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Moving Beyond the Impasse: Importation, Deprivation, and Difference in Prisons

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Abstract

This theoretical article uses an intersectionality lens to show that, together, the importation and deprivation models can act as an important theoretical tool for understanding the lives of incarcerated people who deviate from the expected population of young, white, able-bodied, hearing males. We use examples from the lives of incarcerated d/Deaf people and incarcerated women to introduce a *pain-difference continuum*, where the extent to which someone differs from what is 'expected' in prison correlates with the types of pains/deprivations they experience. We acknowledge the impact of imported oppression and coin the term "imported coping," where people utilize pre-existing strategies to navigate prison's pains.

Keywords

prison, intersectionality, deaf, importation, deprivation

Introduction

The importation and deprivation models are conceptual frameworks used to understand how imprisoned people experience and adapt to the prison environment (Akers et al., 1977). In the importation model, adaptation to prison

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life is primarily shaped by individuals' "imported characteristics" (Mertens & Vander Laenen, 2019, p. 1344), including behaviors, personality traits, connections, and networks, as well as age, race, gender, nature of conviction, and history of mental illness (Brosens et al., 2015). In contrast, the deprivation—or indigenous—model explains behavior as an outcome of and response to the norms and deprivations of the prison environment, regardless of difference (Leigey, 2019). The models have historically been placed into a dichotomy, with scholars including Sykes (1958), Grosser (1960), Goffman (1961), and Irwin and Cressey (1962) publishing accounts which favor one over the other when considering prison life. However, in recent decades, it has become accepted that the two models co-exist and interact, influenced by institutional power (Crewe, 2009), relationships and social organization within prison (Phillips, 2012), sentence length (Wright et al., 2017), misconduct and violence (Lai, 2018), and the individual (Schmidt, 2016).

The limitations of deprivation-oriented texts such as Sykes' (1958) and Goffman's (1961) have been widely documented (see Haggerty & Bucerius, 2020). Their respective studies focus on individuals incarcerated in a particular place and time and are underpinned by the assumption that the tools for adjustment are a direct outcome of the institution itself. In reality, adjustment is complex, noncumulative, and personal, especially for many minority populations—who are the focus of this article (Bosworth, 2003; Kelly, 2018; Kruttschnitt & Hussemann, 2008; Warren et al., 2004). Incarcerated people are not a homogenous group of like-situated individuals able to automatically adjust to the expectations of the role and the everyday realities of prison life (Warren et al., 2004). Despite this, Sykes' and Goffman's ideas continue to resonate, as prisons often assume homogeny by orientating policy, practice, and culture around the behaviors of a certain population (Carlen & Worrall, 2013; Thomas, 2003), and can limit meaningful adjustments which allow those who are 'different' to adapt to, and fully access, the environment (Crawley, 2005; Crewe et al., 2017; Dhami et al., 2007; Kelly, 2018). Throughout this article, Goffman's idea of "batch living" (1961, p. 11) is referenced, where "all …are treated alike and required to do the same thing together" (p. 6), to illuminate what happens when individuals are unable to adjust to the prison environment if treated like everyone else. Sykes' (1958) pains of imprisonment are also used to understand how deprivations are felt differently and more intensely the further someone deviates away from what is "expected" in a prison environment, which we are identifying as a "pain-difference continuum."

This article adds to existing literature by applying an intersectionality lens to show how the models can act as a theoretical tool for understanding the lives of groups that would usually be seen as 'different' or having 'minority'

status in a prison context. Here, minority groups incorporate all populations that deviate from the young, white, able-bodied, English-speaking, hearing male that prison was initially designed to contain, and who continue to be its expected cohort (Abbott et al., 2024; Cheney, 2005; Owen et al., 2017). The reasons for this 'expectation' are multifaceted, and to an extent reflect the fact that the prison population is and always has been predominantly made up of people that fit this mold (Prison Reform Trust, 2023). Furthermore, penal policy usually focuses on these groups (Kelly-Corless, 2022) and regimes and rules are normally framed around their imported characteristics (Abbott et al., 2024; Osman, 2022). Prison culture reflects the norms and values of this 'expected' cohort in many ways too, with hyper-masculinity, strength, and aggression being intrinsic to everyday life in carceral spaces (Mears et al., 2013).[1]

