

The Role of Culture for Administering Effective Programs to Young Offenders

Wanda Vieira

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **The Role of Culture for Administering Effective Programs to Young Offenders**

**Wanda Vieira**

Culture was investigated to explore its role in finding more effective programs for young offenders of different cultural backgrounds. The methodological framework developed by Dorothy E. Smith is employed as the main source that directed inquiry into the influence of culture on the everyday experiences of people. Hirschi's social control theory is used as a starting point for the investigation into culture. This was based on his claims that family bonding maintains conformity.

This exploratory, qualitative study drew on a small sample of participants from the Portuguese community in Montreal. From these in-depth interviews several themes emerged that illuminate culture to be an important element that impacts the socialization process of individuals. The main pattern that surfaced as an indicator of cultural transmission was drawn from respondents' descriptions of the family. Patterns of behavior emerged around the following themes: gender roles, communication, discipline methods, surveillance, education, and social bonds. The identification of these patterns supports the argument that rehabilitation programs need to be adapted to the culture(s) of young offenders. Implications are outlined relating to an assessment of program compatibility to individual offenders (e.g. group vs. individual counseling, reward-based programs, degree of expression, level of program structure, and benefits within involvement in extra-curricular activities). Suggestions for further research are offered.

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## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my mother Ivone for being the strength within our Portuguese family. Her independence, outlook on life, and humor have motivated us to be all we can be.

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## **CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION**

Research on the youth population should be a main focus when attempting to find ways of understanding and improving relations within our society. Adolescence is one of the critical developmental stages in an individual's life. Therefore, it is important to study ways to create an environment in which youth culture can be understood. Also of importance is to increase the number of resources that directly relate to the array of difference among the youth population. The inspiration for this thesis centers on adolescents who are involved with the juvenile justice system. The central issue that will be explored is on reducing the rate of recidivism among young offenders, by exploring the role of culture when implementing rehabilitation programs. This analysis will seek to develop a sociological approach to research more effective ways of dealing with young offenders once they have committed the crimes and are in the process of entering a rehabilitation program. I will argue that it is important to continuously explore new and more effective methods of rehabilitation to help reduce the rates of recidivism among young offenders.

Montreal is a multicultural city in which youth, coming from different cultural backgrounds, may require assistance from our social services. Therefore, I am making the claim that research within the rehabilitation programs of young offenders from different cultural backgrounds is of particular significance. Previous literature on therapy methods used for rehabilitation of young offenders, has not adequately addressed the importance of exploring culture as a variable that should be considered within the counselling process. As a result of this exploratory study, further research can focus on



experimental methods towards the development of concrete tools pertaining to administering more adaptable approaches to young offenders.

Throughout my work and volunteer experience I have worked within the social services field and have had the opportunity to gain an abundance of experience interacting with teens and young adults coming from diverse backgrounds. During several instances, barriers developed which signified the importance of recognizing methods of intervention. In other words, what may have been successful in one case, may or may not have worked with others. Program administrators need to consider that people will adapt to different types of intervention or ways of communicating depending on a vast number of reasons, including personality, trust, and communication. When working with people from different types of backgrounds and home situations, it is important to consider the need for implementing and adapting response strategies in order to find effective methods to ensure that intervention will be successful.

Focusing on the importance of developing awareness of diverse populations and home situations led me reflect on my socialization process growing up in a Portuguese household. I thought about my own childhood in reference to the various methods I employed during my work experiences interacting with youth. For instance, the indications that would prompt me to acknowledge when my mom was really serious about an issue, or the way I was socialized to understand what was expected of me, and/or what prevented or lead me to misbehave. What became of interest were questions such as: What type of bond did I have to my parents? Was there a punishment method that was effective in maintaining discipline within our household? Were there rewards that prevented me from acting out? Was I involved or committed to extracurricular

activities that kept me occupied and from deviant acts? What level of trust was effective in ensuring respect towards my parents? How much freedom was allocated to us as children within our household? And how did my cultural norms differ from those of my friends from other cultures?

While working with youth within the social services field, I have had the opportunity to develop several programs and I believe that the evaluation process is the most critical stage of program development. Program content must continuously be adapted and altered with the overall objective of seeking more effective results. Preventative programs need to offer youth more opportunities where they can benefit from tools to help deter and diminish some of the negative consequences related to low self-esteem and peer pressure. The task of assessing the most effective approach for each individual is not a simple one and may always remain to be a challenge when working within the human services field. Consequently, the challenge keeps professionals responsive to the importance of continuously exploring more effective methods of intervention.

My research has led me to address the fact that rehabilitation programs have not emphasized the importance of adapting programs for youth from different cultural backgrounds. From this stance, I would like to explore whether knowledge into the role of culture impacts the instances where youth of different cultural backgrounds have been misunderstood, or acted as a barrier towards effective communication with program administrators. This statement suggests the need to maintain an awareness of the fact that different approaches are beneficial when it comes to ensuring effective communication. Therefore, this exploration would take on a sociological framework that investigates

culture as an impact on the socialization process of individuals. Research on delinquency issues have previously focused on evaluating the problem with recidivism by examining program components as an evaluation of offenders criminal activity. For example, within the field of social work, assessments are made based on the individual and the problem at hand, whereas, I am proposing that research needs to encompass wider lenses to explore the issue from a broader societal perspective--culture. According to Inglis (2003), culture is “what different groups of people think, believe, and feel. Their ways of thinking and the values that they hold are generally deeply ingrained both within the mind of each individual and in the texture of the collective life of the group they belong to” (Inglis & Hughson, 2003:2).

My original research question was, *which types of responses to young offenders are most effective for youth of different cultural backgrounds?* and following are the themes that emerge from it. Firstly, an analysis is required to investigate whether a possible relationship exists between the role of culture within therapy approaches and the reduction in recidivism rates of young offenders. I have proposed that culturally sensitive treatment approaches will enhance the success rate of rehabilitation processes of young offenders from different ethnic communities. Within this framework, it is important to explore the links that identify and target cultural institutions and processes within an ethnic community that could best be utilized by social workers for the rehabilitation of young offenders from those communities. Overall, the objective presented revolves around an exploration of whether there is a need to enhance the level of awareness of cultural differences among professionals who are implementing treatment programs. The above research question is however not manageable for a Masters thesis. I therefore,

narrowed the topic to draw out *responses* as the main theme to explore. I suggest *responses* to encompass more specifically the impact of culture on the socialization process of individuals. Therefore, my revised research question is as such: *What is unique about culture that can help us better serve youth from different cultural backgrounds*. Tackling this research question would require a theoretical approach that embodied a sociological analysis, suggesting that, we need to consider the culture of these young offenders as a whole, and not merely as an evaluation of potential problems with regards to rehabilitation programs. The central goal of this paper is not to attempt to specifically develop new rehabilitation methods, but to explore what is unique about culture. This study offers a step further within the field in which researchers can take up a more in-depth empirical analysis of the implications involved.

In *Chapter 2* I include a summary of the literature that focuses on studies that have examined numerous rehabilitation programs. This chapter also summarizes the work by sociologists who have examined culture, more specifically individuals of Portuguese origin. In *Chapter 3* I provide a detailed theoretical framework that has influenced many aspects employed in this study. Hirschi's social bonding theory follows, along with a review of research that has empirically tested his theoretical claims relating to delinquency. *Chapter 4* first discusses the methodology of Dorothy Smith, which has inspired this thesis, and then outlines my own research design. *Chapter 5* provides a detailed discussion on the analysis that focuses on the Portuguese community as an example to explore the unique role of culture on the everyday lives of people. *Chapter 6* concludes with the major findings of my research and my recommendations for rehabilitation programs.

## **CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW**

There is an entire body of literature that sets out to investigate ‘what works’ regarding rehabilitation programs for young offenders. Several research articles have produced studies that outlined results of various programs that have not adequately reduced the rate of recidivism for young offenders. Given that there has been a fair amount of research that has focused on ineffective results pertaining to rehabilitation programs, I have chosen to concentrate on studies that investigate program effectiveness by considering the background of the offenders. I wanted to highlight the importance of a more global examination of rehabilitation programs by investigating avenues that provide insight towards better understanding of an individual’s ability to respond to programs.

With the proper guidance and direction, every youth can be given an equal opportunity towards positive change. Throughout my work experience with behaviour problem teens, I observed (although not initially) a significant number who seemed to express through their actions the need for structure and bonding towards someone or something. This challenge lies in motivating them initially, to participate in various programs which would, in turn, increase the chances for positive responses. I am arguing that trying to evaluate the ineffectiveness of program components is not the main source of the problem. I am proposing that the vital element within this process is trying to determine the best methods through which youth might respond within prescribed intervention. Therefore, an evaluation of the process would be more important than focusing on changing the component objectives set out within programs. I have focused the majority of the literature review on an examination of research that considers the way

offenders respond within rehabilitation methods. I propose that responses include the analysis of the cultural background of young offenders. The Literature review has been divided into two sections in order to highlight the main objectives of this paper. First, I have presented research that dealt with responses within rehabilitation programs, and secondly a discussion is provided on culture, more specifically the Portuguese culture.

### ***Offender Rehabilitation***

Researchers have found that achieving positive results within therapy approaches requires program administrators to emphasize the importance of matching appropriate programs with certain individuals. They have also highlighted the need to find compatible characteristics between the offender and the person who administers the program. Griffiths (1994) referred to research by Gendreau and Ross (1987) who argue that the two important elements towards an effective treatment process include the individual offender, and how the treatment programs are delivered within the institution. They state that individual offenders adapt differently to treatment, and this plays a significant role in determining treatment impact. Moreover, they argue that individual offenders must be 'matched' with the appropriate treatment intervention (Griffiths 1994:518-519). Within their study, however, they failed to mention the specific characteristics of offenders that could be further analyzed to assist in finding treatment components that offer a more successful match. From this perspective, the literature review centers on research that has examined rehabilitation methods in relation to the notion of 'matching' the right programs to individual offenders.

Especially influential is the work by Andrews, Bonta & colleagues (1990) who have produced research in the area of assessment of treatment programs for young offenders. They developed an assessment tool to adequately estimate the risk and needs of offenders and more specifically to measure offenders according to their chances of deviant behaviour and need for treatment. This assessment tool essentially includes themes relating to the social learning phenomenon that supports the notion that behaviour is learned both through the interaction with others as well as their surroundings.

Bonta (1997) describes a practical theoretical model developed by Andrews & Colleagues (1990) to assess and administer programs to offenders by implementing four principles that propose to reduce recidivism rates for offenders (Bonta, 1997: 5). The four principles for correctional treatment of offenders are; the *risk principle*, the *need principle*, *responsivity principle* and the *professional discretion principle*. Following is a brief definition of these treatment principles, as well as research that discussed the utilities of these principles.

The risk principal relates to the component within program planning that distinguishes the level of intensity for treatment intervention based on the offenders' risk of recidivism. The level of intensity refers to assessing whether the offender has a high risk of re-offending, in which they would more likely respond better to intensive rehabilitation. At the other end of the spectrum, offenders would respond more effectively to little or no intervention if they were assessed as low risk cases (Bonta, 1997:5). The second principal observes offender needs and comes into play based on the results of their assessed risk level. The need principle distinguishes between two types of offender needs, criminogenic and noncriminogenic needs. Criminogenic needs identify

factors that examine the present situation of the offender that must be changed to reduce the chances of recidivism. Bonta (1997) describes criminogenic needs to be; substance abuse, unemployment, criminal associates, antisocial personality, problem-solving skills, and anger. The second type of need, non-criminogenic needs, targets offenders' levels of anxiety and self-esteem because they are believed to be linked to reducing criminal behaviour (Bonta, 1997:6) The responsivity principle identifies specific personality, styles, and approaches of treatment programs that are strongly matched to the type of learning style and abilities of the offender. This is projected to increase success of program delivery given that offenders relate to the administered method (Kennedy, 1997:3). Lastly, the professional discretion principle proposes that in exceptional cases, professionals can examine the situation of offenders in more detail when they deem that the results of original assessment tools do not correspond to their professional judgment. Professionals may perceive that the assessment tools have failed to target potentially dangerous characteristics. Bonta (1997) uses the example of a sex offender who may score low risk on many objectives relating to the risk instrument, however their professional judgment is required to ensure that these cases are an exception to the rule (Bonta, 1997: 7). In summary, this practical theory incorporates four treatment principles as an assessment tool of offenders in order to find programs that match their personal profiles to ensure more effective results.

The principles of effective correctional treatment have been widely documented within the literature. Of particular significance for this thesis is the research that has examined the implications of the responsivity principle. I concentrated on an analysis of studies that have examined this principle in greater depth as it incorporates notions on



culture that offer insight into factors that increase offenders' ability to respond within programming. Kennedy (2000) argues that the responsivity principle has been overlooked within research although it has been considered to be one of the important elements when administering program components to offenders. She bases her argument on the fact that within the correctional field, treatment responsivity has been targeted as an important variable correlated with increasing the success of the treatment process for offenders.

The Correctional Services of Canada have reported that advancements have been made to develop systematic assessment tools that incorporate the examination of offenders' needs and risk based on the principles of correctional treatment developed by Andrews and associates. Objectives have aimed to facilitate a process that delivers the proper components that will ensure that each offender receives a treatment plan which reflects this assessment (Kennedy, 1997: 2). Kennedy (1997) acknowledges that literature has been able to articulate both risk and need as principles for effective treatment. She does, however, critique that vague definitions outlined within research on the role and function of offender responsivity (Kennedy, 1997:3). She suggests that knowledge on the responsivity principle can assist professionals in understanding motivational choices so that offenders are most likely to respond positively to correctional programming. "Motivation can be defined as the probability that a person will enter into, continue and adhere to a specific strategy" which she states can be measured as, "attributions rates, attendance, participation level, including willingness towards disclosure in sessions" (Kennedy, 1997:3).

