

PRISON SERVICE JOURNAL

November 2021 No 257

Special edition:
Sex and Gender in Prisons

The background of the cover features a dark, textured surface with several glowing, organic, and somewhat abstract shapes. These shapes are primarily in shades of green and red, with some yellow and blue highlights. They appear to be interconnected and have a fluid, almost cellular quality, reminiscent of biological structures or perhaps a microscopic view of a material. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the edges and creating a sense of depth and movement.

Made by men *for men*?

In search of a gender responsive approach to men in prison

Omar Phoenix Khan is a Lecturer at University of Oxford

Introduction

In this paper, I examine the current situation of a gender responsive approach to the male prison estate. In no way do I intend to draw attention away from the vital work of a gender responsive approach to working with women and girls in places of detention. What I advocate for here is for those in policy positions to consider how the male prison estate (and the justice system more broadly) could benefit from applying similar progressive thinking to that which has developed gender-informed processes with women in prison. Prison systems almost exclusively operationalise a binary approach to gender; however, a complete gender responsive approach would also account for a greater understanding of those who identify as transgender, gender fluid and gender non-binary. In 2016 the UK government introduced a new policy stating that prisons must also recognise those with fluid and non-binary genders¹ and other governments have officially acknowledged three genders². While this article focuses on people who were born male and identify as men, I believe that a greater understanding of gendered expectations, pressures and realities can contribute towards facilitating a less binary approach to gender.

I felt compelled to write this paper after authoring a toolkit on 'Places of deprivation of Liberty and Gender'³ aimed at practitioners and policymakers, on behalf of three international non-government organisations (NGOs). The aim of the publication was to present conversations with experts from around the world to consider how places of detention could adapt and become more gender responsive in order to provide inspiration and guidance. After interviewing

experts throughout the global South and North and arriving at several examples of where the specific gendered needs and responsibilities of women had been made central to decision making, it was evident that there existed a distinct scarcity of examples of such an approach with men⁴. This paper is, therefore, a theoretical consideration of the benefits of a gender responsive approach to men in detention.

When considering specific examples of where a gender responsive approach has been successfully implemented globally, it is important to note the established and valid critique of international criminal justice communities' tendency to go in search of 'good-practice' models and the inherent dangers of ethnocentrism⁵. Conscious of the occidentalist inclination to overlook contextual differences when transferring theory and practice,⁶ I stress the importance of evidence-driven change, informed by local interpretivist research, rather than the positivist assumption of replicability of approaches across contexts. I feel it is also crucial as part of theoretical discussion, that we remain conscious of historical and present a-symmetries of power in terms of knowledge production and legitimation⁷. As scholars and practitioners, we can actively work to dismantle such structures within the geopolitics of knowledge by challenging theories and practices which present situated conceptions of gender and masculinity as if they were universal. This, of course, does not mean that our imaginations cannot be ignited by practice from elsewhere. In fact, it can help us to reflect on the socially constructed nature of our norms and conceptual boundaries.

This paper offers a twofold contribution: firstly in terms of arguing for a gender responsive approach to men and imagining paths towards it; and secondly, to

1. Mia Harris, 'British Prisons Must Now Recognise Gender Fluid and Non-Binary Inmates', *The Conversation*, 16 November 2016, <http://theconversation.com/british-prisons-must-now-recognise-gender-fluid-and-non-binary-inmates-63132>.
2. CHRl, 'Lost Identity: Transgender Persons in Indian Prisons' (New Delhi: Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, 2020), <https://www.humanrightsinitiative.org/publication/lost-identity-transgender-persons-in-indian-prisons>. p40
3. Omar Phoenix Khan, 'Places of Deprivation of Liberty and Gender', Gender and Security Toolkit (Geneva: DCAF, OSCE/ODIHR, UN Women., 2019), <https://www.dcaf.ch/tool-5-places-deprivation-liberty-and-gender>.
4. There were even fewer examples for those identifying as transgender, gender fluid or gender non-binary
5. David Nelken, 'Comparative Criminal Justice: Beyond Ethnocentrism and Relativism', *European Journal of Criminology* 6, no. 4 (July 2009): 291–311.
6. Maureen Cain, 'Orientalism, Occidentalism and the Sociology of Crime', *The British Journal of Criminology* 40, no. 2 (1 March 2000): 239–60; Fernando Coronil, 'Beyond Occidentalism: Toward Nonimperial Geohistorical Categories', *Cultural Anthropology* 11, no. 1 (1996): 51–87.
7. Kerry Carrington, Russell Hogg, and Máximo Sozzo, 'Southern Criminology', *British Journal of Criminology* 56, no. 1 (January 2016): 1–20.

emphasise the importance of de-centring a focus not just away from hegemonic masculinity, but also from Western conceptions of masculinity. This second, long-term aim is beneficial to those whose notions of masculinity have been historically overlooked or disrupted by Western dominance, and also for those in Western anglophone centres, where alternative expressions of masculinity have been suppressed or diminished via the dominance of the hegemonic forms.

