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An Exploratory Study of the Needs of Immigrant Women
Offenders

Svjetlana Delic

Thesis submitted to
the Faculty of Graduate and Postgraduate Studies
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the MA degree in Criminology

Department of Criminology
Faculty of Social Science
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Abstract

This study explores the needs of immigrant women in Canadian federal correctional facilities. It specifically examines whether they have any unique needs that stem directly from their immigration status and migration-related hardships. My research included ten in-depth interviews with immigrant women prisoners at the Grand Valley Institution for Women in Ontario and a questionnaire sent to all foreign-born women in Canadian federal correctional institutions (one institution did not have any immigrant offenders at the time). Seven need areas, which were derived from the literature, were explored during the interview: culture-specific programming, migration-related sources of stress, problems with seeking psychological help, parenting issues, vocational skills, language skills, and immigration-related concerns. Considering that existing literature does not specifically identify the unique needs of immigrant female offenders, it appeared more appropriate to develop the questionnaire following the analysis of the interviews. Consequently, some additional themes, not identified in the literature on immigrants, emerged during the interviews and were included in the questionnaire. For example, some of the interviewees identified additional concerns, such as not having access to culture-specific foods and products; having strained relationships with their extended families; or feeling that their culture-specific behavior was misread by the correctional staff. I situated my research findings and proposed recommendations within a broader context of Canadian debates on multiculturalism. Immigrant women belong to various ethno-cultural groups and both they and the correctional system are affected by Canadian multicultural practices.

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Introduction

The Topic

While both the feminist literature and, to some extent, mainstream criminology literature have recognized distinct needs of female offenders, they have overlooked the experience and needs of immigrant female offenders. North American criminologists and sociologists have rarely studied what difficulties imprisoned immigrant women may have to face. This lack of consideration for their special predicament is especially surprising in Canada and the United States where everyone, except members of the First Nations, is either an immigrant or a descendant of an immigrant. To my knowledge, there are only two Canadian studies, which explicitly acknowledge the presence of immigrant female offenders in their samples. One of these studies was a large research project conducted for the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women (Shaw, 1990); another was a small study involving ten foreign-born women in prison (Correctional Service of Canada, 1994). Unfortunately, in the former study, despite the acknowledged presence of immigrant women in the sample, they were integrated into a general discussion of the needs of Canadian female offenders, revealing a lack of consideration for any possible special needs immigrant female prisoners might have. Foreign-born female offenders make up a relatively small proportion of the total female federally sentenced population (9.6%, or 36, foreign-born women out of the total of 374 federally sentenced women in Canadian federal institutions); (Correctional Service of Canada, 2004b). Nevertheless, their marginalized status, coupled with migration-related sources of stress such as discrimination based on their immigrant status, makes a further investigation into their prison experience and perceptions of imprisonment especially important.

To fill the gap in the literature and to act upon my personal interest in the topic, I have conducted an exploratory study of the needs of immigrant female offenders in Canadian federal institutions. Since my study focused on the unique needs of these women, I did not explore their social class status, because most of the incarcerated immigrant women share low socioeconomic status with non-immigrant women in prison. My research included ten in-depth interviews with immigrant women prisoners at the Grand Valley Institution for Women and a questionnaire survey sent to all foreign-born women in Canadian federal correctional facilities.

Research Questions

In my research, I attempted to answer two major questions. First of all, I wanted to assess whether immigrant women in prison had any unique needs because they were immigrants and if so what these needs were. In formulating this question, I implicitly compared the needs of non-immigrant women in prison and incarcerated immigrant women, although this was not one of my research questions. My second research question was whether the existing correctional programs met these unique needs of the respondents in my study adequately and what types of programs, if any, they would like to see in prison to address these special needs. This was a secondary question and thus it was not explored in as much detail as the first one.

The Thesis Structure

In the first chapter of my thesis, I review the literature of the needs of immigrant female offenders. To compensate for the dearth of research in the area of incarcerated

immigrant women, I review the English language literature on the needs of female prisoners in general and of immigrant women in community, based on the assumption that immigrant women prisoners share needs with women from both of these groups. The needs of immigrant and Canadian-born female offenders may be to some extent similar, including the needs related to substance abuse, sexual and physical abuse, parenting training, and vocational training. However, hardships related to the migration experience and the experience of being socialized in a different culture may have aggravated or complicated these needs. For example, migration related sources of stress, such as alienation and special difficulties with finding employment, coupled with a high tolerance for family violence in some immigrant communities, could amplify physical abuse against immigrant women. In addition, the lack of a proper social support system for immigrants in their host countries may be another significant source of stress related to migration. Apart from negatively affecting the psychological well-being of immigrants, the lack of an adequate social support system can manifest itself in practical terms by limiting immigrant women's social and economic opportunities and contributing to their disadvantaged status. The lack of an informal support system may directly affect the immigrant women's prison experience and economic status. Furthermore, immigrant female prisoners may have two unique needs: language and culture-related needs, and immigration-related needs. Mastering language skills and achieving a competent understanding of one's host culture are crucial in overcoming daily communication problems, the stigma of marginality and prejudices against immigrants (Hoffman, 1990: 123). In regard to immigration-related needs, they may be especially relevant for those women whose immigration status is ambivalent or who have not acquired a Canadian citizenship before imprisonment. This uncertain legal status and fear of deportation

can leave some women in constant state of worry, resulting in their feeling insecure and lost in an environment already filled with insecurities.

In the second chapter, I present major themes in the debates on multiculturalism and review major aspects of multicultural policies. The issue of multiculturalism is relevant for immigrant women because of their minority status. Before undertaking my research, I wanted to know what the contested aspects of multiculturalism were and how they relate to women. This also constituted a relevant framework for the interpretation of my research findings and formulation of policy recommendations. In this chapter, I discuss literature on Canadian multiculturalism, cultural defense in the criminal law and the treatment of minorities within the criminal justice system and the Correctional Service of Canada.

In the third chapter, I present my methodological approach, including the samples and research techniques used. As I used both qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection, I explain their significance and complementary nature. By first conducting the interviews and analyzing their content, I was able to develop a questionnaire, which was sent to all 36 foreign-born women in Canadian federal correctional facilities. A combination of two criteria was used to determine the immigration status of potential participants. The first criterion was an objective one and included all foreign-born female prisoners. The second criterion was subjective and included only those women from among foreign-born offenders, who self-identified as immigrants. Participants had to meet both criteria in order to be included in this study. As a result, out of 20 filled questionnaires received, two were disqualified because the respondents did not identify themselves as immigrants. When analyzing qualitative data, I looked for both patterns that were discussed in the literature and those that were not (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 157). Quantitative data are presented as descriptive statistics in the form of tables. The small size of the surveyed population did not

warrant any more sophisticated statistical treatment of the data. In those questions in which survey respondents were invited to write comments qualitative methods of analysis and presentation were used.

In the fourth chapter of my thesis, I discuss research findings obtained through both my survey and interviews. Many findings were consistent with the ones discussed in the literature review, such as being highly reluctant to report abuse to authorities or being hesitant to seek professional psychological help, while other findings revealed new themes, such as the strained relationships between some immigrant women and their extended family members, the problems with obtaining culturally-specific foods and products or misunderstanding between the prison staff and the participants in my study.

I began my concluding chapter by locating my own research within a multicultural framework. This is followed by a discussion of special needs revealed by the participants in my study. I discuss dilemmas involved in unique treatment proposals, relating my discussion back to Canadian multiculturalism. I examine whether providing immigrant female offenders special treatment through unique programming, psychological services and language classes would be consistent with Canadian Multiculturalism Policy. Based on the results of my study, I make recommendations for both Correctional Service of Canada and future researchers. I also examine how my recommendations fit within the official Canadian multicultural model. Finally, I acknowledge the possibility of my research, which was well-intentioned, being utilized to impose more control over women or to blame women's cultural backgrounds for their problems.

Contribution to Criminology/Practical Implications

This study has been designed to contribute to the small body of literature that specifically discusses the needs of immigrant female offenders. In contrast to many studies on female offenders, which do not recognize possible marginalization of immigrant prisoners, my research deals specifically with the needs of that group. My study aspires to give a voice to those women whose voices have been effectively silenced in both correctional and academic settings.

The findings - derived from both its qualitative and quantitative components - may be of interest to correctional planners and reformers. They suggest, for example, a need for re-assessment of the uniform nature of the Offender Intake Assessment process. The current process may fail to identify specific needs of immigrant female offenders or mistake their unique difficulties for signs of criminal propensities. In addition, the findings can provide a basis for a rethinking of current correctional programs in order to meet more adequately the needs of immigrant female offenders. My findings should also be useful for non-governmental groups involved with female offenders or with the assistance to immigrants. However, as I discuss in my concluding chapter, all possible practical implications should be treated with caution to avoid further stigmatization and isolation of immigrant offenders.

Limitations of the Study

This is a small-scale exploratory study and, as such, is bound to have some limitations. The results of the survey could not be presented as being fully generalizable since the response rate was 50%. In addition, since I did not have any research funding and personally covered all the expenses related to this study, it was not feasible to interview more than ten immigrant women or conduct interviews at more than one federal institution. I relied

on a single source of data, incarcerated women themselves. Interviewing or sending a questionnaire survey to correctional staff might have provided information on the available programs and staff's perceptions of the needs and problems of immigrant women. Finally, my study being of an exploratory nature, I have covered a large range of issues, without being able to engage in thorough discussion of all of them.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

Introduction

Although some researchers claim that female and male offenders have similar rehabilitation needs, the literature points to some special needs and unique treatment requirements of female offenders (Covington, 1998; Farrell, 1998; Bloom, 1999; Blanchette, 2000; McLachan, 2000). The purpose of this chapter is to explore the needs of incarcerated immigrant women. While they may, to some extent, share similar experience and needs with non-immigrant female offenders, their migration-related experience and legal status may considerably affect these women's economic and social standing, creating unique needs, such as those related to language and immigration rights. The literature, as well as the Correctional Service of Canada's program strategy for women offenders (2004a), point to four general need areas of female offenders: substance abuse, physical and sexual abuse, parenting training, and vocational training. Specific needs of incarcerated immigrant women, however, are virtually never mentioned. The literature on special needs of immigrant women in the community is also very limited. As a result, in my literature review I focus mostly on the needs of female offenders in general and to some extent on the needs of immigrant women in the community. I assume that immigrant female offenders would share some needs with both of these groups, although these needs may be uniquely shaped or complicated through the combined prison/migration experience. In addition to the four need areas mentioned above, I discuss two additional need areas identified for immigrant women in community, which may be pertinent to immigrant women in prison, namely those related to language and immigration rights. Finally, I make a critical assessment of the reviewed literature.

Needs Related to Substance Abuse

While a relatively high proportion of female and male offenders use alcohol and drugs, women typically begin using drugs at an earlier age than males, and tend to mix drugs and alcohol more often than males (Walsh, 1997). One comparative study of male and female alcoholic offenders in the Massachusetts Department of Corrections reveals that 97% of female substance abusers, as opposed to 86% of males, mixed drugs and alcohol (Walsh, 1997: 33). Apart from some, relatively minor, statistical differences between the tendency of male and female offenders to use or mix substances, some researchers reveal gender differences with respect to reasons for the initial engagement with substances. A comparative study of 500 drug using female offenders, and 1030 drug using male offenders in one state jail in the United States found that childhood maltreatment was more strongly associated with substance abuse and depression among female than male offenders (McClellan et al., 1997). It has also been found that a higher percentage of women, than men, with histories of alcohol or drug abuse report some form of victimization and difficulties dealing with their problems (Harm et al., 1998). An important difference between the reasons men and women gave for initiating substance abuse was identified in a comparative study of 120 male and 79 female alcoholic outpatients at six chemical treatment programs in one southern state in the United States. The study revealed that 49% of females, compared to 33% of males, had reported that they had initiated substance use in order to deal with their problems (Corcoran and Corcoran, 2001: 74).

Some immigrant women may have more difficulties coping with their problems, since in many cases they lack emotional and social support from family members who live in their countries of origin. This issue has been explored in several studies. Although they do not deal specifically with prisoners or substance abuse, they throw some light on the levels

and consequences of social isolation experienced by immigrant women. For example, in a Canadian study comparing problems in accessing health care between 14 newly arrived immigrants and 27 immigrants who lived over 20 years in their host country, most women reported feeling lonely and homesick (Heller, 1986). Another Canadian study compared the psychological well-being of 20 Caribbean immigrant women living in Toronto with that of 20 women living in their home countries (Trinidad, Jamaica, Barbados, and Guyana) (Ali and Toner, 2001). The Caribbean-Canadian women displayed more depressive symptoms, as measured by the Beck Depression inventory (21 self-reported measures of depressive symptoms), and reported lower levels of social support. Fifteen immigrant women reported being depressed, whereas only seven women living in their native countries reported feeling down (Ali and Toner, 2001: 178). Overall, the immigrant women tended to have poor level of social support and low degree of reliance on their friends and relatives as sources of support. While only seven immigrant women reported relying on their friends and relatives, 15 Caribbean women living in their countries of origin reported relying on their family and relatives for support. Both high levels of depression and low levels of social support among immigrant women indicate that migration tends to be a very socially isolating experience.

A Spanish study specifically examined the relationship between poor levels of social support and high levels of psychological distress among 55 Peruvian immigrants living in Spain, 50 Moroccan immigrants living in the same country, and 55 native Spanish women (Garcia et al., 2002). The study found that Moroccan immigrant women exhibited the highest levels of psychological distress and had the lowest levels of social support among all three groups of women (Garcia et al., 2002: 295). One of the most important determinants related to immigrant women's psychological well-being was the number of native Spaniards in their social support system. The higher the number, the better the psychological functioning of the

immigrant woman involved. Peruvian immigrants had a higher proportion of native Spaniards in their social support network than did their Moroccan counterparts, and also exhibited superior levels of psychological functioning compared to the Moroccan group. The number of native-born persons in an immigrant woman's social network may thus be an indicator of her level of absorption into the dominant society.

While all immigrants are at high risk for psychological distress due to the lack of a proper social support system, immigrant single mothers may be at an even greater risk. In an Israeli study of 221 single immigrant mothers from the former Soviet Union and 241 immigrant married mothers from the same country, the generally higher level of distress among single immigrant mothers appeared to be mediated by availability of an informal social support system (Soskolne, 2001: 78). Being a single mother seems to be an additional source of stress in the immigrant's adjustment process (Soskolne, 2001).

Although most of these studies demonstrate high levels of distress among immigrant women, it should not be assumed that they would necessarily turn to alcohol to deal with their isolation. However, the absence of their extended families, coupled with the hardships of migration, may contribute to some immigrant women's initiating and continuing to abuse substances.

Many substance-abusing female offenders report "uncaring personal relationships" as a cause of their pain and as a reason for misusing substances (Bloom, 1999: 23). In this context, uncaring personal relationships typically refer to women's relationships with significant others. For immigrant women, additional problems may stem from the fact that they lose many meaningful relationships all at once, when they migrate. This assertion is consistent with Gilligan's work on the gender specific character of moral development in which females' moral development is driven by their prevailing concern with relationships,

responsibilities, and care (Gilligan, 1993). A number of researchers indicate that women have a need to connect with others and form relationships and that successful substance abuse treatment for female offenders should contain a women-in-relationship component (Harm et al., 1998; Bloom, 1999; McLachan, 2000; Kelley, 2003).

Apart from incorporating a women-in-relationship component as a part of substance abuse treatment, some researchers suggest integrated, empowering, and multidimensional programs be employed for women with substance abuse problems (Koons et al., 1997; Covington, 1998; Bloom 1999). For example, programs that address alcohol and drug dependency should be combined with or complemented by programs that address physical and sexual abuse, as these two kinds of problems appear to be intertwined (Shaw, 1990; Covington, 1998; Harm et al., 1998; Bloom, 1999).

A promising substance abuse program for female offenders designed by Covington (1998) treats addiction as the primary problem, while simultaneously treating complementary issues, such as feelings of shame experienced by many women who have substance abuse problems. This program seeks to examine and break women's "unhealthy connections to the addiction" (women-in-relationship component), while at the same time exploring physical and sexual abuse trauma, which might have contributed to their extensive drinking problems. Recognizing unhealthy connections to alcohol may help women take control of their lives, thereby enabling them to replace their attachment to alcohol with a more positive attachment to a significant other or to their children, whereas dealing with the trauma resulting from childhood or adulthood abuse may help restore a damaged sense of the self. Preliminary evaluation results of this substance abuse program did not contain information on recidivism rates, making it difficult to assess its effectiveness in this respect. The preliminary results, however, were promising in that the program succeeded in increasing female offenders'

levels of self-esteem (Covington, 1998). Yet there is some debate in the literature with regard to the extent to which low self-esteem is a criminogenic factor (Koons et al., 1997; Covington, 1998; Austin cited in Bloom, 1999; Dowden and Andrews, 1999).

In their literature review of effective community programming for female offenders, Austin and colleagues (cited in Bloom, 1999) found that multidimensional programs that addressed women's issues, such as self-esteem, seem to be successful. While some researchers (Koons et al., 1997; Covington, 1998; Austin cited in Bloom, 1999) maintain that self-esteem is a unique need and treatment consideration for female offenders, Dowden and Andrews (1999) question the extent to which self-esteem is a criminogenic factor for female offenders. In their meta-analysis of effective correctional programming for female offenders, Dowden and Andrews (1999) found that correctional programs based on cognitive-behavioral and social learning models, appear to be equally successful with females and males in terms of reducing their recidivism.

Another promising substance abuse program is a parenting group for the recovering drug dependent female offenders in the United States (Harm et al., 1998: 67). This program is specifically geared toward female offenders who are close to being released from prison. While the program evaluation contained no information about the recidivism rates of its participants, a study of 78 drug dependent African-American mothers who participated in the program demonstrated an improvement in the level of self-esteem and in the perceived quality of mother-child relationship (Harm et al., 1998: 67). Harm and colleagues warn that losing children may increase levels of depression among female offenders, which in turn could escalate their drug use. This may be a significant consideration for immigrant female offenders, as they may be more likely to have to leave their children in foster care considering that their extended family members often live in another country. Leaving their

children in the foster care arrangements may be particularly traumatic if immigrant women perceive foster care families as culturally different.

An additional issue that has been raised in the literature about minority offenders and that might be relevant to immigrant female offenders is the higher level of resistance to substance abuse treatment among some groups of minority women. A study comparing degrees of resistance to substance abuse programming among 26 Hispanic, 65 African-American, and 62 white female offenders in one prison in the United States found that women in two minority groups were more likely to resist treatment, because of language, class, and culture differences (Shearer et al., 2001). It might be, therefore, expected that immigrant women, even if they are not members of visible minorities, could exhibit similar resistance, as many of them were brought up in another language and have a unique cultural bond with members of their own group. To minimize resistance to treatment among visible minorities, and possibly immigrant groups, Shearer et al. (2001: 570) recommend that a short term, less intensive, and more structured substance abuse treatment of educational nature be employed. Culture-specific substance abuse programs that address the unique needs of minority women may also be desirable (Pattison, 1998).

Needs Related to Physical and Sexual Abuse

While many offenders report that they have experienced physical and/or sexual abuse in their childhood, researchers have generally found that such reports are more prevalent among female offenders (Shaw, 1990; Walsh, 1997). A Canadian study that compared the needs of 52 male maximum-security offenders with the needs of 37 female maximum-security offenders found that 65% of the women reported having been physically or sexually abused as compared to 13% of the men (Blanchette and Motiuk, 1997). Moreover, 48% of

the women in the same study reported having been victimized in their social relations as adults as opposed to 13% of men. An American study, which compared 64 female and 64 male alcoholic offenders, found that 72% of female offenders reported having been sexually abused compared to 11% of their male counterparts. It was established that the average age at which the abuse started was eleven years of age for girls and six and a half for boys (Walsh, 1997: 33). This difference in the average age at which girls and boys are sexually abused can be explained in terms of girls developing womanly physical characteristics at age 11, which in turn makes them more attractive to potential perpetrators, who are typically family members. In contrast, boys tend to be abused by non-family members, who are pedophiles and who are attracted to prepubescent children, who do not have secondary sexual characteristics, such as pubic hair (Hansell and Damour, 2005).

Rates of sexual abuse among immigrant prisoners are not reported separately from the rest of the prison population. Whereas ten immigrant female offenders participated in a Canadian study conducted for the Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, the final report stated only the overall rate of sexual abuse among female offenders, which was 53% (Shaw, 1990). Research on the rates of sexual abuse among immigrants in general is limited, but existing literature reveals a relatively high rate. For example, Song (cited in Lee and Law, 2001: 6) found that 40% of women in the sample of 100 married Korean women in one Chicago community reported having been sexually abused. In addition, Song speculated that the rate might be even higher, because of a particular reluctance in Asian communities to report sexual abuse. This is a very difficult issue to study, because of its sensitivity and the abundance of cultural stereotypes, as well as cultural taboos.

With regard to physical abuse rates, studies have revealed somewhat elevated levels in several immigrant communities, compared to the levels of physical abuse among western

women. It has been claimed that stress related to migration coupled with high tolerance for family violence in some immigrant communities can lead to an escalation in abuse (Erez, 2002). A study of perceptions of violence among males and females in one Arab-American community found that 56% of male respondents thought that it was acceptable for them if they came home drunk to hit their wives, which suggests high level of acceptability of violence against women (Kulwicki and Miller, 1999: 210). According to another study, conducted in Australia, Philippine immigrant women between ages of 20 to 39 were six times more likely to become victims of domestic homicide than white Australian women in the same age group (Cunneen and Stubbs, 2002: 160). Although such findings are notoriously difficult to interpret and can be used to reinforce prejudice, the unique vulnerability of some immigrant women has to be recognized, especially given their social and cultural isolation.

Immigrant women's rates of physical abuse may be particularly under-reported, as older women and recent immigrants may be reluctant to report abuse, because of the cultural and language barriers. For example, in a Canadian study of 64 female victims of partner abuse, who spoke neither English nor French, and came from four immigrant communities, (Chinese in Montreal, Polish in Ottawa, Italian in Toronto, and Asian-Indian in Vancouver), most women reported that they did not look for help because the help that was available was culturally and linguistically foreign (Russell et al., 1996). Moreover, some immigrant women may be hesitant to report abuse because they think that reporting will further support stereotypes against their ethnic groups (Currie, 1995: 25). Many immigrant women are aware of various stereotypes directed at their ethnic group in their host country. In many western countries higher prevalence of certain types of violence is attributed to specific ethnic groups. A survey of Royal Canadian Mounted Police officers in British Columbia to

determine their estimates of the extent of spousal assault among certain groups in society, found that RCMP officers overestimated the incidents of spousal assault committed by persons of Asian-Indian origin. The officers estimated that 40% of spousal assaults in 1992 were committed by Asian-Indians, while statistics indicated that only 17% of assaults were committed by members of that group (Donovan and Garcha, cited in Currie, 1995: 32).

Although they may experience relatively high rates of physical abuse, there is a lack of services for immigrant women who suffer abuse. Major Canadian centres, with the exception of Toronto and Montreal, do not have safe houses specifically designed for immigrant women (MacLeod and Shin, 1988). Also, those few that do exist were found to be unsatisfactory. In a Canadian study of 15 immigrant women from India who were abused by their husbands, the nine who accessed houses for battered women were generally disappointed about the services they received (Dosanjh et al., 1996). Most of them stated that they did not think that women who worked at transition houses were able to understand them (Dosanjh et al., 1996: 42). While a greater number of safe houses for immigrant women would not guarantee that more women would seek help - many ethnic groups have their own preferred ways of dealing with physical or sexual abuse, such as mediation within their immediate or extended families - they might ensure that immigrant women have a safe place and access to information, while they ponder their problems and options (Currie, 1995). This can pose problems, however, if the families maintain strict patriarchal traditions and use mediation to enforce them.

While physical and sexual abuse typically ceases for males after they reach adulthood, females more often continue to experience such abuse (Chesney-Lind, 2003: 6). For example, a comparative study of 1030 male offenders and 500 female offenders that examined the relationship between drug use and victimization demonstrated that women who

were abused as children were likely to be abused as adults. Fifty-seven percent of the women in the sample reported being abused as children, whereas 75% of the same sample reported being abused in adult relationships, suggesting that for many women abuse continued from childhood to adulthood (McClellan et al., 1997: 461). Substantiating further a correlation between the histories of childhood abuse and the histories of domestic abuse, Belknap (2003) reports that two thirds of adult female domestic abuse victims had either been abused as children or had witnessed their mothers being abused by their husbands or partners. McClellan and colleagues (1997: 471) explain this association between histories of childhood abuse and histories of domestic abuse in terms of women's learned helplessness (this controversial theory proposes that as a result of prolonged experience of abuse, women start to believe that they have no control over the situation. They become passive and their cognitive abilities change, making them believe that anything they do is doomed to fail).

Some researchers suggest empowerment programs be implemented to effectively address the abuse, trauma and, in some cases, the post-traumatic stress disorder many women in prison experience (McClellan et al., 1997; Belknap, 2003). It has been estimated that 48% of women in prison have post-traumatic stress disorder (Belknap, 2003). Exposure to racism or migration-related sources of stress, or such prior traumatic sources of stress as war-related experience, coupled with having been abused, can heighten and complicate post traumatic stress disorder for cultural, ethnic, or immigrant minority female inmates (Scurfield and Mackey, 2001). An American study that compared levels of anxiety and depression among 20 Bosnian refugees, 20 Somali refugees, and 20 Vietnamese refugees found that one third of both Somali and Bosnian women exceeded the cut off score for anxiety (Stutters and Ligon, 2001: 91).

Many psychologists ignore social sources of distress related to racism, which are not included under environmental factors in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (IV) for Mental Disorders, despite the fact that racial discrimination and related experiences can cause psychological distress among minorities (Scurfield and Mackey, 2001: 24). For example, one study on combat-related Post Traumatic Stress Disorder revealed that ethnic minority war veterans tended to have higher rates of psychiatric disorders because of being exposed to racism (Scurfield and Mackey, 2001: 27). In addition, a Montreal study of 104 immigrant women from India found that women who refused to acknowledge and deal with discrimination were more likely to have higher levels of anxiety and anger than those women, who openly discussed it and dealt with it. The suppression of feelings surrounding discrimination, in turn, manifested itself in physical symptoms, such as high blood pressure (Moghaddam et al., 2002). The stress related to discrimination may be an important factor in domestic abuse and victims' responses to it. Yet, mainstream psychological services in prisons do not routinely assess sources of stress related to race, ethno-cultural background and socio-economic factors when evaluating offenders' needs and risks (Scurfield and Mackey, 2001: 24). Institutional psychologists and correctional staff who are inattentive to such sources of stress may misinterpret certain types of behavior among minority inmates. These behavioral patterns may appear pathological to the staff, but they can be more accurately explained as reactions to economic deprivation, minority status, and racism (Scurfield and Mackey, 2001: 25).

According to Belknap (2003), the ideal correctional program for survivors of abuse should have two phases: the first phase to deal with education; the second phase to deal with the trauma. In the educational phase, women should learn about the nature and prevalence of abuse in society in general and about its negative effects. In the second phase, women should

address their trauma through both individual and group therapy (Belknap, 2003: 96). Individual therapy provides an opportunity for women to discuss their trauma with a counselor. It is especially helpful for women who do not feel comfortable sharing their stories with a group. Having the option of talking to a counselor in private would probably be very helpful for at least some immigrant female offenders given that women from certain immigrant communities may feel particularly uncomfortable talking about their personal traumas in front of a group. This is well expressed by one immigrant woman in a study of the needs of minority clients in therapy who said: "...coming to school to talk about your life, your family, your job. That is something that does not happen in my culture. Never!" (Russell and White, 2001: 83). However, group therapy can be very useful to women who feel comfortable sharing their experiences with others, as it encourages them to release feelings of shame that they might have in reference to having been physically or sexually abused.

Art therapy may be potentially helpful to severely abused female offenders (Belknap, 2003: 96). Art therapy can help severely abused women to express their feelings in an appropriate way through drawing, painting or modeling, as some of these women cannot bear to confront directly the destructive feelings associated with the traumatic event. This kind of therapy tends to produce the best results among women, who resist verbal therapy, as the focus on the image appears less intrusive. Art therapy may therefore be appropriate for immigrant female offenders, who have problems expressing themselves in their second language. While the evaluation of this program contained no results on recidivism rates, the preliminary evaluation demonstrated that art therapy had the capacity to foster self-soothing in women who have been abused (Harden and Hill, 1998).

To conclude, many immigrant women seem to be particularly reluctant to acknowledge sexual and physical abuse. Moreover, these types of abuse may be part of a much more complex accommodation of traumatic experiences related to the conditions in their countries, the processes involved in reaching their new country, difficulties of settling there and often coping with prejudice and discrimination. Given the complexity of their situation, any programs focused on sexual and physical abuse should be open to dealing with violence and trauma they might have experienced before and in connection with their migration. To address immigrant women's particular reluctance to report violence, programs of educational and awareness-raising nature may be helpful if conducted with sensitivity and respect for different cultural and religious values. The effectiveness of such programs would be enhanced by employment of members of immigrant communities, as both front line workers and program designers, who have been well trained in dealing with the issues of concern.

Parenting Skills

A review by Gordana Eljdupovic-Guzina of the Offender Intake Assessment revealed that 81% of the total sample of 426 female offenders in federal prisons in Canada, who were admitted in the period between January 1, 1996 and March 31, 1998, had children (Eljdupovic-Guzina, 1999). While a large proportion of male and female offenders have children, incarceration of mothers disrupts the family unit in different ways than incarceration of fathers, since more mothers are primary caregivers and/or single parents (Eljdupovic-Guzina, 1999).

While many male prisoners have children, whom they typically leave with their wives or partners or members of their extended families, most female offenders have no

partners with whom to leave their children upon their arrest and must rely on extended family members or foster care. For example, the Canadian study of Offender Intake Assessment (Eljdupovic-Guzina, 1999) demonstrated that only 27% of children stayed with their fathers upon their mothers' incarceration. Rather, their children stayed either with their grandparents (31%) or with foster care families (17%). In addition, 15% of children stayed with their relatives, while 5% remained with their mothers' friends. Some women had different child-care arrangements for each of their children. According to Sharp (2003), foster care may be a better option for some children, because many of the grandparents with whom the children stay have alcohol problems or have been abusive in their past. One American study found that grandparents with a history of violence were as likely as those with no history of violence to care for their grandchildren upon the incarceration of the children's mother (Sharp, 2003). Despite being fully aware of their parents' abusive histories, some incarcerated mothers preferred leaving their children with them presumably because of problems with custody issues in foster care placements as well as differences in language, culture, and religion.