Kennedy (2000) narrows the implications of the responsivity principle in terms of three components that are interlocked within this principle. They consist of the ability to; match the treatment approach with the learning style of the offender, to make sure that the characteristics of the offender are matched with the characteristics of the counsellor, and the third component suggests that the skills of the counsellor are examined to ensure that they coincide with the type of program identified for the offender (Kennedy, 2000:19). These components derive from the notion that offenders will adapt differently depending on the intervention approach. Therefore, programs demonstrate ineffective results if these responsivity components are not factored in within treatment programs. For instance, an offender may be unable to successfully respond to the intervention due to hindering elements such as cognitive/intellectual deficits that have been overlooked and therefore act as a barrier towards offenders' understanding of content and objectives of the program (Kennedy, 2000:19).

The responsivity principle includes the consideration of both internal and external factors as part of its assessment. Internal factors assess characteristics relating to the offenders' level of motivation, personality (anxiety, depression, mental illness, self-esteem, poor social skills), cognitive intellectual deficits (low intelligence, concrete oriented thinking, inadequate problem solving skills, poor verbal skills) and other demographic variables (age, gender, race, ethnicity). For instance, results within the assessment call for program recommendations to take into account the offenders' gender, ethnicity, age, social background, and life experiences as a starting point to find links that increase the chances that offenders relate to therapy methods (Kennedy, 2000: 20). External responsivity factors examine the counsellor's characteristics in order to

determine personality types that may work better with certain offenders. They take into consideration the setting characteristics to determine the most productive atmosphere that offenders would benefit most from. For example, certain offenders may fair more successfully if programs are administered within a correctional institution, as opposed to programs offered within the community. External factors also include an assessment of whether offenders relate better to individual rehabilitation processes versus working within a group intervention system (Kennedy, 2000: 20).

Kennedy (2000) suggests the need for professionals to maintain an ongoing awareness to actively assess what conditions would best be suited for individual offenders in order that they respond positively to approaches. The responsivity principle proposes that vigilance is required to recognize that offenders are not alike, nor are all staff, settings, or treatments. Matching the right counsellors to offenders requires knowledge of assessment tools to ensure matching characteristics of both parties can improve the effectiveness of correctional intervention (Kennedy, 2000:22).

The responsivity principle was repeatedly documented within literature as lacking in-depth analysis with regards to the important practical implications of its components. Andrews (2000) conducted a meta-analysis on the effectiveness of correctional treatment that have implemented the four principles. His study was of particular significance because it incorporated a concrete illustration of the effective use of the treatment principles and in particular, the responsivity principle to reduce recidivism. Andrews simplified the principles of risk, need, and responsivity to answer the questions relating to the who, the what, and the how of correctional intervention (Andrews, 2000:451). Results demonstrated that behavioural and social learning programs significantly

demonstrated the most effective results for treatment of offenders than approaches that utilized non-behavioural methods (Andrew, 2000: 455). This supports the importance of using the responsivity principle because Cognitive Behavioural and Social Learning programs are based on similar components outlined within this principle. Despite the intuitive appeal of this principle, Andrews stated that no meta-analytic review to date had explored the applicability of internal responsivity to effective correctional programming (Andrews, 2000: 449). These findings therefore support the need to examine more closely specific elements that would encourage offenders to respond favourably to programs [in which I propose to be] based on a closer examination of their cultural backgrounds.

In summary, what this literature shows us is the need to take an in-depth examination of the positive implications that are part of the responsivity principle. Clearly these research studies have proposed the need to understand offenders' ability to respond to intervention and shapes the way this thesis analyses the cultural background of offenders. If we go back to the section on internal components within the responsivity principle, the offenders' ethnicity and life experiences are theorized as components that should be considered within program implementation and delivery. Therefore, this thesis will further explore the degree to which ethnic culture is a unique characteristic that impacts one's socialization process and affects the individual's ability to respond.

The Correctional Service of Canada has shown signs of taking cultural awareness into consideration within rehabilitation programs. Policy objectives have been set in place to ensure that the needs and cultural interests of offenders belonging to minority groups are to be identified and that programs and services are developed to meet those

needs. Some of the policy recommendations included in their report: (a) encourage the offenders of designated groups to self-identify, (b) encourage the offenders of designated groups to assist in achieving of equal treatment by clearly articulating special needs, (c) make every reasonable effort to meet needs for linguistic, cultural, spiritual programs by offering specialized programs and services either in the institution or in the community, (d) take into consideration ethnocultural differences when programs and services are designed and delivered, (e) ensure that offender management system includes a reliable mechanism for tracking, through the self-identification process, the numbers, the proportions and the criminogenic and special needs of offenders belonging to ethnocultural minority groups. Strategies also outlined the need to develop tools to help professionals work towards achieving these recommendations. They also advocate that steps are required to identify and recommend a cross-cultural training for all parole officers, and program delivery officers. These recommendations are encouraging and incorporate logical elements, however, it also portrays the consistent lack of concrete examples with regards to cultural awareness. Examples of concrete tools are required to attain a complete understanding of the recommendations. More specific program elements are necessary to grasp the who, what, where, and why of components to ensure that offenders are getting their needs met. Implementation of policy is effective only to a certain degree. Little remuneration will be offered to offenders if details are not easily accessible to program administrators. The question needed to be asked is, how do ethnic cultural differences impact on responses (positive or negative) to standard therapy methods?

There is a large body of research that relates to the Aboriginal population within the criminal justice system. Drawing on several implications within research on the Aboriginal population would require a separate topic of its own. However, one example of the cultural factors within rehabilitation programs relates to an identification of their specific needs in order to adapt rehabilitation methods accordingly. Robertson (2001) states that the Correctional Service of Canada has begun to address this need by implementing rehabilitation methods that are culturally traditional such as healing lodges as trial methods to obtain more effective results for the Aboriginal population. Healing lodges are rehabilitation programs that primarily assist individual needs relating to substance abuse or anger management (Robertson, 2001:1). The critique of her approach centres on the fact that, although this structure is in place, it merges two opposite ends of the spectrum to deal with criminal behaviour. On the one hand lies the federal prison system which is based on punishment and psychological-based treatment programs whereas the philosophy to the Aboriginal approach maintains an emphasis on traditional culture and spiritual practices (Robertson, 2001:2). Criticism also derived within the fact that these specialized institutions such as healing lodges are not running to capacity and argue that this problem relates as well to a lack of communication or awareness of cultural differences. For instance, offenders eligible for these lodges are transferred from the federal institutions and are required to be classified as low risk offenders. However, their eligibility is dependent on the inconsistent or lack of tools to ensure cross-cultural awareness. They propose that part of the problem is that programs offered to Aboriginal offenders are non-traditional and may not interest the offender. Due to the lack of interest on the part of the offenders, these programs offered by the correctional system

are the only means to allow authorities to get to know the offender. Therefore, the end result is that these men are quiet and don't participate, leaving program administrators with difficulty to assess their levels of risk and needs. This lack of cultural awareness inhibits potential low risk offenders in getting their needs targeted within healing lodges. Increased knowledge is needed to bring awareness to tools that can better assess the risk level of Aboriginal offenders so they can gain more successful rehabilitation chances through institutions that can better serve their needs.

### ***Culture***

Carl E. James (1999, 2001) has done extensive research within the field of sociology relating to the exploration of race, ethnicity and culture. He examined culture through the perspectives of the real voices of people he was in direct contact with. As a teacher, his research based on ethnicity is derived from his students' perspectives in which he was able to acquire valuable insight based on their questions and debates which he believed advances our knowledge within the field and opens more doors to examine race and ethnic issues. In his book titled *Talking about Identity* (2001), he studied individual identity based on their personal accounts of their interactions among people from different backgrounds. For example he states that, "personal exchanges and interactions...or encounters, inform our understanding of the complex ways in which race, ethnic and language identities find expression in daily lives. It is not our intent to nullify or minimize the complexity of such matters...Rather, we want to make explicit how identities related to race, ethnicity, and language influence and inform individuals' life experiences and relationships" (James, 2001:2). James takes an optimistic and

realistic perspective within his objectives. He recognizes that culture and ethnicity is never static and the purpose of his writing is to have the reader recognize whether they can relate their personal experiences to those accounts provided (James 2001: 3). His work is comprised of a collection of writers from various backgrounds outlining experiences with regards to each contributor's personal identity within Canada. The most interesting of the readings by James and Shadd (2001), was their creative ability to put together numerous contributors to provide the reader with various perspectives on culture so that they could then further relate to their own personal experiences. For instance, James states that the reader can understand culture through a collection of contributing authors and that the articles, "describe our realities, contrast our identities, conduct our lives, and interrupt our experiences... we are in a way, acknowledging and accepting who we are and our differences- a process that is absolutely critical in fostering healthy and harmonious relationships" (James, 2001:4). The edited sources presenting perspectives from contributing authors validates the importance of taking the real experiences of people as a tool towards developing new theories and change. Because of the work by James, there is evidence that warrants the present thesis method of interviewing individuals from the Portuguese community to gain insight on cultural implications.

### ***Portuguese Community***

Noivo (1997) has done extensive research on the Portuguese community. Her work portrayed the unique characteristics of Portuguese people that assisted in analysis of the data I collected through interviews with individuals from this ethnic community. I found her material relevant given that she contributed an ethnographic description of the



life experiences of three generations of Portuguese Canadians. More importantly, her research is based on qualitative research on the Portuguese community in Montreal and offered insight relating to the family. I found this useful given that I have formulated my research to center on the family as the institution that will advance knowledge in finding more effective responses to rehabilitation processes. Noivo (1997) collected qualitative data from 37 Portuguese respondents and documented several important aspects that help understand existing relations. In 1997, at the time of her study, approximately 32,330 of the 250,000 Canadian residents that identified themselves as Portuguese lived in Montreal. She states that Canada's Portuguese population, maintains a high rate of endogamy, and the use and preservation of their own language is also relatively high (Noivo, 1997:32). Noivo added that she was initially confronted with resistance from people who were reluctant to discuss any details concerning their family lives to a stranger (Noivo, 1997:35). Overall, she concluded that her method of data collection yielded excellent results and explained that it "was observing life histories in the making and witnessing stuff she never believed to be accessible to fieldworkers" (Noivo, 1997:41).

Noivo (1997) formulated an in-depth analysis of the life stories told by respondents that offer interesting correlations in relation to their 'illusions, expectations, joys, projects and grievances' (Noivo, 1997: 10). She introduced her findings through the portrayal of three separate characters to represent each generation. For instance, within the first generation, the father is portrayed as one who emphasizes the urgency for children to grow up to help financially support the family (Noivo, 1997: 7). Children are expected to marry, yet remain in close contact with immediate family in the sense that

they should visit on a weekly basis for events such as the Sunday family meal. Noivo (1997) observed that fathers within this generation to maintain only a small interaction with daughters and have limited discussions with sons concerning what was described as 'manly' things such as jobs and home repairs. Males also expected that wives maintain order and education of children when it came to personal questions, but expected to be consulted on family matters that required decisions (Noivo, 1997: 8).

The second generation portrayal focused on the idea that women were financial contributors to the household and described as individuals who continuously sacrificed a lot for the family as well as maintained emotional ties to their children. Family image is evident as Noivo (1997) offers an example of a daughter who confides in her mother of her unhappy marriage and sufferings of physical abuse from her husband. The focus was described as mother's insistence to keep these family matters private. Noivo's findings highlighted within this portrait of second generation Portuguese, women's lack of emotional ties to husbands, yet daughters are encouraged to marry because mothers imply that a women's wedding day is the happiest of her life (Noivo, 1997:9).

Noivo (1997) then followed with an example of the third and youngest generation. She paints the picture of a male who has dropped out of school and blames his misfortunes on his parents who talked about the importance of school in theory, but never helped or focused on school or career opportunity. Examples are drawn that suggest little communication with parents who are often described as communicating by arguing (Noivo, 1997: 9). Males in the household are also presented as not helping with domestic chores. This generation was aware of mothers as maintaining a role that is devoted to the family. Noivo (1997) presents examples of the way ideology filters down

from one generation to the next. Her portrait presents a male who is completely against the idea of following his parent's wishes of him marrying a Portuguese girl. Although, this opposition is clear given that he only speaks English and French outside the home, he insists that his girlfriend learn his language because after marriage it is expected that Portuguese will be the spoken language within their household (Noivo, 1997:10).

The above versions of life stories were portrayed by Noivo (1997) to illuminate the interconnected experiences within the three generation of Portuguese Canadians as examples of the findings collected within her research (Noivo, 1997: 10). She states that studies have shown that when family experiences and principles are opposed by its members, it creates 'interpersonal contradictions and tensions', that then lead to individuals' perception of realities to become confusing. However, she states that this confusion results in the reality that, "each new generation absorbs and reproduces the ideologies" (Noivo, 1997:11). Many references of the reproducing ideologies can be found in the examples above within the three portrayals of generations. One of the many examples is of a mother who communicates an unhappy marital experience, yet instils in her daughters the importance of personal sacrifice to preserve the family unity. Similar examples are found in the voice of the third generation portrayal in which a young man blames his parents for lacking sensitive and caring communication skills, yet various examples suggest that he personally integrates these family principles. For instance, he responds to the tensions within the family by withdrawing and remaining silent, which is evident in the many accounts of men of Portuguese origin (Noivo, 1997: 11). Noivo explains that accounts from the three generations demonstrate the way family life is limited to time spent between work, schedules, imposing family rules, controlling others,

and even avoiding family matters that involve nurturing and expressing emotions. Noivo observed that all three accounts expressed obligations, expectations, and constant interactions to be the main factors that keep the family together (Noivo, 1997: 12).

