



Article

Mapping Women's and Men's Pathways into Thailand's Prisons for Homicide and Sex Offences: Utilising a Feminist Pathways Approach

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Abstract: In feminist criminology, there is a growing body of research exploring pathways to prison, but few studies have specifically sought to map women's journeys into the criminal justice system for crimes of physical violence and sex offending. Gender comparative research is sparse, and, to date, we know little about women and men imprisoned in Thailand for these types of crimes. Subsequently, in this paper, we report findings from a gender comparative feminist pathways study conducted in Thailand, with a specific focus on violence and sex offending; namely, homicide, sexual assault, human trafficking, and sex work-related offences. We utilise a qualitative analysis of life-history interviews to centre and value these women's and men's voices, establish their backstories, and thematically map their imprisonment trajectories. Three pathways to prison emerged: (1) lifestyles of contravention, (2) harmed and harming, and (3) destructive masculinity. Utilising the participants' descriptions, we highlight similarities and variance by gender within and between these pathways.

Keywords: gender; prison; feminist pathways; violence; sex offences; Thailand; Southeast Asia



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1. Introduction

Since the 1970s, feminist criminologists have determined that gender is one of the most powerful determinants of criminalisation. First, they pointed out the inconspicuousness of women in criminological research and theory. Then, it was established that women who come into conflict with the law as offenders do so less often than men, and for less serious types of crime. For example, men are significantly more likely than women to be criminalised for acts of physical and sexual violence. Globally, 95% of convicted homicide offenders are male, and a recent meta-analysis of research undertaken in 12 countries found that only a "small proportion [2.2%] of sexual offences reported to police are committed by females" (Cortoni et al. 2017, p. 145; United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime 2013, p. 13). In Thailand, where the following research was undertaken, women constitute a mere 2.8% of the total population of persons imprisoned for crimes against life, body, and sexuality (Department of Corrections 2021).

Next, feminist criminologists mapped the life histories of women, and to a lesser extent, men, who came into conflict with the law. Through this, they learned that the lives of criminalised women, and, in turn, their pathways into the criminal justice system, tended to be characterised by a particular and shared backstory that was qualitatively different from that of men (e.g., see Daly 1994). Women's criminalisation was found to be buttressed by a grouping of interrelated life-history factors, comprising victimisation and trauma,

substance abuse and other mental health problems, male influence and control, limited education, poverty, familial caretaking, limited access to justice, and other adverse life experiences in childhood and/or adulthood. Although men's life stories were in some ways similar (e.g., substance abuse), there were also distinct gender differences (e.g., domestic violence victimisation) (Jeffries et al. 2019; Owen et al. 2017).

However, few feminist pathways studies have specifically sought to map women's journeys into the criminal justice system for crimes of physical violence and sex offences. Gender comparative research is sparse (see literature review section, below), and, to date, we know little about women and men imprisoned in Thailand for these types of crimes. Subsequently, in this paper, we report findings from a gender comparative feminist pathways study conducted in Thailand, with a specific focus on crimes of violence and sex offending; namely, homicide, sexual assault, human trafficking, and sex work-related offences.¹ We utilise a qualitative analysis of life-history interviews to centre and value these women's and men's voices, establish their backstories, and thematically map their imprisonment trajectories.

Below, we briefly review what is known about the gendered nature of women's and men's homicide and sex offending. We then consider feminist pathways scholarship, paying specific attention to prior Southeast Asian research that has focused on, or provides insight into, routes to criminalisation for these types of crimes. Our methodological approach is then explained, and our findings are presented. We conclude by summarising our findings and positioning our study within the broader knowledge base.

2. Gender, Homicide, and Sexual Offending

As noted above, we know that women are less likely than men to come into conflict with the law for homicide and sex offending. Furthermore, in contrast to women, men frequently persist with these behaviours (Cauffman et al. 2017). The motivations, antecedents, and underlying features of these crimes are also gendered, for both women and men.

In the case of women who kill (or attempt to), most research has focused on domestic violence homicide. Here, women's actions are understood as being a response to victimisation, with women criminalised for actions they have taken to protect themselves, children, or other loved ones from domestically violent spouses (Belknap et al. 2012; Caman et al. 2016; Kirkwood 2003, p. 152; Morrissey 2003; Vatnar et al. 2018; Weizmann-Henelius et al. 2012). Additionally, intimate partner infidelity and abandonment, with associated feelings of anger, jealousy, and resentment, can underpin women's offending (Desta and Venema 2021; Hesselink and Dastile 2015; Jeffries and Chuenurah 2018). We also know that women's homicide, when it is perpetrated against others (i.e., not intimate partners), is usually inextricably intertwined with prior experiences of gendered victimisation, trauma, and other adversity (Desta and Venema 2021; Flynn et al. 2013; Friedman and Resnick 2007; Jeffries and Chuenurah 2018; Jeffries et al. 2019; Kachaeva et al. 2010; Oberman 2003, 2008; Rougé-Maillart et al. 2005; Silverman and Kennedy 1988; Veloso 2016, 2022).

In contrast, men's perpetration of intimate partner homicide normally occurs within the context of their ongoing perpetration of violence against their victim. It is motivated by power, control, domination, possessiveness, a sense of masculine entitlement over what they construe as their property, and a way to correct and punish victims' defiance of their masculine authority (Anwary 2015; Elisha et al. 2010; James-Hawkins et al. 2019; Mathews et al. 2015; McCarthy et al. 2018; Sharma and Bazilli 2014). Men's perpetration of domestic violence homicide is thus a destructive expression of masculinity, i.e., a toxic demonstration of socially constructed ideological notions of manhood, typified by physical strength, aggression, power, control, and sexual potency (Beesley and McGuire 2009; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; De Vogel and Spa 2019; Whitehead 2021). When performed in toxic ways, externalised displays of hegemonic masculinity can manifest in

¹ Offence type was driven by the research participants. Namely, those who volunteered to be interviewed. Please see methodology section for more detail.

domestic violence, aggression towards other men, sexual harassment, and assault (Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; Whitehead 2021).

Men may use physical violence, including homicide, in response to threats or challenges posed to their masculine pride, dignity, and identity. Homicide can also provide an avenue through which men can garner respect and recognition (Ellis 2015; Seidler 2010). For example, men's engagement in violence against other men provides space to display courage and defend honour, while rape bestows the opportunity to demonstrate sexual prowess, evolving from, as well as reinforcing, men's sense of entitlement to the bodies of women and girls (DeKeseredy and Schwartz 2005; Pike et al. 2020; Whitehead 2005). Furthermore, the destructive performance of masculinity through men's engagement in group violence bestows opportunities for male peer-group bonding, i.e., a way to strengthen alliances between men, and again, reinforce destructive notions of manhood (Carlson 2008; Da Silva et al. 2015). For example, gang rape gives men the space to establish masculine prowess and sexual vigour within their peer group, and can bind men together, through a shared sense of hostility toward women (Da Silva et al. 2018; Franklin 2004; Harkins and Dixon 2010).

Beyond sex work, which is still criminalised in Thailand, what is known about women who come into conflict with the law for crimes related to sex is limited. We do know that women are over-represented in the criminal justice system for selling sex. Research in South-east Asia suggests sex work and human trafficking are often conflated, and that sex workers are being disproportionately 'caught-up' in the ongoing 'war' (local and global) against human (sex) trafficking (Broadhurst et al. 2012; Jeffries 2014; Mendoza-Manalo 2021).

Responding to international pressure, in 2004, a war on human trafficking was declared by Thailand's government. In practice, this war was waged via punitive criminal justice system responses and repressive anti-immigration policies (Kinney 2013). Currently, under Thai law, the legislative definition of human (sex) trafficking is broad and can 'spill over' into sex work. It includes transporting, housing, purchasing, or organising the exchange of money for the exploitation of a person using deception, force, or bribes. Furthermore, anyone involved in the organisation or act of 'prostitution', where the sex worker is under 18 years old, is guilty of human trafficking (Montgomery 2011). Research has shown that sex workers aged over 18 years who help work colleagues (aged under 18 years) connect with clients have been found guilty of human trafficking, regardless of consent, and in the absence of force, deception, or bribery (Wade 2017).

