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Intersectional analysis of female prisoner's depictions in Orange is the New Black

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INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF FEMALE PRISONER’S DEPICTIONS IN ORANGE IS THE NEW BLACK

by

Arianne Watson

A Thesis
Submitted to the University at Albany, State University of New York
In Partial Fulfillment of
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Abstract

Intersectional Analysis of female prisoner’s depictions in Orange is the New Black

By: Arianne Watson

The purpose of this research is to critically analyze Orange is the New Black (OITNB) by conducting an intersectional analysis of seasons 1 and 2. Imprisoned women are excluded from discussions about their oppression. Incarcerated women lack: 1) the four domains of power, which are hegemonic, interpersonal, disciplinary, and structural; and 2) control of their representations. Media’s representations about imprisoned women are accessible through movies, television news, television shows, and newspapers; which have consistently depicted women in prison inaccurately as “bad”, violent, and sexually insatiable. The women who write prison narratives books are not representative of the female prison system, often reflecting their personal experience.

OITNB is an internationally famous and award-winning show with a readily accessible and influential platform (Netflix). OITNB is relevant to the current discussion of imprisoned women and their representation of females; thus, it is important to ask how the show presents and depicts the women’s Federal prison system. An intersectional analysis will examine how women of different racial/ethnic groups and criminal offenses are represented in OITNB. To establish whether OITNB is disrupting or reinforcing these images for women imprisoned as a whole, or for specific racial/ethnic groups, or criminal offense types.
Intersectional Analysis of female prisoner’s depictions in Orange is the New Black

Introduction

Netflix is the world’s leading Internet television network with an estimated 60 million subscribers, as of third quarter 2014 (Popper 2015). Netflix debuted its comedy-drama series Orange is the New Black (OITNB) in July 2013. Netflix original series, OITNB, follows Piper Chapman, a white college-educated upper-middle-class woman in 2013. On the surface, she is a law-abiding citizen, has a fiancé and is the proud owner of a bath soap business. Her life is suddenly turned upside down when her college misbehaviors catch up with her. Piper is charged with money laundering, for having transported drug money, ten years prior, during her college years. Chapman is sentenced to 15-months at Litchfield Penitentiary, a Federal minimum security facility. At first glance, OITNB focuses on the premise that Piper was never “supposed” to be incarcerated. Demographically she does not fit the prisoner mold, but due to the 11-year statute of limitations for her crime, she must wear orange.

OITNB takes place in a diverse woman's prison facility in upstate New York and offers a compelling view of the daily lives of both inmates and staff. OITNB offers a captivating view to audiences by humanizing incarcerated women and portraying the complexity and diversity of women’s prisons regarding racial/ethnic backgrounds, sexualities, socioeconomic statuses, and criminal activity. Reviewer Robert Bianco (2013) from the USA Today calls season one of the OITNB “A deft mix of comedy and drama in which the prison feels like a real place and the women are actual people, rather than a thinly veiled excuse to stage catfights, lesbian fantasies, and sexual assault.” OITNB evolves from a show that follows the missteps of Piper Chapman; to a show that ropes the audience into the backstories, joys, and drama of 35 other imprisoned women.

For a show with only three seasons, it has made quite an impact on the industry. OITNB is currently one of the top comedy series; earning 83 nominations and winning 36 awards from...
committees recognizing excellence in the television industry and pop culture, including the Primetime Emmy, Critics Choice Television and People’s Choice Awards (IMDB 2016). OITNB has amassed a substantial audience, and the creators of the show have the ability to reinforce factual information based on current crime data or reinforce stereotypes and distort depictions about imprisoned women through dramatizations. Stereotypes regarding incarcerated women and women’s prisons include the idea that the women are dangerous, vagrants, substance users, sex workers and their prisons are violent (Pishko 2015). Reinforcing these stereotypes is hazardous to the image of incarcerated women because it provides an inaccurate image to audiences.

Interest in crime and criminality has been pervasive throughout history from spectators at trials to spectators at punishment procedures such as hangings and with increased technology our viewership has evolved. Traditional forms of media most often included television, newspapers, and radio. Modern day “digital-age” media content comes in the form of phones, tablets, and computers; new content is readily available via streaming and an Internet connection. Both traditional and modern forms of media often over dramatize images of women’s incarceration without discussing the intersection of racism, sexism, and classism within the criminal justice system (Cecil 2007). Secondary information in the media, from prevalent fictional representations, is largely the basis for public knowledge on imprisoned women. “Mediachosis” is a person’s unconscious acceptance of the media as factual, due to a lack of primary information (Bennett 2006: 99). Analysis of OITNB is necessary to measure the ideas being dispersed to the viewing audience, in the likely absence of primary information. This research will use intersectional analysis of multiple axes of race, gender, and criminal offenses. The intersectional analysis is the most comprehensive approach to analyzing a marginalized population; it acknowledges the importance of compounding identities and different forms of oppression including race, class,
gender and sexuality that impact an individual’s life. This study seeks to determine whether OITNB is representative of the federal prison system and incarcerated women within the United States. The goal is to provide a comparison of current crime statistics to data from OITNB; determining the accuracy of information being communicated through the Netflix show.

The “Orange is the New Black” Show

The show Orange is the New Black is based on the prison narrative novel written by Piper Kerman. The program creator of OITNB is Jenji Kohan, who fought adamantly to get this show on the air after her hit show “Weeds” on Showtime, premium subscription television channel, ended after eight seasons. “Weeds” followed single mom Nancy Botwin, a white woman who begins selling weed to support her children after her husband’s untimely death. In a similar vein to “OITNB,” the main character is thrust into a terrible situation of her own making, and the rest of the cast must simultaneously resolve her problem while being trapped in her issues. Although Jenji Kohan has been a successful program creator, both HBO and Showtime rejected her OITNB pitch (NPR 2013). Netflix, a streaming media company, was interested in creating original content; and were willing to take a chance on a women’s prison show (NPR 2013).

The Netflix show follows the main character Piper Chapman, an upper-middle-class college-educated Caucasian woman. Chapman is incarcerated in Litchfield Penitentiary a minimum-security women’s federal prison in upstate New York, for international transportation of drug money; a crime she committed nearly a decade prior. Piper was seeking adventure after graduating from Smith College. She found excitement in Alex Vause her mid-level drug trafficking girlfriend whom she aided in the transportation of drug money. Since her participation in the drug trafficking ring, she has lived a straight and narrow life. At the onset of the story, Piper was the owner of an artisanal bath product line with her best friend, and engaged to a journalist.
She is the polar opposite of the majority of the women incarcerated. Her presence in the prison makes for an interesting comedic drama because she is continuously getting herself and other inmates into undesirable situations.

Program creator, Jenji Kohan, felt that the stories of women, other than the images predominantly featured in society were different, relevant, interesting, and not getting told (NPR 2013). She used Piper Chapman the main character as the “Trojan horse” of her “salad bowl” prison series to discuss other important issues such as sexuality, racial/ethnic relations, class, and women's issues (NPR 2013).

“You're not going to go into a network and sell a show on really fascinating tales of black women, and Latina women, and old women and criminals. But if you take this white girl, this sort of fish out of water, and you follow her in, you can then expand your world and tell all of those other stories. But it's a hard sell to just go in and try to sell those stories initially. The girl next door, the cool blonde, is a very easy access point, and it's relatable for a lot of audiences and a lot of networks looking for a certain demographic. It's useful.” – Jenji Kohan (NPR 2013)

This research on incarcerated women is necessary: 1) OITNB has a significant influence and platform as an award winning show and 2) although, OITNB showcases the diversity of incarcerated women the accuracy of representations is important. Before OITNB, media on women incarceration was dismal, relegated to “sexploration” movies, or brief discussions in television shows, rather than from a semi-realistic perspective about imprisoned women, which OITNB claims to provide (Cecil 2007).

Chart 1 listed below presents the race/ethnicity, offense, and offense type of women classified as relevant and incarcerated in Litchfield Penitentiary. Relevancy is based on the knowledge of the offender’s crimes via flashbacks and/or conversations. In total, there are 36 women in Litchfield, but the audience only knows 18 inmate’s offenses at this time, that is 50% of the total population. Knowledge of a character’s actual crime is necessary to categorize their
offense type. The racial/ethnic breakdown of relevant offenders is 8 White, 7 African- American, and 3 Hispanic/Latina women. Of the relevant women ten are racial/ethnic minorities. The women imprisoned predominantly committed violent offenses, seven in total. Each offense is mutually exclusive and exhaustive based on the Bureau of Justice Statistics “most serious offense rule” (Motivans 2015 42.)