The paper begins with a brief overview of applications of a gender responsive approach to women, and considers how this may be interpreted in the male prison estate. Concerns over conceding space within the gender sphere to (re)turn focus to men are addressed, as well as those posed by discussing the needs, rights and responsibilities of men without aligning with the emergent anti-women agenda of the 'manosphere'. This paper, therefore, is a call to disrupt the status quo; to reduce the gap between scholarly work on masculinities, which acknowledges the multiplicity of the male experience, and the prison-based policy and practice, which tends to treat male prisoners as a homogenous group.

A gender responsive approach to women in prison

A common tendency throughout justice systems has been to assume that by treating all prisoners the same, regardless of their gender, everyone is being treated equally. This type of gender-neutral approach results in systems that do not consider how the specific needs of women and girls differ from the majority male population. In response to the lack of international standards providing for the specific characteristics and needs of women in contact with justice systems, the United Nations introduced the UN Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-custodial Measures for Women Offenders ('the Bangkok Rules') in 2010. Rule 1 of the Bangkok Rules states, as a basic principle:

A common tendency throughout justice systems has been to assume that by treating all prisoners the same, regardless of their gender, everyone is being treated equally.

In order for the principle of non-discrimination, embodied in Rule 6 of the Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners, to be put into practice, account shall be taken of the distinctive needs of women prisoners in the application of the Rules. Providing for such needs in order to accomplish substantial gender equality shall not be regarded as discriminatory⁸.

Some international NGOs have evidenced the imbalance in attention with extensive project work and note that this bias in design 'includes everything from the architecture of prisons and security procedures to staffing, healthcare services, family contact, work and training'⁹. Academics have also emphasised the issue through rigorous research, and with good reason, as concerning prisons historically, 'treatment, research and recovery have been based on men's lives, often neglecting women's experience'¹⁰.

A gender responsive approach is, therefore, necessary to implement the principle of non-discrimination. The National Resource Centre on Justice Involved Women has provided a comprehensive definition:

Gender responsive practices are practices, programs, assessments, or policies that account for the differences in characteristics and life experiences that women and men bring to the justice system AND that have been tested by methodologically rigorous research and found to be effective in reducing recidivism.¹¹

Research known as the 'pathways perspective', has shown that the initial routes to crime and recidivism for women tend to differ from those of men and therefore, pathways are discussed as *gendered*¹². Studies have consistently shown that 'criminally involved women have life histories plagued with physical and sexual

8. UN General Assembly, United Nations Rules for the Treatment of Women Prisoners and Non-Custodial Measures for Women Offenders (the Bangkok Rules). Capitalisation emphasis original.
9. Andrea Huber, 'Women in Criminal Justice Systems and the Added Value of the UN Bangkok Rules', in *Women and Children as Victims and Offenders: Background, Prevention, Reintegration* (Springer, Cham, 2016), p8.
10. Stephanie S. Covington, 'Women in Prison', *Women & Therapy* 21, no. 1 (12 February 1998): p141.
11. Patricia Van Voorhis, 'Gender Responsive Interventions in the Era of Evidence-Based Practice: A Consumer's Guide to Understanding Research' (National Resource Centre on Justice Involved Women, 2016). p1
12. Emily J. Salisbury and Patricia Van Voorhis, 'Gendered Pathways: A Quantitative Investigation of Women Probationers' Paths to Incarceration', *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 36, no. 6 (2009): p42.

abuse, poverty, and substance abuse¹³, and the perspective suggests that there are biological, psychological, and social realities that are specific to the experience of women. A meta-analysis of studies throughout the USA relating to the effectiveness of gender responsive interventions to reduce recidivism revealed that those women who participated fared better than non-participants¹⁴. Furthermore, when filtering for the studies with the most robust methodologies, gender responsive interventions were significantly more likely to be associated with reductions in recidivism in comparison to those with gender-neutral ethos¹⁵. A study from Kenya has also indicated that officers completing pre-trial assessments using gender responsive techniques reported that they understood the context of women's offending better¹⁶. Officers explained that they had since advocated for and achieved non-custodial sentences for both women and men, who would otherwise have received custodial sentences¹⁷.