Studies exploring the characteristics and motivations of women involved in sex trafficking characterised by coercion or deceitfulness show that under-education, associated poverty, and limited legal literacy, in addition to victimisation, underpin their criminalisation (Shen 2015). Here, women are often the victims of trafficking themselves, or they offend (out of love and/or fear) in supportive roles to intimate partners who are often domestically violent (Broad 2015).

Finally, research on women's participation in sexual assault is limited, in part because they rarely engage in direct acts of sexual violence. What we do know is that when women are criminalised for these types of violations, they have typically played a subsidiary role to a man, most frequently their intimate partner. Here, women engage in, support, or facilitate men's access to the bodies of women and children, either out of fear (e.g., as victims of domestic violence), a desire to attain or maintain intimacy with, and get validation from, their partner and/or because their self-worth is dependent on this relationship (Cortoni and Stefanov 2020; Gannon et al. 2010; Gannon et al. 2012; Gannon et al. 2014; Zhao 2021).

3. Feminist Pathways

Daly's (1994) research is considered formative in the development of western feminist pathways scholarship.² Daly (1994) examined women's and men's pathways into one

² Daly (1994) is credited with developing the pathways approach (DeHart 2008, p. 1462; Simpson et al. 2008, p. 85; Wattanaporn and Holtfreter 2014, p. 193). However, explorations of the gendered nature of crime began earlier when feminist criminological scholarship first emerged in the 1970s and 1980s (see Heidensohn 1985;

criminal court in the United States, from which she constructed a typology of criminalisation trajectories. Below, we summarise the five pathways identified for the women in [Daly's \(1994\)](#) study and highlight, within each pathway, the types of physical violence some of the women were criminalised for. However, while there is mention of sex work in one of [Daly's \(1994\)](#) pathways, none of the women in this research came into conflict with the law for other types of sex offences.

- (1) *Harmed and harming women.* Had suffered neglect and/or abuse as children. By adolescence, they had substance misuse problems. The harm experienced growing up manifested in harming others and resulted in convictions for crimes of interpersonal violence (i.e., robbery, assault, homicide).
- (2) *Street women.* Were either pushed out or ran away from abusive homes or were drawn to the excitement of street life. Here, they made a living through sex work and petty hustles, became drug-addicted, and engaged in a diversity of criminal activities (including robbery and assault) that supported their drug habit and general survival. Criminal histories were lengthy, with offending behaviours related to life on the streets.
- (3) *Battered women.* Experienced abuse later in life within intimate relationships. All these women were in relationships with domestically violent men and were criminalised for acts of physical violence (i.e., assault, homicide, reckless endangerment), resulting from “fighting or fending off violent men, with whom they were (or had been) in relationships” ([Daly 1994](#), p. 48).
- (4) *Drug connected women.* Were engaged in drug and drug-related offences (including assault and robbery) attributable to the men (e.g., boyfriends, husbands, family members) in their lives.
- (5) *Other (or economically motivated).* Criminality was related to immediate economic need or greed, and encompassed criminalisation for robbery and kidnapping.

The women's pathways identified by [Daly \(1994\)](#) were not a good fit for the men in her sample. Although [Daly \(1994\)](#) found pathways of harmed and harming men, street men, and drug-connected men, an additional men-only pathway accounted for 35% of the sample. This trajectory was termed ‘the costs and excesses of masculinity’, and men on this pathway were subclassified as (1) explosively violent men, who used violence to control and dominate others, (2) bad luck men, who were either in the wrong place at the wrong time, were used by other men, or were reacting to harassing men (some were criminalised for crimes of violence), and (3) masculine gaming men, who engaged in crime (including violent offending) as a form of recreation and a means to demonstrate masculinity ([Daly 1994](#), pp. 74–78).

[Daly's \(1994\)](#) framework has been reassessed and further developed by several western feminist researchers, utilising both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to map women's imprisonment trajectories (e.g., [DeHart 2008](#); [Simpson et al. 2008](#)), but gender comparative work is limited (see [Daggett 2014](#); [Jones et al. 2014](#)). Together, this work supports core facets of [Daly's \(1994\)](#) research, as do findings from research conducted beyond the Anglosphere, with areas of place-specific variance (e.g., for non-western studies that have considered interpersonal violence, see [Artz et al. 2012](#); [Cherukuri et al. 2009](#); [Jeffries et al. 2019](#); [Russell et al. 2020](#); [Veloso 2016, 2022](#)) Additionally, limited access to justice, and an inability to negotiate corrupted criminal legal systems, have been identified as contributing to women's criminalisation in Southeast and East Asia (e.g., [Cherukuri et al. 2009](#); [Jeffries and Chuenurah 2018](#); [Veloso 2016, 2022](#)). Finally, and of more specific background relevance here, there are three previous studies conducted in Southeast Asia that have either included

[Smart 1977](#)). Furthermore, [Daly's \(1994\)](#) pathways perspective extended feminist criminological studies undertaken in the 1980s and early 1990s, when, for example, [Chesney-Lind \(1989\)](#) pointed to the criminalisation of girl's survival strategies (e.g., running away from home to escape familial abuse, self-medicating with substances) ([DeHart 2008](#), p. 1462). Additionally, see [Gilfus \(1992\)](#), who elucidated themes of violence and neglect in the life histories of criminalised women and pointed toward differential gendered pathways to crime ([DeHart 2008](#), p. 1462).

women and men criminalised for violence and sex offending (Russell et al. 2020; Veloso 2016, 2022), or specifically considered women's trajectories into prison for homicide (Jeffries and Chuenurah 2018).

First, Russell et al.'s (2020) quantitative exploration of $n = 183$ Thai women and men imprisoned for a variety of crimes, including offences against the person (i.e., physical violence and sex offending), identified three common pathways to prison for women and men: (1) peer-group association/deviant lifestyle (aligned with Daly's (1994) street pathway), (2) harmed and harming (as per Daly's (1994) pathway of the same name), and (3) economically motivated (equivalent to Daly's (1994) other/economically motivated pathway). Gender variance was found within these common pathways. Namely, and in contrast to men, intimate relationships, domestic violence victimisation, substance abuse in response to gendered trauma, and familial care-taking responsibilities were key features in the women's lives. Furthermore, two pathways emerged exclusively for women. The first, adulthood victimisation and dysfunctional intimate relationships, aligned with Daly's (1994) battered women pathway. The second, naivety and deception, denoted women who found themselves behind prison walls because of corrupted police practice and an inability to access justice.

Second, Jeffries and Chuenurah (2018) qualitatively explored $n = 18$ women's pathways to prison in Cambodia for homicide offending. Six imprisonment pathways were found: (1) domestic violence, (2) marital abandonment, (3) traumatic life history, (4) deviant women, (5) male association, and (6) feminine familial sacrifice. The first aligned with Daly's (1994) battered women's pathway. The pathway of marital abandonment had no equivalent in Daly's (1994) typology. It included women who described intimate relationships characterised by infidelity and intimate partner desertion, which created feelings of anger, jealousy, and resentment. Here, the experience of marital loss culminated in women killing either their husbands or their husband's new lovers. Like Daly's (1994) harmed and harming pathway, those on the traumatic life history trajectory narrated significant abuse, alongside other adversities, with concomitant negative consequences to their well-being. All these women were incarcerated for killing someone known to them, and the offending occurred against a backdrop of trauma. The deviant lifestyle route paralleled Daly's (1994) street pathway. Those on the pathway of male association were, like Daly's (1994) drug-connected women, caught up in the offending of known men. The final pathway included a woman who had willingly surrendered her freedom, admitting to a murder she had not done, to protect a beloved male family member.

