hear from the UCSD IRB again, after the Full Committee Review re-examined the revised documents that they requested.

I of course ended up receiving approval from each of the entities involved, but it was a long and arduous process, which ended up piquing my interest in terms of understanding what "ethical" research entails overall, and what this means specifically in the prison environment.

Ethics

Because prisoners are automatically identified as a vulnerable population by human research protections programs, all aspects of my research immediately had to go to a Full Committee Review by the university's Institutional Review Board. All in all, it took me over two years (2011 to 2013) to receive approval for every stage of my project.

I also had to get approval from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) Office of Research. They have their own formal process, which involves sending potential researchers to the Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS). I obtained approval from both agencies for this project.

I originally submitted all aspects of my project to the IRB and had my proposal rejected. Because I quickly realized that the requirements of the IRB were much more stringent than I had originally anticipated, I decided to create separate "stages" for my project. The first stage involved the art analysis, which I envisioned as not including any human subjects. Although I wanted to incorporate artworks from conversations with individuals, from art shows, etc., I was told that I would have to obtain written

approval from every individual artist for it to be used in my research or reproduced. Individuals in prisons move around constantly and are paroled every day. Oftentimes artworks would not even be signed or would only have a pen name instead of the artist's legal name. Since this is a near-impossible task, I decided to only use artworks that were publicly available, either published in book, pictured on online prison art galleries, or featured on television shows or documentary films. I made the argument that the individual artists had granted access to their work to the entire world by allowing it to be used in these various media, and that it should follow that the artwork could then be used for research purposes for my dissertation.

I made modifications to each stage of my project based upon the requirements of the university IRB and of the Department of Corrections. Some of these changes were indeed very important in ensuring ethics in research design, but some seemed contradictory or in fact contrary to what sociologists intend to do with their research.

Findings

The Difficulty in Gaining Access

It took me two years to obtain permission to set foot inside a prison and conduct research. I was able to go in constantly as a volunteer, but not as a researcher. There is a very strict formal process involved in gaining access to prisoners as research subjects, which from the outside is a very good thing – it should require effort to prove that a researcher's study will not harm powerless individuals. However, I believe this is the very issue – prisoners are viewed as powerless (and therefore

lacking agency). Most of the decisions that affect what the prisoner as research subject are made by review boards and the state. The issue for the inmate is that the state may have a different goal in mind than that held by the inmate. If prisoner compliance is prioritized by the state, then maintaining gender and racial boundaries may be encouraged (as seen historically for both gender and race, as discussed above). But research (and specifically prison arts programs) may not share the same goal. Prison arts programs often encourage racial integration (Brewster 2010), and allow participants to drop the "hypermasculine imperative" (Pecenco 2014).

Such approval processes also limit the research itself. For example, I decided to not ask a number of questions that I would have liked to, because I thought they would raise the eyebrows of the IRB and CPHS reviewers, and would therefore delay my approval even further. I wanted to ask individuals about the length of their sentences, and what their convictions were, to see if the ideas about prison hierarchies fit for their own personal experiences as well. I also wanted to ask some personal demographic information, such as how the inmates defined themselves in terms of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, religion, etc., but having personally identifying information would have created an increased concern for confidentiality and privacy. I do indeed believe privacy is of the utmost importance to research subjects, but in my project I could not even ask if the inmates wanted their names used – I had to provide a pseudonym for all subjects, even in cases where it might have been to their benefit to have their names used, such as in promoting their own artwork, and when subjects told me they would like their name used. I would very much prefer

to be able to give credit to the artists in my project, and to be able to list this as a potential benefit for my subjects, but was worried that this would lessen my chances of being able to conduct the study in the first place.

Another issue arose in the carrying out of my research design. I had originally wanted, and received funding, to provide each of my interviewees with $10 to compensate them for their time. I thought that would be enough money to provide an incentive for inmates, who receive sometimes only pennies per hour while working in prison industries (if they have a job at all), many of whom are indigent, and many of whom come from poor socioeconomic backgrounds, yet not enough to get someone to participate against their will (if they really did not want to join the study). To maintain fairness, I wanted to provide the same for the other interviewees in my sample – the formerly incarcerated artists and the prison art program staff members and volunteers. I received approval from the IRB to provide this compensation for all of my research subjects, but the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation Office of Research informed me that no inmates are allowed to receive compensation for research purposes. So if the job of the researcher is to maintain fairness for all research subjects, I was prevented from doing so. And if the research subject is supposed to receive compensation in return for the potential for some risks, prisoners are not allowed to do so. This was also an issue mentioned by Gostin, Vanchieri, and Pope (2007); out of the six Departments of Correction interviewed, five do not allow prisoners to receive monetary or other forms of compensation for participating in research studies. The cited concern is that there is not equity among prisoner and non-

prisoner participants in such studies; not even proportionate compensation is allowed (since inmates earn much less money per hour, perhaps they could receive less money for their participation as well).