Noivo (1997) refers to several unique components relating to the family socialization process that foreshadows key elements I observed in my interviews in relation to the structuring of gender roles produced by family ideologies. Women in her study were cognizant that their role entailed the importance of financial contribution to the family. Women were aware of their husband's dependency on both their financial and domestic contributions. Therefore, Noivo found that explanations for the marital power imbalance within the Portuguese household needed to be further observed, given that in practice their inequality cannot be explained by theory that assumes power structure to be caused by women's non-participation in the labour force (Noivo, 1997:19).

Noivo noted that some women were frowned upon by other women in the Portuguese community for questioning traditional sex roles. She suggests that this was due to the fact that moms were seen as worshipped, allocated more respect, admiration and social prestige than women who did not have children (Noivo, 1997:20). Many of the women expressed their lack of intimate relationships with their husbands which may account for an unconscious reflex to become more emotionally involved with their children and dedication to managing the household (Noivo, 1997:21). A second key observation made centered on an emphasis for family gatherings even though gatherings often entailed confrontations, tensions, and emotional domination (Noivo, 1997:28). Noivo proposes that one theory for the insistent bonding of the family can be related to

the ties that link 'affective and economic family' ties. She argues that a significant number of interviews focused on marriage as a 'pooling of resources for family survival' (Noivo, 1997:28)

Noivo's account of the family offered insight from which I drew to illuminate several key elements that surfaced in my study as well. I agree with her argument stating that the family is a very complex institution to study as it is always ever changing. However, she builds on the premise that we must begin somewhere in order to move forward. She quotes directly from Grell (1986), stating that, "Family life is complex and in sociology, the social...slips away just when one believes one has grasped it" (Noivo, 1997:132). In summary, her findings suggests that the family plays a strong part of who they are within their orientation among Portuguese Canadians. They expressed strong respect for the elderly, strong duty to care for aging parents, and the obligation of parents to sacrifice themselves for the pursuits and comforts of their children (Noivo, 1997:75). Second generation respondents condemn their fathers for having been unbearably strict and authoritarian, however most third generation children regard their mothers as more rigid and strict than their fathers. She proposes that this contradiction can be possibly explained by the fact that most second generation mothers are held responsible for education of children, so they attempt to prevent these troubles by 'tightening the ropes' (Noivo, 1997: 117). A common complaint among respondents was the lack of communication in their marriages. They did not, however, see this as a factor in marital problems (Noivo, 1997:122). Noivo stated that there was also a limited degree of freedom for children to express their complaints and/or feelings with their parents. Responses revealed that they in fact felt powerless to do so. (Noivo, 1997:123).

Moreover, she perceived the communication patterns that limited discussion of open ideas, feelings, and fears as inconsistent considering the significant amount of time Portuguese families spent with each other (Noivo, 1997:123). Respondents said that communication was expected to revolve around questions or statements that were concrete in nature, ignoring all other expressions (Noivo, 1997:123).

Higgs and Anderson (1976) also extensively researched the Portuguese community and observed similar aspects with regards to the family as that found in the above research as well the interviews I conducted. They also reported that the family was an important aspect of the Portuguese community. Higgs documented that the majority of Portuguese individuals in Montreal emphasized the importance of the family as a whole (Higgs, 1976: 127). In Portugal, families stressed the importance of respect for father as the head of the household and this respect for the father was continuously evident in the comments of many Portuguese people including children (Higgs, 1976:129). I agree, as my interviews highlight this as well. Higgs documented the work by Romao (1972), who studied the Portuguese community in Montreal and found that Portuguese families raised their children under severe discipline and with respect for older people (Higgs, 1976:129). His study also found that a high percentage of men (90%) in the Montreal sample study stated that the wife's place is at the home, yet contradicting figures showed that half of the spouses of those interviewed were working full-time and the remainder had part-time jobs (Higgs, 1997:130). He added that even though women worked full-time, their work outside of the home was viewed as 'household help'. Although respondents discussed the differences between men and

women, Higgs encountered consensus within descriptions of the family as a circle; and that the family was, as a unit, more important than the individual (Higgs, 1976:132).

Higgs noted that Portuguese people incorporated the Roman Catholic Church as an integral component within their traditions. He states that community picnics, fairs, dances and the opportunities to meet friends and neighbours are frequently associated with religious festivals and are acknowledged to be a vital part of their community (Higgs, 1976:143). Higgs' observations claim that Portuguese people are sociable which is evident under the premise that clubs and meeting places play an important part in establishing community solidarity and social life. He adds that although clubs are an important part of their social life, they do not direct it. Paradoxically they provide a focus for the strong individualism of their members (Higgs, 1976:155). He noted the Portuguese are intensely aware of their culture; yet find it difficult to define. Respondents believed that being Portuguese refers to attitudes, customs, sensibilities and values that make up the Portuguese lifestyle, which center mainly on the home. They expressed that the importance of Portuguese can be described as a way of being (Higgs, 1976:175). Higgs also noted in his research that family life was most intense around the supper table, and the Portuguese remain very faithful to the special foods that are associated with their region of origin and festivals (Higgs, 1987:181).

### **CHAPTER 3: THEORY - SOCIAL CONTROL**

The theory developed by Hirschi (1969) on social bonding, was used to guide this exploratory work on important components that help individuals deviate from delinquent behaviour. As previously mentioned in the introduction, I believe that programs for young offenders have produced ineffective results because they have failed to closely assess tools that would help offenders respond more favourably to programming. Hirschi offers theoretical notions into the possibility that institutions such as the family, school, and or the community, may have implications that can help understand young offenders from different cultural backgrounds.

Hirschi's (1969) theory is built on the idea that the causes of delinquency are directly linked to an individuals' lack of social bonding within their immediate environment. The notions presented by Hirschi directly relate to influences within social control theory that address the problem of deviance by excluding an analysis that examines why offenders commit deviant acts. Hirschi (1969) published the *Causes of Delinquency*, which identified four main variables that affect whether an individual will conform to, or stray from, the norms of society. His work centering on social bonding theory best correlated with the present study as I wanted to focus on exploring structures that influence the socialization process of individuals (such as the bonding that takes place within the family) and avoid any investigation that targets the causes of deviant behaviour. Therefore, I found it useful to apply the elements within bonding theory to act as a guideline to understand what may prevent individuals from further committing deviant acts and respond successfully within rehabilitation programs. For instance, Hirschi focused on the role of social relationships, or social bonds and argues that



delinquent acts will result when a person's bond, or connection to society is weak or broken (Hirschi, 1971:16). Hirschi believed that motivational factors do not need to be present for youth to become delinquent. However if social control and bonding are lacking, youth would be free to commit crime because opportunities to develop a conscience to maintain moral obligation is lacking. Hirschi (1969) believed that people conform to, or deviate from social norms based on four variables: *attachment*, *commitment*, *involvement*, and *belief* described in detail below. Hirschi explains that these four bonds relate to the attachment to society, more specifically what he calls *units*. I refer to these *units* in my study as *institutions* such as the family, school and the community which I will further explain in the Method and Methodology chapter.

*Attachment* refers to the degree that a person is emotionally involved with others and this degree of attachment will ensure that there will be a lesser likelihood that an individual will commit deviant acts. Hirschi believed that the attachments that influence conformity, are the interactions with parents, as well as peers, and school. (Hirschi, 1971:18). Hirschi proposed that deviant behaviour will occur if an individual does not feel a sense of belonging or linked to others in any way, which leads people to be then free from moral restraints. Hirschi believes that people are moral and respect the norms of society to the degree that they believe they must act in accordance with the expectations of others. For instance, Hirschi argued that if a person does not care about the wishes, opinions, and expectations of others, they will not consider the way their actions may affect others (Hirschi, 1971:18).

Hirschi's described the family as the central unit of social bonding, which specifies the individuals' attachment to their parents. He argued that a child who does

not feel attached to his parents is more likely to be exposed to negative influences, such as gangs, and the wrong crowd (Hirschi, 1971: 85). The socialization process is an important element in defining and shaping who we are. As Hirschi writes, “if the child is alienated from the parent, he will not learn or will have no feeling for moral rules, he will not develop an adequate conscience”(Hirschi: 1971: 86). Hirschi states that his definition of attachment does not require youth to be unrealistically attached to their parents in terms of proximity in order to conform. He is, however, referring to the importance of bonding between children and their parents so that the attachment is always present on an emotional level where parents are then psychologically present when temptation to commit a crime appears (Hirschi, 1971:88).

The second variable, *commitment*, is considered to be ‘the rational component in conformity’ (Hirschi, 1971:20). People who invest their time and energy into something that they consider important such as school, their goals, or their job, would be reluctant to jeopardize all these efforts by committing a deviant act. Therefore, a person who is committed to something will consider the consequences of deviant behaviour and take into account the risks of losing investments they have made to conform. Hirschi specifies that the differences between attachment and commitment lies in the fact that attachment to others ensures that individuals develop a conscience that prevents delinquent behaviour, whereas, commitment encompasses common sense (Hirschi, 1971:20). For example, students who work hard to make the sports team at school and are committed to what is required of them to be successful, would not risk jeopardizing their chances of remaining on that team by doing poorly in school or getting into trouble (Hirschi, 1971: 162).

*Involvement* as a bond refers to the idea that individuals who are kept occupied doing productive things, do not have the opportunity to engage in deviant behaviour. The person involved in conventional activities maintain deadlines and plans, therefore, they are directly involved in the things they have to do, that the opportunities to commit deviant acts rarely arises (Hirschi, 1971:22). For instance, using the example above, a student who participates in a team sport consumes energy as they are continuously active and involved with others by attending practices and games leaving them no time and energy to commit deviant acts. Involvement in a sport can keep youth off of the street and assist in preventing delinquency.

The final variable outlined within Hirschi's social bonding theory is belief. *Belief* centers on the notion that there is a common value system within society in terms of conforming to the prescribed norms (Hirschi, 1971:197). A person is more likely to conform to social norms when they believe in the system that creates the rules and regulations within society. Hirschi recognized that individual levels of belief may vary, and this variation is dependent upon the degree of attachment to systems representing the rules that they must conform to (Hirschi, 1971:197). For example, people have respect for the law if they believe that the rules enforced are truly for the good of people. I have drawn on the implications of these four components; attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief as providing my study with a direction to observe the family as an institution that may surface unique characteristics of bonding. Hirschi's theory on bonding combined with responses relating to the family socialization process can be applied to rehabilitation programs.

### ***Empirical Studies on Social Control***

Two separate studies are presented within the following section to demonstrate the applicability of Hirsch's social bonding theory by previous researchers. Teevan and Dryburgh (2000) suggest that feminist methods and social constructionist theory is reflected in their sociological research given that it was centered on creating a forum where the actual voices of the subjects are heard (Teevan, 2000: 77). This research offered insight into the way Hirschi's theoretical claims were applied. Secondly, similarities are evident in their method of data collection to the way I set up respondents in my study as the experts of their personal lives.

Adolescents were required to develop their own conclusions to explain why they engaged or refrained from delinquent acts by choosing from a checklist that consisted of various sociological theories of delinquency (Teevan, 2000:78). In order to ensure that adolescents grasped complete understanding of these theories, they were translated to everyday language. As theories were modified, the present findings based on responses are not considered a reliable source for direct testing of these theories (Teevan, 2000:80). This was, nonetheless, a very creative way of exploring the topic of delinquency by targeting the theory which best explained their motivation. Theories were also analyzed through the personal reflections of respondents themselves rather than testing these theories indirectly and then proceeding to draw conclusions.

The authors concluded that Hirschi's social control theory was one of two theories that provided the best descriptions of explaining conformity. For example, explanations centered on the fact that adolescent males are less likely to fight, shoplift or vandalize if they had legitimate means to or believed that these behaviours were wrong. They also

concluded that explanations for delinquency were tied to social control where delinquency arose out of boredom or lack of social control (Teevan, 2000:92). The study offered limited information relating to the implications of their findings. I would suggest that these results demonstrating the link between delinquency and nonconformist behaviour should be further examined by finding more concrete variables that may have impacted the validity of these theories. I propose that this can further advance our knowledge towards an understanding of delinquency motivation and find out ways to reduce recidivism in young offenders. An evaluation of other variables such as youth background, that are not routinely studied would offer much insight on useful, adaptable program components when used in conjunction with theoretical claims. Overall, this study was useful because it effectively incorporated the realities of the target group to evaluate the validity of social control theory as well as to document useful ways to implicate the actual voices of subjects to gain insight on issues relating to delinquency.

The second study that used Hirschi's social control theory is of particular significance because it directly examines cultural implications within delinquency. Jang (2002) hypothesized that Asian American adolescents commit less deviant acts as opposed to non-Asian adolescents based on the four elements of social bonding theory; attachment, commitment, involvement and belief (Jang, 2002: 650). His proposition states that Asian American adolescents are less likely to commit deviant acts than non-Asian because they are more likely to be attached to conventional institutions such as the family and school. He also proposed that they are committed to conventional goals, school achievement, involved in conventional activities, schoolwork and socialized to hold conventional belief, and respect for authority (Jang, 2002:650). Overall the author

proposes that racial and ethnic difference in terms of delinquency are somewhat dependent to the degree that they are controlled by conventional society and exposed to deviant peers (Jang, 2002:651).