Leaving their children with relatives may not be an option for those immigrant female offenders whose families live in their countries of origin or elsewhere outside of Canada. They have no choice but to leave their children in foster care. Consequently, they worry about custody issues and about welfare of their children. Referring to four Caribbean-British immigrants who have lived in Britain for five years and participated in her study of 20 female offenders, Chigwada-Bailey (1997: 104) states: "Foreign-born women often cope with different culture, language, isolation, lack of family contact, acute anxiety about welfare of their children who are either in care or poverty." Apart from worrying about losing custody of their children, some immigrant female offenders may have conflicting feelings

with respect to the way foster families bring up their children. An Israeli study comparing parenting perceptions and expectations of 20 Israeli-born mothers and 20 Russian-Jew immigrants living in Israel revealed cultural differences in the mothers' developmental goals for their children, despite sharing the same religious beliefs and values (Rosenthal and Roer-Strier, 2001). The former group emphasized social competence, autonomy, and leadership skills in their children's upbringing, whereas the latter group highlighted achievement, emotional control, efficiency, and organization (Rosenthal and Roer-Strier, 2001: 20). Considering that, despite their common religion, these two groups exhibited cultural differences with respect to their children's upbringing, immigrant mothers whose children often stay with foster care families of different culture and religion may be particularly likely to worry about their children's upbringing. A study conducted in Britain found that Pakistani immigrant mothers were more likely to be overprotective and prevent individualization of their children than either their British counterparts or Pakistani mothers who remained in Pakistan (Mujtaba and Furnham, 2001). Thus, it may be confusing for children of Pakistani immigrant mothers to stay with a British foster family, because of different parenting styles. There may, therefore, be a need for immigrant and other mothers who leave their children in foster care to have legal help to address their concerns about foster care arrangements and to have regular visits or contacts with their children who reside with foster parents.

Some researchers (Morton and Williams, 1998; Eljdupovic-Guzina, 1999) cite attachment or bonding between mothers and children as one of the most significant needs for both mothers in prison and their children. It is important for mothers to deal with the shame and guilt that they sometimes feel as a result of leaving their children. While re-establishing attachment is important, only 58% of mothers in the Canadian study of federally sentenced women had contact with their children and 15% were in the process of applying for private

family visits. According to Sharp (2003), a relatively low number of contacts between mothers and their children can be explained in terms of the nature of prison that typically discourages family visits. With respect to children, especially pre-school age children, establishing or re-establishing the bond with their mothers is believed to enable them to grow personally and to develop healthy social relationships (Harm et al., 1998; Eljdupovic-Guzina, 1999). Also, a positive attachment has been found to encourage normal psychological growth of children and negative or absent attachment to foster delinquency (Simourd and Andrews cited in Blanchette, 2000). A moderate relationship between delinquency and detachment was found among children of incarcerated mothers (Simourd and Andrews cited in Blanchette, 2000: 166). Thus, enabling mothers and children to meet on a regular basis can help prevent future delinquency, in addition to assuring a relatively normal psychological development of children.

Some researchers (Boudin, 1997; Sharp, 2003) recommend a feminist model of intervention that focuses on encouraging mothers' growth and improving the relationship with their children be employed with women in prison. This model provides women with an opportunity to grow through examining their role as mothers in the past and present. In one parenting program in prison, women construct their parenting histories that include stories about their children. This is done both individually and in groups, where women help one another with self-investigation (Boudin, 1997). Moreover, groups help them deal with shame and guilt that they may feel because of separation from their children (Boudin, 1997). While this program seems promising, there was no information about evaluation, and as a result it may be too early to speculate about its value.

Another promising correctional parenting program in California is called "Girl Scouts Beyond Bars." It enables mothers and children to meet every two weeks in prison (Moses,

1995). The program covers various topics, including self-esteem, drug abuse, coping with the family, as well as such themes as career, arts, and crafts. In addition to accommodating mothers and children, prison staff offers individual counseling to mothers (Moses, 1995) and parenting instruction similar to those suggested by Eljdupovic-Guzina (1999) in her Offender Intake Assessment review. Although I could not find any evaluations of the Girl Scouts Beyond Bars program, the combination of visitations and parenting training coincides with recommendations made in the literature on the parenting needs of female offenders.

Some researchers (for example, Eljdupovic-Guzina, 1999) have criticized both the literature and the existing parenting programs for neglecting children's needs, as most recommendations in the literature and programs focus on the mother's growth. She postulates that it is crucial to examine the ways in which children react to their mothers' incarceration, as many of them experience various psychological problems, such as higher rates of depression, anxiety and behavioral problems, as well as higher rates of dropping out of school. Thus, she proposes that parenting programs offered in the institutions should enable active participation of children in order to meet both their and their mothers' needs. Considering the possible added difficulties experienced by the immigrant women's children separated from their incarcerated mothers, this seems to be a potentially useful suggestion.

Vocational Training Needs

While offenders generally tend to lack educational and vocational skills, female offenders experience more severe unemployment and financial problems. The research branch of the Correctional Service of Canada in its 1997 review of the needs and risks of minimum, medium, and maximum security federally sentenced female offenders reported that 78% of medium-security and 96% of maximum-security sentenced women were

unemployed at the time of arrest (Blanchette, 1997). The overall level of poverty among female offenders seems to be higher than among male offenders. The research branch of the Correctional Service of Canada (Blanchette and Motiuk, 1997: 10) has reported that 96% of female offenders had been on welfare at least once prior to being arrested as compared to 68% of their male counterparts. Similarly, statistics from state prisons in the United States found that six in ten women were unemployed prior to coming to prison, while four in ten males were unemployed during the same period (Schram, 2003: 21). This finding is highly significant, as the lack of employment is considered to be an important contributor to recidivism (Rettinger cited in Blanchette, 2000: 165).

Unemployment rates of immigrant offenders could not be found, but Statistics Canada revealed in 1996 that recent immigrants who had arrived in Canada during the preceding five years had a 50% higher unemployment rate than other residents of Canada, despite their higher education levels (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1996: 5). Twenty one percent of newly arrived immigrants had university education, while 12% of Canadians had obtained the same educational level. Furthermore, five percent of new immigrants had post-graduate degrees, compared to two percent of other residents in Canada. Despite their higher educational attainments, newly arrived immigrants had in the mid 1990s on average earnings of only fifteen thousand dollars a year, compared to the average of twenty five thousand dollars earned by other Canadians (Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics, 1996: 6). Moreover, an analysis of data derived from Census Statistics Canada from 1991 revealed that foreign-born women's education was rewarded less than education of other Canadian women, when all other factors, such as education and years of experience were controlled (Lee, 1999: 171). Based on data derived from the 2001 Canadian Census, an average immigrant woman between ages 25 to 52 earned 24% less than her Canadian counterpart

(Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2001). Another Canadian study analyzed data derived from 1996 Census to examine the extent to which speaking a non-official language affected individuals' earnings (Li, 2001). Some economic stratification was found among women, who did not speak either of Canada's two official languages at home, with Spanish, Greek, and Polish women reporting the lowest earnings (Li, 2001:143).

Immigrants in general and women immigrants in particular who succeed in finding a job in their host countries, tended to experience an occupational drift. Interviews conducted in 1998 and 1999 with 50 immigrant women who worked for ten immigrant settlement agencies in British Columbia, found that the majority of them expressed dissatisfaction with working conditions, characterized by part-time, low-paid, and unstable employment (Lee, 1999). The majority of immigrant women in this study started working as volunteers first and then moved to low-paid part-time positions. Most of them performed entry-level jobs, such as community outreach jobs, while better-paid jobs, such as teachers of English as a Second Language or facilitators of employment training classes, were reserved almost exclusively for white Canadian-born women. An Israeli study of 221 single immigrant mothers from the Soviet Union and 241 married immigrant mothers from the same country found that two third of the sample worked in occupations that were at least three times lower than the job they held prior to immigrating to Israel (Soskolne, 2001:75). Similarly, in a Californian study of 25 El Salvadorian immigrant women, five women from middle class backgrounds were dissatisfied with life in the United States, because they had moved from relatively well paid and high ranking jobs to low paid jobs (Zentgraf, 2002: 628). It is unclear whether employment is perceived as liberating or as an additional burden for immigrant women. Not all immigrant women view employment as an opportunity to break down traditional values related to women's role.

With respect to the availability and diversity of vocational programs in prison, female offenders have fewer programs available than do their male counterparts, and the existing vocational programs tend to be highly traditional in their nature (Schram, 2003: 21). According to Cranford and Williams (1998: 134), female offenders typically have access to gender-stereotyped programs, such as cosmetology, food preparation and office technology training. In contrast to Cranford and Williams (1998), who propose non-traditional vocational programming for female offenders, Shaw (1990: 40) and Schram (2003: 23) reason that female offenders need to be offered both traditional and non-traditional vocational programming, because the majority of women do not like taking non-traditional vocational programs. A survey of female offenders in Nebraska revealed that the majority of female offenders preferred attending traditional to non-traditional vocational programs (Carlson, 1995: 74). In the non-traditional vocational group, data entry and telemarketing were ranked as highly desirable (Carlson, 1995: 73). Telemarketing seems also popular among female offenders at the Joliette Institution for Women in Quebec, as it offers skills that are easily transferable to similar positions in the community (Gillis, 1999: 38). It may be advisable that more surveys of female offenders be conducted to determine what kinds of vocational programs women in prison want (Gillis, 1999: 39). This would help to offer choice, while investing wisely in desirable, traditional and non-traditional programming, and avoid investing in those non-traditional programs, which female offenders ignore. Two such programs were carpentry and brick laying, in which not a single woman took part in a Canadian prison (Shaw, 1990: 40). The unpopularity of some non-traditional occupations is often generalized to all of them.

There is little known about the social status, shifts, educational levels, and occupational skills of incarcerated immigrant women. Job-training courses for immigrant

women in community seem to be very scarce. Most of the 25 service providers to immigrant women in Canada state that most programs for immigrants do not provide specific job training to help women improve their economic conditions (Currie, 1995). Moreover, one of the best equipped safe houses in Toronto specifically designed for immigrant women, offers referral to services, but does not offer job training (MacLeod and Shin, 1988). Yet, providing job training to abused immigrant women may be essential in helping them to achieve independence and freely decide whether they want to stay in an abusive relationship.

Another vocational need, identified by some researchers (Moses, 1995; Hale, 2001), is the need for offenders, especially those close to being released, to connect with volunteers in the community to broaden their social networks essential to finding a job. One American vocational program that helps female offenders connect with volunteers is designed to promote self-efficiency and economic independence (Hale, 2001). The program tries to match women offenders with suitable volunteers who serve as role models in the community, in the hope of broadening their social network. The program entails the following: developing job readiness, enhancing personal empowerment, increasing support network, and improving life management skills. The program entails a comprehensive skill assessment and job readiness workshops. An evaluation shows that the program helps women maintain a job, stay sober, and reduce recidivism (Hale, 2001).

This type of programming may be especially helpful for immigrant female offenders, as some of them have at best a very limited social support network in their host countries. Most of the ten immigrant women who participated in a Canadian study of 170 female offenders (conducted for the Task Force) stated that they would like to have visits from community and religious leaders from their own communities, suggesting that they lacked sufficient social support in both prison and community (Shaw, 1990: 17). In addition to the

vocational training needs that they share with non-immigrant offenders, immigrant women may have specific needs related to re-training, gaining Canadian work experience, and network building.

Language-Related Needs

Despite recent attempts by the Canadian government to recruit immigrants who speak some English or French, 47% of the newly arrived immigrants in Toronto in 2002 spoke neither English nor French (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2003). Moreover, a study conducted in British Columbia found that 70% of Punjabi immigrants could not speak English (Currie, 1995: 8). In 2001, 61% of newly arrived immigrants in Canada spoke a non-official language at home, making it more difficult for some immigrants to master English or French language skills (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2001). Even if all immigrants have access to second language classes, some researchers suggest that elderly immigrants and the loss-oriented immigrants who focus on negative sides of migrating, tend to have negative attitudes toward a new language, and as a result have more difficulties with mastering language skills (Currie, 1995; Markovic and Manderson, 2000).

Immigrants who lack language skills may experience problems accessing services, such as educational programs, health services in the community, and community programs (Heller, 1986: 53). A British Columbia study of 25 service providers who worked directly with immigrant women found that 21 of them identified the lack of language proficiency as a significant barrier in accessing criminal justice services (Currie, 1995: 10). In an Australian study of the adjustment strategies of 52 women from the former Yugoslavia, some women who spoke poor English stated that the lack of practitioners who spoke their language was a barrier in accessing mental health services (Markovic and Manderson, 2000: 321). Moreover,

a study that looked at the information on community services that were offered to South Asian immigrant women in the United States found that 84% of them had no knowledge of services available to them and 44% of women were not aware of the existence of safe houses for women (Currie, 1995: 29). According to Currie (1995), it can be speculated that many of these women may lack proper language skills to acquire knowledge about community services available to them. In prison, accessing services may be even more difficult, because prisons offer a limited number of programs and women cannot readily go outside to attend community programs offered in their own language.

While using translators may be a viable option, five out of 25 service providers to immigrants in the British Columbia's study were of the opinion that using translation was problematic, as translators were not always available and sometimes offered their own opinions instead of translating (Currie, 1995: 11). A Canadian study of ten foreign-born women in Prison for Women in Kingston found that most women had no adequate translation services (Correctional Service of Canada, 1994). An Australian study of language barriers experienced by 104 Vietnamese, 107 Filipino, and 107 Turkish immigrant women, who gave birth in Australia, found that eight percent of them did not always receive language assistance when they requested it (Small et al., 1999: 84). In addition, those women who requested help of interpreters, but did not always receive it, were more likely to have a caesarian birth compared to those who had language assistance when needed (Small et al., 1999: 87).

Another significant problem for those immigrant women in prison who have poor command of the official language is that they may be more likely to experience difficulties socially connecting with others. A social worker in Toronto, who shared a common language with one of her clients states: "being able to communicate with a social worker in their own

language provides the means of connecting themselves socially” (Russell and White, 2001: 74). Lacking language skills, coupled with being perceived as “the other,” can lead to complete isolation of these women in prison. The Task Force on Special Need Offenders (1999) stated that isolation was one of the most difficult problems that foreign-born offenders face in prisons. Moreover, the correctional staff in some prisons further excludes these women by reminding them of their otherness. This is exemplified by a British correctional officer’s response to an immigrant offender’s complaint about the condition of the prison toilet: “you are lucky to have one. In your country you would have to go to the bush” (Chigwada-Bailey, 1997: 114). This comment reveals division between them and us. According to a British-born female prisoner: “prison staff is horrible to foreign women reminding them all the time about where they come from and saying how lucky they are to have this and that” (Chigwada-Bailey, 1997: 114). This constant reminder of their otherness or even inferiority prevents immigrant women from feeling comfortable in their host countries, and is bound to make their prison experience particularly difficult.

While mastering language skills may help immigrants in every day life, it does not protect them from being perceived unfavorably by many native language speakers, because of their foreign accents. Whereas some accents, such as French or American in Australia, may be welcome as they connect the speaker with desirable places, other accents may connect the speaker with “uncivilized” or otherwise undesirable places (Colic-Peisker, 2002: 153). Even if accented speech can sometimes be perceived as socially attractive, processing accented speech is cognitively and emotionally tiring for native speakers (Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern, 2002: 610). A study of 200 undergraduate and graduate students on the west coast of the United States found that their attitudes toward foreign students were somewhat favorable. However, they reported often feeling impatient, frustrated, and uncomfortable

when talking to foreign students (Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern, 2002: 621). The researchers speculate that the combination of intercultural communication emotions, general affects, stereotypes, and perceived threats may explain the variance in attitudes toward foreign students (Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern, 2002: 627). There were two relatively surprising findings. The first finding was that male graduate students reported significantly higher negative attitudes toward second language speakers than their female graduate colleagues and undergraduate students (Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern, 2002: 620). The authors speculated that male graduate students were more competitive and that they perceived foreign students as a threat. The second surprising finding was that the respondents' ethnic group membership did not play a role in ratings of international students. Students of Latin-American descent born in the United States were equally unfavorable in their attitudes towards Mexican immigrants as were white American students (Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern, 2002: 625).

Having a foreign accent defines a person as a cultural outsider preventing that individual from fully accepting his or her new identity (Colic-Peisker, 2002: 158). In a study of 40 Croatian immigrants in Australia, most of them felt that they had no right to claim their Australian identities, because they were recognized as people from another place (Colic-Peisker, 2002:158). Twenty professionals who participated in this study felt that their accents and foreign names prevented them from moving up in their jobs (Colic-Peisker, 2002: 162). These professionals spoke of cultural differences in non-verbal and verbal communication styles. They stated that being understood was not simply a matter of language. They had to learn the appropriate communication style in the English language. For example, loud speech, interruption and gesticulation may be interpreted as a lack of manners based on the standards of the English language in Australia, while it may be perfectly acceptable in the

Croatian language (Colic-Peisker, 2002: 157). Having a foreign accent or coming from a non-English speaking country can be a source of discrimination, similar to racism (Colic-Peisker, 2002).

Needs Related to Immigration Status

Some immigrant female offenders may not know their immigration rights and may as a result fear prison authority. A study conducted with ten foreign-born women prisoners at Prison for Women in Kingston in 1994 demonstrated that most of these women were concerned about not being properly informed about their immigration rights (Correctional Service of Canada, 2003). Some of them felt that their case managers were working against them, pushing for their deportation.

There is some evidence that immigrant women in the community are apprehensive about exercising their legal rights. For example, it has been documented that many immigrant women in Australia are reluctant to report domestic abuse to authorities. They explained that they were afraid of being turned over to the immigration authorities once they contacted the police (Erez, 2002: 152). According to Erez: “for battered women, immigration laws, welfare laws and legal and cultural barriers to accessing civil and criminal courts render meaningless terms, such as equal protection before law” (2002: 146). Immigrant women’s fears may not be completely unfounded as an estimated 300 immigrant men accused of domestic violence are deported each year from the United States to their countries of origin along with their wives, because they were claimed as dependents on their husbands’ application forms (Menjivar and Salcido, 2000: 908). To prevent punishing a woman for her husband’s wrongdoing, the United States Department of Justice and Naturalization Services put forth a proposal to consider victims of violence as members of a special social group

entitled to apply for asylum from within the country (Menjivar and Salcido, 2000: 912). According to 25 Canadian workers who work directly with immigrant women, refugee women may be especially reluctant to report being abused or to access community services for help, because of their concerns about their legal status (Currie, 1995: 27). Considering that refugee women have to wait two to five years to get their legal status in Canada, they may refrain from reporting abuse to avoid jeopardizing their immigration status. Also, women who are sponsored may be more reluctant to report being abused or seek community help, because it takes a few years for them to gain their legal status in Canada. The 25 service providers to immigrants in Canada agreed that refugees who have been abused needed specialized services to help them utilize criminal justice services (Currie, 1995: 28).

Considering the reluctance among immigrant women in the community to exercise their rights because of their apprehension about possible negative outcomes, immigrant female offenders may be even more reluctant to do so, because they have been deprived of their freedom and they have limited access to information. In some instances, correctional staff may fail to properly inform immigrant women, especially those who do not speak English or French, of their individual and immigration rights. In a Canadian study of the needs of ten foreign-born women prisoners, the majority of interviewees stated that their situation with regard to deportation was not explained to them in a manner that would allow them to make informed decisions (Correctional Service of Canada, 1994). Some women, who were given deportation orders stopped following their correctional plans, although in the end, only a small percentage of the deportable women was actually deported to their country of origin. Being unaware of their rights increases immigrant women's fears and insecurities. According to 16 British-born women in one British prison, instead of providing immigrant women with a sense of stability through teaching them about their immigration rights, the

staff applied harsher treatment to them (Chigwada-Bailey, 1997: 111). Not only did the staff fail to inform immigrant women about their rights, but also they used women's lack of understanding about their rights to impose harsher treatment. In the words of one of the British-born woman prisoner: "foreign Black women have it tough in prison...Some of them cannot speak English and the prison officials do not bother to explain the rules to them. Most of these women do not know their rights" (Chigwada-Bailey, 1997: 111). In Ontario, Ioannou (cited in DiZazzo and Petrunik, 2003) observed systemic discrimination in the preparation of immigrant and visible minority prisoners for parole applications. It was found that their linguistic needs were overlooked, they were given false information, and they were discouraged from applying or threatened to deny support for applications.

Similarly, immigrant women in the community lack adequate knowledge of legal rights. The brief to the House of Commons Sub-committee on the status of women regarding legal rights and violence against women reported that immigration officers in Canada were of the opinion that immigrant women were given insufficient information about their rights (MacLeod and Shin, 1988: 9). Furthermore, in a British Columbia study, 19 out of 25 service providers to immigrants stated that immigrant women lacked adequate legal information with regard to their rights and obligations in Canada (Currie, 1995: 11). The majority of service providers to immigrants suggested that information in a wide range of languages, such as Mandarin and Serbo-Croatian, be published to inform all immigrant groups about their legal rights. Another British Columbia study, which included 15 immigrant women from three Indian groups: Punjabi, Hindi, and Gujarati, established that most of them lacked information about their legal rights in Canada (Dosanjh et al., 1996: 40). All 15 women expressed the need for effective outreach programs that would provide immigrant women with basic

information regarding rights and obligations of immigrants in Canada (Dosanjh, et al., 1996: 40).

All of these problems may be amplified in the case of incarcerated immigrant women. Ten foreign-born women in the Canadian study suggested an information kit about the immigration process, along with a list of local immigration lawyers, and advocate groups, be developed (Correctional Service of Canada, 1994). On a more general level, these problems might be alleviated if Canadian immigration authorities informed all immigrants at the point of entry into Canada about their rights, the benefits of citizenships and the potential disadvantages of not acquiring it, and how Canadian laws and justice might differ from that in their country of origin.

Controversial Issues

While many cultural feminist scholars argue that females and males are essentially different, and as a result male and female offenders require different treatment, other feminist scholars disagree. According to Pollock (1998: 194), advocacy often results in another trap for women, who are subsequently defined as in need of cure. Pollock (1998: 194) lists some examples: “the battered women defense, pregnancy discrimination acts, and other attempts to recognize and respond to women’s unique realities.” In other words, women’s problems are transformed and presented as concerns that require an immediate remedy. Moreover, in some instances, unique needs may become re-defined as risks in correctional settings, resulting in women scoring higher on the risk scale.

Cultural feminism has also been criticized for its tendency to confuse the conditions of one group of women with the conditions of all (Chigwada-Bailey, 1997: 25). In other words, the problems and experiences of white middle class women serve as a centre of

knowledge and are represented as being shared by all women, including visible minorities and immigrants. Instead of broadening scientific discourse by discussing the experiences of minority women, some feminists fall into the trap of ethnocentrism (Chigwada-Bailey, 1997). As a consequence, the literature of the needs of female offenders fails to explore the possible differences and similarities between Canadian and immigrant or other minority prisoners. Out of the two Canadian studies that included immigrants in their samples, one of them, which was conducted for the Canadian Task Force on Federally Sentenced Women, failed to discuss the differences and similarities between these two groups of women. This criticism should not be understood as an attempt to argue for unique treatment of immigrant offenders, as it is far from clear whether assigning them such a treatment would lead to improvements in their prisoner's status or, instead, contribute to further stigmatization. However, complete silence about their existence indicates the lack of consideration for the specific experiences and needs of immigrant prisoners.

While much social science research on physical and sexual abuse ignores cultural and racial minorities, a small body of literature available on sexual and physical abuse among women belonging to immigrant and minority groups tends to portray violence as an inherent part of their cultural repertoire (Menjívar and Salcido, 2000). Violence seems to be interpreted differently depending on the person's ethnic and racial origins. For instance, wife battering may be presented as a violence issue for Canadians, but a cultural issue for foreigners (Currie, 1995: 23). Some studies claim high tolerance for violence in certain foreign cultures and treat it as something that is inherited and therefore not easy to change. In other words, researchers may concentrate on immigrants' culture as a source of abuse, instead of trying to assess the specific situation and make recommendations to help immigrants solve their problems (MacLeod and Shin, 1988). Researchers often see

immigrants' family structures and churches as responsible for supporting traditional family model and discouraging women from reporting abuse.

Some feminists accuse cultural feminists of creating a cult of victimization (Lennon and Whitford, 1994: 59). Typically, empowering programs for substance abusers and survivors of abuse view and treat women as victims, which in turn may lead some women to perceive themselves mainly as victims, not actors (Koons et al., 1997). By focusing on their victimhood, female offenders may overlook the need to undertake positive transformation in their life circumstances (Pollock, 1998). Interpreting all of their problems in reference to being a victim may take away any autonomy or control that women have over their lives. Furthermore, many of these "empowering" programs are structured in such a way that women perceive themselves as having various problems, such as being abused or alcoholic, and do not recognize their strengths (Pollock, 1998). They may make it difficult for some women to move beyond the role of victim and take charge of their life circumstances. To avoid this trap, Pollock (1998: 200) argues that empowerment programs should contain active elements that teach women coping skills that prevent them from entering yet another abusive relationship, and let them practice the newly acquired skills (Pollock, 1998: 2000).

Several feminists argue that success of correctional programs should not solely be measured in term of their ability to reduce recidivism (Covington, 1998; Harm et al., 1998; Bloom, 1999). If program participants experience improvement in their emotional or psychological well-being, the program can be considered at least partly successful. Based on the assumption that the only measure of a program's success is the recidivism rate, the majority of empowering programs discussed earlier can be criticized for achieving very limited success (only one vocational program reported a lowering effect on the recidivism rate). To those researchers, however, who disagree that the recidivism rate is the only

measure of a program's success, the empowering programs have succeeded, as many of them have reported increases in levels of self-esteem among female offenders (Covington, 1998; Harm et al., 1998).

A criticism of empowering programs is that they may reduce women's economic, social, and political problems to purely personal problems by asking women to accept responsibility for their own empowerment (Kendall cited in Pollock, 1998; Hannah-Moffat, 2001). This enables penal reformers who support empowering programs to ignore the whole set of economic, cultural, and social factors that have contributed to the economically disadvantaged status of women in general and of female offenders in particular. While some female offenders commit property or white collar crimes to accumulate wealth, the majority of them commit property and prostitution-related crimes to meet the basic needs of themselves and their children, which suggests that they may need to acquire proper skills to support themselves and their families (Bloom, 1999). Thus, empowering women through teaching them emotional or cognitive skills to enable them to transform themselves psychologically into self-sufficient, active, and productive citizens may not be enough (Rose, 1996; Hannah-Moffat, 2001). Critics suggest that women should be empowered to address their needs through various correctional programming and community support, which would provide tangible help and teach them concrete skills that they can take with them to their life after prison. These debates notwithstanding, incarcerated women's needs, such as those related to their status, victimization, addictions, vocational skills or motherhood, should not be defined solely through the prism of non-immigrant women's experience. Yet, as my literature review shows, there is very little research that would help to make this definition more inclusive.

Chapter 2: Canadian Multiculturalism

Introduction

In this chapter, I present a critical review of the literature and debates surrounding the concept of multiculturalism as well as a brief discussion of the official model of multiculturalism in Canada. My review concerns different models of multiculturalism, arguments for and against multiculturalism, the issue of the cultural defense in the law, the status of minorities within the criminal justice system and more specifically within the Correctional Service of Canada, are presented and discussed in this chapter. Instead of using one particular sociological or criminological theory to conceptualize my research, I situate it within an on-going discussion on multiculturalism. Immigrant women belong to various ethno-cultural and racial groups and both they and the correctional system are affected by Canadian multicultural practices.

Multiculturalism in Canada

Canadian society has become increasingly multicultural in the last few decades. Canada has annually accommodated approximately 220 000 new immigrants since the early 1990s (Fleras and Elliott, 2003: 247). The 2001 Metropolitan Census revealed that 43% of the population of Toronto identified itself as foreign-born, followed by 37% in Vancouver, and 24% of the population in Hamilton (Statistics Canada, 2001). An even larger proportion of Canadians - for example, 69% of Torontonians and 65% Vancouverites - declared themselves as belonging to an ethnic group other than English or French (Piché, 2002).

A current approach to integrating immigrants into Canadian society is called multiculturalism. Its goal is to encourage *integration* of immigrants as distinct from their

assimilation (Harles, 1997: 713-714). While integration incorporates immigrants into the mainstream culture, it permits them to continue to value their identities. In contrast, assimilation encourages immigrants to adopt the core values of the host society even if this means giving up some of their own cultural traditions (Sing, 1999). Canada embarked on a unique journey in 1971, when the then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau declared a policy of official multiculturalism within a bilingual framework of Canadian society. Before presenting this policy, I highlight four different meanings of multiculturalism.

Different Meanings of Multiculturalism

Several scholars (Parhar, 1990; Kallen, 1998; Koenig, 1999) have distinguished between four meanings of multiculturalism. They differentiate between multiculturalism as social reality, ideology, policy, and a process. The first meaning refers to the fact of cultural and ethnic diversity. Multiculturalism in Canada is accepted as a sociological fact (Parhar, 1990). Multiculturalism as ideology refers to philosophical arguments used to support claims for the recognition of various identity groups (Koenig, 1999). My discussion of voices for and against multiculturalism includes some of these philosophical arguments. The ideology engrained in the Canadian multicultural policy focuses on managing diversity, which is considered a source of enrichment and strength in the process of building national unity (Parhar, 1990). Multiculturalism as a policy refers to Canadian federal government policy designated to create national unity in ethnic diversity. At this level, multicultural ideology is put into practice through variety of governmental initiatives. Finally, perceived as a process, multiculturalism is being deployed as a resource. While, theoretically, it can be used by the state, politicians, and minority groups, it has been criticized for being deployed by the dominant group to advance its privileged status (Parhar, 1990).

Multiculturalism Act

The multicultural policy enshrined in law in the 1988 Multiculturalism Act, includes the following principles:

“It is hereby declared to be the policy of the government of Canada

- a) to recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their heritage.
- b) to recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in shaping of Canada’s future.
- c) to promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist them in the elimination of any barriers to that participation.
- d) to recognize the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and their histories contribution to Canadian society and enhance their development.
- e) to ensure that all individuals receive equal treatment and protection under the law, while respecting values of diversity.
- f) to encourage and assist the social, cultural, economic and political institutions of Canada to be both respectful and inclusive of Canada’s multicultural character.
- g) to promote the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins.
- h) to foster the recognition and appreciation of diverse cultures of Canadian society and promote the reflection and the evolving expression of these cultures.

- i) to preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French while strengthening the status and the use of official languages of Canada.
- j) to advance multiculturalism through Canada in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada” (Canadian Multiculturalism Act, 1988).

In summary, multicultural policies are guided by the following goals: support for cultural development of ethno-cultural groups; helping members of ethno-cultural communities to overcome barriers to full participation in Canadian society; promoting creative interchange among all ethno-cultural groups and assisting immigrants in acquiring proficiency in at least one official language (Kymlicka, 1998: 15). Multiculturalism - as it is understood in Canada - gives positive recognition to the collective identity of all ethnic communities, it legitimizes multiple identities and is institutionalized as a political value (Curtis et al., 1988: 236).

The following are some of the multicultural initiatives currently implemented in Canada.

- Employment Equity;
- Revisions of history and literature to give greater recognition to visible minorities;
- Flexible schedule to accommodate religious holidays;
- Flexible dress codes;
- Anti-racism education programs;
- Workplace and school policies to prevent racism;
- Cultural diversity training for police and health professionals;
- Canadian Radio Television Corporation regulatory guidelines regarding ethnic stereotyping;
- Government funding of ethnic festivals;
- Programs to help illiterate adult immigrants acquire literacy in their mother tongue and English or French as a Second Language (Kymlicka, 1998: 42).