The lives of people that do not fit the 'expected' mould are fraught with difficulty, exacerbated by a prison environment which can be "institutionally thoughtless" (Crawley, 2005, p. 350) toward their needs (Abbott et al., 2024). Living conditions designed to be uniform are in practice anything but, as argued by Kelly (2018, p. 15), who states that minority groups become "institutionally deficient" due to a lack of resources, funding, awareness, and inclination on the part of the prison organizationally, and prison staff individually, to accommodate them. A growing body of literature demonstrates that minority groups experience disproportionate deprivation in prison (Abbott et al., 2024; Carlen & Worrall, 2013; Crewe et al., 2017; Kelly, 2017a, 2017b, 2018; Kelly-Corless, 2022; Mertens & Vander Laenen, 2019; Tomczak & Mulgrew, 2023). Despite being classed as a minority, some populations, such as Black people and people with learning disabilities, are overrepresented within the prison population relative to their representation in the general population (Prison Reform Trust, 2024). Disproportionate pains are inflicted at disproportionate levels, on populations who are already structurally disadvantaged (Carlen, 1998; Foley and Papadopoulos, 2013; Sudbury, 2005).

While we reference 'different' populations broadly, we give most focus to three groups, the first being women, because the literature relating to their lives in prison and the disproportionate punishment they face, is the most well established. Attention then turns to audiologically deaf and culturally and linguistically Deaf individuals, both of which have been the focus of the lead author's research to date (Kelly, 2017a, 2017b, 2018; Kelly-Corless, 2020, 2022). The small 'd' here denotes the audiological condition (Hearing Link, 2021) and is used to refer to people with a significant hearing problem who commonly view their deafness negatively, while the capital 'D' includes culturally and linguistically Deaf people, who value

their Deafness and often communicate via British Sign Language (BSL) (Baker & Padden, 1978; Woodward, 1972). Concentrating on these groups allows us to discuss how intersectional differences within these populations can impact an individual's experience of prison. We focus on the types of pains to which they are subjected because of their imported characteristics, orientations, and networks, and use Sykes' (1958) deprivation-oriented pains of imprisonment framework and Goffman's (1961) ideas to examine how they 'compare' to the experiences of more 'expected' incarcerated people.

It is the relationship between layered-ness of difference and layered-ness of pain that makes intersectionality key. Crenshaw (1989) devised the term to highlight the importance of the intersection of gender, race, and class in the context of the marginalization experienced by Black women in America. It has since been used more broadly by scholars across disciplines globally to explore different intersections of characteristics/identities and their interaction with systems of power (Carbado et al., 2013; Lavis, 2019). By using intersectionality, we illuminate how different intersecting imported characteristics interact with the structural deprivations and characteristics of the prison environment outlined in deprivation-oriented studies.

It is key to recognize oppression as both a consequence of the prison environment and a factor imported into it. Prison's assumption of the young, able-bodied, white, hearing male mirrors inequality in wider society (Ellis, 2021). It is widely known that the structural privileging of certain populations in society has significant consequences for the lives of others (Carbado et al., 2013). This includes Black and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, women, people with disabilities, and the Deaf Community among others. When examining the lives of multiply disadvantaged groups, scholars have applied intersectionality to show that different types of inequality intersect, leading to deeper disadvantage and structural oppression (Kilty, 2020; Raven, 2021). Crewe et al. (2017) examined how pre-existing oppression impacts people's experience of prison through the experiences of men and women serving life sentences for murder in prisons in England and Wales, noting that imprisonment is part of "a broader web of gendered power relations" (p. 1376). They cited a pattern of adjustments to prison life that was consistent irrespective of imported characteristics, apart from gender. We argue that to understand how certain groups experience prison, we must look at a full prism of intersecting imported characteristics and experiences of oppression in wider society. This imported oppression then interacts with the structural deprivations of the prison environment, which can compound it further (Ellis, 2021; Kelly-Corless, 2022). However, in wider society, oppressed groups find ways to cope with, adjust to, or resist this

oppression (Prilleltensky, 2003). We demonstrate that while there is a pain-difference continuum in prison—a correlation between extra layers of difference and pain-to combat these extra layers of pain, people utilize skills for resistance/protection developed prior to prison to allow them to navigate these pains—something we call "imported coping."

Importation and Deprivation

Here, we discuss the development of the importation and deprivation models and the ways they have been used by different scholars to understand prison life. We then explore how they can be valuable tools for understanding other, often hidden, populations in prison.

