



The Martin Institute PRINTS is an undergraduate peer-reviewed academic journal that aims to support and promote the scholarship of Stonehill students in the fields of Anthropology, Criminology, Political Science, and Sociology.

### **PRINTS 2026 Editorial Staff**

Adam Ammirata '26  
Editor-in-Chief

Andrew Poulin '27  
Editor

Ava Cutler '27  
Editor

Jordan Bigda '27  
Editor

*Many thanks to our Faculty Advisor: Katie Currul-Dykeman, Chair of Criminology and Director of the Martin Institute*

# Table of Contents

|                                                                                                            |    |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|
| Editorial Staff .....                                                                                      | 3  |
| Connell and Cowboys: What <i>Brokeback Mountain</i> (2005) Teaches us about<br>Hegemonic Masculinity ..... | 4  |
| <i>Sarah Hawks</i>                                                                                         |    |
| The Role of Short-Term Secure Detention in Promoting Rehabilitation for Justice-<br>Involved Youth.....    | 12 |
| <i>Emma Fontes</i>                                                                                         |    |
| Ending the Detention and Criminalization of Human Trafficking Victims in Thailand<br>.....                 | 22 |
| <i>Emily Gundler</i>                                                                                       |    |
| The Dogs are Out: K-9s in Police Work .....                                                                | 35 |
| <i>Madison Quenneville</i>                                                                                 |    |
| Interview: Assistant Professor Cameron Burke .....                                                         | 43 |
| <i>Andrew Poulin and Jordan Bigda</i>                                                                      |    |
| Martin Institute Presents: Federal Law Enforcement Panel.....                                              | 45 |
| <i>Ava Cutler</i>                                                                                          |    |

# Meet the Editorial Staff

## Adam Ammirata

Editor-in-Chief



Adam is a graduating senior with a double major in Criminology and Psychology and a minor in Political Science. He is a Moreau Honors Scholar passionate about the interaction of mental health and criminal justice. Adam hopes to address the lack of effective and compassionate mental health support in the justice system while seeking continued education. After Stonehill, Adam accepted a job at Bridgewater State Hospital as a Rehabilitation Coordinator. He hopes to support the needs of their population while working towards his PsyD in Clinical Psychology. Adam is President of the Criminology Club and has completed internships in domestic violence, corrections, and criminological research. Adam is also Chair of the Honors Advisory Council, on the Student Conduct Board, a Campus Ministry Retreat Coordinator, and a Resident Assistant.

## Andrew Poulin

Editor

Andrew is a member of the Class of 2027 pursuing a double major in Criminology and Psychology. He is also a Moreau Honors Scholar and a member of the Edwin Sutherland Criminology Honor Society. During his time at Stonehill, Andrew has interned with the Rochester, MA Police Department for two summers. He has also interned with the Victim and Witness Advocates at the Bristol County District Attorney's Office in Fall River, MA. After graduation, he intends on going into law enforcement at the local or federal level.



## Ava Cutler

Editor



Ava is a junior from Brattleboro, Vermont with a Criminology major and a Psychology minor. She is a member of the Criminology Honor Society and the Lambda Epsilon Sigma Honor Society. Ava is the upcoming SGA Class of 2027 Public Relations Coordinator, as well as the Criminology Club President. She works at the Martin Institute as a student ambassador and at the campus's art gallery as an assistant. Throughout being at Stonehill, Ava has had numerous internships within the criminal justice system that has strengthened her passion for victim advocacy. Through observing victim witness advocates in court rooms and sitting in on child advocacy multidisciplinary team meetings, she has seen how important it is to be a support system and a voice for others. After graduation, she plans to attend law school and specifically work within specialized courts for domestic violence.

## Jordan Bidga

Editor

Jordan is a junior majoring in Political Science and International Relations. On campus she is actively involved in the St. Thomas More Pre-Law society, where she will serve as president during the upcoming academic year. Jordan has been a dedicated member of the Stonehill College Mock Trial team and currently serves as the Community Outreach Chair for the club. She is also a student facilitator in a First Year Experience course and is a member of the Student Alumni Association. This past spring, Jordan was inducted into Pi Sigma Alpha, the National Political Science Honor Society, and Lambda Epsilon Sigma, Stonehill's honor society. For the past two years Jordan has been an intern with the Hampden County District Attorney's office where she has continued to further her passion for law. After graduation she plans to attend law school and pursue a career in law.





## Sarah Hawks

Sarah is a graduating English and Political Science double-major. At Stonehill she competed with the Mock Trial team and revived Rolling Stonehill, an on-campus cultural magazine. She also had the opportunity to study abroad in Edinburgh, Scotland where she took a gender and sexuality class that inspired this specific piece. Following graduation, she has secured a legal assistant job at a family law office and has ambitions to go to law school

### **Connell and Cowboys: What *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) Teaches us About Hegemonic Masculinity**

The main characters of Ang Lee's 2005 film *Brokeback Mountain* are gay men who attempt to subscribe to sociologist Raewyn Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity. They seek to maintain fake livelihoods as husbands. Ultimately, they end up being victims of this hegemonic position, as it forces them to hide their queerness, and eventually, a proudly homophobic, hegemonic masculine group of men brutally murder one of the main characters. Connell describes hegemonic masculinity as "the configuration of gender which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees the dominant position of men and the subordination of women" (Connell, 1995, p. 77). By associating queerness with femininity, which takes a subordinate societal position, we begin to see the exclusion of gay men from the hegemonic group. In describing scenes from *Brokeback Mountain*, this paper will argue that the formation of a current Western hegemonic masculine group is still rooted in homophobia, even though it fluctuates by representation in the media, and will describe emotional awareness as a mitigating factor.

By describing relevant scenes of the film, this paper will explain the violent depictions of homophobia and how that affects the characters' relationships to masculinity. It will also address the origins of Connell's idea of hegemonic masculinity and how that is related to homophobia through the research of Pascoe (2005) and Phoenix et al. (2003). It will then highlight some critics of hegemonic masculinity's conflation with homophobia through Coles (2007) and Demetriou's (2001) arguments but ultimately show through Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) why they do not hold merit. Ultimately, this paper will show the exclusionary nature of hegemonic masculinity and suggest some ways, through the work of McQueen (2017), Siedler (1989), and McCormack (2001), that we may overcome this.

Although sociologist Herek's (1986) position that "to be a man in contemporary American society is to be homophobic" seems simple, it certainly rings true in this film (p. 563). *Brokeback Mountain* takes place in rural Wyoming from 1963 to the 1980s. The story follows two cowboys, Ennis Del Mar and Jack Twist, in their twenty-year-long relationship. The two meet on a job up on the mountain, where they grow close to one another. These feelings become romantic and they become sexually active. Four years pass before Jack and Ennis meet again, and they quickly fall into their old ways. Over the next 15 years, the men get married and have children, all while going up to Brokeback Mountain a few times a year with each other. Even though this was a progressive film highlighting a moving love story with same-sex partners, there are also violent depictions of the oppression gay men faced at the time. For context, same-sex sexual activity was not legal nationwide in the United States until the 2003 Supreme Court Case *Lawrence v. Texas*. Additionally, gay marriage was not legal in all U.S states until *Obergefell v. Hodges* in 2015. This story is set long before these progressions. Thus, homophobia is more explicit than may be seen today.

The first example of internalized homophobia in this film, or the internal absorption of society's negative bias towards gay people, is shown when Jack first tries to initiate sex with Ennis. Ennis freaks out, slapping his hand away. While Ennis is overcome with his attraction to Jack and ultimately has sex with him, it is very violent and devoid of romance. The next day, Ennis reminds Jack, "you know I ain't queer," and Jack replies, "me neither" (*Brokeback Mountain*, 2005, 00:33:01). Even after engaging in gay sex, the two men did not accept their attraction; however, Ennis had a panic attack that night and laid his head down on Jack's chest while he cried. This is where it became apparent that Ennis had never had sex with a man before and Jack clearly had. In fact, throughout the rest of the film, Ennis blames Jack for "making him this way" (1:47:30). This shows an underlying belief that being gay is something you choose or have control over, and that heterosexuality is the norm Ennis is accustomed to.

In another scene, Ennis shares a childhood story about the time his father forced him to see the body of a dead man with his penis cut off because the town suspected he was gay. Ennis admits that his father could have assisted in murdering this man (1:12:03). He was socialized to believe that being gay is not just wrong but has lethal consequences. Finally, in a rare moment of vulnerability towards the end of the film, Jack tells Ennis, "sometimes I miss you so much I can hardly stand it" (1:43:04). Ennis does not reciprocate this commitment to Jack out of fear they will be caught, and the two have a falling out. Jack becomes vocal about his sexual needs throughout the film as we see him flirt with other men and go to Mexico for the male prostitutes. At the end of the film, Jack's wife informs Ennis that he died in a tire explosion. However, Ennis believes he was murdered for his homosexuality after being discovered by the wrong group of men. When thinking of which masculinities are clearly hegemonic in this film- those who are heterosexual, married, tough, blue-collar workers- Jack and Ennis seemingly blend right in. Both are married, have children, enjoy rodeoing and ranching, are harsh with their wives, and drink heavily. Their only difference is that they enjoy having sex with other men. This film forces us to question why, historically,

homophobia was a key identifier of a hegemonic masculine group. Most importantly, we must examine whether the current hegemonic masculine position in Western culture is still exclusionary of queer men.

According to Connell (1992) and Demetriou (2002), gay men are subordinated in the hegemonic model because their object of sexual desire undermines the institution of heterosexuality. Meaning, because their sexual desires do not contribute to reproduction and thus uphold the patriarchy, they become excluded from the hegemonic group. It is important to note that the term “hegemonic masculinity is not a substantive kind of masculinity like toxic masculinity or the group of masculinities that legitimate patriarchy, but a structural position in the hierarchy” (Yang, 2020, p. 325). Thus, not every individual who resides or is complicit with the hegemonic masculine group personally chooses to exclude queer men from it. Yet, it is the presence of a hegemonic masculine group in the hierarchy itself that structurally subordinates queer identities. As scholar Cole (2007) explains, hegemonic masculinity not only includes dominance over women but also over subordinate masculinities such as queer men.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) establish that hegemonic masculinity is exclusively heterosexual because it requires the policing of men and relies on the exclusions of those who do not express domination over women. The policing of male behavior means there are societal rules for what one is allowed to be and do, and those who do not follow those rules face punishment. Men, especially young boys, let other men know they have stepped outside the hegemonic group through name-calling. C.J. Pascoe (2005) supports this idea by collecting data on the usage of the term “fag”, a derogatory term to describe gay or effeminate presenting men, at an American high school. This data expands previous research by unpacking multilayered meanings that boys deploy through their use of homophobic language and joking rituals. Pascoe's (2005) observations and meetings with the students told her that the word “fag” was not deployed in a way that was supposed to mean homosexual, but instead anything that is not perceived as masculine. She concluded this because the girls never called each other “fag”, and the guys never applied it to girls because there is already a set expectation that they are supposed to be feminine. On the other hand, whenever a boy was “being stupid, incompetent, dancing, caring too much about clothing, being too emotional or expressing interest (sexual or platonic) in other guys,” he was deemed a “fag” by his peers (Pascoe, 2005, p.337). Pascoe found that the boys were constantly dancing around this term. If one boy did something that was deemed “faggy” then they would quickly deflect by doing something ultra-masculine or passing the joke onto someone else. Pascoe concludes that masculinity, in part, becomes the daily interactional work of repudiating the “threatening specter of the fag” (Pascoe, 2005, p. 342). Pascoe’s research helps solidify the connection between homophobic behavior and hegemonic masculinity, as Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) explain, it subordinates queer men from entering this group.