The research was constructed to examine the racial and ethnic backgrounds of 18,132 respondents who were broken down into categories of; White, Black, Hispanic, Native American, and Asian American (Jang, 2002: 659). In order to test the validity of their hypothesis and compare survey responses, the findings were then separated into Asian and non-Asian groups. The results demonstrated a significantly lower level of general deviance for Asian American adolescents than non-Asian American adolescents particularly relating to deviance at school. Yet in terms of other deviant acts, results reported no differences. The authors found that in general there was a lack of difference in self-reported arrests between Asian and non-Asian students. However, they speculate that the lack of difference can be explained because surveys were distributed at school, excluding responses from dropouts. Jang reports that studies by Kaufman *et al* (2000) have proven that Blacks and Hispanics have disproportionately higher drop-out rates. They have also demonstrated dropouts to be more likely to engage in higher rates of delinquency than graduates. Jang suggests that their findings remain speculative as it questions the method of data collection rather than present reality. Although results demonstrated inconsistent findings, the following conclusions were drawn. First, results proved that all American adolescents regardless of their racial and ethnic groups were more likely to engage in deviant behaviour when they lack social control provided by their families. Second, problems exist if adolescents are not encouraged and/or supported for doing their best at school leading to offer little stakes in conformity. The next factor

was related to association with friends who do not value education. Lastly, adolescents who believe that it is acceptable to violate certain norms will commit delinquent acts. These findings suggest that delinquency prevention programs would be more effective if the programs focus on adolescents' relations to key social domains such as; the family, school and peer group (Jang, 2002: 672). In addition, this study illustrates support in conducting an examination of the family as an important institution that can offer perspectives on rehabilitation programs for young offenders.

### ***The Role of Culture***

By drawing from Hirschi's theory, I use social bonding as an important link existing within the family institution that can be further explored to find more effective rehabilitation approaches for young offenders. Inquiry is based on finding patterns within the family as an institution to maintain social control of children. The objective is to begin a preliminary investigation as to whether young offenders from different cultural backgrounds share certain similarities in terms of responding to administered therapy methods. As previously stated, taking on an investigation of the role of culture for young offenders is far too big of a topic to be manageable for a Masters thesis. This is why I have chosen to only focus on the cultural element to grasp what is unique about culture that can then be applied to rehabilitation methods. I propose that this knowledge on culture assists towards a better understanding of the types of mechanisms that are effective or ineffective. Therefore, better methods can be adapted towards implementing more effective approaches to young offenders of different cultural backgrounds, with the overall objective to reduce the rate of recidivism. Moreover, the claims made within

social bonding theory relating *to attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief* help target specific patterns to explore when examining the influence the family has in maintaining social control over their children. For example, using the four elements as guidelines around social bonds can help to explore the family as an institution in terms of its ability to positively impact youth to deter from deviant behaviour. More specifically, I would argue that details within social control theory can be related to an inquiry on; parents' level of strictness; methods used to punish negative behaviour; what encouraged positive behaviour; and family's level of trust or tolerance within the home. This investigation ties into social bonding theory because it looks to explore the family as the main institution that functions to maintain control over youth through bonding. These central themes will be the point of reference to guide data collection centered on the influential work by Smith outlined in the chapter that follows.



## **CHAPTER 4: METHOD & METHODOLOGY**

This chapter provides a detailed description of the framework that has influenced the method of data collection and analysis of this study. I have been inspired by the methodology put forth by Dorothy E. Smith who is a pioneer for her work in the field of feminist sociology. Smith (1987) has developed a method of data collection and interpretation that theoretically allows the researcher to directly study the real lives of people to examine larger perspectives that are linked to underlying influences of various institutions. I have employed a qualitative analysis that uses her method of thinking as the basis of conducting research on this topic. Within this chapter, I have highlighted three main themes that are present in Smith's overall methodological framework that directly demonstrate the data collection and interpretation process for the present study. Her methodology has allowed me to explore the role of culture as an influencing factor that must be considered when implementing more effective rehabilitation methods for young offenders from different cultural backgrounds. Using Smiths' methodology has assisted me in examining the actual realities of one culture to explore this possibility.

### ***A Summary of Smiths' Methodology***

Smith (1981, 1987) developed a way of addressing the fact that the voice of women was omitted within the field of Sociology. I divided her methodology into three sections to simplify the major themes that I drew on to direct data collection and analysis for the present study. The first section offers a description of the way she projects this omission of women to be the ***problem*** proposing a rationale for developing a, 'sociology for women'. The second major theme includes a presentation of what Smith formulates

as an *alternative to the problem*. The final theme concludes with her *research strategy* incorporating *institutional ethnography*, which offers a practical method to conducting qualitative sociological inquiry towards research. Within each of these three sections, I have proceeded to outline several links that I have borrowed from her methodology. Throughout this chapter, as I convey the link between Smiths' work and my study, I refer to the overall objective as being the role of culture in administering effective programs to young offenders of different cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, a description of my research design is explained using these same concepts within a more manageable inquiry relating to only one aspect of the above broad objective; the exploration of culture. Her research allows inquiry into a practical analysis from the standpoint of one particular culture as the basis for data collection and interpretation to explore the role of culture. I decided to focus on Portuguese people as the group to explore whether unique characteristics exist within culture. I explain my rationale for choosing individuals from this cultural background in the subsection titled *research objectives*.

### ***The Problem***

Her main project centers around what she titled creating a, 'sociology for women'. Smith argues that her methodology challenges the field of sociology by identifying the problem that its main school of thought has been written from an exclusively male perspective and that her research was one that would, "propose and formulate a sociology from the standpoint of women and follow through its implications for research", (Smith, 1987:1). Smith wanted to create a sociology that would take the everyday lives of women's experiences to be the main component that would value women as contributing and knowledgeable subjects within their own society. She

emphasizes the need to take sociology on a path that would project how women see the world through their own eyes. Smith (1981) states that the result of omitting the voice of women would be that, “women did not know how to view the world from where women are or were” (Smith, 1981:20).

Smith’s description of the problem within sociological discourse offers similar parallels that legitimize the rationale for the present study. I am proposing that the assessment of objectives to implement more effective rehabilitation programs for young offenders, requires a need to explore alternative methods than those instilled by law enforcement agents, or social workers, as they are solely responsible for the development of these programs. I am questioning the school of thought that has been developed based on perspectives mainly composed of social service agents who make decisions on the types of programming to be administered to young offenders. Within this argument, I suggest a sociological standpoint that considers culture as an important influence.

Azmi (1999), has identified the need to employ a sociological perspective for research approaches in the field of social work to address limitations. The elements outlined within his work are of particular significance, since social workers or program administrators are in the position to assess young offenders in their required rehabilitation methods. The author argues that the initial conceptual approach of research determines the nature of how the data will be gathered, analyzed and interpreted. He states that if the conceptual approach is inadequate, the casting of the problem for the research itself will be inadequate (Azmi, 1999:154). From this stance, the author critiques the narrow assumptions regarding various researchers and professionals who have inadequately cast the problem of social welfare, leading to literature that maintains conceptual bases that

are questionable in many distinctive communities. Azmi argues that in order for adequate theoretical hypotheses to be developed in an attempt to represent the welfare needs of diverse communities, it is important to research broader perspectives than that of the social services. The author believes that what is needed is to conduct empirical research that attempts to first develop conceptual frameworks that are grounded in the real perceptions of target populations, where effective welfare responses to social diversity might be constructed (Azmi, 1999: 154). Azmi proposes that research of this type needs to begin from a sociological perspective. This critique is based on the assumption that social service research is founded on narrow conceptions of welfare and diversity, and represent a view from 'inside' which assumes a legitimacy for existing social work practices, and is therefore unable to maintain a critical perspective from 'outside'. For instance, social work practice is concerned with identifying social problems on the individual level and offering solutions to the present problem. Whereas, "sociology of welfare is concerned with studying all social relations emerging from the activity of welfare, not just those identified as social problems" (Azmi, 1999:155). Within this statement, Azmi is arguing that culture needs to be observed and researched as it fits within the context of society as a whole and not necessarily as it relates to problems within the individual.

In relation to the above standpoint, rehabilitation methods for young offenders have not adequately addressed the broader picture of the individuals' cultural background, which may be a factor that has been overlooked to provide effective therapy outcomes. Research on programs ability to attain the projected objectives have centered on an evaluation of whether reductions are evident in the rates of recidivism among

young offenders. I argue that it is necessary to look beyond program components and examine a broader perspective that includes the offenders' cultural background to explore whether this aspect may influence more effective responses towards therapy approaches.

As Smith (1987) proposes the need to formulate "sociology from the standpoint of women", the present study will employ this framework by identifying the need to conduct an analysis of rehabilitation programs for young offenders from different cultural backgrounds. Taking the everyday lives of people from a similar cultural background to be the main focus (standpoint), will offer a sociological perspective that may inform social services, and law enforcement agents with a more global perspective that will view individuals themselves as subjects within their own culture. For the purpose of this study, I focus only on the Portuguese culture. However, I suggest that interpretations of this investigation into the Portuguese culture was used only an example of implications that can then be further explored as propositions for other cultural communities.

Smith (1987) argues that women's perspectives have been excluded within sociological discourse because they have been subjected to a form of domination from the power infrastructures that have been created to serve the purpose of those occupying these positions. This form of dominance creates a problem when the people who occupy positions within this ruling class impose their dominant views of the world from the sole perspective of their position as a ruling structure. She states that, "a ruling class serves as an active process of organization, producing ideologies that serve to organize the class itself, and its work of ruling, as well as to order and legitimize its domination" (Smith, 1987: 56-57). Smith argues that within sociology, we can look at women's position in history as one of the concrete examples that demonstrate how a class of people (men) can

maintain a position within the ruling class as method to create principles and discourse based on the objective to serve its own purpose of retaining domination within society (Smith 1987: 74). From this stance, she believes that in the social sciences, if sociology is based on solely a male perspective, there is no room for women to know what they would have to learn or how to conceptualize what they have learned if they cannot relate to this perspective. Therefore, women's experience as a missing component within sociology must be developed as a research study (Smith, 1981:2).

Smith's focus on structures enables us to see the way institutions work to influence peoples actions. Within this study, direct links are made to understand the structural influences Smith refers to within institutions. First, is an analysis of the legal system that aims to implement program requirements, which I support as an important system to structure the rehabilitation of offenders. I would, however, add that it would be beneficial to incorporate within this structure, the life experiences of real people from different cultural backgrounds. This will direct research towards an alternative perspective when evaluating ineffective programming for young offenders, rather than trying to solve the problem through the perspectives of those viewed as experts in the field who maintain positions of power, such as the law enforcement officers, and social workers. Smith argues for the need to affirm the experience of the everyday lives of people as crucial to maintaining and transforming social structure. Therefore, within this framework, I propose that in order to reduce the recidivism of young offenders of different cultural backgrounds, we need to explore everyday experience of ethnic communities to target more successful approaches that directly come about through the analysis of culture as an institution.

Smith added that her method of thinking is one that is transferable and that she wanted to create an approach that can take on an analysis of society and social relations that are not only about women but make it possible that it can be applied to examine all aspects of society (Smith, 1987:8). Secondly, she also wanted to emphasize that by describing the need to bring about the standpoint of women, she is not suggesting that there is a common viewpoint among women. The idea here is, that women's experience has been the resource for developing a position from which to investigate social relations and how they are organized (Smith, 1987:78). I draw on this point to reinforce the rationale for this study. I am not suggesting that people from similar cultural groups maintain the same viewpoint, or wish to stereotype that people of similar backgrounds all believe, value, and act in a similar fashion. However, mapping out patterns that exist within a culture, should be explored as a missing component within the structure of rehabilitation programs which can produce more effective responses. The experiences of one culture are used solely as a resource to explore if unique characteristics surface that can open the door for further research and examine whether its role may play a factor in finding more effective rehabilitation procedures.

### ***Proposed Alternative***

Smith (1987) offers to formulate a sociology where the experts are the members of society and are those who are not considered part of the theoretical conceived notion of a ruling class. She argues that starting research from the point of women's experiences, will direct the researcher towards the beginning of an investigation that will encompass their representation within the field (Smith, 1987:88). Smith states that, "if

we begin where people are actually located as the position of our subject, our knower, we begin in the everyday world” (Smith, 1981:4). She believes that the sociologist is required to develop a sociology that will spell out the social organization that governs the individuals’ everyday world, and make this visible to everyone in society. The researcher will be able to interpret from within what subjects say about their experience as it is beyond what is the subject themselves can see (Smith, 1987:89).

In reference to my study, in order to explore alternative approaches within the rehabilitation process, we must begin inquiry from the everyday perspective of families from different cultural groups. The family will be examined as the institution that will allow us to gain insight on various cultures from individuals themselves as the experts. As the researcher, I will try to discover from the people I interview, the social organization of the way they live their lives. I draw on Smith’s way of thinking and focus inquiry on the family’s everyday experiences within examples such as the way they socialize their children. Her methodology allows me to direct my questions towards looking at the family socialization process instead of a continuous evaluation of the problems within rehabilitation programs. Focusing on program content would have led me to otherwise turn to professionals in the field to pursue questions on ineffective programs. Within this framework, the purpose and direction of inquiry for this study can be explained as an exploration of what may be hidden in the everyday world of people from different cultural groups from the standpoint of the family. This investigation will open the door to explore whether there can be links made from their experiences that can help improve the effectiveness of programming for young offenders from different cultural backgrounds. For instance, Smith quotes that her research, “does not



universalize a particular experience. It is rather a method that, at the outset of inquiry, creates the space for an absent subject, and an absent experience that is to be filled with the presence and spoken experience of actual women speaking of and in the actualities of their everyday worlds” (Smith, 1987:107). For the present study, I targeted in particular the voice of people who were of a Portuguese origin.