Sykes (1958) established the 'pains of imprisonment' in *The Society of Captives*—a framework of deprivations including loss of autonomy, security, liberty, goods and services, and heterosexual relationships which are an inherent consequence of the prison environment, as well as the primary force influencing the formation of an "inmate social system" (p. 131) and individual and collective adaptation to it. As prison life is oriented around these pains, everyone experiences them regardless of who they are. Similarly, in *Asylums,* Goffman (1961, p. 6) emphasized the role of deprivation in total institutions where "all aspects of life are conducted in the same place and under the same single authority," such as the prison, characterized by rules, surveillance, and punishment. The total institution dominates inmates from entry, physically and psychologically separating them from society, and forcing them to behave as part of a "batch" (Goffman, 1961, p. 17). For both scholars, the "resources for adjustment" (Crewe, 2016, p. 81) are inside the prison. Inmates adopt roles and "secondary adaptations" (Crewe, 2016, p. 81) to cope, whether that is embodying the "perfect inmate" (Goffman, 1961, p. 63) or refusing to cooperate with staff. Sykes and Goffman acknowledged that some pre-prison factors influence adaptation to prison social life, such as current and previous convictions, but, ultimately, "the inmates are moved, the system is not" (Goffman, 1961, p. 51). These deprivation-oriented studies have since framed the findings of much contemporary work (Haggerty & Bucerius, 2020). They are important here, as we show that how people experience pains depends on the extent to which they align with, or differ from, the 'expected' population.

Importation studies began with Grosser (1960) and Irwin and Cressey (1962). The latter considered many patterns of inmate behavior to be based on a "criminal code" found in wider society (Irwin and Cressey, 1962, p. 145), and the former theorized that the interaction of various inmate personality types was the "foundation" for misconduct and hostile attitudes to the

prison administration, "regardless of the frustrating conditions" (Grosser, 1960, p. 133). Similarly, Thomas and Petersen (1977, p. 17) suggest that inmates' attitudes are already so strongly influenced by "antisocial attitudes and behavior" developed outside; this can undermine attempts at rehabilitation. For importation-leaning theorists, behaviors and demographic traits established outside prison become part of the inmate culture, which is concomitant with the culture created by the objectives of the administration and its staff. Researchers have considered interactions between, and the coexistence of, the deprivation and importation models in many international contexts (Akers et al., 1977; Brosens et al., 2015; Crewe et al., 2017; Dhami et al., 2007; Leigey, 2019; Tewksbury et al., 2014; Warren et al., 2004). This has led to a range of findings which vary depending on the prison environment, participant group, and method of measurement, and highlight the fallibilities of a one-size-fits-all adaptation framework.

Clemmer (1940) described the prison environment as "dynamic" (p. 84)—a constant flow of inmates and staff, individual personalities, and variable processes and speeds of assimilation. His inclusion of the importation model is shown in his argument that prison culture can "swallow up" (p. 102) some inmates, integrating them into a set of prison-based social codes through the process of "prisonization" (p. 299). Similarly, in his ethnographic study of one category C prison, Crewe (2009, pp. 7–8) found that the power of the institution, and forms of power generated by the community of people within it, "interrelate…differently for different individuals, creating a set of adaptive typologies which can change throughout a custodial sentence." Despite conceding that not all individuals adapted in such ways, Crewe found that most did.

Tewksbury et al. (2014, p. 214) suggest that researchers "generalize with caution" and adopt what Dhami et al. (2007, p. 1088) call "theoretical synthesis"—considering the "interactive effects" (p. 1088) rather than comparing the two models as opposing and exclusive forces which can be measured and distinguished. Similarly, Ellis (2021, p. 193) describes the prison environment as "porous," with influences entering prison through inmates, staff, and visitors, shaping experiences while inside, and leaving with inmates as they are released. She argues that the "total institution" is a theoretical starting point, but it does not remove the most economically and socially disadvantaged from society, rather it enhances and develops the difficulties they already experience in "a controlled, punitive location that can never be fully unlinked from the outside world" (Ellis, 2021, p. 194).

Despite this convergence, Schmidt (2016, p. 65) argues more needs to be done "to show how the individual biography intertwines with the structural environment of the prison." While this article is not able to do this for

individual people who are incarcerated, by illuminating the layered-ness of difference and using an intersectional lens, we provide a more nuanced understanding of the pains an individual is likely to feel, based on how far they deviate away from what is 'expected' in prison, as discussed below.

Women

Scholars focusing on women's experiences of prison show that they experience the pains of imprisonment differently and more intensely than men —because prison is not and never has been designed for their needs. Research cites a range of imported characteristics that disproportionately affect the female prison population, including a history of victimization, mental illness, and substance misuse, which then create 'extra' layers of pain (Carlen, 1998; Carlen & Worrall, 2013; Crewe, 2016; Leigey, 2019; Thomas, 2003; Zaitzow, 2003). Carlen (1998, p. 55) has also described an "increase in punitiveness" toward women from poor economic backgrounds and histories of living in local authority care. Sykes' (1958) pains of imprisonment were applied exclusively to incarcerated males, but there are also "gendered pains" (Carlen & Worrall, 2013, p. 71; Crewe et al., 2017). This includes the "medicalisation of women's problems" (Carlen & Worrall, 2013, p. 57), separation from children, geographical distance from family/friends, paternalistic staff attitudes, lack of education and development opportunities, and inadequate healthcare (Ferraro & Moe, 2003; Kruttschnitt, 2010; Thomas, 2003).

