

ASSESSMENT OF PSYCHOPATHY IN THE CARIBBEAN:
A PUERTO RICO CASE STUDY

by

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To my dear mother.

Thank you for all that you do.

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Psychopathy is a personality disorder characterized by a lack of empathy and concern for others. This disorder represents a particular issue for the criminal justice system because, as previous research has demonstrated, it poses as a risk factor for criminal behavior and recidivism. However, most of the research on this topic has been conducted in the United States and Canada and experts in the field suggest careful attention should be paid when addressing this topic in other areas where cultural and ethnic differences come into play. This qualitative study addresses psychopathy in the Caribbean, particularly in Puerto Rico where there is a substantial lack of research in this area. Through qualitative interviews with psychologists in Puerto Rico, the present study explores the manifestation and prevalence of psychopathy within the Puerto Rican context, its importance to the Puerto Rican criminal justice system, and how the literature on psychopathy in Puerto Rico can be advanced.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Research Problem

Over the last two decades, there has been a marked increase in studies addressing psychopathic personality disorder and its relation to criminal behavior (Fanti et al., 2018). Since the vast majority of studies developed on this topic were conducted using North American samples, particular interest has been devoted to understanding the prevalence of psychopathy, its manifestation and its significance within the criminal justice system across different cultural environments and ethnic groups (Fanti et al., 2018). However, the literature remains fairly limited, as particular attention to the problem is mostly concentrated in European countries (Cooke, 1998; Endrass et al., 2008; Habermeyer et al., 2010; Pham & Saloppe, 2013), where efforts are made to test the efficacy of the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R), the “gold standard” for measuring the psychopathic personality disorder. In Latin America, research on psychopathy has been conducted in Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela, Chile and Brazil (Maldonado et al., 2014). Nevertheless, it appears that European countries have paid substantial close attention to this issue in comparison to Latin American and Caribbean countries. Some scholars have hypothesized that lack of a research culture in these countries could be a contributing factor to the differences in scientific research development in general (Ciocca & Delgado, 2017).

Ciocca and Delgado (2017) noted that Latin American and Caribbean countries showed great disparities in modern research production in comparison to North American and European countries, and cited economic inequalities, political instability, and even high levels of corruption as barriers to the development of a stable scientific and productive research

community. These disparities in research production may be a part of a larger problem that began centuries ago with the colonial regime of the Iberoamerican continent during the 1600s that affected the production of scientific knowledge in this region at a time when empirical journals started to emerge in Europe, an issue that is still present in modern Latin America, including Spanish speaking countries in the Caribbean such as Cuba, Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico (Cetto & Alonso-Gamboa, 1998).

The scientific study of psychopathy, as it has been demonstrated through numerous research findings (see Patrick, 2018), represents a particular issue not only to mental health agencies but to the criminal justice system as well. According to Dr. Robert Hare, the developer of the PCL-R, a psychopathy diagnosis constitutes a significant risk factor for violent behavior and criminal recidivism (Hare, 1999). In fact, Maldonado et al. (2014) noted that, while individuals identified as psychopaths make up about 1% of the general population, they represent a large proportion of the prison population in North America. Nevertheless, it must be noted that scholars remain cautious when estimating the prevalence of psychopathy in the general population, as studying the condition outside prison settings imposes several challenges (Haycock, 2014). Efforts in understanding the prevalence of this condition in prison settings and the general population should not be taken lightly, as a proper diagnosis has significant implications regarding public and criminal justice policies, treatment strategies, evaluations for risk of recidivism and parole board decisions.

Latin America, including Spanish speaking countries from the Caribbean, has been recognized as “one of the most violent regions in the world” (Cruz, 2016: 376). Much of this spike in violence has been attributed to economic factors and social inequality, drug related

violence, cultural factors and even violence perpetuated by the state (Cruz, 2016; Vilalta, 2020). The influence of psychopathy in violent behavior in these countries has not been addressed thoroughly (Fanti et al., 2018) In addition, previous research suggested that Hispanic populations, including Puerto Rico, had a lower prevalence of psychopathy and violent antisocial behavior in general in comparison to North America (Canino et al., 2000; Maldonado et al., 2014). “Familism and extended kinship networks” (Canino et al., 2000:34) were suggested as factors that might contribute to a higher social control for antisocial behavior in Hispanic and Puerto Rican families. However, the study noted that it failed to consider variables such as tendency to underreport engagement in antisocial behavior, and further exploration was needed to evaluate the causal mechanisms of familism in reducing violent antisocial behavior among Hispanic and Puerto Rican families.