Chart 1. Race/Ethnicity, crime type, and offense on the relevant women incarcerated in OITNB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character</th>
<th>Crime Type</th>
<th>Offense</th>
<th>Race/ Ethnicity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Piper Chapman</td>
<td>Property</td>
<td>Money Trafficking for a drug trade</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alex Vause</td>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>Drug trafficking</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tasha 'Taystee' Jefferson</td>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>Drug trade</td>
<td>African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tiffany 'Pennsatucky' Doggett</td>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>Shooting a nurse in an abortion clinic</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poussey Washington</td>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>Selling Marijuana</td>
<td>African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lorna ‘Morello’ Muccio</td>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>Attempted murder</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gloria Mendoza</td>
<td>Property</td>
<td>Food stamp fraud</td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erica 'Yoga Jones' Jones</td>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>Manslaughter of a minor</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Janae Watson</td>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>Armed robbery</td>
<td>African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophia Burset</td>
<td>Property</td>
<td>Credit card fraud</td>
<td>African- American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aleida Diaz</td>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>Drug related charges</td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patricia 'Tricia' Miller</td>
<td>Property</td>
<td>Theft</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Claudette Pelage</td>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>Human trafficking and murder</td>
<td>African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black Cindy</td>
<td>Property</td>
<td>felony theft</td>
<td>African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gina Murphy</td>
<td>Property</td>
<td>embezzlement</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yvonne 'Vee' Parker</td>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>drug trafficking</td>
<td>African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosa Cisneros</td>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>armed robbery</td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frieda Berlin</td>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>Aggravated assault with a deadly weapon</td>
<td>White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 Offenders</td>
<td>6 property</td>
<td>8 White</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5 drug</td>
<td>7 African-American</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7 violent</td>
<td>3 Hispanic/Latina</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

History of Incarcerated Women

Since its inception, America has had some form of a local custodial facility to place or hold offenders, “witches”, and “morally depraved individuals” (Pishko 2015 and Rafter 1983). Before
the late 1700s, jails focused on detaining individuals without any theoretical or experimental purpose to rehabilitate the offender (Pishko 2015). Quakers invented the concept of a “penitentiary” with the Pennsylvania system. Penitentiaries, for Quakers, were places where prisoners could reflect on their deviant acts in silent solitary confinement; this would pay “penance” for their sin and offense, leading to rehabilitation (Pishko 2015). In 1776, the first American penitentiary was Walnut Street jail in Pennsylvania and expanded in 1790 due to overcapacity becoming Walnut Street prison (Pishko 2015 and Hirsch 1992). Prisons in the United States at this time held accommodations for male offenders; few had separate sections for female offenders (Rafter 1983). These early experimental penitentiaries exclusively incarcerated white men, because women and minorities were “barely considered human”, thought to be incapable of reflecting on prior indiscretions and changing their behavior (Pishko 2015).

America’s prevailing belief about women in the early 1800s drew from the “Cult of Domesticity”; in part, white middle to upper-class women should stay at home and tend to household needs (Pishko 2015). In 1825, Auburn State Prison in New York used the Congregate/Auburn system, forced silent labor and communal confinement, to transform both men and women into law-abiding citizens (Shelden 2009). Male prisoners were confined to solitary rooms at night and during the day, they congregated in workshops to silently labor.

Imprisoned women were housed in a windowless attic room above the kitchen (Shelden 2009). These women lived in filthy conditions; forced to do domestic labor for 10 hours a day six days a week in an effort to domesticate them (Pishko 2015 and Rafter 1983). These women had little to no free time; their movement was limited to the attic; restricting their accessibility to physicians, exercise, or the chaplain (Pishko 2015 and Rafter 1983). Although, Auburn women did not fully encompass the true meaning of “women” as poor white ethnics, as defined by the
“Cult of Domesticity” they could be useful as servants or potential wives by gaining “feminine” skills (Pishko 2015 and Rafter 1983). Auburn confined “wayward women,” generally lower to working class White ethnic minorities from Southern and Eastern Europe (Italians and Irish) migrating to the U.S.A. during the Industrial Revolution (Shelden, 2009). These women had committed low-level, non-violent crimes, crimes deemed “unladylike” such as moral turpitude, prostitution, lewd behavior, and vagrancy (Pishko 2015, and Rafter 1983).

During this period, at Auburn prison, women faced high risk of physical and sexual assault by correctional officers and male inmates, who did not face serious recourse for their acts (Pishko 2015 and Rafter 1983). In 1826, the death of Rachel Welch forged change within the women’s prison system. Welch became pregnant by a prison official during solitary confinement; she was flogged to death after childbirth (Shelden 2010, Rafter 1983: 138 and Rathbone 2005). Welch’s death made New York officials construct separate women and men prison facilities and in 1835 the first separate custodial prison system, Mount Pleasant, was established (Rafter 1983: 138).

The prisons systems discussed above were located in the Northern parts of the United States. The northern prison system had a very different structure than their Southern counterparts. Until the 13th Amendment, African-Americans were enslaved rendering incarceration for African-Americans in the South unnecessary (Johnson, Robert, Ania Dobrzanska, and Seri Palla 2005:23). For slaves, punishment for criminal acts came in the form of brutal corporal punishment by slave masters (Johnson, Robert, Ania Dobrzanska, and Seri Palla 2005:26). Free African-Americans could face imprisonment, but were more likely to face lethal forms of brutality, whether for an offense or suspicion (Johnson, Robert, Ania Dobrzanska, and Seri Palla 2005: 25).

After slavery was abolished throughout the United States in 1865, women’s incarceration increased, and the demographics of incarcerated women changed as well. During the Civil War
and after slavery ended, the highest rate of female incarceration occurred; increasing by one-third while male imprisonment declined by one-half (Banks 2003:3 and Johnson, Robert, Ania Dobrzanska, and Seri Palla 2005:27). Men were off at war, leaving women to be policed by officers of the law, instead of traditional monitoring by male family members. Historically, women have been incarcerated more for property and public order offenses like prostitution, petty larceny, vagrancy, and drunkenness; rarely for violent crimes (Banks 2003: 3 and Mankarious 2013).

Two forms of incarceration for women traditionally existed: 1) custodial and 2) reformatory (Johnson, Robert, Ania Dobrzanska, and Seri Palla 2005: 27-28). Custodial prisons were common pre-1870s stressing containment, security, and discipline of prisoners; focused on protecting society from prisoner’s negative behavior (Rafter 1983: 142-146). Custodial women’s prisons emphasize productivity and profitability over programs and activities. Also, incarcerating predominately property offending African-American women ages 22-30 years old; few imprisoned had committed violent offenses. Next, matrons were available to assist and protect incarcerated women at the facilities. Finally, discipline and punishment could consist of straight-jacketing, solitary confinement, extended bread-water diets and near drownings “shower baths” for disobedient offenders (Rafter 1983: 142-146).

Reformatories are female prisons that were common from 1870 to 1935 seeking to rehabilitate the offender through constructive activities and treatments with indeterminate sentencing (Rafter 1983: 156-168). Reformatories held “wayward” young White women ages 16-25 years old, who committed petty larceny, prostitution, and vagrancy. White “wayward” women were believed to be morally deficient but able to be rehabilitated (Johnson, Robert, Ania Dobrzanska, and Seri Palla 2005: 25). Reformatories concentrated on wholesome and domestic activities to maintain their facilities, which had cottages, gardens, free movement, and no fences.
(Johnson, Robert, Ania Dobrzanska, and Seri Palla 2005: 25). Reformatories focused on training these women to be “ladies” through similar activities as Auburn women, but without silence, and some facilities employed female matrons and superintendents (Hagedorn 2003 and Rafter 1983: 159).

The push for incarcerating African Americans began shortly after slavery ended in 1865. America found a different way to keep African Americans in bondage in custodial prisons. Southern states had “chain gangs” and Northern states had warehouse prisons. All of America’s custodial prisons relied heavily on manual labor and had no pretense about improving the inmate (Johnson, Robert, Ania Dobrzanska, and Seri Palla 2005: 28-29). In the South “chain gangs” filled, the slave labor shortage and decreased the necessity and reliance on sharecroppers (Johnson, Robert, Ania Dobrzanska, and Seri Palla 2005: 29-30). The majority of the Latino population resided in the South and were considered to be “nonwhite,” thus ineligible for reform prisons and forced to face the hardship of custodial prisons and “chain gangs” (Horsman 1981). Mexican Americans were stereotyped as “barbaric, inferior, mongrels, and criminally inclined” (Horsman 1981).

African American women’s experience differed greatly from her white counterpart. African American women could no longer be in bondage on slave plantations, nor were they “reform-able” (Johnson, Robert, Ania Dobrzanska, and Seri Palla 2005: 25). African- American women “were black first, and then they were women”, assigned to “chain gangs” like Black men (Johnson, Robert, Ania Dobrzanska, and Seri Palla 2005: 25). In state-run prison plantations in the South, Black women could be leased out from their “chain gangs” as free labor in mines and railroads (Johnson, Robert, Ania Dobrzanska, and Seri Palla 2005: 28-29).
By 1880, Blacks made up the majority of the inmates replacing European immigrants and disproportionately filling the Houses of Correction and prisons of that era (Johnson, Robert, Ania Dobrzanska, and Seri Palla 2005, 30-32). Beginning in 1910, African-Americans migrated north during “The Great Migration” joining white ethnics in northern prisons and jails (Hagedorn 2003). This migration forever shifted imprisonment in the United States of America, increasing the rate of African Americans in Southern and Northern prisons.