The lives of women in prison are influenced by both importation and deprivation factors *through* a gendered lens (Bosworth, 2003; Crewe et al., 2017; Thomas, 2003; Zaitzow, 2003;). Women are "doing gender" (Zaitzow, 2003, p. 21) while they "do time" (Irwin & Cressey, 1962, p. 150), and imprisonment is just one element "in a broader web of gendered power relations" (Crewe et al., 2017, p. 1376). Crewe et al. (2017, p. 1363) examined the experiences of men and women serving life sentences in England and Wales, noting "the intensity and consistency of the trauma disclosed by the women" in their pre-prison lives. The women's experiences of powerlessness, "enforced dependence" (p. 1371), and lack of trust in the institution demonstrated that they experience more intense pains of long-term imprisonment than men, and the foundations for this are constructed pre-prison. Thus, adjustment takes on a different form and motivation for women when the institution represents more than just confinement and other forms of deprivation as described by Goffman and Sykes, but a patriarchal, abusive force they have encountered many times before. Women import

pre-existing oppression, and this is intensified by the structural deprivations of imprisonment.

An intersectional understanding of women in prison reveals more complex imported vulnerabilities and institutional challenges. Intersectional explorations of imprisoned populations are currently limited, with researchers tending to explore one characteristic of 'difference' at once rather than multiple intersecting differences together. An exception here is Osman (2022, p. 121), who explores the lives of BAME women in prison settings in England and Wales, and illuminates how an "intersectional approach can enhance our understanding of the disproportionate impact that imprisonment has on those who occupy multiple marginalized positions." BAME women in prison can experience extra layers of mistreatment and prejudice from staff and other incarcerated people in an environment that neglects and sometimes deliberately ignores their needs and differences (Carlen, 1998; Chigwada-Bailey, 2004; Foley & Papadopoulos, 2013; Sudbury, 2005). Evidence has shown resistance to "stocking a full range of hair and skin products suitable for Black women" (Carlen & Worrall, 2013, p. 62) in prison canteens. On the pain-difference continuum, BAME women can experience more intense and distinct deprivations because they deviate further away from what is 'expected' in a prison environment.

Foreign national women face their own unique challenges in a prison system in a foreign language, an uncertain immigration status, and separation from family and children in an alien culture (Chigwada-Bailey, 2004; Foley & Papadopoulos, 2013; Matos, 2016). These women experience fewer rights than those with full citizenship and "bureaucratic procedures" (Matos, 2016, p. 360) can delay their legal cases and make deportation a likely outcome. This uncertainty around their sentence and their future is both an imported factor (because it is unique to women who have migrated) and a deprivation factor (they are experiencing heightened levels of the deprivation of autonomy within the prison system), creating particular pains. Many of the structured deprivations inherent in prison life in deprivation-oriented studies are experienced differently and more intensely by women of all ethnicities. However, the more layers of 'difference' imported, the more layers of penal pain they are subjected to, creating this pain-difference continuum.

A further example relevant to this pain-difference continuum relates to pregnant women, who Abbott et al. (2024, p. 2) describe as "an anomaly, deviating significantly from the more typical prison experience" and subject to "institutional thoughtlessness" (Crawley, 2005) because their different needs are overlooked and neglected. Abbott et al.'s (2024, p. 10) research reveals that pregnant women in prison experience a punitive lack of resources, physical adaptations, and wellbeing support, becoming "lost within a system

that does not reflect their needs." The authors attribute these gendered pains in part to the masculine nature of the prison system, which already struggles to make adaptations for a female population, and so is even more unlikely to support a *pregnant* female population. BAME women present "a noteworthy, amplified risk of being pregnant and in prison" (Foley & Papadopoulos, 2013, pp. 557–558) and are less likely to receive appropriate prenatal and postnatal care, highlighting further the importance of this intersectional understanding of difference.