Another study of 11–14-year-old schoolboys shows similar findings, as “part of the boys’ self-positioning was designed to defend them against being called ‘gay,’ resulting in boys policing of themselves and others by repudiating versions of femininity” (Phoenix et al., 2003). In the film, avoiding the 'gay' label is

something Ennis and Jack try to overcome by overcompensating in their masculine pursuits to prove they are not gay. Jack risks riding bulls in the rodeo to show the people of his community and his father that he can master the art. Also, at the film's beginning, he refuses to ride any other horse besides the most difficult one on Brokeback Mountain to show Ennis he is manly. Ennis shows his masculinity by controlling his wife. He wants to be the breadwinner of the family and does not allow her to take more shifts at work, even though they need the money. He leaves to spend time with Jack for days at a time, forcing her to stay housebound and isolated with their children. He also shows violent acts of aggression through yelling. Therefore, because of the homophobic nature of the hegemonic masculine group, Ennis and Jack try to show they do not consider themselves part of the subordinated masculine identity of a gay man.

The conflation of homophobia and dominant masculine identities faces a lot of contention by critics of Connell (1992). Some believe there is not a singular hegemonic masculine identity, but that masculine identities are shifting and merging (Coles, 2007; Demetriou, 2001). Cole (2007) argues that hegemonic masculinity does little to account for the variety of dominant masculinities that exist under this umbrella and disregards their complexities. This has to do with the various other factors that dictate a man's social position, such as his class and race, in addition to his sexual orientation. It remains unclear who gets to be included as part of the formation of the hegemonic group. Even throughout *Brokeback Mountain*, we see varying versions of masculine performances, such as businesspeople who live in large homes with their families versus the tough blue-collar guys who hang around the pub, such as Ennis and Jack. If there are no clear identifying features of the singular hegemonic group, it makes it difficult to definitively conclude whether this group is exclusionary of queer men or not.

Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) address this issue by explaining that regional and local constructions of hegemonic masculinity are shaped by the articulation of gender systems with global processes. Existing hegemonic masculinities can be analyzed at the local (face-to-face interactions), regional (nation-state culture), and global (world politics and transnational media) levels, with each having a trickle-down influence on the others. Thus, "local models of hegemonic masculinity may differ from each other, they generally overlap" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 850). While the hegemonic masculinity we see in rural Wyoming of *Brokeback Mountain* may look different from what it did in Massachusetts at the time, the two likely overlapped. This is because the associations of what it means to be masculine are trickled down from world processes that each affect local hegemonic groups. For example, in the United States, where the nation's leaders display anti-LGBTQ+ rhetoric, the same hate has started to infiltrate local hegemonic masculine groups (DiAlesandro, 2025). Global politics and media shape the culture of a nation and then the actions of those in local communities.

Thus, "gay communities have a spectrum of experience ranging from homophobic violence and cultural denigration to toleration and even cultural celebration and political representation" (Connell & Messerschmidt, 2005, p. 848). Meaning, gay men from different parts of the world experience subordination

from the hegemonic group and homophobia in different ways that largely vary by representation and general tolerance among community members. For instance, US presidents whose administrations are supportive of LGBTQ+ communities engage in a culture of traditional family roles. There is only one US president who never married, and all others were married to women (Freidel & Sidey, 2006). By continuing to build a nation on strictly heteronormative terms, it can begin to affect the way people interact with queerness in their local communities.

This calls into question representation at the national and global level, which Demetriou believes is increasing. Demetriou's (2001) critique can be seen as building off Coles' (2007) in that they argue gender practice takes place within different historico-cultural contexts and is performed by agents of different races, classes, or generations. They introduce the notion of a "hegemonic masculine bloc", which suggests that the form of masculinity that can reproduce patriarchy is in a constant process of negotiation, translation, hybridization, and reconfiguration. This provides a critique of Connell's (1995) concept of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities. According to Demetriou (2001), after the 1970s, a new hegemonic bloc drew from gay subcultures since there had been a hybridization of queer and straight aesthetics in addition to more explicit gay male imagery. A film such as *Brokeback Mountain* would fit under this category. Messerschmidt and Connell (2005) address this by suggesting most international research shows hegemonic masculinity works "through the production of exemplary symbols that have authority although most men and boys do not fully live up to them" (p. 846). Meaning, although in everyday lives there is greater visibility of queer people, men are still more likely to strive towards the authoritative images of masculinity, even if that image is unattainable to them.

For example, someone in a leadership position, such as Donald Trump, signing an executive order stating there are only two recognized genders has more influence than the gender-diverse people reflected in our everyday lives (White House, 2025). Authoritative roles make the hegemonic masculine group more likely to comply with what Trump is saying than what they truly believe. As Yang (2020) explains, men who pursue hybrid masculinity may appear as feminist and nonhomophobic, but they can still fortify gender, sexual, class, and racial boundaries in social interaction, making underprivileged men scapegoats of masculine domination. Even men who follow Demetriou's (2001) idea of hybrid masculinity are complicit in upholding hegemonic groups that subordinate marginalized peoples.

The assumption that hegemonic masculinity is exclusionary of queer people seems to hold true and therefore must be overcome. There is little doubt in the film that Ennis' flawed relationship with his queerness started in childhood. This may call for a change in the socialization of young boys to lead them to live a more accepting lifestyle. In sociologist Victor Siedler's (1989) writings on male intimacy, he explains men's traditional notions of masculinity distance them from their own emotional lives and make it harder to respond to others. Men are not taught to recognize their emotional needs, which are hidden behind "an endemic fear of personal emotions and personal conflict behind a wall of rational disdain" (Siedler, 1989,

p. 161). We see Ennis do this time and again throughout the film. He denies himself the pleasure he feels being with Jack because of societal pressure and needing to work, which can be considered rational disdain.

Fiona McQueen's study on intimacy in male relationships helps further Siedler's point. While interviewing her male subjects, McQueen (2017) found vulnerability was consistently described as a central feeling for men when they talked about disclosing their emotions in their intimate relationships. Men identify sharing their emotions as a vulnerability and something that is controlled, even in their most intimate relationships. This shows that they do not have a space to be open with their emotions without fear of being ridiculed or exposed (Phoenix et al., 2003). Again, the film demonstrates this as we watch Ennis waste his life away, distanced from his family and the rest of society. He was never given an opportunity to share his emotions out of fear of real physical punishment and social ostracism, so he removed himself from anywhere he could indulge in his desires. It's not until Jack dies that we see Ennis completely pour out his emotion by sobbing at the end of the film, but by then it's too late as the person he could be most vulnerable with without consequence is gone.

We expect young boys to be sensitive to identities that do not match theirs, but we do not teach them how to connect with their own emotions. If society is to ever to curve hegemonic masculinity to be inclusive of queer men, we need to lead boys to be more sympathetic towards one another. It is our responsibility as adults, including "teachers, parents, and policymakers... to find ways of treating boys sympathetically and allowing them to talk about emotions without being teased or belittled so that their expectations soften" (Phoenix et al., 2003, p. 193). Additionally, Mark McCormack (2001) suggests that a new theoretical lens for viewing male behavior in schools is needed. In his research, he found that the 6th-form students at Standard High School were never homophobic, misogynistic, or exclusionary of all types of masculinity because they were in an environment that prioritized their emotional well-being. This suggests it is possible to create an environment of tolerance when young men are given the tools to connect with their emotions. As Karla Elliott (2015) identifies, a reduction in the harmful costs of hegemonic masculinity can lead to benefits for men, including increased physical and psychological health, longer life expectancy, increased quality of social life, better familial relationships, and reduced violence between men. Potentially, Connell's (1995) framing of hegemonic and subordinated masculinities keeps us close-minded on how we frame masculinity, which inadvertently dictates our treatment and relationships with different types of masculinities. Ultimately, those who educate the youth should provide a safe environment for them to express their emotions without fear or judgment from other children, and especially the adults around them.

With the rise of right-wing influence in America and across the West, it is more important now than ever to create a safe space for children to share their emotions. As seen, men feel threatened when being emotional, which leads to rationalization, which creates rigidity in their tolerance of accepting other types of masculinities (McQueen, 2017; Siedler, 1989). Although Connell's (1995) conceptualization of hegemonic masculinity is a helpful framework to identify the connection between homophobia and masculinity, we will

ultimately have to change the way we frame masculinity if we expect boys to center their masculine identities around a more accepting and caring form (McCormack, 2001). Never again should we see the anguish Jack and Ennis were forced to go through as a result of the hegemonic group that assumed its position by subordinating gay men.

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## Emma Fontes

Emma is a graduating senior at Stonehill College with a double major in Psychology and Criminology. She is passionate about the role and needs of juveniles in the criminal justice system. While at Stonehill, Emma gained valuable experience through her internship with the Department of Youth Services. She was also Vice President of the Criminology Club, studied abroad in Italy, and a Tutor with Stonehill Tutoring Services. Following graduation, Emma hopes to pursue her PsyD and continue advocating for the needs of juveniles.

### **The Role of Short-Term Secure Detention in Promoting Rehabilitation for Justice-Involved Youth**

Juvenile detention facilities in the United States occupy a uniquely contested institutional space: they are simultaneously tasked with ensuring public safety, complying with legal mandates, and providing meaningful rehabilitation to some of the most vulnerable young people in the country. Whether short-term secure detention can serve as a genuine vehicle for rehabilitative intervention—or whether its inherent coercive structure undermines that goal—remains one of the central unresolved questions in juvenile justice policy and practice. This literature review examines that question across five domains: the historical purpose and evolving philosophy of juvenile detention; the documented impact of detention on youth outcomes including recidivism, mental health, and education; the role of structured routines and staff relationships in shaping the custodial environment; the delivery of educational programming in secure settings; the use of behavioral incentive systems and therapeutic skill-building interventions; and the distinctive challenges posed by short lengths of stay. Taken together, the evidence suggests that while detention carries significant risks of harm, carefully structured short-term facilities can provide stabilizing services and relational supports that contribute to positive youth outcomes—provided that they are designed with rehabilitation as a genuine operational priority and that services are effectively bridged to the community upon release.