Women were perceived to be mentally incompetent and lacked the necessary physical aggression to commit deviant acts; as a result, the criminal justice system had been unwilling to impose severe punishment according to the Chivalry hypothesis (Farnworth and Teske 1995 and Grabe et al. 2006). The women’s right movement of the 1960s shifted society’s perception about women as “second-class citizens,” to individuals with separate beliefs, ideals, and concepts about society different from their male relative. This change influenced the leniency Caucasian women received from a White male-dominated criminal justice system (Grabe et al. 2006). Minority women did not receive chivalrous protections from the criminal justice system according to Farnworth and Teske (1995) who concluded that out of the variables offense, charge, gender, race/ethnicity, and age – “race was the greatest predictor of reduction in criminal sentences.” African American females were likely to receive lenient sentences but far less than Caucasian women, yet more likely than African American males who were least likely to be granted with a charge reduction (Farnworth and Teske 1995).

From the Great Depression in the 1930s through the end of the crack epidemic in 1995, women’s prison system experienced major growth and women were perceived different. The increase in female prisons in the late 20th century can be attributed to the changes in law, specifically the Rockefeller drug laws which stemmed from the “War on Drugs” and “Get Tough
on Crime” (Harmon and O’Brien 2011; Richie 2001: 369). Rockefeller drug laws over-criminalize drugs, specifically narcotics used and sold in minority communities. Poor, minority and immigrant women were all particularly vulnerable to incarceration because of their association with delinquent individuals or participation in criminal activities in their community “the number of women in prison has increased at nearly double the rate of men since 1985.” (Harmon and O’Brien 2011; Richie 2001: 369). Stereotypes about women in poor communities were “welfare queen” and “crack addicts,” these labels increased their likelihood of persecution and imprisonment (Harmon and O’Brien 2011; Richie 2001: 369).

From 1935 to the 1980s women’s reformatories broke down because “the inadequacies in women’s prisons took a low priority, as compared to men’s facilities, just as they had in women’s custodial institutions from the early nineteenth century” (Rafter 1983: 167). The American criminal justice system and various forms of legislation used to create and support the War on Drugs in the 1970s affected the philosophy on female incarceration. Shifting from a mix of custodial and reformation to primarily custodial prisons "warehouse model" for both genders (Pishko 2015). "Warehouse model" prisons focused on maintaining the prison population, not rehabilitating or engaging prisons. The “crack epidemic” ended in the early 1990s, but by 1995, there were 150 female prison facilities in the United States (Pollock and Davis 2002: 68-69 and Mallicoat 2012: 461-462).

Current Prison Statistics

The most recent data on incarceration in America is from the Bureau of Justice Statistics Report of Prisoners in 2014 (Carson 2015). Incarceration for women has steadily risen since the early days of Auburn. Since 2004, the prison population for women has increased by 1% (1,600 prisoners), making 7% of the entire inmate population and males encompass the other 93% (Carson...
At the rate of incarceration per 100,000 by gender, race/ethnicity, White women are 53, African American women are 109, and Latina women are 64 in 2014 (Carson 2015:15).

Table 1 presents the only intersectional statistics that the Bureau of Justice Statistics shows in “Prisoners in 2014” collects and provides to the public on incarcerated individuals in state and federal prisons (Carson 2015). To obtain intersectional data of race/ethnicity and gender on offense type on Federal prisons, the use of the Federal Criminal Case Processing Statistics (FCCPS) instrument is necessary. FCCPS tool allows users to generate tables and trends on federal law enforcement, prosecution, courts, and incarceration of individuals entering, exiting, and in federal prison at the year-end from 1998 to 2012. FCCPS uses data from the Federal Justice Statistics Resource Center (FJSRC) a resource for the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS).

Intersectional data is necessary for comparisons and analysis to be made between the women incarcerated in Litchfield Penitentiary and actual federal prison data based on race/ethnicity, gender, and crime. Therefore, tables 2-12 will indicate 2012 FCCPS data. The research charts based on FCCPS information exclude Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and racial/ethnic groups with Missing/Unknown information. The lack of intersectional data does not allow for Non-Hispanic to be omitted/restricted from data unless another pertinent variable of race, gender, or offense is removed from the analysis. The data that is available can only be expressed as one independent variable affecting one dependent variable, with the choice of all the information being restricted/excluded using a subset variable.

Table 1. Imprisonment rate and percentage of sentenced state and federal prisoners per 100,000 U.S. residents, by race/ethnicity and gender, December 31, 2014.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentenced</td>
<td>(35.46%) 453,500</td>
<td>(40.41%) 516,900</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The entire prison population excludes “Other”. “Other” includes American Indians and Alaska Natives; Asians, Native Hawaiians, and other Pacific Islanders; and persons of two or more races.

Table 1 reveals the Bureau of Justice Statistics 2014 information on the prison population, which is most recent data. The women’s federal and state prison population is 93,500 not only, significantly smaller than the male prison population at 1,279,100, but predominately White as well. White women make up the majority of the women’s prison population at 56.8% while African American women make up 24%, followed by Latina women at 19%. Women’s prison racial demographic information is in direct contrast to the men’s prison population, where African American men make up the majority at 40.4%, followed by Caucasian men at 35% and Latino men at 24%.

Table 2. Rate and Percentage of Race/ Ethnicity and gender of prisoners in Federal Prisons at year-end in 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>African-American</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sentenced prisoners</strong></td>
<td>(42.42%)</td>
<td>(32.32%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61,804</td>
<td>47,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entire population</strong></td>
<td>145,709</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 exclusively reflects race/ethnicity and gender demographics of Federal prisoners at the end of 2012. Once again, the female population at 12,914 is substantially smaller than the male prison population at 145,709. The same pattern of a majority white women prison population at 56.6% is evident in Federal prison data, as it is in the combination of state and federal prison

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1 Citation: BJS’ Federal Justice Statistics Program website (http://www.bjs.gov/fjsrc/)
Data Source: Bureau of Prisons - Extract from BOP’s online Sentry System, FY 2012 (as standardized by the FJSRC) Note: Includes only commitments to Federal prison for Federal law violations; commitments from the District of Columbia Superior Court are excluded. The BOP public-use data files that are available for download include these D.C. Superior Court commitments. The universe of cases reported above is identical to the universe used in the FJSR’s annual statistical tables.
information. Inversely, African Americans are the smallest population at 19.61% and Latinas at 23.79%, which is in direct contrast to state and federal prison data. In federal prisons, White men make up 42.42% of the population as the largest racial/ethnic group. Male prisons still have a substantial minority population at 57.58% of the population.

Table 3. Rate and Percentage of Race/ Ethnicity and gender and offense type of prisoners in Federal Prisons at year-end in 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>Hispanic/ Latino</td>
<td>White</td>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>Hispanic/ Latino</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>(7.76%) 4,498</td>
<td>(9.07%) 4,273</td>
<td>(3.13%) 1,153</td>
<td>(3.01%) 220</td>
<td>(5.09%) 129</td>
<td>(1.66%) 51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>(9.74%) 6,021</td>
<td>(6.21%) 2,923</td>
<td>(3.92%) 1,444</td>
<td>(19.06%) 1,393</td>
<td>(36.85%) 933</td>
<td>(10.87%) 334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug</td>
<td>(82.50%) 50,985</td>
<td>(84.72%) 39,907</td>
<td>(92.94%) 34,205</td>
<td>(77.93%) 5,697</td>
<td>(58.06%) 1,470</td>
<td>(87.47%) 2,687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentenced</td>
<td>61,804</td>
<td>47,103</td>
<td>36,802</td>
<td>7,310</td>
<td>2,532</td>
<td>3,072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prisoners</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entire</td>
<td>145,709</td>
<td>12,914</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 above provides data from the FCCPS on race/ethnicity and gender into violent, property, and drug offense types. Expanding on the information in Table 2 to highlight the Offenses Types that racial/ethnic women and men imprisoned commit. Males commit more violent offenses than women at a rate of 7.02 % at 10,221 violent offenses compared to women at a rate of 3.10 % and a total of 400 violent crimes. Women and men regardless of race/ethnicity are incarcerated in a federal prison for predominately drug offenses. Women also commit a substantial portion of property offenses at 20.60% of the imprisoned women, while men are at 7.13% of male prisoners. Current data from BJS by Carson (2015) about federally imprisoned women in 2014, calculations are based on data in table 12, reflects that women incarcerated mostly for drug
offenses 72.14%, property 22.46% offenses, followed by violent offenses at 5.4%; excluding public order and other/unspecified offenses.