Women with extra layers of difference experience extra layers of pain, which often reflect (and exacerbate) pre-existing forms of societal oppression, meaning that they already have experience of navigating this. Women can use this in prison to cope with or resist the extra pains they are subject to, creating nuanced forms of the pain-difference continuum. Matos (2016, p. 361) showed that in Portuguese prisons women are often labeled by staff and fellow inmates in ways that illuminate difference, such as "the Africans" and "the gypsies." While this created problematic hierarchies, it also provided "a source of strength and unity" (Matos, 2016, p. 361) for women from the same ethnic, national, or religious background. Bosworth (2003, p. 149) also shows that women of different ethnicities can "lay claim" to this part of their identity to cope with life in prison, becoming a 'Black woman' or a 'Muslim woman' rather than an imprisoned woman', highlighting that extra layers of imported difference can be a shield to protect individuals from the pains associated with the 'prisoner' label. In the same study, she found other individuals use their difference as a "mask" (p. 148), where an inability to speak the dominant language becomes a way to "block" (p. 148) the environment out, insulating from the pains of imprisonment. This is a form of imported coping"—the resistance and protection skills developed prior to prison which allow individuals to navigate/survive the pains of imprisonment.

After examining how the importation and deprivation models can and have been used to understand the experiences of women in prison and their layered experiences of pain and difference, focus is now given to the experiences of d/Deaf people who are incarcerated, about which much less is known.

d/Deaf People in Prison

To understand the arguments put forward here, the reader must have some comprehension of the differences between being audiologically deaf and culturally and linguistically Deaf. In terms of the first group, the small "d" denotes the audiological condition (Hearing Link, 2021) and is used to refer to people with a significant hearing problem who usually view their deafness negatively and may wish to be "cured" of it (Wallhagan, 2010).

Most of this population becomes deaf through accident, illness, or ageing during adulthood (Hearing Link, 2021). They have already developed a 'hearing identity' (Ladd, 2003; Lane et al., 1996), viewing deafness as a "stigmatising" feature (Goffman, 1963, pp. 47–48) and attempting to cope with it by behaving as hearing through strategies such as denial, correction, or passing (Lane et al., 1996; O'Brien & Harris, 1999; Wallhagan, 2010). When these coping strategies are not possible or effective, evidence shows that deaf people often resort to withdrawal as a secondary coping mechanism for navigating their experience of deafness in world designed by and for hearing people (Marschark, 2009).

While there are overlaps between the lives and experiences of d/Deaf people because of their lack of access to sound and the oppression they experience as part of a hearing world, there are also significant differences. Culturally and linguistically Deaf people, who often communicate via BSL and utilize visual cultural behaviors such as touch and prolonged eye contact for getting people's attention or expressing warmth and affection (Baker & Padden, 1978; Woodward, 1972), usually value their Deafness, rejecting the stigma commonly associated with it and preferring to spend time with other Deaf people in social and personal contexts (Snoddon & Underwood, 2017; Wilks, 2019). These individuals are usually deaf from birth/an early age and begin to identify as Deaf once they become aware of the Deaf world. Prior to this point deaf children commonly experience significant isolation, both at home where 90% are born to hearing parents (Snoddon & Underwood, 2017), and in educational settings which are usually designed for hearing people (Stapleton, 2015). Even after integrating into Deaf life, people often continue to have difficult experiences in the workplace and medical settings, where there is commonly little conception of Deafness or resources allocated to support their language (Grote et al., 2021; Wilks, 2019). Inevitably, individuals can become resentful of hearing people, viewing them negatively and avoiding them where possible.

The pains of imprisonment are particularly harsh for d/Deaf people, both in England and Wales and globally (see, Cobb, 2016; Kelly, 2017a, 2017b, 2018; Kelly-Corless, 2022; McCulloch, 2012; Tamura & Gunnison, 2019; Vernon & Miller, 2005; Zidenberg, 2021). Prison life is oriented around sound (Kelly, 2017b; Herrity, 2019), and people need to be able to hear to comply with the expectations of "batch living" (Goffman, 1961 p. 11). Without access to sound, or sound converting equipment, which is not consistently provided (Cobb, 2016; Kelly, 2017b, 2018), d/Deaf people become isolated from the prison regime—unable to hear bells, tannoys, alarms, or voices. The work of the lead author, who completed the largest

study carried out in the UK to date based on qualitative interviews with d/Deaf people who were incarcerated and staff that worked with a d/Deaf individual,[2] shows that the structural deprivations of imprisonment are felt differently and more intensely because their d/Deafness does not align with what is 'expected'. For example, the deprivation of security (Sykes, 1958) is felt more keenly as they are more vulnerable to fires and attacks and can be subject to more disciplinary action because they violate certain expectations of the regime by missing announcements (Kelly, 2017b). Without access to equipment such as hearing aids, communication is difficult, which affects their ability to engage in rehabilitation programs, education, and medical/legal appointments, or to form relationships, something which is seen as key for effective adjustment (Sykes, 1958). Without adjustments, it can be impossible to use the phone, damaging relationships outside of prison, intensifying isolation (Kelly, 2017b; McCulloch, 2012) and the deprivation of liberty (Sykes, 1958).