Kelly Hannah-Moffat has warned us, however, that if gender is acknowledged yet too narrowly defined, this can create a range of other challenges linked to essentialising the female experience of prison as a distinct set of characteristics¹⁸. In such cases, dominant social ideals can silence the experience of others, and Hannah-Moffat provides the example that in Western contexts, 'women prisoners are expected to adhere to middle-class white normative ideas of motherhood'¹⁹. In any given society, there are multiple forms of femininity and masculinity to consider, and a gender responsive approach is not one that takes a static

reading of the needs and responsibilities of any gender. It is vital to emphasise the need to de-centre dominant and normative notions of gender to allow space for multiple expressions.

Therefore, when considering a gender responsive approach to men in prison internationally, we must look beyond a referent Western man and acknowledge a multiplicity of experiences, needs and responsibilities. Each country and even different populations within countries are likely to reveal different gendered pathways to crime and recidivism. Therefore research should always be carried out to best understand the particular context, due to what Silvestri and Crowther-Dowey refer to as 'the enduring relevance of the local'²⁰. The bulk of the research in this area comes from North America and Western Europe, however, to further efforts to decolonise the study of gender, scholars must ensure that gendered patterns observable in Western nations are not conceptualised as universal or normative. For examples of non-Western context-specific research on the experience of women in the justice system, see Penal Reform International's 'Who Are Women Prisoners' series^{21,22,23}.

... when considering a gender responsive approach to men in prison internationally, we must look beyond a referent Western man and acknowledge a multiplicity of experiences, needs and responsibilities.

Made by men for men?

A focus on a gender perspective with women and girls has developed in reaction to the naturalised presumption of the referent object as male, with any work with women equating to 'add gender and stir'²⁴. Many high-profile media organisations have made efforts to communicate the need for penal reform to the public by making the point that 'Jails Weren't Built for Women'²⁵ (TIME

13. Emily J. Salisbury and Patricia Van Voorhis, 'Gendered Pathways: A Quantitative Investigation of Women Probationers' Paths to Incarceration', *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 36, no. 6 (2009): p543.
14. Renée Gobeil, Kelley Blanchette, and Lynn Stewart, 'A Meta-Analytic Review of Correctional Interventions for Women Offenders: Gender-Neutral Versus Gender-Informed Approaches', *Criminal Justice and Behavior* 43, no. 3 (1 March 2016): p301, Gobeil, Blanchette, and Stewart. p301
15. Omar Phoenix Khan, 'Introducing a Gender-Sensitive Approach to Pre-Trial Assessment and Probation: Evaluation of an Innovation in Kenya', *Probation Journal* 65, no. 2 (1 June 2018): p194-195.
17. Omar Phoenix Khan, 2018 p196
18. Kelly Hannah-Moffat, 'Sacrosanct or Flawed: Risk, Accountability and Gender-Responsive Penal Politics', *Current Issues in Criminal Justice* 22, no. 2 (2010): p195.
19. Hannah-Moffat. p199
20. Silvestri and Crowther-Dowey, *Gender & Crime*. p93
21. Penal Reform International, *Who Are Women Prisoners?: Survey Results from Jordan and Tunisia*, 2014.
22. Penal Reform International *Who Are Women Prisoners?: Survey Results From Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan*, 2014.
23. Foundation for Human Rights Initiative and Penal Reform International, eds., *Who Are Women Prisoners? Survey Results from Uganda* (London: Penal Reform International, 2015).
24. Katelyn A. Wattanaporn and Kristy Holtfreter, 'The Impact of Feminist Pathways Research on Gender-Responsive Policy and Practice', *Feminist Criminology* 9, no. 3 (1 July 2014): p192.
25. Samantha Cooney, 'Jails Weren't Built for Women. Inmate Advocates Say That's a Big Problem', Time, 19 July 2017, <http://time.com/4864958/incarcerated-women-prison-inmates/>.

Magazine) and that the 'penal system is designed *by men for men*'²⁶ (The Guardian). Many activists, academics, politicians and practitioners (including myself) have also become accustomed to talking about how the prison system was designed by men for men to highlight the necessity to focus on the specific needs of women. However, there is a part of this phrase that I have come to question. The intimation that men have designed the system in a patriarchal manner with little concern for women, is certainly not the part that I am questioning; the inequality faced by women and girls in the vast majority of justice systems across the world is both deep and expansive. Rather, it is the part of the phrase that states that the system has been created *for men*.