The social control aspect that suggests that Latin American cultures have higher social controls in relation to violence seems to be contradictory to what other researchers have found in the study of the prevalence of violence in Latin America that suggest a particular high level of violent behavior in these areas (Cruz, 2016; Vilalta, 2020). Limitations noted by Canino et al. (2000) in their study, in conjunction with previous findings of high levels of violence in Latin America and the Caribbean, and the lack of a well-established research community in these countries could lead to hypothesize if the supposed “lower prevalence” of psychopathy and violence suggested by Canino et al. (2000) and Maldonado et al. (2014) might be due to underreporting and the lack of scientific studies of violence after all. It remains to be seen if a higher prevalence of psychopathy might in fact contribute to the higher violence rates in Latin America.

As it pertains to the Caribbean, the study of violence is often conducted in conjunction with the study of violence of other regions in Latin America that pay particular attention to bigger nations like Mexico, Argentina, Colombia, and Venezuela (Cruz, 2016). Other recent studies addressing violence in the Caribbean focus on independent countries in this region and do not include data from Puerto Rico in their analyses (Izarali, 2018). Puerto Rico constitutes a peculiar case due to its relationship with the United States. Because of its colonial status and the strong American influence, the study of rates of violence in Puerto Rico is often compared to that of the United States in some form or another (Canino et al., 2000; Canino et al., 2019). The “ni de aquí ni de allá” (neither from here nor from there) mentality, a common saying to refer to the island’s status with the United States, can result in difficulties of studying peculiar issues that affect the island, including violence. More specifically, how do we study potential explanatory factors for violence in Puerto Rico? For example, as stated above, Canino et al. (2000) indicated that Hispanic populations tend to have a lower prevalence of antisocial behaviors in general in comparison to North American populations and noted familism as potential explanatory factors for this supposed lower prevalence. But other studies suggest a higher level of antisocial and violent behavior in Hispanic countries, including Puerto Rico (Vilalta, 2020). In addition, statistics on violence in Puerto Rico tend to analyze this data comparing it to rates of violence in the United States (Sin Comillas, 2020). Is the study of violence in Puerto Rico comparable to that of other independent areas of the Caribbean? Is it comparable to Latin American countries? Do we address the issue from a North American standpoint?

The criminal justice system in Puerto Rico, influenced by the federal criminal justice system, should consider the study of violence as a priority in order to incorporate effective,

evidence-based policies aimed at dealing with the violence crisis, as the rise in violent crimes has started to interrupt several areas of normal social life (Sin Comillas, 2020). For example, in 2020 there was a 62% increase in homicides related to gender violence in comparison to 2019, which has prompted people to be out on the streets protesting and demanding more action from the police and the government (Observatorio de Equidad de Género, 2020). Furthermore, as of July 25, 2021, there was a total of 326 homicides, 38 more than the previous year by the same date (El Nuevo Día, 2021). Having in mind the empirical evidence supporting the influence of psychopathy in predicting violent behavior (Douglas et al., 2018), exploring the role of this phenomenon and its influence in the violence occurring in Puerto Rico could be useful in the development of new criminal justice policies to target violent crime, as well as expanding empirical knowledge regarding influential factors of violence in the Caribbean and Latin America, and the manifestation of psychopathy in other cultural environments apart from European and North American countries.

In Puerto Rico, the literature available addressing psychopathy is limited to only three published articles and one unpublished doctoral dissertation (González, 2001; Maysonet-González, 2007; López, 2013; Maldonado et al., 2014). These articles primarily focus on emphasizing the need for more empirical studies to test the validity and reliability of the PCL-R in the Puerto Rican context as well as the prevalence of the disorder in the general population and within prisons around the island. This can have several implications because Puerto Rico, as being an unincorporated territory of the United States, receives funding from the federal government. According to a report from the 2018-2019 Fiscal Year, the budget for the Puerto Rico Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation was set at \$404,977,000 and around

\$1,900,000 came from federal funding (Gobierno de Puerto Rico, 2019). Since this budget includes mental health services and treatment programs to rehabilitate offenders, it is imperative that resources are distributed and assessed properly to ensure that offenders are being assigned to the correct services according to their needs. As it pertains to this study, a wrong diagnosis, or an undiagnosed psychopathic individual may result in assignment to incorrect treatment programs and uninformed parole board decisions. Empirical studies are needed to understand the possible mechanisms that influence the manifestation of psychopathy in Puerto Rico, its prevalence and how can this be addressed from a criminal justice policy perspective. These issues can not be targeted without first evaluating how can empirical studies be developed in the first place and which barriers may compromise the efforts of evaluating psychopathy as an influential factor in criminal behavior in Puerto Rico.