An intersectional understanding of d/Deafness and d/Deaf identification reveals further nuances in the importation–deprivation convergence. Findings from Kelly (2017b, 2018) and Kelly-Corless (2022) show that the way someone views their d/Deafness impacts how they attempt to adjust to and 'cope' with the deprivations of prison life. Audiologically deaf people commonly attempt to adhere to "batch living" (Goffman, 1961, p. 11) by trying to pass as hearing people—disassociating from their deafness and the weakness they perceive it to infer (Kelly, 2017b, 2018). This "imported coping" strategy is deemed particularly important in prison—an environment characterized by violence and hostility, where hierarchies are often structured around perceived strength and masculinity (Crewe, 2009).

Despite attempting to behave as 'ordinary' hearing people, their deafness is too different from what is expected in an institutionally thoughtless prison environment. In consequence, deaf people are less able to adjust in ways that lessen the pains of imprisonment and may feel forced to withdraw, which is also a secondary coping mechanism in wider society (Marschark, 2009). Participants in Kelly's (2017a) study discussed staying in their cells as much as they could and feeling as though they had no choice but to isolate themselves from other people. As such, it is clear that the lives of incarcerated deaf people are still affected by the structured deprivations of imprisonment, but rather than being able to adapt in ways that lessen the impact of prison, their lives become defined by isolation and separation from a regime that is not designed to accommodate an imported characteristic such as deafness—creating different layers of pain, and illuminating the "pain-difference continuum".

Members of the Deaf Community are also affected by a lack of comprehension of sound. However, their culturally distinct norms and use of BSL move them further away from what is 'expected' in this setting (Kelly-Corless, 2022), adding an extra layer of imported intersecting difference. In addition to sound converting equipment, Deaf individuals need regular access to BSL (or other) interpreters, and to staff who are Deaf aware to conform in any meaningful way to the environment. In practice, this provision/awareness is rare and they become even more isolated, unable to access information, programs, or services in a language they understand (Kelly-Corless, 2022; Zidenberg, 2021). This isolation can become akin to solitary confinement, with little opportunity to engage meaningfully with prison life (Cobb, 2016; Kelly-Corless, 2022). This level of difference intensifies the way structural deprivations are felt. Deaf people in prison can experience the deprivation of autonomy (Sykes, 1958) more intensely when they are unable to access important services, facilities and items they have a legal right to, or to know the process for submitting complaints or arranging visits (Kelly, 2017b). Consequently, prison becomes more totalizing for Deaf people because their imported Deaf characteristics are too different in terms of how prison is set up and designed.

An intersectional understanding of d/Deafness is vital for understanding how the importation and deprivation models interact, because the extra layer of 'difference' adds an extra layer of pain/deprivation for imprisoned Deaf people in the pain-difference continuum. Research shows that where there are multiple Deaf people in a prison, staff members can become suspicious of signing, falsely interpreting it as plotting against staff or planning escapes, leading to unnecessary disciplinary action and even attempts to ban BSL on a wing (Kelly-Corless, 2022). Exclamatory movements and the use of touch to get attention can also be perceived as problematic by staff, given the violent, hostile nature of prison life (Kelly-Corless, 2022). This resonates with Goffman (1961) who states that when a group of inmates attempt to deviate from the "batch" and create their own cultural world, staff can "consciously try to hinder" (p. 60) the formation of such groups.

In terms of "imported coping," evidence shows that if someone is the only Deaf person in a prison (which is common), they can feel they have little option but to withdraw because there is no room for them in the batch (Cobb, 2016; Kelly-Corless, 2022). However, their cultural identity also impacts their responses, as while deaf individuals commonly want to adjust to "batch living" (Goffman, 1961, p.11) but struggle to do so, Deaf people often purposefully separate themselves from hearing staff and other

incarcerated people because of the oppression they have experienced in the broader hearing world (Kelly-Corless, 2022). While Deaf people attempt to continue behaving in line with their imported identity, there is no space for such profound difference in prison. Without appropriate resources and support they are also unable to adapt to "batch living" (Goffman, 1961, p.11) or the expectations of their role, becoming stuck in a 'prisonized limbo' where further withdrawal feels like the only available option (Cobb, 2016; Kelly-Corless, 2022; McCulloch, 2012). While it is clear there is significant overlap between the experiences of deaf and Deaf people due to the lack of access to sound in a sound-oriented environment, Deaf individuals experience extra pains because of their cultural differences and visual language.