Criticisms of the Multiculturalism Act

Some critics argue that the Multiculturalism Act, with its separation of the Canadian ethnic collectives into immigrants, charter population and Indigenous people, divides the

majority from the minority and perpetuates the interests of the dominant group (Curtis et al., 1988; Parhar, 1990; Nash, 2001). Other critics claim that separation of us and them provides the dominant white culture with invisible privilege and power and suggests that those others threaten the democratic fabric of Canadian society (Henry et al., 2000: 347). Still other critics contend that multiculturalism reinforces the centrality of Anglo and/or Franco Canadian norms, in reference to which all other cultures are perceived as being multicultural (Curtis et al., 1988: 237; Nash, 2001: 119). The underlying premise of all these critiques is that the dominant way is superior to minority ways (Henry et al., 2000: 30).

According to Nash (2001), history and immigrants are missing from both the policy and contemporary discourse on multiculturalism. She criticizes the use of several terms in the Act. The use of the term “origin” in the Act is a way to construct events in the past without mentioning specific groups whose inclusion in the multiculturalism discourse might give them special political place (Nash, 2001: 9). The word “heritage” is strategically vague and celebratory, rendering the past out of focus (Nash, 2001: 7). Furthermore, Parhar (1990) points out that such terms as tolerance, used in contemporary multicultural discourse, are problematic because they imply superiority and inferiority.

The Multiculturalism Act has been criticized for failing to acknowledge racism and its adverse effects on immigrants in Canada (Parhar, 1990; Nash, 2001). This exclusion, some scholars argue, testifies to the fact that the Act limits diversity to a symbolic rather than transformative nature. The Act is not binding. It emphasizes cooperation, encouragement, awareness and persuasion (Henry et al., 2000: 337), without opening any possibility, even purely theoretical, for minority groups to use the Act for social or political change.

Alternative Multicultural Models

While Canada was the first country to declare an official multicultural policy, it is not the only country that has embraced multiculturalism. According to Kymlicka (1998:65), some Canadians stretch the meaning of multiculturalism too far because its intended limits are not made clear. He argues that in Quebec and Australia the official limits of multiculturalism are more explicit than in the federal Canadian law. For example:

multicultural policies require all Australians to accept the basic structures and principles of Australian society, constitution, and the rule of law, tolerance and equality, parliamentary democracy, freedom of speech and religion, English as the national language, and equality of the sexes (Kymlicka, 1998: 66).

Multiculturalism in Australia requires that both obligations and rights are granted to newcomers. Multicultural policies in Australia are based on the premise that all Australians, newcomers, Anglophone, or native, must demonstrate an overriding commitment to the country and its interests. Similarly, Quebec checks the limits of multiculturalism or the so-called interculturalism based on the following requirements: recognition of French as the language of public life; respect for liberal democratic values, including civic and political rights and equality of opportunity; and respect for pluralism, including openness to and tolerance of other minorities (Kymlicka, 1998: 67). When compared to federal policies, Quebec's multicultural policy is more clearly defined.

Does the Canadian Public Support Multiculturalism and Its Policies?

Multiculturalism and its policies have not been embraced without controversy by the Canadian public. Some Canadians who are critical of multiculturalism perceive its policies as giving immigrants special rights, while its proponents claim that these policies simply assure

equal access to economic and political resources for all socio-economic groups in Canadian society. Before reviewing arguments for and against multiculturalism as proposed in the literature, I am going to discuss briefly the issue of the public support for multiculturalism.

In an American study, which was conducted in the 1980s to examine struggles over cultural diversity in nine western democracies, Canada was described as being the least likely to face crises in the future (Kymlicka, 1998: 5). At that time, the Canadian public firmly believed that they could manage problems related to integration of immigrants. This self-confidence of the Canadian public has been shaken in the last decade. It has become apparent that the increasingly multi-ethnic and multi-racial character of Canadian society presents a challenge for Canadian society (Stasiulis, 2002: 371). It has been increasingly difficult to establish a minimal consensus of values, beliefs and feelings of shared community, which make society functional (Nieguth, 1999).

A more recent Canadian national survey, conducted in 1995, assessed attitudes toward multiculturalism among 2 500 respondents in three major Canadian metropolitan areas: Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver. It found that respondents were moderately supportive of multiculturalism, with considerable variations in attitudes among different ethnic and language groups (Berry and Kalin, 1995). Overall, French-Canadians appeared to exhibit higher levels of ethno-centrism than English-Canadians or those who belong to other ethnic groups (Berry and Kalin, 1995: 304). The researchers speculated that one possible explanation could be that, in Quebec, immigrants might be perceived as a threat to the French language. The survey also showed that respondents tended to rank certain ethnic groups more favorably than others. The highest ranking was given to western and northern European background immigrants, followed by Eastern and Southern European background immigrants, and then by those of non-European origins.

A 1995 study compared attitudes toward immigration, integration versus assimilation, national pride, and xenophobia among four western countries: Austria, Germany, Australia, and Canada. It has revealed lesser levels of support for integration of immigrants among Canadians than what is expected from a society, which prides itself on multiculturalism and tolerance for diversity (Hjerm, 2000). When asked whether they agreed with the statement that immigrants should keep their own customs, 29% of Canadian participants agreed, compared to 45% of Germans and 35% of Austrians (Hjerm, 2000: 368). In addition, only five percent of Canadians agreed with the statement that ethnic communities should be given government assistance to help preserve their customs and traditions, compared to 12% of Austrians and 11% of Germans (Hjerm, 2000: 366). The results of this study are quite surprising, as Canadians appear to be less likely than Germans and Austrians to support integrative, as opposed to assimilative, immigration policies. According to Hjerm, the nature of multiculturalism promoted in Canadian society can be responsible for encouraging negative attitudes among the general public toward the integration of immigrants (Hjerm, 2000: 375). Hjerm states:

[an offensive multiculturalism] is a form of multiculturalism that equates freedom with obligation, where a person does not have the option to assimilate to a certain culture of her choice. The promotion of different but coexistent cultures uniting under a common civic society may have made it impossible, especially for newcomers, to choose whether they want to keep practicing their indigenous culture or not. This would be a situation where people became marginalized and segregated due to their cultural practices and where such a situation could constitute a great hindrance for natural integration into any form of the civic society (2000: 375-376).

According to Hjerm (2000), while the very nature of Canadian multiculturalism makes it difficult for immigrants to identify with either the mainstream culture or their own ethnic or

cultural group, the public may perceive them as being unwilling to integrate into Canadian society. This may result in hostility toward them.

Following the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, negative attitudes toward certain minority groups have intensified in Canada. The results of an EKOS poll conducted in September of 2002 revealed that 50% of respondents agreed that Canadians of Arabic descent should be targeted for extra security attention (Khoury, 2003). A large proportion of respondents in the same poll (39%) confessed to having developed negative attitudes toward Arab-Canadians. In addition, the New Democratic Party claimed in 2002 that there were more than 173 reported incidents of aggression against Arabs in Canada, following the attacks in the United States (Abu-Laban, 2002: 469). The most recent Arab-Canadian Federation's poll found that 41% of Arab-Canadians believed that non-Arab Canadians did not like Arabs (Khoury, 2003).

In the political realm, multiculturalism and its policies have been increasingly criticized in parliamentary debates. A number of conservative politicians have argued against spending money on multiculturalism (for example, Parliamentary Debates, 1995). Another argument, put forward by the Reform Party in the mid 1990s, is that it was arrogant for the Federal government to decide which programs and which ethnic groups should be funded. One member of the Reform party said:

by relinquishing control at the federal level for funding multicultural projects we will give individuals the chance to choose for themselves what cultural endeavors they wish to support. Is it not arrogant for the government to decide which programs and which groups will be funded (Parliamentary Debates, 1995).

The Reform Party also argued that multiculturalism threatened the national unity of Canada (Nieguth, 1999: 98).

Theoretically, in a truly multicultural society, no ethnic or religious group should be favored or discriminated against. It is becoming increasingly clear, however, that Canadians have endorsed two conflicting sets of values. While Canadians value their sense of commitment to democratic principles of justice and equality, some of them have simultaneously developed negative attitudes toward some minorities. The term used by some authors to describe these conflicting sets of values is “democratic racism” (Henry et al., 2000: 23).

Philosophical Arguments Against Multiculturalism

Many opponents of multiculturalism argue that multicultural policies impede the development of national unity, because they legitimize the proliferation of particularistic value differences among Canadians (Curtis et al., 1988: 238). According to these critics, the overemphasis on ethno-cultural diversity undermines the development of special Canadian identity and hampers the emergence of an uniform consensus (Bissoondath, 1994). Bissoondath (1994) contends that the separation of Canadians based on their distinctive ethno-cultural characteristics, and ethnic, religions and racial identities fosters the development of racialized communities, which are being shaped by a heightened sense of ethnicity. Furthermore, the creation of special ethno-cultural programs undermines immigrants’ tendency to integrate as they separate them by putting up cultural walls (Harles, 1997). Even some visible minority liberal members of Parliament have argued that multiculturalism divides Canadians because it treats various groups differently (Henry et al., 2000: 336). It has also been suggested that some immigrants themselves may perceive multiculturalism as being exclusionary. In a qualitative Canadian study of 30 immigrants from Laos People’s Democratic Republic, most of them expressed a concern that

multiculturalism isolated their group socially and undermined the unity of their adopted country (Harles, 1997: 733).

Multiculturalism has been criticized for being inconsistent with liberalism and its ideals because it advocates special rights for minority groups. According to this critique, liberal societies should treat everyone equally and thus everyone, including immigrants and visible minorities, should have the same rights. For those who view liberalism through this lens, no group should demand nor should they be given any special considerations (Harles, 1997). While individuals are entitled to preserve their culture in private spheres, the state has to keep its neutral position to guarantee equal treatment of all, regardless of the fact that some groups have lower socio-economic status or are culturally unique (Nieguth, 1999). It has also been argued that given its advocacy of group rights over individual rights, multiculturalism stands in direct conflict with the highly valued liberal ideal of individualism. Some opponents of multiculturalism go as far as to say that awarding special rights to certain groups would eventually lead to the creation of separate political institutions within Canada (Harles, 1997).

Some feminist critics argue that by favoring cultural collectivism over individual rights, multiculturalism and its policies may create a power imbalance among different segments of immigrant or visible minority populations. One of the unwelcome consequences of promoting collective rights could be creating unrepresentative elites, usually men, to speak for their ethno-cultural communities (Abu-Laban, 2002: 462). According to Abu-Laban, the problem may not lie with multiculturalism itself, but with the essentialist understanding of culture, which informs some current discussions surrounding multiculturalism. He states: “cultural essentialism refers to a common sense popular understanding that each culture has unique fixed relations, which makes an ethnic group act the way it does” (Abu-Laban, 2002:

461). According to Abu-Laban (2002: 464), many feminists present the issue of abuse among minorities in a stereotypical fashion, whereby non-western women are presented as being oppressed and non-western men as being abusers. He argues that once again consistent with the essentialist view of culture, violence in ethno-cultural communities tends to be presented as a cultural issue. He also claims that non-western women are presented in some feminist literature as having no agency.

Philosophical Arguments in Support of Multiculturalism

Charles Taylor questions whether equality is guaranteed by the liberal principle of universalism, where everyone is treated the same or rather by recognizing and valuing differences (Taylor, 1994). He argues that recognizing the uniqueness of each group as opposed to treating everyone the same is the essence of true equality. According to Kymlicka (1998), Taylor's position is limited as multicultural policies should go further by ensuring that no groups are privileged at the expense of others. Thus, special rights should be given to marginalized ethno-cultural and racial groups to overcome their disadvantaged status. Multicultural policies can simply increase the choices available to minority groups, whose range of choices is typically limited due to their class, ethnicity, gender, and/or sexual orientation (May, 1999b: 27). Multicultural policies, such as employment equity, can ensure that minorities have equal access to job opportunities without depriving others of their equal share of economic resources or political powers. Kymlicka states:

thus, multicultural policies increase the access of immigrants to mainstream institutions (e.g. affirmative action), prohibit discriminatory or prejudiced conduct within these institutions (harassment codes, media guidelines), improve the sensitivity of these institutions to cultural differences (training for police and health-

care workers), and provide services that the minority could not otherwise afford (funding of bilingual classes, ethnic media) (1998: 64).

According to Kymlicka (1998) and Frances (2000), most of the multicultural policies in Canada simply assure equal participation of minorities in socio-economic affairs without discriminating against others.

Pointing to the complex nature of multiculturalism's compatibility with liberal ideals, Kymlicka (1998) claims that critics should distinguish between policies that promote internal (in-group) restrictions from those that entail external restrictions. He maintains that there are two types of group rights: the rights of a group against its own members and rights of a group against the larger society. The first set of rights protects groups from the destabilizing impact of internal dissent. Such rights may lead some groups to seek legal restrictions on the freedom of individuals in the name of group solidarity (Kymlicka, 1998: 62). As such, they may be, under certain circumstances, inconsistent with liberalism. However, the second set of rights protects certain disadvantaged groups from external pressures, such as undesirable economic or political decisions of a larger society. The latter set of rights is consistent with liberalism, because its implementation simply assures an equal share of economic resources, language rights, and political powers for all groups, including minority ones (Kymlicka, 1998: 63).

It is completely unfounded, according to Kymlicka (1998: 28), to believe that multicultural policies present the first step on the road to separate public institutions for different minority groups in Canada. He argues that, unlike national minorities who often fight for self-government, immigrants typically lack territorial and/or linguistic concentration to form a linguistically and culturally distinct society (Kymlicka, 1998: 28). He also notes that none of the multicultural policies in Canada encourages immigrants to view themselves

as separate self-governing nations. Moreover, most immigrants are willing to adapt to certain features of mainstream society, such as learning one of the official languages, or taking part in some common institutions. Unlike some other scholars, he does not believe that liberal democracies are neutral with respect to people's ethno-cultural identities. In fact the state pressures immigrants to accept a certain degree of cultural integration. While the state does impose various demands on immigrants, such as learning one of the official languages, in order to gain citizenship or professional credentials, immigrants do have some power to negotiate the terms of this integration.

Some opponents of multiculturalism argue that it fosters differential citizenship, which creates problems for Canada as a modern state. Debates and doubts surrounding the issue of the Canadian identity have led some writers to refer to Canadian multiculturalism as "the masochistic celebration of Canadian nothingness" (Starowicz, 2003). According to Kymlicka (1989: 62), the notion of differential citizenship can be defended based on culture, which is seen as central. In his view:

The argument simply says that cultural membership is important in pursuing our essential interest in leading a good life, and so consideration of that membership is an important part of having equal consideration for the interests of each member of the community (Kymlicka, 1989: 168).

He believes that cultural identity is very important for the individual's personal identity.

Culture provides people with language and shared way of life. Some multicultural scholars have criticized Kymlicka, however, for failing to recognize the possibility of belonging to more than one culture or having multiple and shifting identities based on ethnicity, religion, gender, and class (Abu-Laban, 2002: 465).

Effectiveness of Selected Multicultural Policies

With respect to racism, some authors claim that instead of eliminating systemic racism, multicultural policies serve, in practice, to maintain the *status quo* by positioning various ethno-cultural groups at the margins rather than in the mainstream of public culture and national identity (Henry et al., 2000). This argument is consistent with the claim that Canadian multiculturalism is of a symbolic rather than transformative nature (Henry et al., 2000: 48). It has been described as cultish and at odds with reality (Bissoondath and Richler, 1994; Hinz, 1996).

These critiques can be somewhat substantiated because numerous multicultural policies, such as employment equity, have not brought significant improvements in the socio-economic status of ethnic minority groups. While the purpose of introducing employment equity was to eradicate systemic racism by increasing the representation of visible minorities, women, Aboriginal people, and disabled people in governmental bodies, the Canadian Human Rights Commission (1994) found that the government's commitment to employing members of visible minority groups was questionable. It showed that visible minorities were grossly under represented in the federal government. Only four percent of public servants at the time belonged to visible minority category, compared to 20% of the overall Canadian population (Henry et al., 2000: 344). Yet, many Canadians perceive employment equity as giving special rights to minorities and blame them for not doing enough on their part to succeed (Tarven et al., 2002: 19). In a 1994 survey in Canada, 41% of a representative sample of Canadians agreed with the statement that they were tired of ethnic minorities being given special treatment (Bergman, 1994). Employment equity has also been criticized for both discriminating against white people and stigmatizing minorities by casting doubt on whether they are hired because of their qualifications or simply to fulfill a quota (Henry et

al., 2000: 365). In short, gains that minorities can acquire through employment equity are often considered economically and ideologically costly for Canadian society (Henry, et al., 2000: 348).

Another area in which various multicultural initiatives have been undertaken in Canada is education. Many multicultural educational initiatives have been criticized for failing to recognize the effects of racism and discriminatory immigration policies on minority students (Nash, 2001: 118). Moreover, many educational multicultural initiatives have been criticized as being poorly implemented in practice. They have been either ignored by the educators or they have painted an overly simplistic picture of ethnic differences. An ethnographic study that examined the impact of multicultural and anti-racist policies in two schools in British Columbia found that limited efforts were being made by educators to incorporate these policies into educational practice, despite many teachers admitting to being aware of their district's policies (Parhar, 1990). Moreover, teachers in these two schools demonstrated limited understanding of multicultural and anti-racism education. In an American study on multicultural education, most of the 25 teachers interviewed in one school believed that their school was multicultural because they talked about different religious and cultural alternatives to Christmas (Falconer and Byrnes, 2003: 6). Many schools and institutions understand multiculturalism as an opportunity for minority groups to talk about their religious holidays, exotic food, festivals, music, dance, and folktales. In short, critics point out that when multicultural education is attempted, it often turns out to be superficial.

In her review of literature on multicultural education, Parhar (1990) found that approaches to multicultural education could be categorized as traditional and non-traditional. In the traditional model of multicultural education, it is recognized that the dominant

ideology prevails. Traditional models can be further broken down into liberal, concerned with sameness, and pluralistic, focused on differences and diversity of values (Hebert, 2001). Some examples of the traditional model of multicultural education include education about cultural differences and education stressing cultural pluralism. Those approaches have been criticized for reflecting stereotypical points of view with regard to dominant and minority groups, ignoring problems of racial and religious discrimination, and emphasizing the celebration of folk traditions with regard to food, clothing, music, and dance (Parhar, 1990). One of the most promising non-traditional models of multicultural education is called an empowerment approach model. Its underlying premise is that educational programs should evolve around the needs, concerns, and aspirations of minorities (Fleras and Elliot cited in Parhar, 1990). Some scholars (Moodley cited in Parhar, 1990), however, doubt that Canadian schools will embrace an approach that entails a form of resistance to oppressive social relations. They define past and present multicultural education in Canada as being similar to those of a “melting pot on a slow burner.”

Another promising multicultural educational approach is called critical multiculturalism. It is a perspective that concerns itself with social injustice and change (Hebert, 2001:159). It consists of three key elements: 1) It challenges the notion that each society has a natural set of cultural values that underpin the public life; 2) It recognizes cultural differences without presenting minorities as being contained within their own cultures. Indeed, cultural differences are situated within a wider nexus of power relations of which they form a part (May, 1999b: 33); 3) Finally, it maintains a reflective critique of specific cultural practices without lapsing into cultural relativism. According to this perspective, controversial cultural practices or issues should be explicitly discussed instead

of being pushed aside. Silencing discussion about such issues may cause additional animosities between the majority and the minority (May, 1999b).

The Use of the Cultural Defense in the Law

Can men use culture as a defense when charged with beating their wives? Many Canadians do not feel at ease with multiculturalism because they believe that it will lead to the acceptance of practices, such as clitoridectomy (feminine genital mutilation) that are otherwise considered unacceptable in the Canadian context. While there have been some legal proposals in Canadian context to accommodate ethno-cultural minorities, most of them have been rejected based on the argument that there should be one law for all people. Most of these proposals were rejected, because of liberal pluralism, which is characterized by the absence of any separate standing before the law for ethnic, religious, or linguistic minorities (May, 1999b: 14).

Officially, cultural differences do not count in the criminal law, nevertheless some lawyers have successfully used them to reduce sentences for their clients (Henry, 2001). Some Canadian examples of the application of cultural defense will be discussed shortly when problems with the cultural defense are presented. In Britain and the United States, the law allows the use of the cultural defense in conjunction with the insanity or provocation defense (Unsigned, 1986: 1294). According to Torry (2001: 8), there are two cultural defense models used in the provocation defense: social deprivation and loss of self-control. There is some evidence that judges are most likely to accept the loss of self-control defense. The author quotes an example of the explanation given by an Australian judge in a case involving an Aboriginal man: “we all know that a white person cools down comparatively quickly. In the case of a native you may think it right to say that the effects of provocation last longer

than in the case of a white person” (Torry, 2001: 18). The task that lawyers face in such cases is to show how the cultural influences brought into testimony had made abstention from violence inordinately hard for their clients. Another challenge for lawyers is to show how strongly attached their clients are to their culture or how assimilated they are to their host society (Torry, 2001: 33). Moreover, it may be difficult to prove with what cultural group, their own or the host one, their client identifies (Unsigned, 1986: 1309).

While Canadian law does not formally recognize the cultural defense (except the Aboriginal conditions clause in Canadian sentencing law), consideration of cultural differences is discretionary (Fournier, 2002: 86). Supporters of cultural defense argue that it helps achieve individualized justice for the defendant, as well as that it represents a commitment to cultural pluralism (Sing, 1999). They argue that a strict and uniform application of the law to everyone is unfair to the defendants raised in foreign cultures (Unsigned, 1986: 1299). The argument is that the accused should not be severely punished for behavior that is practiced among members of their own culture, as culture can determine one’s behavior (Sing, 1999; Tunick, 2004: 406). With respect to cultural pluralism, cultural defense would protect the preservation of clients’ cultural identity and be more consistent with integration of immigrants as opposed to their assimilation (Goldstein, 1994: 155).

In contradiction to the proponents of cultural defense, its opponents argue that recognizing cultural differences in court perpetuates negative stereotypes of minorities (Fournier, 2002). Courts, through relying on culture as a mitigating factor, could advance a position of superiority over minority defendants and victims. This was clear in the Australian judge’s statement, which I quoted earlier. Fournier (2002: 89) cites a Montreal case, *Lucien vs. Shamon*, where two eighteen year-old Haitian men guilty of sexual assault were

sentenced to serve only eighteen months in the community, with a condition to observe 10:30 pm curfew. The judge explained:

In this case, the absence of remorse of the two accused seems to arise from a particular cultural context with regard to relation with women rather than from a real problem of sexual nature (Fournier, 2002: 91).

The Haitian community in Montreal was infuriated that Judge Dubreuil assumed that it was acceptable for Haitian men to mistreat Haitian women (Fournier, 2002: 100). The Haitian community proclaimed the ruling racist and sexist. Yet on June 23, 1998 the judges' review council reviewed the judge's decision and did not find it racist (Fournier, 2002: 102).

Another problem with using the cultural defense is that culture (for example, traditional notion of honour) could be used as an excuse for committing crimes and may, for example, give license to immigrant men to abuse their wives or children (Goldstein, 1994: 159). While the cultural defense may advance individualized justice for the defendant from a foreign culture, it curtails the rights of victims who are often immigrant women and children (Sing, 1999). Accepting it would mean excusing violence on cultural grounds (Goldstein, 1994). Goldstein (1994: 161) argues that the: "cultural defense is illogical because it does not even protect the entire group of immigrants that is deemed worthy of protecting". In acquitting a minority client on the basis of cultural defense, the court may unintentionally send a message that his or her behavior is acceptable, thereby encouraging crimes among immigrants by its implicit guarantee of an excuse (Sing, 1999).

Ethno-cultural Minorities and the Criminal Justice System

Racial Profiling

One form of possible discriminatory treatment within the criminal justice system is referred to by the term “racial profiling”. An important consideration is whether racial profiling represents the formal policy or a sub-cultural practice. Scholars define racial profiling in several ways. According to a narrow definition: “racial profiling occurs when a law enforcement action is focused on the race of the suspect, so race is the sole criterion for questioning, stopping or detaining suspects” (Ramirez et al., 2003: 1197). A broader definition explains that racial profiling occurs: “when law enforcement officials often rely upon race, ethnicity, national origin, or religion as one of several factors in determining whom to stop, search or question” (Ramirez et al., 2003: 1198).

Some authors assume that the United States is the only country where there are concerns about racial profiling in law enforcement and other parts of criminal justice system. There are, however, increasing concerns that racial profiling is also used in Canada. The most recent controversy surrounding racial profiling within the Toronto metropolitan police force has been in the news recently. The Toronto Star accused the Toronto police force of using racial profiling based on the fact 33.6% of the people stopped by the police during routine traffic stops from 1996 to 2002 were black (Toronto Star, 2004). While some academics criticize the Star’s analysis as falling short of meeting scientifically defined criteria of a good study (Melchers, 2003; Gabor, 2004), racial minorities are outraged by what they perceive as a real problem. More rigorous evidence of differential treatment will be presented later in this section, when the findings of the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System are discussed.

Racial profiling has become increasingly embraced by the CJS following the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, despite being at odds with the liberal ideal of equal treatment (Abu-Laban, 2002: 460). While prior to September 11, 2001 racial profiling was likely to be seen as reprehensible, recently some CJS officials, academics, and many members of the public appear more willing to endorse some forms of racial or ethnic profiling in at least some circumstances. For example, an Internet survey conducted after the attacks in the US by the Canadian Race Relations Foundation found that 46.9% of Canadians approved of racial profiling by the police (Tanovich, 2002: 159).

One of the justifications used for racial profiling is that it relies on criminal justice statistics, which demonstrate that members of certain minority groups tend to be more prone to engage in particular kinds of criminal activities, such as illegal drug use and trafficking. There are various problems with using statistics to assess the degree of criminal involvement of ethnic groups. First of all, they only present reported crimes, leaving out many unreported criminal incidents (Tanovich, 2002: 162; Ramirez et al., 2003: 1199). Furthermore, by focusing on certain areas of town more than others, the police are more likely to find evidence of criminal involvement among residents of these areas. The police may simply concentrate on these neighborhoods, when they are urged to get tough on crime. According to Tanovich (2002), racial profiling can be minimized by imposing more stringent judicial scrutiny of the police's motives for stopping a minority member. For example, in making a decision, judges should consider the nature of police work, reasons for a stop as given to a dispatcher, whether or not a computer check was conducted before the stop, the nature of questioning and whether a police officer investigated a passenger (Tanovich, 2002: 171).

The current rhetoric on security and terrorism prevention implicitly justifies racial profiling in the name of security. Recently, one particular group, the Muslims, have been

increasingly affected by this practice. It is believed that by proposing various security measures of which most target certain groups, such as Arabs, future terrorist attacks can be prevented. Apart from human right issues, some authors (Ramirez et al, 2003) raise several practical concerns with respect to this issue. They suggest that focusing on the “middle Eastern look” to prevent possible terrorist activities may be problematic as there is no distinct middle Eastern look. Some middle Eastern men and women have fair skin, light hair and blue or green eyes. Moreover, Greek, Latin-American, Italian, or Spanish men are often mistaken for Eastern men and stopped at the airports, because of their supposedly middle Eastern look (Ramirez, et al., 2003: 1205). These authors also warn that in response to racial profiling at airports, members of terrorist groups may try to reach to people who do not resemble the so-called typical “middle Eastern look” (Ramirez et al., 2003: 1200). It should also be kept in mind that there are various other groups with potential interest in attacking established western institutions.

Using racial profiling goes hand in hand with the most recent rhetoric on national and international security and terrorism prevention that followed the attacks of September 11. While such targeting is upsetting to minorities, the public is fearful and wants protection from future terrorist attacks. The question becomes, however, whether it is morally right to use racial profiling even if there are some pragmatic justifications for its use. Risks, such as the creation of negative stereotypes of minorities, psychological harm, and stigmatization may outweigh potential benefits (Tanovich, 2002: 161).

Differential Treatment of Minorities in the Canadian Criminal Justice System

The Law Reform Commission of Canada assessed the degree of systemic racism in Canadian criminal justice system and found some troubling evidence (Henry et al., 2000).

One third of judges and 40% of defense lawyers surveyed said that they thought that judges used differential treatment. Furthermore, it was found that white individuals were twice as likely as black persons to be released by the police when suspected of drug offences. The Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System presents the most comprehensive review of studies on discriminatory practices against minorities in that province. Three separate studies conducted for the Commission will be discussed. One of them called “the Systemic Racism Public Opinion Survey”, undertaken by the York University Institute for Social Research involved random telephone interviews with 417 black, 405 Chinese, and 435 white residents of Toronto (Wortley, 1994). Toronto was chosen because of a relatively high proportion of visible minorities living in that city. Blacks were chosen because the Commission’s mandate was to assess the degree of discrimination against black people specifically. Persons of Chinese origin were included in the survey because they represented the second largest ethnic group in Toronto. Based on the high percentage of foreign-born respondents (91.1% of Blacks, 90.5% of Chinese, and 26.9% of Whites), it is safe to assume that many of them were immigrants (Wortley, 1994: 22).

The survey examined respondents’ perceptions of the police and courts. It was found that white respondents were the most satisfied with the ways police enforced the law, followed by black and Chinese respondents (54% of Whites, 37% of Blacks, and 27% of the Chinese) (Wortley, 1994: 39). When asked whether they felt that Blacks and Whites received equal treatment by the police, 41% of white respondents said that they believed that this was the case as opposed to only 14% of Blacks. Ninety percent of those who stated that differential treatment took place in the CJS reported that they believed that Blacks were treated worse by the police than Whites (Wortley, 1994: 58). When asked whether the police treated the Chinese “worse, much worse, better or much better” than white people, close to

two thirds of all respondents answered “worse” (Wortley, 1994: 78). When participants were asked about differential treatment that affected Blacks and the Chinese, it was found that 65.5% of Blacks, 71.1% of the Chinese and 73.9% of Whites felt that Blacks received worse treatment from the police than their Chinese counterparts (Wortley, 1994: 80). Interestingly, a higher percentage of the Chinese respondents than black respondents believed that Blacks were treated worse than the Chinese.

While Wortley (1994) acknowledged that these data could have merely revealed respondents’ perceptions of differential treatment, he found the results troubling. He argued that even if the differential treatment were only in the minds of the respondents, the findings would still have some validity on the basis that what one feels or believes becomes his or her reality. For Wortley, the least the government should do is to look at why a large proportion of visible minorities hold such negative perceptions of police treatment of minorities.

Another set of questions in the same study, which explored contacts with the police, provided “more empirical evidence” of discriminatory treatment by the police. It was revealed that 28% of black respondents reported being stopped by the police in the last two years, compared to 18% of white respondents and 15% of their Chinese counterparts (Wortley, 1994: 84). Also, the highest number of black respondents (10%) reported being stopped by the police three or more times, as compared to four percent of white respondents and two percent of the Chinese sample. After conducting a logistic regression analysis, Wortley concluded that being Black emerged as a statistically significant predictor of being stopped by the police when all other demographic factors were controlled (1994: 96).