Research Purpose

As a qualitative study, the purpose of this project is to conduct a case study evaluation of Puerto Rico and the absence of empirical literature on psychopathy, a personality disorder where marked emotional deficits are present and is often associated with high risk for criminal behavior (Haycock, 2014). A case study is defined by Bogdan & Biklen (2003) as a comprehensive evaluation of one specific setting. As a case study evaluation, this study will focus on conducting semi-structured interviews with psychologists in Puerto Rico with experience working in forensic settings as well as experience studying personality disorders and violence. This study seeks to resume the conversation on how the literature on psychopathy can be advanced by prompting new empirical studies to identify the prevalence of psychopathy in Puerto Rico, how

the PCL-R can be applied to the Puerto Rican context and what is its importance within the criminal justice system on the island.

In addition, Hare (2003) emphasized that careful consideration should be employed when interpreting empirical findings regarding psychopathy among groups for which the PCL-R has not been standardized or validated. This study aims to consider Hare's cautionary remarks by suggesting the standardization of the PCL-R in Puerto Rico as a mean to contribute to the literature on ethnic and cultural differences on the manifestation of psychopathy and its influence on criminal and antisocial behavior. As Fanti et al. (2018) noted, despite the growth in international attention towards psychopathy, more international studies are essential for understanding the etiology of this disorder and how culture and ethnic variations can influence its manifestation and prevalence. Having this in mind, this study seeks to encourage new steps towards the evaluation of psychopathy and its effects on violence in Latin America and the Caribbean in general by addressing the dearth of literature regarding psychopathy in Puerto Rico.

Research Questions

The research questions that the present study seeks to explore are: Why is it important to understand the prevalence of psychopathy in Puerto Rico within the criminal justice context? How can we begin the conversation to create more studies to fill the gap in the current literature on psychopathy in the Caribbean? And finally, what are the possibilities of standardizing the PCL-R in Puerto Rico as a way to understand how psychopathy may be present in the island? This will be done through one-on-one semi-structured interviews with psychologists in Puerto Rico who have experience working as forensic psychologists and/or experience studying personality disorders and their relation to violent behavior.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychopathy Definition

Attempts made at properly defining and understanding what psychopathy is and what it entails can be traced back to 1801 when Philippe Pinel, a French pioneer of today's psychiatry, developed the term *manie sans delire* to describe a mental condition in which delirium or delusions were not apparent (Schulsinger, 1972). This condition began to be studied in the United States and gained substantial empirical attention by the early 20th century (Dinwiddie, 2015). By 1941, American psychiatrist Hervey Cleckley published what it became arguably the most influential book in modern literature on psychopathy: *The Mask of Sanity*. According to the second edition of the book, the psychopathic individual portrays a specific set of characteristics (See Appendix A) that consist of a notable inability to comprehend or identify with "normal" personal and societal values and lacks an understanding on how to relate to those values (Cleckley, 1964).

However, in the recent literature that builds on the work developed by Cleckley, the term *psychopathy* consists of a personality disorder where individuals exhibit a lack of conscience and acknowledgement of others' feelings (Hare, 1999). More specifically, scholars have conceptualized the disorder as consisting of four dimensions or factors of the personality: a) *interpersonal factors*, characterized by manipulateness, pathological lying, superficial charm, exaggeration of self; b) *affective factors*, where a lack of remorse and empathy are present, along with superficial affection and inability to take responsibility for one's actions; c) *lifestyle*, where a persistent need for stimulation, impulsiveness, absence of realistic long-term goals and a

parasitic lifestyle are present; and d) *antisocial*, characterized by problematic behavior from a young age, absence of behavioral controls, possible juvenile delinquency and criminal adaptability (Neumann, Hare & Pardini, 2015).

Psychopathy and Criminal Behavior

It has long been recognized that psychopathy represents a risk factor for criminal behavior and recidivism (Cleckley, 1964; Hare, 1999; 2003; Haycock, 2014; Neumann, Hare & Pardini, 2015). However, it is important to have in mind that not all individuals with psychopathic tendencies engage in criminal behavior. Individuals that tend to commit criminal acts are categorized by Haycock (2014) in a subgroup referred to as “criminal psychopaths”. This group of people is what most of the literature regarding psychopathy focuses on. But the extent to which psychopathy involves criminal behavior it depends on how a particular society and culture define what this criminal behavior actually is (Fanti et al., 2018). According to Hare (1999), individuals with psychopathic tendencies characterize a particular and notable lack of conscience and regards for others’ feelings and wellbeing; it involves an ever-lasting search for personal gratification, and it is because of this that these individuals violate societal norms and transcend to criminal behavior.