Like with research relating to women in prison (Bosworth, 2003; Crewe et al., 2017), d/Deaf people's experiences are not unique to the prison environment and can act as an extension of their lives outside of prison. They import oppression from a broader hearing society oriented around medicalized understandings of d/Deafness (Kelly-Corless, 2022), which become more intense when combined with the hostile and totalizing nature of the prison environment and its structured deprivations. For example, Deaf people experience significant issues as part of the hearing world in wider society, so commonly embed themselves within the Deaf Community (Ladd, 2003). They then import these experiences of oppression and responses to it as means of 'coping' in the prison environment. In this totalizing setting, "batch living" (Goffman, 1961, p.11), disempowerment and "institutional thoughtlessness" (Crawley, 2005, p. 350) intensify this oppression and restrict the capacity to 'cope' with it. This makes the prison environment particularly painful for this group, giving rise to the layered-ness of pain with different layers of imported difference.

Discussion

Deprivation-oriented frameworks can neglect the experiences of those who are 'different', assuming the resources for adjustment "lie inside the institution" (Crewe, 2016, p. 81) regardless of imported characteristics and identities. However, they provide a useful basis for understanding prison culture and individual experiences, because they continue to align in many ways with formal and informal expectations for incarcerated people. The groups in this article experience Sykes' (1958) pains of imprisonment to some degree because of the coercive, depriving, disempowering nature of the institution and its "thoughtlessness" (Crawley, 2005, p. 350). However, their

imported differences mean that they experience pains in different ways and to different levels.

We are aware that highlighting layers of pains based on layers of difference could be crude, particularly when these differences are defined against conceptions of what is 'ordinary' or 'expected' in prisons (a young, able-bodied, hearing, English-speaking male). Though we do not want to underestimate the pains and complex experiences of this group, this terminology is important because it remains the case that prison is designed for this group and that society privileges them more broadly. While there is more of a focus on diversity in prisons now than historically, buildings, policy, and the regime are still structured for this 'expected' population. Although incarcerated people are not one homogenous batch, prisons largely continue to be set up in this way—meaning that those who cannot adjust accordingly and deviate from that which is 'expected' experience different layers of pain and deprivation in the pain-difference continuum. If prison environments mimic the intersecting layers of oppression in wider society, the further someone moves away from this 'expected' type, broadly, the more layers of pain they are likely to experience (Crenshaw, 1989). For example, a Black woman experiences more layers of penal pain than a White woman because although both deviate away from 'male', a Black woman also deviates away from 'White'. A foreign national woman deviates linguistically, in national identity, and potentially ethnically from the institution's norm. Pregnancy also adds a further layer of difference that the prison environment is ill-equipped to deal with, and often insensitive to. Similarly, culturally and linguistically Deaf people experience different types of pain and deprivation than those who are audiologically deaf, because as well being unable to hear in a setting where sound dominates, they also communicate in BSL and utilize visual cultural behaviors, which serve to further exclude them from the norms of the prison regime.

Bosworth's (2003) work suggests that in certain contexts, these extra layers of 'difference' can act as a cultural shield from the incarcerated label for some individuals, demonstrating that there can be power indifference. Indeed, not being able to adhere to the batch, perhaps being unable to speak the primary language of the prison, can allow for reflexive liberation from the disempowerment associated with this type of living, or "imported coping." Theoretically, this too could apply to incarcerated deaf people, who may not be able to hear what is being said, and Deaf people who communicate in BSL and may not understand verbal language. However, deaf people commonly import pre-existing isolation from the wider hearing world, ascribing stigma rather than cultural value to their difference and wanting to escape it (Kelly, 2018). As such, rather than acting as a shield

from the confines of the batch, these individuals *want* to be able to adhere to the batch, and their inability to do so intensifies their feelings of stigma, isolation, and inferiority. Furthermore, for Deaf people, their "imported coping" strategies relating to their culture and language can have an inverse effect in prison, because of the extent to which they misalign with the expectations of prison life.

While Crewe (2009) argues that different adaptive frameworks are likely to be needed in different contexts, the experiences of d/Deaf people who are incarcerated seem to be almost universally desperate (Zidenberg, 2021). When somebody's imported characteristics differ so profoundly from what is expected, differences across establishments and even jurisdictions become almost irrelevant, as it is isolation from the regime that becomes the defining experiential feature, rather than the regime itself. Together, the importation and deprivation models can be used as an important theoretical lens for understanding why certain populations suffer so significantly in prison and can help to illustrate why withdrawal can feel like the only viable response to prison life. Existing studies outline adaptive frameworks containing different typologies and processes that people undertake to combat the deprivations of imprisonment. Crewe (2009) discusses how deliberate and changeable roles of adaptation can be, in that they might change their approach to prison life if their release is coming up or they can see benefits in behaving in a particular way. However, people with specific challenges or identities are less able to take on the roles of adaptation and use them to their advantage, and as shown throughout, they are primarily just surviving in the environment.