As for the perceptions of bias in judicial treatment, all respondents perceived judicial discrimination as less widespread than police discrimination. When asked whether they felt that black individuals were treated by judges “better, much better, worse or much worse”

than white individuals, 52% of black respondents, 36% of white respondents and 31% of their Chinese counterparts responded “worse” (Wortley, 1994: 125). Similarly, 40% of Blacks, 27% of the Chinese and 18% of Whites believed that Chinese defendants were treated by judges worse than their white counterparts.

Overall, the data from this survey suggest that visible minorities were more likely to perceive differential treatment by the police and the courts than their white counterparts. This finding was not surprising given that Whites are in numerical majority with regard to race in Canada. They can be expected to be less likely to experience discriminatory treatment and to believe that it took place in the CJS.

In respect to differential treatment of members of immigrant or visible minority groups in prison, Campbell (1994) found a slight over-representation of black inmates involved in the complaints of the use of force in Ontario’s provincial correctional facilities. The data were collected from 34 provincial prisons covering period from 1989 to 1994. Moreover, information on race was collected for 170 incidents involving the use of force from 1991 to 1993. Of the 214 inmates affected, 201 were males and 13 were females (Campbell, 1994: 15). Of the total number of 214 inmates involved in the identified incidents of the use of force, 36 were black inmates (16.8%). This number revealed a slight over-representation of Blacks since at that time black inmates made up 14% of the overall population in the Ontario’s provincial jails (ibid.). What is more striking than the slight over-representation of Blacks involved in incidents of the use of force by the prison staff is the open racism exhibited by some correctional officers as revealed in incident reports. In one case, a black offender’s mail was defaced by a correctional official who wrote the following comments on the back of the offender’s eight month old daughter’s picture: “Incest is best. Look dad, I’m in jail just like you. Please bail me out” (Campbell, 1994: 24). In addition, a

pair of women's breasts were drew on his daughter's chest and horns were attached to her head. The researcher was unable to establish whether any disciplinary proceedings against the correctional officer were carried out. In another case, an officer hit an inmate several times in the head and called him "dumb nigger" and "fucking nigger" (Campbell, 1994: 50). The inmate called the police, who did not initially lay charges because they did not believe the inmate's version of the event (Campbell, 1994: 51). The officer received a five-day suspension, but when the case was reviewed by the Provincial Parole Board, it was revoked and replaced with a written warning.

Another study conducted for the Commission examined the degree to which visible minority members involved in special governmental bodies, which were supposed to give minorities a voice in governmental decision-making, were actually consulted in the policy making process. After conducting interviews with various governmental officials, the researchers concluded that, in most cases, policy had already been developed when it was unveiled to minorities (Scott and Aylen, 1993). Eight specific cases of policy-making process were reviewed and in all of them minority individuals and organizations that were designed to strengthen minorities' involvement in policy-making had very minimal impact on policy. In the case of a special anti-racism unit of the Attorney General, it was found that while its manager was invited to participate in meetings of senior management, she felt that she was not given a chance to participate in any meaningful way in these meetings (Scott and Aylen, 1993: 65). Moreover, the initial reporting arrangements did not work in practice as she was supposed to report to the deputy Attorney General, but ended up reporting to someone who held a lesser position (Scott and Aylen, 1993: 65).

It appears that both governmental and non-governmental bodies, which were specifically introduced with the purpose of enhancing the role of minorities in governmental

policy-making process, have in practice very little or no power to affect policies. These governmental bodies, like many institutional products of multiculturalism, seem to be more of a symbolic than a transformative nature. It must be disappointing for members of visible minorities to find out that the role of minority officials who were put in place by the government to assist in the policy-making process is purely cosmetic. By ignoring these minority representatives, the government may be further contributing to the political alienation of minorities. Ordinary members of visible minorities may feel powerless to even attempt to address their discrimination since the more educated and supposedly more powerful members of their group failed in their endeavours.

Ethno-cultural Minorities and the Correctional Service of Canada

While Aboriginal issues are not the focus of my thesis, I shall briefly note some of the problems related to the treatment of Aboriginal people within the Canadian criminal justice system, as they are believed to have endured the most relentless discrimination of all the minorities. Aboriginal offenders are highly over-represented in prisons. They made up 17% of all male admissions to federal penitentiaries in 2001, whereas they constituted only 2.7% of the overall population in Canada (Correctional Service of Canada, 2001c). This is even more pronounced for Aboriginal women who accounted for 24% of all female admissions to federal institutions in the same year. There are numerous studies that address the discriminatory treatment of Aboriginal peoples in Canada. For the purposes of my thesis, I shall refer to only one Canadian study based on interviews with 20 federally sentenced Aboriginal women held as maximum-security prisoners. Many of them felt discriminated against or at best misunderstood by the prison staff. Thirteen (or 76%) out of the 20 Aboriginal women in maximum security felt pre-judged by the staff, citing a lack of cultural

empathy (Sky Blue, 1999). Moreover, the same number of women complained about being perceived as manipulative and argumentative, when they spoke their minds. Many Aboriginal women also felt that their requests for the transfer to healing lodges were denied for wrong reasons. For example, they would be denied the transfer because their quietness would be misinterpreted as having “an anti-social personality.” Sky Blue (1999) said: “others were told they were being anti-social and keeping too much to themselves when they were trying to avoid trouble.” Thus, the behavior, which was perfectly acceptable in Aboriginal cultures, was misinterpreted by the staff as threatening.

In 1994, the Correctional Service of Canada adopted an official policy, known as the Commissioner’s directive 767, which aimed to determine the needs and specific cultural characteristics of ethno-cultural minority offenders. This policy’s objective was: “to ensure that the needs and cultural interests of offenders belonging to ethno-cultural minority groups are identified and that programs and services are developed and maintained to meet these needs” (Correctional Service of Canada, 2003). Following the adoption of this directive, the CSC set up the National Ethno-cultural Advisory Committee aimed at providing advice and recommendations in reference to services and programs affecting ethno-cultural offenders. Related developments included organizing chapters of the Black Inmates and Friends Assembly (BIFA) in some women’s prisons, such as Grand Valley Institution for Women. In the West of Canada, the Pacific Black Inmates and Friends Assembly provides black inmates with a liaison officer. Generally, BIFA offers the following programs and services: assistance with preparing for parole, discharge planning, group counseling, and staff development. This organization serves, however, only one particular segment of the minority population and therefore has a potential of creating problems in prison as some minority groups may feel left out.

Other CSC initiatives include introducing the right to interpreter services in quasi-judicial proceedings, such as disciplinary hearings, Parole Board hearings, and the review of parole conditions in the community (DiZazzo and Petrunik, 2003: 13). With respect to diversity sensitivity training for the CSC staff members, the Université de Montréal has offered courses in cross-cultural intervention, which a number of staff from Quebec, Ontario, and Atlantic regions have attended. Recently, the CSC has developed a compulsory cross-cultural awareness training for all new employees (Correctional Service of Canada, 2003).

While the CSC has introduced some services specifically geared toward minority offenders, most of them fall short of addressing their unique needs. Most existing multicultural services offered to offenders provide assistance in organizing cultural days and other occasions, such as celebrating the International Day for Elimination of Racism (March 21), Black History Month (February), and International Day for Human Rights (December 10), to provide positive affirmation for members of ethno-cultural minorities. Such multicultural services do nothing to prevent the politics of inclusion from becoming mere rhetoric. Most multicultural services offered in prison portray an overly simplistic picture of cultural differences and fail to bring about significant changes in the status or treatment of ethno-cultural minorities in the prison population.

The only program which I am aware of that explicitly addresses the needs of ethno-cultural minorities in prison is a pilot program in the Springhill Institution in the Atlantic region called Creating Opportunities for African American Heroes (Correctional Service of Canada, 2001a). It focuses specifically on the needs of African-American male offenders. However, the program is of a local scope and is not offered to female members of African-American communities or to members of other visible minority groups. According to DiZazzo and Petrunik (2003: 12): “it is imperative - given the sizable and *growing* I/VM

[Immigrant/Visible Minority] populations in Canadian federal institutions - that corrections staff develop programs and services responsive to offenders' cultural, religious, and ethnic backgrounds, and communication styles." There is some evidence that minority offenders themselves wish to participate in correctional programs that address their unique needs. Highlighting the findings of the annual report entitled *Overview of Ethno-cultural Minorities within the Canadian Prison System in Quebec*, Douyon states that most ethno-cultural minority offenders who participated in his study expressed an interest in attending correctional programs designed to meet their needs (Correctional Service of Canada, 2001b). Many of them also complained that they were often classified as high security risk and many benefits were consequently taken from them.

One possible explanation with respect to the over-classification alleged by some ethno-cultural minority offenders is that the CSC uses rigid normative schemes, based on studies of predominantly male subjects, which value certain cultural identity formations more than others. As a result, various minority members and women are at a disadvantage (Gilligan, 1993). Moreover, their psychological or mental problems are more likely to be misdiagnosed. Some ethno-cultural offenders may seem pathological simply because of the different manifestation of personality traits and psychopathology in different cultural contexts. There is, for example, some evidence that depression and attention deficit disorder manifest themselves differently in different cultures. Most Pakistani patients that are depressed typically lack some elements, such as dysphoria, guilt and low self-esteem, which are considered as essential in manifestation of this disorder in western societies (Castillo, 1997). Moreover, a study of 80 Hindu psychiatrists found that they reported that all disorders listed under cluster C of personality disorders in the Diagnostic Statistical Manual (version IV) were considered quite normal behaviors in their country. These findings testify to the

fact that the definition of normal and abnormal behavior depends to a significant degree on the cultural context (Alarcón et al., 1998: 192).

Arguments for gender and culture-specific programming notwithstanding, some authors, for example, Pattison (1998: 578), argue that cultural differences should be taken into consideration at the earliest point of service delivery, assessment, and evaluation of prisoners. In his review of relevant literature, Pattison (1998: 579) found that young offenders from cultural minorities tended to respond better to staff from the same culture. Similarly, the American Association for Correctional Psychology (AACP) argues that: “prison staff composition should reflect the ethnic, racial, gender, and linguistic makeup of the inmate population” (Megargee cited in DiZazzo and Petrunik, 2003: 15). In short, arguments are being made that correctional staff should be diverse and able to utilize culturally appropriate methodologies when assessing or providing intervention to their minority clients (Pattison, 1998: 598).

Conclusion

In my thesis, I grapple with the question of to what extent factors such as race, language, and religion may be as significant or more significant than immigrant status and whether immigrant women in prison should be given a special status and receive special programming. In order to place this question in a broader context of arguments for and against multiculturalism, I have examined understandings of multiculturalism and whether its effects are positive or negative for various segments of society. Instead of automatically assuming that multiculturalism policy must be good for immigrant women in prison, I decided to explore its potential weaknesses and strengths. While multiculturalism in theory

seems very promising, how it is implemented in practices may perpetuate stereotypes of minorities. Poor implementation of multiculturalism policies, combined with many past examples of well-intentioned ideas going “wrong”, make me skeptical as to the potential benefits of a unique status for immigrant women in prison. The framework presented in this chapter helped me to conceptualize my empirical research, which enabled me to explore this issue directly with the women concerned.

My interviews and the survey were informed by the literature on the needs of women in prison and immigrant women in community as well as the literature of multiculturalism. In my concluding chapter, I return to the Multiculturalism Act itself and some of the issues raised by the reviewed authors to explore and assess the contribution made by my own research.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Introduction

I used both qualitative and quantitative approaches in my data collection. The two components of my research involve in-depth interviews with ten immigrant women at the Grand Valley Institution for Women (GVI) in Kitchiner, Ontario and a mail-in survey, which was sent in both the English and the French language, to all federally sentenced foreign-born women in Canada. Considering that existing literature does not specifically identify the unique needs of immigrant female offenders, it appeared more appropriate to develop the survey questionnaire following the analysis of the interviews. A questionnaire - developed in English and then translated to French - was prepared after major themes had been identified and probed during the interviews.

Below, I explain first the criteria I used to designate immigrant status. This is followed by the presentation of the qualitative component of my research and its ethical dimensions and the explanation of the quantitative component of my research. Finally, the potential contribution of my study to criminology, correctional practices, and the women themselves is explored, followed by a discussion of limitations of my research.

Criteria for Immigrant Status

A combination of two criteria was used in both qualitative and quantitative approaches to determine the eligibility of potential participants. The first criterion was the inclusion of all federally sentenced women who were recorded as being born outside Canada. I had to use this criterion in order to extract immigrant female offenders from the RADAR (CSC's database). The RADAR did not indicate immigrant status *per se*. Rather, offenders

were recorded as foreign-born or Canadian-born. My second criterion was that potential participants had to self-identify as immigrants. To avoid excluding women who still consider themselves as linguistic or cultural outsiders after years of being in Canada, or including foreign-born women who view themselves as unequivocally Canadian, only those women who met both criteria were eligible to participate in the study. The self-identification criterion was adopted, because it respected the women' description of their own status. Self-identification with an immigrant group is a very subjective experience with individuals, depending on their age, language ability, level of acculturation, and past experience, perceiving it in a different way. The self-identification criterion was also consistent with the concerns of qualitative research, which usually attempts to capture the subjective identities of the participants (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). To ensure consistency the same criterion was applied by asking the same question of both potential interviewees and survey participants. This question was: Do you at least partly think of yourself as an immigrant? (I added "partly" because women may identify with multiple groups of which one could be their own immigrant/cultural group).

The Qualitative Study (Interviews)

The Recruitment Method

Having obtained necessary authorizations and permissions from both the CSC and the University of Ottawa's Ethics Board, I mailed my recruitment letters on December 15th of 2003 to all 20 foreign-born women at the Grand Valley Institution for Women (see Appendix A). In this letter, I informed them about the purpose of my research and invited those women who were interested in taking part in this study to come to a designated area, one of the programming rooms in the prison, at 10 am on January 5th of 2004. In my initial meeting

with six potential interviewees, I provided additional information with respect to my study and asked them to fill out a short questionnaire (see Appendix E) in order to determine their eligibility to participate in my study. I called on the phone additional four women in their designated houses in prison and met with them. All ten women met my criteria for immigrant status. I interviewed them in January of 2004.

Data Collection

In-depth interviews with ten women were conducted during a three-day period, from January 5th to January 7th, 2004. The average length of these interviews was one hour. They took place in one of the rooms in which women typically take their correctional programs. I explained to the potential interviewees that I was a Master's student from the University of Ottawa conducting a study of the needs of immigrant women. I made it clear to women that no prison staff was going to be present during the interviews or involved in their analysis. They were asked to read and sign the consent form (see Appendix F). Eight interviews were tape-recorded and in two other cases detailed notes were taken because the women did not feel comfortable having their interviews taped.

Seven need areas, which were derived from the literature, were explored during the interview: culture-specific programming, migration-related sources of stress, problems with seeking psychological help, parenting issues, vocational skills, language skills, and immigration-related concerns (see Appendix B). I probed the relevance of the immigrant experience in each of these areas. The interview guide was very flexible and open and it was adjustable, depending on what each participant had to say. It could not be over-emphasized that this interview schedule was simply a guide to assist me to encourage the women to share their experiences pertinent to my research topic. I memorized the questions so that I did not

simply read them to participants. Some themes were not explored, when it became clear that they did not apply to the particular circumstances of a respondent. For example, the questions on language-related difficulties were skipped during eight interviewees as these women reported learning English at an early age.

Sample Composition

I interviewed ten immigrant women at the GVI for Women in Kitchener. The interviewees have been in Canada for anywhere between one to 34 years (see Table 1). Interviewees have spent on average 18.4 years in Canada.

Table 1: Number of years spent in Canada by the interviewees

1-10 years	11-20 years	21-30 years	31-34 years	Total
2	4	2	2	10 women
20%	40%	20%	20%	100 %

Why is it Important to Minimize the Imbalance of Power between the Interviewees and Me as a Researcher?

Feminist scholars have emphasized the importance of being concerned about the potential vulnerability of the interviewees during the interview process. While patterns of power depend on gender, class, and race of the researcher and the interviewee, the researcher tends to have advantage because of his or her specialized knowledge, education, and the ability to control the interview questions and research setting (Driscoll and McFarland, 1989: 186; Dyck et al., 1995). The women I interviewed may be particularly vulnerable because of their low economic and educational status and minority status, in addition to having their

freedom taken away and occupying a subordinate position by the virtue of being in prison. Some feminist scholars (Cotterill, 1992: 603) refer to such groups as captive groups.

One way the researcher can make the interviewees less vulnerable is by making the relationship more symmetrical through sharing personal experiences with them (Oakley, cited in Cotterill, 1992: 603). In my case, I found that self-disclosure helped me to initiate dialog with the interviewees. Being an immigrant woman, which I revealed when I initially met the interviewees, helped me to establish contact with the majority of the women. I told them that I was from Bosnia and Herzegovina and that I came to Canada in 1995. Moreover, I indicated that I would be happy to answer their questions related to my experience. At the end of the interview I answered all the questions, including some very personal, such as whether I was married and what type of work my husband did. In case of a couple of women, who very strongly identified with their race (both women were Black), I was not able to establish the same level of comfort as with other interviewees. Those women with whom I connected based on our common immigrant status and experience, would use certain phrases, which included me in their status group. For instance, they would refer to “our” experience as immigrant women in Canada or they would say to me: “you know how it is to be an immigrant.” Furthermore, I was somewhat surprised that being seven months pregnant at the time helped me to connect with all ten interviewees as all of them had children. They asked me various questions related to my pregnancy, such as whether I knew the sex of my baby and when the baby is due. One of the interviewees wrote me a note congratulating me on having a baby, after I had sent a brief message to each of my interviewees, thanking them for their participation in my research and letting them know that I had a son.

Another way to shift the focus of power toward research participants is to try to make the relationship between the interviewee and the researcher as egalitarian and non-

hierarchical as possible (Speer, 2002). This type of relationship should minimize the possibility of exploitation and allow the research participants to respond on their own terms, using their own language and concepts. Some feminist scholars have suggested that this can be achieved by the shared notion of sisterhood, implying the commonality of experience of the researcher and the interviewees as women (Oakley, 1981). However, others have questioned this approach, arguing that some women experience higher degree of oppression than others, depending on their race, class, and age (Cotterill, 1992: 600). Another way to achieve this goal is to place the interviewees at the center of research (Speer, 2002; Walker, 2004). In trying to equalize the relationship between the interviewees and myself as the researcher, I validated their knowledge, experiences and subjective perceptions of their needs. Moreover, I made an effort to convey that their views were valuable and they were the ones who really knew what their needs were (Marshall and Rossman, 1999). I also tried to give them voice by encouraging them to express their concerns and preferences with respect to the desirability of correctional programs designed specifically to address their needs. In the process of encouraging them, I emphasized the subjective nature of the data (Rubin and Rubin, 1995) and stressed that there were no correct or incorrect answers, no right or wrong views.

Apart from the already mentioned approaches to minimization of the imbalance between the interviewees and me, I gave them an option of deciding whether they wanted to be referred to in my thesis by their own first name, a false name (of their or my choice) or no name at all. Moreover I told them that they could break or end the interview at any time. Finally, I arranged for an institutional psychologist to be available in case any of them felt distressed during or after the interview.

Data Analysis

Instead of fully transcribing each interview, I listened to my tapes a few times and summarized key findings. I transcribed those parts that I found particularly important. In analyzing the data, I looked for general themes identified in the literature review and assessed my data against the preliminary research questions (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 149). At the same time, I considered it to be important to let new themes emerge from the interviews. Thus, I looked for both new themes and the “negative” instances that might signal that the patterns identified in the literature might be inaccurate. I was open to conceptually intriguing patterns that might indicate the need to expand the range of issues to look at (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 149). After having listened to the interview tapes and reviewing the notes several times, I developed a simple coding sheet to facilitate organization of the material and develop analytic categories (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 155). Lastly, in order to challenge my own explanations and to probe whether my analysis and interpretations were plausible, I searched for other possible explanations (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 157). Given my intent to conduct a quantitative study that would build on and further explore my qualitative findings, I also focused on selecting the most appropriate topics for my survey questionnaire.

The Quantitative Study (A Survey)

Questionnaire Development

After I had conducted a preliminary analysis of my interviews and identified the unique concerns that women had raised, I developed a survey questionnaire in English (see appendix C). Once I was satisfied with my draft questionnaire, I conducted a pre-test with five immigrant women I knew. I asked my volunteers to check the questionnaire for clarity

(with respect to terminology, the length and construction of questions), comprehensiveness (for example, with respect to the range of listed answers), and sensitivity (with respect to such issues as invasion of privacy) (Rea and Parker, 1997: 28-29). The final version of the questionnaire was translated into the French language by a friend (see Appendix D).

My survey contained 19 questions (see Appendix C and D). Questions were derived from both the literature review and my interviews. Some of the interviewees identified additional concerns, such as not having access to culture-specific foods and products or having strained relationships with their relatives, which were not noted in the literature. Most questions were close-ended. However, to avoid compelling respondents to choose an answer that did not adequately reflect their views, some questions contained an open answer “other, specify” and some room was provided for additional responses (Rea and Parker, 1997). In several questions, respondents were invited to explain and comment on their answers in the extra space provided. Moreover, respondents were encouraged to use an extra page if they wished to express their thoughts and offer feedback to the researcher.

Recruitment Process

Questionnaires were sent to all 36 foreign-born women in the Canadian federal prisons for women. Since there were no foreign-born women at Nova Institution for Women, questionnaires were sent to the remaining four federal institutions for women. The list of women was compiled through the CSC database RADAR. After a follow up mailing the number of women who responded reached 20. Two women did not meet the subjective identification criterion and were excluded from my sample. Moreover, eight envelopes were returned because they could not be delivered to the addressees, which meant that the women had either been released, moved to another federal institution, or were under community

supervision. As a result, 18 completed survey questionnaires formed the basis for my data analysis. They constituted 50% of all initially mailed questionnaires and 64% of the 28 delivered questionnaires. According to Babbie, 50% response rate is adequate for analysis, while 60% rate is good, and 70% very good (1995: 262). The author (Babbie, 1995) emphasised that these numbers were rough guidelines. Considering that some of the immigrant women might not have an adequate command of English or French to respond to a questionnaire, it was expected that response rate might not be very high. The actual response rate exceeded my cautious expectations. Nevertheless, the possible self-selection based on language proficiency is an obvious limitation of my sample as women with inadequate language skills may have particularly acute unmet needs and feel isolated in prison.

Sample Composition

The total number of completed questionnaires that formed the basis of my analysis was 18. Seventeen questionnaires were answered in English and one in French. The survey respondents have lived in Canada for periods ranging from one year to 34 years. The average number of years spent in Canada was 18.6.

Table 2: Number of years lived in Canada by survey participants

1-10 years	11-20 years	21-30 years	31-34 years	Total
5	4	6	3	18 women
28%	22%	33%	17%	100 %

While I do not have any information on my survey respondents' (I am referring to 20 women who replied to my questionnaire) countries of origin, the women on the original list of 36 foreign-born women came from 23 different countries in the following regions: 13 from the Caribbean; 9 from Asia; 4 from Western Europe; 1 from Eastern Europe; 3 from North America; 3 from Africa; 2 from South America and 1 from Central America.

Data Analysis

I used descriptive statistics to present my quantitative findings. They were presented in the form of tables. Each table was followed by a discussion of my findings, their possible interpretations, and their association with the data from the qualitative component of my research. In several questions, where survey respondents circled more than one response, the answer total exceeded 100%. In these instances, I did not provide the total number of women or percentages of women who responded to these questions in order to avoid confusing the reader. The additional comments provided by women were analyzed using qualitative methods (described above). In general, I looked for both those themes and views that were shared by many respondents and those comments that highlighted some specific needs or issues not raised by the majority of women.

Contribution to Criminology

The purpose of this study is to conceptualize and explore an issue that is insufficiently covered in the literature and to provide foundations for future research. Neither criminologists nor feminist scholars have discussed the needs of immigrant offenders in any significant way. To my knowledge, there are only two studies that specifically discuss the unique needs of incarcerated immigrant women: one British study conducted by Chigwada-

Bailey (1997) and one Canadian study conducted by the CSC (1994). My study attempts to acknowledge the existence of immigrant women prisoners, explore whether they have any special needs and obtain some preliminary results as to the nature of these needs. The two-stage structure of my study, which combines qualitative and quantitative approaches, represents an additional strength of my research.

Practical Implications

Although immigrant women constitute a relatively small proportion of the overall prison population, certain regions, such as Ontario, have a relatively high proportion of immigrant women in prison or under supervision in the community. For example, immigrant women constitute 25% of the overall prison population in Grand Valley Institution (RADAR, Correctional Service of Canada, 2003). Moreover, immigrant women make up 50% of all women who are currently under supervision at Women's Supervision Unit in Toronto (RADAR, Correctional Service of Canada, 2003). Properly identifying the needs of immigrant women in prison may be particularly beneficial for certain regions and may help to address the needs of these women in a more culturally relevant way.

Correctional planners may use these findings about the needs of immigrant women to instruct institutional staff to identify special needs of immigrants at the intake assessment, and to make correctional practices and programs more relevant to immigrant women.

Benefits to Women

By participating in my study, some immigrant women might have gained clearer insight into their needs. They might have also felt empowered by the opportunity to express

in their own words what they felt their special needs were. Finally, other studies may follow, building on my findings and conceptual framework and, as a result, the needs of immigrant women in prison may be more adequately met in the future.

Limitations of my Study

While I attempted to compensate for the non-representative nature of my small qualitative sample with somewhat larger survey, the response rate of 50% (or 64% depending on the basis of calculation) prevented me from presenting my findings as being fully generalizable. If language was for some women a barrier to responding, I might have lost input from a potentially very vulnerable segment of the population studied. In addition, for practical and financial reasons my interviews were conducted only at one site, rather than at various sites, which prevented me from accounting for specific institutional cultures and experience. Finally, the study relied on a single source of data: immigrant women themselves. Including data from multiple sources might have strengthened the validity of the study (Marshall and Rossman, 1999: 194).

Chapter 4: Research Findings

Introduction

In this chapter, I present findings from both my quantitative and qualitative studies. With respect to the former, I obtained 18 completed survey questionnaires, that is 50% of the total of 36 questionnaires sent out. Seventeen questionnaires were answered in English and one in French. The qualitative component of my research included interviewing ten immigrant women at the Grand Valley Institution and analyzing written comments provided by survey respondents.

In order to present my data in a structured and uniform way, I start each section, or sub-section when applicable, by presenting quantitative findings, followed by interview data. After quoting the relevant question from the survey I present the distribution of answers in simple tables that give both absolute numbers and percentages. They are followed by a discussion of the findings, which include qualitative analysis of the respondents' written comments. The interview data are presented in a form of a discussion, which contains many direct quotations and compares the survey and interview responses. Since I want to avoid any confusion between the findings of my quantitative and qualitative studies, I add an extra space between the presentations of those findings and use italics when referring to *interviewees* as opposed to survey respondents.

The order in which major themes are presented in this chapter is generally consistent with the themes used in the interview guide (Appendix B), which I used to conduct ten interviews, as well as with the order in which needs of women in prison are presented in the literature review. One difference with the literature review is that substance abuse *per se* was not addressed directly in my study as I decided that it would be too sensitive. Instead, related

issues, such as sources of stress or for example the absence of family members, were explored as they may have led some women to initiate substance abuse.

To comply with the wishes of the *interviewees*, I use names for some of them, symbols for others and no reference at all in the remaining cases. In the consent form, the *interviewees* were presented with three choices as to how they were to be quoted: by their first name, a pseudonym, or simply as “one participant.” All first names are real names of the six *interviewees* who chose to be quoted by their first names. One *interviewee* decided to use an English version of her real name. None of the women opted for a pseudonym. I gave symbols X, Y, and Z to three *interviewees* who wanted to be called “one participant.” I used, however, my discretion to remove the real first name of an *interviewee* when I felt that she had revealed something of a sensitive nature or something that she might later regret saying. In making this decision, I considered both the nature of the environment in which women are placed, and the private or sensitive nature of certain topics, such as children or child-care arrangements. In those cases neither names nor symbols are used. Finally, I want to bring to the reader’s attention the similarity of two women’s first names, which may lead to confusion. They are distinguishable by a slight difference in the spelling of their names: Charmain and Charmaine.

Culture-Specific Programs in Prison

The purpose of the first question in my survey questionnaire was to find out whether immigrant women in prison felt that correctional programs were relevant to their culture and immigration-related experience. The question reads:

Q 1. Have any of the correctional programs you have taken addressed in any way culture-related or immigration-specific experiences?

Table 3: Cultural relevance of programs taken in prison

Yes		Somewhat		No		No Answer		Total	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
-	-	-	-	15	83.3	3	16.7	18	100.0

As shown in Table 3, almost 84% (15) of the respondents believed that existing correctional programs did not address culture-specific or immigration-related experience. One of the respondents added “absolutely” in front of “No” to put more emphasis on her answer. Three women did not provide an answer to this question.

All ten *interviewees* claimed that most correctional programs did not have any culture-specific or immigration-related components. For example, one participant said:

Correctional programs do not discuss any culture-specific and immigration-specific experiences. They teach you steps, just more in general things that they use in, I do not want to say, boot camps. Methods that are used with teenagers, when they do not know how to behave or how to handle certain situations (X).

A couple of other women complained that correctional programs cover general issues, such as anger, which many prisoners face, without any consideration for different cultural manifestations of such behavior. One *interviewee* who expressed a high degree of satisfaction with a parenting program, stated that it had addressed culture-specific rearing practices. Tina said:

Parenting program let me know that the way we talk to our children is different. There is many ways to discipline your children and parenting program helped me realize that. Back home you discipline your children by beating them. We do not beat them to hurt, but still...

While that program appears to have discussed some culture-specific rearing practices, Tina's comments reveal that the Canadian way of rearing children seems to be presented as a norm, based on which all other rearing practices seem inadequate or at best different.

While I did not query them on possible misinterpretations of their culturally specific behavior, three *interviewees* voiced their concern about this issue. They felt that many correctional programs focused on correcting their culture-specific behavior, instead of focusing on factors that had contributed to their offending. As a result, a question exploring this issue was included in the survey.

Q 4. Do you feel that correctional staff misunderstands your behavior or body language, which are typically considered normal in your culture?

Table 4: Misinterpreting immigrant women's behavior

Often		Sometimes		Rarely		Never		Total	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
11	61.1	4	22.2	1	5.6	2	11.1	18	100.0

A great majority of respondents (83%) felt that correctional staff misinterpreted their behavior often or at least sometimes, while around 17% of them indicated that it happened rarely or never. One respondent added "very" in front of "often", while another commented that she felt strongly about it. Moreover, five of the women who indicated that they were often misunderstood by the staff wrote brief explanations clarifying what they meant. One stated that her quietness, which was typical of her culture, was seen as her personality trait. She stated: "I am from very conservative country and I grew up in society where everyone is quiet. So, when I am quiet, they just think that's my personality." Four other survey

participants indicated that their tone of voice or body language was often perceived as threatening. Their written comments included the following: “The way we speak, they always assume that we are fighting.” “Tone of voice is loud by culture but misinterpreted as yelling.” “Normal voice or grown up in a large family and you need a loud voice to be heard.” “When we are in group talking.” They also mentioned that staff misinterpreted signs of affection, such as a hug, and failed to see that crossed arms may simply mean that one feels comfortable or cold.