Table 4. Race/ Ethnicity, gender, and offense type of prisoners in Federal Prisons at year-end in 2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Female prisoners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>White (55%)</td>
<td>(3.10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>220</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African-American (32.25%)</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino (12.75%)</td>
<td>(12.56%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(12.75%)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property</td>
<td>(52.37%)</td>
<td>(20.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,393</td>
<td>2,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African-American (35.07%)</td>
<td>933</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino (12.56%)</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(12.56%)</td>
<td>334</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug</td>
<td>(57.81%)</td>
<td>(76.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5,697</td>
<td>9,854</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>African-American (14.92%)</td>
<td>1,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hispanic/Latino (27.27%)</td>
<td>2,687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(27.27%)</td>
<td>2,687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentenced</td>
<td>7,310</td>
<td>12,914</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prisoners</td>
<td>2,532</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3,072</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 reflects the FCCPS rate and percentage of gender and race/ethnicity on offense. The percentage now reflect how much each racial/ethnic group commits of each offense type. White women commit over 50% of every criminal offense; this is not substantial since they make up over 50% of the women's prison population. African American women are the next largest perpetrators in violent offense category at 32.25% and property crimes 35.07% but have the lowest rates for drug offenses nearly 15%. Inversely, imprisoned Hispanic/Latina women are the least likely to commit either violent crime at 12.8% or property crimes at 12.6%, but for drug offenses, 27.27% commit it at a rate nearly twice as high as African American women. No comparison of this data can be made for Bureau of Justice Statistics; as this data does not exist because women are classified only as their gender, rather than by the intersection of race and gender.

**Literature Review of media images for Incarcerated women and female offenders**

“Miss Chapman, no one's gonna mess with you here, unless you let them. This isn't Oz (HBO male prison television series). Women fight with gossip and rumors” – Sam Healy a Correction officer/ inmate counselor at Litchfield Penitentiary (Season 1, Episode 1, 2013.) In this
quote, Healy tries to dispel preconceived and misconstrued notions about women's prison environments; highlighting that media references about male prisons as hostile and sexually/physically violent are generally untrue for women prisons. Concepts and representations from newspapers, television news, movies, and prison narratives predominately shape society's perception and opinion of female criminality. Understanding the images that shape our knowledge of female offenders is critical to representational intersectionality and changing the images to be accurate, if not already.

**Offenders**

The purpose of beginning the discussion on imprisoned women with women offenders is the relation between the two representations in the media. Rafter and Stanko (1982) developed some of the earliest knowledge of imagery in the media about female offenders; identifying six themes of female property criminals: 1) biologically inept; 2) impulsive/ illogical; 3) passive; 4) gullible; 5) masculine and 6) purely evil. Women offenders are “evil” and vilified in the media and society for deviancy (Rafter and Stanko 1982). Themes in television and newspapers create and reproduce concepts that women who offend are dangerous, particularly minorities (Oliver 1994 and Brennan and Vandenberg (2009). Oliver (1994) conducted a content analysis of five "reality-based" police programs from fall 1991 to the first week of 1992; showing that police programs over represent violent crimes and overrepresented villains as non-white criminal suspects.

Brennan and Vandenberg (2009) conducted a content analysis of 54 front-page news articles in *Los Angeles Times* and *New York Times* in 2006. Outcomes show that news depicts female offenders in two images; as “bad” or “mad/sad” and it is generally based on race. Typically, African-American women were “Bad” and deserved punishment, frequently demonized and “masculinized,” as dangerous and aggressive in newspaper articles. Media’s unquenchable thirst
for violence is reproduced with “bad” murderous women, condemning her and her acts, while actively seeking more “bad” women to cover (Naylor 2001:159).

Media has the power to control the conversation and can easily redirect attention, casting a shadow of doubt on a “bad” woman’s guilt; based on mental history making her “mad/sad” (Naylor 2001: 170). The media excuses “Mad/Sad” women, usually White, for their criminal acts by hyper-focusing on their mental state, feminine appearance, and ability to reform. This neutralizes and downplays “mad/sad” women’s crimes providing a favorable non-culpable slant (Brennan and Vandenberg 2009: 146). Both the news and media play a crucial role in the depiction of offenders, deciding whether to reproduce negative notions of female criminality and sensationalize the image of the “bad” minority through concepts of violence.

**Imprisoned women**

Beth Richie believes that society does not want to confront the issues surrounding women’s imprisonment like substance abuse, poverty, and unemployment; rather society wishes to be entertained with distorted/inaccurate images (Cecil 2007). From an intersectional standpoint, the reality of women’s incarceration is challenging because society and mass media are integral to their subordination. Change can only come from mass media and society recognizing their place in imprisoned women’s oppression.

**Media on imprisoned women**

The knowledge on imprisoned women predominately comes from movies, televised news, and newspapers; the only American sitcom on incarcerated women is one season of “Women in Prison” airing on the Fox channel in 1987 and being canceled in 1988 (Green, Moye and Levitt 1987.) After watching few episodes of “Women in Prison” both shows have a similar plot. “Women in Prison” features Vicki Springer a naive wealthy white woman’s tragic plummet into a Wisconsin
Prison, after being framed for shoplifting. Vicki Springer must navigate the correctional system, but also, an unfamiliar social system with murders, prostitutes, and robbers; women she would not interact with before to her arrest.

Faith’s (1993) analyzed and organized themes about female crime and women in prison (WIP) movie coverage, from the 1970s to 1990s. Women outlaws in movies are “interesting characters”, only because they are masculinized to be like the macho monsters in male prison movies (Faith 1993:57). (WIP) movies may change over time, but the overwhelming theme is women imprisoned are “bad” and fall into categories of “Devil women, the lesbians as villains, teenage predators, and super bitch killer beauties”. These uni-dimensional films are created by and for the male gaze; running the gambit from sexually explicit and provocative to “violent” women are “men” once imprisoned. The reproduction of these themes always ends with violent rages; stereotyping women imprisoned as violent and uncontrollable (Faith 1993: 68). The only racial/ethnic minority females to appear are African American, cast as violent villainous women. Most of the movies focused on incarcerated females are “sexploitation” films of the 70s and 80s that sexualized every aspect of incarceration Faith (1993).

Media has not changed drastically from the 1980s; a content analysis of 98 imprisoned women featured in documentaries, news magazines, and talk shows from 1990s to 2006 still found the “bad” women theme being utilized (Cecil 2007). The format and model for media on women prisoners seems to be excessive and unnecessarily violent intermixed with salacious sex scenes, even for forms of media meant to be more informative than (WIP) movies (Cecil 2007). Female prisons were misconstrued as institutions teeming with dangerous women, 54% of the incarcerated women in documentaries and news magazines were violent offenders (Cecil 2007: 312). Media on incarcerated females tend to over represent the number of incarcerated African American and
White offenders while minimally showing other racial/ethnic groups (Cecil 2007:305.) White female offenders are overrepresented, in general, regardless of the type of crime they have committed while African American women were synonymous with street level crimes (Cecil 2007:312). Unlike movies, other forms of media will hold genuine discussions or segments on prevalent issues such as motherhood, abuse, health concerns, and prison life (Cecil 2007).

Media meant to inform viewers like documentaries, television news, and talk shows made the effort to conduct in-depth discussions with women imprisoned but still reproduced representations of the “bad” prison woman, found in other content. In discussions and segments about motherhood, the women were blamed for leaving their child (Cecil 2007). Cecil (2007) found that media wants to avoid the stark reality of health issues for women in prison, whether mental or physical. Segments on prison life focused heavily on sex in prison; taking two forms; comfort or sexual predators like “lesbians as villain” in Faith’s research (Cecil 2007 and Faith 1993). Informative media does not provide representative depictions of real life in prison for women; rather it points to their issues as the basis for them deserving prison as punishment.

Prison Narratives

A narrative is a non-fiction, where the author recounts the events of particular span of time in their own life. Prison narratives are the only opportunity women get to use their voice to express their anguish of incarceration; also, it is the only chance society gets primary knowledge without knowing an imprisoned woman or ex-felon. Prison narratives are important because it the author’s voice is recounting, his/her experience of being imprisoned and each prison story is different.

Bordt conducted a content analysis of 22 women’s published prison narrative books from 1960 to 2010. Bordt concluded that the majority of these books come from the standpoint of non-violent high-school educated Caucasian women who were over 40 years old (Bordt 2012:135-
70% of these narratives were from Caucasian women; the other 30% were from African Americans; no stories were from other racial/ethnic minorities. The women committed only violent, or property offenses, and 90% had at least a high school degree. The women who wrote these stories generally fell into four categories: 9 political crimes, 11 non-political crimes, 10 celebrity statuses, and 10 non-celebrity statuses (Bordt 2012: 140). The women who publish books on incarceration are not representative of the majority of the prison population based on criminal history, age, health/mental issues, and physical/sexual abuse histories (Bordt 2012). A representative population of female felons would consist of non-celebrities who did not commit political crimes; are socioeconomically disadvantaged and serving long sentence in federal prisons (Bordt 2012).