## **Literature Review**

### **Purpose and Philosophy of Juvenile Detention**

The juvenile justice system in the United States was founded on a rehabilitative philosophy that distinguished youth from adult offenders on the basis of developmental capacity and moral culpability. The establishment of the first juvenile court in Cook County, Illinois, in 1899 marked a formal institutional departure

from treating young offenders as miniature adults. Instead, it positioned the state as a therapeutic authority responsible for guiding wayward youth toward prosocial development. Progressive Era reformers—sometimes referred to as “child savers”—argued that delinquency was a product of environmental deprivation and family dysfunction rather than moral failing, and that the appropriate response was supervision, education, and reform rather than punishment. The doctrine of *parens patriae*—the state as parent—undergirded the original design of the juvenile court, which positioned the state as a benevolent guardian charged with acting in the best interest of the child rather than as a punitive institution (Jaros, 2019). This framework encouraged discretionary, individualized responses to delinquency and prioritized treatment over incarceration. However, Jaros (2019) also highlights the double-edged nature of *parens patriae*, noting that its broad discretionary reach has historically been used to extend state control over youth—particularly status offenders—in ways that blur the line between care and punishment. The very flexibility that allowed the juvenile court to adapt individualized interventions also enabled the imposition of open-ended confinement on youth who had committed no criminal act. This raised enduring questions about the relationship between benevolent intention and coercive state power.

The rehabilitative consensus that characterized the early juvenile court began to erode significantly in the 1980s and 1990s, as political rhetoric around rising youth crime rates fueled a wave of “get tough” punitive policy reforms (Feld, 1999). Legislative changes during this era included the expansion of transfer and waiver provisions allowing juvenile offenders to be prosecuted as adults, the imposition of mandatory minimum sentences for certain juvenile offenses, and the introduction of blended sentencing schemes designed to bridge the juvenile and adult systems. Mears et al. (2015) examined public attitudes toward juvenile justice using survey data and found that while Americans express support for rehabilitation in principle, they simultaneously endorse punitive measures, reflecting a “balanced” but often contradictory set of expectations for the juvenile system. This duality has shaped juvenile detention policy in important ways, producing facilities that are architecturally and operationally punitive while maintaining rhetorical commitments to treatment and reform. Teske (2020) offers a particularly instructive case study through Georgia’s juvenile justice reform efforts. A collective decision-making approach was deliberately designed to de-politicize crime and punishment policy, enabling evidence-based reforms to advance without the electoral pressures that typically push juvenile justice systems toward greater punitiveness in response to high-profile cases or moral panics about youth crime. Teske’s analysis illustrates that durable rehabilitative reform requires not only ideological commitment but also structural insulation from political dynamics—findings that highlight the fragility of rehabilitation-oriented policy in the absence of sustained institutional support.

Cox (2019) offers a critical analysis of reformist and humanist rhetoric within juvenile justice, arguing that discourses of rehabilitation are often deployed to legitimize rather than genuinely challenge the conditions of confinement. Cox contends that structural critique is frequently eclipsed by individualized therapeutic interventions that pathologize youth rather than address systemic inequities, and that reforms framed in humanistic language often leave the carceral infrastructure itself intact. This perspective challenges practitioners

and policymakers to consider whether rehabilitative programming within detention constitutes meaningful reform or simply more humane management of confinement—a question with direct implications for how short-term secure facilities evaluate and present their own practices. At the same time, scholars such as Laird (2021) have pointed to international juvenile incarceration models—particularly those in Scandinavian countries—that demonstrate the viability of genuinely rehabilitative, non-punitive secure facilities. In these models, secure facilities are typically smaller in scale, more community-integrated, and staffed by trained social workers and educators rather than corrections officers, producing markedly better outcomes across recidivism, mental health, and educational domains. Laird’s comparative analysis offers a framework for evaluating the American system against international standards of practice and for identifying the structural features of detention that are most amenable to reform. More recently, Kimbrell et al. (2023), in a systematic review and meta-analysis of restorative justice programs in juvenile justice, found positive outcomes including reductions in recidivism, suggesting that philosophically restorative approaches—centered on repairing harm, restoring relationships, and reintegrating youth into their communities—can be operationalized even within formal justice settings. These divergent theoretical frameworks—rehabilitation, deterrence, retribution, and restorative justice—continue to compete for dominance in juvenile justice policy, and the tension among them is visible in the daily practices of facilities where punitive and therapeutic functions are simultaneously required of the same institutional space.

### **Impact of Short-Term Detention on Youth Outcomes**

A substantial body of research has examined the effects of juvenile detention on youth outcomes, including recidivism, mental health, and educational continuity. The overall picture is mixed but leans cautionary: while some structured interventions show promise, the act of detention itself—particularly pretrial or short-term confinement—has been associated with a range of negative consequences. Gilman et al. (2021), in a rapid evidence review, found that detention exposure was associated with increased recidivism, worse mental health outcomes, and greater educational disruption, particularly for youth without prior services or family support. The authors conclude that detention should be used sparingly and only when necessary for public safety, as its collateral harms may outweigh its deterrent or rehabilitative benefits for many youth.

McCormack and Evans (2016) similarly found that juvenile detention increases the likelihood of reoffending, particularly when youth are exposed to delinquent peers during confinement. This criminogenic peer influence effect—sometimes described as “deviancy training”—represents one of the most frequently cited risks of congregate secure detention. When antisocial youth interact intensively with one another, they may reinforce delinquent attitudes, normalize criminal behavior, and form networks that persist after release.

The mental health consequences of detention are also well-documented. White et al. (2016) found that detained adolescents demonstrate disproportionately high rates of mental health disorders, yet access to treatment during and after confinement remains inadequate. Duchscher et al. (2022) conducted a pilot study specifically examining a mental health intervention gap in juvenile detention, documenting that youth in

detention frequently experience symptoms of anxiety, depression, trauma, and behavioral dysregulation that go unaddressed due to limited clinical resources and brief detention stays. This gap is particularly consequential because untreated mental health conditions during detention are associated with increased risk of reoffending, institutional misconduct, and difficulty reintegrating into educational and community settings after release. Udell et al. (2017) further identified structural barriers—including lack of transportation, insurance, and health literacy—that prevent detained and recently released youth from independently accessing mental health care in their communities, underscoring the importance of linkage to services during the detention period itself.

### **Structured Routine and Staff Relationships in Detention Settings**

Despite the documented risks of detention, researchers have also explored conditions under which a structured custodial environment may provide stabilizing or even therapeutic benefits for some youth. Crawford et al. (2018), drawing on routine activity theory—which holds that delinquency is most likely to occur when motivated offenders, suitable targets, and the absence of capable guardianship converge in time and space—found that the nature of an adolescent’s daily routine significantly influenced delinquent behavior. Specifically, the presence of structured, prosocial activities and bonding to conventional institutions reduced the likelihood of delinquency. Their findings suggest that for youth from chaotic or under-resourced households, the predictability and structure of a detention setting may temporarily reduce exposure to criminogenic environments by replacing idle, unsupervised time with scheduled activities, providing consistent adult oversight, and fostering engagement with prosocial routines—even if the setting itself introduces new risks.

Clear and consistently enforced behavioral expectations are a foundational feature of most juvenile detention environments. These expectations typically govern movement, communication, participation in programming, and interpersonal conduct, and are communicated through orientation processes, posted rules, and daily staff interactions. When enforced with fairness and relational warmth rather than arbitrary authority, such expectations can provide youth with a framework for understanding and navigating social norms—a particularly important function for adolescents who have lacked consistent structure at home. Walden (2019) conducted qualitative research at a short-term juvenile detention facility and examined how correctional staff members incorporated rehabilitation into their everyday practices. They found that staff who viewed their role as relational and educational—rather than purely custodial—were more likely to engage youth in ways that supported behavioral change. Staff relationships, daily routines, and consistent behavioral expectations emerged as structured and meaningful components of the rehabilitative environment, operating alongside or in place of formal programming. This aligns with developmental research suggesting that adolescents benefit from predictable environments, clear expectations, and warm but authoritative relationships with adults.

Luna et al. (2022) examined the role of coercion in juvenile justice settings and argued that reducing coercive practices—including verbal threats, physical restraints, and punitive room confinement—while replacing them with positive behavioral support approaches can improve institutional climate and youth behavior. Their

perspective from within a juvenile facility offers a practitioner-aligned analysis of how staff culture and behavioral philosophy shape the therapeutic potential of detention environments.

### **Educational Programming in Secure Detention**

Education is among the most consistently emphasized components of rehabilitative programming in juvenile detention, and research documents both its importance and the substantial barriers to its effective delivery. Sullivan (2018) provides an overview of the landscape of educational systems within juvenile detention centers, noting significant variability in quality, curriculum, credentialing, and instructional hours across facilities. For example, some facilities offer accredited coursework aligned with state standards and employ certified teachers, while others provide little more than supervised study halls with limited instructional support. Many detained youth enter facilities already significantly behind grade level, and the disruption of incarceration—such as school changes, record transfers, and credit gaps—can compound existing academic deficits and reduce the likelihood of re-engagement with schooling upon release.

Miller (2019) specifically examined the challenges of providing special education services within juvenile detention facilities, finding that a disproportionate number of detained youth have Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) or qualify for special education services. However, detention facilities frequently lack the staffing, resources, and coordination with sending schools necessary to fulfill those legal obligations. The failure to provide legally mandated special education services represents both a civil rights concern and a missed rehabilitative opportunity, as unaddressed learning disabilities and academic frustration are themselves associated with behavioral problems and recidivism.

The relationship between educational engagement and institutional behavior is also well-supported. Engstrom et al. (2020) found that youth with higher educational attainment committed fewer institutional infractions during detention, reinforcing the idea that academic investment serves a stabilizing behavioral function within the facility itself. This connection between schooling and conduct underscores the importance of not only providing education in detention, but ensuring its quality. In that regard, Zee (2016), in a synthesis of forty years of research on teacher self-efficacy, found that teachers' beliefs in their own instructional effectiveness significantly influenced student academic adjustment and classroom outcomes. This finding has direct implications for juvenile detention education programs, where recruiting and retaining skilled, self-efficacious educators is a persistent challenge. The quality and confidence of instructors in detention classrooms may be as important as the curriculum itself in determining whether detained youth experience educational gains during their confinement.