Conclusion

This article demonstrates that an intersectional understanding of difference is an important lens through which to consider the importation and deprivation convergence. Throughout, we have drawn attention to the existence of a pain-difference continuum, whereby the further an individual moves away from "expected" characteristics, the more layers of pain they are likely to experience. While the disproportionate pain and punishment experienced by groups that are 'different' in prison are becoming more widely understood, this difference is often explored in relation to single characteristics in isolation, such as gender or race. By creating a continuum that examines different intersecting imported characteristics, we can make space for a more nuanced understanding of difference, giving an indication of the layers of pain and deprivation an individual is likely to experience based on how 'different' they are.

Throughout, we have added further weight to existing claims that many of the problems faced by populations who deviate away from what is 'expected' in prisons are not unique to the prison environment. Prison in many ways is a microcosm of wider society, where certain groups are privileged, and those who do not fit this mold are oppressed in myriad ways. This privileging is woven into policy, practice, and culture across prisons, and is often even more marked given that most of the prison population fits this mold. This means that prison regimes are oriented around the behaviors and needs of this group, and they become the focus of resource allocation. It is clear then that while the importation model is important for considering the types of characteristics/behaviors people import into prison, it is also useful for considering the types of pre-existing oppression that people import too.

While Crewe et al. (2017) focus on the prison being part of a bigger picture of oppression in relation to gender, and argue that in the context of individuals serving a life sentence, gender was the only characteristic that significantly impacted people's experience of and patterns of adjustment to prison, we show that different types of imported characteristics and corresponding oppressions impact how an individual experiences the structural deprivations of the prison environment. Indeed, we must explore the full prism of intersecting imported characteristics and experiences of oppression in wider society if we are to understand how people experience prison, and to begin to meaningfully explore "how the individual biography intertwines with the structural environment of the prison" (Schmidt, 2016, p. 65).

We have demonstrated that oppressed groups find ways to cope with, adjust to and even resist the oppression that they experience in wider society. Once imprisoned, they often utilize these "imported coping" skills to allow them to navigate the pains of imprisonment. As illuminated, in certain contexts, this can help to lessen the experience of pain, whereas in others, it can compound it further. As such, researchers must consider and explore relevant "imported coping" strategies and the impact that they have on how an individual experiences prison, and the types of pains and deprivations that they are subjected to.

This article has used an intersectional lens to think about deafness and Deafness, and has done so quite crudely based on the limitations of existing prison literature. However, there are significant overlaps and nuances here. For example, d/Deaf people can have multiple relationships with both hearing and Deaf worlds based on educational background, use of sign language at home, and relationships with other d/Deaf people (Smolen & Paul, 2023). There are also contexts where they may feel excluded from both the hearing and Deaf worlds (O'Brien, 2013), find their racial identity eclipsed in predominantly white d/Deaf spaces (Chapple, 2019; Stapleton,

2015), or transition between hearing and d/Deaf behaviors and communication depending on the context. When thinking about this in the context of prison then, this notion of "fluid identity" (Smolen & Paul, 2023, p. 6) and sometimes forced "assimilation" (Chapple, 2019, p. 190) could be explored further when thinking about intersectional layers of difference and their correlation with the importation and deprivation models. Indeed, other researchers could use the difference-pain continuum as a conceptual lens through which to understand the lives of Black d/Deaf or female d/Deaf populations. They could 'test' whether these extra layers of difference correlate with extra layers of 'pain' in the way that the continuum indicates.

This continuum is not intended to be a tool for understanding the highly complex lives of individual people in prison. Rather, it can act as a starting point—providing a foundational indication of the layered-ness of the pains/problems they are likely to experience, which researchers can then build on with in-depth rich qualitative research. It is very apparent that certain groups suffer particularly acutely in prison, and throughout we have shown how the importation and deprivation models can be used as a theoretical lens for understanding why this is. The difference-pain continuum could be utilized widely as a lens through which to view and to begin to understand the lives of all groups who are 'different' in prisons.

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Notes

1. While it is important to acknowledge that there are many factors that influence prison culture, ultimately the fact that this culture aligns most easily with the behaviors of the 'expected' population has significant bearing on the lives of other populations.
2. For full details about the methodology and research design of this research, see Kelly-Corless (2020), where it is outlined in depth.

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