Just as Haycock (2014) explains, people with psychopathic personality disorder who engage in criminal behavior differ from those who do not suffer from the disorder in the way their brains manage emotions. The psychopathic brain, in fact, responds differently to emotional images and circumstances in comparison to the “normal” brain; a notable lack of ability to properly process emotional content and stimuli behind words and experiences is a key feature of the psychopathic brain, something that has been identified through brain imaging studies

showing lower heart rate levels for people with psychopathy when presented with stressful situations compared to those without the disorder that presented an increase in their heart rates when presented with the same situations that caused stressful emotions (p. 130).

It has also been demonstrated through numerous studies in neuroscience, that psychopathy may entail some genetic influences (Haycock, 2014). However, arguing that individuals with psychopathic personality possess genetic differences that influence their behavior carries important legal implications, such as level of culpability for their criminal behavior. In turn, Hare (1999) argues that the “criminal psychopath” is a result of a mix between biological and environmental forces that influence criminal behavior and the individual expression of psychopathy. Additional research also portrays criminal behavior as a correlate of psychopathy, rather than a particular component of the condition (Skeem & Cooke, 2010).

Psychopathy and Cultural Differences

When understanding the manifestation of psychopathy and how it can influence criminal behavior, it is important to note that most of the influential research conducted on psychopathy was done in the United States and Canada, with samples of North American and European American prison populations (Maldonado et al., 2014). For this reason, Fanti et al. (2018) suggest that the possibility of psychopathy being “culturally specific” (p. 529) is often overlooked and while research in this area has increased significantly over the last decades, the task of exploring this venue has stayed withing European and North American societies; there is a persisting need of further exploring cultural conceptualizations of psychopathy in other countries.

According to Maldonado et al. (2014), studies addressing the prevalence of psychopathy and how it influences criminal behavior in Spanish speaking countries have found that the condition has a lower prevalence in Hispanic populations when compared to the United States (p. 13). Furthermore, Canino et al. (2000) noted a lower prevalence of antisocial behavior among Hispanic cultures, including Puerto Rico, hypothesizing that these cultures may possess a protective factor in the form of familism against violent antisocial behavior due to higher rates of social control towards such behaviors. However, as it was noted in Chapter 1, the more recent literature on violence in Latin America and the Caribbean suggest a higher prevalence of violence and criminal behavior in these countries (Cruz, 2016; Vilalta, 2020) in addition to the strong correlation of violent behavior and psychopathy supported by extensive literature on the topic (see Patrick, 2018). Research has yet to explore if this supposed lower prevalence of criminal antisocial behavior in these countries is in fact supported by Canino's (2000) hypothesis or if it is related to a more complicated process of disparities in relation to scientific research productivity between North American and European academia and Latin America and the Caribbean. Specific to this study, how can one be sure that the prevalence of psychopathy in Puerto Rico is relatively low in comparison with North America if the phenomenon has not been empirically addressed in the island?

While the construct of psychopathy has been tested for its validity and prevalence among different Spanish speaking countries (Moltó et al., 2000; Alvarado et al., 2006; Garcia-Valencia et al., 2008; Ostrosky-Solis et al., 2008; Fernandez-Montalvo & Echeburua, 2008; Flores-Mendoza et al., 2008; León-Mayer et al., 2015), more recent empirical studies are needed in order to test the hypothesis proposed by Canino et al. (2000) and to provide further knowledge to

understand the prevalence of psychopathy in different cultural environments, how it influences criminal behavior in those environments and if there are any variations in its manifestation. Furthermore, the wide acceptance and usage in the legal arena of the construct of psychopathy in North America have prompted the consideration of the role of psychopathy in international forensic populations, but most of the studies are concentrated in European countries and less attention has been directed toward Latin American populations (Fanti et al., 2018).

Psychopathy in Puerto Rico

The literature regarding psychopathy in the Caribbean remains extremely limited, even when research findings across the world have suggested how this disorder may pose as a risk factor for criminal behavior (Patrick, 2018). More specifically, empirical studies from the Puerto Rican population addressing psychopathic personality disorder are limited to only a case study and an unpublished doctoral dissertation (González, 2001; Maysonet-Gonzalez, 2007). In fact, from the data obtained from interviews for this study, the 2001 case study about the only known “serial killer” in Puerto Rico has been subjected to criticism since the study was conducted using historical accounts and criminal records to collect the data and does not necessarily portrays the “psychological profile” of that of a psychopathic individual, but rather that of a “serial killer” suffering from other major mental health disorders. Moreover, Maldonado et al. (2014) classified such case study as a study of psychopathy in Puerto Rico, when in reality, the author (González, 2001) makes no mention of psychopathy being a contributing factor for the killer’s behavior. This discrepancy suggests that there are no published studies regarding psychopathy in Puerto Rico. In addition, disparities in scientific research productivity between North America and

Europe in comparison to Latin America and the Caribbean could potentially play a role in the lack of research development, something that was also suggested by participants of this study.