### **Behavioral Incentive Systems and Prosocial Skill Development**

Behavioral management systems, including point-based level systems and incentive structures, are widely used in juvenile detention facilities to promote compliance, reward prosocial behavior, and create structured pathways for earned privileges. Richardson et al. (2025) examined youth perceptions of incentive systems in

juvenile probation settings and found that adolescents responded most positively to incentives that felt meaningful and individualized—particularly those involving increased autonomy, relational recognition from staff, and tangible privileges. Their findings highlight the importance of involving youth in shaping the reward structures designed to motivate them, as externally imposed incentives may have limited value if youth do not personally find them reinforcing.

Luna (2022) advocates for the integration of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in juvenile justice settings. PBIS is a tiered behavioral framework, originally developed by Sugai and Horner (2002) for use in school settings, that emphasizes proactive instruction in expected behaviors, consistent reinforcement of prosocial conduct, and data-driven decision-making rather than reactive punishment. In a detention context, PBIS might be operationalized through clearly posted behavioral expectations, daily point sheets, staff-delivered praise, and graduated privilege systems tied to behavioral goals. Luna argues that reducing punitive responses and replacing them with structured, positive reinforcement systems improves both youth behavior and facility climate. Their analysis of the behavioral science literature suggests that consistent, immediate reinforcement of prosocial behavior is more effective than punishment-based approaches in producing lasting behavioral change—a conclusion consistent with decades of operant conditioning research.

Prosocial skill development is increasingly addressed through both behavioral incentive systems and structured therapeutic interventions. Docherty (2022) found that improvement in emotional regulation during detention significantly predicted lower recidivism rates following release, suggesting that targeting specific emotional and cognitive skills during confinement can yield durable outcomes beyond the facility. Yang et al. (2023), in a scoping review of Dialectical Behavior Therapy (DBT)—a structured skills-based treatment that teaches mindfulness, distress tolerance, emotional regulation, and interpersonal effectiveness—in juvenile correctional and detention facilities, found growing evidence for the feasibility and preliminary effectiveness of DBT with justice-involved youth, particularly in addressing emotional dysregulation, self-harm, and interpersonal conflict. Folk et al. (2023) further piloted a comprehensive DBT program for adolescents in a juvenile correctional treatment center and reported reductions in behavioral incidents and improvements in coping skills among participants. Heynen (2025) conducted a meta-analysis of moral developmental interventions for youth engaged in delinquent behavior and found moderate effect sizes for programs targeting moral reasoning, empathy, and perspective-taking. These results are significant because moral reasoning deficits and limited empathic capacity are among the most consistently identified risk factors for continued delinquency; interventions that produce gains in these areas may support not only behavioral compliance within the facility but also the broader prosocial reorientation associated with long-term desistance from crime. Finally, Liu (2024) found that youth who developed stronger communicative bonds with non-parental adults during incarceration—including staff and counselors—demonstrated lower recidivism, underscoring the rehabilitative potential of relational skill-building even within short-term custodial settings.

## **Challenges of Providing Rehabilitation in a Short Length of Stay**

One of the most frequently noted limitations in the literature on juvenile detention is the difficulty of delivering meaningful rehabilitation within a brief and often unpredictable length of stay. Walden (2019) specifically examined short-term detention facilities and found that the abbreviated timeline posed significant challenges for both staff and programming, making it difficult to establish rapport, complete therapeutic curricula, or coordinate follow-up services. Staff in their study reported adapting their rehabilitative practices to focus on immediate skill-building, stabilization, and relationship-building rather than on long-term behavioral change, recognizing the structural constraints of the setting. While Walden notes that these adaptations were reported as helpful by staff, the authors also acknowledge that systematic outcome data on their effectiveness were limited, leaving open the question of whether brief, relationship-focused approaches translate into measurable reductions in recidivism or improved post-release functioning.

Duchschere et al. (2023) documented the mental health intervention gap in juvenile detention in part as a consequence of brief stays, noting that youth may be screened and assessed but released before treatment can be meaningfully initiated. The gap between identification of need and commencement of services is a systemic problem that is particularly acute in short-term facilities, where youth may cycle through in a matter of weeks. Udell (2017) highlighted that even when services are initiated during detention, the transition back to the community represents a critical point of vulnerability as many youth face structural barriers to continuing care independently.

Gilman et al. (2021) similarly concluded in their evidence review that the benefits of detention-based interventions are frequently undermined by insufficient duration, incomplete service delivery, and inadequate reentry planning. The question of continuity of care—whether services initiated during detention are sustained following release—emerges as one of the most important determinants of whether detention-based rehabilitation translates into lasting outcomes. Taken together, the literature suggests that short-term detention facilities face a fundamental tension: they must attempt to deliver meaningful services in a compressed and uncertain timeframe, while simultaneously managing the risks of confinement itself. Policy and practice responses to this challenge include developing brief, modular intervention curricula designed for short stays, strengthening coordination with community providers prior to release, and reexamining the conditions under which short-term secure detention is warranted at all.

## **Conclusion**

The literature reviewed here makes clear that short-term juvenile detention is neither inherently rehabilitative nor irredeemably harmful. Its impact on youth depends substantially on the conditions within the facility, the quality and intentionality of programming, the relational orientation of staff, and the robustness of reentry planning. The evidence supports a cautious but not dismissive view of detention-based intervention: structured routines, skilled educators, evidence-based behavioral and therapeutic programming, and relational staff practices

each carry meaningful rehabilitative potential, particularly for youth who lack stability and support in their home environments. At the same time, the risks of criminogenic peer influence, mental health deterioration, educational disruption, and insufficient service duration are real and must be actively mitigated. The challenge for practitioners and policymakers is not simply to make detention more humane, but to design short-term facilities that function as genuine bridges to prosocial development—connecting youth to the skills, relationships, and community resources they need to desist from delinquency long after their release. Future research should prioritize longitudinal outcome studies that track the post-release trajectories of youth who received specific evidence-based interventions during short-term detention, as well as comparative analyses of facility-level factors that moderate those outcomes.

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## Emily Gundler

Emily is a graduating senior at Stonehill College, where she double majored in Psychology and Criminology. She is a member of the Edwin H. Sutherland Criminology Honor Society and Lambda Epsilon Sigma Honor Society. During her time at Stonehill, she interned at Bridgewater State Hospital, where she gained valuable experience with psychoeducational groups, therapeutic interventions, and interdisciplinary treatment in a secure psychiatric setting. Upon graduation, Emily will begin the Clinical Mental Health Counseling master's program at William James College with a concentration in forensic and correctional counseling. Emily is passionate about helping underserved populations and hopes to build a career in forensic mental health, providing care to individuals either in a prison facility or throughout their reentry process.

### **Ending the Detention and Criminalization of Human Trafficking Victims in Thailand**

Human trafficking remains one of the most significant human rights challenges worldwide, affecting millions of individuals through forced labor, sexual exploitation, and other various forms of coercion. Although countries have made substantial economic and social progress, trafficking continues to thrive where vulnerable populations lack adequate legal protection and access to resources. Thailand, a Southeast Asian country with a population exceeding 71 million people, has undergone significant economic and social transformation in recent decades (World Health Organization, n.d.). To improve development indicators, the Thai government has invested in education reforms, leading to improved literacy rates (UNICEF, 2022). Overall living standards have risen through diminishing poverty rates and economic opportunities, yet deep-rooted social and political challenges continue to disproportionately affect marginalized groups, increasing their vulnerability to exploitation (The World Bank, 2025). The social, economic, and legal factors that contribute to human trafficking in Thailand expose critical gaps in the country's current anti-trafficking framework, demonstrating the need for a formal non-punishment policy that protects trafficking victims from criminal liability while strengthening victim-centered interventions.

#### **Economic Development and Inequality**

Thailand's economic status now falls within the upper middle income and has transformed rapidly through the modernization of industries and an export-led economy (The World Bank, 2025). From 1960 to 1996, Thailand's economy grew an average of 7.5 percent annually. Due to the Asian Financial Crisis between 1999 and 2005, economic growth then slowed to an average of 5 percent annually (The World Bank, 2025). Along with economic growth, the average income per capita increased exponentially, starting at \$740 in 1980 and growing to \$7,080 in 2019. This has led to a noticeable increase in living standards, particularly in urban areas, as well as the

national poverty rate dropping from 42.5 percent in the year 2000 to 6.3 percent in 2021 (The World Bank, 2025). This economic growth has created a desirable environment for people from outside regions to migrate to Thailand. Although poverty reduction slowed after 2015, the percentage of individuals living below the upper-middle income poverty line of \$6.85 per day continued to decline, falling from 14.6% in 2015 to 8.5% in 2023 (The World Bank, 2025). Although Thailand has had an improvement in their standards of living through economic development, the country is currently facing significant economic and social challenges characterized by both high inequality in wealth, as well as slowing economic growth. According to recent data, wealth is highly concentrated within urban areas, and the richest 10 percent of the population controls 75 percent of the country's wealth (The World Bank, 2025). This has led Thailand to be one of the most unequal nations in the world. Simultaneously, Thailand's economic momentum is weakening year by year due to the combination of global trade distributions, reduced export demand, slowing domestic consumption, and a lull in tourism rates. As a result, Thailand's gross domestic product growth is projected to decline to 1.8 percent in 2025, and even further to 1.7 in 2026 (The World Bank, 2025). Deep-rooted inequality poses a severe threat to sustainable economic progress and overall cohesion as a nation.

### **Education System and Youth Inequality**

Over the last 25 years, Thailand's education system has made substantial progress in broadening basic education and diminishing the attendance gap between socioeconomic groups (The World Bank, 2011). All children in Thailand receive 12 years of free education, in addition to three years of pre-primary schooling. From 1990 to 2011, the enrollment rate for children in secondary school rose dramatically, starting at 31 percent and later reaching 78 percent of the population under 18 years of age (The World Bank, 2011). In addition, there were more female students (82%) enrolled in school than males (74%). Although there was increased stress on the quality of education given to young students, the knowledge needed to prepare students with the skillsets and expertise to acquire jobs, such as working in skilled trades and healthcare, was lacking (The World Bank, 2011). In 2011, one third of 15-year-old Thai students were borderline illiterate and unable to comprehend the meanings of passages they had just read. This particular issue was most commonly seen in rural, village schools where 47 percent of 15-year-old students were deemed illiterate (The World Bank, 2011). Smaller schools tend to have increased issues with providing quality education due to a lack of teachers, school materials, and an absence of physical infrastructure (The World Bank, 2011). As of 2022, Thai literacy rates rose to 98 percent and by grade 9, 91 percent of children achieved foundational literacy skills (The World Bank, 2022; UNICEF, 2022). While literacy rates are increasing, children from poor and rural villages are still underperforming in comparison to those in urban and wealthy areas. At all school levels, rural and poor children have completion rates below the national average (UNICEF, 2022). Additionally, 82 percent of children from the richest quintile complete upper secondary education compared to only 23 percent of children from the poorest quintile (UNICEF, 2022). There are also 48 percent of children between the ages of 7 and 14 living in households with no child-oriented books, hindering their opportunities for literacy and reading development (UNICEF, 2022). Despite Thailand's notable progress in

expanding access to education and improving literacy rates, significant disparities persist between socioeconomic and geographic locations. As a result, individuals from these backgrounds may become more vulnerable to exploitation, as limitations increase the likelihood for Thai citizens to search for more promising educational opportunities elsewhere.