Three *interviewees* also felt very strongly that the staff misread their behavior. Tina stated:

When I was taking the Anger Management program, I tell them the way we talk, the body language is different and here it is different too. So that when I am talking to you, like frustration, the way I express myself. They think that you are aggressive, a violent person. That is the way we express ourselves because of my culture, my attitudes.

She explained that certain types of behavior, such as loud talking, were considered perfectly acceptable in her culture and that the prison staff should be aware of this. Another *interviewee* (Pearl) explained that being late was acceptable in her culture but in Canada she was considered irresponsible and unreliable every time she was late.

Do Immigrant Women Need Special Programs in Prison?

To explore further the issue of culture-specific programs, survey participants were asked about a need for special correctional programs for immigrants.

Q 2. Do you think that immigrant women should have special programs in prison?

Table 5: Desirability of programs specifically designed for immigrants

Definitely Yes		Rather Yes		Rather Not		Definitely Not		Total	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
15	83.3	1	5.6	2	11.1	-	-	18	100.0

Eighty-nine percent of respondents in the survey felt that there was a need for programs specifically designed for immigrants. Out of 15 women who answered “definitely yes,” six made more specific comments. One respondent mention the need for English as a Second Language courses. Another woman wrote: “they need to know what they can do when they leave the institution to go on with their life”. According to yet another participant: “more programs in overcoming abuse need to be provided with the use of translators so that all the women understand”. One respondent made a following comment: “Aboriginals have several courses about their culture and why shouldn’t we. Plus they have section 84 - for their day parole they can go to their reserve”. Another respondent explained the need to have special programs by stating: “Yes. We are brought up differently and they themselves do not understand us”. Finally, one respondent stated that special programs were important because “otherwise, she is losing her identity.” As the two women who preferred not to have unique programs for immigrants in prison did not make any comments, I was not able to explore the possible reasons for such preference.

The survey results corroborated my findings from the interviews, where all ten *interviewees* felt that immigrant women should have programs in prison that specifically address their needs. When specifically asked whether having special programs in prison would create tension within prison, all of the *interviewees* responded negatively. Charmain

explained: “other women would understand that we have immigrated from different countries to Canada and may have different needs.” The *interviewees* did not appear to share the view of some opponents of multiculturalism that creating special programs would put up cultural walls between groups and reinforce divisions (Bissoondath, 1994). One reason for having special programming was suggested by three *interviewees* who believed that some immigrant women might feel more at ease in a group with other immigrants. One *interviewee* said: “if there is a program to meet our needs and if there are other immigrant women to talk to, we may feel more at ease in prison” (Z). Two participants (Merna and Charmaine) argued that immigrant women should have special programs in prison because they represented a unique group with different needs. For example, Merna stated:

We live in multicultural society. This country is made up of immigrants. And with that in mind, accordingly, it should be dealt with as different minorities in this country, even in the jail system.

This position is consistent with the view of Taylor (1994), who argues that equality is recognized by valuing and acknowledging differences, instead of treating everyone the same. Another argument was formulated by an *interviewee* who stated that immigrant women deserved special treatment because they were disadvantaged and had clearly more obstacles to overcome than their non-immigrants. She stated:

Yes, we need special programming. Clothing-wise, no English, emotional aspects. If you cannot communicate that is another obstacle. Let us say you can communicate, immigrant women have ten times more obstacles to overcome than people who live in Canada. They entirely know the system. They know exactly how to play, who, what...(X).

In keeping with the view of such proponents of multiculturalism as Kymlicka (1998), X explained that providing additional assistance to immigrant women would simply compensate for an unequal share of economic and language rights among different groups in

prisons. In other words, having special programs for immigrant women in prison would somewhat alleviate their disadvantaged status without discriminating against other women in prison.

Recommendations Regarding Special Programs

Several survey respondents made some comments regarding the nature of desired programs even though they were not asked that question directly. They included issues of preserving cultural identity of immigrants, preparing them for the problems awaiting them after their release from prison, and providing more help to immigrant women to overcome the effects of abuse. One survey respondent wrote the following comment on the bottom of the questionnaire: "I cannot even walk around the house. It is so-called restricted area. So, I'm losing my ability to walk. And I'm losing my ability to speak my language. And I'm literally sick and tired." Clearly, her worry about losing her physical abilities is amplified by her anxiety about losing her cultural identity.

In general, *interviewees* made two types of recommendations for programs specifically designed for immigrant women in prison. First, three women, not all of whom were deportable, wanted to see a program that addressed deportation issues and/or immigration rights. A second program, also suggested by three *interviewees*, would explain the differences in the way Canadian and immigrant women behaved. One of the survey respondents mentioned that the staff did not understand immigrant women because they were brought up differently. This may be interpreted in two ways, with one interpretation pointing to immigrant women's problems with understanding Canadian behavioral norms and another indicating that their own culture-specific behavior is being misinterpreted. Finally, one woman recommended a program be developed to help immigrants, like herself, to deal

specifically with the feeling that through their imprisonment they brought shame and embarrassment upon their families. While this was the only recommendation to develop such a program, several *interviewees* addressed the same issue when discussing migration-related sources of stress. Their concerns will be explored in the next section of this chapter.

Comments

All ten *interviewees* and the majority of survey respondents (89%) would like to have unique correctional programs for immigrants. None of the *interviewees* felt that having unique programs would reinforce a division among different groups in prison. My research results revealed that programs recommended by the *interviewees* tended to fall into two groups. One addresses immigration, deportation and legal matters and another aims at introducing immigrant women to Canadian behavioral norms and addresses differences between these and their own cultural norms.

The views expressed by the participants in my study reinforce some recommendations found in the literature. For example, what may increase immigrant women's satisfaction with the existing correctional programs is hiring more staff from various ethnic backgrounds to lead programs or provide therapy (Pattison, 1998). Moreover, the existing programs should strive to recognize cultural differences without presenting minorities as being contained within their own cultures (May, 1999b). Some researchers (Pattison, 1998; Megargee cited in DiZazzo and Petrunik, 2003) insist that staff from various ethnic backgrounds be hired in all occupational groups, including management positions. This change in the make up of the staff might minimize misinterpretation of immigrant women's behavior and body language (noted by the majority of survey respondents and some *interviewees*) as at least some of these new staff members would be able to understand

them. Providing cultural sensitivity training for the correctional staff may also reduce cross-cultural barriers. While misunderstanding culturally different behaviors may be an obvious problem, it is interesting that it was under-explored in the literature on both prisoners and immigrants.

Migration-Related Sources of Stress

The Importance of Extended Family

In both my survey and interviews I attempted to explore whether immigrant women experienced problems with respect to the absence of their extended families in Canada and how they coped with this issue. I focused on the extended family members because the separation from the immediate family is a problem shared by both immigrant and non-immigrant women in prison. I also relied on the literature that emphasized the unique importance of the extended families in many non-western cultures.

Q 11. Are any relatives or members of your extended family (not counting your partners and children) here in Canada?

Table 6: Number of women who have extended families in Canada

Yes, Many		Yes, Some		None		No Answer		Total	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
7	38.9	5	27.8	6	33.3	-	-	18	100.0

Six survey respondents (33.3%) reported having no members of extended family in Canada, while 12 of them (66.7%) indicated that they had at least some.

The proportion of *interviewees* and survey respondents who reported having many relatives in Canada was quite similar. Four out of ten *interviewees* indicated that they had many relatives in Canada, while the remaining six women reported having none. All four women who had extended family in Canada reported relying on them for emotional support and encouragement. For example, Pearl said: "I rely on my family for support and to discuss life." However, one of the *interviewees*, sentenced to a long-term imprisonment, explained that she had to distance herself from her family due to the nature of her sentence. This finding suggests that offenders serving long prison terms may have different needs from those serving short sentences. She said:

The first little while when I came in, I did rely on my family members. I had nobody. And then, depending on the time if you were doing a year or two the connection stays there, but after a while it gets really tough. If you are doing long time you have to be really careful and strong to keep one leg inside and one leg outside, because emotionally it is very difficult. The world goes on. In here if you are always connected and like this is happening and this is happening on the outside. Your mind just... You have to be like a rock. So, I kind of started distancing myself (X). She went on to explain that she still needed a connection with her family or members of her ethnic community, but that the nature of the connection had changed due to a long term confinement.

All six *interviewees* whose families remained in their countries reported that their absence made them feel sad and, at times, overwhelmed. One participant stated:

It is terrible, especially during Christmas and all that, because I am not used to being away from my home. There is a lot of everything, you feel guilty, you feel lonely, scared, afraid a little bit of everything. All kinds of mixed emotions. And especially when you are not from this country. It makes you feel even worse (Y).

While all six *interviewees* found that it was difficult to carry on without the support from their family members, a closer analysis of the interviews revealed a varied and dynamic picture. For example, one woman did not tell her family back home that she was incarcerated and another selectively shared her story of incarceration with some of her extended family members. The former, when asked if it was difficult to keep her imprisonment a secret from her family, responded: “Yes and no, because if they know it could be much harder. Maybe I would feel even worse. I would be more stressed.”

This finding may be interpreted in two ways. It could be that some immigrant women were too embarrassed to talk about their incarceration with their family members or they may fear their families’ reactions. The literature on immigrants suggests that immigrant families who come from at least some non-western cultures tend to be closer knit than western families (Ali and Toner, 2001). However, in addition to the two women who did not disclose their incarceration to their relatives, two other women talked about the complex nature of the relationship with their relatives. Merna explained:

With different cultures - Blacks, Italians, Portuguese - when you come into jail it is like shame on your family. It takes a while to win back your family’s trust. So, when you come in here, you do not always have support of your mother, father, your siblings, aunts, or uncles. When they hear you get arrested they get pissed off. They know that you are going to jail. It hurts. It is shame and embarrassment. They got to take care of your children, your furniture, and your house, everything else. It becomes a financial burden for your family. So, when you first come in here you do not have the support of your family. They have to understand that.

Another *interviewee* commented: “when you want to discuss your problems, your family would say, well I cannot deal with you today” (Cassandra). Despite the claims in the literature with regard to the heavy reliance of immigrants on their families, the findings from this study suggest the complicated nature of the relationship between some women and their

families. Before additional studies are conducted, researchers should not automatically assume, as I initially did, that all immigrant women perceive having no family members in Canada as a problem. As it was pointed out, some women may be relieved that their families are not in Canada, avoiding the potential criticism or ostracism for being incarcerated.

Coping Strategies

The next question explored what coping strategies, if any, survey respondents employed to deal with not having their families around.

Q 12. Please answer this question if you have answered SOME or NONE to question 11. If it is difficult for you to be separated from your extended family, how do you deal with it?

- a) Keeping to myself and working it out on my own
- b) Turning to religious services
- c) Turning for help to the psychologists or other professionals
- d) Turning to friends
- e) It is not a problem
- f) Other (specify): _____

Table 7: Coping strategies with respect to separation from extended families

A		B		C		D		E		F		No Ans.	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
9	50.0	8	44.4	2	11.1	2	11.1	-	-	2	11.1	5	27.8

Note: more than one answer could be chosen. Therefore, the percentages do not add up to 100%. The total number of answers was 28. The percentages were calculated based on 18 survey respondents.

As shown in the previous table (Table 6), eleven women had either no relatives or only some relatives in Canada. Yet, 13 women answered this question. As indicated earlier, some respondents might have felt estranged from their families because of shame or the

length of their sentence. Nine survey respondents (50% of the entire sample) indicated that they dealt with the absence of their families by keeping to themselves. One of them added “nobody cares here” to explain her answer. Eight survey respondents (44.4%) turned to religious services to deal with this issue, suggesting that religion might play a significant role in lives of some immigrant women. Seeing a psychologist (11.1%) or turning to friends (11.1%) were less popular choices. Two women replied using the “other” category. One of them indicated that she dealt with the absence of her extended family by writing letters. Another woman seemed to make the following comment more for herself than to answer the question. She stated: “I’ve lost everything. I’ve had bad luck with people all my life.”

Four of the *interviewees* mentioned the use of some coping strategies to escape the void they felt due to the absence of their relatives. Two of them found comfort in books, while the remaining two turned to religious services to deal with the absence of relatives. With respect to the former, one participant said: “Yes I feel lonely and isolated but I always take pleasure in a good book. I like to read” (Z).

Regarding religious services, one *interviewee* stated:

I have seen the mistake that I have made because of Bible. The Lord will forgive you. I find that the Bible has really gave me hopes up because sometimes it is really hard to be away from my family and my daughter. It is still very hard (Cassandra). It appears that it was comforting for some women to use these strategies to escape the loneliness that they felt in prison.

Discrimination-Related Stress

The combination of being not only immigrants but also members of visible minorities - as nine of the ten *interviewees* were - may expose women to differential treatment, which can present an additional source of stress for this particular segment of prison population (Henry et al., 2000). When asked about discriminatory practices within prison, seven out of ten *interviewees* felt that immigrant women were discriminated against in most part based on their immigrant status. A landed immigrant who was deportable stated:

They treat immigrant women differently, because they are not Canadian. You have to be Canadian or get Canadian citizenship to get certain jobs. The same here in jail. I cannot go on Unescorted Temporary Absence by myself. I'd have to get immigration bail before they let me out unsupervised (Charmaine).

It appears that potential deportees lack some basic rights that Canadian-born prisoners are guaranteed. Another woman explained her predicament:

I did not take my citizenship. I did not know that I was going to commit crime. This is discrimination. I have learned that things could just change. You cannot take things for granted. Being a landed immigrant could have saved me before but now I am deportable (Z).

She went on to explain that a new law permitted the deportation, without the right of appeal, of permanent residents who committed violent offences. I assume that she referred to the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act (C-31) (Department of Justice, 2004). It was passed by Parliament in November 2001 and became law on June 28, 2002 (National Congress of Italian-Canadians, 2000). No appeal can be made if a permanent resident or foreign-national is found to be inadmissible on grounds of security, violating human or international rights, serious criminality and organized criminality. Serious criminality refers to crime that carries a sentence of at least two years (National Congress of Italian-Canadians, 2000). Prior to the passage of the Act, the National Congress of Italian-Canadians (2000) raised some concerns

in a brief submitted to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration with respect to the deportation of permanent residents or refugees without the right of appeal. It argued that the proposed bill diminished established rights of permanent residents and refugees in Canada. The position of the Congress was that permanent residents deserved proper consideration before the government stripped them down of their status. This provision of the Act is also inconsistent with the recommendations made in a 1998 report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Citizenship and Immigration, in which it was argued that the government should protect the rights of long-term residents, especially those who came as children, from deportation determinations (National Congress of Italian-Canadians, 2000). The new act seems to have affected the status of at least two of the *interviewees*, who felt very angry as a result.

Apart from experiencing immigration-related discrimination, three *interviewees* reported being exposed to racism. These *interviewees* expressed their frustration with what they perceived was the different treatment accorded to Blacks both in prison and outside prison. One of them stated: “we are late five minutes and a white person is late ten minutes, but we get called.” With regard to perceptions of differential treatment within the criminal justice system, one woman felt particularly discriminated against by the police and two black women felt discriminated by the judge. With respect to the former, the *interviewee* stated:

I saw a lot of racism. Cops were like: You people, you need to do that in your country. Cops called me bad names. He called me the B word, more than once (Y). Merna felt discriminated against by the judge. She stated:

My co-accused is Nova Scotian. She got a conditional sentence. I got two years for the exact same crime. Judge brought [up] the fact that I was Black. He brought [up] the fact that I was Jamaican. He brought the fact that I had four different fathers for my children, which I didn't. I had two. But I didn't see what the hell that had to do

with the price of coffee: how many fathers I had for my children and where I was born.

Considering that some studies (for example, Wortley, 1994) have shown differential treatment of visible minorities within the Canadian criminal justice system, it is surprising that more *interviewees* did not report being exposed to racism. As indicated earlier, all but one of them were visible minority women.

Two women mentioned other forms of discriminatory treatment. One woman stated that she was subjected to discrimination based on her religion. She complained about inadequate cooking arrangements in prison. Despite the fact that she did not want to eat certain kinds of food for religious reasons, she had to put up with whatever a cook from her house decided to prepare. She felt that there should be a written rule explaining that women could cook for themselves. She resented the situation where it was left to the individual to assert herself and possibly cause tension with the cook and other women in the house. Another woman reported feeling that she was discriminated against because of the lack of access to culture-specific food and hygiene products.

Reactions to Discriminatory Treatment

The majority of the *interviewees* stated that they felt helpless and angry when they experienced discriminatory treatment. One woman stated that she did not actively deal with discrimination: "I just let it go. Sometimes, like you freak out. You feel like telling people is it because I am Black?" (Charmain). Yet, the literature suggests that women who do not actively deal with their discrimination may end up having more psychological problems, as well as physical illnesses in the long run (Moghaddam et al., 2002). If such findings are correct, then the *interviewee*, who did not actively deal with discrimination, may be at a

higher risk for developing either physical illnesses or psychological problems. Two women said that they learned some lessons from being discriminated against. Merna commented:

I have learnt to be more stronger. Other people can let you down but you cannot let yourself down. I do not think I have let myself down to how people have left me down. It has brought me and my family closer.

The two women who reported that they learned something from their discriminatory treatment seemed to be better prepared than other woman to deal with possible discrimination in the future.

Comments

An important finding in this section was that some *interviewees* preferred to distance themselves from their families and lack of contact with their relatives was not automatically seen as a problem. This finding suggests that some immigrant families may not be as close knit or supportive as they are presented in the literature. One reasonable explanation is that immigrant families tend to be presented in a stereotypical way in the literature, whereby cultural differences among various minority groups and individual differences among immigrants are ignored.

My analysis of the responses to the relevant survey questions revealed that most women chose to deal with the absence of their family members on their own, suggesting the lack of trust in psychological services. A large number of survey respondents found comfort in religion to deal with this issue. It is impossible to speculate how religious these women were prior to immigrating to Canada or to their incarceration and whether loneliness increased their reliance on religion. Finally, given that nine out of ten *interviewees* were

members of visible minorities, it was interesting that more of them felt discriminated against based on their immigrant status than on race.

Seeking Psychological Help

Consistent with the findings from the literature, all ten *interviewees* felt reluctant either throughout their imprisonment or at least at the beginning of their prison term to seek psychological help. They cited various reasons for such reluctance. Some *interviewees* felt uncomfortable discussing personal life with a stranger. Charmaine said: “Canadian women are more outspoken and up front than we are. We are very private. We do not discuss personal life with a stranger.” Other commonly cited reasons were culturally based fears of being perceived by others as crazy for seeking psychological help and feeling that prison counsellors were useless. One *interviewee* said: “Yes! Immigrant women tend to see themselves as crazy for seeking psychological help. Canadian women are more likely to seek psychological help because they do not see themselves that way” (Charmain). With respect to psychologists, Cassandra stated: “As I hear from certain inmates who are black that they do not do nothing for Blacks.” Perhaps having access to a psychologist from their own racial group might increase the women’s willingness to seek psychological help.

The analysis of the *interviewees’* willingness to seek psychological help revealed some rather unexpected results. While all ten *interviewees* reported being particularly reluctant to talk to a psychologist, five of them stated that, if given an option, they would rather talk to a psychologist than a family member. Only three out of ten *interviewees* specifically stated that they would turn to their families if they were facing psychological problems. Charmain thus explained her reasons for choosing not to open up to relatives:

Family members seem to get you down sometimes. You tell them and then they go and tell other family members and they have something negative to say. And that is just what you do not want to hear.

A couple of other *interviewees* talked about their family members not having time to deal with their problems. One woman said that she would not share her problems with her family because she wanted to protect them. Kati stated: “I do not want to talk about my problems to my kids or my relatives. I do not want them to worry. My daughter would say, ‘oh my mom is not happy’.” Finally, two women said that they would try to work their problems out on their own, suggesting a lack of trust in both family members and psychological services in prison. These two women may be in a particularly vulnerable position, as they insist on dealing with their problems on their own. A difficult question is, however, whether the prison staff should impose western values by trying to convince distressed immigrant women to seek psychological help or whether they should be left alone to deal with their problems on their own. While proposing a western approach may be controversial, leaving women to their own devices may result in some of them turning their worries inward, possibly causing further emotional damage. It appears that the question of refusal to seek psychological help by immigrant women deserves a special consideration. More research should be conducted to explore immigrant women’s psychological needs and identify culturally sensitive ways of addressing them.

Do Immigrant Women Prefer Counselors of Their Own Cultural Background?

There was one question in the survey that explored women’s preferences as to whom they would want to see if they were abused or had psychological problems.

Q 15. Who from the following list of people would you prefer to talk to if you have been abused or have psychological problems?

- a) a Canadian born and trained psychologist
- b) a psychologist who comes from my own culture
- c) a psychologist who comes from any immigrant group
- d) a religious leader from my own religion
- e) a religious leader from any religion
- f) I do not feel comfortable talking about psychological problems
- g) Other (specify): _____

Table 8: Preferred providers of psychological support

A		B		C		D		E		F		G	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
3	16.7	9	50.0	1	5.6	5	27.8	1	5.6	3	16.7	6	33.3

Note: more than one answer could be chosen. Therefore, the percentages do not add up to 100%. The total number of answers was 28. The percentages were calculated based on 18 survey respondents.

One half of the respondents (9) indicated that they would want to see a psychologist who came from their own culture, while only three chose a Canadian born and trained psychologist. Almost 35% of the survey respondents chose a religious leader from their own religion or culture. This includes 5 women who circled “d” and one who wrote that she would like to talk “to a pastor of my own culture.” One of the women in “d” category added that she would like to talk to a Buddhist religious figure. There were six answers in the “other” category, which ranged from the person from the embassy of the woman’s country of origin to a respondent’s mother to a female volunteer from the same culture “who wants to help and not just [doing her job].”

The interview results were quite similar. Among the ten *interviewees*, seven said that they would prefer to see a psychologist who was either from their own racial group or was an immigrant. One half of the *interviewees* (5) would prefer to see a “Black” counselor, while two *interviewees* would prefer to see a counselor who was an immigrant. The remaining three women were indifferent as to the psychologist’s background. All five women who opted for a Black psychologist felt that he or she would understand better their behavior and life circumstances. Charmaine said: “Yes! I would prefer a psychologist from my own culture because that person knows where you are coming from.” The two *interviewees* who expressed preference for an immigrant psychologist felt that he or she would better relate to their experiences as immigrant women. One of them said:

Sometimes immigrants do not get as much [from a program] as they could because they may feel shy to ask questions. If they ran a program for immigrant women by an immigrant psychologist or a program delivery officer, I think that it would be more beneficial. Women would connect better and be able to ask more questions. They would feel more comfortable to ask questions and they would know that the person is understanding it better (Z).

The seven *interviewees* seemed to have similar misgivings about the staff in their institution to those expressed by the immigrant women in a study conducted in Toronto’s battered women shelters. They too felt culturally misunderstood by the staff (Dosanjh et al., 1996).

Physical and Sexual Abuse

The purpose of survey questions 13 and 14 was to explore whether immigrant women were hesitant to report being abused and if so what were their reasons.

Q 13. Are women from your culture particularly hesitant to report being physically or sexually abused?

Table 9: Reluctance to report abuse

Yes		No		No Answer		Total	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
9	50.0	5	27.8	4	22.2	18	100.0

One half of the respondents stated that women from their cultures were particularly reluctant to report being physically or sexually abused, while five (27.8%) responded negatively. Four respondents chose not to answer this question. There was extra space provided for comments and three of the survey respondents who answered positively to this question made comments. One respondent stated that women from her culture were too ashamed to report abuse. Another woman mentioned several reasons for the hesitation to report abuse: “not to let society know my business, hurts my family’s pride, afraid to leave - where to go or even for help. Services are limited. Security, income.” Yet another woman explained that in her culture there was no tradition of legal support for abused women. She stated: “in my culture the husband rules the family and the laws do not support women that are abused.”

The following question explored the reasons behind women’s hesitation to report abuse.

Q 14. If women from your culture are particularly reluctant to report being physically or sexually abused, is it because

- a) Abuse is considered taboo in my culture
- b) Abuse is not openly discussed
- c) Abuse is not seen as a problem
- d) Women fear being deported if police are involved
- e) Women do not want to reinforce stereotypes against their own cultural or ethnic group
- f) Other (specify): _____
- g) NOT APPLICABLE

Table 10: Reasons why women hesitate to report abuse

A		B		C		D		E		F		G		No Ans.	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2	11.1	9	50.0	-	-	4	22.2	3	16.7	2	11.1	6	33.3	2	11.1

Note: more than one answer could be chosen. Therefore, the percentages do not add up to 100%. The total number of answers was 28. The percentages were calculated based on 18 survey respondents.

One half of survey respondents believed that women from their communities were particularly reluctant to report abuse because it was not openly discussed in their cultures. Two of them also indicated that abuse was a taboo in their cultures, which seems to be a stronger version of the same response. Four respondents chose the answer indicating fear of deportation, despite the fact that Canadian law protects women who report abuse from being deported. Three respondents believed that women from their countries would not report being abused in order to avoid reinforcing stereotypes against their cultural or ethnic group. Finally, the two respondents who chose “other” category added the following comments: “culture, history” and “more abuse if reported and lack of knowledge of services for women.”

All ten *interviewees* indicated that women from their particular culture were highly reluctant to report being physically or sexually abused. They provided various reasons for such reluctance. Four *interviewees* explained it in terms of the issue being perceived as a family matter. Pearl said: “we bear it, we keep it. We do not call the police. It is cultural. Nobody calls the police. It is a family issue, not a public one.” One *interviewee* explained

that reporting abuse by a family member would be perceived in her culture as betrayal. She said:

In the 80s, when I grew up, people die before they report their family members. I've gone through this myself. This is a family member [she lifted her sleeve to show me a scar on her hand]. I'm in a hospital, intensive care, and my mother's only concern is that I do not say anything to the police. Not that I would anyways, but she said that to me while I got tubes, one was falling off my hand. Your child may be dying but your only concern is that you do not say anything to the police (X).

She added that her family would disown her had she reported being abused. One woman did not perceive being abused as a problem. Tina stated:

If your husband hits you, you hit him back. When it comes to an argument, we are re-selling together. It is just misunderstanding. It is different when your husband is telling you what to do, when to eat, when to go out. That is what I call abusive.

One *interviewee* explained immigrant women's reluctance to report abuse in the following terms: "they think that it is something bad and they do not want to say it because it makes them feel bad inside. Sometimes people are angry all the time. It builds inside. It keeps building up until it explodes" (Charmain). Finally, Merna said she never reported her former husband, who physically abused her, to the police, because she was fully aware of how black men were treated in prison. She felt very protective and supportive of men from the same racial/ethnic background. It could also be that this woman, just as did four of the other survey respondents, did not report being abused to authorities to avoid reinforcing stereotypes against her own ethnic group.

Interviewees' Recommendations

Interviewees gave various recommendations as to how women from their countries could be encouraged to report being physically or sexually abused. Two women

recommended that educational programs be developed to encourage them to talk about abuse and inform them about how to deal with it. One participant said: “there should be programs to encourage women to talk about sexual or physical abuse. There is nothing wrong with talking about sexual abuse. [The abuse] is wrong and women should not feel bad about it” (Z). One woman suggested friends should be involved in encouraging women to report being abused. One *interviewee* said that some immigrant women might be more comfortable reporting abuse to a pastor or a doctor. Charmain stated: “women should tell someone that they can trust, like a pastor or doctor.” Finally, two *interviewees* did not think that women from their culture should be encouraged to report being abused. They believed that women should be left alone to make this decision for themselves.

Comments

It was somewhat surprising that five *interviewees* who were very reluctant to seek psychological help in prison would still prefer, if given an option, to talk to a psychologist rather than their family members. Yet, this confirms a similar finding noted in the previous section. As indicated earlier, some *interviewees* revealed that they were not always able to rely on their families for support. The hesitation to ask for professional help, combined with the lack of emotional support from their relatives, may leave some women in a particularly vulnerable emotional state. While traditional western therapy is one option for these women, it may not be the most appropriate one, because of its tendency to over diagnose or misdiagnose minority clients (Stingler et al., 1990). For example, western personality psychologists specified certain criteria (including independence, self-containment, and autonomy) for psychologically healthy personality based on a rigid normative register derived from studies of the white males. This rigid normative stance values certain

cultural/gender identity formations more than others. Thus, many minority individuals and especially minority women risk being defined as pathological. I explore this dilemma in my concluding chapter when discussing an alternative therapeutic approach promoted by cultural psychology. One half of immigrant women in both my samples stated that they would prefer to have access to a psychologist from their own culture. This suggests that women may be able to develop a more trusting relationship with counselors from their own cultural background.

All ten *interviewees* and one half of survey respondents thought that women from their cultures were hesitant to report abuse to authorities. The most commonly cited reason for such reluctance was that abuse was not openly discussed in their cultures. What turned out to be a somewhat unexpected finding was that four survey respondents (22.2%) believed that women from their countries were reluctant to report abuse due to fear of being deported from Canada. This may reveal the lack of knowledge of basic legal rights. Perhaps, introducing programs of educational nature, which include a discussion of immigrants' legal rights, to help women deal with their abuse would be beneficial. Also, more research should be conducted to determine the reasons why some immigrant women are not aware of Canadian laws and the legal protection extended to them in the event of victimization.

Parenting

Discussion of my findings in this section is based mostly on my interviews and does not contain many details. Most *interviewees* found it difficult to talk about separation from their children and seemed to view themselves as failed parents. I did not want to aggravate their distress through my questions. Therefore, in my questionnaire, I included only one

question about child-care arrangements. Two survey participants referred to issues related to their children in an open question about their greatest worry or unmet need in prison.

Parenting Concerns

All ten *interviewees* had children. Six women reported having children under the age of 18, while the remaining four women had adult children. Three out of the seven women whose children were not adults at the time when they were sentenced to prison left them with the children's fathers. One woman left her children with her paternal grandmother, another with her sister, and yet another left her children with friends. One woman, a foreign-national, left her child with her grandmother back in her country of origin.

Four out of the seven *interviewees* with non-adult children stated that they were not given enough time to make proper child-care arrangements for their children. Two women complained that they did not have enough time to make arrangements for their children, because they were not released on bail. One woman was denied bail and another was given 20,000 dollars immigration bail, which she could not afford. She stated:

I was going to fix problems with my children, but Immigration gave me 20,000 dollars bail. Yet I walk out that door every day for work. You see what I 'm saying. How stupid! (Y).

Two women were satisfied with the time frame that allowed them to make proper child-care arrangements. For one foreign-national woman, whose grandmother took care of her daughter most of the time prior to her being incarcerated, this was not an issue.