Veloso's (2016, 2022) qualitative research explored the imprisonment pathways of $n = 27$ women serving commuted death sentences in the Philippines. Eighteen women were convicted of crimes against the person including homicide and kidnapping. Overall, the women in this study narrated experiencing multiple constraints in their lives, stemming from gendered familial, relational, and economic responsibilities, vulnerability to gendered control and violence, and poverty. Most of the women relayed having endured "an astounding level of victimisation", including intimate partner abuse, sexual violence, forced marriage and sex work, labour exploitation, and abuse by in-laws (Veloso 2022, p. 128). Some were incarcerated for homicides committed in response to direct victimisation, either of themselves or their children, and others for kidnapping offences that were committed in response to financial difficulties. However, most of the women were "dragged into the crimes" of intimate partners, family members, friends, acquaintances, and/or fell afoul of corrupted criminal justice systems (Veloso 2022, p. 133).

4. Methodology

We utilised narrative analysis of life-history interviews to identify the backstories and temporally map and compare the criminalisation trajectories of $n = 25$ women and $n = 31$ men incarcerated in Thailand for violent and sexual offending. Our positionality as feminist criminologists guided our decision to use a qualitative approach. We wanted to

provide our research participants, who are experts in their own lives, with a forum to tell their stories in their words.

Our interview schedule was semi-structured, open-ended, and loosely derived from the previously discussed feminist pathways scholarship. This approach provided participants with the opportunity to define and describe significant events in their lives and explore links between their varied life experiences and criminalisation. The topics canvassed in the interviews included relationships (familial, friendships, and romantic), victimisation experiences, education, employment, economic circumstances, health, substance (mis)use, offending, and interaction with, and experiences of, criminal (in)justice.

The fieldwork was undertaken in eight prisons in four regions of Thailand: Central, North-eastern, Northern, and Southern. Prison staff informed prisoners sentenced for crimes of physical violence and sex offending about the research and invited them to participate in the study. Around half of the research participants (women and men) who volunteered for, and subsequently participated in the research, were in prison for a homicide offence. Nearly half the men, and only a small number of women, were convicted of sexual assault and child abduction offences. The latter appeared to be a proxy for the former when there was not enough evidence to secure a conviction of sexual assault (see Table 1, below). Proportionally, women were more likely to be criminalised for human (sex) trafficking, and men for sexual assault and child abduction.

Table 1. Imprisoned Offence.

| | Women | | Men | |
|--------------------------------|---------------|----|---------------|----|
| | <i>n</i> = 25 | % | <i>n</i> = 31 | % |
| Human trafficking/sex work | 9 | 36 | 2 | 6 |
| Sexual assault/child abduction | 3 | 12 | 15 | 48 |
| Homicide (including attempted) | 13 | 52 | 14 | 45 |

To ensure participants had received the relevant information and were providing informed consent, before commencing the interviews, we explained the aim of the study and stressed the confidential, anonymous, and voluntary nature of participation. We then obtained the participant's verbal consent to participate. Each participant was assigned a pseudonym, and minor life details were changed or masked to further protect anonymity. Any such changes were unrelated to the research study's purpose or findings.

The interviews lasted between one and two hours, were conducted in Thai, verbally translated into English (by the third or fifth author), audio-recorded, and transcribed verbatim in the translated English. The narratives were then synthesised into life-history maps, which were then thematically organised according to common factors and experiences, into imprisonment pathways. Particular attention was given to comparing by gender, to uncover any similarities and differences between women and men. Through communication with one another, and to establish intercoder reliability, we actively sought to mitigate underlying biases by working separately, and then together, to thematically organise the life-history maps. If interpretations varied, these were discussed until a consensus was reached.

5. Findings

In this section, findings from our pathways analysis are reported, following a descriptive overview of our research participants' backstories. The latter provides a cross-sectional view, while the former paints a more nuanced picture of the temporal life circumstances, experiences, and events that culminated in their imprisonment.

5.1. Demographic Profiles

Research participants' ages ranged from 22 to 80 years, with a mean age of 39 years for women and 38 years for men. Most identified as Buddhist. As shown in Table 2 (below),

education levels were low, with 80% of women and 77% of men never completing secondary school. Before imprisonment, nearly half the women earned a living in the underground economy, mainly through sex work. In contrast, while over 30% of men stated that the underground economy had been their primary source of income pre-imprisonment, none had worked in the sex industry. Rather, the men earned a living in the illicit drug and/or gambling industry (which is illegal in Thailand, see the Gambling Act B.E.2478 [1935]).

Table 2. Age, Education, Religion, and Income Pre-Incarceration.

| | Women | | Men | |
|---|---------------|----|---------------|----|
| | <i>n</i> = 25 | % | <i>n</i> = 31 | % |
| Age | | | | |
| 20–29 | 5 | 20 | 9 | 29 |
| 30–39 | 6 | 24 | 10 | 32 |
| 40–49 | 10 | 40 | 7 | 23 |
| 50 and over | 4 | 16 | 5 | 16 |
| Highest Level of Education | | | | |
| Never complete primary school | 6 | 24 | 6 | 19 |
| Primary school | 10 | 40 | 15 | 48 |
| Lower secondary school | 4 | 16 | 3 | 10 |
| Upper secondary school | 4 | 16 | 6 | 19 |
| University | 1 | 4 | 1 | 3 |
| Religion | | | | |
| Buddhist | 21 | 84 | 29 | 94 |
| Christian | 3 | 12 | 0 | 0 |
| Muslim | 1 | 4 | 2 | 6 |
| Primary source of income pre-incarceration * | | | | |
| Sex industry | 10 | 40 | 0 | 0 |
| Drug dealing other underground economy | 2 | 8 | 11 | 35 |
| Farming | 5 | 20 | 5 | 16 |
| Constriction | 2 | 8 | 4 | 13 |
| Factory | 3 | 12 | 1 | 3 |
| Driver | 1 | 4 | 5 | 16 |
| Sells goods at markets and/or on the street | 4 | 16 | 1 | 3 |
| Retail | 0 | 0 | 3 | 10 |
| Business owner | 0 | 0 | 2 | 6 |
| Other | 1 | 4 | 2 | 6 |

* Could be multiple primary sources of income.

For those in legitimate employment, and perhaps unsurprisingly given low levels of education, most worked in low paying menial jobs selling goods at markets and on the streets, earning a living in the farming and construction sectors, in factories, or as drivers (truck, taxi, and messengers) (see Table 2, above) (Noknoi et al. 2017, p. 1411; Sopranzetti 2021; Thadphoothon 2017, p. 319; Trading Economics 2021).

5.2. Childhood Experiences

The childhood experiences of both the women and men were frequently troubled, being marred by adversity (see Table 3, below). Many grew up in poverty, although, proportionally, this featured more often in the women's stories, as did taking on the adult responsibility of employment and having to work from a young age to bolster the family income. For many, this childhood poverty explained their under-education (see Table 2, above). For example, Fa Yang said that while she liked "studying [at school] a lot" she could only "finish primary school. I wanted to continue to study but my parents did not have money [so] I stayed at home and helped my parents in the rice field and took care of the buffalo [and then] at the age of 15, I moved to Bangkok to work in a factory".