Maysonet-Gonzalez (2007) attempted to tackle this dearth of research by developing a training program directed at capacitating mental health professionals and law enforcement personnel to identify and manage individuals with psychopathic personality disorder. However, the program was not tested for its efficacy and the study was not published, despite revealing the need for training programs of this nature and the need for empirical studies addressing psychopathy in Puerto Rico. Today, what we know about the prevalence of psychopathy in Puerto Rico and its effect on criminal behavior in the island is virtually nothing and there are only two additional mentions that call for the need of empirical studies attending this issue (López, 2013; Maldonado et al., 2014).

This notable lack of research may be troublesome. In 2006, Calderon noted a steep increase in antisocial and criminal behavior in Puerto Rico, contradicting the findings published by Canino et al. (2000). Furthermore, a news article published in 2020 also revealed that 22 homicides per 100,000 residents occur in Puerto Rico, noting the violence crisis occurring in the island (Sin Comillas, 2020). In an additional news article from 2019, Puerto Rico was described as one of the most violent territories of the United States and its violence crisis was comparable to that of other Latin American countries like Mexico (Gil, 2019). That same year, FBI Puerto Rico Director, Douglas Leff, announced in a press conference that Puerto Rico was going through a crisis of violent crime; there were 18 murders reported in the first 8 days of that year (Correa-Velazquez, 2019). The latest report on violent crimes published by the Institute of Statistics of Puerto Rico revealed that as of February 2021, there was a total of 923 reported

violent crimes; 101 of those were murders (Instituto de Estadísticas de Puerto Rico, 2021).

However, a news article published in April 2021 reported that the total number of murders in Puerto Rico increased to 195, 94 more murders in comparison to the 101 murders reported in February of the same year (Primera Hora, 2021).

These statistics and the remarks made by interviewees throughout this study suggest that there is an ongoing crisis of violence happening in Puerto Rico that needs attention from the criminal justice system and mental health system as well, as it has been documented that violence also has an impact on the general public's mental health (Santiago et al., 2014). Empirical articles addressing the prevalence of violence in Puerto Rico have focused on studying its impact on victims' general well-being, including mental health. No recent studies have targeted the mechanisms of violence from the offender's perspective, let alone study the possible influence of psychopathy in their criminal behavior. Addressing this issue is required in order to 1) provide the training necessary to mental health professionals and correctional services providers to ensure that correct treatment and rehabilitative strategies are implemented and 2) provide the criminal justice system in Puerto Rico evidence-based data in order to make informed decisions regarding sentences, rehabilitative efforts, and conditional releases.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

The approach taken for the present study is based on DeLisi's (2009) views that psychopathy itself can be thought of as a unique theory of antisocial and criminal behavior. As a theoretical approach, DeLisi (2009) argues that psychopathy is a "unified theory of crime" (p. 268). In fact, taking away some key points from Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) self-control theory, psychopathy can be thought of as the "profile" that embodies the causes of antisocial behavior described by Gottfredson and Hirschi (DeLisi, 2009).

According to the self-control theory of crime (Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990), antisocial and criminal behavior are influenced solely by one kind of control: self-control. Individuals with low levels of self-control and high levels of impulsivity will be more likely to engage in criminal and antisocial behaviors than those who possess higher levels of self-control (Akers, 2013). DeLisi (2009) proposes that this profile of a criminal individual with poor self-control and high levels of impulsivity is a "watered-down" version of the profile that captures the true essence of the psychopathic personality disorder, where there is a constant need for personal gratification at the expense and suffering of others, even if the gratification itself does not necessarily translate into criminal behavior.

Furthermore, DeLisi (2009) noted that psychopathy as a criminological theory could potentially help researchers understand the mechanisms behind chronic offending. In fact, Fox et al. (2015) attempted to study the psychopathic personality disorder within the scope of life-course and developmental criminology main theories and emphasized that psychopathy itself is a strong predictor of criminal behavior and its stability over the life-course of an individual.