All *interviewees* had some type of contact with them. Most women either went to visit their children or their children came to see them on family visits in prison. Although none of the *interviewees* mentioned visiting area at GVI, one survey respondent complained

(in question 19) about inadequate visiting area for children. She wrote: "Visit area isn't adequate for children. The hours aren't good either." Most *interviewees* were very emotional and genuinely concerned about the welfare of their children. Two women reported sending money to their children. Two women, whose children remained with their families in their countries of origins kept contact with them by either writing to them or calling them on the telephone. These two women complained about difficulties in contacting their children because of the expenses involved in making long-distance phone calls. Cassandra, a foreign-national, said: "Every time I speak to my family. You know. I cannot talk long because it is very expensive." In addition, two survey respondents complained (in question 19) about having limited contacts with their families because of expenses involved. One of them wrote: "Calls are all collect, so contact is limited." Based on their experience, and that of other women, whose children stayed in their home countries, it may be suggested that women who have to make calls outside Canada to talk to their immediate family members be given an additional telephone allowance to maintain contact with their families. Calls outside Canada tend to be more expensive than those within Canada. While some proponents of multicultural policies may perceive this recommendation as giving immigrant women special rights, it can be argued that it would simply allow them to call their families as often as do other women in prison.

Custody Issues

None of the *interviewees* worried about custody problems upon their release, as most of their children were placed with their own family members. Only one woman gave a legal custody of her children to a family member; other women either gave temporary custody of their children to their relatives or made oral arrangements with their children's caregivers.

With respect to minimizing possible problems with custody issues upon release, two *interviewees* suggested that both women and children should be involved in making important child-care decisions. One participant said: “at least give parents the right to decide where their kids should go if you are from a different country” (Y). Foreign nationals whose children lived in Canada with them at the time of their arrest may find themselves in a particularly difficult situation. They may want their children to go back to their country of origin right away, while the Canadian courts want first to assess their child-care arrangements back home. The foreign national whose children stayed with a foster family for one month before they were sent back home complained that this was not in the best interest of her children:

All they did was a big stink mentally, emotionally destroyed my children and myself and waste the tax-payers money. If they think that they helped my children they did not. It was not in the best interest of my children. They will remember that forever (Y).

One woman recommended turning to church for help. Another recommended turning to an African program (she could not remember the exact name of it) in which one gives a temporary custody to a family who is willing to take care of a child until the mother is released from prison. Interestingly, one woman, whose children were placed with their father and a grandmother, argued that CAS care might be a better option for those women whose families blamed them for being in jail.

Experience with Children’s Aid Society

The Children’s Aid Society was involved in two cases. Both women who had to deal with the CAS had described the entire experience as being a horrible ordeal. They contended that the CAS was responsible for breaking up their families. One of the women, a foreign-

national had to fight in the court to get her children back to her country of origin so that they could stay with her family. Having spent large amount of money on lawyers, she was eventually able to place her children in their home country with their uncle. She stated:

Canada says that they do not like to break up families. What was that? I could not understand it for the life of me. They just snatched my two boys ... They would not let me talk to them, write to them. They would not let me do anything (Y).

Her biggest complaint was that she was not allowed to see her children when they were placed for one month with a Canadian foster care family. She also said that she was not allowed to attend the court when this decision had been made.

Concerns with Respect to Child-Care Arrangements

The survey included only one question related to children. It explored possible concerns that women may have with their children being placed either with a culturally-different family or with culturally-same family, for example, their relatives.

Q 3. Do you have any culture-related concerns with respect to your current child-care arrangements? (For example, are you concerned that your children may lose their cultural roots or that their integration into the Canadian society may be made more difficult?)

Table 11: Concerns regarding child-care placements

Major Concerns		Some		Almost None		None		Not Applicable		Total	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
5	27.8	2	11.1	-	-	2	11.1	9	50.0	18	100.0

Altogether, close to 40 % of survey respondents expressed some cultural concerns about childcare arrangements, while two women had no concerns of this type. For nine women this question did not apply. Three of them explained that they had no children. For the remaining six respondents, I assume that they had adult children, no children, or for some other reason did not see the question as applicable to them. Based on my interview experience, I was not surprised that only one survey respondent out of the five, who expressed major concern with respect to their current child-care arrangement, wrote a comment. She stated: “mothers are nurturers and [children] need guidance and direction. Even though the father or grandparents are raising.” There were no explanations offered as to possible problems with culturally different or culturally same child-care placements.

Among the *interviewees*, none seemed to be particularly concerned that their children who stayed with their fathers or relatives might have problems integrating into Canadian society. Three out of the ten *interviewees* had some exposure to culturally different foster care placements for their children. The children of one of them had only a brief contact with a culturally different foster family and she did not make any particular comments about that. The two remaining *interviewees* were generally satisfied with these placements. One of them offered the following explanation of benefits of children placed with a culturally different foster family.

For example, as an immigrant woman, I do not know how to bring up Canadian kids. I need children to be in the Canadian area as long as they are treating them the right way. For example, we play soccer back home; here they play football. So, I came to this country to make a better life for my children. So, I ‘d like them to know about Canadian culture.

It appears that this *interviewee* wants her child to integrate into Canadian society. She hoped that the placement with the Canadian family would ease her child's transition into Canadian society. She felt that her child would benefit from learning about Canadian culture. Another *interviewee*, Charmain, saw only a minor problem with her children staying with a friend who came from a different country. She said:

My friend does not believe in Halloween or Christmas. So, Christmas tree is not up. I visited them on Friday. I asked how was their Christmas and my son said 'Christmas sucks mummy.' I'm like why and he is just like it sucks (Charmain).

Although generally satisfied, in her comment she touched upon some disadvantages of having children placed with other immigrant families who came from cultures different from either children's home culture or host country. It may be confusing for children to learn and have to adjust to yet another set of cultural practices. These children may have difficulties both integrating into Canadian society and forming a clear cultural identity, since they have been exposed to their parents culture, host culture, and their adopted family's culture. While the literature and some survey participants indicated culture-related concerns about child-care placements, scholars do not seem to offer much discussion on positive aspects of culturally mixed placements. Yet two *interviewees*, whose children were placed with families whose culture was different from their own, had generally positive view of these arrangements.

Comments

Most immigrant women discussed parenting issues that may be relevant to both immigrant and Canadian-born mothers in prison. For example, similar to findings from Fournier's study of perceptions of mother's role in prison (2000), some *interviewees*

complained about being given inadequate time by the court to make appropriate arrangements for their children. Furthermore, some of them shared their disappointments with the Children's Aid Society. While problems with having children in CAS care may apply to both Canadian and non-Canadian families, the latter may also have concerns about being discriminated against based on their immigration status. Additional inquiries should be conducted to determine whether the CAS prevented contacts between mothers and children, as one foreign-national claimed, and, if so, what reasons were given.

Culturally different child-care placements may not be specific to immigrant families as it is a problem for Native families and, theoretically, white Canadian-born children may be placed with immigrant families. It is, however, an issue of an obvious relevance to immigrant women. While two *interviewees* whose children were placed in culturally-different families were satisfied with the arrangement, the literature (Mujtaba and Furnham, 2001; Rosenthal and Roer-Strier, 2001) and some survey respondents noted concerns. Given the contradictory evidence, it may be useful to conduct more studies to determine possible advantages and disadvantages of both culturally different and culturally same child-care arrangements. Also, more studies should be conducted to determine the possible advantages and disadvantage of having children placed with their relatives as these placements may cause integration problems. Yet, it is important to keep in mind that much depends on the specific circumstances and some family placements may be problematic simply because of a variety of pre-existing problems, including domestic violence and substance abuse.

Vocational Skills

A question about education serves as an introductory question to the issue of vocational and educational skills.

Q 9. What was the highest level of formal education that you achieved before coming to Canada?

- a) Elementary school
- b) High school
- c) University
- d) Graduate school
- e) Other (specify): _____

Table 12: Education

A		B		C		D		E		No Ans.		Total	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
4	22.2	8	44.4	-	-	2	11.1	3	16.7	1	5.6	18	100.0

Almost one half of the survey respondents completed high school, while four finished elementary school. In addition, two women had no education at all, while two other women completed graduate school. One woman reported attaining college level education, while one survey respondent did not answer this question.

The purpose of the next survey question was to assess whether immigrant women experienced downgrading of their academic credentials upon settling in their host country.

Q 10. Did you have difficulties with getting your academic training recognized in Canada?

Table 13: Problems with the recognition of academic credentials

Yes, Many		Yes, Some		Almost None		None		No Answer		Total	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
3	16.7	7	38.8	2	11.1	5	27.8	1	5.6	18	100.0

As shown in Table 13, more than one half of survey respondents reported having at least some problems with getting their academic credentials recognized in Canada. Around 40% of women said they did not have problems with transferring their academic credentials. One woman did not answer this question. One survey respondent noted education as her unmet need in prison in answering question 19. She, however, did not elaborate exactly what she meant when she listed “family, education” as her greatest worries and unmet needs.

All of the *interviewees* had some high school education. For five out of ten *interviewees*, the question related to possible difficulties with having their diplomas recognized in Canada did not apply. Three women had come to this country as children and finished high school here, and two other women were living outside Canada prior to their arrest. Out of the remaining five *interviewees*, four stated that their high school diplomas were not fully recognized, confirming the problems noted in the literature (Lee, 1999; Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2001; Li, 2001). Three of them were downgraded to grade 11, while one woman was returned to grade 9. Both the survey and interview findings confirm that immigrant women have difficulties with their academic achievements being recognized in Canada. While the two foreign nationals have not had any exposure to the Canadian educational system, one of them complained about not being able to take high school courses for free while in prison. Cassandra said:

Immigrant women must get the same opportunities as Canadian women have. Do not tell me because you are going back to your country you shouldn't go forward with your schooling, because when I leave I still have to go back to society and find a job.

While Cassandra is a foreign-national and has no ties to Canada, denying her the right to attend high school, to which all Canadians and permanent residents are entitled, may further worsen her chances of finding a job upon being deported.

Discrimination at work

Three out of ten *interviewees* reported having experienced racism at their work places. One woman said this happened while she was in prison and two women said this took place outside prison. One *interviewee* talked about her experience of work-related discrimination in prison:

They [CORCAN, CSC division in charge of employment] always choose the white girls over black girls. Let them do more staff, like staff that we want to do.

That is how I felt when I worked for CORCAN.

Pearl reported what happened to her outside prison:

Once I called for a job and they said to come and fill out the application. But, when I came in, they said 'sorry position is filled.' I went back home and asked my girlfriend to call and she said that it was available. Sometimes on the phone, they do not know your background, but when they see you, they say this position is not available. Even if you ask to leave your résumé, they say no it is not available.

None of the three women tried to actively deal with the discrimination they experienced.

Instead, one woman said she tended to get really angry and the other two reported that they tried to ignore it. One of the women in the latter category said:

When it comes to racism, I just laugh because you cannot discriminate against me without my consent. I have to consent for you to make me lesser of a person. I don't spend sleepless nights over this (Z).

Apart from racial discrimination, three other *interviewees* felt exploited by their employers based on their prison status, because they were paid far less than workers outside the prison,

who performed the same type of work. They perceived this situation as unfair. When asked specifically whether they tried to raise this question with the prison staff, all three *interviewees* felt powerless to fight the prison structure to try to increase their wages.

Recommendations to Improve Vocational Programs

One *interviewee* suggested more vocational programs be implemented to teach women marketable skills with which they could secure well-paying jobs after their release. Merna said:

Once they have programs in here that teach you new skills so that when you get out there you can make some money and not come back to jail, they'll see a high drop in black women coming back to prison. That much, I know!

Merna argued that black women's wants were strictly monetary and that having more vocational programs would help to address these needs. Similarly, two other black *interviewees* felt that prisons should offer more training in occupations that would allow them to make a living. Pearl stated that prisons should have more vocational programs to teach women marketable skills so that they could stop importing drugs. While some women presented the monetary issue as being specific to one particular group of prisoners, it applies to most women in prison as most of them are concerned with their ability to earn a living once they get out of prison. This is exemplified by the comment of one survey respondent, who wrote that among her greatest worries in prison was: "where to start when I get out. To find a job and get some money."

Comments

Immigrant women in prison talked about the many educational and vocational challenges that they face, such as the lack of money and lack of prospects upon their release. Most of these concerns seem to be common to all women in prison. One immigrant-specific concern is that many immigrant women complained about having difficulties with gaining Canadian equivalent of academic credentials attained in their home countries. Moreover, while all women in prison could profit from having more vocational programs, this may be doubly important for immigrant women, as they need to gain some Canadian work experience in order to secure a job after their release.

Language-Related Needs

Four questions in the survey are related to language difficulties. This may seem disproportionate when compared to the number of questions devoted to some other issues. The reason for having four language-related questions in the survey was to try to compensate for the lack of qualitative data as only two out of the ten *interviewees* reported that neither English nor French was their first language or an official language in their country. (For example, four women came from Jamaica where English is the official language). The purpose of the first language-related question was to determine what percentage of immigrant women did not learn English or French at an early age.

Q 5. Is English or French your first language or official language in your country of origin?

Table 14: Percentage of women who came from English or French speaking countries

Yes		No		Total	
#	%	#	%	#	%
4	22.2	14	77.8	18	100.0

The language-status of the survey respondents proved to be quite different from that of the *interviewees*. As shown in Table 14, the majority of them did not come from countries, in which English or French was an official language learned in school at an early age. Only four survey respondents reported that one of the Canada's official languages was their first language or an official language in their country.

As for qualitative data, eight *interviewees* reported speaking English at an early age. Only two of them came from non-English speaking countries. What made the exploration of language-related needs even more difficult was that one of them had considerable difficulty articulating her thoughts in English and understanding my questions.

The purpose of the next survey question was to determine whether immigrant women experienced problems in prison as a result of not being fluent in English or French.

Q 7. If you are not fully fluent in English or French, has this caused you problems in prison?

Table 15: Language-related problems in prison

Definitely Yes		Rather Yes		Rather Not		Definitely Not		Total	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
9	50.0	4	22.2	1	5.6	4	22.2	18	100.0

Close to 75% of survey respondents indicated that having poor command of English or French caused them problems in prison. One woman, who circled “definitely yes”, wrote a comment emphasizing that she experienced language-related difficulties: “not only in prison, during all period of “investigation” and trial, since the moment of “911”...” This seems to suggest that the moment she came in contact with the criminal justice system, her foreign accent became an issue. Given that all 18 survey respondents answered this question, it could be speculated that four women who answered “definitely not” were the women who came from English speaking countries. Thus, only one survey respondent who came from non-English/non-French speaking countries indicated that she did not experience any problems because of not being fluent in English or French.

One of the *interviewees* felt that her poor English caused her problems in prison, while the other woman, who reported English as her second language, said she did not have any problems. The latter, when asked, if she had language problems when she came to Canada answered that she did not as she spoke some English when she initially immigrated to Canada. She reported being somehow able to communicate with people around her. She stated that she focused on improving her language skills by taking English as a Second Language courses in the school she attended after arriving to Canada. When I asked her whether she had experienced any problems due to not speaking English fluently, Tina responded: “I still have a problem with my accent but I cannot change it. I am not shy about my accent. I just ask questions and I am okay.” Tina’s perception that people react differently to a speaker with an accent, confirmed similar claims made in the literature (Colic-Peisker, 2002; Spencer-Rodgers and McGovern, 2002). When asked to provide additional comments, Tina persisted in saying that she was not ashamed of her accent. What mattered to her was to be able to convey her message clearly to others and to understand

them. However, some immigrant women, who have different personality traits and lack confidence, may feel shy or at least uncomfortable speaking to people outside their own culture because of their accent. It would be interesting to explore this issue in the future.

The next survey question was a follow-up question and it explored feelings related to not being fluent in either French or English.

Q 8. If you are not fully fluent in English or French, how does this make you feel (or made you feel in the past)? CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY

- a) Isolated
- b) Dependent
- c) Insecure
- d) Hesitant to initiate a conversation
- e) Other (specify): _____
- f) NOT APPLICABLE

Table 16: Feelings related to not being fluent in English or French

A		B		C		D		E		F		No Ans.	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
9	50.0	5	27.8	7	38.9	10	55.6	6	33.3	3	16.7	1	5.6

Note: more than one answer could be chosen. Therefore, the percentages do not add up to 100%. The total number of answers was 41. The percentages were calculated based on 18 survey respondents.

The largest number of women - just over one half - said they felt hesitant to initiate conversation, followed by feeling isolated (50%). A large number of women reported feeling insecure (38.9%) and dependent (27.8%). For three women this question did not apply and one did not answer. Six women wrote comments in the provided space. Three of them expressed their feelings in quite strong terms: "Feel treated like an idiot;" "Abused, frightened, frustrated, and unable to fit;" "Abused, humiliated, harassed since the first step on the "justice way", i.e. 911." One woman wrote that she felt she had no choice. She wrote

down: “what are my choices.” Another survey respondent commented that she had hard time explaining what she needed. Finally, one woman wrote: “Not participate [unable to participate].”

One of the *interviewees*, who still has major problems with her English, talked about feeling very lonely (both in prison and outside). Kati stated: “I felt very lonely when I did not speak any English. No friends, only friends from my country. My son teaches me English. My son translates everything for me.” She went on to explain that she used to feel comfortable at work (outside prison) because everyone else was from her country, but that she had problems meeting Canadians. Kati was lonely in prison, but was happy that she could take English classes there. She said: “I feel happy about help in English. Now, I feel good. I like English!”

Second Language Services in Prison

The purpose of this question was to explore what immigrant women think about the second language services offered in prison.

Q 6. In your opinion, does the prison offer adequate English or French as Second Language classes and services?

Table 17: Quality of English and French as Second Language Services

Definitely Yes		Rather Yes		Rather Not		Definitely Not		No Answer		Total	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
8	44.4	4	22.2	2	11.1	3	16.7	1	5.6	18	100.0

Almost 67% of survey respondents stated that the prison offered adequate second language services to immigrant women. Five women (about 28%) were not satisfied with the second language courses and services that were offered. One of them wrote: “The teacher is reserved to some inmates and doesn’t want to help ESL or handicapped individuals.”

Kati, the *interviewee* who had difficulties with her English, reported having three types of ESL services available at the GVI. She meets an ESL teacher every day from 9 am to 11 am. In addition, another inmate from her house has been assigned to help her with her homework and to tutor her. Finally, a volunteer from the community comes once a week to practice English with her. The ESL services offered at the GVI seem to meet her need to a considerable extent and receiving help from her peers may facilitate her integration into the prison environment.

Three survey respondents expressed a need for translators, when asked, in question 19, to identify their greatest worry or unmet need in prison. One of them gave a relatively elaborate explanation:

I think that translators should be available for women who are still learning English, and who need to attend Parole Board meetings. It is difficult to provide accurate information and express yourself clearly to them, as they may not understand your English.

Another woman simply identified her “need for a translator here” as her greatest worry or unmet need. Finally, one woman was less explicit in her comment, but her underlying message was that women who felt insecure about their language abilities should have access to a translator in prison. She wrote:

I'm afraid that I will not be able to express myself well in front of the National Parole Board so that I will be allowed E.T.A.s., U.T.A.s., day parole, then full parole because under stress I forget the English words I need to express myself. While all second language speakers have the right to ask for translators in quasi-legal hearings (DiZazzo and Petrunik, 2003), it appears that some immigrant women in prison were either not aware of this or their requests for interpreters were denied. In another Canadian study of ten foreign-born women in prison, most of them complained about not having access to adequate translation services (Correctional Service of Canada, 1994). It would be interesting to conduct further research to explore whether and under what circumstances women's requests for translators are granted or denied and whether the quality of these services is satisfactory.

Comments

Most immigrant women who struggled with speaking English or French reported, as expected, feeling afraid to initiate a conversation, being isolated, insecure and dependent. The best way to help these women to overcome these feelings is to provide adequate second language services in prison. Based on the results from survey and interviews, the second language instruction offered by most institutions seems to be adequate. However, one survey respondent wrote that the teacher in her prison tended to ignore ESL students and handicapped individuals. Since the questionnaires were not marked in any way and women were not asked to identify their institutions, I have no way of knowing to which prison she was referring. Nevertheless, her accusation seems to be of a very serious nature. Based on the comments from three survey respondents, however, it was clear that prisons were less efficient in providing access to translators than they were in providing second language

courses. The issue of access to translators should be further explored in future studies. More research could be conducted on how having an accent affects women's confidence, well-being and social status both in prison and in their other contacts with the criminal justice system and whether the impact is greater in prison than outside.

Immigration Rights

One survey question attempted to explore whether respondents were informed about their immigration rights.

Q 16. While in prison, has anyone ever informed you of your immigration rights?

Table 18: Information on immigration rights

Definitely Yes		Rather Yes		Rather Not		Definitely Not		Don't Know		Total	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
2	11.1	1	5.6	2	11.1	9	50.0	4	22.2	18	100.0

More than 60% of survey respondents said that they were not informed in prison about their immigration rights, while three women (close to 17%) indicated that they did receive such information. One woman who circled "definitely not", commented: "We are isolated, completely."

All ten *interviewees* indicated that they had not been informed about immigration rights. Moreover, none of them reported receiving the Correctional Service of Canada booklet that covers, among other things, immigration issues. Receiving this booklet may be

helpful to the immigrant women as they appear to have no knowledge or limited knowledge of their rights.

The purpose of the next survey question was to explore whether respondents were able to get adequate information in prison regarding deportation orders or other immigration issues.

Q 17. If a woman has questions concerning her immigration status or deportation order, can she receive adequate information in prison?

Table 19: Access to adequate information concerning immigration issues

Definitely Yes		Rather Yes		Rather Not		Definitely Not		Don't Know		Total	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
3	16.7	-	-	1	5.6	9	50.0	5	27.7	18	100.0

When asked whether it was possible to get adequate information in prison regarding deportation orders or immigration issues, more than one half of survey respondents said no. One of those women made the following comment: "I would like to be deported, but the local police [in Canada] destroyed all my documents, passport included." Another survey respondent in answering question 19 expressed her concern about the possibility of being deported to her country. Three women said they were satisfied that it was possible to obtain adequate information in prison. It would be interesting to know whether these three women came from the same institution. I am unable to establish this, however, because in order to assure anonymity of respondents I did not ask them to identify their institutions on the

returned questionnaires nor did I mark in any way their questionnaires to identify from which institution they came.

All ten *interviewees* expressed some concern about a lack of proper information about immigrants' rights and issues. One foreign-national did not think that the staff was obliged to inform her about immigration rights as she could not stay in Canada. Cassandra said:

"Because I am not Canadian, they really do not bother with me. I am getting deported anyway. I have no right to be Canadian or permanent resident. So, why they should talk to me." Her comment reveals that she perceives herself as the outsider or "the other" even compared to immigrant women. Both those women who were deportable and those who were not expressed concern about the deportees' lack of knowledge regarding their rights. It is particularly disturbing that four women who had deportation orders, two foreign nationals and two landed immigrants, did not receive such information. All four deportable women reported being very frustrated with trying to get basic information, such as the date of their deportation. One of them stated:

When I first came in, I asked all kinds of questions as to when I was going home, you know. Nobody knew that kind of stuff. And I think that they should! Then, you ask different people and they all give you different answers. That is kind of a little messy in the head for you, because you already have to be here. I know that I have committed the crime, but I'd like to know what is going to happen to me. Even [my] sentence manager doesn't know. I asked her when am I going home on full parole, she is like oh I don't know but I will try to find out for you. I do not want to hear that (Y).

The four deportable women simply wanted to be informed on a regular basis about the status of, or any changes to, their deportation orders. They suggested that it would be preferable that the prison staff designated a knowledgeable staff member to address their questions.

Discrimination Based on the Immigration Status

Most *interviewees* felt that immigrants received differential treatment in prison. One non-deportable *interviewee* explained how even the law discriminated against immigrants:

Immigrant women are sent back. But what do you think psychologically what is the difference between women. Just because you have a piece of paper that says you are a citizen and an immigrant woman does not have a piece of paper that says that she is a citizen. That individual has the right to apply for day parole and be incarcerated after 1/6 in the least restrictive environment, which is a halfway house. What is the difference? They are both human beings. Do you think that Canadian citizens need psychological help in a halfway house but the immigrant woman does not? That is just a blunt way of putting it. You do not think that that person has been affected.

They have been taken from their children, country (X).

In other words, women who are deportable have to stay in prison until their full release because they have no right to stay in a Canadian half-way house or to be sent to a half-way house in their countries. One *interviewee* resented the fact that people can be deported to their countries of origins after living in Canada for many years. Tina stated: “they return women to their countries after living here for 20 years. It is discrimination! Wake up and smell the coffee.”

Two women, who had landed immigrant status in Canada (one woman came as a child, when she was eight years old and another came 11 years ago as an adult) felt that it was unfair to return them to their countries of origin. Charmaine stated: “I have children who are Canadians. I want to stay. I have six grandchildren and four children.” They both said they felt powerless to reverse their deportation orders, even though they were convinced that they had the right to stay in this country based on the years that they spent here and the fact that their children were born in Canada. One of them said:

It is unfair that you are a landed immigrant and that they will take immigration status from you. They should give us another chance. They don't give us a hearing. I don't cry about it. They're just wicked people (Z).

They also complained, as did one foreign-national woman, that the immigration officers who came to prisons to serve them their deportation orders were very unpleasant. One *interviewee* said: "immigration lady came in and said you'll be deported. She said it in a very mean and vicious voice. I can't fight it. It makes no sense getting emotional about it" (Z). Another foreign-national deportee (Y) complained that a person from immigration threatened her by saying that she would not be able to see her children for six months.

When asked if they received any useful help from an immigration lawyer, two deportable women who were able to get free access to an immigration lawyer said that they were not satisfied with the help they received. It is worth mentioning that access to an immigration lawyer is not automatic as both women had to apply for free legal help claiming humanitarian grounds. One of them explained her dissatisfaction with the advice she received: "they [immigration lawyers] do not know. There is no crack in the law. It is very tight. You cannot penetrate it" (Z). She was referring here to bill C-31, which was discussed at the beginning of the chapter. Given that there was no right to appeal a deportation order, having a lawyer could not help her. Another woman, who had problems meeting with her immigration lawyer, explained:

The last time, I spoke to my lawyer, he is telling me when I get my Escorted Temporary Absence that I should come and see him. There is no way when I get my ETA that I should come and see my lawyer! That's ridiculous because when you get ETA you go straight home (Charmaine).

Charmaine tried to complain about her deportation order to various governmental department heads, including Minister of Citizenship and Immigration Canada. In her complaint, she

explained that her life would be in danger if she were returned to her country of origin. She received a few responses that advised her to contact the appropriate department, which was Immigration and Citizenship. She has never received any answer from that department, however. One deportable woman, a foreign national, felt that deportable women from western and non-western countries were not treated in the same manner. She felt that non-westerners were more likely to receive free legal services. Finally, some deportable women felt discriminated against in prison. One of the two deportable permanent residents expressed her anger with what she perceived as differential treatment. Charmaine stated: "I cannot go to UTA [Unescorted Temporary Absence] by myself. I would have to get immigration bail before they would let me go unsupervised. I get upset but there is nothing I can do. You know what I mean."

Recommendations as to How to Address Immigration/Legal Rights

All ten *interviewees* reported being genuinely concerned about the lack of access to adequate information for women whose immigration status was uncertain. Women who had Canadian citizenship did not have specific questions for an immigration lawyer, but they all agreed that women with uncertain immigration status would need such access. Seven *interviewees* recommended that women who had questions with regard to their immigration status or rights should be able to talk for free to an immigration lawyer. Some of them argued that immigrant women in prison should be able to meet with an immigration lawyer as a group, as well as be able to see him or her individually, when they had some specific concerns that they did not want to share with the group. Three women suggested that prison authorities should hire someone who would work specifically with immigrant women. One woman (Y) said: "If we have questions, no one knows. So, why don't you hire someone who

knows, someone from immigration.” Two women suggested giving immigrant women access to a toll free number where all their questions and concerns could be answered.

Comments

The issue of immigration rights appears to be a concern to the majority of the participants in my study. The majority of *interviewees*, regardless of their deportation status, were concerned that women who were deportable lacked some basic knowledge with respect to their deportation orders and legal services to which they were entitled. Women appeared to be particularly concerned about deporting permanent residents to their countries of origin, after years of living in Canada. All *interviewees* agreed that immigrant women should have free access to an immigration lawyer. Moreover, three *interviewees* said they would like to have one member of the prison staff designated to specifically deal with their immigration concerns, as regular staff members seemed unable to answer even basic questions. This issue, unlike any other, appeared to touch all of the respondents in my study. Based on their postulates, it can be recommended that immigrant women in prison are provided with both access to a competent person who could answer their questions and to an immigration lawyer, where required.

I do not think that providing special information and assistance to immigrant women with respect to their immigration rights could be legitimately criticized as a special treatment. It would simply alleviate their worries with regard to their unique legal status and reduce the level of uncertainty for them and their families. While having access to free legal services may not save them from being returned to their countries of origins, they may be enabled at least to try to change their deportation status or negotiate the conditions.

Culture-Specific Foods and Other Products

Concerns related to culture-specific food and other products were voiced by five *interviewees* when they were given an opportunity at the end of the interview to raise any concerns they might have. Therefore, this issue was further explored in the survey.

Q 18. Do you have access in prison to food and beauty or hygiene products specific to your culture?

Table 20: Access to culture-specific food and other products

Definitely Yes		Rather Yes		Rather Not		Definitely Not		No Answer		Total	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
5	27.8	5	27.8	1	5.6	6	33.2	1	5.6	18	100.0

While five survey respondents did not see it as an issue and another five seemed relatively satisfied, seven women (almost 39%) indicated having problems accessing culture-specific food and products. Eight survey respondents provided additional comments. One survey respondent who answered “definitely yes,” explained how she had access to culture-specific products and food: “through BIFA [Black Inmates and Friends Assembly] group outside shopping.” Two respondents who circled “rather yes” stated: “Need different kind of cream for my face but you are not allowed to have it” and “not allow to buy your own cream.” One respondent who circled “rather not” explained: “My hair is very thick and unmanageable sometimes. I need a special kind of hair products.” Finally, four women who opted for “definitely not” made the following comments: “Because it is a prison,” “Mehandi, coconut oil, spices,” “Because we have a standard food order for the houses,” and “I cannot

buy [my country's] food and beauty products." One survey respondent identified her problems with accessing culture-specific products as her greatest worry or unmet need in prison. (question 19). She wrote: "when I am sick I cannot have the stuff (ointment or some syrup)." Based on the distribution of responses, it would be interesting to find out whether women in some prisons had better access to culture-specific products than in others.

Although I did not raise this issue directly in my interviews, five out of ten *interviewees* complained about the lack of access to culture-specific food and hygiene or beauty products. For example, Charmain commented that: "they should have more culture-specific food for immigrant women." The results of both the survey and my interviews pointed that almost one half of immigrant women were not satisfied, on cultural grounds, with the choices offered in prison canteens. The *interviewees* did not demand the canteen food be completely replaced with culturally specific food, but rather said they would like to see more options for immigrant women. While providing access to culture-specific food or products would equalize immigrant women's rights with the rights of others, prison authorities seem to refuse to offer such choices. Some *interviewees* mentioned that at one point in the past, certain culture-specific foods and products were available but they were discontinued. Several *interviewees* felt discouraged and tired of fighting as they have already fought unsuccessfully for three years to get more culture-specific products. It is worth noting that the *interviewees* at the GVI can order culture-specific food or products from outside, but they complained that they were very expensive if delivered in such a way. One woman complained about not being able to receive parcels from her family. She said that it would be a lot cheaper for her family to send her some culture-specific products or food in boxes, but this was not allowed. One woman also complained about restricted access to her hair

extensions that she and many other black women purchase outside. Merna said: “It is a process that we have to go through to get our hair. They keep it locked. We have to get the staff to get us the hair.” She went on to explain that a few women had escaped using hair extensions for disguise, but that most of these women were not black women. According to Merna, black women should not be punished for something that other women have misused in the past to escape from prisons.