Table 3. Childhood Experiences.

| | Women | | Men | |
|--|---------------|----|---------------|----|
| | <i>n</i> = 25 | % | <i>n</i> = 31 | % |
| Low-income family | 16 | 64 | 14 | 45 |
| Separated from parents | 10 | 40 | 16 | 52 |
| Worked from a young age (under 18 years) | 15 | 60 | 15 | 48 |
| Became a parent | 12 | 48 | 10 | 32 |
| Victim of childhood abuse | 6 | 24 | 6 | 19 |
| Exposed to illicit drugs and/or crime in the community | 13 | 52 | 13 | 42 |
| Family members abuse drugs and/or alcohol and/or are involved in other criminalised behaviours | 6 | 24 | 11 | 35 |
| Friends use and/or sell drugs and/or are involved in other criminalised activities | 7 | 28 | 18 | 58 |
| Intimate partner uses and/or sells drugs and/or is involved in other criminalised activities | 10 | 40 | 2 | 6 |

Over half the men, and 40% of the women, reported having been separated from their parents (due to death, desertion, or divorce). Some were exposed to family members' abuse of drugs, alcohol, or involvement in other criminalised behaviours. Others lived with childhood abuse, which included emotional, physical, and sexual violence, as well as growing up in households marred by domestic violence. The former was more common in the men's life stories, and the latter was more frequently relayed by women. Pimchan's story included each of these facets of childhood adversity. She was the victim of direct child abuse by her alcoholic father, who was also violent toward her mother and siblings. Eventually, her mother ran away, leaving her children behind with their father, who abandoned them to state care. She told us:

"My Dad, he's always drunk and he hit my Mum all the time. He beat me up, he beat my Mum up, and he touched me [sexually]. This started when I was 10 years old. He raped my sister. I felt a lot of pressure. I felt stressed. I felt scared. He was verbally abusive, and he would hit me with a wooden stick. I kept everything to myself. My mother left my father when I was 11 years old, and my father took me to a foster home".

Some of the research participants were exposed to illicit drugs and other criminalised behaviours within their communities. This featured more frequently in the women's stories, but friendship groups with people involved in these activities were more often reported by men. For example, Chet grew up in a "slum area", characterised by "crime and drug use". When he was 13–14 years of age, he "hung out with senior friends who were involved in gambling, raced motorbikes, dealt drugs, and used drugs". In contrast to the men, during adolescence, the women often disclosed having formed intimate relationships with men who were involved with illicit drugs and crime. Women were also more likely than men to have become parents during their teenage years.

5.3. Adulthood Experiences

By adulthood, most of the women were parents, while only around half of the men relayed being fathers. There were also palpable gender differences in experiences of adult intimacy and friendships. As was the case during adolescence, men were more likely than women to recount being friends with people who used illicit drugs and/or were involved in other criminalised activities, while women more frequently formed bonds with intimate partners embroiled in these types of behaviours. Just under half of the women (and none of the men) expressed having lived with domestic violence. Many women also recounted the distress of intimate partner infidelity and the dissolution of a significant romantic relationship (see Table 4, below). Both situations occurred less frequently in the men's lives. Natcha's story illustrates many of these women's experiences:

“When I was 16 years old, I got married. We were together for 13 years, have three children. He was abusive. After we got married his behaviour changed. When he got drunk, he just picks a fight with me and did so many things. He was [also] addicted to methamphetamine. Once, he used a hot iron and put it on my arm and stabbed me on my back. I went to the hospital. When I was three months pregnant, he kicked me, I miscarried. Verbal abuse, all those names. He used all the words and kicked and slapped, everything. My children always witnessed this, and he was abusive to the children as well. When I broke up with him, he took my oldest daughter away from me and he sexually abused her”.

Table 4. Adulthood Experiences.

| | Women | | Men | |
|--|---------------|----|---------------|----|
| | <i>n</i> = 25 | % | <i>n</i> = 31 | % |
| Has children | 22 | 88 | 16 | 51 |
| Victim of domestic violence | 11 | 44 | 0 | 0 |
| Intimate partner infidelity | 12 | 48 | 5 | 16 |
| Dissolution of an intimate relationship | 17 | 68 | 12 | 39 |
| Friends use and/or sell drugs and/or are involved in other criminalised activities | 13 | 52 | 21 | 68 |
| Intimate partner uses and/or sells drugs and/or is involved in other criminalised activities | 10 | 40 | 3 | 10 |

5.4. Substance Use and Histories of Previous Criminalisation

Although most research participants had no previous histories of criminalisation, men were more likely than women to report prior arrests. A little over 30% of the women reported ever having used illicit drugs, compared to nearly 40% of men. Problematic substance misuse (including drugs and/or alcohol) was relayed by around two-fifths of the research participants (see Table 5, below). For example, Ittiporn told us that before she was imprisoned, she was using “ten yaba³ tablets, every day, drugs were my friend”. Chalerm relayed that he used to “drink every day and when I have money, I would spend it on drink. I was addicted to alcohol”.

Table 5. Substance Use and Histories of Prior Criminalisation.

| | Women | | Men | |
|--|---------------|----|---------------|----|
| | <i>n</i> = 25 | % | <i>n</i> = 31 | % |
| Substance Use | | | | |
| Used drugs | 8 | 32 | 12 | 39 |
| Problematic substance use (drugs and/or alcohol) | 11 | 44 | 14 | 45 |
| Criminal History | | | | |
| Prior Arrests | 2 | 8 | 9 | 29 |

5.5. Victim Characteristics and Sentence Length

Most of the participants’ victims were women or girls who were known to them. However, none of the women, but some of the men, committed acts of interpersonal violence against strangers. Sentences included the death penalty, life imprisonment, and prison terms ranging from 1 to 84 years. Half the women were sentenced from 1 to 10 years, while half of the men received incarceration terms of over 10 years up to 30 years (see Table 6, below).

³ Yaba is a combination of methamphetamine and caffeine.

Table 6. Victim Characteristics and Sentence Length.

| | Women | | Men | |
|--|---------------|----|---------------|----|
| | <i>n</i> = 25 | % | <i>n</i> = 31 | % |
| Victim Sex * | | | | |
| Male | 10 | 40 | 13 | 42 |
| Female | 15 | 60 | 20 | 64 |
| Victim-Offender Relationship * | | | | |
| Intimate partner (former or current) | 4 | 16 | 7 | 23 |
| Intimate partner's lover | 2 | 8 | 2 | 6 |
| Children/Stepchildren | 3 | 12 | 1 | 3 |
| Other family members | 4 | 16 | 0 | 0 |
| Friend or is someone known to a friend | 1 | 4 | 4 | 13 |
| Work colleague or other acquaintance | 11 | 44 | 10 | 32 |
| Stranger | 0 | 0 | 9 | 29 |
| Sentence | | | | |
| Death | 1 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Life imprisonment | 2 | 8 | 1 | 3 |
| 1 to 5 years imprisonment | 7 | 28 | 4 | 13 |
| ≥5 years up to 10 years imprisonment | 5 | 20 | 5 | 16 |
| ≥10 years up to 20 years imprisonment | 4 | 16 | 8 | 26 |
| ≥20 years up to 30 years imprisonment | 1 | 4 | 8 | 26 |
| ≥30 years up to 40 years imprisonment | 2 | 8 | 3 | 10 |
| ≥40 years imprisonment | 3 | 12 | 2 | 6 |

* Adds up to more than *n* = 31 for the men due to multiple victims.

5.6. Criminal Justice System Experiences

Experiences of police misconduct were not uncommon but featured slightly more frequently in the women's stories; women were proportionately more likely than men to express being unfairly treated by law enforcement (see Table 7, below). Police misconduct in these cases included officers asking for bribes, tampering with evidence, being verbally abusive, threatening, intimidating, and physically violent. For example, Nin was assaulted and intimidated by police during questioning, and was coerced into signing blank pieces of paper that were later filled in and used against her in court. She told us that the police, "put a bag over my head and electrocuted me. I pee myself because I was tortured so badly. They asked me to sign a blank paper [and] some sort of documents and asked me to pretend to read it and took photographs of it. I didn't know that they were going to type on that paper that I intended to commit the murder, that I was planning the murder".

Table 7. Criminal Justice System Experiences.

| | Women | | Men | |
|---|---------------|----|---------------|----|
| | <i>n</i> = 25 | % | <i>n</i> = 31 | % |
| Police Misconduct | 7 | 28 | 6 | 19 |
| Did not have legal representation | 3 | 12 | 4 | 13 |
| Did not feel fairly treated by police | 14 | 56 | 12 | 39 |
| Did not feel fairly treated by the courts | 9 | 36 | 17 | 55 |

At court, few people were without legal representation, and men were more likely than women to feel unfairly treated (see Table 7, above). Feelings of injustice in these cases stemmed from what was seen to be inadequate legal representation, and overly harsh sentencing outcomes.