Smith’s methodology promotes the active role of the researcher because it is not realistic to rely on subjects for an understanding of the relation that shape and determine their everyday worlds (Smith, 1987:110). Therefore, the researcher’s task is to investigate the social relations that exist and explore how they are presented and operate in their everyday world (Smith, 1987:110). To illustrate her point in concrete terms she suggests the need to combine both subject and researcher as active participants. She describes a sequence of events that is routinely involved in sociological inquiry. I quote the following text from her book:

*Riding a train not long ago in Ontario I saw a family of Indians: Woman, man, and three children standing together on a spur above a river watching a train go by. There was (for me) that moment- the train, those five people seen on the other side of the glass. I saw first what I could tell this description as it was, but that telling as a description built in my position and my interpretation. I have called them a family: I have said they were watching the train. My understanding has already subsumed theirs... My description is privileged to stand as what actually happened, because theirs is not heard in the contexts in which I may speak (Smith, 1987:112).*

Smith wanted to demonstrate from this example the way in which she used the train as a metaphor for the kind of distance between the observer and the observed in which the observed does not have the power of speech. For instance, she states that she would routinely write down her observations through a descriptive procedure that would incorporate interpretations that were not verified by the experiences of the people she observed. This is evident as she proceeded to describe the people she observed in the

text, 'a family'. She writes, "but were they really a family, and were they actually watching the train?" (Smith, 1987:112). The issue she addresses from the above example is one that questions not only whether she is accurate in this description, but also the fact that she had created a complete description that not only describes the scenario itself but makes assumptions solely through the interpretations of the sociologists, the framework to define it as well. Therefore, this would leave questions of accuracy and fact to revolve within the frame she has already established which she believes would change the whole account of observation (Smith, 1987:112).

Smiths' example of the train is relevant to the examination of the rehabilitation process that is developed for young offenders by social services personnel. These youth are observed, and evaluated by individuals who have the power to indicate an analysis and outcome based on their observation and evaluation of youth. These institutions have the ability to recommend what they have evaluated to be effective and ineffective for young offenders in terms programming content, and rehabilitation processes. Smiths' work offers a collaborative approach that proposes to begin with the standpoint of peoples' experiences first in order to investigate patterns that may exist within these experiences that can assist towards more effective programs. Furthermore, this proposition does not imply that all young offenders from a specific cultural background will demonstrate more effective results within a specific program, but put forth the importance of awareness that culture may play a factor in finding more effective approaches, would then change the whole account of observation.

Smith suggested that there is a need to apply a method that is readily available where observations made by the researcher can be described through a manner that will

allow outsiders to verify if this is a reality. Smith argues that this method exists through an examination within what people say about their everyday experience that is an ongoing sequence that is common with what other people say about their daily activities as well (Smith, 1987:122). She thinks that this is possible, through a method that can investigate a research study which aims to illuminate the actual ongoing human action rather than look to explain it (Smith, 1987:126). The next section highlights the practical tools to go about conducting research methods that implement the voice of subjects.

### ***Research Strategy***

Smith (2002) developed a practical research strategy that collects data and interpretation through a method called Institutional Ethnography. This method uses the primary voices of those individuals interviewed as subjects, to encompass the basis in which sociologists can begin to develop inquiry. The objective of her research strategy was to ‘remake sociology from the ground up’ in which women’s everyday worlds would be initially rediscovered and then applied to investigate how their actions are organized by social relations (Smith, 2002:17-18). Her central project aims to initiate research from issues and problems of peoples' everyday life experiences and develop inquiry from the standpoint of the people themselves. The second step requires the expertise of the sociologist whose job is to locate the associations that are evident within what people describe as their everyday lives and map them out so that people can be aware of ‘how their own lives are hooked into the lives of others in social relations’ (Smith, 2002:18). Institutional ethnography is described as explicating from interviews, the way these experiences are organized by and coordinated with what people are doing at a completely

different time and place. This is what she defines as problematic because the basis of research aims to discover the social relations that are hidden in institutions (Smith, 2002:19). This method is based on the rationale that the people interviewed are the experts of their everyday world and the task of institutional ethnography is mainly to learn from the subject. The second step takes shape when data collection is complete by then examining relationships and patterns that exist within all interviews that demonstrate 'how they are hooked into relations that connected them beyond the scope of their experience' (Smith, 2002:21).

In order to start research on any particular issue, Smith directs our attention to the importance of beginning the research strategy by envisioning the social as the target of our investigations. She cautions that this technique is only a small step towards research on the topic and is used only to establish a place to begin inquiry within the topic. She states that, "It locates only a point of entry. It makes no commitment to what may be found. That remains to be discovered" (Smith, 2002:22). This will allow the researcher to locate a standpoint in an institutional order that can be related to real issues, concerns, or problems to people that provide and direct the perspective to explore a topic (Smith, 2002:23). The second stage takes place once all interviews have been conducted and involves situating experiences in the organization being explored. Hence, the research takes a new turn from exploring of the day-to-day experiences to investigating the widespread 'relations in which each individual's everyday world is embedded' (Smith, 2002:25). She states that, "Institutional ethnography is sampling an institutional process rather than a population, choosing the standpoint from which the institution will be explored is a key step in ethnography" (Smith, 2002:26).

I draw on several elements within Smith's research strategy to direct my own method of data collection. Her research strategy guided me to observe patterns that arose across the interviews of individuals from one specific culture based on the family as the main institution explored. From this perspective, I was able to observe whether there existed within the family setting, influences that were organized by social relations and in turn, I suggest, cultural influences. Exploring issues and problems of people's everyday lives within the context of the family and how they socialize their children, is where I began inquiry.

The objective was to locate in what they said about their socialization process to investigate the relationship between their everyday worlds and observe whether patterns exist within all other interviews. When the data collection was completed, the next process employed Smiths' research strategy that situates their experiences within the organizational order of the family. This led me to investigate whether a greater influence such as the institution of culture in fact, can play a vital role in finding more effective programs for young offenders of different cultural backgrounds.

### **Method of Data Collection**

In order to achieve my research goal which was to examine the possible role of culture within rehabilitation process, I need to address the following question: *What is unique about culture that can help us better serve youth from different cultural backgrounds?* Exploring culture as an institution that maintains structural influences can then be further applied to practical methods that centers on young offenders who would possibly benefit from therapy programs. Maintaining awareness, adaptability and/or

cultural components within programming could help offenders feel more comfortable within the rehabilitation process, and allow them to feel that they can better relate to individuals who are administering the programs. The increased familiarity with programs matching their cultural backgrounds may increase interest and understanding of program goals that fit their personal needs. This study proposes that programs that adopt cultural components will increase the likelihood of lower rates of repeat offenses for young offenders from different cultural backgrounds. This study is not exploring the idea that differential treatment is required within the sentencing of offenders of different cultural backgrounds. However, the goal of this study is to demonstrate that programs need to maintain awareness of cultural differences to allow offenders a better chance in relating to the administered programs. I would also like to address the fact that this study does not examine the causes for delinquency. This area would require more extensive research; the present analysis is formulated to intervene at the level of treatment, after conviction.

### ***Research Objectives***

Choosing the family as my starting point was based on Hirschi's theory on social bonding. For instance his theory presumes that the causes of delinquency are directly linked to an individuals' lack of social bonding within their immediate environment. He believes that people conform to, or deviate from social norms based on four variables; attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. These components to me demonstrated the influence that an institution such as the family may have on an individual, which offered a direction to start examining the everyday experiences of one

cultural group. Social control is one of the many themes explored to investigate if cultural differences occur within various institutions such as the family, but also with friends, school and the community. The cultural differences around functions that maintain social control may include: punishment, reward, surveillance, and tolerance. I describe these elements as functions to describe the tools that families use to enforce conformity within the household in which bonding then occurs. I set out to explore conformity by interviewing individuals based on an analysis of the family as the main investigation. However, the socialization around friends, school and the community are secondary institutions that I projected would develop within the interview process.

I decided to concentrate on interviewing Portuguese people as a community to explore for several reasons. For one, I am personally interested in learning more about this culture as I am of a Portuguese origin; my parents emigrated from Portugal. Secondly, they make up a large cultural community in Montreal who maintain strong ties to their tradition and culture. I also rationalized that this had a positive impact within the interview process because I was be equipped with the tools to speak Portuguese if I was confronted with any subjects who had trouble understanding the direction of questions. The family was the main institution that had allowed me formulate a research design based on Smith's methodology.

### ***Research Design***

Throughout this thesis, I refer to the notion that culture is an important component to focus on when exploring more effective approaches for young offenders of different cultural backgrounds. Therefore, drawing on Smiths' methodology, I concentrate on

examining culture because I suggest it to be the hidden component that will increase successful responses. I examined interviews with Portuguese individuals to discover if there are patterns that exist in relation to social control over children that increase or decrease the opportunities of bonding to occur. As this was an exploratory study, I propose that existing patterns with these Portuguese respondents, would validate the need to conduct more in-depth research with regards to implications for rehabilitation programs for ethnic communities. Because Montreal contains such a diverse population that includes numerous cultural communities, culture is an important aspect to examine if we validate the importance of cross-cultural communication as one of the major tools to improve the services provided by our social institutions.

I interviewed eight individuals who were from families where both parents are of Portuguese origin. These interviews contained open-ended questions and I used a snowball strategy for finding participants. At the end of each interview, I asked the participant if she/he could refer me to someone who was of Portuguese origin. Interviewees were ages 22-34 years old based on a rationale that 18 years old provided a basis that subjects were of an age where they were able to offer some insight with regards to their life experience to date. In terms of examining subjects' socialization process as the point of entry to begin inquiry, I foresaw global perspectives to possibly differ with regards to a large gap in age categories. However, an analysis from both ends of the age spectrum would have allowed me to test if patterns existed within all interviews or within the two separate age categories. This concern with age was however irrelevant given that all interviews consisted of similar ages.



Using Smith's methodology, I examined the day-to-day life experiences of Portuguese people through open-ended interviews. Once all interviews were completed, I was left with access to real data on real people that allowed me to use transcripts to pull out the themes and narratives that developed as a result of interviewing. This research strategy mapped out patterns that existed within the everyday experiences of the respondents. I wanted to investigate the standpoint of Portuguese people within the institution of the family to provide insight at the broader institution--culture. The objective of interviewing respondents was to develop inquiry on the processes and development of social relations, which organize, shape, and determine the lives of Portuguese people. The research focused on the way they raise their children in terms of their behaviour, following the rules, maintaining structure in the household, etc. as the point of entry. This entails an examination of ways that people socialize their children to conform to the household rules. In accordance with Smith, I was careful to avoid techniques within the interviewing process that evaluated reasons for the way things existed within the family. I focused on encouraging respondents to maintain descriptions rather than explanations of their everyday experiences at home. The research strategy incorporated an analysis of Hirschi's social bonding theory by exploring whether in fact there were similarities to components of attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief that are embedded within the family institution to maintain social control over children. Interpretation of data sheds light on the question of whether the relationship of culture is a variable that may be missing within rehabilitation in terms of understanding bonding within different cultural backgrounds.

## **CHAPTER 5: ANALYSIS**

The following chapter summarizes the results obtained from the data collection of primarily open-ended interviews. An outline is provided on the patterns that surfaced based on interviews with eight respondents who were all of Portuguese origin and told of their everyday life experiences. Of the eight respondents, three people identified themselves as individuals from a Portuguese ethnic background, and the remaining identified themselves as both Portuguese and Canadian. All respondents confirmed that both their parents were born in Portugal and that they themselves were born in Montreal, except one individual who was born in Portugal, and one respondent who was raised in Portugal during his childhood years. Five respondents identified that their parents were originally from the Lisbon in Portugal, two were from the Azores, and one respondent was from the Madeira region.

The data collection process targeted individuals from ages 18 and up, but all respondents ranged between 22-34. The close age gap can be explained by the goals of the snowball strategy method that rely on the importance of referrals to be from interviewees. Further research on this topic can investigate whether age had an impact on the emerging themes. Throughout the interview process, I had the opportunity to meet very interesting people and also gain an abundance of knowledge about my own Portuguese heritage. As themes became apparent, I reflected on my own socialization process in which I could relate to similar social relations portrayed by respondents. In order to maintain the confidentiality of respondents, I applied pseudonyms to each of the respondents on transcribed interviews and refer to these names to demonstrate links within their personal accounts. The majority of interviews ranged between one hour to

one and a half hours providing me with the access to detailed data on the everyday lives of Portuguese people. All interviews took place at respondents' homes except for two interviews that were carried out at a local coffee shop. Within several homes of respondents, I noticed that there were religious artefacts such as pictures or statues. Of the eight respondents, two were males, three of the respondents had children, and four of the respondents were married, along with one who was living with his partner. All respondents had siblings and came from families where both parents remained married and only one of the respondents stated that her parents were divorced.

Results demonstrated that several issues raised by respondents were similar in terms of the accounts of their everyday experiences highlighting the connection to what other respondents were doing at a different time and place. Several patterns became evident during the review of transcribed interviews that were then grouped into specific themes. My methodological framework influenced the direction of analysis to center on retrieving themes directly from respondents' discourse on their everyday experience. The data was collected based on the standpoint of the family to begin inquiry on the socialization process of individuals in shaping experiences and exploring whether discoveries can assist in finding more effective programs for young offenders of different cultural backgrounds. The findings in the present study are also similar to the research by Noivo (1997) and Higgs (1976) relating to both their accounts of the Portuguese people within my literature review. I have provided a brief interpretation on these similar themes within the *Implications* chapter that follows. The patterns that existed explicated the way they are organized and directed by the philosophy of institutions, more specifically culture.