I contend that it is true to say that the typical prison system has been designed for the physical restriction of male bodies, but not *for men* in any holistic, humane or rehabilitative sense. The difference is between the conceptualisation of those in prison as physical manifestations of the statistics about prison populations, homogenous, assumed dangerous and in need of control, and those who exist in reality, meaning the three-dimensional individuals who lead complex and widely varying lives. This assertion does assume, however, that we as a community believe that the justice system should not deteriorate men's mental or physical health and that the system should facilitate the rehabilitation of prosocial men. This is an assumption that does not fit with those who continue to promote retribution as a key informant to penal policy.

For prison systems to truly be made *for men*, the approach to those who identify as men and boys in detention needs to be informed by the diverse gendered pressures, needs and responsibilities of men. Currently, trauma-informed understandings of male violence and offending are side-lined to specialised programmes, unreachable for the majority, rather than being infused into the thinking about the justice process. Comparatively, little attention is paid to men as integral

parental figures and the complex pressures to express or perform masculinity in certain ways within the restrictive environment of the prison, are generally unaccounted for in prison practice. These conditions remain the case despite the existence of substantial scholarly work into masculinities and justice systems. Studies such as those from Boppre et al. have suggested that men's pathways to crime are directly influenced by experiences framed by masculine expectations such as physical domination and financial provision²⁷. It can reasonably be argued, therefore, that policies for prevention and response to crime would benefit from being informed by a more holistic picture of the individual and their gendered pressures and expectations.

Multiple masculinities and re-gendering men

it is true to say that the typical prison system has been designed for the physical restriction of male bodies, but not for men in any holistic, humane or rehabilitative sense.

The overwhelming focus on men in mainstream literature has led to the use of the term 'malestream'²⁸. Yet, rather than this greater focus on men creating well-rounded and varied accounts of the particular societal demands, needs and responsibilities of the heterogeneous groups of men in prison, the tendency across most prison estates has been to apply broadly the same approach to all men regardless of their situation. In opening a discussion on global masculinities, Kulkarni refers to Harry Brod to explain that the

pervasive usage of men as generic humans has blurred our vision of women 'by pushing them into an undistinguished background' and also of men 'by bringing them into an overly highlighted foreground'²⁹. Jennifer Rainbow has noted that although men have been the subject of most of the critical literature on prisons, the gendered element of men is rarely foregrounded, and therefore 'they are 'seen' (whilst simultaneously going 'unseen') as the norm, the stereotype and the population that prison was designed for in the first place'³⁰. The issue is encapsulated in Joe Sim's reflection that critical analysis has focused largely on 'men as prisoners rather than prisoners as men'³¹.

26. Baroness Corston, Victoria Prentis, and Kate Green, 'The UK Penal System Is Designed by Men, for Men', *The Guardian*, 13 March 2018, sec. Public Leaders Network, <https://www.theguardian.com/public-leaders-network/2018/mar/13/penal-system-men-women-new-strategy-inquiry>.

27. Boppre, Salisbury, and Parker, 'Pathways to Crime'.

28. Wattanaporn and Holtfreter. p192

29. Mangesh Kulkarni and Rimjhim Jain, *Global Masculinities: Interrogations and Reconstructions*, 2019. p1

30. Jennifer Sloan, 'Saying the Unsayable: Foregrounding Men in the Prison System', in *New Perspectives on Prison Masculinities* (Springer, 2018), p123.

31. Jo Sim, "'Tougher Than the Rest? Men in Prison.'" in *Just Boys Doing Business?: Men, Masculinities and Crime*, Edited by T. Newburn and E. A. Stanko (Psychology Press, 1994). p101 (emphasis original)

Linked to this critique is the contention that multiple masculinities have been overlooked because the discourse has primarily focused on hegemonic expressions of masculinity, defined by Messerschmidt as ‘those masculinities constructed locally, regionally, and globally that legitimate an unequal relationship between men and women, masculinity and femininity, and among masculinities’³². Within their critique of what they term the ‘hypermasculinity hypothesis’³³, Morey and Crewe warn against an exclusive focus on portrayals of ‘male prisoners as hardened figures, stripped of their emotionality’, due to the risk of obscuring the subtleties within the multiplicity of masculinities³⁴. While the pressure to perform dominant forms of masculinity remains relevant to prison life³⁵, we can reflect here on how part of the reason for the previous focus on hegemonic forms may be due to how prison policies and environments facilitate these particular performances of masculinity over others. Both the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture and the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture have noted that detention facilities have cultures that maintain strict hierarchy and that those most subordinated, including LGBTQI persons, typically suffer double or triple the discrimination of others on mainstream locations³⁶.