5.7. Pathways to Prison

The following section focuses on the life circumstances, experiences, and central mechanisms that constituted the research participants' varied life trajectories to prison. Three pathways emerged, one of which was only constituted by women: (1) lifestyles of

contravention, (2) harmed and harming, and (3) destructive masculinity. Additionally, the life story of one man was found to be an outlier (see Table 8, below). We discuss his story at the end of the findings section.

Table 8. Pathways to Prison.

| | Women | | Men | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----|---------------|----|
| | <i>n</i> = 25 | % | <i>n</i> = 31 | % |
| Lifestyles of Contravention | 9 | 36 | 7 | 23 |
| Harmed and Harming | 9 | 36 | 0 | 0 |
| Destructive masculinity | 7 | 28 | 23 | 74 |
| Economic need | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 |

5.7.1. Lifestyles of Contravention

This trajectory encompassed $n = 16$ research participants ($n = 9$ women, $n = 7$ men), making this, alongside the harmed and harming pathway, one of the most common criminalisation routes for women. These narratives were generally characterised by persistent illicit drug use over the life course (starting in adolescence or early adulthood), and what participants described as addictions to drugs, alcohol, gambling, and/or ‘partying’. Furthermore, everyone made a living through the underground economy. They worked in casinos or the sex and/or drug industry. Some had official criminal histories for offences committed supporting their lifestyles, including property and drug crimes. No one had previous convictions for violence. Thus, all the women and men on this pathway led lives outside the norm, characterised by persistent criminalised actions and behaviours. Furthermore, there were two distinct subgroups within this pathway.

The first subgroup included those who were pushed into lifestyles of contravention because of multiple childhood adversities, including, but not limited to, poverty, abuse, separation from parents (through death, divorce, or abandonment), caregiver substance abuse (alcohol and drugs) and involvement in other criminalised activities (e.g., drug dealing), and exposure to illicit drugs and other “crime” in their immediate community. Most of these research participants’ life stories reflected these experiences ($n = 6$ women, $n = 5$ men).

For example, Adranuch grew up in a poor farming family, and her parents separated when she was 12 years old, with resultant financial hardship. Adranuch’s mother became increasingly stressed and started to take this out on Adranuch. She explained, “when my dad left, we had financial problems. That led to me stopping going to school. I had to work. Mum was very stressed. She hit me. I felt lonely and fed up with life, so I left, I decided to live by myself”. At 15 years of age, Adranuch moved from her rural village to Bangkok, where she lived in a “slum area” with “drug problems”. She was initially employed as a waitress in a tourist targeted restaurant. By the time she was 18 years old, Adranuch realised that foreign men were prepared to pay significant amounts of money to have sex with her, and her sex work career began. Adranuch was introduced to methamphetamine by her work colleagues, and explained, “this is normal for people who work there [in the sex industry]. I used drugs almost every day”.

In another illustration, Chet grew up in a “slum area”, where there was “crime and drug use”. He described his parents as “very strict, they would hit me, I was scared of them, and I didn’t want to stay at home”. Chet “ran away” when he was “13–14 years old”. He stayed with his “senior friends”, who “gambled, raced motorbikes, dealt, used and [introduced Chet to] drugs”. Chet explained, “I was addicted to yaba, and I also tried cannabis. I used drugs often, almost every day. I would sell drugs to support my drug habit”.

The second sub-group ($n = 3$ women, $n = 2$ men) was relatively void of childhood adversity. Here, people had been pulled away from loving families by friendship groups into lifestyles of contravention. Ittiporn, for example, was born into a caring “middle-class

family". Her father was a "police officer", and her mother a "teacher". There was no "crime or drugs" in her childhood neighbourhood. However, when Ittiporn was 18 years old, she started "hanging out with a group of friends, they were clubbing and partying a lot". By the time she was in her twenties, Ittiporn was using "yaba every day", and she started "selling drugs to afford drugs". She explained, "I was using drugs, partying, selling drugs and also sending girls to clients for sex work" because this provided the income needed to maintain her lifestyle. Like Ittiporn, Niran grew up in a middle-class family. He started "hanging out with the wrong people", used "yaba" at the age of "15–16" years, got "addicted", and started to "rob", "thieve", and "receive stolen goods", because "I needed the money for partying and drugs".

Despite the above subgroup variance, everyone on this pathway was incarcerated as a direct result of their non-normative lifestyles. Nevertheless, how this led to imprisonment was gendered. All the women were sex workers, and eventually imprisoned for human (sex) trafficking offences that occurred against the backdrop of their criminalised vocation and lifestyle. More specifically, in all but one case (which was an organised sex-trafficking operation involving immigrant women being held in debt bondage), the women on this trajectory connected clients with sex worker colleagues. This was, on the face of it, a win-win arrangement for our research participants and their associates, with the former being remunerated for their trouble and the latter securing more work. However, oftentimes, and unbeknownst to them, the sex worker colleagues in question were aged under 18 years old. Thus, this human trafficking occurred with consent in the absence of force, deceitfulness, or bribery. Consider Fa Ying's and Hansa's stories below:

"My mother passed away when I was young, and my father lived abroad [so] I lived with my grandmother. I stopped going to school in grade 6 because I needed to work to support my brother's education. When I was 13 years old, I worked in a beauty salon but then I changed to massage [sex-work]. When I was 25 years old, I tried methamphetamine because it helps with weight loss [which was good for business]. I took a little bit [but] then it started increasing. I had many men [long-term clients] who give me money. They pay my rent for me and get me a car. Above the massage place where I work is a place where students could rent a room. These students provide sex services. Sometimes students come to chat with me. When my clients saw the girls, they wanted the girl. I called the girls to give a massage. I was arrested for human trafficking. They were like 14 or 15 years old. The girls told the police that I am innocent, but it didn't matter what they said". (Fa Ying)

"I came from a poor family. My father died and my mother had a stroke. In grade 6 I started using drugs with my friends because I thought it would be fun. I got addicted. I used it every day. I started working [sex work] when I was 13–14 years old. I wanted to support my family. I was the main provider. Using drugs also gave me the courage to work. The police were my customers. I got pregnant so I couldn't work and they [police] rung me and asked for girls. The girls wanted to make money, they contacted me, and I just hook them up. They were 14 years old, and I was 17 years old. It was a set-up. I took the girls to a hotel. I knew these girls were already sex workers. They wanted to earn money for hair extensions. They gave consent but when I delivered these girls to the hotel I got arrested. I didn't know it was human trafficking" (Hansa)

In contrast, no men were sex workers, and they had been incarcerated for a variety of offences, including sexual violence, human (sex) trafficking, and homicide. These men were either criminalised because of sexual offending that primarily occurred while they were out 'partying' and intoxicated on drugs, or for violence perpetrated within the context of earning a living in the underground economy. For example, Sakda was a drug dealer imprisoned for killing a client who owed him money. David provided personal security services to the "boss" of a casino. One day, his employer asked him to kill a rival, leading

to David being behind prison walls for attempted homicide. Chalerm had been arrested “many times” by police for “committing crimes” to “make money for partying” (including drug use). He was dating a sex worker who “sent clients girls. That night [when he was arrested for human trafficking] we got a call asking to deliver some girls. There were three girls, they were all 14 or 15 [years old]”. Khemkhaeng and Kraisee were imprisoned for sexually assaulting young women. These offences occurred within the context of these men’s drug-using lifestyles, but as will be discussed later in this paper, their actions could have also been constituted on the pathway of destructive masculinity. Our choice to include them here is directly related to the fact that these men were very much caught up in lifestyles of contravention. For example, Chet, who since the age of 13 years, had been involved in gambling, used, and sold drugs, was imprisoned for rape. He narrated that “girls would sometimes have sex with me and get drugs in return. On that day I was at my friend’s house. Friends of my girlfriend came to see me [for drugs]. We took drugs together, had drinks and had ‘sex’ [rape]”. Similarly, Kraisee told us that, one night, he was at a “party” a “place where we were using drugs [yaba]”, and “two girls came to drink with us”. He was “drinking, chatting, and flirting with one of the girls [who was 13 years old]”. He explained, “we had sex [rape]. There was a medical report that said the victim had a tear in her private parts”.