One of the other issues that arises is that the term "prisoner" is used to standardize all individuals who are incarcerated, despite their diversity. Individuals have varying amounts of power within prison, but the usage of this term and its automatic classification as "vulnerable" serves to pretend that such diversity does not exist. As quoted by Epstein (2007), Dr. Bernadine Healy, former director of the National Institute of Health, stated, "The orthodoxy of sameness and the orthodoxy of the mean, which has dominated much of the thinking in medical science…often impaired our attitude toward clinical research in those days" (1). What both Healy and Epstein are referring to is the tendency for many researchers to use the white, male, 35-year-old man as the "standard" subject (and standard researcher, at that) who can be used to extrapolate for everyone else. Historically, drugs have only been tested on such men, without regard for the fact that reactions may be very different in different populations.

In fact, the usage of paperwork itself can be daunting to individuals who feel disempowered for various reasons. I received varying responses when I asked individuals to sign the consent forms (informed consent and tape recording consent) for my study. A potential respondent who I approached looked very wary when I pulled out the forms; I began to explain to him what each form was requesting, but he told me he would need to "take some time" to read it very carefully "to see what it's

really asking." He seemed very distrustful of paperwork asking for his signature. However, another individual, who had been incarcerated with him and later told me that he was good friends with him, did not even glance at the form before signing – he said to me, "Oh yeah, we had to sign forms all the time in there [while in prison]." He seemed very comfortable with the consent process, and did not seem distrustful at all of paperwork such as this. Here is an example of the diversity within the "prisoner" or "formerly incarcerated" population, that is often unaccounted for in blanket descriptions of "vulnerable prisoners."

Discussion

While ethics committees are absolutely a step in the right direction, and are preventing many of the atrocities committed by researchers in the past, there is also potentially an issue in the formulaic way in which IRBs generally work. Ethics committees do indeed take individual characteristics into account, and have a personalized character, as members of the committees do read over individual proposals, but the generic language and general understanding of practices prevents potentially innovative, creative research, that might also enact positive change within a research sample. These policies are created within the framework of the state and institution. Therefore, we have three potentially different goals from the different parties: those of the inmate/research subject, those of the prison institution, and those of the ethics committee. Although arts programs may provide benefits to inmates

overall, research on such benefits may conflict with the policies promoted by the institution itself.

Part of what makes prisoners a "vulnerable population" in the first part is that they are disenfranchised in numerous ways – many of their rights are taken from them, they are subjugated through racial discrimination (and institutional racism in our laws), are often indigent, etc. Byrne et al. (2005) notes that lack of autonomy among prisoners often contributes to violence within prisons (qtd. in Gibbons and Katzenbach 2006: 22). To ensure that prisoners are not further disenfranchised, they should be able to make some of these decisions for themselves. Granted, it is of course the duty of the researcher to ensure that each and every single potential research subject understands their rights as a research subject, and understands what is being asked of them as a research subject, especially since many prison inmates do not have extensive formal education (and some of them are even functionally illiterate), but we should also not assume that they cannot answer certain questions because they are too sensitive, or risky, etc. Perhaps this is a difference in terms of type of research – social science questions may cause individuals some discomfort and social alienation, while scientific research may indeed cause physical harm. But again, research may not move forward at the rate it might because IRBs make decisions for subjects before the subjects ever see them (Epstein 2007).

This is not to say that all progress is good progress – one would be hard-pressed to say that the famous shock experiment (to study obedience to authority) conducted by Stanley Milgram was justified. That experiment indeed taught the

scientific community, and the entire world, something incredibly important, that we regularly use today – that "regular" people blindly obey authority (and their peers) and can be told to do horrendous things, and actually execute them. However, we know that many participants of the Milgram experiment were left with psychological scars. This is certainly evidence that experiments such as this are harmful to research subjects and should not be carried out.

However, there have been multiple replications of the Milgram experiment, considering the potential risk for harm. The "justified" point on the scale is a very tricky one – how do the members of an IRB determine at one point the world learns "enough" to justify some slight discomfort for subjects? What kind of compensation is appropriate for them, to balance out the potential risk they face during the experiment? What and whose goals are we meeting by conducting research? These are the kinds of questions we must ask ourselves as we move forward in conducting the best research possible while protecting human subjects.

Chapter 7: Conclusion: "From the Inside Out: Connections Between the Prison and the Outside World"

In this dissertation, I have presented an overview of what arts creation looks like in the prison environment, and the implications of involvement in a prison arts program for participants. Overall, I argue that prison arts programs provide safe spaces for incarcerated men to reduce the salience of the hypermasculine imperative and replace it with an artist identity.

Each chapter urges us to reconsider our assumptions about the "prisoner" and his identity. They all also suggest that art acts as a catalyst for the adoption of an alternate identity. Not only does this encourage inmates to question the hypermasculine identity often imposed on them, it also mitigates other identity boundaries, such as race, class, sexual orientation, age, and disability, that are deemed important in prison. Art itself encourages this by asking inmates to participate in self-discovery and team building; in order to protect the sanctity of the art program, the men are willing to overcome what the socialization by both prison staff and other inmates has suggested is necessary. As arts program participant Brandon wrote in a reflection response one evening,

> Not only has [the arts program] helped my talents as an artist, it has helped my ability to work with various categories & abilities of people. I have grown as an artist & as a person in the short time that I've attended [the program] & look forward to growing more. My heart has grown fond of the art community knowing now that so many others care for not just my art but about us inmates as people. Thank you Laura for this life changing experience.

Arts making itself encourages introspection, which can help inmates in expressing themselves; as Roberto says, art allows him to be "judged by none, understood by all."