Acknowledgement of multiple masculinities in itself, however, is not enough. Hegemonic forms aren’t necessarily the only forms that lead to violence against women and other men. Critiques have suggested that a focus on masculinities, rather than the action of men, can lead to the ‘disembodying’³⁷ of men from their masculinity and thus the harmful effects of their actions are externalised and ‘[i]nstead of wondering whether they should change their behaviour, men ‘wrestle with the meaning of masculinity’³⁸. I advocate for a gender responsive approach to men — in practice — that does not aim to justify men’s behaviour, nor externalise or abstract it, but instead uses understandings of gendered pressures and expectations to challenge

assumptions that underpin antisocial actions of men, including sexual and gender-based violence. Such holistic understandings could also inform policy decisions to reduce the additional trauma created by carceral environments, and attempt to reverse patterns such as that which have seen the number of incidents of self-harm increase year-on-year for over a decade in England and Wales³⁹. Where many prison systems currently centre around cultures of physical dominance, choices could be taken to create environments to facilitate multiple outlets of prosocial masculinity. Alternative expressions of masculinity, such as Martin Glynn’s ‘Black Masculinities’⁴⁰, Maguire’s ‘Vulnerable Masculinities’⁴¹ and Rosemary Ricciardelli et al.’s ‘Strategic Masculinities’⁴² provide us with a greater understanding of multiple forms of masculinity (in the Western contexts of England and Canada), which could be used to inform policy and practice.

Furthermore, while these important contextual varieties warrant additional investigation, it is of paramount importance that these ideas remain closely aligned to their locations and that such theories are not centred in work in global South contexts. This is a particular caution for those interested in international ‘good practice’ and who are committed to preventing further presumptive universality of Western thought. There may be additional conceptual layers to consider in post-colonial contexts where longstanding, locally competing masculinities are in tension with colonially imposed western ideals.

Calling on the work of Homi Bhabha⁴³, Janani Umamaheswar explains how colonial cultures never fully replicate themselves in other contexts, meaning that the influences of two cultures lead to hybrid identities and that such conceptions of masculinity can ‘represent *challenges* rather than to colonial control’⁴⁴. Umamaheswar has recently argued that discussion should be framed around how alternative ‘hybrid masculinities’ are actively constructed in prison, rather

-
32. James W. Messerschmidt, *Hegemonic Masculinity: Formulation, Reformulation, and Amplification* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018). p75
33. Martha Morey and Ben Crewe, ‘Work, Intimacy and Prisoner Masculinities’, in *New Perspectives on Prison Masculinities* (Springer, 2018), p18.
34. Morey and Crewe. p38
35. Indeed, the pressure to perform to hegemonic expectations (at least in Anglophone global North prisons) remains relevant, as Rod Earle highlights in his discussion of the fetishization of muscularity and the importance of being ‘hench’ as enduring aspects of masculine expression in contemporary English prisons – see Rod Earle, ‘Being Inside: Masculine Imaginaries, Prison Interiors’, in *New Perspectives on Prison Masculinities* (Springer, 2018), p51.
36. United Nations, ‘Ninth Annual Report of the Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment’, 22 March 2016, <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G16/059/73/PDF/G1605973.pdf?OpenElement>.
37. Melanie McCarry, ‘Masculinity Studies and Male Violence: Critique or Collusion?’, *Women’s Studies International Forum* 30, no. 5 (1 September 2007): p409.
38. McMa-hon, 1993: 690–1 cited in McCarry, 2007 p410
39. *House Of Commons Paper 856 - HM Chief Inspector of Prisons*. (S.L.: Dandy Bookseller, 2020). p37
40. Martin Glynn, ‘A Framework Model of Black Masculinities and Desistance’, in *New Perspectives on Prison Masculinities* (Springer, 2018), 169–195.
41. David Maguire, ‘Vulnerable Prisoner Masculinities in an English Prison’, *Men and Masculinities*, 2019.
42. Rosemary Ricciardelli, Katharina Maier, and Kelly Hannah-Moffat, ‘Strategic Masculinities: Vulnerabilities, Risk and the Production of Prison Masculinities’, *Theoretical Criminology* 19, no. 4 (November 2015): 491–513.
43. Homi Bhabha, ‘Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse’, *October* 28 (1984): 125–33.
44. Janani Umamaheswar, ‘“Changing the Channel”: Hybrid Masculinity in a Men’s Prison’, *Incarceration* 1, no. 2 (1 November 2020). p3 (emphasis original)

than framing discussion around 'how marginalized men 'compensate' for their inability to perform hegemonic masculinity'⁴⁵. Part of decolonising the study of gender is to acknowledge the geopolitics of knowledge production and to recentre forms of knowing and being that have been peripheralised by western hegemony. Insights such as this, as well as those provided by Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative⁴⁶ in their report on the experience of transgender prisoners in India as a legally acknowledged 'third gender', can provide valuable inspiration for those considering challenges to dominant and binary conceptions of gender.