Other forms of prison narratives are in-depth interviews and discussions conducted by researchers with women who are imprisoned or were formerly incarcerated. Enck and McDaniel (2014) conducted a narrative analysis on three women in prison during 2011. Enck and McDaniel (2014) found that women faced issues with traditional-moral discipline of “true womanhood”, “motherhood”, “purity”, and “submissiveness”, but are still committed to the structure, although their actions and lifestyles within and outside of prison walls clash with societal norms for females. These women saw themselves as “bad” because they could not be “good” based on societal concepts from the media and society.

Pogrebin and Dodge (2001) conducted a study on a racially/ethnically diverse sample of 54 women who were imprisoned; to provide a retrospective and critical reflection on their time in prison. The women recollect that socialization into correctional institution is traumatic and difficult (Pogrebin and Dodge 2001: 533). Prison has a survival of the fittest mentality, and people who are naïve will be harassed and taken advantage of by more aggressive women (Pogrebin and Dodge
Chaos became normal because of sporadic spouts of violence (Pogrebin and Dodge 2001: 535). Romantic relationships were consensual unions; meant to provide emotional support and familial bonds that many lacked (Pogrebin and Dodge 2001:536).

Drug involvement was the reason many were imprisoned; substance abusers committed property crimes while under the influence of drugs or in an effort to gain access to drugs and money (Pogrebin and Dodge 2001). Substance abusers in prison would find ways to sneak and use drugs while incarcerated (Pogrebin and Dodge 2001). The sentiment many of the women held were that a lack of drug treatment programs were available (Pogrebin and Dodge 2001). Women stated that medical treatment and services were not a priority for medical or correctional staff because women were perceived to be deceitful about medical issues (Pogrebin and Dodge 2001). Correctional staff abused their power to sexually and emotionally exploit the women (Pogrebin and Dodge 2001). Family separation is the most difficult portion for “mothers” in a cell, since most are the primary caregivers; in their absence children were in the custody of family members and foster care (Pogrebin and Dodge 2001).

Mass media overall portrays women incarcerated as un-reformable violent, dangerous, and “bad”. The general population has no ability to contradict media’s information and representations because of the absence of primary contact or interpersonal connections to incarcerated women. The narratives highlight that women in prison do not fit the archetypes as violent and “bad”. The correctional system is draining both physically and mentally; between fights, staff mistreatment, family separation, and the overall aggressive nature of prison; women must turn to each other for supportive and emotional bonds.

**Theory**
The theoretical basis for this research is grounded in intersectional knowledge by two trailblazers in the paradigm of Intersectionality. Kimberlé Crenshaw a legal scholar, in 1991 article “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color” coined the term intersectionality which are the individual identities of race and gender make qualitatively different experience for non-marginalized and marginalized people. Crenshaw’s (1991:1245) states a major component of intersectionality as representational, which are depictions in the media of people at the margins of society. Marginalized groups understand the necessity of diversity, representations, and visibility in the media although; historically have faced inaccurate representations that are akin to stereotypes and caricatures. Representational intersectionality is the guiding light behind this research, because mass media has the potential to affect incarcerated women with depictions, yet the women have no recourse or power to change their representations.

In Collin’s (2000) "Black Feminist Thought Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment" sees that intersectionality as crisscrossing systems of oppression i.e. race, social class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, nationality, and age, that compound to shape experiences, social location, and power to create change (Collins, 2000, p. 299). Collin’s discusses hegemonic power, one component of the four domains of power, is the acceptance and belief in an oppressive system “Racist and sexist ideologies if disbelieved, lose their impact” states Collin (2000; 284). The hegemonic domain of power is created through the various stimuli we use, respond to, and believe in; but it is maintained through schools, language, religion, mass media, family, and culture. For example: Litchfield prison system oppresses imprisoned women by organizing the prison structure around inmate’s race/ethnicity; but the women’s “tribalism” perpetuates Litchfield’s hegemonic power despite self-interest.
Interpersonal domain of power are personal relationships and daily interactions. The lack of bonds between non-imprisoned people, disconnects them from their place in incarcerated women's subordination and oppression; in the absence of connections non-justice, involved individuals formulate their own perception about women's prisons from mass media. Imprisoned women are just (7%) of the “1 in every 35 (2.8%) adult residents in the United States that was under some form of correctional supervision at yearend 2012 to 2013” women incarcerated have limited interpersonal contact with non-justice involved people because of their population size (Carson 2015 and Glaze and Kaeble 2014). Structural domain of power comes from control and women imprisoned are powerless both in prison as property of the correctional facility and upon release with laws created to disenfranchise felons. The Disciplinary domain of power would be incarcerated women’s ability to mask or highlight their oppression through organizing and controlling society’s routines, but they have access to neither hegemonic nor structural power.

Imprisoned women on the spectrum of power are at the bottom; overall unable to negotiate and exert power through representations, interpersonal relationships, disciplinary acts and the structure. Therefore, it is important that society makes a concerted effort to represent women incarcerated accurately through media’s representations. Only through prison narratives can incarcerated women take a critical reflexive stance in determining, creating, and expressing their own representations; but they are seldom representative of the majority of the race/ethnicity, offense, drug use, class, age, and education of the prisoners. The Black feminist priority emphasizes self-definition and critical reflexive education; stepping-stones to deconstructing and dissuading the hegemonic power through representations of imprisoned women. Thus, we need to understand their accuracy of these depictions leading to two research questions/hypotheses:

1) In what ways does OITNB provide realistic depictions of the women’s Federal prison system?
2) In what ways does OITNB provide unrealistic images of the women’s Federal prison system?

**Methods**

The methods section will describe four aspects of the data collection process and data analysis for the thesis: data collection, variables, sample, and methods of analysis. The first section, Data Collection, describes the methods, techniques, and process for collecting data. The second section, Variables, will review the coding of variables selected for analysis. The third section, Sample, will provide an overview of the study and the sample selected. This segment will include a discussion of the eligibility requirements for characters to participate in the study and a table highlighting the basic demographic information on the sample. The fourth and final section is the Methods of Analysis; this will be a brief description of the hypotheses and the procedures used to analyze the variables.

**Data collection**

The show Orange is the New Black has 13 episodes per season, each episode is approximately 51 to 59 minutes long, season 1 aired July 2013 and season 2 aired July 2014. There is a total of three seasons, but for the purposes of this research, only two seasons will be analyzed. Race/ethnicity and the offense will be examined for each character in the show, to obtain how accurate the show is in comparison to the statistical data generated from the (FCCPS). To obtain information about race/ethnicity, offense, and offense type all 26 episodes of OITNB will be viewed twice. The information collected was recorded in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

The analysis will be based on seasons 1 and 2 out of the possible three seasons because of media’s patterns and repetition of tropes, plots, and plot twists emerge during the first two seasons. The Atlantic writer Charney (2014) published a news article on the “sitcom code” a perspective that television has a formula and writers of a show will not diverge from this formula in fear of
losing or alienating their audience. The “sitcom code” be seen in shows like American Horror Story, How to get away with Murder, Breaking Bad, and Scandal. Whether or not OITNB is realistic based on crime statistics will emerge within the first two seasons.

To obtain data on each the variables of race/ethnicity, gender, and offense type, different tables were generated using the FCCPS tool on incarceration at year end of 2012. The data that will be used to compare against OITNB is from The Federal Criminal Case Processing Statistics (FCCPS), an instrument used to analyze federal case processing data by allowing users to generate statistics in on violators of federal law. The FCCPS data is available from 1998 to 2012 in the areas of federal law enforcement, prosecution/courts, and incarcerations. Data on Federal Prison facilities are run by the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) are under the legal authority of the federal government, excluding private facilities with exclusive contracts to BOP (Motivans 2015).

FCCP is an instrument that operates under The Federal Justice Statistics Program (FJSP) compiles comprehensive demographics from Federal agencies of suspects and defendants processed in the Federal criminal justice system for The Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) (Motivans 2015:41). To provide uniform case statistics and definitions across all stages of the Federal criminal justice system classifications are matched to the state system. Through its grantee, Abt Associates, BJS receives data extracts from each Federal agency's case management system for a fiscal year from October 1 through September 30. Correctional data is then provided to the Federal Justice Statistics Resource Center (FJSRC) by the Bureau of Prison (BOP) to create cohorts based on offenders entering prison, offenders released from prison, and offenders imprisoned at the end of each fiscal year. The fiscal years by website composite for online analysis from 1998 to 2012; while statistical tables and data archive are from 1994 to 2012.
The use of FCCPS 2012 is preferential and necessary because it provides the most recent intersectional data. FCCPS 2012 data is within the reasonable timeframe of one to two years removed from 2013 and 2014 seasons of OITNB. Also, FCCPS data are specific to Federal prisoners, and it allows users to generate tables using variables specific to their research. BJS report on Prisoners 2014 (2015) provides newer data than FCCPS 2012, but the BJS information includes state prison data and lacks the ability to generate intersectional information.