Participation in an arts program seems to magnify the positive effects of art making. This is especially important in the prison environment, where many areas of the prison are deemed hostile by inmates. Therefore, arts programs everywhere encourage participants to share with one another, learn new techniques, work with professional teachers, collaborate with others, etc., but in prisons one sees all of these positive effects compounded (since collaboration between inmates of different races, for example, is not allowed [by both other inmates and the prison staff] to happen in public spaces) and sharing emotion is frowned upon. Rex wrote,

> Much of the time in prison, many men, myself included, isolate themselves emotionally from others as a protective measure. No one wants to be hurt or exposed to danger unnecessarily. This has a deep impact on our ability to connect with others, to understand the impact of the crimes we have committed on others, and to have empathy for them. This program has helped me to reconnect with the type of personal expression that allows me to understand what I took from the victims of my own crime. I took this form of expression, of creating something of beauty for others to enjoy, from another human being.

Program teachers and coordinators never bring up crimes that the participants committed. However, participants are able to apply their artistic practice to that and other areas of their lives.

As program participant Andrew put it, "I wasn't sure I could make art (drawing/painting), but with the patience & support of our instructors I have gained a lot more confidence in my art as well as being less self-conscious about my inner self and artistic expression. I never expected to be treated like a human being in here, but I

have found through these programs that not everyone in free society will treat me like an animal." A prison arts program is very much about art, but it is also very much about being human – and removing many of the labels that divide people in prison and replacing them with the "art creator" identity. Hann responded, "I'm a lifer halfway thru my 18th year of incarceration. Before discovering and allowing art to enter my realm I lived a mundane existence of hopelessness. Art is hope. Art is the key to the locks that shackle and bind me. Art is the pure and clean half of my heart. Art saved my life. I am an artist." He very much identifies as an artist and sees this as a way to separate himself from his previous time as a "prisoner."

Art puts the prison back into the world; "outside" and "inside" begin to blend and overlap. It is this power of art that suggests that these findings have both theoretical and practical implications. Not only can sociologists learn more about the performance of gender in prisons and use this extreme case to apply it to society overall, but we can also use it as public sociologists to make practical suggestions to prison and government officials about growing prison arts programs.

Theoretical Implications

Gender inequality is embedded in our society. It occurs on multiple levels, from the individual to the interactional to the institutional. The understanding of the prisoner as masculine leads to policies that support hypermasculine behavioral expectations. The "doing gender" approach recognizes that gender is performed by and embodied in people. Gender is often done unconsciously, which means that it is

constantly reproduced. This becomes a major component of our identities. And yet gender has the potential to be "undone" as well. Understandings of gender can, and do, change over time. One example related to my argument is Ely and Meyerson's analysis of oil rigs. They recognized that the creation of an alternate focus within the hypermasculine environment of the oil rig paved the way for the undoing of gender. When the owner of the rig implemented a safety initiative, emphasizing the collective good. Workers began to wear fallibility as a badge of honor, acknowledge their own and ask about others' feelings, and seek out help. Ultimately, they discovered that this shift in emphasis led to the devaluing of stereotypically masculine traits. Arts creation, and especially the art studio, within the hypermasculine prison environment performs a similar function.

My approach also highlights how objects, as well as people, are gendered. I emphasize the importance of visual sociology in recognizing what can be learned from an object about its creator. Examining the artists and the artworks provide a more holistic view of the art world (Becker 1982) that exists for prison artists. Such an approach stems from the cultural diamond (Griswold 1986), analyzing the relationships among social context, cultural object, creators, and audience. The works of art produced by the incarcerated artists are central to their understandings of their identities.

The total institution works to strip inmates of their personal identities (Goffman 1961), but many of the arts program participants employ their own agency to foster the creation of an alternative artist identity. This identity, in contrast to that of

the "criminal," is one that has the ability for redemption. They display their artworks proudly, often bringing to class items that they have been working on independently in their cells and displaying them on the tables in front of their work spaces. They use this as validation of their artist identity, often using the "not-so-total" aspects of the prison (Farrington 1992), including my presence there as an arts program provider in the first place. They wait to hear my and the other instructors' critiques of their work and clamor for feedback on how their creations are received when put on display to the general public. The various art markets in which the inmate artists are embedded also serve to legitimate their artist identity. They encourage the artist to consider their processes of creation, and how they can possibly convey messages about themselves as people beyond their prisoner master status.

They also rely on one another within their artistic community, pushing each other to overcome any blocks in their artistic process and applauding one another for presenting their artistic selves. They discourage negative behaviors in the art studio environment, recognizing that they must protect the sanctity of the space. Ultimately, they keep each other accountable for performing their artistic identities. Just as Ely and Meyerson (2010) discovered in the oil rigs, a sense of collective identity developed.

An intersectional perspective provides a more complex picture of the "prisoner" identity, recognizing how the doing of gender varies according to various axes. Despite all of these variations, the artist identity encapsulates almost all of the program participants.

Overall, my research confirms past arguments that prison arts programs provide numerous benefits to inmates as individuals, to the prison as an institution, and to the world outside the prison gates, but it extends the reasoning behind why this is the case. While prisons encourage the "doing" of hypermasculinity, prison arts programs allow for its "undoing," subsequently resulting in the reduction of institutional violence, the strengthening of family ties, increased likelihood of post-release success, and more. Prison arts programs provide an avenue for inmates to renounce the hypermasculine imperative and adopt a more productive artist identity.