According to research on these theories, their main purpose is to explain antisocial behavior focusing on differences at the individual level and changes over the course of the individual's life, paying particular attention to the combination of changes in developmental stages and age differences, personality, which includes both protective and risk factors for criminal behavior, and life events that may influence engagement in criminal activities, and how these changes may have an effect in the display or engagement in criminal activities over time (Farrington, 2003). However, Fox et al. (2015) emphasized on the absence of psychopathy studies in the developmental and life-course criminology research and proposed that this phenomenon could potentially be a key factor in the explanation of the levels of variation within the main themes explained above that the life-course and developmental criminology focuses on. Fox et al. (2015) attempted to explain how the construct of psychopathy was applicable to the main life-course and developmental criminological theories (p. 277-278) and how it could provide further explanation to understand the emergence of criminal behavior in the first place and its manifestation across several life stages.

While explaining in detail each theory under the life-course and developmental criminology literature would not be ideal for the purpose of this writing, it should be mentioned how these theories integrate common themes and how the concept of psychopathy ties within their main propositions. For example, out of the principal life-course and developmental criminological theories, the age-graded theory of informal social control (Sampson & Laub, 2005), the social development model theory (Catalano & Hawkins, 1996), and the interactional theory (Thornberry, 1987) primarily focus on the importance of social influences in delinquent or antisocial behavior, like parental influence, as well as the importance of developmental factors,

such as age, in influencing such behaviors. The concept of psychopathy can be easily introduced to these theories because one of the areas that the literature on psychopathy pays attention to is the individual's bond to society. As Fox et al. (2015) further explain, a lack of proper parental relationships, exposure to environmental risk factors, such as socialization with deviant peers or family members, and rejection by peers and other social structures when displaying mild deviant behaviors often reinforce the manifestation of psychopathy and alienation with criminal behavior. Furthermore, both the situational interaction theory (Wikström, 2005) and the self-control synergistic theory (Jennings et al., 2013) implement a key component of the psychopathic personality disorder: low levels of self-control. When the individual is able to exercise positive moral judgement and has higher levels of self-control, his or her criminal propensity is lower in comparison to those with poor moral judgement and lower levels of self-control (Wikström, 2005); when an individual is greatly influenced by delinquent peers, their levels of self-control are reduced and delinquent behavior is more likely to occur (Jennings et al., 2013). In the psychopathy literature, a dominant feature of the psychopathic individual is poor levels of self-control which often translates into a high disregard for others, increasing the likelihood of deviant or criminal behavior to satisfy their desires.

Other life-course and developmental criminological theories also feature the biological component as well. The multilayered control theory (LeBlanc, 1997) and the developmental taxonomy theory (Moffitt, 1993) assume that a combination of social factors, individual constraints, and levels of self-control along with biosocial mechanisms can explain chronic offending. In fact, Moffitt (1993) argued that adolescence-limited offenders (AL), individuals who engage in criminal activity during a specific developmental period, often do so due to

societal pressure, while life-course persistent offenders (LCP) continue offending throughout their course of their life due to a combination of neuropsychological and social factors. These chronic offenders, Fox et al. (2015) explain, usually show higher scores on psychopathy scales. The authors continue to argue that psychopathic traits and behaviors often show stability over time, something that aligns with the life-course persistent offender theory, as well as the recognition of the influence of biosocial factors that are present among these individuals deemed as “psychopaths”. In addition, the developmental pathways model theory (Loeber et al., 1993) and the developmental propensity model theory (Lahey & Waldman, 2003) pay attention to the early stages of life of an individual and how there are subtle behavioral factors that often translate into future deviant behavior. Loeber et al. (1993) identified three main developmental pathways in children to explain early signs of possible future criminal behavior: the Overt Pathway (OP), the Covert Pathway (CP) and the Authority Conflict Pathway (ACP). These three pathways have key characteristics such as low level forms of aggression (bullying, insults...) that escalate to serious aggression (fighting) and finally translates into serious violent actions (rape, murder) in the OP, engagement in minor crimes, like shoplifting before the age of 15, that continue to more serious crimes in adulthood, such as burglary, in the CP, and in the ACP stubborn behavior is usually present before the age of 12 and continue to develop into a disregard for authority figures. The characteristic presented in these pathways, particularly in the OP and ACP, one could argue are also key characteristics of the psychopathic individual, where evidence suggest a strong relationship between high scores of psychopathy and persistent overt violent behavior and consistent defiance to social norms (Hare, 1999).