Comments

Given that I do not know how many of the *interviewees* answered my survey, it is hard to speculate how many of the seven survey respondents who indicated that they had no access to culture-specific products were the women I interviewed. Based, however, on women’s strong feelings about this issues, it appears reasonable to recommend that prison staff be more open to ordering more cultural foods or products to respond to the needs of immigrant women. More research should be conducted to determine what types of culture-specific products and food women need the most and best strategies to order and deliver them to women. While the *interviewees* from various ethno-cultural backgrounds complained about the lack of access to culture-specific products, black women felt particularly strongly about this issue.

Other Concerns Raised by Survey Respondents

Overall, 14 survey respondents added various additional concerns and complains, when asked in the final question in the survey (question 19) to identify their greatest needs and worries in prison. Some of their comments are included in the relevant sections throughout the chapter; other answers were either very specific (for example, one woman

complained about staff taking her on E.T.A.) or very vague. For example, one woman wrote: “misunderstanding,” without elaborating to what type of misunderstanding she referred. It is likely, however, that as a prisoner from another culture she feels often misunderstood by others. Another two survey respondents mentioned that everything was very slow. One of them wrote: “none of criteria meet my needs, everything is so slow.” Another woman wrote: “freedom, it takes so long to get anything approved.” It would be inappropriate for me to speculate as to what exactly they meant.

Concluding Remarks

In this chapter, I presented in detail my research results. Each section was concluded with a brief discussion of their possible interpretations and implications. A more in-depth analysis of my findings will be presented in my conclusion. Therefore, I am going to reiterate here only my major findings. They will be grouped in four categories: the unequivocal findings that had strong support among both survey respondents and *interviewees*, findings consistent with my expectations, unexpected findings, and contradictory findings. My expectations as to the needs and wants of women were based on the reviewed literature.

Two themes that appeared to concern my respondents most were culture-specific programs and immigration rights. All of the *interviewees* and virtually all survey respondents (89%) argued that they should have culture-specific programs in prison, tailored to their specific needs and experiences as immigrants. They also felt quite strongly about cultural differences and the need to explore and address them. Most of the survey respondents (83%) stated that the staff misinterpreted certain types of their culture-specific behaviours, that is behaviours considered normal in their culture. While this issue was not specifically raised by me during the interviews, three *interviewees* voiced their concern with respect to their

culture-specific behavior being misunderstood by the prison staff. Consequently, this question was included in the survey. It is suggested more research be conducted to determine what types of behavior are most likely to be misunderstood by the staff and how to help the staff to avoid misjudging immigrant women's behavior. The research participants also emphasized the need to have programs that would inform them about their legal and immigration rights. They felt very strongly about the lack of assistance in prison with immigration and deportation issues. Moreover, seven *interviewees* felt that most immigrant women in prison were discriminated against based on their immigration status. It appears that immigrant women have at best a very limited knowledge of their basic immigration and legal rights. It is especially disturbing that women who were deportable were unable to receive adequate information in prison with respect to their deportation orders or legal assistance.

As predicted, it was found that most immigrant women were reluctant to ask for psychological help and that they had some problems with getting their academic credentials recognized in Canada. Nevertheless, despite their reluctance to seek professional psychological help, one half of survey respondents and one half of *interviewees* indicated that they would talk to a psychologist who came from their own culture, if they were facing psychological problems or were abused. It was interesting that one third of the survey respondents would prefer to talk to a religious leader when they faced psychological problems or were abused. It may, however, be understandable that some women turned to religion to deal with their problems given the absence of a social support system and the economic and social hardships that many immigrants face upon coming to a new country. Consistent with the findings presented in the literature, the respondents in my study also believed that immigrant women tended to feel reluctant to report sexual and physical abuse, a subject generally not discussed in their culture. This view was shared by one half of survey

respondents and practically all the *interviewees*. It was interesting that four survey respondents indicated that immigrant women from their culture would hesitate to report abuse to the authorities due to fear of being deported, confirming that some immigrant women lack the knowledge of their immigration/legal rights. Some respondents expressed the need for programs designed specifically for immigrant women to encourage them to open up and recognize the problem of abuse. With respect to their academic credentials, it was expected that many women would have difficulties because most countries do not fully recognize academic credentials from people who migrate from other countries. It would be interesting to know whether immigrant women who come from western countries experience fewer problems in this respect.

Among somewhat unexpected findings was that some immigrant women's ties to their extended family members were rather tenuous and that the second language instruction offered in prison was judged quite adequate and even responsive to individual needs. My analysis of my interviews revealed that some immigrant families might not be as close knit and supportive as they were presented in the literature. While all *interviewees* reported being reluctant to seek psychological help in prison, five of them indicated that they would rather talk to a psychologist than a family member. It may be that immigrants from non-western countries tend to be presented in a stereotypical fashion, whereby they are grouped into one general category without much consideration for individual and cross-cultural variations in behavior and cultural practices. With respect to language instruction, I expected that women would have more problems with receiving adequate assistance. It appears that their needs are quite adequately met. What seemed to be surprising and worrisome was that some survey respondents were either not aware that they had the right to ask for interpreters in quasi-legal hearings or that their requests were denied. There was clearly some anxiety about being

unable to express themselves adequately in front of the National Parole Board. One interesting language-related finding that may intrigue some researchers was that one survey respondent felt discriminated against based on her accent once she came in contact with the criminal justice system. Finally, I was somewhat surprised that five *interviewees*, when asked to mention any additional problems they have faced in prison, identified the issue of access to culture-specific food and hygiene or beauty products. The results of the survey showed that seven respondents felt strongly about this issue. While it is understandable that losing access to culture-specific products may cause a number of inconveniences to women, I did not predict it to be an issue of such importance. Black *interviewees* tended to be particularly concerned about having limited access to hair relaxers and special facial creams.

As for contradictory evidence, the results of the survey and interviews seemed somewhat discrepant with respect to culturally different child placements. While none of the *interviewees* specifically expressed any concern with regard to possible problems with their integration of their children into Canadian society, two of them shared their positive experiences with culturally different child-care arrangements. However, 40% of survey respondents expressed a concern with either leaving their children with families that belonged to culture other than their own or with relatives, which could lead to possible problems with integration into Canadian society. It is impossible to know the exact breakdown between these two types of concerns because the question was quite general. It is recommended more research be conducted to explore both advantages and disadvantages of these two types of placements. Yet, based on my experience, it is a highly emotionally charged topic and potential researchers should be equipped to deal with it in a very sensitive way.

Chapter 5: Concluding Discussion

Locating my Research within a Multicultural Framework

I am aware that research findings and recommendations rarely reach or help those for whom they were intended. Nevertheless, my intent in doing this research was to help incarcerated immigrant women. As such, I tried to make my thesis as relevant as possible to the women concerned and address issues that are important to them. My research project differed from typical multicultural initiatives, which rarely focus on groups that are marginalized and alienated even from their own ethnic communities. Many multicultural initiatives, as well as multiculturalism itself, have been criticized for diverting attention away from important and difficult issues to less important ones, for example by over-focusing on the validation of superficial expressions of ethnic culture and folk art (Parhar, 1990; Nash, 2001). I kept this criticism in mind when designing and conducting my survey and interviews and throughout the process of writing this thesis. I tried to address truly important and complex issues, such as discrimination related to the immigrant status, which if addressed could improve the status of incarcerated immigrant women in prison. Above all, I tried to listen to what the women concerned had to say about their plight and what remedies they envisaged. The awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of multicultural policies was particularly helpful in elaborating relevant practical recommendations.

Do Immigrant Women Have Special Needs?

This exploratory study on the needs of immigrant women in prison has shown that they have some unique needs. Seven specific issues will be discussed here: culture-specific programs in prison; psychological needs; parenting needs; vocational needs; language-related

difficulties; immigration-related concerns; and the availability of culture-specific foods and other products.

As shown in the review of the literature, various studies have found that immigrants are hesitant to seek mainstream mental health and other community services because the help that is available is, in their opinion, culturally and linguistically foreign (Russell et al., 1996; Markovic and Manderson, 2000). In the light of this reluctance, some scholars have proposed that immigrant women's needs be met through culture-specific programs, designed around their unique needs, and aspirations (Perhar, 1990; Pattison, 1998). In general, the results of my study with respect to culture-specific programs were consistent with the claims of those scholars who argue for culture-specific programs for minorities. All ten *interviewees* and 16 out of 18 survey respondents (89%) expressed the need to have unique programs in prison to address their needs. While the participants in my study never used the term "culturally foreign" to describe existing correctional programs, all ten *interviewees* and 15 survey respondents (83%) indicated that none of these programs discussed in any way culture-specific or immigration-specific experience. The absence of culturally-relevant content in the existing correctional programs, coupled with the feeling of being misunderstood by the staff - a concern raised by 15 survey respondents (83%) and three *interviewees* - likely contributed to the women's support for unique programming for immigrants. As for the specific proposals, the highest number of women recommended a program on immigration rights and a program that would address differences between Canadian and immigrant women's cultural behavioral norms.

While my literature review did not specifically focus on the willingness of immigrant women to seek psychological help, several studies pointed to their reluctance to both seek help of mental health professionals and to report abuse to authorities (Currie, 1995; Russell

et al., 1996; Markovic and Manderson, 2000). According to some researchers, migration-related sources of stress, such as the exposure to racism and the absence of an informal social support, can adversely affect the psychological functioning of immigrant women (Ali and Toner, 2001; Scurfield and Mackey, 2001; Soskolne, 2001; Stutters and Ligon, 2001; Garcia et al, 2002; Moghaddam, 2002). Apart from some unexpected findings with respect to support from their family members, most of my findings related to immigrant women's psychological needs appeared to fall in line with those from the literature. All ten *interviewees* reported feeling particularly hesitant to seek psychological services in prison and to report abuse to authorities. Moreover, one half of the survey respondents indicated that women from their countries were hesitant to report abuse to authorities. While I have not specifically scrutinized the relationship between racism and psychological distress, ten *interviewees*, of whom three reported being exposed to racism and seven to discrimination based on their immigration status in prison, expressed anger and frustration with the treatment to which they were subjected.

As for the absence of an informal social support system, six survey participants and two thirds of *interviewees* reported having no relatives in Canada. It also appeared that many of the participants lacked support from their friends, as only one survey participant indicated that she would turn to friends to deal with the absence of her relatives in Canada. While, all of the *interviewees* indicated that they felt distressed by the absence of their relatives, a closer analysis of the interviews revealed that some of them felt they were unable to rely on their family members for support in times of crises. The strained relationships between some women and their families can be inferred from two types of situation. Firstly, two *interviewees* did not reveal the fact of their incarceration to some or all of their extended family members. Secondly, five *interviewees*, who initially reported being highly reluctant to

seek psychological help in prison, stated that they would rather talk to a psychologist than a family member, if they were to face psychological crises. Having, at best, a limited social support system in place in their host country, coupled with being reluctant to seek professional psychological services may place some immigrant women in a particularly vulnerable position. What may increase their willingness to seek psychological help in prison is hiring more psychologists from various ethno-cultural backgrounds. It was very clear from my survey and interviews that many immigrant women in prison have no one to turn to when they have psychological problems. Some of them would be inclined, however, to speak to a religious figure or counselor from their own culture or religion or at least of immigrant background.

While immigrant and non-immigrant women have many problems in common with respect to parenting issues, one immigrant-specific issue emerged from the review of the literature. When children are placed with a culturally different foster family, they may be confused because of the exposure to different parenting styles and cultural practices (Mujtaba and Furnham, 2001; Rosenthal and Roer-Strier, 2001). Yet two *interviewees* in my study who left their children with culturally different foster families had fairly positive perceptions of such placements. One *interviewee* said she was happy that her children had an opportunity to stay with a Canadian family as it eased their integration into Canadian society. This more positive side of mixed placements was not explored in the literature reviewed. Two other issues were raised by the participants in my study, which might be unique to immigrant women or foreign-nationals in prison. One issue concerns the limited contact with their families, including children staying with relatives back home, due to the expenses involved in making long-distance phone calls, which are considerably greater than the charges for calls within Canada. The second issue related to the reality of having to fight child welfare

officials in the Canadian courts to allow their children to stay with their families in their countries of origin rather than being placed with foster families in Canada.

Various Canadian and international studies have revealed that immigrants have, on average, higher unemployment rates and lower income than non-immigrants (Canadian Center for Justice Statistics, 1996; Lee, 1999; Soskolne, 2001; Zentgraf, 2002). Many immigrants also experience problems with getting their education recognized and when they find employment it is often unrelated to and not commensurate with their training. Many of the participants in my study - ten survey respondents and four out of the five *interviewees* to whom the question applied - reported having problems with getting their academic achievements recognized in Canada. One foreign-national *interviewee* complained about not being able to take high school classes for free in prison. Finally, three *interviewees* talked about racism at their work places (one referred to work-related racism she experienced in prison and two women referred to racism they experienced outside prison). Having a higher likelihood of experiencing work-related racism can further reduce immigrant women's chances of finding or maintaining a job in their host countries.

The reviewed literature on the language-related needs of immigrants indicates that feeling isolated is one of the biggest problems that foreign-born women face both in prison and community (Task Force, 1999; Russell and White, 2001). The lack of language skills is an important factor preventing them from socially connecting with others. Several studies have also revealed that having an accent, can be perceived as problematic by native speakers and can make it difficult for immigrants to form a new identity (Colic-Peisker, 2002; Spencer-Rogers and McGovern, 2002). With regard to the availability of adequate second language services offered to immigrants in prison and in the community, some Canadian and

international studies have shown that translation services are not always available when they are requested (Correctional Service of Canada, 1994; Small et al., 1999).

The results of my study have confirmed that isolation was one of the greatest problems faced by immigrant women in prison. Social isolation, hesitation to initiate a conversation and feeling insecure were other frequently selected answers by the survey participants. Moreover, according to one *interviewee* and one survey respondent, having an accent was perceived as problematic, thus echoing observations in the literature. The survey respondent's comment implied that her accent was a problem particularly once she came in contact with CJS. She alluded to her accent as a possible source of discrimination. With respect to the adequacy of second language services in prison, two thirds of survey respondents found them definitely or rather adequate. However, three survey respondents identified lack of access to translation services in prison as one of their greatest worries in prison. While the number of women who complained about translation services appears relatively low, the real number of dissatisfied women could be higher, as the question related to the availability of translation services *per se* was not included in the questionnaire.

In my literature review on the needs related to immigrant women's legal status in Canada, various studies in the community and one prison study involving ten foreign-born prisoners in Kingston penitentiary have found that immigrant women are concerned with respect to not being properly informed about immigration/legal rights (MacLeod and Shin, 1988; CSC, 1994 Currie, 1995; Dosanjh et al., 1996; Manjivar and Solcido, 2000). The results of my study bore out these findings. All ten *interviewees* and 11 out of 18 survey respondents (61%) indicated that they were not informed in prison about their immigration/legal rights. While all *interviewees* rated immigration/legal rights as being highly important, some of them, especially those facing the possibility of deportation to their

countries of origin, identified them as critical. The *interviewees* who were deportable complained about experiencing difficulties with obtaining even basic information, such as the date of their deportation. In addition, 56% of survey respondents stated that a woman who had questions related to her deportation order would not be able to receive adequate information in prison. All of the ten *interviewees* felt very strongly that immigrants in prison should receive adequate information with respect to their legal/immigration rights either from an immigration lawyer or from a competent person who could answer their questions.

The analysis of both my interviews and survey questionnaire revealed that some immigrant women felt very strongly about being at a disadvantage with respect to the availability of culture-specific foods and other products in prison compared to their non-immigrant counterparts. This issue emerged from my interviews even though I did not ask about it directly. At the end of the interview, when they were given the opportunity to raise any additional issues, five *interviewees* voiced their concerns with respect to having limited access to culture-specific foods, hygiene products, hair and skin products and other cosmetics. As a result, a related question was included in the survey. The analysis of the survey responses revealed that nearly 40% of survey participants were not satisfied with the availability of culture-specific foods and products in their prison. It is likely that immigrant women who continued to use culture-specific foods and/or products after migrating to Canada were particularly affected by this issue. These products may also include traditional medicines, as mentioned by one survey respondent. Although I did not explore in my study, the health related needs of immigrant women, the lack of familiar diet and medical remedies may be expected to have a potentially negative effect on their health.

Is Special Treatment of Immigrant Women in Prison Consistent with Canada's Multiculturalism Act?

The wish of women in my study to have culture-specific programming in prison to address their unique needs appear to fit within the framework of Canadian Multiculturalism Policy. Both *interviewees* and survey participants recommended various types of culture-specific programs, including immigration-related programs, programs related to differences between Canadian culture and their own cultural behavioral norms, second language instruction, programs to address being abused, and programs that would help them to stay in touch with their cultural roots. The aim of the first four types of program is to overcome various barriers to full participation in Canadian society, such as uncertain legal status in the country, culture-related misunderstandings, language difficulties, and domestic abuse. This corresponds with one of the main goals of the Canadian Multiculturalism Policy. Addressing immigrant women's needs in these four areas would simply help them deal with their concerns without depriving others of their fair share of political or economic resources in prison (Kymlicka, 1998). Another goal of Canadian Multiculturalism Policy is to acknowledge the freedom of all members of society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage. Encouraging women to stay in touch with their cultural roots through attending culture-specific programs would fit with this goal, as it would allow them to preserve their cultural heritage. This would also endorse the understanding of multiculturalism in Canada as legitimating multiple identities (Curtis et al., 1988). Moreover, providing culture-specific programs to encourage women's cultural growth is consistent with Taylor's notion of equality, whereby true equality means acknowledging differences (1994).

The idea of culture-specific programming has some obvious limitations. Apart from making it almost impossible to design a program for each particular group of minority

inmates (in the case of programs that help incarcerated immigrant women to address their cultural identities), these programs could separate the minority groups from the majority based on ethnic characteristics. Having separate programs for each ethnic group in prison could foster the development of communities where ethnicity and/or race may be overly emphasized, possibly creating hostility toward immigrants in prison (Bissoondath, 1994). The women's suggestion to have programs that discuss the difference between their own cultural norms and Canadian norms, confirms that most Canadian immigrants tend to be willing to integrate into Canadian society (Kymlicka, 1998), despite language and cultural barriers that could prevent them from forming new identities in their host country. However, there is a danger that immigrant women may feel that they have to suppress their own identity and fully assimilate to be accepted in their host society.

Another demand, which will be discussed later in more detail, calls for culturally appropriate psychological assistance to immigrant women in prison. It also appears to be congruent with one of the goals of Canadian Multiculturalism Act, which is to help minorities to overcome barriers to full participation in Canadian society. It may help some minority women participate more fully in society if they are enabled to address their specific psychological needs through culturally relevant counseling. Giving immigrant women an opportunity to take part in culture appropriate therapy and/or hiring more psychologists from diverse ethno-cultural backgrounds, as suggested by some of the participants in my study, would simply mean awarding them access to services that are equivalent to those utilized by other prisoners (Kymlicka, 1998). In other words, these recommendations aim at equalizing the choices available to immigrant and non-immigrant women in prison.

Nevertheless, there are clear limitations to the proposed methods of alleviating cultural barriers to obtaining psychological help. For example, the proposals made by some

interviewees to have a psychologist from the same *racial* background testify to the importance of considering multiple identities, such as race, class, or religious status, in addition to one's cultural/ethnic identity. Many multicultural scholars have been rightly criticized for failing to consider these multiple identities (see, for example, the criticism of Kymlicka by Abu-Laban, 2002: 465). In the event the CSC decides to hire more ethno-cultural staff in prison, there are some important issues to consider. Prisons could experience difficulties deciding from which ethnic, racial and cultural groups new staff members should be recruited. Moreover, their decision is unlikely to satisfy all incarcerated immigrant women in prison because of both inter-group and intra-group differences (for example, individuals from the same country of origin may vary in race, class, and religious values). More importantly, having the power to decide on the minority's behalf which ethno-cultural groups should be represented among the staff members, prison authorities are likely to be criticized for trying to control minority affairs. Similar criticism has been directed against multiculturalism in general (Nieguth, 1999).

With respect to parenting programs, it may be possible to accommodate immigrant women's concerns by including some discussion of issues related to both culturally-different child-care arrangements, with their potential for confusing and uprooting children, or culturally-compatible placements (usually with relatives), which may hamper their integration into the Canadian society. While the former concern reflects women's anxiety with respect to preserving and maintaining their own culture, the latter relates to their desire to become part of Canadian society. Both are compatible with and vital to the philosophy underlying Canada's Multiculturalism Act.

While most women in prison have limited education and difficulties with finding employment, immigrant women may be even more disadvantaged if they face difficulties

with getting their education recognized in Canada. As a result, many of them may be prevented from applying for most jobs as they do not meet basic educational requirements. This, in turn, deprives them of opportunities of gaining Canadian work experience. If the goal of multiculturalism is, as Kymlicka (1998) claims, to ensure that no ethno-cultural groups are either privileged or disadvantaged, then it follows that immigrant women in prison should be assisted to acquire some Canadian work experience in order to gain equal footing in the labor market.

The availability of second language services in prison directly relates to two clauses of Multiculturalism Policy of Canada, which specifically refer to offering language services to immigrants to encourage them to learn one or both of the official languages. Offering immigrant women in prison access to second language instruction and translators allows them to overcome barriers, in this case the language barrier, to exercising their rights and participating in society. According to Kymlicka (1998), providing second language services simply means giving immigrants a chance to take vitally important courses that many of them could not otherwise afford. Moreover, mastering the language skills through classes offered in prison should increase immigrant women's chances of finding a suitable job after their release.

Addressing immigrant women's immigration/legal needs through a special program or access to an immigration lawyer simply gives them an opportunity to try to address their uncertain legal status. This is particularly relevant for permanent residents, who are deportable. Stripping them of their permanent resident status and forcibly removing them from Canada seem to be inconsistent with one of the clauses in the Canadian Multiculturalism Policy, which lends support to any programs or activities that may help immigrants to overcome barriers to full participation in society. Despite the fact that some of

the deportable women have lived in Canada for many years, they seem excluded from the orbit of multiculturalism policy. Providing them with a right to appeal their deportation order, as well as with adequate legal assistance to address their immigration/legal issues would bring some balance to their plight.

While the issue of access to culture-specific foods and products cannot be directly referred to any of the clauses in Canada's Multiculturalism Act, it could be indirectly linked to the right of all members of society to preserve, enhance, and share their heritage. When properly organized, increasing minority women's access to these products would broaden their choices, without depriving others of access to the products to which they are accustomed.

Recommendations for Correctional Service of Canada

Recommendation # 1

It is recommended the prison staff attend a mandatory cultural sensitivity training. While many *interviewees* and survey respondents felt very strongly about having culture-specific programs for immigrant women in prison, it is important to consider the possible drawbacks of introducing such programs. While potential benefits of having unique programs for immigrant women in prison are not entirely clear, separate programs may have a potential for further marginalizing women who may already be perceived as different. Having separate programs for minorities may be treated by both the staff and other inmates as the evidence of immigrant women's unwillingness to integrate, which may contribute to further exclusion and hostility (Hjern, 2000). Moreover, even if the CSC decides to design culture-specific programs, they may end up being low-budget, quick-fix programs informed by essentialist notion of culture, resulting in women's cultures being blamed for their

problems. Finally, it may be very difficult in practice to decide which cultural programs to implement and ensure that they meet the needs of all minority women in prison.

My reservations as to the viability of culture-specific programs notwithstanding, I am going to discuss the framework around which such programs could be developed. To create a more conducive climate for the development and maintenance of culture-specific programs, it would be desirable to define and communicate clearly the goals of multicultural services or programs offered to immigrant women in prison to reduce possible resentment among other women and the staff in prison. According to Kymlicka (1998), people may feel less threatened by multiculturalism policy in Quebec and Australia because its limits are clearly defined. If culture-specific programs for immigrant women were to be implemented in prison in the future, they should be based on an empowering model, which focuses on restructuring the system to validate the needs, concerns, and aspirations of minorities (Parhar, 1999). Some scholars refer to these programs as being ethno-specific (Parhar, 1999). Being ethno-specific in the area of educational programs implies attempts to counterbalance the assimilative force, extend the familiar socialization or broaden participants' knowledge of their ethnic heritage. Based on my research, however, it appears that immigrant women would also like to use some aspects of culture-specific programming to facilitate their integration into Canadian society, including better understanding of the mainstream cultural-behavioral patterns.

It may be argued that instead of introducing culture-specific programs for incarcerated immigrant women in prison, a mandatory cultural sensitivity training should be provided to the staff. Fostering cultural sensitivity may help alleviate stereotypes and misinterpretation of immigrant women's behavior. If the training is well designed, it may be more effective than one or two culture-specific programs that are unlikely to diminish the

tension between immigrant women and the staff. Instead of teaching the staff about stereotypical cultural differences, cultural sensitivity training should equip them to work with all minority clients, regardless of their ethno-cultural background, in an open-minded, sensitive, and flexible manner.

Rather than focusing on differences and/or similarities among cultural groups, the training should entail a discussion on cultural accommodation. According to Hansen and Gama (1996), this should consist of three steps: exploring minorities' cultures, gathering culturally relevant data, and negotiating. First, the staff should try to explore the woman's cultural identities. This could include looking into how she defines herself from a cultural perspective, how she conceptualizes gender, what the history of migration of her group is (forced or voluntary) and its socio-political history, the age of the individual, religion, languages spoken, and norms related to hygiene and personal appearance. In the gathering stage, the staff should collect and interpret data relevant to the client's particular cultural needs and concerns with self-presentation. Finally, in the negotiation stage, the staff and the woman would negotiate the best way of accommodating her culture-specific requirements (for example, if she is reluctant to share a personal story in the group, the staff may encourage her to organize her own support group consisting of her family members or fellow immigrants). Two additional components of the training should teach the staff to explore their own biases against particular ethnic groups and learn to understand different ways of conveying messages. With respect to the former, the staff should engage in exploring both positive and negative stereotypes against a particular group. For example, black women may be perceived as typically being very strong. Thus, the staff may fail to reach out to a black woman who may suffer from depression. In regard to different ways of conveying messages, the training should sensitize the staff to other ways of expressing oneself. For example,

women from certain minority groups may express their anger by what others might perceive as yelling, but this is a perfectly acceptable way to present anger in their culture. Thus, women should not be labeled as violent or aggressive based solely on this culture-specific behavior.

Recommendation # 2

To address the psychological needs of immigrant women in prison, it is recommended that changes be made at three levels: hiring more professional counselors from various ethno-cultural backgrounds, training the currently employed psychologists in principles of cultural psychology, and facilitating meetings between immigrant women and religious leaders from their culture/religion.

The demands of some scholars (Pattison, 1998) to hire more professional staff in prison from various ethno-cultural backgrounds have been corroborated by the answers of one half of survey participants and five *interviewees*. A serious commitment to this goal would change the make up of the CSC staff, which, in turn, could lead to an increase in a number of immigrant women willing to seek psychological help and to reduction of cultural misunderstanding between the staff and the women. While it may be difficult to decide from which cultural groups to hire psychologists, it is even more problematic to maintain the *status quo*.

It is noteworthy that currently few graduate psychology programs discuss issues involved in psychotherapy and counseling with minority clients. As a result, many psychologists treat every client in the same manner. An alternative approach to counseling, which could be successfully employed with immigrant women is offered by cultural psychology. It combines cross cultural psychology, psychological anthropology, and ethno psychology (Shweder, 1991). Cultural psychology conceives psyche and culture to be

mutually constitutive phenomena, as opposed to traditional psychology, in which psyche is isolated from its context (Castillo, 1997). Cultural psychologists argue that cultural knowledge influences cognition. Moreover, objects do not have fixed traits and the experience and the knowledge of an object are constructed by each person. Cultural meanings and personal experience influence cognitive schemas in the construction of experiences, which, in turn, gives meaning to each experience and shapes one's knowledge of the world (Castillo, 1997, p. 18). In short, the goal of cultural psychology is to look into this process of turning sensory data into cognitions in order to make sense of the object within a particular cultural context.

The role of cultural psychologists in providing therapy to minority clients is to understand their constructions (Beutler and Malik, 2002). Cultural psychology offers a four-stage model of assessing mental disorder and providing therapy to minority clients: thinking by means of the other (recognize clients as experts), getting the other straight (rational reconstruction of beliefs, behaviors, and cultural practices), deconstructing and going beyond the other (challenge and discover clients' world) and situated witnessing (behave like a stranger in a foreign land trying to discover context specific experiences) (Stingler et al., 1990: 33-34).

The responses to two survey questions and comments from two *interviewees* testify to the importance they attach to religion and, in particular, religious services and leaders. When the surveyed women were asked how they dealt with the absence of their family members, around 45% responded that they turned to religious services. Moreover, when asked to whom they would like to talk if they were abused or had psychological problems, nearly 30% of survey respondents indicated that they would choose a religious leader from their own religion. Also, two *interviewees* talked about using religion as a coping strategy to deal with

the absence of their relatives. Therefore, the prison staff should be involved in facilitating contact between immigrant women and religious leaders from their religions/community.

Recommendation # 3

It is recommended that immigrant women in prison be explicitly informed at the Intake Assessment about their right to ask for a translator in quasi-legal hearings in order to avoid creating unnecessary anxiety among second language speakers in prison.

Recommendation # 4

It is recommended that immigrant women be informed at the Intake Assessment stage about their immigration/legal rights and who to contact in the case they have any concerns or questions. It is, also, recommended that a member of prison staff or someone from the immigration department be designated to deal specifically with any questions or concerns that incarcerated immigrant women may have with respect to their deportation orders or other legal/immigration issues. Furthermore, all women who are deportable, regardless of their legal status (permanent residents or foreign-born) should have a right of appeal. While the right of appeal is beyond CSC jurisdiction, further inquiry into this issue, to provide the needed information and arguments for a relevant legal amendment, is warranted.

Recommendations # 5

It is recommended that the staff in each federal institution recognize immigrant women's needs related to access to culture-specific foods and products and find a reasonable and mutually acceptable solution, whether through outside shopping or by adding these products and foods to the standard prison order. This subject should be recognized as having clear relevance to the health and psychological well-being of immigrant women. As with other recommendations, safeguards need to be implemented to prevent these changes from reinforcing ethnic stereotypes and discrimination.

Recommendation # 6

It is recommended the CSC reassess the uniformed nature of the Offender Intake Assessment as my study implies that it fails to capture various unique needs of immigrant women.

How Do My Recommendations Fit within the Official Canadian Multicultural Model?

The aim of this section is to place my recommendations within the context of an on-going discussion of the official Canadian multicultural model and arguments against and for multiculturalism in general. The recommendations addressed concern cultural sensitivity training for the correctional staff as well as programming related to abuse, immigration rights and provision of food and other culture-specific products.