This research can be applied to other settings as well, beyond the confines of correctional facilities. My findings corroborate those of Ely and Meyerson (2010), both of which occur in hypermasculine, all-male environments, that alternative identities can be created even when the institution promotes the hypermasculine imperative. But this argument can extend to mixed-gender organizations also. For example, many workplaces support gender stereotypes by punishing employees who transgress such boundaries. Both men and women would benefit from a reduction of such behavior and policies.

Policy Implications

How art is able to transcend particular social boundaries is of theoretical interest. However, I believe it is also useful to consider the potential policy implications of prison arts programs for reducing recidivism, which is especially important in this age of fiscal crisis (see Nagourney 2011). Within the past three

decades, the incarceration rate in the U.S. has increased exponentially. The U.S. has a higher rate of incarceration than any other nation in the world. California has allocated more of its budget for prisons than for education since 1994 and the cost to house an inmate is extraordinary ($21,470 per year) – "…in 1995, on the eve of its replacement by a program of forced labor or 'workfare', a single mother with three children residing in California received a total of $555 per month under the main public assistance program, Aid to Families with Dependent Children. If one adds administrative expenses to this grant, the cost to the public aid budget of a family of four rises to $7229 per year, one-third of the monies devoted to locking up a single inmate" (Wacquant 2002: 381). Reducing the number of people returning to prison could certainly help financially. And preliminary research has indicated that prison arts programs do help the behavior of offenders, reducing one's chance of recidivating and thereby benefiting society: "Those working in prisons such as managerial staff, art tutors and officers provide anecdotal evidence that inmates participate more effectively with sentence plans, behave less aggressively, improve self-esteem, develop their communication skills" (Meadows 2010: 14). MercyCorps Northwest, which runs a course entitled Lifelong Information For Entrepreneurs teaching small business skills to women offenders, has had only three of their approximately 100 graduates recidivate (Prichep 2011).

However, there has been a shift in the U.S. from a focus on rehabilitation to one of mere punishment and the removal of inmates from areas inhabited by regular citizens (Austin and Irwin 2001; Gilmore 2007). This ideological shift has led to the

reduction or elimination of funding for a number of rehabilitative programs, such as educational, vocational, and arts programs. This trend of cutting programs (both art and educational) has been occurring since the early 1980s (Austin and Irwin 2001). Wacquant (2002) notes that only 5 percent of the budget to run the California Department of Corrections is dedicated to rehabilitative activities, including education, training and work (380-381). Out of every state in the U.S., California has the most inmates recidivate (Cavanaugh 2009).

My research argues for reconsidering the notion of the "criminal," recognizing that the social marginalization of inmates has been a process of social construction. Art has the ability to convey messages the world over, and celebrating these works may aid us in recognizing the humanity currently being warehoused and often forgotten about throughout the United States.

My analysis provides a framework for comparative studies across not only prison arts programs, but other rehabilitative initiatives within correctional facilities ranging from traditional ones, such as Bible study and correspondence school, through to newer initiatives, such as theater programs and yoga sessions.

Future work should examine the connections between work on gender and prison and society more broadly. Additional research can also be done into how to create additional "safe spaces" within the prison, to reduce the hypermasculine imperative and its related boundaries of race, social class, sexual orientation, etc. and within hypermasculine environments in other institutions as well. Such safe spaces provide for the ability for alternative identities (artist or otherwise) to flourish.

Appendix: Methodological Approach

This Appendix highlights the multi-step process involved in obtaining approval for my dissertation research and in gaining access to my research subjects and research sites. The table below provides a timeline, corresponding to particular actions associated with multiple agencies. These agencies include the university Institutional Review Board (IRB), the individual prison (and the Warden of the prison), the state Department of Corrections (DOC) Office of Research, the state Department of Corrections Division of Adult Institutions (DAI), and the state-level Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS). I provide a brief explanation of each step below, and expound in more detail following the table.

Table A.1: Research Approval Process

Date	Step	Explanation
April 2009	Joined an organization providing books to indigent inmates	Volunteered for over 6 years (become Art Show Chair in 2011 and President in 2013)
June 2009	Began attending meetings of various prison organization groups	Connected with community regarding prison issues; participated for 3 years
May 2011	Had initial discussion with university IRB	Discussed research involving prisoners
September 2011	Became Art Show Chair for the organization providing books to indigent inmates	Allowed me to oversee the prisoner art our organization had collected and curate it for exhibitions (over 3 years)
November 2011	Completed prison volunteer orientation	Needed to go inside prison for any program