Implementing a gender responsive approach with men

There are many ways a gender responsive approach to men in prison could be considered. In this section, I discuss some opportunities to learn from a gender responsive approach to women and explore the possibility of expanding on promising projects with men.

In many countries, staff training is the same for those working in women's or men's prisons, and this design has allowed staff to be redeployed between them. While some may see this as an operational imperative, others have looked to be innovative at this stage. Today in Canada, prison staff are specifically recruited to work with women as 'Primary Workers', or with men as 'Correctional Officers'⁴⁷. The first two of three stages of the Correctional Training Program (CTP) remain the same for all future staff⁴⁸, yet in Stage Three, there is a divide. Those employed to work with women, complete the 'Women Centered Training Orientation Program' (WCTOP). Staff taking this programme must pass an exam before proceeding to an eight-day course, which covers the history of women's corrections, current interventions and priorities, mediation, communication skills, effective intervention with women via boundary setting, and the importance of a trauma-informed

perspective. After successful completion of the final exam and deployment to their site, Primary Workers then receive an additional three days of Case Management for Primary Worker Training, which provides guidance on completing casework records, escorted temporary absence applications, correctional plan updates, security level reviews and private family visit applications .

Compare this to the experience of staff intended to work with men, who in place of rigorous training on communication skills and effective intervention, receive 13 days of firearms training, including one day of instruction on a 44mm grenade launcher. So while the approach to women in prison in Canada leads to staff trained and consciously positioned to facilitate a

positive environment to encourage rehabilitation, the approach to working with men equates to the arming of an occupying force. The job titles of the staff represent this divide in ethos. 'Primary Worker' suggests a staff member employed to support active and autonomous individuals, while 'Corrections Officer' evokes connotations of authoritative instruction, necessitating the passive compliance of those held and the threat of consequences.

There is no doubt that the culmination of such specific and progressive focus on the characteristics, needs and responsibilities of women in prison

during the WCTOP renders Primary Workers supremely more equipped to work with women in such a specific environment, than if the programme did not exist. Indeed, an evaluation of the program showed that only 3 per cent of participants during one batch of the WCTOP said that the training was not helpful for working with women offenders⁴⁹. It appears that a significant opportunity has been missed here. While there may be a minority of men who will require an armed response, specific training on mediation, communication skills, and a trauma-informed approach would undoubtedly be appropriate for staff working with men. When considering the level of mental health concerns⁵⁰ and the

Part of decolonising the study of gender is to acknowledge the geopolitics of knowledge production and to recentre forms of knowing and being that have been peripheralised by western hegemony.

45. Umamaheswar. p2

46. CHRI, 'Lost Identity'.

47. All information describing Correctional Service of Canada (CSC) training procedures is taken from a document received in response to a direct request for information to CSC in 2018.

48. The first two stages consist of 50 online modules of approximately 80 hours of learning, followed by a further 40 hours of online learning and assignments.

49. A Nolan, A Harris, and D Derksen, 'An Assessment of the Women-Centred Training Orientation Program (WCTOP)' (Ottawa, 22 June 2017), <https://www.csc-scc.gc.ca/research/r-385-eng.shtml>. p21

50. For example, NHS England spending on mental health and substance misuse in prisons is more than double that within the NHS budget as a whole - see House of Commons and Committee of Public Accounts, 'Mental Health in Prisons', Session 2017-19 (Committee of Public Accounts, 13 December 2017), p8 <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmpubacc/400/400.pdf>.

high rates of suicide⁵¹ in such Western contexts, it is inconceivable that any genuine attempt to maintain the wellbeing of men and boys in prison would not include the embracing of a trauma-informed approach and a greater understanding of the gendered pressures, needs and responsibilities. As Rainbow states very clearly, 'men have complex needs too'⁵². An exact replica of the WCTOP with men would be missing the point. However, a programme built on the evidence-based understanding of the pressures, needs and responsibilities of men in prison, their pathways to crime and causes of conflict would be a progressive move.

In Albania, multidisciplinary 'waiting commissions' consisting of a psychologist, a social worker, a medical doctor and a security representative, create individualised plans for the welfare of pre-trial detainees and prisoners, highlighting signs of anxiety, depression and other mental health issues⁵³. The policy is in place for women and men, although it was noted that it was often more thoroughly applied with women⁵⁴. Processes such as this give greater meaning to the imperative 'duty of care'.