Limitations of this data collection through the FCCPS are 1) most serious offense/hierarchy rule and 2) variables selection. The purpose of Hierarchy Rule or most serious offense is only for crime reporting purposes where more than one offense was charged. The most serious offense is the result of severity based on maximum incarceration, type of crime, and maximum fines as determined by the AOUSC’s offense severity code ranking. Reports on inmates use the most serious offense information and ignore all other criminal activity. Ranking offenses has no effect on the number of charges the defendant may be prosecuted for in court.

Variable selection is also a limitation with the FCCPS because it only permits bivariate data to be analyzed, with the option of a subset/restricting variable. For example: The offense type of Hispanic/Latino females can be achieved using FCCPS; with Ethnicity as the independent variable and selecting Hispanic, and the dependent variable being Offense type. Then, restricting the data to cases where the Gender is female. On the other hand, offense type of African American Non-Hispanic or White non–Hispanic females cannot be achieved with the same level of assurance because demographics are mutually exclusive and exhaustive of Hispanic ethnicity. To produce that information an extra variable needs to exist to restrict cases to non-Hispanic, requiring Race, Offense Type, Gender, and Ethnicity variables. In lieu of data that allows four variables to
intersect, data was collected on White and African American female’s offense type without the restriction of non-Hispanic ethnicity.

**Variables**

Chart 2. Variable definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FJSRC Statistics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Variable</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offense type</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chart 2. Provides the exact definitions of Gender, Ethnicity, Race, and Offense type as supplied by the FCCPS/FJSRC under Bureau of Justice Statistics. Gender is defined as the biological sex of the prisoners, and all of the women are identified as female. Ethnicity is based on having Hispanic/ Latino descent or identifying as Mexican-American, Chicano, Mexican, Mexicano, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central American, South American, or from some other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race. Some Bureau of Justice Statistics data separates Hispanic and non-Hispanic from the individual’s race, but not the FCCPS/FJSRC, to create mutually exclusive and exhaustive data. Race indicates whether the prisoner is regarding as White or African American. Finally, the offense type variable is the most serious crime charged for a prisoner.
Offense type consists of three values of violent offenses, property offenses, and drug offenses. Violent offenses are the most serious crime, any person incarcerated for two crimes, where one is a violent offense; the offender is classified as violent. Next, Property offenses involve money and illegal monetary gains for the offender. Finally, Drug Offenses involve the possession, trafficking, dealing, or creation of controlled substances.

The imprisoned women in Litchfield Penitentiary will be categorized based on the classifications and the rubric in Chart 1. All of the women will be classified as female; Sophia is a transwoman and she will be regarded as a woman. The “tribal” system within OITNB identifies the women by their race and ethnicity; affecting their daily activity, employment, friendships and “dormitories”. The women are divided into dormitories “Spanish Harlem”, “The Ghetto”, and “The Suburbs” based on their and race/ethnicity. The two groups are “The Golden Girls”, based age and “The Others” are women who do not fit into race/ethnic or age-based categories. The group that they have been assigned is based on race / ethnicity will identify women. For example, Dayanara, Watson, and Chapman upon arrival and after formalities of living in the transfer dorms; they were dispersed into the race/ethnic based dorms of “Spanish Harlem”, “The Ghetto”, and “The Suburbs”.

Offense type will be uncovered by watching each episode twice, to uncover the actual offense. Then, a flashback scene displaying the perpetration of the criminal act; which will solidify their relevancy and criminal act. Once, the criminal offense is uncovered, and the offense must be “typed” into the three definitions as shown in Chart1. For example, Chapman committed money laundering classified as a financial crime against property. Her offense is technically neither a property of drug offense but for this research her financial crime will be codified as a property crime. (Motivans 2003).
Sample

The total sample within OITNB consists of 36 women confined to Litchfield Penitentiary. The sample has 50% a significant portion of women that are classified as “offense unknown”. Women are classified as “offense unknown” because there has not been any discussion of their criminal activity, through dialogue or flashback. Flashbacks are scenes within OITNB that show the women prior to incarceration or earlier in their imprisonment; providing information to the audience about the women’s offense and history. “Known offenses” are established for the audience through conversations in the prison and flashbacks; which establish relevancy for the imprisoned women. Since the goal of the research is to understand if OITNB is realistic based on crime statistics, it is pertinent offenses are known to the viewing audience to draw out comparisons to crime data and representations. The list of relevant characters stands at 18 offenders whose offenses are discussed or revealed to the audience within the two seasons.

Due to the most serious offense rule for FCCPS, the women who committed two or more crimes were classified on the basis on their most serious offense. For example, Lorna “Morello” Muccio committed a slew of crimes that included Harassment, Violating a Restraining Order, Mail Order Fraud, and Attempted Murder; her sentence is based on her criminal activity, but her offense classification is violent for the attempted murder charge.

Table 5. Rate and Percentage of Race/Ethnicity of imprisoned Orange is the New Black women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/ethnicity</th>
<th>Rate/Percentage</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18 offenders</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The racial/ethnic background of the original sample of 36 women incarcerated consisted of 18 White non-Hispanic, 8 Hispanic/Latinas, 8 African-Americans, and 2 Asian-American. Relevancy affected both the White population and Hispanic/Latina population the most. The
White population decreased from 18 to 8, losing 55.6% of their potential population. The Hispanic/Latina population went from 8 to 3 imprisoned women. The African American population decreased by 2 imprisoned women from a total of 8. The Asian American women were excluded, only one had stated her offense which was a political offense.

Table 6. Rate and Percentage of Offense type of imprisoned Orange is the New Black women

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense type</th>
<th>Violent</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Drug</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 is an overview of the offenses types of violent, property, and drug committed by the women incarcerated. The lowest percentage of criminal activity was drug offenses at 27.8%. Violent offenses have the highest rates at 38.9%; of the seven women who committed violent acts, five used lethal force in an effort to harm or kill an individual, the other two women committed armed robbery. 33.3% of the women committed a property offense.

Table 7. Rate and percentage of offense type by race/ethnicity within Orange is the New Black

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race/ Ethnicity</th>
<th>Violent</th>
<th>Property</th>
<th>Drugs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>60%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latina</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total population</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 7 shows the offense types of imprisoned women by their race/ethnicity, illustrating highest percentages of offenses for each racial/ethnic group. The majority of violent offenses are perpetrated by white females at a rate of 57.14%, more than the rate from racial/ethnic minorities. For property offenses, white women perpetrate 50% of the crime, an equivalent rate to that of the racial/ethnic minorities. For drug offenses white women and Hispanic/Latina women have the lowest rates of perpetration at 20% each. While African American females are heavily involved in the drug trade at 60% of the drug offenses.
Table 8 is meant to highlight the highest rates of perpetration for each racial/ethnic group. White females predominated commit violent and property crimes, at higher rates than African Americans and Hispanic/Latina American women. African American women have the highest rates for drug offenses, but are involved in property and violent offenses at similar rates. Hispanic/ Latina American have a small population size of 3, and are equally involved in violent, property and drug offenses at a rate of 33.3% each.

**Methods of Analysis**

The method of analysis used is holistic; chosen for its ability to measure demographic and offense information, as well as, provide a thorough perspective on representations within OITNB compared to Federal prison statistics. Holistic method of research allows for the large-scale effects of prison representations of offense and race/ethnicity to be ascertained because all of the offenses are highlighted and an in-depth discussion about specific rates of criminal perpetration and marginalized groups can occur. Collecting this information is necessary but with a complex television show with diverse characters, it is important to understand the show as a whole and analyze how women are depicted as a whole and not fall into the pitfall of non-intersectional work and analyze these women as all “parts” without noticing the sum. To obtain this information large scale themes, which are the current variables of race, ethnicity, offense type, and gender will be
analyzed to see if themes in the media about prisoners are sustained through data on Litchfield or is Litchfield representative of American Federal women’s prisons.

Microsoft Excel and the FCCPS tool were used to generate bivariate statistical data on offenses types and race/ethnicity. The bivariate statistics for race, ethnicity, crime, and gender offer a brief description of the Federal Prison population and OITNB population. Holistic methods allow comparisons to be generated about the percentages for each type of offense and the rate at which each racial/ethnic population commits crime as compared to each other and real Federal women's prisons.