### **Minority Groups and Marginalization**

The demographic makeup of Thailand consists of many minority groups, one in particular being the Hill Tribes that typically reside in rural, northern Thailand. In the 1950s, Thais “discursively separated lowlander ‘Thais’ from upland minorities” by using the term Hill Tribes (Morton & Baird, 2019, p. 10). These ethnic minorities are made up of the Akha, Hmong, Iu-Mien, Lahu, and Lisu people and have been further rejected by the Thai government for disrupting their uniform Thai-Buddhist country (Morton & Baird, 2019). Due to being labeled as such, these individuals face several challenges obtaining Thai citizenship and have extremely little political representation beyond their particular villages. A study conducted in 2008 showed that only 62 percent of the one million Hill Tribe population have Thai citizenship (Morton & Baird, 2019). Over the years, the Thai government has made efforts to reduce the divide and unify the people by changing the term Hill Tribes to Mountain Thais; however, social and political polarization persists and these communities continue to face marginalization through government policies and limited political representation (Morton & Baird, 2019). As in many other countries, minority groups are often pushed away from the land in which they reside due to the mistreatment and stigma surrounding them. This ultimately creates potential for exploitation and vulnerability.

While there is little gender imbalance within the Thai population, the issue of gender inequality continues to impede opportunities for the advancement of women. The rate of women in the labor force is only 59 percent in comparison to men who have a 75 percent participation rate. Although there are fewer women, they typically spend 3.2 times more of their lives completing unpaid domestic work, leading them to be more vulnerable to coercion and exploitation with little personal financial income (World Bank Group, 2023). Additionally, the representation of women in Thailand is below the average for most East Asia and Pacific upper middle-income countries, coming in at 15.7 percent (World Bank Group, 2023).

### **Political Instability**

There is a plethora of political issues within the region, including a recent history of political upheaval in Thailand and instability of neighboring countries. In 1997, the Thai government implemented a relatively new constitution that was innovative for its time, incorporating human rights concerns and issuing checks and balances. Less than a decade later, from 2005 until 2014, Thailand experienced considerable political instability that began when former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra (2001-2006) engaged in tax evasion (Hewison, 2014; BBC, 2025). Political demonstrations turned to riots in 2005 and ended when the Thai military overthrew and banned “a pro- Thaksin Shinawatra elected government,” leading to intense political restrictions (Hewison, 2014, p. 1).

After the coup d'état in 2006, the Thai military set forth a new constitution that would eventually be replaced by a revised constitution in 2007. The 2007 constitution was put in place to prevent “any Thaksin-like domination of electoral politics,” however, when the pro-Thaksin parties continued to win elections, the military proceeded to discard this constitution in 2014 (Hewison, 2014, p. 2). The years of protest birthed two groups: the “yellow shirts”, which were later known as the People’s Committee for Absolute Democracy (PCAD), and the “red shirts”, which were composed of the pro-Thaksin United Democratic Front Against Dictatorship (UDD). There were countless rebellions that resulted in the loss of hundreds of lives and thousands injured, and ultimately ended in censorship and inequality (Hewison, 2014). The political conflicts and divisions that emerged during this period highlight the complexity of Thailand’s governance and social climate. These broader structural conditions provide important context for understanding the challenges associated with addressing exploitation and protecting vulnerable populations.

Political instability within Thailand is not unique to the region; neighboring countries experienced similar and more detrimental issues. In relation to the regional political instability impacting Thailand, Myanmar had a brutal civil war due to a military coup that began in 2021 (United Nations, 2025). Since then, roughly a third of Myanmar’s population, or around 20 million people, are expected to require humanitarian assistance and 15 million are anticipated to experience dire food insecurity in 2025 (United Nations, 2025). In addition, the fight between junta forces and armed opposition groups has been estimated to displace over 3.5 million of its citizens (United Nations, 2025). Many of those displaced seek refuge in neighboring countries, including Thailand, where limited legal protections and economic opportunities can increase vulnerability to exploitation. As a result, regional political instability contributes to migration patterns that are pivotal to understanding the persistence of human trafficking in Thailand.

### **Natural Disasters and Climate Vulnerability**

Natural disasters commonly impact Thailand. An earthquake hit Thailand in 2025, causing significant damage to neighborhoods, hundreds of deaths, and missing people (United Nations, 2025). Thailand is also susceptible to flooding, such as the devastating floods that took place in 2011. These caused many deaths and nearly \$46 billion of damage, which is over 12 percent of Thailand's GDP (The World Bank, 2025). With the effects of climate change expected to increase the frequency and severity of natural disasters, more individuals may experience displacement, financial insecurity, and limited access to essential resources. These conditions can increase vulnerability to exploitation by creating circumstances in which traffickers are more likely to target those seeking safety and employment.

### **Vulnerable Populations at Risk of Trafficking in Thailand**

Despite Thailand's significant economic growth and it being a major destination for migration over the years, thousands of individuals, both its citizens and those from other countries, fall victim to the various forms of exploitation and deceit used by human traffickers daily. There are a multitude of regional factors within Thailand

that increase the likelihood of innocent individuals being trafficked, firstly being from disadvantaged and poverty-stricken communities. When it comes to the transportation of trafficking victims, traffickers will typically construct routes from poorer regions into more urban and industrialized ones (Kara, 2009). Traffickers within Thailand in particular will bring people from outside countries or rural areas into bigger, major cities such as Bangkok in order to facilitate human trafficking.

Poverty within Thailand was exacerbated from 1997 to 1998 due to the unemployment rate tripling and the International Monetary Fund, or IMF, increasing interest rates to approximately fifty times greater than it was previously (Kara, 2009). IMF cuts on social welfare programs combined with a 50-80 percent increase in the price of staple foods resulted in large riots by citizens and starvation on many different levels (Kara, 2009). This economic instability led many families to desperation as they were unable to obtain jobs to provide for their families and to afford the cost of living to keep their families alive.

Thailand changed with globalization, resulting in desperate migrants being “easily exploited in sweatshops, construction projects, manufacturing jobs, and brothels” (Kara, 2009, p. 29). Rather than benefiting equally from economic growth, many migrants experienced exploitation as traffickers took advantage of their need for work and limited access to legal and social protections. Current trends for migrants involving Thailand have drastically changed since 2019 due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the military takeover in Myanmar (International Organization for Migration, 2024). These trends have made it clear that a large sector of migrants is often excluded from the labor force. They are also excluded from social protection due to the lack of implementation and enforcement of legal safeguards. When this occurs, migrants are susceptible to low or no wages, excessive hours or hard labor, and the threat of punishment (International Organization for Migration, 2024). These conditions force vulnerable people to work against their will and be susceptible to exploitation.

Along with poverty, women and children are at high risk of being exploited and trafficked. Across the world, millions of people are displaced from their homes due to civil wars, genocides, natural disasters, and other calamities. Out of those individuals, 9.9 million live in refugee camps, with women and children accounting for 72 percent of this population (Kara, 2009). This disproportionate representation reflects the heightened vulnerability of these groups- a condition further exacerbated by the prevalence of gender-based violence in rural areas where law enforcement response is often limited (Kara, 2009). As women and children are forced to flee for their safety, they often face extreme desperation, increasing their likelihood of accepting traffickers’ deceptive job opportunities.

Another group which faces vulnerability to human trafficking is minority groups, specifically the Hill Tribes within Thailand. The Hill Tribes were among the most frequently trafficked and enslaved population. These individuals rarely found justice due to the criminal justice system being racially biased against them (Kara, 2009). Kara (2009) explains that “exploiting them for labor was similar to exploiting animals [and] enslaving them for sexual exploitation was an unabashed statement of racial superiority” (32). This characterization highlights the extent to which racial discrimination has contributed to the dehumanization of Hill Tribe communities, increasing their vulnerability to both labor and sexual exploitation.

### **Forms of Human Trafficking in Thailand**

The two main ways in which vulnerable populations are exploited in Thailand are through sex trafficking and labor trafficking. According to Thammasiri (2024), 70 percent of sex trafficking victims are adult women, 30 percent are children, and 40 percent are of ethnic minorities. Sex trafficking most commonly occurs in brothels or hotels within Thailand. The brothels commonly hold between 20 and 50 slaves at any given time. They all stand behind a wall of glass in a room called an "aquarium" waiting to be selected, typically by men, to perform sexual favors (Kara, 2009). Hotels are also a very prominent mode of sex trafficking used in Thailand. Many times, when walking into a hotel, men are solicited by traffickers offering up young and fresh girls that could be delivered to their rooms for as low as \$10. Mafias within Asia will also partake in trafficking individuals, specifically from Mekong Subregion countries into Thailand in order to sexually exploit them (Kara, 2009). Specifically, in the case of child sex trafficking, families experiencing extreme poverty are manipulated by traffickers into giving up their child, typically a girl. Families may also voluntarily give them up due to debt bondage that their families have carried with them (Davy, 2014). Children looking to escape impoverished areas are lured into the sex trafficking industry. Females are especially vulnerable to leaving rural towns and being sex trafficked since they hold a unique role in traditional family structures that allows them to seek employment in Bangkok to support their families financially back home (Davy, 2014). When tasked with the primary responsibility of supporting their families, many women are driven to seek employment in any available sector, which increases their exposure to exploitative working conditions and human trafficking. In a study on sex workers in Southeast Asia, Davy (2014) found that one third of all sex workers are between the ages of 12 and 17. Sex tourism within Thailand has always been a growing phenomenon and has only increased with the globalization of Thailand, the increase in communication, and global travel.

Labor trafficking is also a prominent form of human trafficking used in Thailand, specifically within the fishing industry. Those being trafficked within the labor force are typically men ranging from the ages of 20 to 29 (U.S. Department of Labor, 2024). Thai fishing exports mainly source shrimp, fish, and other fishery products and many of the men on these ships undergo extreme physical abuse, such as beatings and being thrown overboard (Stringer et al. 2022). They are forced to work long, excruciating hours and some are subjected to sexual abuse (Stringer et al., 2022). The majority of labor trafficked men are deceived into working on fishing boats due to brokers in Cambodia and Thailand promising them monthly wages; however, on arrival, migrants from

neighboring countries are sold falsified documents and forced into trafficking through debt bondage (Stringer et al., 2022).