I drew out several common issues within respondents' discourse that highlight the relationship between their everyday living and the structural influences of culture. Results explicate culture as an institution that influenced the socialization process of respondents. I found that three separate institutions emerged as influencing factors as well, which include the family, religion and community. I began inquiry into the exploration of culture by examining the family as the point of entry. I found that family was an indicator of cultural transmission and was fascinated to find religion which seemed interchangeable with community, to act as an indicator. Results illuminate culture as an institution that organizes the experiences of Portuguese people, and the family/religion/community are indicators of cultural transmission. Cultural transmission as well as the indicators of this transmission through the family and religion/community, are drawn from transparent patterns within respondents' discourse. These similarities pertaining to their descriptions of growing up in a Portuguese household, are presented below demonstrating the influences on shaping their experiences. Within some of the cases respondents referred to the power of religion that shapes the fundamental practices for family members and that direct or coordinate community life. This led me to explicate in further detail, the relationship between religion and community as interlocking practices.

I divided the patterns that emerged within the interviews into separate themes that are listed below. I began with a description of the family because it was the main institution that indicated cultural influences that impacted the socialization process of individuals within their daily interactions. I then included a description of patterns of behaviour that existed within the family setting that demonstrate this influence. These

include gender roles, communication methods, discipline measures, surveillance, education and social bonds. While I focused on family, two other institutional sites for control emerged from the data as being important: religion and community. Patterns around references to religion and community were also a big part of what I drew on from what respondents relayed in their discourse to describe what it was like growing up in their household that impacted their day to day experiences. Overall, the patterns of behaviour that existed illuminate indicators of influences such as the family, and religion/community, that are all ultimately linked to the structural power of cultural transmissions.

## **THE FAMILY**

Family values were described as one of the most important aspects within the Portuguese culture in defining who they are. Respondents stated that Portuguese people see family as a sense of togetherness and commented on the fact that their parents insisted on maintaining a focus in their lives on the role of the family. Some explained this role to encompass a coded duty to help one another and that everyone within the family must contribute however they can. I drew on the patterns in their discourse that demonstrated an emphasis placed on the importance of family values and bonding based on the expectations that they be together on a regular basis. For example, family members are expected to interact together at least once a week, in which some specified was mostly on Sunday. However, their accounts at the same time provided examples that suggested 'family time' consisted of a physical proximity rather than an emotional bond with the family, especially with regards to their fathers. I will explain this important element further within a description of the father's role within the family. Sabrina

provides an example to describe the physical proximity that is common within

Portuguese households:

*Being Portuguese is really about family values, I think that is important, especially with my mom... important that family is together and you are there to help each other out. Like Sunday is family, kind of embedded in Portuguese people...family is there, maybe not so much in practice as it is in way of seeing it.*

This importance was also described as suggesting that it reflects an entity that defines a part of Portuguese people in the way it links them to bonding with the Portuguese community. Although, some of the interviews expressed that they did not like the fact that they were required to continuously contribute their presence to the family and the community, they at the same time mentioned that life would seem unfulfilled if family values did not encompass family and community. For instance, several individuals reiterated the importance of having meals together as witnessed in Sabrina's account above. Maria also brings out this notion related to a sense of solidarity that is embedded within the Portuguese culture. She states:

*It is hard to define what values I have with the Portuguese culture, cause it's in me without me even realizing it myself. The values of the family are of giving, that Portuguese 'saudade' which is a Portuguese feeling. ...is a Portuguese word that anybody who is Portuguese all over the world can refer to that word. Saudades, ...is missing someone, the feeling of missing. Lets say when you say I miss you when you haven't seen someone for a while, you say 'saudades' but it is more than that, it is 'saudades' of our country, as immigrant people. We have that in Portugal.*

Respondents repeatedly made reference to the values within the whole process surrounding food that is very present in a Portuguese household. Portuguese individuals are not only loyal to the products and types of food and recipes relating to their cultures, they are however also receptive to the fact the food really defines their culture. For example Maria spoke about values as such:

*Like food- like culture- you can see your culture in your food. What you eat- you can describe this as your culture.*

This can be tied to the fact that within the Portuguese culture, food relates to the bonding time families spend together. Parents reiterated the importance of having meals together as a family especially on Sundays. The idea that Sunday is important can perhaps then be linked to the emphasis that Portuguese people place on Religion. This may transpire into the focus placed on the family to be together on Sunday that may be linked to the religious connotation of Sunday as the Holy day. Nancy recounts the importance of having meals together as a family:

*Sundays like the whole week everyone was super busy so like on Sunday it is the big meal and the table is always full and...a lot of the values and things came out in the kitchen around the table. 95% of time spent in a Portuguese house is spent in the kitchen like when there is guests, you don't bring them to the living room, you bring them to the kitchen, like it is always revolves around food and the kitchen, like I feel that is where is the tradition, it passes through the stomach.*

Preserving the image of the family was another important aspect within the interviews. Image was referred to as one in which required that members always present the family in a very respectable manner. I highlight this factor because several interviews spoke about the requirement of children to listen to their parents and refer to them in a formal way. Discussions portrayed the image of the family as important to both outsiders and insiders of their community. For instance, respondents reported that although things were not right in the family, it was very important to preserve family dignity by not displaying this to the general public and always keeping things private. This is supported in Noivo's (1997) study within her account of daughters who complain about the physical abuse from their husbands, and were quickly silenced by mothers and told not to discuss

any of the marital troubles with outsiders. One example is evident within Nancy's description of the importance to preserve family image.

*Following the religious prototype of things is very important...like I had a couple of cousins that moved out with their boyfriends before getting married and it was like the big scandal, now people accept it more ...like it was a big deal but then you see the religious values come into it. Sometimes it is not even necessarily that you agree with that, but they know that other people are going to talk about it and it is not a nice image for the family. Image is very important too, what other people are going to think and say about your family too, you have to be a respectful family. Divorce not acceptable.*

The interviews highlighted that within the Portuguese community, image encompasses the idea that confidentiality should be maintained at all times with regards to personal issues. I will suggest that this is linked to the limited communication within the household. Both Vera and Jose discuss examples of how important it is to present a strong image of their culture. Vera focuses on the importance of portraying personal strength to the community:

*Like the image of the Portuguese community that was a big thing, everybody always tries to outdo each other... like Portuguese people have this thing with image, like it was as if I am going to show you that I came to this country and I have all these things I built with my bare hands with just 5 dollars in my pocket, that was the biggest thing, especially with the older generation, I guess it was something to appreciate and value that they were able to do it with less than what we have today.*

Jose demonstrates how important it is to preserve the family image in terms of respect:

*I remember one time we were moving and I don't remember what it was but probably they were asking me something and obviously I was rude to my parents I just said something and it was my landlord that was present and I answered back to my parents which I should not have done...I knew my dad didn't like it and at home... he slapped me and asked 'what did you say then' ...you just know what you did wrong so there was no need to say it, and I think I learned.*



The above account demonstrates the importance of respect towards authority. In addition, we can see the interchange between respect and image. Showing disrespect as a child would demonstrate in this case to reflect on the family.

***i) Gender Roles:***

Within both themes, communication and discipline described below, we can observe within their accounts that allow us to presume that gender differences clearly exist within the Portuguese household. Mothers maintain full-time employment, but, were still expected to do all the domestic and child-rearing duties. Overall, this lifestyle is common in many families that support this unequal balance between men and women when it comes to domestic duties. Within Portuguese families, women are expected to work in order to help financially support the family, yet, their jobs were described as not really valued by their husbands. Vera describes:

*My mom's job was cleaning of people houses...my mom worked but I don't think that it was validated by my father as much, even though she came home and everything was clean and she cooked for him. I don't think he validated her.*

The mother's role within the family was described by respondents as fundamental in providing emotional support to their children as well as in keeping the family together. Descriptions suggested that husbands put a high degree of pressure on their wives to ensure that children were educated to follow the rules and behave in an acceptable manner. For example, in terms of discipline, it was the mother's role to punish children, however, the father was regarded as the ultimate authority and on occasion ensured discipline of children if they continued to misbehave. This discrepancy in fear of fathers' measures could be explained by the fact that respondents described their mothers to be

continuously screaming. Children may unconsciously become desensitized to their methods. Nancy's example best explained patterns that existed around the issue of differences in terms of mothers who maintained the everyday role of disciplinarian and domestic charge of the home:

*So my mom used to yell at us a lot... my dad would interest himself in some things. Like the role of the mother is to educate the kids and not the father, so if something goes wrong it is like her fault...But I found that it was funny she never said anything, she let us be kids and play do whatever we wanted so to speak not do whatever we wanted but she would just come out in the lane and scream for us to come in...It is very sexually discriminatory in my house I think my dad washed the dishes once at our house, ... and he would do something small like that and make it into a big thing like you are not doing your house duties as a wife sort of thing. My mom would decide on the small things, but the dad is definitely the authority figure. He didn't really say much and my mom would be always don't do this or that and we would not really pay attention but when my dad said it and okay then we used to stop.*

Although both parents contributed financially, several respondents referred to their fathers as the money providers of the family. This can perhaps be explained by examples such as Vera stated above demonstrating the fathers' disregard of the mothers role within the workforce. In addition, Lisa stated:

*Both my parents worked...mostly the mother did most of the disciplining, my father was just there in the background as the more like you know authority figure. But my mother did everything in the house, and the father is bringing in the money.*

The lack of communication on behalf of the fathers can be connected to the different parental roles found in the examples above that suggest that fathers are required to enforce the discipline of their children in only more severe instances and remain distant from the everyday interactions. Distinctions were also clear that in theory, the father was seen as the head of the household, who held power of all major decisions. However, in practice, a general consensus portrayed the mothers' role to be the strength of the family and was expected to control the education and discipline of the children. The mother would therefore hide certain things from the father, i.e. allow their children to

do certain things, stay out later, etc. For instance, Jose's account of his relationship with his mom was similar to many others:

*Mom was really the one who wore the pants in the family because she decided what to do financially. She would organize everything, and my dad, just like he would say do whatever you want...She played a really strong role in the family. She kept the kids together; she was very positive as well.*

Results demonstrated that close bonds were shared with mothers as opposed to the generally distant relationships that were shared with their fathers who were mainly seen as the authority figures. However, some of the interviewees expressed that as they got older and had their own children, they maintained a closer relationship with their fathers than when they were younger. Mario expresses what was repeatedly referred to within many interviews with regards to the mother role:

*I had a stronger relationship with my mom...and mom was more the comfort. We were just brought up that way...Mom was just the dependable one...it was mostly my mom when we got in trouble...she was strict but I really still could talk to her and she would understand things or even if she would be mad at us she still was easy to talk to...she was really the one who was in charge of our house. If there was a decision about us, she was the one she was the strong one in the family, to keep control and to know what was happening with us all the time.*

There was a focus within interviews on the importance of women taking on the role of a wife (marriage) and a mother (motherhood). This may seem contradictory when respondents reiterate that their mother's work is not valued as highly as their father's by referring to fathers as the money provider as well as referring to examples that portray the necessity for fathers to step in and maintain authority within the household. Nonetheless, women are also responsible for reinforcing the gender differences. Respondents mostly referred to this ideology as being tied to those from the older generation. For example, respondents described their mothers as working moms, they however at the same time,

placed little value on relating these jobs as careers. Nancy expressed the notion of marriage in the Portuguese culture:

*I find that in Portuguese families, the importance of a woman comes through marriage as a mom like a woman only becomes a woman when she is married...a woman that has a professional career and is going well in life but has no husband and kids it is not valued at all. And it is like these successful people are talked about like it is tragic or something.*

Even though the interviews highlighted that there was an expectation for males to maintain authority, women were however, not portrayed as the submissive type. Results showed that regular arguments occurred between parents in which women voiced their opinions. Secondly, mothers were repeatedly described as the ones who were the strength of the family. The gender roles were evident, in several accounts as that of Mario's:

*Well, basically, my father went to work...my father was all right but he was kind of just there...you don't really talk to him or tell him personal things. He was there to bring in the money and that's it.*

Mario, as others, described fathers as distant and providing no emotional support to their children. Some even touched on the fact that emotional support was lacking within their parent's relationships as well. Noivo's (1997) findings on the Portuguese community speculated that this correlation is linked to one of the main reasons why mothers retain a closer relationship to their children. Vera stated:

*My dad if he was missing a fork he wouldn't even get up. He would call on one of us... mainly his role was authoritarian. My dad was the prime worker and my mom was the prime caregiver even though she my mom worked. I don't think that it was validated by my father as much, even though she came home and everything was clean and she cooked for him...my dad was more the conservative type, quiet type will only speak when he needs to speak, if he does he is going to tell you exactly the way it is...my dad was not a man of many words...he was always very quiet, very reserved. He would watch television 24-7 if he could which he does now, and wouldn't converse that much...all the time my dad has to think that he is the one that is right, he knows everything and we don't know anything, we go to school and we don't learn anything. He doesn't understand what we are doing in school because we come home knowing less than when we left...that is just the type of person my dad is, he always has to have the last word.*

Sabrina also added: *Portuguese culture the man is right, and everything he says goes and you have to listen to him and that kind of stuff... the dad is definitely the authority figure, he didn't really say much...when my dad said it then we used to stop...I can't really relate with my dad, he is a mans man, but he just thinks women have their place and that is where they should stay and stuff like that. It is just the way it is, he is very authoritarian and wants to control everything...the worst thing you can do at my house is take my dads place at the table ...My dad he doesn't like to be questioned about things and differences of opinion in my house usually lead to arguments. Depends but in terms of like how things are done and behaviour, you don't question. It is disrespectful.*

Within Nancy's statement, we can see gender roles were evident around the supper table:

*There is values with respect are like the male spoke therefore he is right, your grandfather said something and obviously he knows more than your grandmother, that sort of thing. These are the aspects of the culture that you put aside...like it is a very patriarchal society...the idea of who is the authority especially comes out at the table, he has to sit at the head of the table, and he has to be served first and it is so disrespectful if the kids would dig for the food first.*

Within their discourse several respondents showed the unequal treatment between the way males and females were socialized. Maria also distinguishes this between the very clear gender roles within the household:

*Well it was a very strict home, very patriarchal, like my father was the boss of the family...I remember I would have to prepare coffee for my dad then my mother would come home and prepare dinner...washing dishes was me and my sister, never my brother, well cause men just don't wash the dishes, it is not a man's job... they both worked so we didn't really see the role to bring the money home. But the father was really to discipline, that is what I got...the father say yes or no, and you don't talk back...I call my father 'Sir' and my mother 'Madame', 'Senhor' and 'Senhora', say if you call me I and I say 'what!' ...they would say 'what did you say, I am not your friend, I am your father, so answer, yes Sir' ...parents are authority...so my dad was mostly essentially the money provider, and he's there like if you cross the line.*

The authority gap between parents and children can be observed in the language used that suggest that Portuguese children must refer to their parents by following a somewhat formal protocol.