5.7.2. Harmed and Harming Women

This women-only pathway encompassed $n = 9$ research participants. In contrast to the women on the previous route, everyone was imprisoned for a homicide offence, and only one, Pensri, had a previous arrest (for drug offending). Pensri and another woman, Pimchan, did have a history of drug use and sex work, but both women had “stopped using drugs”, and Pensri had found a legitimate job. Furthermore, in both instances, as was the case for every woman on this pathway, criminalisation was not the result of living a non-normative lifestyle. Instead, gendered abuse, trauma, and adversity, compounded by other problems in intimate relationships, manifested in either a loss of control, anger being directed outwards at harming others, or violence being used as a protective strategy against abusive men.

These women had endured multiple adverse events and traumas. Six had been the victims of direct physical and/or child sexual abuse, and another woman described growing up in a community where there was “a lot of murder, people were shooting each other”. By adulthood, all but one had survived domestic violence victimisation, and most had been intimately partnered with men who caused other problems. Husbands/boyfriends were described as jealous and controlling, unfaithful, abused substances, failed to support their families, had gambling addictions, and abandoned them. Two women reported drinking alcohol as a form of self-medication, as it helped them to cope with the psychological distress, and three women relayed that their trauma experiences resulted in a diagnosed mental health problem. Sreypov’s narrative illustrates many of these experiences in the one life story, and is a poignant elucidation of the trauma and emotional angst indicative of these women’s lives:

“I grew up in a poor family. When I was five, my father was robbed and murdered. My mother could not afford to look after me, so my father’s friend adopted me. Sometimes I didn’t feel like I belonged there. He did not love me like his own children. Later my stepsister got married and her husband came to live with us. He would touch my breasts. I was afraid no one would believe me, so I left. When I was 17, I married a relative of my mother’s. He was violent. He would kick me, call me names, and accuse me of cheating. He told the village that I was cheating, and it ruined my reputation. He would drink and hang out with his friends all the time. I had to do all the farming work. He didn’t help and used the money for other things. Later I found out that he was having an affair. I asked him to stop but he hit me with a stick. I left him and later, went out with another man. I got pregnant with this new man, but he cheated on me and didn’t want

to take responsibility [for the baby]. He didn't believe it was his child and when I insisted that it was, he locked me in the bathroom, then he hit and kicked me. When I was five months pregnant, I fell and lost the baby".

Five of the women were in prison for homicide offences that they described as being a protective strategy against violent men. May and Karawek had both killed their domestically violent intimate partners in self-defence. Nin murdered a man known to her who had "psychically attacked" her after she asked him to return some money that he owed. Natcha and Pimchan murdered the abusive boyfriends of another family member. Below, Natcha and May's stories are provided as an illustration of those who killed to protect themselves or others.

As a child, May had lived with domestic violence, with her father "hitting her mother often", and, as an adult, she had a long history of violent victimisation at the hands of men. At 19 years of age, May was raped and subsequently fell pregnant. She had been in three intimate relationships with men who had all "physically abused" her, in addition to mistreating her in other ways. When relaying what life was like with her "second boyfriend", May said that he went out "partying, drinking, gambling, had girls, used drugs, would get jealous, and incurred a lot of debt". Like the other men, May's third intimate partner, the person that she killed, was extremely violent, jealous, and controlling. On the day of the offence, May had spent the day with friends, and, upon returning home, her boyfriend brutally assaulted her for leaving the house and socialising. She explained what happened:

"When I came home, I opened the door and he hit me. Suddenly he hit me, not a single word was coming from him. He had a knife. He tried to stab me in the neck, but he missed. I tried to take the knife from him, I threw the knife away, so he strangled me. I couldn't breathe, I thought he would kill me. I punched him in the ear and kicked him in the penis. He said I didn't care about him because I spent time with my friends and family. He used bad words. He got the knife back and said 'only one will stay alive' so I grabbed a knife and stabbed him. He asked for help, so I took him to the hospital. A few days later he passed away".

Natcha grew up in a "poor village", her parents were both alcoholics, and there was a lot of "fighting between them [verbal and physical violence], they used the money for alcohol and not the family. I wanted to go to school, but we were so poor. It was an unhappy time. I can't eat because they use all the money [to support their alcoholism]. Sometimes my mother would hit me. She was verbally abusive". Like May, as an adult, Natcha was also the victim of domestic violence. She explained:

"When I was 16, I got married. He was quite abusive [and an alcoholic]. There's a scar that I got from him from when he stabbed me. When I was three months pregnant, he kicked me, and I got a miscarriage. I feel really stressed. I got a medical condition for my mental condition because of stress. There was also verbal abuse, all those names, he used all the words and kicked and slapped, everything".

Eventually, Natcha left her husband after he and his friend sexually abused their daughter. After ending this relationship, Natcha could not provide for her family and had nowhere to live. She put her children into "foster care", and was homeless, "collecting garbage to sell". Eventually, she formed another intimate relationship, and was able to retrieve her children from foster care, because this man provided them with a place to live. However, he was "addicted to meth", so she left him. Her next boyfriend infected her with HIV, and sexually abused one of her daughters. Natcha started to drink alcohol regularly, because it "helped me feel relieved and I forget about the bad things". She is in prison for the murder of her abusive son-in-law:

"He [boyfriend] would hit my daughter. I felt like, you can't touch my daughter, you cannot hit my daughter. I want to protect her. I love my children so much. My daughter was so scared but at the time she loves her boyfriend so much. I

didn't want to see the same history that happened to me happen to my daughter. So, I made a plan [to kill the boyfriend] and I implemented it".

Four women had killed people, in what their narrations suggested, was a loss of control and anger being directed outwards at others against a backdrop of lifelong trauma and adversity. Pensri had survived domestic violence and numerous relationships with drug-using men, who had fathered children with her and failed to support them. She told us, "that day I lost control [and] I got really angry. I didn't plan to do it [stab him with a knife] but he [current boyfriend who was using drugs and not contributing financially to the family] would not find a job". In another example, Sreypov (also discussed previously, see above) had lived with poverty, the grief of her father's murder, maternal abandonment, childhood sexual abuse, the loss of a child, domestic violence, and other types of mistreatments by intimate partners. She is in prison for killing the girlfriend of her second boyfriend, the man who had beaten her, with whom she became pregnant and lost the baby. Sreypov explained, "this new girlfriend laughed at me, made fun of me, calling me all the time to saying bad things. My ex-boyfriend, too. He would text and say bad things". Eventually, Sreypov wanted it to stop, so she took a knife to her ex-boyfriend's house and got into an argument with "the girlfriend". The knife "fell out of [Sreypov's] purse so she grabbed the knife, just stabbed her in the stomach and ran away". Sreypov said, "I still can't believe that she died from one stab".

5.7.3. Destructive Masculinity

This pathway included $n = 23$ men and $n = 7$ women. Unlike the harmed and harming pathway, no men were the victims of direct abuse as children or adults. Two women did report domestic violence victimisation, but, in contrast to the harmed and harming women, their offences were not characterised by anger or a loss of control, nor were they fending off a violent intimate partner. Furthermore, no one was in prison because of a lifestyle of contravention. Only $n = 7$ of the $n = 23$ men (and no women) reported having used illicit drugs, but in every case, this was sporadic, recreational, or in the past. As will be illustrated below, some men were under the influence of alcohol while committing their crimes, as was the case for one woman whose narrative suggested she was struggling with alcoholism.