There are also accounts of refugee camps within Thailand where tens of thousands of individuals from Burma fled from “military oppression, rape, incarceration, and murder” and found themselves in “filthy, crowded, and depressing” environments where refugees were not allowed to leave or seek employment (Kara, 2009, pp. 7-8). Because of this entrapment, refugees are offered and accept job opportunities, such as working on fishing boats, as they have no other opportunity for employment. Kara (2009) explains that they understand the risks of working in these slave-like conditions, but do not believe there are other ways out of the refugee camps.

### **Existing Anti-Trafficking Policies and Prevention Efforts**

There are multiple mechanisms in place to prevent human trafficking in Thailand, one being the “Leave No One Behind” principle in regard to protecting migrants. Embedded in Thailand’s sustainable development goals, the principle involves the unique needs of migrants, children, women, and those of differing sexual orientations and gender identities (International Organization for Migration, 2024). By promoting inclusive policies and improving access to essential services, the initiative aims to reduce the vulnerabilities that increase the risk of human trafficking. Along with this, the PROTECT Project aids in preventing human trafficking in the digital world amongst Thai youth (United Nations, 2025). This project, organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, is funded by the European Union and supported by the International Labor Organization, UN women, and UNICEF. There was roughly \$37 billion worth of losses to cyberfraud in East and Southeast Asia in 2023 by criminal groups utilizing AI in order to scam people (United Nations, 2025). In most cases, these scammers are targeting young victims to lure them into human trafficking. University students, migrants, government and law enforcement officials, as well as community leaders convened in Bangkok in 2025 to develop strategies to raise awareness and prevent technology from being used for human trafficking recruitment (United Nations, 2025). Along with these programs, there are also policies in the Thai government that have been enacted in order to fight this long-lasting issue. The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act was adopted in 2008, which “criminalizes all forms of trafficking and prescribes severe penalties for offenders, including imprisonment and fines” (Thammasiri, 2024, p. 14). Additionally, Sections 282 and 283 of the Thailand Penal Code sets penalties for those who engage in these activities to deter potential traffickers (Thammasiri, 2024). Lastly, there is also the Anti-Money Laundering Act from 1999, which aims to combat financial transactions linked to trafficking activities, disrupt trafficking networks, and halt the economic incentives that drive human traffickers (Thammasiri, 2024).

### **Limitations of Current Policies and Enforcement Gaps**

Although Thailand has enacted policies and programs in order to decrease human trafficking, it is still a prevalent issue. The Prevention and Suppression of Human Trafficking Act from 2008 established harsh punishment for traffickers; however, this is not entirely the case. Thailand has no financial penalty for sex

trafficking and jail sentences rarely exceed four years in length (Kara, 2009; U.S. Department of State, 2024). Additionally, prostitution is illegal in Thailand; however, law enforcement in Bangkok has been known to turn a blind eye and tolerate commercial sex in tourist areas (Hung, 2023). They have been reported taking bribes from traffickers and even partaking in sex acts with victims of sexual exploitation. There was a bill drafted in 2023 to legalize sex work in Thailand for women over the age of 20, which would help protect women from the exploitation of human trafficking as they could involve themselves in sex work on their own volition (Hung, 2023). On the other hand, there are police in Thailand who genuinely aim to combat human trafficking; however, the primary funding in anti-trafficking methods does not cover the costs of training police. The Thai government has little funding for law enforcement and cannot supplement the foreign funds to train officers on anti-trafficking efforts (Kara, 2009). Police are also not permitted to perform “proactive investigation or raids on sex-slave establishments; they could only respond to complaints from the community or escaped sex slaves” (Kara, 2009, p. 39). Most commonly, traffickers would use intimidation tactics on these vulnerable people, and since there was also a lack of protection for them, less than ten percent of victims would come forward (Kara, 2009). These shortcomings demonstrate that the effectiveness of Thailand’s anti-trafficking response is constrained not only by gaps in enforcement, but also by insufficient protections for victims.

### **Policy Proposal and Target Audience**

The potential policy being proposed to further aid those affected is to end the detention and criminalization of human trafficking victims in Thailand. Weak victim protection procedures, particularly the use of immigration detention and the criminal prosecution of victims for offenses committed as a direct result of their trafficking undermine investigations, increase the re-trafficking of victims, and reduce the trust and cooperation that is necessary to dismantle trafficking networks. This proposal will adopt a formal non-punishment policy for victims of human trafficking, no matter their immigration status or age. Survivors must not be detained or criminally charged for acts committed as a direct consequence of being trafficked, including foreign trafficking victims, and ensure they will not be further victimized. Additionally, victims will be provided with resources such as education, employment, legal assistance, safe housing, and medical care. The rationale behind this policy is to prevent re-victimization, increase trust and cooperation amongst survivors, reduce harm, and provide victims with adequate resources.

The primary audience for this policy recommendation is Thai law enforcement leadership and the members of the Royal Thai Government, particularly the Immigration Bureau, Ministry of Justice, and Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, who are responsible for drafting or amending legislation. Secondary audiences include international partners and funders, national and international NGOs providing victim services, and community leaders and media who shape public opinion.

### **Policy Rationale and Need for Reform**

The main issue lies with Thailand placing victims of human trafficking in detention centers and arresting

victims, whether they be Thai citizens or foreigners, “for unlawful acts committed as a direct result of being trafficked in these illicit operations” (U.S. Department of State, 2024, para. 1). This is a systematic issue that affects innocent migrants from different countries, as well as its own citizens. Thailand reported identifying 381 trafficking cases (316 sex trafficking, 27 forced labor, and 38 unspecified forms of exploitation), prosecuting 647 suspected traffickers (547 for sex trafficking, 94 for forced labor, and 6 for unspecified forms of exploitation), and convicting 360 traffickers (U.S. Department of State, 2025). Statistics on the number of trafficking victims who have been convicted remain unknown. Official identification gaps and practices have led to survivors being prosecuted instead of being provided with the resources they need. These practices expose survivors to further abuse and discourage cooperation with law enforcement, leading to traffickers slipping through the cracks and never being identified. Replacing detention and punitive responses with medical assistance, legal support, reintegration services, child protection, and repatriation services will aid victims of trafficking with their healing process and a chance at a better life (United Nations, 2024).

The new policy to end detention and criminalization of trafficking victims is necessary because Thailand has statutory protections against trafficking, including the Anti-Human Trafficking Act (2008) and obligations under the Palermo Protocol, yet implementation gaps remain. Thailand’s Anti-Trafficking In Persons Act was intended to broaden the definition of exploitation so that it would include sexual exploitation, the production and distribution of pornographic content, slavery, forced begging, forced labor, and organ trading (Association of Southeast Asian Nations, 2008). It also said it would extend application to all persons, whether they were legally allowed in the country or not and provide resources to victims. Reports have shown that Thailand has not met these promises. Additionally, Thailand ratified the Palermo Protocol in 2013 which emphasizes the protection and assistance of victims. Once again, there have been reported cases of victims being placed in detention centers, being prosecuted, and arrested for committing crimes as a result of being trafficking and coerced (U.S. Department of State, 2024). Thailand’s trafficking laws have strengths, being they highlight the important factors of protecting victims and actively try to end human trafficking, as well as their involvement with international organizations. Unfortunately, as previously stated, the country is inconsistent in the implementation of these practices which further harm the victims who need help. They are also inconsistent with identification of victims, have issues with corruption in law enforcement, and provide limited access to resources to promote long term rehabilitation. Criminalizing survivors undermines trust, deters the process of gaining pivotal information, and leads to cases where traffickers are never identified or prosecuted. In turn, this perpetuates networks of exploitation. Strengthening the non-punishment principle is essential, both as a human-rights obligation and as a strategy to improve investigations and disrupt trafficking networks.

### **International Examples of Non-Punishment Policies**

Several countries have successfully reduced the detention and criminalization of human trafficking victims by adopting victim centered, non-punitive policy frameworks. The Netherlands allows identified trafficking victims to obtain temporary residence permits that protect them from prosecution for immigration or prostitution-

related offenses and provide access to healthcare, employment, and shelter. (Netherlands - United States Department of State, 2024). These policies have increased victim cooperation and reporting in the Netherlands. Sweden's Nordic Model shifts criminal liability away from trafficked individuals by criminalizing the purchase of sex rather than its sale, formally recognizing exploited persons as victims and expanding access to social services instead of incarceration (Egestål & Wild Thongsonti, 2021). Additionally, municipalities working with NGOs and other government agencies provide medical and psychological care, shelter, and social assistance for its citizens and undocumented immigrants, aiding in their rehabilitation process and decreasing further victimization. Immigrants, who are the majority of identified victims, have the opportunity to receive these resources for themselves and their families, as long as they are willing to cooperate with authorities (Sweden - United States Department of State, 2024). Lastly, Canada further demonstrates effective alternatives by issuing temporary residence permits or special visas to trafficking victims, shielding them from deportation and detention while granting access to medical care, counseling, and legal employment without requiring cooperation with law enforcement (Immigration, 2006). Collectively, these approaches demonstrate that ending the detention and criminalization of trafficking victims improves victim identification, strengthens trust in authorities, and enhances the overall effectiveness of anti-trafficking efforts.

### **Impacts of the Proposed Policy**

There are a multitude of different impacts this policy will set forth. Examples of the intended impacts include a reduction in arrests and detention of human trafficking victims, greater referral to protective services to aid in rehabilitation, and increased reporting by survivors. Additionally, impacts should include higher-quality evidence due to the increased cooperation in trafficking investigations, leading to more prosecutions and convictions of traffickers rather than of victims. More long-term impacts can include reduced re-trafficking, improved reintegration outcomes for survivors, strengthened public trust in law enforcement and social services, and an overall decrease in trafficking prevalence as criminal networks are disrupted.

### **Policy Implementation and Funding**

Implementation of the policy would require coordinated action among government agencies, NGOs, and international partners. The Immigration Bureau of Thailand would need to revise detention and deportation policies to ensure trafficking victims are exempt from immigration enforcement and transferred immediately to protective services. Law enforcement officers and prosecutors would be required to undergo mandatory training on victim identification, trauma-informed practices, and the principles of non-punishment amongst victims. Funding could be obtained from international sources, the United Nations, or reallocation of current government spending used for the prosecution of victims to instead expand shelters, medical services, legal assistance programs, and employment support initiatives. NGOs and international organizations would play a central role in delivering these services and monitoring progress for victims. Implementation would follow an 18-month timeline beginning with legislative reform and funding allocation, followed by training programs,

expansion of victim services, and finally full enforcement. Potential challenges include financial costs, social stigma surrounding trafficking and sex work, and corruption within law enforcement which can be addressed through public awareness campaigns, community engagement, stricter oversight, and accountability mechanisms to reduce corruption.