Table A.1: Research Approval Process, continued

Date	Step	Explanation
December 2011	Provided initial protocol submission to university IRB	Submitted all steps for dissertation project, including written interviews with currently incarcerated artists, which I did not end up doing
January 2012	Received project deferral from university IRB	IRB informed me that I needed to submit approval from the prison
February 2012	Contacted another prison staff member who I had met at volunteer orientation	Referred me to prison spokesperson
March 2012	Contacted prison spokesperson	Spokesperson referred me to prison headquarters (Department of Corrections [DOC])
March 2012	Contacted DOC to ask about conducting and tape recording interviews	DOC referred me back to individual prison
April 2012	Contacted prison spokesperson again, since DOC had referred me back to individual institution	Did not hear back from spokesperson until June 2012; he said he would meet with the Warden the following week
June 2012	Divided research into 2 phases and applied to university IRB to get approval for only Phase 1 of research	Phase 1 included written interviews with current prisoners, in-person interviews with former prisoners, staff, and volunteers; and art analysis
June 2012	Received approval from university IRB for Phase 1, pending receipt of additional documents	IRB Committee wanted separate consent forms and interview questions for former prisoners and staff and more detail in recruitment scripts
July 2012	Submitted requested revisions to university IRB	Provided requested consent forms, interview questions, and recruitment scripts to IRB

Table A.1: Research Approval Process, continued

Date	Step	Explanation
July 2012	Received official initial approval from university IRB for Phase 1 of research	Approval was back-dated to June 25, 2012 and good for 1 year
July 2012	Reached out to spokesperson again regarding research request	Did not receive any response
July 2012	Flew to another state to attend the largest prisoner art show in the world	Met people who had started and run prison arts programs and formerly incarcerated people who participated in such programs
July 2012	Began interviews with formerly incarcerated artists and with prison arts program staff members	Conducted 21 interviews over 2 years
November 2012	Began volunteering for creative writing program at prison where I was applying to conduct research	Gave me access to prison as a volunteer; went in 4 hours per week for 6 months
November 2012	Introduced to Warden	Began to discuss possibilities of arts program
November 2012	Met with Warden	Warden approved idea of art program; decided to start with a mural project
December 2012	Applied for amendment from university IRB to revise consent forms to allow for usage of art itself and specify that compensation of $10 would be provided to inmate subjects if allowed, and to request 3 stamped forms that IRB had overlooked in June	IRB had wanted me to treat all subjects equally, providing compensation for all; also realized IRB had overlooked providing me with stamped copies of 3 of my consent forms

Table A.1: Research Approval Process, continued

Date	Step	Explanation
December 2012	Applied for amendment to university IRB for Phase 2 of research	Phase 2 included in-person interviews with current inmates and participant observation in a prison arts program
December 2012	University IRB requested additional information	Wanted to know how I would run arts program and asked for written approval from prison
December 2012	Notified by prison that I needed approval from the Department of Corrections (DOC) Office of Research before I could begin research inside prison	Contacted Office of Research regarding approval process
January 2013	Submitted requested documents (explanation of arts program and approval from prison) to university IRB	Submitted signed letter of approval from Warden (to circumvent prison approval requirement, since DOC Office of Research would not provide me with official approval until university IRB approved) and memo explaining arts program
January 2013	University IRB approved amendment upon receipt of additional documents	IRB committee requested more information on how arts program would be used and clarification of potential benefits
January 2013	Attended prison volunteer orientation	Approval must be renewed annually
May 2013	Attended panel in another part of state on incarceration and rehabilitation	Made network connections and learned about available programs
June 2013	Submitted Continuing Review application to university IRB	IRB approval must be renewed each year
June 2013	University IRB approved Continuing Review	Phase 1 allowed to continue for another year

Table A.1: Research Approval Process, continued

Date	Step	Explanation
June 2013	Attended tour of 8 prisons across state	Accessed wide variety of facilities and met people working in various prison programs
July 2013	Submitted application to DOC Office of Research	Told proposal would be reviewed by Research Advisory Committee in August
August 2013	Attended prison arts exhibition and panel discussion in another part of state	Conducted interviews with formerly incarcerated artists and arts program staff while on trip
September 2013	Received letter from DOC Office of Research stating that they would not be reviewing new external research proposals for 18 months, due to a system conversion	DOC Office of Research recommended submitting new research requests in January 2015
September 2013	Called DOC Office of Research regarding letter I received about system conversion	Discussed issue and explained my project further
September 2013	Became President of the organization providing books to indigent inmates	Enabled me to further strengthen my connection to organizations with similar interests, and increased my knowledge of prison institutions
October 2013	DOC Office of Research contacted the Division of Adult Institutions (DAI), another agency within the Department of Corrections	Office of Research requested that DAI be the official approving agency for my project, due to Office of Research system conversion process
October 2013	Met with Warden	Discussed arts program details and research process
November 2013	Informed by DOC Office of Research that I had received approval for my project	Told that I would be receiving a letter from the Division of Adult Institutions shortly

Table A.1: Research Approval Process, continued

Date	Step	Explanation
November 2013	Asked by DOC Office of Research if I had gotten Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) approval	I said I did not since it had not been requested; reassured by Office of Research that CPHS approval was not necessary, as long as I had university IRB approval
November 2013	Told by DOC Office of Research that I would indeed need CPHS approval (and that my project required Full Committee Review by CPHS)	Informed that I would not receive approval letter from the Department of Corrections until I secured CPHS approval
November 2013	Submitted research application to CPHS	Told that I would need to call in to CPHS meeting in December
December 2013	Called in to CPHS review meeting	Informed that I did not need CPHS approval, as I was not asking the DOC for any data (only getting information from inmates) – ruled "project not within CPHS purview"
December 2013	Provided DOC Office of Research with CPHS letter	Letter stated "project not within CPHS purview"
December 2013	Received approval letter from DOC Office of Research	Enabled me to begin research inside of prison (participant observation and interviews) from the DOC view (but I could not actually begin yet, due to not having final approval from university IRB)
January 2014	Responded to university IRB's pending approval for Phase 2 of research	Made all requested changes, as well as removed wording about compensation for inmates because DOC Office of Research prohibits compensation for research