## **ii) Communication Patterns:**

Throughout the telling of their experiences, common methods of communication emerged. My analysis explicated a connection between the value of family to maintain bonding based on their demonstration of physical proximity rather than bonding on an emotional level. In addition, in cases when respondents conveyed emotional ties within their families, more often than not, they referred to the emotional bond with their mothers with whom they felt more comfortable to communicate with. Results showed there was little communication with the father, who remained quiet and or distant within the household. Communication between family members was described as concrete or specific in nature. For instance, Portuguese children rarely shared their feelings especially with their fathers and vice versa. Several respondents' depicted discussions that did take place as loud and based on marital arguments, as well as, parents yelling at their children as a form of discipline. Mothers were described as maintaining the role of enforcing structure in the household which often led to yelling at their children, yet, mothers were at the same time referred to as the ones that children felt a deep bond with and could talk to. Fathers were described as basically keeping to themselves unless they had to step in and discipline children who continued to misbehave. Vera's account on communication within the household stated:

*With my mom, it was always very warm. I find she is like my best friend. With my dad he was always more distant, and didn't have enough time for us but also the fact that he was busy working. I guess he always felt uncomfortable with the fact that we were two girls, so we didn't share with him as opposed to my mom. But basically it was a very big commotion, nobody gets in a word, like at supper everybody was screaming over the others and the louder we got, the loader everybody else got...I speak loud and I talk loud has a big influence on the way I was raised, I don't realize that until I am with my boyfriends side of the family and everybody whispers...my daughter had gotten to the point that she is loud, and when she starts talking loud, I realize it and I say talk low, talk soft, but we can't sometimes, it is stronger than us...My dad was not a man of many*

*words unless he was with his friends. At home he was always very quiet, very reserved...and wouldn't converse that much, it was always me and my mom the last one to leave the table because we would sit down and talk forever, but I was always very close to my mom.*

Sabrina's description also portrays the general patterns that surfaced within the interviews, leaning towards the idea that communication within the Portuguese household was concrete, and avoided the discussion of feelings. She pointed out that:

*With Portuguese families you know what you can talk about and you know what you can't talk about...The conversation was very superficial, very superficial, you never talk about how you feel, and even if you do it is so uncomfortable...So I don't know communication it is very superficial, it is not deep, you speak to speak I guess to fill the silence or for direct things you need.*

Mario acknowledged the very different forms of communication between his parents:

*We would eat together but kind of not really together... we eat and that's it, my mom would talk with us, but my father was just there. My father was different, like I said he was just there, you don't really talk to him or tell him personal things...it was more my mom... we weren't scared to talk, everybody talked, my parents would talk louder and louder to get their points in with each other.*

Nancy offered similar accounts with regards to the suppression of feeling among men:

*As far as communication goes, I will give you an example, I have an aunt that passed away recently and obviously my dad was sad about it. I can see it in his face like he wasn't as talkative ...like he was just not talking, he was dressed in black and that was his way of communicating, not saying anything is talking about it kind of thing. I find that it is a very Portuguese thing like even among us like between us it is not like as if I would hug my dad and say how are you feeling, are you sad? It implies in his presence like you won't talk about these things. You just live them...Talking... Well we ate together all the time, and that's it, just eat, but to talk as a family and express things no, you just don't talk.*

These accounts all highlighted a limited communication within interviews to express feelings and emotions, as was described in previous research on this community.

### ***iii) Discipline Methods:***

It is common within the Portuguese families to use physical tactics to discipline their children. During most of the interviews, I noted that respondents described the

physical discipline in a manner that revealed that they seemed to find humour in the fact that they would get punished with the use of a slipper or a wooden spoon. Most of the disciplining was expected to come from the mother who basically controlled the educating of children. Although the mother controlled this aspect, interviews suggested that children were however more afraid of their fathers who were said to maintain the ultimate authority in the household. An overall portrait with regards to similar discipline methods within Portuguese families is evident within accounts by Sabrina, Nancy, and Maria based on their childhood memories:

*Sabrina: we used to be hit as kids, and like I even got the wooden spoon, or the slipper...you know now you laugh about it but you know it is really bad being educated that way...I went to a baby shower and my grandmother got a wooden stick and it was so funny because everybody knew the joke... is so funny because the wooden stick is associated with discipline. When you see that wooden spoon you run...punishment in my house was never like being grounded like, I had no concept of that.*

*Nancy: My parents, it was hitting, they thought it was something very normal like I remember in elementary school, my dad would say to my teachers like if she doesn't behave, you twist her ears, and it is so embarrassing oh my god, my dad would be like more the threat like just the way he would look at you, and like before doing anything you knew what was acceptable and what was not, you knew what you should not do, like the sense of guilt was there right away, like as soon as you do something wrong. and my mom was always like always like pull your ears and stuff...never take her seriously.*

*Maria: At home it was like I said no and it is no and that's it- you would understand it, common for Portuguese to discipline with physical punishment...just that- if you know, if you do something wrong, you get a slap or a beating...It was kind of normal in a Portuguese sense. You know that is how it was in Portugal and they brought that here...you don't really get punished and sent to your room. You just get yelled at or hit...when I was a kid my mother would come after me with the slipper, here comes the 'chinelo' (the slipper).*

A second interesting development was that rewards were not a common practice in the family setting. Respondents stressed the fact that children were not rewarded for good behaviour. Some also pointed out that verbal appreciation was not something that happened regularly. Members of the family did what they had to do without requiring or



expecting anything in return for it. Therefore, incentives did not relate to any rewards in order to ensure good behaviour and some respondents reported that they in fact never remembered any rewards given to them. Maria specified the lack of rewards as well as the lack of emotional support.

*There was no rewards at home. Like if you're a nice kid you're going to get that-it was not materialistic like I find the mainstream culture is a bit...Actually if you did something good, your parents never said...I played in the Portuguese band and I knew I could see it in my mom that she was proud of me and that she loves me, but I never had a reward for it like that. It was just such you did what you had to do.*

We can also see within the above account, the reserved display of emotion, this relates to communication described in the previous section, in which expressions of feelings and emotions are limited.

#### ***iv) Surveillance:***

I observed common elements that suggest that Portuguese families maintain strict rules within the household that clearly outline what was expected of them. The general routine outlined that children were expected to be home after school, and were also expected to interact in family affairs on a regular basis, i.e. have supper together, attend church weekly. It is evident that parents maintain a close watch over children, which was drawn from their accounts that suggested they were required to play near the house so that their parents could supervise them closely. A second indication of strict surveillance was the continued reference within interviews that children were generally not allowed to sleep over at their friends' homes. For instance, parents were described as not feeling comfortable with the fact that at a friends' home, they are unable to ensure that a strict surrounding is enforced or the level of trust in other families is limited. The limited freedom allocated to children is evident within the discourse of Maria and Nancy:

*Maria: There was no freedom...no freedom of speech anything at all, you had no opinion...I am your father and you don't talk to me like that...you don't say your mind, and it's my way or the highway kind of thing...but like on a daily basis there was no set curfew, but you knew you had to be home after school, you wouldn't go somewhere else, go home, eat supper and maybe play outside in front of the house and when it was dark, you just come home. Like I was always in the schoolyard in front of my house, that my mother would have a peek in the window where she could see me. It would be okay as long as she could see me...Sleeping over, no way...maybe because they can't check on us.*

*Nancy: Like the word freedom doesn't exist at home, like you know you live with your parents and it is like until you are in my house you live by my rules. Being 22 or 18 is the same thing. Age doesn't apply to anything. But like when it first started to go out you really had to fight for that freedom. It wasn't something that was like given to you...when you are 15 or 16 and you had a party you had to start working on your parents like a week before and you were sure that you behaved that week...my parents didn't like me sleeping over or going over to friends house. It was always like bring them here you don't have to go to their houses... always have my friends over at my house.*

Reinforcing structure to maintain a strict home, I would argue, was evident in relation to the issue of respect that was required to be shown to elders at all times. For example, when rules were enforced, it implied a high degree of emphasis on obeying and acknowledging the authority of elders, therefore, objection to these rules were considered as maintaining a lack of respect for parents. Vera states:

*There were always strict rules...I always had that respect for my parents, I knew that this was what they wanted, so I followed their rules, I lived under their roof, their household, there was the respect they gave me by like trusting me and I returned that respect by obeying what they had asked you know like their wishes*

Respect of elders, interplays with the limits that are present in terms of children's freedom of speech which maintains a distinct gap between parents and children regarding authority. Discussions that involve debates or questioning authority were not expressed by the Portuguese respondents' especially when it came to fathers. Therefore discussions did not encourage the exchange of ideas, and if children disagreed with something, there was no room to discuss feelings, or ideas on any particular issue. As Jose offers:

*Differences of opinion were handled through arguments... my parents always knew better like, 'shh! what do you know, you don't know anything, like your a kid so shh-no don't even think about it- it is always that my parents had the last word when I would argue- but it would be, what do you know? What do you know your 15 years old; you're still a kid! don't even speak'. I would ask something and it was ultimately they would have the last say.*

The idea that debates were not readily present within this cultural group, ties into the fact that within the culture, respect for authority (parents) is mandatory. Respect was one of the elements that respondents repeatedly referred to within the telling of their everyday experiences. Respect for fathers' authority was evident in their descriptions relating to discipline tactics from parents. They described a lack of taking their mother seriously when it came to being punished as opposed to when their fathers enforced the rules. This could also be related to the fact that mothers disciplined their children on a regular basis. It can also be explained by the fact that fathers verbally demanded respect from their children.

**v) Education:**

Education on the other hand was an area that was somewhat lacking in parental attention and participation. Findings suggest that a large part of Portuguese immigrant parents had limited schooling and some provided details showing that parents averaged a completion of a grade four level of education. Within the Portuguese family, there seemed to be contradictory standards on this topic. For example, it is common for parents to emphasize the importance of school on the one hand, while on the other the need to work in order to financially contribute to the household. Importance was also given to starting a family of their own. Maria's account provides an accurate summary of the general perspectives on the part of the family regarding school:

*Most Portuguese kids that I know in the Portuguese community in Montreal-they all went to Portuguese school and we all talk about it as a joke...Portuguese kids don't continue into school...not expected to continue in their studies, they drop out, get married, do jobs that they don't like maybe...Its funny cause I never showed my parents my report card, they never told me to go do my homework. I was a good student, and remember I had a great average and stuff like that, but I never was rewarded ...I was just doing it for myself...Like we never talked about it at home, only if there was a problem. Like my brother had problems at school, so it was only talked about because the school called.*

Carmen suggested that Portuguese children were not questioned about school success:

*Well like with schoolwork and stuff we knew we had to do it on our own. We were never questioned is your work done or what marks did you get on your report card. They didn't know when we were being tested or anything, its not that they didn't want to be aware, and didn't care or uninterested, it was just like that.*

Within Maria's account, we can see a general pattern that existed based on examples of when school was actually discussed: when there were problems at school. This discussion can perhaps be linked to the importance of image within the Portuguese culture, which was another theme that developed during the interviews. It was important for parents to emphasize that they expected their children to go to school, and listen to their teachers. However, in practice, children stated that parents did not make sure that homework was done, or follow-up on school exams, etc. Therefore, failing to send the message that there is a real need to spend time and energy on school in order to reinforce the necessity to do well and excel at school. For instance, Sabrina suggested:

*Like my parents didn't help me in school, my dad would only say stuff if we got a bad grades,... when we had to sign tests and stuff, we used to know who to go to...but also they didn't know how to help you, they expected you to be able to do it on your own. Parents are there to tell you the importance of school like you just hear it... but you never actually see it in practice They are telling you to study but on the other hand they haven't been to school as many years as you have.*

I would suggest that various reasons account for the lack of reinforcement towards school. For one, the parents themselves have a limited level of education therefore they do not have the tools to help children with school related tasks. Secondly,

the literature review as well as elements within the above themes demonstrate the importance of financial contribution of their children, so priorities may have centered on employment rather than education. Portuguese parents do, however, insist that children attend Portuguese school on the weekends both in theory and in practice. Nancy states:

*It is very important to go to Portuguese school on Saturday...is what would define a Portuguese kid like getting up seven days a week to do something to be part of this community.*

The above account would seem to contradict their lack of direct focus on the importance of school. I put forward that Portuguese school like religion is another important avenue that is used to reinforce language, cultural identity and preserve it within a foreign country. This example demonstrates the focus on Portuguese school and how it related to enforcing community ties.