## **Conclusion**

Thailand's significant economic development and influence stand in clear contrast to the persistent exploitation of vulnerable populations through human trafficking. Despite comprehensive legal frameworks and international commitments intended to combat trafficking, gaps in implementation undermine these efforts and perpetuate cycles of exploitation. Detaining survivors not only violates human rights principles, but also weakens investigations, discourages victim cooperation, and allows trafficking networks to continue operating with impunity. Adopting a formal non-punishment policy would represent a critical shift toward a victim-centered approach that aligns Thailand's practices with international standards. By ending the detention and prosecution of trafficking survivors and expanding access to protective services, Thailand can increase trust in authorities, improve victim identification, and strengthen the prosecution of traffickers rather than their victims. Ultimately, prioritizing protection over punishment is both a moral imperative and an effective strategy for disrupting trafficking networks, reducing re-victimization, and encouraging long-term stability within Thailand.

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## Madison Quenneville

Madison is a rising senior accounting major, double minoring in criminology and data analytics. She is commonly seen working at the MacPhaidin Library or the Office of Health and Wellness. She is the president of Take Back the Night and lead liaison for the Peer Health Educator program. During her time at Stonehill, she has interned at the Take Back the Night Foundation, AAFCPAs, and Transparency International. After graduation, she intends to have a career in forensic accounting while devoting time to advocacy work.

### The Dogs are Out: K-9s in Police Work

Police dogs, also known as K-9s, are used in a multitude of cases, such as search and recovery operations, detection of illegal possessions, and apprehension of individuals (AKC, 2024). Historically, dog handling as a fear tactic is used to marginalize populations and enforce power dynamics. Police dogs are considered a “byproduct of police departments failing to provide officers with adequate training for dog interactions,” (Kaatz, 2014, p. 824). Due to a lack of awareness and training on the topic, the criminal justice system has allowed prejudice to persist with the violent usage and implementation of canines, especially regarding interactions with vulnerable populations. Through the Vulnerability-Stress Model, a historical overview of the usage of canine policing, and comparative analysis of other working dogs, this paper highlights the difficult feelings people may have in the presence of a police dog and proposes new ways to implement trauma-informed canine policing.

The Vulnerability-Stress Model, also termed the Diathesis-Stress model, is a psychological framework developed in 1977 by Joseph Zubin and Bonnie Spring. Biological factors, environmental stressors, and protective factors were emphasized in the model, stating that someone of a vulnerable disposition has a lower threshold for stress, leading to explosive responses or mental health disorders (Demke, 2022). The psychologists stated genetic disposition to mental illness and traumatic situations led to a high likelihood of abnormal behavior. In terms of criminality, deviant behavior can take effect when someone struggling from mental illness is faced with an intense situation. Protective factors are considered buffers an individual may use to help with stress-management, decision-making, and consistency. When an individual lacks protective factors, they may be subjected to risk factors that encourage dangerous behavior and instability. The presence of risk factors leads to increased vulnerability with experiencing or perpetrating violence (CDC, 2024). Canines on scene can be seen as a hostile force and lead to escalation due to the potential for violence.

## Literature Review

### Contextual Implications of K-9 Studies

The strengths and weaknesses of police dogs in the workforce lack concrete statistical data, as there is no national database or documentation of police dog incidents (Marie-Ordway, 2021). K-9 incidents vary based on location and precinct, lacking a streamlined concept of harm. As individuals are labeling systemic problems, databases such as The Marshall Project are being compiled. The Marshall Project, a nonpartisan news source, seeks to spotlight the criminal justice system for equitable changes and conversations, developing media such as “A Dog Can Be Trained to Be Anti-Black” (The Marshall Project, n.d.). The Marshall Project has conducted investigative journalism on the matter and stated that “dogs have served as instruments of violence” (Vansickle et al., 2020). Through investigative work, there is more discussion regarding the role of K-9s in the field.

### Racial Perception of K-9s

Subjugating populations and administering canine force is paramount throughout history. Noticeably, canines were used to hunt slaves who ran away. During the Civil Rights movement, pictures of police canines attacking black youth during the non-violent 1963 Alabama Children’s Crusade led to global outrage (Wall, 2016). More recently, between 2005-2013, police dogs have led to the hospitalization of 3,600 people, disproportionately being black males (Remkus, 2020). The Baton Rouge police department was proven responsible for the assault of teenagers by a K-9 every three weeks between 2017-2019 (Wasilczuk, 2023). Police agencies have profited from the historical fear of canines, taking minimal steps to change their image when they can be used as a deterrent from crime. Sociologist Tyler Wall states, “police have more respect for dogs than they do people,” which emphasizes the dehumanization of the black subpopulation by using and praising dogs to enforce power (Wall, 2016). Through the continual harm against black people, negative sentiment has been passed down generationally, cautioning to stay away from police and police dogs.

Police dogs’ historical past leads to fear, rippling through other demographics, such as the Latinx and Jewish communities. In the U.S. the Latinx community is overrepresented in statistics of K-9 violence, and some departments such as the Bakersville police, have had their canine altercations clustered in Black/Latinx communities (ACLU California Action, 2024). While the addition of K-9s to branches has been seen as a transformative experience, providing police officers with sidekicks, it repackaged the previous devastation felt by many. Besides the U.S. weaponization of canines against marginalized groups during slavery, Nazis favored the German Shepherd. Using them as guard dogs in concentration camps, Nazis encouraged hostile behavior as a method of domination against the Jewish population (Skabelund, 2008). Throughout Europe, dogs were an offensive tool in colonization. Marginalized populations are bitten the most by K-9s, which highlights the profiling still transpiring (Wasilczuk, 2023). The consistent violence of K-9s reinforces the fear people, both innocent and guilty, have towards them. The Marshall Project has determined most K-9 victims were either

innocent, non-violent, or suspected of minor crimes (Remkus, 2020). Due to the severity of a canine attack, caution is needed when implementing this force, especially when someone may be innocent.

### **Societal Experiences of K-9s**

Consequently, the societal perspective of police dogs has reinforced the menacing and unapproachable perception of officers with police dogs. In a study about officers with and without K-9s, participants noted officers pictured with a K-9 were “significantly less approachable” and elicited fear of a threat (Sandrin et al., 2022). The responses from Sandrin’s study highlighted potential for situations to be exacerbated as individuals feel like they are already in danger. When officers make no steps to acquaint K-9s with society and display their positive characteristics, society is more likely to have uneasy demeanor around them. The presence of K-9s impairs the public perception of the officer they are with as well, characterizing them as a powerful and dangerous individual capable of inflicting pain.

### **Dismantling the Super-Dog Archetype**

Data highlights the inaccuracy of K-9s and discretion of implementing them in cases. Assumptions presume K-9s are instrumental in investigation, yet many researchers have debunked this. An Australian study noted 93% of the time that individuals with ecstasy were near police dogs, they were unnoticed (Jezierski et al., 2014). While conducting a study with different canine breeds, all passed by an illegal substance 2-3 times and had the highest accuracy rate with marijuana (Jezierski et al., 2014). The data suggests that more concrete methods are needed and human deliberation whenever canines are present. Also, the decriminalization of marijuana in various states changes the relevance of this study. Dogs alerting for marijuana may heighten a scene if an officer reacts and causes panic for the recipient, completely elevating a situation otherwise benign of illicit activity. Canines also had the highest rate of false alerts while searching in cars, all concerning the question of why K-9s would be a vital source in enforcing the law (Jezierski et al., 2014). K-9s can aid in some police investigations, yet there needs to be human nuance before assuming canines have total accuracy.

### **Vulnerability-Stress Model**

Subsequently, police dogs lead to heightened responses to mental health and drug-related cases, as reinforced by the Vulnerability-Stress model. When describing this model, Zubin and Spring (1977) emphasized the somatic symptomology of experiencing an acute stress experience, regardless of its duration, coupled with biological vulnerability. Research has explored additional factors, like self-efficacy, which can be defined as the personal drive and resilience an individual may have. When the protective factor of self-efficacy is missing from the individual's life, stress and genetic components can be devastating and lead to higher anxiety (Schiele, et al., 2020). When there is a small degree of natural resilience, individuals are also susceptible to affective disorders (Rodgers, 1990). Increased stress around police is linked to deviant behavior, and with the combination of a canine, there can be violence trying to protect oneself. Police officers who report higher stress fit the

vulnerability-stress model, leading to erratic emotions and increased use of force (Otto & Gatens, 2022). When an officer is predisposed to stress and is handling a canine, it can contribute to an escalation of violence. While law enforcement can be grueling, officers wield an authoritative position, and a canine adds to their threatening position. Nix highlights a crucial piece of information that may be part of the reason why injuries with canines are occurring.

### **Comparative Analysis of Working Dogs**

Conversely, service dogs, like support canines for veterans, receive mental health focused training. Some K-9s- referred to as station dogs or school ambassadors- receive training in emotional support but are a smaller segment of the population. Emotional support K-9s are used to mitigate the high trend of mental illness in police officers and to reverse the adverse effects of the job (Ridderbusch, 2024). There is an emphasis on emotional support canine effort for officers. Additionally, studies have been conducted about the effectiveness of canine-assisted therapy in traumatic cases, gathering positive results from youth participants (Dravnsnik et al., 2018). Dravnsnik's study is an example of how police dogs can be reimplemented as a friendly companion during cases with child victims or bystanders. Moreover, emotional support dogs for PTSD veterans led to lower isolation, higher resilience, and higher companionship abilities (Nieforth et al., 2021). It is discussed that there is an adjustment period, where those around the service canine need to educate and integrate the new addition into their life. Health benefits for the veteran's family may also be minimal which highlights the difference between individualistic and community-based service canines (Nieforth et al., 2021). Officers with exposure to service dogs (focusing on physically and emotionally supportive dogs for disabilities) have a fonder attitude toward police dog wellness programs (Sandrin et al., 2022). Other forms of emotional support dogs reinforce that police dogs can be implemented to interact positively with the public.

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

The Vulnerability-Stress model, historical usage of canines, and differences in working dog implementation all call to action a new era of police dogs. From the generational transmission of fear and usage of K-9s even when accuracy is questionable, many may feel dehumanized when K-9s alert them as suspicious. Individuals with a vulnerable disposition (from a mental illness or being on an illicit substance) involved with a K-9 wielded by an authoritative officer can lead to a heightened incident, and inability to regulate.

The research above implies that there is a general misconception of police dogs. Many would assume it is advantageous for the police force to use dogs, but studies fail to validate this with data. In many ways, the harm conducted by a police dog is due to the cruelty of the handler. As canines are unable to talk and advocate for themselves, their handlers should be ensuring the safety of the dog and civilians. Officers should be mindful of the power they possess, having a living companion to aid them in their work.