Table A.1: Research Approval Process, continued

Date	Step	Explanation
January 2014	Met new point of contact at prison to discuss arts program	Discussed details of program
January 2014	Invited by the director of a prison program in another state to attend April 2014 tour of prison	Had to decline, since I did not have approval for research outside of state
February 2014	University IRB requested additional information	IRB told me to change "There is a slight potential for the loss of confidentiality" to "There is a potential…" and that I must delete data at some point
February 2014	Responded to university IRB	Made all required changes
February 2014	University IRB approved Phase 2 of research	Approved December 2012 amendment; allowed me to begin participant observation and interviews inside of the prison
February 2014	Attended 2 panels on prison rehabilitative programs at a university in another part of the state	Met potential interviewees and learned about program models
February 2014	Met with prison staff contact	Discussed specifics of arts program
February 2014	Solicited donations from businesses for mural project	Received donations to enable prison mural project
March 2014	Completed prison volunteer orientation	Renewed approval (must be done annually)
March 2014	Began prison mural project	Had group of about 20 inmates working with 3 program volunteers 2 times per week, 3 hours/session
April 2014	Told by prison staff member that I needed approval from prison public relations office to tape record interviews	Told by public relations office that they do not oversee research and there was no issue in tape recording

Table A.1: Research Approval Process, continued

Date	Step	Explanation
April 2014	Attended prison theater performance	Performance at another prison in the state
May 2014	Followed up with prison about public relations response	Informed by prison staff member that an administration official at the prison said no tape recording would be allowed; I followed up with approvals from DOC and university IRB
May 2014	Warden signed tape recording memo	Allowed me to bring in tape recorder to interviews
May 2014	Submitted Continuing Review application to university IRB	IRB approval must be renewed each year; also removed compensation language from consent forms for written interviews with inmates
May 2014	Began interviews with currently incarcerated artists – memo required to be signed by prison staff for each interview (done weekly)	Conducted 31 interviews over 6 months
May 2014	State announced funding for prison arts programs available	Applied for contract
May 2014	Notified that my program was funded by the state	Enabled me to run 2 32-week arts courses (beginning in December, with 2 classes/week, 3 hours/class) and to hire additional instructors
June 2014	Received university IRB renewal	Approved for 1 additional year
June 2014	Received approval for amendment to written interview consent form	IRB treated my mention on the Continuing Review as an amendment
June 2014	Submitted DOC Office of Research approval renewal	Submitted once I received re-approval from university IRB

Table A.1: Research Approval Process, continued

Date	Step	Explanation
July 2014	Received renewal from DOC Office of Research	Approved for 1 additional year
August 2014	Revised tape recording memo for prison	Needed to change specifics of form to cover when interviews were held
September 2014	Attended prison theater performance	Event held at another prison in the state
October 2014	Attended meeting of prison arts program directors in the state capital	Met with others who run prison arts programs across the state
November 2014	Completed mural project	Murals now hanging in prison's visiting rooms
December 2014	Began new prison arts classes (through funding received from state)	Worked with 32 inmates in 2 classes (2 classes/week, 3 hours/class) and hired 3 instructors
January 2015	Completed prison volunteer orientation	Renewed approval (must be done annually)
April 2015	Submitted application for Continuing Review to university IRB	IRB approval must be renewed each year
April 2015	Applied to university IRB for amendment for additional research	Requested changes to include additional methods for National Endowment of the Arts grant on prison arts programs
May 2015	IRB stated I needed to obtain approval from each individual prison where I would be conducting NEA research	Issue in that DOC Office of Research requests university IRB approval before providing their approval
May 2015	Re-applied for program funding for 2nd year through state	Applied for 2nd contract
May 2015	Notified that my program was re-funded	Enabled program to run 4 different classes during fiscal year (1 40-week, 1 24-week, 1 16-week, and 1 12-week courses, all with 3 hours/class each week) and hire 5 instructors

Table A.1: Research Approval Process, continued

Date	Step	Explanation
June 2015	Requested and obtained letter from DOC Office of Research indicating support for NEA research	Submitted letter to university IRB
June 2015	Attended national conference for prison arts researchers and providers	Presented on my research, as well as networked with program providers from around the country
August 2015	Received approval from university IRB to conduct NEA grant research	Enabled me to expand scope of the project from 1 prison to prisons across the state and to work with collaborators from multiple universities

I first contacted the university's Human Research Protections Program (HRPP) in May 2011, to ask what the requirements were for studying prisoners. I began my journey to obtain approval from ethics committees for my research by submitting a proposal to the university Institutional Review Board (IRB) in December 2011, immediately after I had defended my dissertation prospectus to my committee. In that proposal, I explained that I wanted to conduct an analysis of artworks created by prison inmates while they were incarcerated, conduct interviews with formerly incarcerated artists and prison arts program volunteers and staff members, use written interviews to communicate with prison inmates throughout the United States, and conduct in-person interviews with current inmates and with both current and former prison staff members. However, I received a deferral, on January 25, 2012 along with a number of requirements for my revised protocol. One of these requirements was that I needed to obtain approval from the prison to conduct research. I called the Office of