Results

Table 9 indicates the percentage of the total population of prisoners for Federal prisons and OITNB have committed certain Offense types of violent, drug, and property. The total number of sentenced prisoners in all federal prisons is 12,914 compared with the 18 relevant characters within OITNB. In federal prison, the amount of women who have been incarcerated for a violent offense Table 9. Percentage of Offense type data with FSJRC and OITNB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Federal prisoners (FJSRC)</th>
<th>OITNB prisoners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Violent Offenses</td>
<td>3.10%</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property Offenses</td>
<td>20.6%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drug Offenses</td>
<td>76.3%</td>
<td>27.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentenced prisoners</td>
<td>12,914</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

is nominal at 3.1%; they are least likely to be incarcerated for a violent act. Women in OITNB Federal prison are most likely to perpetrate a violent offense at a rate of 38.9%. OITNB prisoners commit property offenses 33.3% a higher rate than in Federal prisons at 20.6%. 76.3% the majority of inmates in Federal prison are there for drug offenses; the opposite is true for OITNB prison which have the lowest rates of drug crime.

Table 10 indicates the percentage of the total population of prisoners for Federal prisons and OITNB prisoners identified as White, African-American, and Latina/Hispanic women.
Table 10. Percentage of Race/ Ethnicity data with FJSRC and OITNB

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offense Type</th>
<th>Federal prisoners (FJSRC)</th>
<th>OITNB prisoners</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>56.6%</td>
<td>44.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>19.61%</td>
<td>38.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latina</td>
<td>23.79%</td>
<td>16.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentenced prisoners</td>
<td>12,914</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The largest racial/ethnic population in Federal women’s prison is White at 56.6%, also, the white woman population is the largest group in OITNB at 44.4%.

In Federal prison the smallest population African-American women at 19.61%, nearly half the rate of black women in OITNB at 38.9%.

The smallest racial/ethnic population in OITNB is Hispanic/Latina while alternatively they are the second largest population in Federal prison.

Table 11 displays information from both OITNB and federal prison on the race/ethnicity and offense type of women incarcerated. White women are more active in the categories of violent and property offenses then drug offenses; this information opposes data from FJSRC. In Federal prison, the white female population is most active in the drug crime category. High activity in drug related crime is seen within all race/ethnicities in Federal prisons. African American women in Federal prison and Litchfield are predominately involved in drug offenses. African Americans offend at the same rate of 28.6% for violent and property offenses. Crime rate for African-
Americans in OITNB is at 28.6%, lower than federal prison at 36.85%. The small relevant Hispanic/Latina American population within OITNB impacts the sample size as well as the offense type. Each Latina had perpetrated at least one type of offense.

Table 12. Percentage of Race/ Ethnicity offense type of prisoners in Federal Prisons at 2012 year-end as compared to Prisoners in Orange is the New Black

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Violent Offenses</th>
<th>Property Offenses</th>
<th>Drug Offenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FJSRC</td>
<td>OITNB</td>
<td>FJSRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
<td>52.37%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African-American</td>
<td>32.25%</td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td>35.07%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/ Latina</td>
<td>12.75%</td>
<td>14.3%</td>
<td>12.56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentenced prisoners</td>
<td>400</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2,660</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 12 displays information from both OITNB and federal prison on the offense type and race/ethnicity and of women incarcerated. The rates of violent offenses and property offenses have similar rates across racial/ethnic groups; the margin between federal and OITNB statistics is about less than for 5%. The variation between federal prison and OITNB is predominantly in the category of drug offenses. In Litchfield, African Americans are the largest group at 60% being incarcerated for drug offenses, but in Federal prison are the smallest at about 15%. Inversely white women dominate drug trade in Federal prison at 57.81% but have the same rate of perpetration as Hispanic women at 20% in OITNB.

Findings

Results from the holistic analysis between Orange is the New Black and Federal prison data indicate that offense and race/ethnicity are significant in the representation of women incarcerated, as well as the prison system. This section will focus on representations of 1) prison
system, 2) race/ethnicity, 3) offense type, and 4) race/ethnicity and offense type in OITNB to discuss whether depictions are realistic or unrealistic based on women’s Federal prisons statistics.

**Prison System**

Litchfield Penitentiary would likely be identified as a Pastel prison by Rafter, since it is an exclusively female campus style prison featuring colorful dormitories; different from the typical gray and drab prison cells (1990). Pastel prisons are more custodial than reformatory; strict on rules and policies, but attempt to soften custody with gendered educational programs and activities. Litchfield administration focused on efficiency rather than gendered programing; employing inmates in any and every capacity. For example, women maintained the prison by operating the prison vehicle, kitchen, laundry, and library; also, by doing electric, maintenance, and custodial work.

The programs and activities offered are gardening, religious services, the newspaper, and yoga. OITNB women have stimulating programs like Alcoholics Anonymous, mock job fair, “safe place”, Scared Straight, and the WAC pack; but they need more education, substance abuse programs, and job training. The combination of these three have shown to impact recidivism rates and are successful for reintegration (Cobbina 2010 and Flower 2010.) The women who wrote and were apart of prison narratives discussed the lack of substance abuse programs; OITNB’s Alcoholics Anonymous seemed to be insufficient. The meetings were only featured in two episodes and had no trained professional in the room; forced to share a room with a yoga class and discussing their “rock bottom stories.” Women need substance abuse programs they have severe substance/sexual/physical abuse histories that are more extensive than males; combined with high rates of co-morbidity with mental health disorders and physical health problems. (U.S. Department
Media’s depiction of the women’s prison system is “violent”, “caged and lustful”, “villainous lesbian” and “bad” women/ “bad” minority. As a holistic analysis, both statistics and media are used to form concrete conclusions about OITNB’s representation of incarcerated women. The prison system was not overly violent; intense altercations took place in the last few episodes of each season. The violent women’s correctional institution was not exemplified with OITNB; women in prison narratives expressed much more anxiety about fights than Litchfield women, who rarely got into confrontations.

OITNB illustrations did not support the “caged and lustful” depiction of imprisoned women seeking sex through coercion and rape. Litchfield inmates were not overly preoccupied with sex, although it did occur; women focused on tribal relationships, familial bonds, romantic connections, and friendships. Unlike the sexploitation movies of the past, where prison life revolved around sex; Litchfield resembled prison narratives where women tended to bond. The LGBTQ women were not more violent or dangerous than their heterosexual counterparts, and did not become the “villainous lesbian” tropes. Women in prison narratives described officers who exerted their power to force sexual relationships with women; exemplified by Pornstache, who smuggled in narcotics to control and have sex with substance abusers.

The “bad” woman depiction in OITNB was not reinforced because most women were portrayed as “redeemable” characters. The only character that was shown as unredeemable was Vee the “bad minority,” who sought power in season 2, by taking advantage of naïve women, as described by women in prison narratives. The “bad minority” was not representative of Hispanic/Latina in either season because they were not interested in being aggressive or dangerous.
While African-Americans displayed more dangerous, “masculine”, and aggressive qualities under the guise of Vee.

**Race/ Ethnicity**

Male and female prisons have different racial/ethnic breakdowns, whether Federal prison data alone or in combination with State prison data, as seen in Tables 1 and 2. Female prisons are majority White while male prisons are majority-minority. Litchfield is similar to male prisons at 55.6% majority-minority, as seen in Table 2. In Table 10 on Federal prisons, African-American women only comprise 19.61% of the population but are twice as large within OITNB at 38.9%. The majority-minority Litchfield prison population is created by an overrepresentation of African-Americans; with a decrease in the Hispanic/Latina and White population in OITNB. This shift also means Hispanic/Latina and Asian American women receive little representation within the show. Latinas make up only 16.7% of the population in OITNB but within Federal prison are 23.79%. Prison media on incarcerated women over-represents the amount of African-American and White women, while minimally highlighting other racial/ethnic groups (Cecil 2009). An in-depth examination shows that Kohen used OITNB to highlight minority actresses, but statistically recreated common themes in prison media by over-representing African-Americans and underrepresenting other racial/ethnic minority women. Minority representation is vital to the story, but overrepresentation and underrepresenting certain groups distorts the depiction of the prison system and the groups that populate prison cells.

**Offense**

Historically, women perpetrate more property and public-order offenses, but Rockefeller drug laws influenced the incarceration of more drug offenders (Snell and Greenfeld 1999: 6; Richie 2001: 369; Harmon and O’Brien 2011 and Carson 2015.) Currently, 76.3% of women incarcerated
Federally commit drug-related offenses, compared to the 27.8% within OITNB, which is the lowest offense rate within Litchfield. Women commit significantly more drug offenses in reality than within OITNB, where the majority have committed a violent offense. Violent offenses within OITNB are at 38.9% while Federal women’s prison only has 3.10% imprisoned for violent crimes. The overly violent female offender distorts the image of women incarcerated and recreates media’s concept that women imprisoned are violent and “bad.” OITNB distorts the fact that women are not violent offenders; also, detracting from drug-trade, drug laws and substance abuse problems imprisoned women face (Pollock and Davis 2005).