Another area for consideration is that of prison systems designed to enable men to enact prosocial aspects of their masculine identities. Reflecting on his in-depth studies of men in English prisons, Maguire notes how many men expressed pain related to their perceived inability 'to live up to the respectable protector and provider masculinity of previous generations'⁵⁵. Similar issues have been highlighted in Mahuya Bandyopadhyay's ethnographic studies of Indian prison culture⁵⁶. Instead of moving men from their local communities, penal practice could be organised to encourage regular contact with their families. This would enable men to fulfil greater levels of parental and familial activity, with the potential to have positive impacts beyond the individual men. Katie Buston notes in her ethnography of a parenting programme in Scottish Young Offender Institution (holding male prisoners aged 16-21) that there 'appeared to be significant attitude change amongst the young men in relation to parenting' and that the space allowed men to display 'a softer side' rather than the aggressive and hypermasculine that they otherwise performed⁵⁷.

Brown and Grant provide an example of an English prison programme that 'created spaces where Black men could reason together to deconstruct dominant and narrow representations of them as hyper-masculine and "irrational" and instead, showed "practices of Black manhood and masculinity that are relational, complex, heterogeneous and liberatory"⁵⁸. The authors provide positive feedback from participants about how the programme provided space for positive relationships in calm, supportive spaces and how they lamented that such spaces were 'novelties in prisons'⁵⁹. In both prison programmes mentioned here, men described positive responses to the chance to present to 'softer' or 'supportive' masculinities that they were otherwise unlikely to display on the wing. Signs, therefore, point to the advantages of facilitating change so that these spaces are less of a novelty and are instead part of the fundamental thinking of prison regime.

The concern about 'bringing men in'

Many scholars, activists and practitioners of gender reform have expressed concern about *bringing men in* to the discussion on gender, through fear that 'to talk about men and masculinity was *dangerous*, risking the hard-won gains of feminism'⁶⁰. Part of the broader argument is that a central driver for the need for feminist movements has been the lack of focus on women, with men as the automatic normative benchmark or point of departure for discussion⁶¹. While women's movements have seen positive progress across several aspects of societies, many a promise of change has remained just that, with paper-based pledges of equality yet to be grounded in the everyday experiences of women.

A further concern is that rather than applying the progressive thinking of a gender responsive approach to the male estate, policymakers will instead remove the necessary time, space or resources to continue to build on this work for women, in a perverse and reductive version of equality. Due acknowledgement also needs to be given to the fact that public discussions of men's needs, rights and responsibilities, are often framed as being in opposition to those of women, or restricted due

51. Internationally, rates in men's prisons are 3-6 times greater than the general population - see Seena Fazel et al., 'The Mental Health of Prisoners: A Review of Prevalence, Adverse Outcomes and Interventions', *The Lancet. Psychiatry* 3, no. 9 (September 2016): p875.

52. Sloan, 'Saying the Unsayable'. p137

53. Jo Baker and DIGNITY - Dansk Institut mod Tortur, *Conditions for Women in Detention in Albania: Needs, Vulnerabilities and Good Practices* (DIGNITY - Danish Institute against Torture, 2015).

54. Ibid.

55. David Maguire, 'LEARNING TO SERVE TIME: Troubling Spaces of Working Class Masculinities in the U.K', *RSA Journal*, no. 2 (2016). p21

56. Mahuya Bandyopadhyay, 'Competing Masculinities in a Prison', *Men and Masculinities* 9, no. 2 (1 October 2006): 186-203

57. Katie Buston, 'Inside the Prison Parenting Classroom: Caring, Sharing and the Softer Side of Masculinity', in *New Perspectives on Prison Masculinities* (Springer, 2018), p301 & 302.

58. Geraldine Brown and Paul Grant, 'Hear Our Voices: We're More than the Hyper-Masculine Label—Reasonings of Black Men Participating in a Faith-Based Prison Programme', in *New Perspectives on Prison Masculinities* (Springer, 2018), p146.

59. Brown and Grant. p152

60. Sarah C. White, "'Did the Earth Move?" The Hazards of Bringing Men and Masculinities into Gender and Development', *IDS Bulletin* 31, no. 2 (2000): p34.