Research at the state prison headquarters (the Department of Corrections [DOC]) and was told that I needed approval from the individual prison; I was provided with the names of contact people at two prisons where I was interested in conducting research. I called these contacts – I never heard back from the one of the individuals, but was able to contact someone at one prison. He told me he would need to check with the Warden and would get back to me. However, this was a very lengthy process.[16]

I decided that, in the meantime, I needed to be able to move forward with at least some part of my dissertation research. Therefore, I decided to split my IRB proposal, and ultimately my dissertation research, into multiple phases. Phase One included the art analysis with publicly available artworks; in-person interviews with former prisoner artists, staff members, and prison arts program volunteers; and written interviews with current inmates. I received approval for this research on June 27, 2012. However, I did not receive stamps on all of the forms that I had sent in, so I had to send in another, separate request in order to get the rest of the forms stamped with the seal of approval (even though they had been approved).

However, here was a disjuncture between approving agencies – the university IRB indeed wanted approval from the prison (and vice versa), but the IRB interestingly did not seem to consider my written interviews as officially being

[16] I later realized the power of social connections. I tried on my own for over a year to get my foot into the prison gates, without making much headway. However, once I began volunteering in another program in that prison, and started connecting with people who knew and were already well-respected by the Warden and the prison administration, things progressed very quickly. I was introduced to the Warden and two weeks later I had a meeting with him. Having those connections was invaluable in gaining access to the prison.

conducted within the prison, and therefore somehow did not require the prisons' approval for those. However, I do believe that, technically speaking, I would need approval from the prison headquarters' Office of Research (and potentially every single prison) in order to actually use the inmates' words as part of my dissertation research.

I then began my work on Phase One, with the art analysis as my first step. I started my interviews with formerly incarcerated artists and prison arts program staff members and volunteers after as well. However, I decided not to do the written interviews – it would have been very complicated to go through the approval process and contact staff members at every single prison. I had wanted to get perspectives from inmates across the United States, so that I could see if this state was an anomaly in some way, but, again, I would have had to undergo the Office of Research requirements at each state's Department of Corrections, which would have been an immense undertaking.

Phase Two of my research focused on everything inside the prison – the interviews with current prison inmate artists, and the participant observation in a prison arts program. I originally had thought I could get general approval to do research in any type of prison program, be it arts-based or educational. I thought I could either contact one already in existence and join them (perhaps going to stay in another area of the state for a period of time), but found out that I needed more specifics for the IRB. Since I realized that the arts program at the individual prison I was intending to conduct my study at had been cut years previously, I thought I could

make my research appealing to the Department of Corrections by framing my work as also providing a much-needed service for the prison. Since prison arts programs have been cited as having multiple benefits, even from state Department of Corrections themselves (CDCR 1987), I thought it would be an easy sell. However, even though the Warden was thrilled for me to come in and start a program, in December 2012 one of the prison's administrators decided I needed to go through the prison headquarters' Office of Research. They then told me I needed to submit a variety of documents, which I was able to complete by mid-2013. I was told I would hear back from them shortly. However, I then received a letter saying that they were undergoing a data conversion project and would not be fulfilling any data information requests. I was extremely concerned, because they explained that they would begin taking new requests starting in 2015, which was a year and a half from when I submitted my proposal. I also never submitted a request for any data from the Office of Research – my project was entirely original data collection. I called them and explained the situation and was told that perhaps they could send my project to another branch, the Division of Adult Institutions. I never spoke directly with the individuals in the DAI, as someone from the Office of Research served as the intermediary.

In October 2013, through email communication, I was told that the DAI would approve my protocol, but that I could not provide compensation to the inmates (contrary to what I had been told by the university IRB; the university hoped that all research subjects would be treated the same). I was then asked by the intermediary if I had gotten CPHS (Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects; the state-level

IRB) approval. I explained that I had not, since I had approval (approval pending receipt of revised documents) from the university Institutional Review Board. The intermediary told me that this should be sufficient. This was confirmed for me three times, so I was sure that I did not need to go through CPHS or obtain any sort of approval from them. However, in November 2013 I traveled out of state for a conference; while giving my first presentation, I missed three calls from the Office of Research intermediary. She informed me that I needed to obtain CPHS approval immediately, because CPHS, and not an individual university IRB, was the organization that gave approval for research having to do with the Department of Corrections. She also said that the deadline for the next meeting had already passed but they would make an exception due to the confusion and still allow me to turn documents in – within the next two days. I was also required to get both my advisor's registration and signature, in addition those of the "Responsible Official," who needed to be someone "at least one level above the PI" (in my case the Department Chair). It is truly amazing that they (and their assistants) were able to get this done for me within one day. I was able to call someone at CPHS and explain the situation and got an extension until Monday. I had to send the documents in to the CPHS staff to review them and ensure the required information was provided before submitting the official documents to the committee itself; this was great for peace of mind (knowing that I was not missing any information), but meant a very quick turnaround. I was then informed that I needed to print out ten hard copies of the forms for the committee members, so I had to overnight ship those (costing me over $50, in addition to the