Consequently, from a social justice perspective, little is being done to condemn stereotyping and bias. Canine force is an example of deceptive racism, which has become part of typical life. When systems in place are

not trying to dismantle longstanding issues, they contribute to the problem. In this case, policymakers and higher-ups in the police force can alter canine implementation. Policy, training, advocacy, and better empathy of the situation can lead to improvements, yet the people who have the power are silent.

Research is limited to the harm of police dogs, or different implementation of them in the police force. Literature reviews of the racial and social context of K-9s are staggering, eliciting viewpoints that police dogs are counterproductive. Streamlining data of K-9s, especially accuracy rates and physical engagements with civilians, would allow for more accurate research to be conducted. The intersectionality of culture and police dogs is foundational, and research should shift to efficient jobs for dogs in the workforce. Research has been delving into the potential for K-9s to aid human trafficking or white-collar crime searches, procuring evidence such as computer hardware. Focusing dog implementation on crimes related to children would also encourage a better public image and shift in generational fear long-term.

Policing and public health intersect, with the hope of regulating human behavior for the common good (Gatlin, 2004). Understanding the psychological causation canines have for mental health cases can lead to improved policing procedures. Police well-being dogs have been known to lead to improved resilience and stress (Elkins, 2023). The benefits derived from animal-based support are extensive; if police dogs were reframed with specialized training and community input, the perception of police can be changed altogether. Training should be geared towards entire police departments with a canine unit, so all officers on scene are able to deescalate situations. Moreover, civilians and trained professionals in trauma should be given a platform in the curriculum development, to ensure the main point of trauma-informed approaches is being properly handled. It is questionable that police dogs lack emotional support training like PTSD dogs do. Blending public health and policing concerns, dogs can be used to calm all parties in stressful situations. Well-being police canines can work towards dismantling historical pain and inspiring a new policing culture.

The research explored various issues with current police canine usage and the impacts it has on civilians. Many ethical issues come to mind when using animals as a deterrent for crime, jeopardizing the safety of the animal and society. The research implies that national data and accountability need to be legally mandatory. More public health scrutiny should engage with how police dogs are used and what emotions they are meant to elicit. While it is understandable how police dogs are meant to make criminals think before acting, and they aid in solving crimes, intimidating innocent people is self-defeating. Law enforcement often lacks awareness of how they are perceived, or how difficult it can be to act appropriately when you are in a fearful state. Deviant behavior can arise at the worst times from strain, and with the inability to regulate, legal implementation needs to be in place for struggling individuals not to get harmed.

K-9s are a common figure of the American police force, and the most noticeable of working dogs. Overarchingly, this paper establishes that dogs have not always been man's best friend; they have been many people's experiences of plight and trauma. With the historical connotation of attack dogs and oppression, along with previously developed literature, this paper highlights the disparities when K-9s are on scene, especially for

mental health-related cases. Through the Vulnerability-Stress Model, there is scientific reasoning to explain the heightening of fear and erratic behavior in humans in the presence of a police dog. This leads to discussion about public health and safety and how police canines can be repackaged as beneficial, friendly faces to encourage positive, rather than negative, police-community interaction.

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## Interview with Cameron Burke

Assistant Professor of Criminology

By: Andrew Poulin and Jordan Bidga

Professor Cameron Burke started as an Assistant Professor in the Criminology Department at Stonehill College in the fall semester of 2025. Previously, Professor Burke worked as an adjunct professor for the same department since the fall semester of 2024.

Starting his academic career here in Easton, Professor Burke graduated from Stonehill College in 2017 with a B.A. in Criminology. He received his M.A. in Criminal Justice from the University of Massachusetts Lowell and continued at UMASS Lowell as a doctoral teaching fellow while pursuing his Ph.D. in Criminology and Criminal Justice. Professor Burke specializes in restorative justice, focusing specifically on the implementation of restorative justice in the context of sexual harm on college campuses.

During his time at Stonehill, Professor Burke served as the treasurer for the Criminology Club. He was also the PRINTS Editor-in-Chief from 2016-2017. Professor Burke also participated in the LION program, which gave him the opportunity to study abroad and intern with the Victimology Society of Serbia.

Professor Burke always knew that he wanted to teach. Specifically, at a liberal arts college with small class sizes, like Stonehill. He also wanted to have close relationships with his students, like he did while he was a student. Professor Burke chose to teach at Stonehill because he already loved the Criminology Department. After coming back to campus, he felt comfortable, but not like he was back too soon. Professor Burke hopes to continue researching with students through the SURE program if the opportunity arises.

### **What does your research focus on?**

Professor Burke's research centers around restorative justice, relating to sexual harm on college campuses. For his dissertation, Burke interviewed campus-based victim advocates in regard to their opinions on accountability and justice pertaining to campus sexual harm. In our interview, Burke emphasized the barriers to achieving justice in terms of institutions' desires to maintain a positive reputation. Moreover, he described the

concept of institutional betrayal, whereby institutions fail to respect survivor autonomy, causing survivors to experience further harm. Institutional betrayal can arise from a lack of options available to survivors, as well as from issues with existing options. Some examples include when schools discourage or fail to encourage reporting, a lack of transparency, or sanctions disproportionate to what the survivor wants. Burke related the idea of restorative justice to allowing the survivor to "drive the car"; that is, providing them full autonomy and support regarding how they proceed in the aftermath of their experiences.

### **What classes do you teach?**

Professor Burke currently teaches three classes at Stonehill: Critical Introduction to Criminal Justice, Sexual Violence, and a criminology seminar on Race, Class, and Gender. He has also taught Criminological Theories. In the fall, he is teaching Criminological Theories again, as well as Restorative Justice as a Topics in Criminology class.

### **How do you bridge the gap between criminological theories and practical criminal justice fieldwork?**

There are significant practical implications of the concepts Professor Burke has researched. In our interview, Prof. Burke noted that the theoretical approach of restorative justice is different from the traditional criminal justice approach. Restorative justice, he explained, is internal and survivor driven. Moreover, in a practical sense, restorative justice is a continuum of practices. There are a wide variety of options available to survivors, and the practical focus of restorative justice is ensuring that survivors feel heard, in control of their choices, and that they have the most options possible regardless of how they proceed.

### **What advice do you have for Stonehill students?**

Professor Burke's biggest piece of advice for students is to enjoy their experience at Stonehill. He highly recommends connecting with faculty. During Burke's time at Stonehill as a student himself, he recalled feeling especially inspired by Prof. Ann Marie Rocheleau of the Criminology Department. In the same way, Burke emphasizes the importance of having relationships with his own students and so encourages students to get to know their professors. He recommends that students participate in internships during their time at Stonehill and noted that knowing your professors can also be a valuable way to obtain them.



## The Martin Institute Presents: Federal Law Enforcement Panel

By: Ava Cutler

The Martin Institute hosted a Federal Law Enforcement Panel on November 6, 2025 featuring Professor Laura Kaplan, Professor Michael McCall, and U.S. Marshal Dominic Gentile. It was a great turnout, with members from the community, Stonehill students, and faculty in attendance. Professor Katie Currul-Dykeman moderated the event, and began by asking each speaker to summarize their career paths.

Laura Kaplan, who teaches Federal Criminal Processing and a Terrorism class at Stonehill, is a recently retired U.S Attorney. She attended the Washington College of Law where she received her Juris Doctor. She reflected on different experiences, like interning in a maximum state prison, and doing contract work for an airline in Florida, that helped push her in the direction of becoming a U.S Attorney. She also worked at the Brooklyn DA's office for a few years in the sex crimes unit, and also at a law firm in Manhattan working in civil litigation, sexual exploitation of children cases, and organized crime. Ultimately, she made the move to Boston to be with family and worked in the U.S Attorney's office for 22 years where she mainly tried organized crime and terrorism cases. Now retired, she works as an adjunct professor in the Criminology Department at Stonehill.

Professor Michael McCall, who teaches in the Accounting Department as well as the Criminology Department, teaches White Collar and Cyber Crime courses. He is a retired FBI agent. He is originally from South Jersey and attended Ruckers College for a degree in Accounting. He didn't always know what he wanted to do after college until he landed a job working with the Federal Government in the IRS Bureau with special agents. It expanded his horizons and allowed him to explore other opportunities within the government. He became a special agent in the FBI and eventually got placed in Boston. McCall discussed his involvement in investigations on Pete Rose, a baseball manager who had been found guilty gambling on games, as well as the 9/11 investigation where he helped detain the 3 cars used by the terrorists that took them to Logan Airport. He is extremely proud of his job and is passionate about how it gave him the ability to protect the United States and uphold the Constitution.

The third guest speaker, Dominic Gentile, is a U.S Marshall. He is from Brockton and started off his career as a police officer. He then transitioned to work in the Secret Service when an agent reached out to him after observing him give testimony in court. He emphasized, much like Kaplan and McCall, to never turn down

opportunities that come your way, especially in the criminal justice field. If it weren't for the agent approaching him after trial, he would have never considered applying to be in the Secret Service. He moved to Washington D.C and was placed in the White House. After working there for a while, he transferred to Boston and traveled on different flying missions around the world. He worked on counterterrorism cases in Boston and Rhode Island. He also explored his passion of teaching through different education programs he facilitated for federal government agents on the use of firearms, active shooter drills, defense tactics, and the use of force in the field.

Kaplan, McCall, and Gentile, throughout the panel gave advice and discussed what they found to be the most rewarding and challenging aspects of their careers. Kaplan explained how, as a federal prosecutor, it can be hard to be so devoted to a case- providing evidence and witness lists- just for it to be turned down by a judge. She stated it is crucial to have patience and dedication, and that you have to be prepared to be in it for the long run in any case you're invested in. The most rewarding aspect of her job was working with victims and bringing them justice. McCall felt rewarded working as an FBI agent and getting to be a part of teams like the evidence response team, healthcare fraud, and disaster scenes. He expressed how important it is to nourish your individual skillsets because they will set you apart from others and you never know what asset someone is looking for in a job. Gentile explained how the initial process of getting his job was the most challenging, it was long and he had to get used to the mobility of traveling. The most rewarding parts for him come from bringing closure to victims and making a difference in keeping people safe and preventing crimes.

Kaplan, McCall, and Gentile were all extremely knowledgeable and passionate about their careers. Each of them suggest to anyone that wants to work in the federal government to expand your network, don't be afraid to introduce yourself, and understand that where you start may not be where you end up. Getting your foot in the door and getting experiences under your belt is what will make someone a good candidate in the field. There are always active job postings and recruiting events that they urge people to explore. They advise students to always take constructive criticism and learn from it to continuously improve yourself.