61. See Criado-Perez's book for multiple examples of how society uses men as the natural point for departure: Caroline Criado-Perez, *Invisible Women: Exposing Data Bias in a World Designed for Men* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2019).

to some form of societal subordination of men, rather than a way of holistically investigating the best way to work with any individual. This narrative remains a pressing concern due to the emergent anti-women and anti-feminist Western online movements, such as 'Men Going Their Own Way' (MGTOW), or the 'Men's Rights Movement (MRM)⁶². Jie Liang Lin explains that such groups which almost exclusively consist of straight cis-gender⁶³, white, middle-class men from North America and Europe, 'espouse the abandonment of women and a Western society that has been corrupted by feminism⁶⁴ and as Debbie Ging points out, is one of many manifestations of anti-feminist thinking, loosely grouped under the broad banner of 'the manosphere'⁶⁵. Ging goes on to explain:

'[T]he manosphere has since received considerable media attention, most notably for its extreme misogyny and association with high-profile, off-line events; from the Isla Vista and Oregon mass shootings... and cases of college campus rape to the sustained abuse and death threats directed at female gamers and journalists that culminated in Gamergate^{66/67}.

So to be clear, the argument presented here is that while comparison to the observable progress with women from a gender responsive perspective is valuable — to spur an equal but different response to working with men in detention — it is not an argument framed in opposition to a gender responsive approach to women. *Bringing men in* and understanding gendered expectations and how they influence men's actions can potentially open space up to de-centre normative conceptions and to challenge assumptions that lead to the subordination of the feminine.

Concluding thoughts

In England and Wales, the Corston Report⁶⁸ became the crucial enquiry that launched a thousand projects focusing on the realities of the needs and responsibilities of women in the justice system. Jennifer Rainbow laments the fact that there has been no equivalent for men in prison, even though many of the issues raised by the

report — such as an overrepresentation of prisoners who are survivors of violence and abuse, being coerced into criminal activity, drug addiction and self-harm — all apply to men in prison too⁶⁹. Despite the strong scholarly writing on the diversity of prison masculinities, the leap to policy and practice influenced by such an evidence base has yet to be made. Those who design, manage and legislate policy for prisons are not neutral actors taking an objective stance to gender and masculinity. By ignoring the realities of the diverse responsibilities and needs of men in detention, such actors continue to assume the prison population to be a homogenous group, which perpetuates existing oppressive patriarchal narratives or passively permits aggressive and performative expressions of masculinity to proliferate.

This paper argues for greater attention to be given to the benefits of adopting a gender responsive approach to men in prison, whilst also recognising that there is no one kind of referent male model of responsibility and therefore the need for localised interpretivist research. It also calls for more significant investment in the study of alternative expressions of masculinity and localised, interpretivist examination of the needs and responsibilities felt by men, how they influence pathways to offending, behaviour in prison and recidivism. Prison regimes can make concerted efforts to facilitate and legitimise non-hegemonic forms of masculinity — expressions that incorporate 'empathy, caring, parenting, emotional/physical fragility'⁷⁰ — that are traditionally deemed too feminine to be valuable. Enacting this may go a long way towards appreciating the needs and responsibilities of the three-dimensional, diverse populations of men in prisons and simultaneously reduce the need for men to perform to narrow and unsustainable, antisocial expressions of masculinity.

In the vast majority of cases, prisons are not made *for men*, but merely for the physical restriction of male bodies. In order for prisons to be made *for men* in any holistic, humane or rehabilitative sense, the status quo will need to be disrupted. Those with prison governance responsibilities will need to acknowledge the diverse forms of masculinities present in prisons and recalibrate policy and practice to meet the needs and responsibilities of men in their care. The promising work of those adopting a gender responsive approach to women in prison can provide immense inspiration.

62. Jie Liang Lin, 'Antifeminism Online: MGTOW (Men Going Their Own Way)', in *Digital Environments*, ed. Urte Undine Frömmling et al., Ethnographic Perspectives Across Global Online and Offline Spaces (Transcript Verlag, 2017), p77

63. A person whose gender identity matches their sex assigned at birth

64. Lin. P78

65. Debbie Ging, 'Alphas, Betas, and Incels: Theorizing the Masculinities of the Manosphere', *Men and Masculinities*, 10 May 2017, p3

66. Ging explains that: 'The Gamergate videogame controversy began in August 2014 when game developer Zoe Quinn's former boyfriend published a blog post naming a list of men she'd allegedly slept with to promote her game Depression Quest. Although his allegations were false, this sparked a movement that continues to be framed as an ethical stance against corruption in the gaming media. Female gamers, journalists, and game developers are still receiving rape and death threats'. p17

67. Ging, 'Alphas, Betas, and Incels'. p3.

68. Jean Corston, 'Corston Report. A Report by Baroness Jean Corston of A Review of Women with Particular Vulnerabilities in the Criminal Justice System' (Home Office, 2007), <http://www.prisonreformtrust.org.uk/WhatWeDo/ProjectsResearch/Women/History/Corstonreport>

69. Sloan, 'Saying the Unsayable'. p125

70. Ricciardelli, Maier, and Hannah-Moffat, 'Strategic Masculinities'. P493