costs to print out the 500 pages [10 copies x 50 pages each]) so that they would reach the committee members in time before the Thanksgiving break. They were supposed to have two or so weeks to review the proposals, and then I was required to phone in to their meeting in December 2013. The committee member who had been assigned my project was very supportive of my proposal overall. He asked me whether I was submitting this under the Common Rule or the Information Practices Act; I had not been entirely sure about this when filling out the form originally, but I read descriptions of both, and thought the Common Rule fit best since it provided the most general approval and specified that it applied to human subjects under the purview of the state. The Information Practices Act was about the release of personal information from any state department. Therefore, it did not seem applicable to my project, as I was interviewing individuals and collecting original data, rather than requesting any data from the state. I grew concerned when the reviewer subsequently informed me that CPHS did not grant Common Rule applications. We then discussed that I should get Information Practices Act approval. He asked me to explain further the usage of pseudonyms and how I would keep the documents with prisoners' names on them. I said I would keep everything separate, and that the names would not even be used in my notes, per my approval from the university IRB. The CPHS reviewer was concerned because in my protocol I had specified that I would keep a list of real names with their pseudonyms. He asked me if that was necessary, and if I even needed to get real names in the first place. I told him it was not necessarily essential for my project, since I was planning to use pseudonyms, but that I was required by the

university to IRB to get signed informed consent forms, using the inmate's real names. He then said that CPHS approval was not necessary for me, because the state was not releasing names or other information to me – it was all being provided by the prisoner. I then received a "Project Not Within CPHS Purview" letter, which I submitted to the prison Office of Research. The Office of Research provided me with their official letter of approval in December 2013 (expiring in June 2014, corresponding with my university IRB approval).

I then used the approval from the prison Office of Research to get approval from the university IRB for Phase Two of my protocol. The IRB wanted details on how the program would be run, which I had to work out with the prison. In early 2014, I met regularly with the staff at the prison to plan everything. I received final approval from the university IRB in February 2014.

When I finally had all of my human subjects research approvals ready, there was still work to be done in getting the arts program off the ground and in beginning the interviews with currently incarcerated artists. When I submitted my final Office of Research approval to prison itself, I was told that I needed to get my volunteers' paperwork (background checks, etc.) submitted. I had already done that; unfortunately, one of my volunteers had been unable to attend the volunteer orientation. Even more unfortunately, my other volunteer was not notified if he had been approved. I had also not been told that my training had expired, or I would have attended the January 2014 orientation. When I called to ask about the progress, I was told that the database was down, but that they did not have either of my volunteers on

file. I ended up being able to resolve all of this paperwork, but there were many steps along the way that required much back-and-forth with the specific parties.

The visual arts program ended up taking far longer than I had hoped to get off the ground. Part of this was practical: I needed to find volunteers, have them undergo their training and orientation, find a name, secure funding, etc., but much of it was related to my research, and needing to obtain approval from multiple organizations. Thankfully, the administration at the prison where I did my research was incredibly patient in waiting for me to get this approval and has been very supportive of my endeavors over the years.

However, other issues were circumstantial to my project. There were a number of staff changes at the prison, so we would have to begin discussions anew at times. I also sometimes received conflicting information as well, where one party would inform me that the program required a mental health component and another would disagree, or one person would say I needed to get approval from one entity while that entity would say they needed approval from another agency first, etc.

Early on in my research I had considered doing a comparative study, since prison arts programs may be run differently in states across the U.S. However, I soon realized that I would have to go through the same arduous approval process that I had gone through in my state, so I decided not to pursue this, even though a few opportunities presented themselves that would have allowed me to make a comparison. Because these opportunities often arose within a relatively tight timeframe, there was nowhere near enough time for me to go through the entire

approval process before the trip would take place. For example, in January 2014 I was invited by a prominent researcher in another region of the U.S. to visit the prison she works in, which has a prisoner art show each year in April. Although I even received funding from my department to attend the trip, I realized that I would not be able to use my observations for research (since approval would take more than a few months) and ultimately decided not to attend.

Much of the approval even within my own state required maintenance throughout the whole process as well. I began the participant observation in March 2014, with the start of the program's mural project. I had to submit memos about what supplies we were bringing in, often weeks ahead of receiving approval. I had to get participant lists signed as week, ensuring that the inmates involved were allowed to be a part of the program.

I was able to go in and conduct my first interview with a currently incarcerated artist in May 2014; I could not begin immediately in February 2014 (when I received final IRB approval) because the prison administration had not yet signed a memo stating that I was allowed to bring a tape recorder on the grounds. I had the official approval from the headquarters' Office of Research and from the university IRB to use it during the interviews, but officers at the prison would not let me carry it on my person unless I had a piece of paper from their superiors (at the local level – the prison itself) proving that I had permission for it. Then, each week I would have to get a memo signed by the prison staff who worked where I was conducting the interviews,

specifying the dates and times I was approved to come in and actually sit down with the inmates.

Ultimately, the approval process was very lengthy and filled with different interested parties, thereby making it somewhat difficult to navigate at times. But the process itself became part of my experience, and I learned even more about research through it. And it was absolutely worth it.

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