#### ***vi) Social Bonds***

Several patterns existed in themes relating to respondents' deterrence of deviant behaviour and are related to Hirschi's theory on Social Control. The family was described as one of the main elements that centered on bonding, supporting attachment as a component to influence social control and remain on a fairly straight path. Several references were made during the course of interviews where respondents mentioned the emotional bonds that existed with mothers. In addition, clear guidelines were indicated as to what was expected of children, so they anticipated outcomes of their behavior and did not want to especially disappoint their moms. Although, it was evident that communication of feelings did not commonly take place within the family, the family itself was seen as an institution that maintained bonding as there was a sense of family

values readily present, providing a base to fall back on when needed. For instance, Vera refers to her family's influence:

*Seeing how my parents like even though they fought and they have gone through these different obstacles, the main thing is that they have the good core together, even though communication is like screaming at one another, they still understand each other and that holds them together. And the values and the morals that they instilled in me, that is what I go by, I think to me, it was never of interest to me, me personally it was not my character. I was never influenced regardless if I saw people drink and take drugs. It was never of my doing. Its not that I wouldn't get involved in it just that it wasn't of an interest for me...I think that it was just the fact that I knew what my mom expected of me and I tried keeping it and also of myself more than anything.*

As second aspect that evolved from their discussions that ties into Hirschi's theory is the degree of involvement of community found within the Portuguese culture. For instance, respondents often referred to the fact that they had to attend Portuguese church and school and take part in the religious festivals. This idea of reinforcing a sense of community and occupied in social events, I suggest to be two major influences tied into deterrence from deviant temptations. The notion that the family was involved and present was another key element respondents referred to as preventing deviant activity. For example, negative behaviour reflected on the family, therefore once again tied to the above discussion on image. In what follows is Nancy's account of respect for her parents.

*From a very young age, even without much definition or communication from your parents, you know what you can or can't do...might lead to punishment...so in order to avoid getting your parents upset you try to follow what they believe is the right thing to do. There's always that sense of guilt that follows you as well, often set according to religious beliefs if you do that you'll go to heaven, if you do that you go to hell...so as a kid, you don't know better and you actually follow a certain track thinking a superior force can control your life. Also, there's the family, the sense of not wanting to be an embarrassment for your parents and deceive them. You know that if your cousins are doing things a certain way you are expected to do the same. Difference is not well accepted. Your family's example definitely prevents you from a deviant behaviour as you try to stick within a certain pattern to avoid rejection.*

Lisa discussed religion as one of the aspects that deterred her from deviant behaviour:

*I think that my parents are religious and I think that going to church every Sunday, that helped with having a moral. Her teaching us morals, she taught us and the fact of going to church really helped a lot, not just to teach but also bringing us. I think that helped a lot. The friends you make and the area you grow up is part of it. The ones I made at school because it was where I spent most of my time, but the base, yes, is at home. And I think Religion had a big part of it.*

In summary, the accounts above relate to Hirschi's theory that address social control through bonds to a conventional institution which include components such as attachment, commitment, involvement and belief. The above themes can be linked to the attachment component given that the family and the community were expressed as maintaining a role that bonded children to the family and the Portuguese community. Because of this they did not want to disrespect or disappoint these people by committing delinquent acts. Involvement was also addressed as an important element of social control based on the level of continuous interaction to the community, i.e. festivals, Portuguese church, religious events. Finally, I suggest the component belief because of the respect for authority and rules that acted as a deterrent to criminal activity that is present in respondents voices. Respondents have a clear understanding of what was expected of them in terms of knowing what behaviour to avoid as well as a demonstration of belief in rules outlined within the household. A second indication of belief in rules I suggest is evident in respondents reference to physical punishment. For example, accounts were stated in a humorous way, suggesting that respondents did not think negatively about their punishments so this must, at some level, be seen as affective means of social control according to respondents.

## RELIGION/COMMUNITY

Religion also surfaced as a common relationship among respondents. According to respondents, the Catholic religion is an integral part of the Portuguese culture. I would explain religion to be in fact a large part of what links Portuguese people to community life. Portuguese families attend Sunday mass regularly. It was also illustrated as a place where people could meet acquaintances and feel that they were still connected to their community and culture. Religion was referred to as part of the values within the Portuguese culture as well as to be a very important part of being Portuguese. Most of the major Portuguese gatherings that take place in Montreal, center on religious themes. Portuguese people were described as practising Catholics in a sense that they would attend church on a regular basis. The degree to which they were faithful to their religion is unclear. For example, the church was referred to as a way of enforcing control over others, control over children, and also as mainly a place to engage with people who share the same cultural background. Therefore, reasons for attending church on a regular basis would require a more detailed examination to further investigate its implication on experiences. Sabrina and Nancy offer examples of the church within their life histories:

*It does bring people together, church gives them a place to get together, in terms of tradition...my mom is very religious...when I was growing up everything was about religion...Religion is the answer... it was always like, that it is written in the book. Religion was the answer to everything, whenever they weren't able to answer something. ...my parents wouldn't accept that we have a different opinion on things about Religion...the church you couldn't have a different opinion with church or else you were going to go to hell.*

*Nancy:*

*As far as Religious tradition, that is big...the religion is the whole religious aspect to Portugal, no matter where you are in Portugal there is always a religious connotation to everything, ...and I was educated in the way that there was a Religious perspective on things like if you do something bad you are going to go to hell. If you do this you are going to go to heaven, and like traumatizing you... always a religious connotation to*



*something...and if there was ever church on TV or the radio, it would be the most disrespectful thing if I changed to channel or asked to turn off the radio... like I would get a shot across the forehead, so like you don't mess with Religion.*

In total, reflections centered on the Portuguese culture in maintaining a focus around a sense of community, which was presented within the discourse of respondents when they refer to the cultural and religious events that are important to attend as a family. Maintaining the Portuguese community is also evident within the idea that children are required to take part in cultural events, as well as Portuguese school. Both adults and children are described by respondents as being heavily involved in the preparation of Portuguese religious events. They described the sense of morals they get from religion/community as a sense of bonding. Vera followed by Maria described elements of this.

*Well if I think about it though my parents always instilled a lot on me even without through words. Like they always instilled the Portuguese community in me and I was always involved with that, to the point that I am teaching Portuguese dancing. As far as keeping in tune with the Portuguese community I think that I will always stay in touch with that, it is a big part of who I am,. I danced in the community...I guess there is a lot of morals and everything that comes with it...The community is important because it is part of who we are and a lot of second generation forget the roots what they are made from and where their parents came from. A lot of them have never gone to Portugal to see their country where their parents came from.*

*Maria: It is hard to define what values I have with the Portuguese culture, cause it's in me without me even realizing it myself. Umm, the values of the family, & giving, that Portuguese saudade- that Portuguese feeling...all the Portuguese feasts, it is all religious- but that too is important for the Portuguese community...I have a bond with the community. The Portuguese bond, it's like getting together- singing folk music, start dancing folkloric songs- say expressions- talk like our parents do, it is a Portuguese feeling- we just- everybody understands... when I was younger we had to do stuff together like go to church, involved in community feasts and stuff, part of the Portuguese bands lots of parties, lots of family, get dragged all over the place.*

These two examples demonstrate how ideology filters down through institutions by the way they adopt the values, morals and traditions from either the community or religion.

## **CHAPTER 6: IMPLICATIONS**

The results from the present study highlighted similar findings in the literature review by both Noivo (1997) and Higgs (1976) who conducted extensive research on the Portuguese community. Several common themes developed within my results that I have briefly listed as follows. The family was considered a big part of the Portuguese culture which was evident in previous research as well as my own study that demonstrated how families placed expectations on maintaining regular contact with each other. They did this by having meals together, going to church, and/or taking part in community events. These examples suggested bonding that existed with family members even though this entailed mostly being together based on a proximity level rather than an emotional level. I found similar references to Noivo (1997) that presented Portuguese men to maintain limited communication with family members, and that communication was based on concrete issues rather than an expression of feelings and emotions. In accordance with other studies, respondents expressed the point that all members of the family were expected to contribute financially, and all addressed the point that their mothers worked as well. Image was represented in Noivo's study relating to the need to keep marital troubles quiet, which was also present in my study. This, however, was expressed as the need to demonstrate family life as one that was always respectful and eliminates a display of weakness. School was also in both cases not a central focus of parents expectations for children, and this was said to be because of the focus on the financial contribution of family members. Gender differences were also brought up by Noivo and I touched upon these as well in my study. Girls maintained more strict surveillance, and the fathers authority over the household was evident both in disciplinary power as well as being

portrayed as the breadwinner although both parents earned wages. In my study, I also found that moms were described as the strength of the family and fathers as the authority figure, yet, respondents expressed that they turned to their moms for everything. Therefore, one could argue that in fact women hold the ultimate authority given that they are the ones aware and in control of their children's whereabouts and needs. The studies also highlighted similar accounts of mother's close bonds to children which Noivo suggested was in part due to the lack of emotional attachment to husbands.

Findings illuminated significant patterns showing several distinct similarities within the interviews with Portuguese people that can be used to further explore more concrete research on implementing cultural awareness into program objectives for young offenders. Current findings also revealed similar themes that were consistent with studies in the literature review that provided an in-depth portrait of the Portuguese community. One of the major elements that stood out was on the emphasis of the family as the main institution that organises and shapes the everyday life experiences of Portuguese people. I was able to map out existing patterns within the discourse of respondents that explicate culture as the main institution that influences several aspects of their lives. This conclusion is based on the fact that respondents referred to common examples of the way things come about that were also directly evident in other respondent's accounts. Patterns of behaviour emerged around the following themes: gender roles, communication, discipline methods, surveillance, education, and social bonds. The identification of these patterns supports the argument that rehabilitation programs need to be adapted to the culture(s) of young offenders.

In order to concretely focus on research that explores the role of culture on more effective programming, it would require empirical studies to be carried out on young offenders themselves. This study does advance research on programming and points towards culture as an influence in the lives of people. In addition, this study can propose ways in which culture offers understanding into how people relate in various relations or situations. In order to further investigate the implication of culture on the programming for young offenders, it would be beneficial to do a comparative study on various cultural groups to explore if unique characteristics exist within each culture and also whether they differ from one group to the next.

The results also provide a second important implication that sheds light on potential areas to focus on with relation to program components that can be adapted for young offenders of different cultural backgrounds. The implications listed below are based on characteristics illuminated within the Portuguese culture to demonstrate cultural awareness of in relation to programming. However, in practice, this assessment would require a detailed and focused research analysis on actual young offenders in order to produce validity and reliability of outlined implications that follow. Examples of the themes that follow are suggested for future research as important elements that should be examined in programs to test whether cultural components assist towards reducing recidivism rates. Hence, the objective of the thesis was focused on exploring whether culture as an institutional process acts to influence the life experiences of individuals. In the course of this research, culture was explicated as an institution that shapes the organization of people's lives, therefore I put forward that it does in fact play a role in finding more effective rehabilitation approaches. In addition, the implications of the

present study offer a starting point to support the need to examine culture further within the context of delinquency research.

The family was highlighted as one the main indicators of cultural transmission that guided the everyday practice of individuals from the Portuguese culture. The family offers insight for program administrators to develop an awareness around the cultural implications of adapting programs according to whether young offenders would benefit more within a group setting as opposed to individual counselling. Responses within interviews described a transparent existence towards a sense of community and emphasis on family and community interactions. Therefore, one avenue to explore further is to assess whether youth would be more comfortable in a group program in which more support would be available. These implications based on patterns do not suggest set guidelines that distinguish requirements of individuals from specific cultural groups, but offer an awareness that can allow the administrator to maintain advanced assessment tools in order to assist youth to better adapt to existing programs.

Communication also surfaced as another important element to consider within administered programs. The data demonstrated that patterns existed with males within the Portuguese culture to be more withdrawn and silent around family members. This example made me think of the way in which communication methods can assist within the development of outlined objectives for programs. For instance, assessment of communication patterns in this case can lead to designing program objectives that initially center on more productive hands-on therapy methods rather than require the discussion of feelings right away. The avoidance of feelings as well as concrete communication surfaced as a common pattern among Portuguese men. Therefore,

recognizing this aspect of the culture can assist in better understanding rather than risk misinterpretation.

Surveillance within the Portuguese home was described as strict, offering limited freedom to children. This knowledge can highlight the fact that offenders may reveal unproductive results within programs that offer too much freedom and little structure. Offenders may then respond more favourably in programs where direct rules and guidelines are outlined. Within the interviews, rewards were non-existent as a method to reinforce positive behaviour. In this case rewards would do nothing to persuade young offenders to maintain a required behaviour. This would then allow the program administer to explore other avenues before considering reward based components. This research also explored deterrence to delinquent behaviour and found that bonding in the family and community exemplified a strong influence on positive behaviour. Therefore, linking young offenders to institutions where bonding exists, or can develop, would be beneficial. Examples can include: family, sports teams, community centers, or cultural events.

Overall research will be required to examine the role of culture within programming to observe whether reduced rates of recidivism will occur. The methodology used an ethnographic method that allowed me to reveal the structural patterns that exist within the lives of the individuals interviewed. Clear themes emerged within the telling of Portuguese respondents' everyday experiences which propose culture is what acts to influence experiences of people and suggests that research is essential to explore the direct implications of culture as an institutional process in the field of rehabilitation of young offenders. But more importantly, awareness is the key to change.

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