The men's violence was often presented as overly excessive, and some had been labelled aggressive by others (i.e., teachers and family members) from a young age, or they identified this trait in themselves. Aat, for example, described himself as "explosively violent", and his teachers at school had labelled him "anti-social". Kittibun stated, he was "hot-headed with a short temper". The behaviours of the men on this pathway are presented as expressions and displays of toxic masculinity, underpinned by a sense of power, dominance, entitlement, and superiority. They killed other men who challenged them, used murder to punish former intimate partners for leaving them, and sexually assaulted girls and women. Sometimes the men acted alone, but, on several occasions, their crimes were committed in groups with other men.

In contrast, the women relayed being caught up in men's acts of destructive masculinity, and they did not narrate having played an active role in the violence resulting in their imprisonment. Instead, the women were incarcerated for the actions of intimate partners, or in one instance, another male family member. More specifically, they were either a bystander to men's physical assaults on other men, or they had failed to intervene and sometimes appeared to actively support boyfriends/husbands sexually abusing their daughters. None of the women had a history of past criminalisation, while some of the men had prior arrests for violence. This contrasted with those on the lifestyles of contravention pathway who only had prior arrests for drug-related offending.

Eight men were in prison for killing other men who had challenged them. Here, the violence was narrated as an expression of masculine prowess. By enacting aggression, these men demonstrated masculinity through a show of strength and power and were able to redress the insult or threat posed to their honour by other men. For example, Tanawat told us that, from a young age, he had needed to "learn how to fight [so] he could retaliate

[against other men] if needed". As an adult, Tanawat worked as a security guard for a large manufacturing company. He had no history of drug use or alcohol misuse. On the day of the homicide, Tanawat was "at work", and one of his "colleagues, who [he] sometimes argued with, started shouting at [him], saying bad things about [Tanawat] and [his] family, all those rude words in front of everyone". Because he was a security guard, Tanawat "always carried a knife". He described being blinded by rage, and "stabbed him [the victim] seven times" in an inordinate display of aggression.

In $n = 5$ of these $n = 8$ cases, the homicides were acts of group violence (sometimes but not always fuelled by alcohol consumption), and, as such, presented as a possible avenue for male bonding and peer-group affirmation of masculinity. Here, the men were defending their honour in the face of threats posed by other groups of aggressive men. For example, Kasem was at a "festival" with "four friends" where they were "drinking", and a "fight" broke out with another group of men. In the ensuing brawl, a member of the opposing group was "stabbed" and died. Kasem only drank "sometimes", and he used "meth occasionally" in his twenties, but this ceased shortly after it began. Kasem had previously been imprisoned for another act of group violence. Namely, he had committed a "gang robbery" after consuming alcohol with the same group of friends. Somchai got "into a fight with some people just because they were staring" at him and his friends. One of the men in Somchai's group had a gun for "protection", and it "went off" during the altercation, killing a man from the opposing side.

Kittibun and Sirichai sought to punish their former intimate partners for daring to leave them and start a romantic relationship with someone new. They described being jealous and angry that other men were 'sleeping with' what was rightfully theirs. Sirichai took a gun to the house of his former girlfriend and "shot the guy [ex-girlfriend's new partner], my [former] girlfriend, and my [former] mother-in-law". Kittibun killed his former wife's new "lover". He explained that he had planned to do this for "revenge", and that if he could turn back time, "I would have shot my wife as well". Both men were in prison for murder.

The remaining $n = 13$ men were incarcerated for sexual violence. This included $n = 11$ men who acted alone, and $n = 2$ imprisoned for gang rape. Here, the sexual violations conferred a destructive performance of masculinity predicated on male dominance and sexual appurtenance to the bodies of women and girls. Perhaps the most conspicuous example of this emerged from the narrative of Asnee, who was imprisoned for the rape and murder of an 11-year-old girl. Asnee explained he was intoxicated at the time, and that they had been "playing [flirting] with each other". He wanted to have "sex", but "she didn't want to have sex with me", even though she had been 'asking for it' by "playing" with him. So, in a disturbing illustration of sexual entitlement and power, he "raped her" and then "strangled her" to death. When asked why he made the latter decision, Asnee said, "because she screamed and kicked me and that made me angry". By bravely resisting, fighting back, and "assaulting" Asnee, this young girl had dared to defy her attacker and challenge his destructive sense of masculine sexual entitlement. Asnee needed to 'put her back in her place,' and punish her recalcitrance. He said, "if she didn't kick me, I wouldn't have strangled her".

All but $n = 2$ men were in prison for sexually harming or abducting (where there appeared to be a lack of evidence to prove sexual assault) girls and young women. Like Asnee, some were open about what they had done, while others claimed they were innocent, reconstituted what they had done as consensual sex, or engaged in a narrative of victim-blaming. Two men were imprisoned for the sexual violation of adult women. Runrot had sexually assaulted a work colleague (which he denied), and Aat a former intimate partner. Aat had a long history of perpetrating violence against the women that he purported to love. He had been to prison before for domestic violence and described himself as being "explosive" in intimate relationships, having "hurt and harmed" both his former wives. Aat was in prison once again for violence against a romantic partner. He held this woman hostage for nearly a month and repeatedly raped her, sometimes at gunpoint. Aat denied it

was rape, and claimed it was just a continuation of their intimate affair. Reflecting on what he perceived to be an excessive term of imprisonment, Aat said, “I think I should have just killed her, that would have been easier”.

Although most of the men imprisoned for sexual violence had acted alone, Kam and Kla were in prison for gang rape. Like physical aggression, acts of group sexual assault provide opportunities for male connectedness and a way to execute masculine prowess within a peer-group setting. Kam and his group of four friends “meet two girls at a market” and took them out into the “fields”. Kam tried to “hug” one of the “girls”, but she resisted, and then “two other friends came to help me hold her down [then] two or three of my other friends had sex with [raped] this girl”. He explained that violating this girl with his friends made him “feel like we were a team, we were in this together”. Kam and his friends sanctioned their actions by blaming their victim for accompanying them, saying, “she came to that place” and, as such, was a ‘bad girl’ deserving of rape. Kla and his group of friends were arrested for the gang rape of a 14-year-old girl. Kla explained they had sexually assaulted young girls as a group “quite often, there were about four or five girls [previous victims]”. Kla said, “we were all drinking, and I just enjoyed it”. Kla expressed, “they were all bad girls because when my friends asked them to come with them, they did, a good girl would not do that”. Gang rape was not the only group violence that Kla and his friends engaged in, as they would also go “out drinking and fighting with other people”.

Three of the $n = 7$ women on this pathway were incarcerated for offences of sexual assault (or child abduction), and, in every case, the primary perpetrator was their intimate partner, and the victim their daughter. These women engaged in, supported, or facilitated, either through action or inaction, men’s access to the bodies of girls and young women. Thus, these women acted as auxiliaries to destructive masculinity, namely male sexual entitlement, in what were attempts at maintaining intimacy with these men in the wake of previously tumultuous romantic relationships.

For example, Chai Charoen was in prison for “conspiracy with my boyfriend to rape my daughter”, who was aged 13-years old at the time. She said, “my daughter told the court that I helped my boyfriend rape her”. The sexual violence had occurred multiple times over “a year”, and Chai Charoen’s daughter told police that her mother had “held her down, grabbed her arms and legs so that [her stepfather] could do something”. Chai Charoen denied actively participating in her boyfriend’s sexual violation of her daughter, but accepted that it had taken place, just without her knowledge. She said, “I didn’t know what happened because I was drunk and lost consciousness every day”. Chai Charoen had a long history of dysfunctional intimate relationships with men who “didn’t take care of me, I had nobody to support me, I had to look after myself”, including one previous partner who “hit me”. She narrated that her alcohol dependency began in the aftermath of this domestically violent relationship. Drinking helped her to cope. Given Chai Charoen’s history of intimate partner mistreatment, abuse, and abandonment, she appeared to be seeking to protect her relationship because, unlike previous men, “this one treated me well and the only bad thing was that he had ‘sex’ [raped] with my daughter”.