Race/Ethnicity and Offense Type

The intersection of race/ethnicity and offense data highlight relevant information that neither alone could provide about incarcerated women. The overpopulation of African-Americans in Litchfield, is also an overpopulation of African Americans involved in drug trade at 60% compared to Federal prison data at 14.92%, based on Offense type in Table 12. Cecil (2007) states that media tends to over-represent the amount of “street level crime.” which are drug-related offenses, which African American women are committing. Although, African-American women are not depicted as more violent in prison they do seem to have un-redeemable qualities, similar to the “bad minority” representation. Black women overrepresented the category of drug-related offenses and created a drug smuggling ring under Vee, the archetype of the “bad minority” in Season 2; showcasing that incarceration did not provide a lesson about crime. White Females are significantly underrepresented in drug-related crime; in OITNB White female’s makeup 20% of drug-related crime but in Federal prison are the majority at 57.81% of the drug crime. Hispanic/Latinas are 20% of the drug offenders in Litchfield prison but 27.27 % in Federal prison.
In Table 11 violent offenses regardless of race/ethnicity is significantly higher in Litchfield prison than in Federal prison facilities. Violent offense rates and race/ethnicity highlight that although Litchfield shows women are incarcerated mostly for violent offenses, it does not show any racial/ethnic group as overly violent, thus showing them specifically as “bad”. The Hispanic/Latina relevant population is made up of three women, whom each perpetrated an offense in all categories. Hispanic/Latina women are not only underrepresented in the relevant population of OITNB but within each specific offense type.

**Conclusion**

Imprisoned women’s inability to negotiate and exert power through representations, interpersonal relationships, disciplinary acts, and the structure; makes media’s representation of the women’s prison system their only possibility to be depicted accurately. The book *Orange is the New Black* (2010) written by Piper Kerman, allowed her to take a critical reflexive stance in determining, creating, and expressing her life while incarcerated, but her experience was not representative of the majority of females incarcerated. The Black feminist priorities are focused on self-definition and critical reflexive education; both are crucial to deconstructing and dissuading the hegemonic power through representations of imprisoned women. The Netflix show, OITNB, is based on Piper Kerman’s ability to define and reflect on her imprisonment, but the Netflix show is meant to display diverse women’s prison stories. Thus, we need to understand the accuracy of these illustrations to determine if efforts are being made to deconstruct negative representations about prison life for women. This knowledge, was obtained by comparing current FJSRC Federal prison statistics to data from OITNB; determining the accuracy of information being communicated through the Netflix show and whether is it realistic or unrealistic of women’s Federal prison system.
The representations of “violent”, “caged and lustful”, “villainous lesbian”, “bad” women, “bad” minority, as previously depicted in the media about incarcerated women were not all accurate in OITNB (Faith 1993; Cecil 2007; and Brennan and Valdenberg 2009). The women imprisoned in Litchfield were most similar to the experiences and discussions held in the prison narratives; sex and violence occurred, and there were “bad” women imprisoned, but OITNB focused more on human connections. Both informative media like television/paper news and entertainment like movies lacked discussions about substance abuse, poverty, motherhood, and health concerns (Faith 1993 and Cecil 2007). OITNB touched on those issues, as well as examining addiction, motherhood, transgender issues, poverty, felony disenfranchisement, mental health, domestic abuse, but it has yet to tackle the issues of chronic health issues and sexual abuse. Inadvertently by Litchfield not providing inmates with real job training skills, educational programs, and substance abuse courses, although requested by inmates; OITNB highlighted prisons unwillingness to provide incarcerated women with programs that have proven to reduce recidivism rates and imprisonment cycle (Holtfreter and Morash 2003).

Based on data collected from Federal prison and OITNB the prison system; Litchfield would be unrealistic because it distorted the images of the women imprisoned and the types of offenses they commit. Litchfield is overpopulated with violent offenders, African-American women, but specifically, Black women incarcerated for drug-related offenses. The prison is also underpopulated with drug-related offender overall, but specifically White women and non-Black racial/ethnic minorities who commit drug-related crimes. The underpopulation of drug-related offenders in OITNB, overall, distorts the high incarceration rates for drug-related offenders in Federal prisons and masks the adverse effects of drug policies by the criminal justice system (Mumola and Karberg, 2006). The overrepresentation of violent offenders reinforces media’s
concepts of women’s prison system being populated by violent inmates in a dangerous women’s prison, although the actions and behavior of OITNB women do not reflect a vicious prison system. Also, OITNB underpopulated the amount of White and other non-Black racial/ethnic minorities in prison, which distorts how much their population is affected by the criminal justice system.

OITNB reinforced the image that the women’s prison system is majority-minority and heavily populated with African-American women who commit mostly drug-related offenses. These are common distortions in the media about the prison system, but are false and support the “bad minority” stereotype. Although, most of the minority women conducted themselves as “redeemable” women in season 1; in season 2, African-American women created a drug smuggling ring and possessed more dangerous and aggressive qualities. They were reformed by the last episode in season 2, but it remains that negative images were reinforced about Black women through statistics and representations in the show.

Overall, OITNB is drawing inaccurate images of the women imprisoned and the prison system. The show, does deliver more accurate images than the “villainous lesbian”, “bad women”, and “caged and lustful” stereotypes, also highlighting relevant issues to provide a better look at imprisonment for women than previously offered by exploitation movies, television shows, and paper/television news. OITNB does work to disrupt and distort negative representations which are stepping-stones to deconstructing hegemonic representations. It is still significant that Orange is the New Black reinforces the “bad minority” and violent female prisoner stereotype; while underrepresenting drug-related crimes, White, and non-Black racial/ethnic minority women.

Limitations

There are three major limitations in this study, most serious offense/hierarchy rule, variables selection, and sample size. The most serious offense/hierarchy rule is based on maximum incarceration, type of crime, and maximum fines as determined by the AO USC’s offense severity
code ranking. Most serious offense/hierarchy rule is for the purposes of crime reporting where more than one offense was charged; only the most serious offense is accounted and all other criminal activity is ignored. This restricts the amount of offenses OITNB women can be classified as committing, making their most serious offense the criminal activity that is accounted. The accounting method for offense type must match that of the FJSRC collection method to obtain similar results.

Variable selection is also a limitation with the FCCPS because it only permits bivariate analyzes, with the option of a subset/restricting variable. This research is a multi-axis analysis of race/ethnicity, gender, and offense; FCCPS variable selection restricts demographics and is not mutually exclusive and exhaustive of Hispanic ethnicity. This impacts the White and African-American population because some may identify as both their race and their ethnicity, but FCCPS does not allow for an extra variable of Non-Hispanic to be included in the analysis.

This research is limited by sample size because of relevancy and offense type. OITNB women are defined as relevant because their offense type is known to the audience, but this limits the amount of potential women that can be analyzed. The total population of women depicted is 36, but the amount of relevant women is 18, which is a significant reduction. Having an increase in known offenses would expand the sample size, allowing for more accurate or representative conclusions to be drawn from Federal prison statistics.

**Future Research**

First, due to OITNB representing women’s prison system inaccurately based on Federal prison statistics, future research should focus on conducting an analysis of media effects on a sample population. Negative representations are only harmful if they have an impact on society; it would be relevant to understand what is being communicated and established about women’s
prison to non-justice involved populations. This would provide knowledge on the impact of depictions to an audience, but also, how viewers perceive women incarcerated based on media. Conducting an intersectional analysis would provide information on hegemonic power and its ability to communicate accurate or inaccurate stimuli through the media to society and the ramifications of this perception. Focusing a twofold method of research: 1) how audiences view the women in OITNB and 2) how audiences view women incarcerated before and after screening OITNB. Studying how their perception of incarcerated women shifted and in what direction, as in positive or negative.

Relevancy based on the knowledge of an inmate’s offense limits the potential population; therefore future research should wait until the show is completed to 1) conduct a comprehensive intersectional study, and 2) recreate this research. Future research should conduct a comprehensive content analysis that studies the complex intersection of Race/ Ethnicity, Age, Class, LGBTQ+ statuses, and Gender performance in Orange is the New Black to obtain an in-depth understanding of the representations within the show. Not many shows have such high levels of diversity, in which six Intersectional hierarchies are prominent, and women are the majority. Upcoming research should wait until the last season and complete analysis, which will provide a larger population of relevant OITNB prisoners. Even, conducting a study on just one of the shows systems will be significant. For example: “Golden Girls” representation of female aging or concepts on “LGBTQ+” statuses while imprisoned. Recreating this research after the last season has aired can allow for more character’s offenses to be revealed and different women to be incarcerated. Also, future research may not face my same limitations of data for ethnicity. Future research may not be limited by FJSRC and FCCPS variables, and this will improve their accuracy and advance the knowledge about women imprisoned.
Citations