A well designed mandatory cultural sensitivity training, based on principles of cultural accommodation discussed in my concluding chapter, has the potential to improve sensitivity of the prison staff to cultural differences, which is one of the official multicultural initiatives undertaken in Canada (intended explicitly for medical professionals and the police; Kymlicka, 1998). It could also improve their ability to work with women who come from various ethno-cultural backgrounds. While it probably would not change the staff's perceptions of immigrant women, the program could convey to them the importance of cultural context in one's behavior. Such understanding has the potential to prevent staff members from automatically applying their ethno-centric criteria in judging immigrant women's culture-specific behavior. The main goal of the proposed program is for the staff to understand that immigrant women often behave according to their own cultural norms and their behavior should not be defined as inappropriate or threatening simply because it is

different. The training aims to incline staff members to pay attention to women's particular cultural context. Finally, it is critical to consult immigrant women themselves at each stage of the program development.

While this proposal may appear overly simplistic, I have recommended it as an initial step in trying to overcome misunderstandings between incarcerated immigrant women and the prison staff. This could be followed by more complex solutions, including mechanisms for greater staff accountability in cases of discrimination and an on-going training on immigration issues. While my goal was not to divert attention, as many multicultural initiatives and program proposals do, from the real important issues, such as discrimination, that many immigrants face, at first sight this proposal may appear to be quite the opposite of the initial goal. While it is just a first step, the cultural sensitivity training has a potential to improve incarcerated immigrant women's status. By being conscious of the importance of culture-specific context in immigrant women's lives, the staff could minimize the instances in which they wrongly define immigrant women's behavior as violent or antisocial.

My recommendation with respect to hiring more ethno-cultural staff in prison echoes the recommendation made by the women in my study and, as such, has already been discussed in the preceding section. With respect to the issue of abuse, I have argued that prisons should reassess the relevance to immigrant women of the existing programs for abused women. Providing some type of educational sessions to these women would at least inform them about legal protections existing in Canada and other relevant developments related to addressing abused women's needs.

With respect to immigration issues, I recommended that the prison should facilitate immigrant women's access to a lawyer when warranted and that a regular staff member would be trained to address women's concerns related to immigration, deportation and other related

issues. It is obvious from my study that many women's claims of being discriminated against in prison based on their immigration status are ignored by correctional authorities and other governmental departments. Several women specifically told me that they raised this problem with prison authorities and other governmental departments with not much result. By ignoring women's claims of discrimination based on their immigrant status, the CSC and other governmental departments seem to by-pass the Multiculturalism Act. They decide when and under what conditions complaints by minorities are taken seriously. Similar criticism has been directed at the Canadian multiculturalism in general (Parhar, 1990).

Finally, I recommended that in order to address the question of access to the culture-specific food and other products the prisons staff should be involved in negotiations with incarcerated immigrant women to find the best solution. It appears that the current situation with respect to the availability of such products in prison falls in line more with the assimilative model, as opposed to the integrative model that is promoted in Canada (Harles, 1997). By definition, in the integrative access to culture-specific food and products model, immigrants should be able to preserve their own cultural identities, customs, and choices, including food and culture-specific products. By refusing to provide culture-specific choices, prison authorities demonstrate insensitivity and indifference toward the issue that seems to be highly important to some immigrant women in prison.

Recommendations for Future Research

One of the most significant limitations of this exploratory study is that its results are not fully generalizable because the response rate to my questionnaire was only 50%. Moreover, in keeping with the nature of exploratory studies, I tried to cover a range of issues,

without being able to examine them in detail. I believe that it would be useful if future researchers examine more in-depth several themes that emerged from my research.

More research should be conducted to look into numerous constructed notions of “other”. It would be interesting to examine how ‘otherness’ is constructed within the prison and whether these constructed notions affect immigrant women’s perceptions of themselves and other immigrant women in prison.

More research should be conducted to probe immigrant women’s complaints about feeling misunderstood by the prison staff and their recommendations as to the ways to minimize it. Misinterpretation of culturally different behavior and body-language is very troubling when it occurs in the community at large, but may become particularly oppressive in the prison environment.

A follow-up study could be undertaken to probe immigrant women’s recommendations with respect to culture-specific programs. Participants in my study recommended that various types of culture-specific programs be implemented. This should be further scrutinized as well as their reasons for choosing a particular type of culture-specific program.

Regarding psychological issues, two interesting topics for future research have emerged. Clearly more research is needed to examine alternative ways to help immigrant women to address their psychological needs, as most women in my study indicated being highly reluctant to seek traditional psychological help offered in prison. It would also be important to gather more information on the relevance and sensitivity of correctional programs for abused women to the specific values and taboos of different cultures. Finally, in my research, I did not probe the issue of same-sex relationships and their possible role in

fulfilling emotional, social, and sexual needs of immigrant women in prison. This is a sensitive issues, which is not easy to study, but merits consideration.

While inquiring about child-care placements may evoke emotional responses in women in prison, as it did in the case of some *interviewees* in my study, more research should be undertaken to examine various aspects of different types of arrangements involving immigrant women's children. The women's and their children's experiences with placements that are culturally-different and culturally-same (usually involving placements with relatives) have not been sufficiently explored in the literature. It would also be interesting to examine cases in which immigrant women report being discriminated against by the Children's Aid Society to see whether they are treated more harshly, because of their ethnicity or uncertain legal status, than their non-immigrant counterparts.

Three topics worthy of further research emerged from the analysis of language-related data. While most survey participants were satisfied with the second language services offered in prisons, five of them did not find these services adequate. It would be interesting to conduct a study to review the availability and quality of existing second language services offered to immigrant women in all federal institutions. Furthermore, based on the comments of some survey participants, it would be important to examine whether immigrant women in all prisons have access to translation services and/or whether their requests for interpreters have been denied and what reasons if any, have been cited. Finally, examining the relationship between women's accents and possible discrimination within the criminal justice system would make a very unique study.

A follow-up study could also be conducted to assess how well informed immigrant women are with respect to their immigration/legal rights in Canada. This issue has far reaching implications for women's status in Canada, the well-being of their children, and

even their personal safety. Four survey participants in my study stated that women from their countries would not report abuse to authorities due to fear of being deported to their countries of origin, revealing the lack of knowledge of their rights in Canada. Based on the comments from many *interviewees* who reported being discriminated against in prison due to their immigration status, a national study is needed to probe their claims.

In addition to the needs explored and confirmed in my study, one need area that is not covered in my research deserves special attention. The physical and mental health-related needs of immigrant women in prison are likely to differ from those of non-immigrant women. The apprehensions that women expressed with regard to seeking psychological services may extend to other health services. Furthermore, being cut off from their communities may deprive them of benefits of traditional ways of healing and familiar remedies.

Final Remarks: A Word of Caution

Despite being somewhat hopeful that the unique needs of immigrant women in prison would be addressed more adequately in the near future, I want to end this thesis with a word of caution. While my purpose in writing this thesis was to explore immigrant women's needs with the hope that prison authorities and community organizations would recognize and address them properly, I am somewhat skeptical about the probability of this happening. I am fully aware of many instances of well-intentioned ideas being turned into detrimental policies. In his book *Visions of Social Control*, Stanley Cohen reviewed some illuminating examples of well-intentioned ideas going wrong in the actual practice of criminal justice reform. According to him, one lesson that can be drawn from history is that:

The real block lies at the organizational level. When forms reach the existing system, they confront a series of powerful managerial, administrative and organizational imperatives. The reform impulse is resisted and blocked or (more frequently) it is welcomed, only to be absorbed and co-opted (for the wrong reasons) and in the process completely transformed, even in directions diametrically opposed to the original vision. (...). We ... must confront the plaintive refrain which has run through the real stories of social control ‘that is not what we had in mind at all.’” (Cohen, 1985: 92, 204).

As any researcher torn between the desire to be useful and the apprehension of causing damage, I can only express my wish that special caution be taken in interpreting and utilizing my findings to inform any subsequent policies or programs.

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Appendix A - Recruitment Letter to Potential Interviewees

Dear Madam,

My name is Svjetlana Delic. I am a graduate student at the Master of Arts program with the Department of Criminology at University of Ottawa. For my thesis I would like to explore *the special needs of immigrant (foreign-born) women in prison*.

In an attempt to properly address my research questions on the special needs of immigrant women in prison, I would like to conduct in-depth interviews with immigrant women. **The purpose of the study is to explore your experience and perceptions of your own needs. I am interested in understanding your personal opinions and feelings concerning your needs and the extent to which the existing correctional programming meets them.** This study will give you an opportunity to speak out and express your own views.

I plan to conduct my study at your institution on January 5th, 6th and 7th of 2004. For those of you who are interested in participating in this study, we will meet in room 208 in the program area at 10 o'clock on Monday, January the 5th, 2004. I hope to see you there.

If you have any questions, you can write to me at the following address:

University of Ottawa,
Department of Criminology,
Faculty of Social Science,
25 University Private,
Ottawa, Ontario,
K1N 6N5.

You can also Email me at sdeli037@uottawa.ca.

I thank you in advance for your co-operation,

Svjetlana Delic

Appendix B - Interview Guide: Needs of Immigrant Women in Federal Institutions

Theme 1 - Culture-specific Programming and Immigrant women

- How many programs have you taken so far?
- Have they met your expectations and needs?
- Do you think that programs are individualistically oriented?
- Have any of the correctional programs that you have taken discussed or included in any way migration-related experiences or culture-specific experiences?
- Do you think that your group or immigrants in general should be identified as in need of special programs or services? Explain. If yes, do you have any suggestions in terms of programming?
- Would you like your program delivery officer or a psychologist to be from your own ethnic or cultural group? Why?

Theme 2 - Exploring Migration-related Sources of Stress

- How old were you when you left your country of origin?
- Was leaving your country traumatic? Could you elaborate? Overall, was your immigration process a positive or negative experience?
- Are members of your extended family in Canada? If not, how does the absence of your extended family affect you: (a) in everyday life, and (b) when you are going through particularly difficult periods. (Do you often feel lonely, isolated, and insecure in making decisions?) If your extended family is in Canada, how has their presence affected you?
- Has lack of finances been a problem for you or your family in Canada?
- Have you ever been discriminated against in Canada (based on race, culture, ethnicity, immigration status)? If so, in what context? How did this discrimination affect you? Has anything positive come out of this experience?
- Do you feel that you are often perceived as different because you were not born here? Do you feel excluded? How do you react when it happens?

Theme 3 - Seeking Psychological Help

- Do you have any problems with asking for help or counseling?
- Do you think that members of your own culture may be reluctant to report being sexually or physically abused to prison or other authority? If so, why? (Taboo, honor, modesty, lack of trust, treated as family matter, etc).
- Do you think that women from your own culture are less likely than Canadian-born women to seek psychological help or any other kind of professional help? If so, why?
- Would you rather open up to a professional psychologist or to your family members or friends?
- Do you feel that women from your own culture should be encouraged to report abusive behaviors and/or seek psychological help? If so, do you have any suggestions as to how to achieve this goal? If not, explain the reasons.

Theme 4 - Parenting

- Do you have underage children? Where are they now? (Are your children with your relatives, friends or in foster care arrangements?)
- Were you given enough time to make proper arrangements for you children after you were sentenced?
- Do you have any contact with your children and their caregivers? (If they are with foster care families from cultures other than their own, does this cause problems?)
- Are you worried that you will have problems with custody issues upon your release?
- Do you have any suggestions as to how this kind of problems could be ameliorated?

Theme 5 - Vocational Skills

- Did you have any skills or schooling when you arrived in Canada? If so, did you have problems with getting them recognized?
- Have you had any problems acquiring skills or education upon arrival to Canada or in prison? (Adequate information, access to services etc).
- Do you know anyone (community volunteer, family member, friend etc.) or any community program that could help you find a job upon being released?
- Have you ever felt discriminated against or exploited by your employer or when you looked for a job or in prison (based on immigrant status, language, race or culture)?

Theme 6 - Language

- Did you speak English or French when you came here?
- If not, how did this affect you both outside and inside prison (dependency, loss of self-esteem, misunderstandings, isolation etc.)?
- Are there any services in prison that allow people to improve their language skills? Do you have any suggestions with this respect?

Theme 7 - Immigration Rights and Legal Issues

- Are you a Canadian citizen? If not, do you feel fully informed about your immigrant status and rights? Is this a problem? (How does not knowing your rights make you feel?)
- While in prison, has anyone ever informed you of your immigration rights or prisoner's rights in general?
- Have you ever received Correctional Service of Canada's booklet on immigrants and their rights? Was it helpful?
- Do you feel that you have some questions that only an immigration lawyer could answer? If so, what are you doing about it?
- Has any of prison staff or anyone else threatened to return you to your country of origin?
- What if anything would you like to see done to improve prisoners' access to immigration services and information?

Is there anything that you would like to add? Is there anything that you would like to ask me about my research, cultural background or my immigration experience?

Appendix C - Questionnaire on the Needs of Immigrant Women in Prison

- A. When did you come to Canada (year)? _____
- B. Do you at least partly think of yourself as an immigrant? _____ Yes
_____ No

If you have answered YES to question B, please fill this questionnaire. Please circle the most appropriate answer. Your comments and additional explanations are welcome. You may add an extra page with comments if you wish. Your participation in this survey is greatly appreciated.

1. Have any of the correctional programs you have taken addressed in any way culture-related or immigration-specific experiences?

1.YES 2.SOMEWHAT 3.NO 4.NO ANSWER

2. Do you think that immigrant women should have special programs in prison?

1.DEFINITELY YES 2.RATHER YES 3.RATHER NOT 4.DEFINITELY NOT

Comments:

3. Do you have any culture-related concerns with respect to your current child-care arrangements? (For example, are you concerned either that your children may lose their cultural roots OR that their integration into the Canadian society may be made more difficult?)

1.MAJOR CONCERNS 2.SOME 3. ALMOST NONE 4. NONE 5.NOT APPLICABLE

Comments:

4. Do you feel that correctional staff misunderstands your behavior or body language, which are typically considered normal in your culture?

1.OFTEN 2.SOMETIMES 3.RARELY 4.NEVER

If yes, please explain:

5. Is English or French your first language or official language in your country of origin?

1. YES 2. NO

6. In your opinion, does the prison offer adequate English or French as a Second Language classes and services?

1.DEFINITELY YES 2.RATHER YES 3.RATHER NOT 4.DEFINITELY NOT

7. If you are not fully fluent in English or French, has this caused you problems in prison?

1.DEFINITELY YES 2.RATHER YES 3.RATHER NOT 4.DEFINITELY NOT

8. If you are not fully fluent in English or French, how does it make you feel (or made you feel in the past)? **CIRCLE ALL THAT APPLY**

- a) Isolated
- b) Dependent
- c) Insecure
- d) Hesitant to initiate a conversation
- e) Other (specify): _____
- f) NOT APPLICABLE

9. What was the highest level of formal educational training that you achieved before coming to Canada?

- a) Elementary school
- b) High School
- c) University
- d) Graduate School
- e) Other (specify): _____

10. Did you have difficulties with getting your academic training recognized in Canada?

1.YES, MANY 2.YES, SOME 3. ALMOST NONE 4.NONE

11. Are any relatives or members of your extended family (not counting your partners and children) here in Canada?

1.YES, MANY 2.YES, SOME 3.NONE 4.NO ANSWER

12. Please answer this question if you have answered SOME or NONE to question 11. If it is difficult for you to be separated from your extended family, how do you deal with it?

- a) Keeping to myself and working it out on my own
- b) Turning to religious services
- c) Turning for help to the psychologist or other professionals
- d) Turning to friends
- e) It is not a problem
- f) Other (specify): _____

13. Are women from your culture particularly hesitant to report being physically or sexually abused?

1.YES

2.NO

3.NO ANSWER

Comments:

14. If women from your culture are particularly reluctant to report being physically or sexually abused, is it because

- a) Abuse is considered taboo in my culture
- b) Abuse is not openly discussed
- c) Abuse is not seen as a problem
- d) Women fear being deported if police are involved
- e) Women do not want to reinforce stereotypes against their own cultural or ethnic group
- f) Other (specify): _____
- g) NOT APPLICABLE

15. Who from the following list of people would you prefer to talk to if you have been abused or have psychological problems?

- a) A Canadian born and trained psychologist
- b) A psychologist who comes from my own cultural group
- c) A psychologist who comes from any immigrant group
- d) A religious leader (e.g. Priest, Rabbi or Imam) from my own religion
- e) A religious leader from any religion
- f) I do not feel comfortable talking about my psychological problems
- g) Other (specify): _____

16. While in prison, has anyone ever informed you of your immigration rights?

1.DEFINITELY YES 2.RATHER YES 3.RATHER NOT 4.DEFINITELY NOT 5. DON'T KNOW

17. If a woman has questions concerning her immigration status or deportation order, can she receive adequate information in prison?

1.DEFINITELY YES 2.RATHER YES 3.RATHER NOT 4.DEFINITELY NOT 5. DON'T KNOW

18. Do you have access in prison to food and beauty or hygiene products specific to your culture?

1.DEFINITELY YES 2.RATHER YES 3.RATHER NOT 4.DEFINITELY NOT

If no, please explain:

19. What is your greatest worry or unmet need in prison?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN COMPLETING AND RETURNING THIS QUESTIONNAIRE.

Appendix D - Questionnaire sur les Besoins des Immigrantes en Prison

- A. Quand êtes-vous arrivée au Canada (année) ? _____
- B. Vous considérez vous, du moins en partie, comme une immigrante _____ Oui
_____ Non

Si vous avez répondu oui à la question B, veuillez s.v.p. répondre au questionnaire. Veuillez encercler la réponse la plus appropriée. Vos commentaires additionnels ou explications sont bienvenus. Vous pouvez ajouter des pages additionnelles afin d'y inscrire vos commentaires. Votre participation à ce sondage est grandement appréciée.

1. Certains des programmes correctionnels auxquels vous avez participé adressaient-ils, d'une façon ou d'une autre, l'expérience reliée à la culture ou à l'immigration ?

1. Oui 2. Quelque peu 3. Non 4. Aucune réponse

2. Pensez-vous que les immigrantes devraient avoir des programmes spéciaux en prison ?

1. Définitivement 2. Plutôt oui 3. Plutôt non 4. Définitivement pas

Commentaires :

3. Avez-vous certaines inquiétudes en ce qui a trait à la présente garde de votre enfant (par exemple, êtes-vous inquiète que votre enfant perdra ses racines culturelles OU que son intégration dans la société canadienne sera peut-être difficile ?)

1. Inquiétudes importantes 2. Un peu d'inquiétudes 3. Presque qu'aucune inquiétude pertinente 4. Aucune inquiétude 5. Non

Commentaires :

4. Sentez-vous que le personnel correctionnel ne comprend pas votre comportement ou langage corporel qui est considéré normal dans votre culture ?

1. Souvent 2. Parfois 3. Rarement 4. Jamais

Si oui, veuillez expliquer :

5. Votre langue maternelle ou la langue officielle dans votre pays d'origine est-elle l'anglais ou le français ?

1. Oui

2. Non

6. Selon vous, l'établissement offre-t-il des cours et services adéquats de langue seconde soit en français ou en anglais ?

1. Définitivement 2. Plutôt oui

3. Plutôt non

4. Définitivement pas

7. Si vous ne parlez pas parfaitement le français ou l'anglais, cela vous a-t-il causé des difficultés à l'établissement ?

1. Définitivement

2. Plutôt oui

3. Plutôt non

4. Définitivement pas

8. Si vous ne parlez pas parfaitement le français ou l'anglais, cela vous fait sentir (ou vous a fait sentir dans le passé)... Toutes ces réponses

a) isolée

b) dépendante

c) inquiète

d) hésitante à commencer une conversation

e) autre (spécifier) : _____

f) non applicable

9. Quel est le plus haut niveau d'éducation formelle que vous avez reçue avant d'arriver au Canada ?

a) école primaire

b) école secondaire

c) collège

d) université

e) troisième cycle d'université

f) autre (spécifier) : _____

10. Avez-vous eu de la difficulté à faire reconnaître votre niveau d'éducation au Canada ?

1. Oui, beaucoup

2. Oui, un peu

3. Non

4. Aucune réponse

11. Y a-t-il des membres de votre famille étendue qui sont ici au Canada (cela ne comprend pas votre partenaire ou vos enfants) ?

1. Oui, plusieurs

2. Oui, quelques-uns

3. Aucun

4. Aucune réponse

12. Veuillez répondre à cette question si vous avez répondu "quelques-uns" ou "aucun" à la question 11. S'il est difficile pour vous d'être séparée de votre famille étendue, comment réagissez-vous ?

- a) je garde cela pour moi et règle mes problèmes moi-même
- b) j'utilise les services religieux
- c) j'utilise les services du psychologue et d'autres professionnels
- d) je parle avec des amies
- e) ce n'est pas un problème
- f) autre (spécifier) : _____

13. Les femmes de votre culture sont-elles particulièrement hésitantes à parler d'abus physiques ou sexuels si elles en ont été victimes ?

1. Oui 2. Non 3. Aucune réponse

Commentaires :

14. Si les femmes de votre culture sont particulièrement hésitantes à signaler l'abus physique ou sexuel, est-ce parce que

- a) l'abus est un tabou dans ma culture
- b) on ne discute pas ouvertement de l'abus
- c) l'abus n'est pas considéré comme un problème
- d) les femmes ont peut d'être déportées si la police est impliquée
- e) les femmes ne veulent pas renforcer les stéréotypes contre leur groupe ethnique ou culturel
- f) autre (spécifier) : _____
- g) non applicable

15. Parmi la liste suivante de personnes, à qui préféreriez-vous parler si vous avez été abusée ou si vous avez des problèmes psychologiques ?

- a) un(e) psychologue né(e) et éduqué(e) au Canada
- b) un(e) psychologue venant de mon groupe culturel
- c) un(e) psychologue venant de n'importe quel groupe immigrant
- d) un chef religieux (par exemple un prêtre, rabbin, imam) de ma propre Religion
- e) un chef religieux de n'importe quel religion
- f) je ne me sens pas à l'aise de parler des mes problèmes psychologiques
- g) autre (spécifier) : _____

16. Pendant votre incarcération, quelqu'un vous a-t-il informé de vos droits en tant qu'immigrante ou détenue ?

1. Définitivement 2. Plutôt oui 3. Plutôt non 4. Définitivement pas 5. Je ne sais pas

17. Si une femme a des questions en ce qui a trait à son statut d'immigrante ou arrêt d'expulsion, peut-elle recevoir des informations adéquate dans l'établissement ?

1. Définitivement 2. Plutôt oui 3. Plutôt non 4. Définitivement pas 5. Je ne sais pas

18. Dans l'établissement, avez-vous accès à la nourriture, à des produits de beauté ou d'hygiène propre à votre culture ?

1. Définitivement 2. Plutôt oui 3. Plutôt non 4. Définitivement pas

Si non, veuillez expliquer :

19. Quelle est votre plus grande inquiétude ou votre besoin auquel on ne répond pas en établissement ?

MERCI BEAUCOUP DE VOTRE COOPÉRATION, D'AVOIR REMPLI ET RETOURNÉ
CE QUESTIONNAIRE

Appendix E - Short Questionnaire to Determine Interviewees' Eligibility to Participate in the Study

Dear Madam,

My name is Svjetlana Delic. I am a graduate student at the Master of Arts program with the Department of Criminology at University of Ottawa. For my thesis I would like to explore *the needs of immigrant women in prison*.

In an attempt to properly address my research questions on the needs of immigrant offenders, I would like to conduct in-depth interviews with immigrant women. The purpose of the study is to explore your experience and perceptions of your own needs. I am interested in understanding your personal opinions and feelings concerning your needs and the extent to which the existing correctional programming meets them. This study will give you an opportunity to speak out and express your own views.

In order to assist me with the selection of women for my study, I would really appreciate if you could answer five questions. Upon receiving your answers, I will let you know whether you have been selected for my study. For those who are not selected to participate, I will explain the reasons for my decision.

Prison staff will not be present or in any way involved in this research. I will not share interview information with any members of the staff or with correctional authorities. I will also make sure that your anonymity is protected, and preserved in my thesis and in any publication that may result from this research. **To protect your anonymity, you may choose an option in which a pseudonym is used instead of your name.**

You have to be able to understand, read, and speak English well enough to clearly understand the text in the consent form.

I thank you in advance for your co-operation,

Svjetlana Delic

Please answer the following questions:

1) Were you born outside Canada: _____ Yes
_____ No

2) What is your country of birth? _____

3) When did you come to Canada? _____

4) Do you at least partly think of yourself as an immigrant? _____ Yes
_____ No

5) Would you like to take part in this research? _____ Yes
_____ No

Name: _____

Institution: _____

Appendix F - Consent Form: for Interviewees

Name of researchers: Svjetlana Delic
Institution: University of Ottawa
Department of Criminology
Faculty of Social Science
25 University Private
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5
Telephone number: 562-5800 ext.1799
E-mail: sdeli037@uottawa.ca

Name of supervisor: Maria Los
Department of Criminology
25 University Private
Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5
Telephone number: 562-5800 ext.1799

I, _____, accept to take part in the study on *the Needs of Immigrant Women in Prison* conducted by Svjetlana Delic, a Master's student at the Department of Criminology, the University of Ottawa.

The purpose of this study is to explore the needs of immigrant women in prison. An additional goal is to explore your experience and perceptions of your own needs. Seven general themes will be discussed during the interview: culture-specific programming, migration-related sources of stress, seeking psychological help, parenting issues, vocational skills, language skills, and immigration concerns.

My participation will involve attending one interview, which will not exceed two hours. The session will take place in the Grand Valley Institution for Women in Kitchener, Ontario. I may fill out the survey/questionnaire (my participation in the survey is completely voluntarily) that will be sent by the researcher following the interviews.

I am fully aware that this study may deal with personal information, and that it may cause emotional discomfort at times. The researcher has assured me that every effort will be made to minimize these occurrences.

I have the right to refuse to participate in this project. **My refusal or acceptance to participate in this study will in no way affect my treatment by the institution.**

I am completely free to withdraw from the project at any time. I can refuse to answer any question or a series of questions without any risk of reprisal. I can ask the researcher to listen to parts of the tape-recorded interview and ask her to erase certain parts of the interview. The researcher has assured me that the information I share with her will remain strictly confidential and personal information that might identify me will be removed from any quotations from this interview.

I have the right to choose one of the following options to assure my anonymity. Please check one of the following:

- ☐ I will be quoted under a pseudonym only.
☐ I will be quoted without any identification (“One participant said.....”).
☐ I will be quoted under my first name.

I have the right to refuse to have the interview taped. Please check one of the following:

- ☐ I agree to have the interview taped
☐ I do not want the interview to be taped.

Svjetlana Delic is the only person who will listen to and transcribe tape recordings of the interviews. The tape recordings and transcripts will be kept under lock in a secure place in my supervisor’s (Maria Los) office for five years. They will be destroyed after five-year period.

If I have information requests or complaints about ethical conduct of the project, I may contact the Research Ethics Board (REB) of the University of Ottawa. I may contact Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 160, (613) 562-5387 or ethics@uottawa.ca

This consent form has two copies, one of which I may keep.

Date:

Researcher’s signature:

Participant’s signature:

Appendix G - Recruitment Letter to Potential Participants

Dear Madam,

My name is Svjetlana Delic. I am a master student in Criminology at the University of Ottawa. For my master thesis, I am interested in exploring the *unique needs of immigrant women in prison*. The purpose of the study is to explore your own experience and perceptions. I am interested in understanding your personal opinions and feelings concerning your needs and the extent to which the existing correctional programming meets them.

Your participation will involve completing this questionnaire regarding your needs and feelings as an immigrant woman in prison. It should not take you more than 15 minutes to fill it out. After you have completed the questionnaire, please return it in the self-stamped and self-addressed envelope, which was sent to you along with the questionnaire.

Your participation in this study is completely **voluntarily**. **Your refusal or acceptance to participate in this study will in no way affect your treatment by the institution.** You do not need to answer questions if you do not feel comfortable answering them. Filling out this questionnaire will be taken as your informed consent to participate in the study.

Confidentiality will be fully respected. To assure your anonymity, please DO NOT provide your name in the survey or on the envelope. Survey data will be retained for 5 years. They will be, however, in the sole possession of the researcher and her supervisor, Professor Maria Los. The data will be kept in Professor Los' office at the University of Ottawa.

If you have information requests or complaints about the ethical conduct of the project, you may contact the Protocol Officer for Ethics in Research for the Research Ethics Board (REB) of the University of Ottawa, 550 Cumberland Street, Room 160, (613) 562-5841 or ethics@uottawa.ca

If you have any questions, you can write to me or my supervisor at the following address:

Svjetlana Delic
University of Ottawa,
Department of Criminology
Faculty of Social Science
25 University Private
Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 6N5

Maria Los
University of Ottawa,
Department of Criminology
Faculty of Social Science
25 University Private
Ottawa, Ontario
K1N 6N5

Once again, I would like to thank you for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.
Sincerely,

Svjetlana Delic

Appendix H - Lettre aux participantes potentielles

Bonjour Madame,

Mon nom est Svjetlana Delic. Je suis étudiante à la maîtrise en criminologie à l'Université d'Ottawa. Afin de compléter ma thèse de maîtrise, je m'intéresse à la question *des besoins uniques des immigrantes en prison*. Le but de l'étude est d'explorer votre expérience propre et vos perceptions. Je cherche à comprendre vos opinions et sentiments personnels concernant vos besoins et comment les programmes correctionnels y répondent.

Votre participation consistera à remplir ce questionnaire concernant vos besoins et sentiments. Il ne devrait pas vous prendre plus de 15 minutes à remplir. Après l'avoir rempli, veuillez me le retourner dans l'enveloppe pré-affranchie qui vous a été envoyée avec le questionnaire.

Votre participation à cette étude se fait entièrement sur une base **volontaire**. **Votre choix de participer ou non à cette étude n'affectera aucunement le traitement qui vous est offert par l'établissement**. Vous n'êtes pas obligées de répondre aux questions qui vous rendent inconfortables. Le fait de remplir et retourner le questionnaire démontre votre volonté de participer à cette étude.

La confidentialité sera respectée. Afin d'assurer votre anonymat, je vous demande de ne PAS inscrire votre nom sur le sondage ni sur l'enveloppe. Les données du sondage seront retenues pour une période de cinq ans. Elles seront seulement en la possession du chercheur et de sa superviseure, professeure Maria Los. Les données seront conservées dans le bureau de cette dernière à l'université d'Ottawa.

Si vous avez des commentaires ou questions concernant l'éthique du projet, vous pouvez contacter le Comité d'éthique de la recherche (CÉR) de l'université d'Ottawa. Vous pouvez contacter un agent du protocole de l'éthique en recherche, 550 rue Cumberland, pièce 160, (613) 562-5841 ou ethics@uottawa.ca. Si vous avez des questions, vous pouvez écrire à ma superviseure ou à moi-même aux adresses suivantes :

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Encore une fois, j'aimerais vous remercier de prendre le temps de compléter ce questionnaire.

Veuillez agréer, madame, mes salutations distinguées.

Svjetlana Delic