Kamala was also a victim of prior domestic violence, and, like Chai Charoen, was incarcerated for “providing my husband with my daughter”. In this case, Kamala appears to have ‘turned a blind eye’. Her “daughter testified in court that I was not home”. However, like Chai Charoen, there was a suggestion in Kamala’s narrative that not wanting to lose her husband may have underpinned what was, in this instance, inaction in the face of masculine sexual entitlement. She said, “my husband said in court that the reason I let him have sex [rape] with my daughter was that I wanted to keep him. I didn’t want him to get another girlfriend”.

The remaining women were criminalised as accessories to men’s homicides. Here, the women’s intimate partners (and in one case another male family member) had used violence in response to being challenged, threatened, humiliated, and disrespected by other men. For example, Boonsri was present when her husband stabbed a neighbour to death. She explained that the victim was constantly “drinking” and “shouting” abuse at them.

Rochana was imprisoned for being an accessory to a murder committed by her boyfriend and his brother. On the day of the homicide, they had borrowed Rochana's car (which is why she was deemed to be an accessory by the court), driven to the victim's house, and killed him because he was having an affair with Rochana's brother-in-law's wife.

5.7.4. Economic Need

Finally, one man's pathway into prison did not fit with any of the trajectories discussed above. Rama was raised in a loving, albeit poor, family. He only completed primary school because his parents could not afford to pay for further education. Thereafter, Rama engaged in numerous menial low paying jobs, and eventually worked as a "motorbike taxi driver". He "never used drugs", rarely drank alcohol, and had never come into conflict with the law before. While he was single, Rama explained, "I did not have financial problems". However, after marrying and having three children, there was only "just enough money to get by". While driving his motorcycle taxi, Rama would talk to sex workers, and they would ask him for help finding clients. He said, "I would help clients that used my taxi service find sex workers. The girls would pay me for clients. I could make a lot of money". Rama only did this when his family were experiencing significant financial pressure. He was imprisoned for "recruitment for prostitution".

6. Summary and Discussion

Utilising in-depth life-history interviews with $n = 25$ women and $n = 31$ men incarcerated in Thailand for violent and sexual offending, the research described herein utilised a feminist pathways approach to describe, examine, and compare women's and men's backstories and pathways to prison. Overall, we identified three imprisonment trajectories (and the additional story of one man, imprisoned due to economic need). Utilising the participants' descriptions, we highlighted similarities and variance by gender within and between these pathways.

Descriptive information revealed that, while there were commonalities in the background features of the women's and men's lives, there were also gendered distinctions. Most significantly, women were more likely than men to have been victims of abuse (in childhood and adulthood), to have grown up in poverty and communities marred by drugs and crime, to have taken on adult responsibilities at a young age (e.g., going out to work to help support their families), to be parents, and to suffer angst in their intimate relationships with men who were often unfaithful, and involved with illicit drugs and other criminalised activities. Men, on the other hand, more frequently had family members and friends involved in illicit drugs/other crimes and were more likely to have prior histories of criminalisation. Reports of drug use, substance abuse, under-education, working in low paying menial jobs, and earning a living in the underground economy were relayed with similar frequency by women and men. However, men are more likely involved in illicit drug and gambling industries, and women in the sex industry.

Finally, there were minimal gender differences in sentencing and experiences of criminal justice, but offence profiles differed. Although equally likely to be imprisoned for homicide, when it came to sex offending, most of the women were criminalised for human trafficking/sex work, and the men for sexual assault/child abduction. In most cases, victims were known to the research participants, but some of the men, and none of the women, offended against strangers.

The most common trajectories into prison for the women were the harmed and harming and lifestyles of contravention pathways. The former was a women-only trajectory and a culmination of [Daly's \(1994\)](#) battered women/harmed and harming pathways. All these women were imprisoned for homicide. Gendered abuse, trauma, and adversity, compounded by other problems in intimate relationships, resulted in violence being used as a protective strategy against abusive men, or a loss of control/anger being directed outwards at harming others. In addition to emulating [Daly's \(1994\)](#) work, this route is reflected in previous Southeast Asian research ([Russell et al. 2020](#); [Jeffries and Chuenurah 2018](#); [Velo 2022](#)),

and aligns with what is known more generally about women's perpetration of homicide (Belknap et al. 2012; Caman et al. 2016; Desta and Venema 2021; Flynn et al. 2013; Friedman and Resnick 2007; Hesselink and Dastile 2015; Kachaeva et al. 2010; Kirkwood 2003, p. 153; Morrissey 2003; Oberman 2003, 2008; Rougé-Maillart et al. 2005; Silverman and Kennedy 1988; Vatnar et al. 2018; Weizmann-Henelius et al. 2012).

The lifestyles of contravention pathway included women and men. It was characterised by persistent engagement in non-normative, and, oftentimes, criminalised activity across the life course. It encompassed people who were pushed into lifestyles of contravention by childhood adversity, and those pulled away from loving families by friendship groups. There was gendered variance within this pathway. Every woman worked in the sex industry; the overwhelming theme was of human trafficking and sex work being conflated, and women being caught up in Thailand's war against human trafficking. Most women were imprisoned for doing little more than assisting a work colleague to find clients, for a commission, without asking for proof of age. In all but one case, these human trafficking offences were narrated as having involved consent, and as being devoid of coercion, deception, or bribery. In contrast, most men were incarcerated for either sexually assaulting young women while they were out 'partying' and intoxicated, or for homicides perpetrated within the context of earning a living in the underground economy. This imprisonment route mirrored Daly's (1994) street pathway, Russell et al.'s (2020) peer-group association/deviant lifestyle pathway (in Thailand), and Jeffries and Chuenurah's (2018) deviant women trajectory (in Cambodia).

The pathway of destructive masculinity was the most common route for men, and least likely for women. Here, men were in prison for sexual assault, murdering other men who challenged them, or for homicides meted out as punishment against former lovers. Some men relayed histories of aggressive and violent behaviour, including prior arrests, but unlike the harmed and harming women, there were no suggestions of having lived with direct victimisation, nor was there any evidence of a lifestyle of contravention. Rather, these narratives presented homicide and sexual assault as destructive displays of masculinity, predicated by a sense of power, dominance, entitlement, superiority, and, in the case of gang rape and group homicides, an avenue for male peer-group bonding and masculine affirmation. This pathway subsequently supports what is known about the link between toxic masculinity, physical violence, and sexual assault (Anwary 2015; Carlson 2008; Connell and Messerschmidt 2005; DeKeseredy and Schwartz 2005; Da Silva et al. 2015; Da Silva et al. 2018; De Vogel and Spa 2019; Elisha et al. 2010; Franklin 2004; Harkins and Dixon 2010; James-Hawkins et al. 2019; Mathews et al. 2015; McCarthy et al. 2018; Sharma and Bazilli 2014; Beesley and McGuire 2009; Pike et al. 2020; Whitehead 2021). The men on this trajectory were, like many men in Daly's (1994, p. 68) research, in prison because of the "costs and excesses of masculinity".

In contrast, the women on this final pathway were all accessories to men's acts of destructive masculinity. Some were imprisoned because they were caught up in the homicide offending of men with whom they were relationally close. Others relayed stories duplicating the limited research on women's participation in sexual assault showing women rarely engage in direct acts of abuse, but, rather, offend out of a desire to maintain an intimate relationship with the perpetrator. Here, the women supported, facilitated, or 'turned a blind eye' to men's toxic sense of masculine sexual entitlement (Cortoni and Stefanov 2020; Gannon et al. 2010; Gannon et al. 2012; Gannon et al. 2014; Zhao 2021). These stories mirrored Daly's (1994) drug connected pathway, and in Southeast Asia, Jeffries and Chuenurah's (2018) trajectory of male association (in Cambodia), and Veloso's (2022, p. 133) research (in the Philippines), showing that most women were "dragged into the crimes" of intimate partners and others.

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