Lahey and Waldman (2003) propositions can also be compared to the behaviors displayed by the psychopathic individual. The authors noted that three main features can explain engagement, or the lack of it, in criminal or deviant activities: (1) prosociality, where social norms are followed, (2) negative emotionality, often characterized by an adverse reaction to frustration and perceive threats, and (3) daringness, where depending on the socialization of the individual, can be described as engagement in sensation seeking activities, risk-taking and adventurousness (Lahey & Waldman, 2003). These three characteristics are displayed during childhood and are highly influenced by the individual's upbringing and their interaction with their environment. Among individuals with psychopathic characteristics, it has been noted a lack of prosocial values often present since childhood, high levels of negative emotionality and persistent sensation seeking or risk-taking behaviors at the expense of the individual and other's well-being. This emphasis on the environment and upbringing's influence on the individual is also recognized in the integrated cognitive antisocial potential theory (Farrington, 2005). According to Farrington's (2005) propositions, the propensity of an individual to engage in antisocial or criminal activities, in other words their antisocial potential (AP), is greatly influenced by long-term persistent AP, which is a result of environmental, cognitive, and developmental factors, and short-term AP, which is determined by situational circumstances (suitability of a target, absence of a perceived risk...). Among psychopathic individuals, it has been demonstrated that their personality traits can pose as long-term AP and, when placed in a situation where a perceived suitability to commit illegal or antisocial activities (short-term AP) are present, engagement in such activities is likely to occur (Fox et al., 2015). However, it is

important to note that because of their personality traits, psychopathic individuals are often looking for ways to satisfy their needs, regardless of the situation or suitability of a target.

This somewhat brief explanation of the main life-course and developmental criminological theories describe the suitability of including the study of psychopathy in this line of research. As research suggest the stability over time of the behaviors displayed by the psychopathic individual (Hare, 1999), integrating the study of this phenomenon to life-course and developmental criminology suggested by Fox et al. (2015) aligns with DeLisi's (2009) previous suggestions that the study of psychopathy could potentially facilitate the study of criminality over the life-course.

Moreover, another aspect to pay attention to when attempting to explain the causes of criminal behavior is to evaluate the differences between offenders and non-offenders: should we evaluate these differences from categorical perspectives, or should we study them in a continuum? Well, in accordance with the psychopathy literature available, this phenomenon allows us to study criminal and antisocial behavior from both points of view. In fact, research suggests that those individuals regarded as "psychopaths" are inherently different from those who are *not* diagnosed as suffering from psychopathic personality disorder (Hare, 1999). Furthermore, the literature available suggests that even among those in which psychopathic tendencies appear to be present, the level of severity of the condition is an important factor when conducting risk assessments evaluations, positive treatment response rates, behavioral evaluations, and even academic research. Skeem and Cooke (2010) added that the construct of psychopathy itself should be thought of as a correlate of criminal or antisocial activities, rather than a component of the condition. These remarks are supported by the literature on psychopathy

measures suggesting that individuals with lower scores of psychopathy are more responsive to treatment and have higher levels of self-control in comparison to those individuals who show higher levels of psychopathy (Hare, 1999; 2003).

In addition, Skeem and Cooke's (2010) suggestion indicates that being labeled as a "psychopathic individual" does not necessarily translates into engagement in criminal behavior, but rather it poses as a risk factor for it. Just as Hare (1999) suggested, the manifestation of psychopathy can also be influenced by the individual's upbringing and other developmental factors, including neurobiological differences. For example, research suggest that even complications during birth can pose as a risk factor for future violent behavior in adulthood when combined with other social risk factors, like exposure to deviant behavior by immediate family members (Raine, 2014). Conversely, Haycock (2014) explained that the amygdala and the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex are areas of the brain where emotional responses are regulated and studies using technologies such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) and positron-emission tomography scans (PET) to study these areas of the brain have attempted to identify brain differences between psychopathic and non-psychopathic individuals. In fact, it has been found that there is a reduction in the prefrontal functioning of the brain in psychopathic criminals in comparison to non-psychopathic individuals (Raine, 2014). This part of the brain is responsible for the regulation of behavioral responses to stimuli such as impulsivity, fearfulness, and other "normal" human emotions that, in psychopaths, appear to function abnormally: high levels of impulsivity, low levels of fearfulness or anxiousness and low empathy.

While the biological aspect of psychopathy continues gaining popularity among neuroscientists, it is important to recognize the implications of research regarding the biological

roots of psychopathic behavior. Hare (1999), Haycock (2014) and Raine (2014) explain that not all individuals deemed as psychopathic should be inherently recognized as future criminals, but rather understand that this condition poses as a risk factor for criminal behavior when other aspects of the individual's life are also exposed to risk factors, such as poor education and unhealthy familial relationships. Needless to say, these biological explanations of psychopathy and its relationship with deviancy also align with DeLisi's (2009) arguments that psychopathy as a unified theory of crime also accommodates possible biological explanations for antisocial and criminal behavior.

At the same time, one key aspect within the psychopathy literature is that much of this research was conducted among similar populations and careful consideration should be applied when utilizing psychopathy measures in other regions and cultures. However, as research continues to advance in this area, it has been demonstrated that the construct of psychopathy appears to have successful predictive validity across different cultural regions (Fanti et al., 2018). In fact, psychopathy has been even mentioned as one of the most important constructs within criminal justice settings due to its validity when predicting recidivism (DeLisi, 2009).

In sum, psychopathy thought of as unified theory of crime, according to DeLisi (2009) allows us to 1) understand criminal behavior from both dimensional and categorical perspectives, 2) study the link between psychopathy as a personality disorder and offending over the life-course, because research findings suggest there is stability over time in the profile of individuals who engage in highly violent criminal behavior, 3) use the construct of psychopathy as a strong predictive measure of behavioral outcomes, 4) incorporate aspects of biosocial descriptions of criminal and antisocial behavior, as studies show that individuals with high psychopathy levels

demonstrate a “low peripheral nervous system” (p. 143), which influences the manifestation of common traits of psychopathy such as low levels of fear and anxiety (Walsh & Wu, 2008). In understanding psychopathy, not only as a disorder but also as a theory of crime, is what this paper argues lies the importance of the implications that this condition can have for the criminal justice system in Puerto Rico and society’s well-being in general.

However, it must be noted that DeLisi’s (2009) arguments seem to be applicable to a small subgroup of violent and chronic offenders. While understanding psychopathy as a theory of crime can be useful for explaining chronic and violent offending, it is important to understand that it is not applicable to all criminals, as a high number of criminals tend to “age out” from offending (Haapanen et al., 2007). More specifically, studies suggest that psychopathic offenders tend to commit more crimes than those offenders who are not psychopathic (Lynam, 1996; Hare, 1999). In fact, about 6% of offenders, those who are described as persistent offenders, account for about 60% of known committed crimes (Farrington et al., 1986). Farrington et al. (1986) proposed that this specific type of offenders could potentially be psychopathic in nature and early detection and intervention could lead to more efficient crime reduction strategies.

The present study argues that psychopathy could be a potential explanation for understanding rates of violence committed by persisting offenders in Puerto Rico and that the high number of violent crimes in the island are committed by this subtype of chronic offenders.

CHAPTER 4

METHODS

For the purpose of this qualitative study, the approach taken to gather the data was the case study method. According to Bogdan & Biklen (2003), a case study can be defined as a comprehensive evaluation of one specific setting. The setting to be evaluated for this study is Puerto Rico, an island located in the Caribbean where there is a marked absence of empirical studies addressing psychopathy and what this condition could represent to its criminal justice system and society's general safety.

The geopolitical status of this island makes it part of a peculiar situation. Research production in Puerto Rico, particularly in the field of social sciences, is quite low. As it was stated in chapter 1, this lack of research productivity might be influenced by several factors, one of them being Puerto Rico's status and its relationship with the United States. Because the majority of studies addressing violence in Latin America and the Caribbean typically incorporate findings from independent countries in their analyses (Izarali, 2018), the studies available that address these issues in Puerto Rico often compare their findings to data collected from studies conducted in the United States. But the cultural differences between Puerto Rico and the United States can lead us to question if the study of violence and criminality in Puerto Rico should be compared to those studies conducted in the United States at all. This "geopolitical confusion", in conjunction with other issues discussed during the interview process for this study that will be further explained in chapter 5, might be key factors that account for the lack of research productivity in the island.

The present study seeks to pose as a first step to understand the possible presence of psychopathy in the island, how it is manifested and its influence on the ongoing violence in Puerto Rico. Furthermore, it seeks to add to the existing, but limited, literature on psychopathy and cultural differences surrounding this phenomenon.

Study Population

Most empirical studies addressing psychopathy incorporate data gathered from prison samples where psychopathy measures were administered in order to test the efficacy of such measures, identify the prevalence of this phenomenon, or study this disorder in general.

According to Hare (1999), conducting psychopathy studies within prison settings allows us to have more access to useful data in comparison to attempting to measure psychopathy in the general population, where locating the appropriate sample population can result quite difficult.

While the purpose of this study is to address psychopathy in Puerto Rico, it is extremely difficult to evaluate this phenomenon in a setting where it appears to be little to no knowledge regarding the topic. In addition, due to Covid-19 precautions and difficulties having access to incarcerated populations in Puerto Rico, the unit of analysis selected for this study were licensed psychologists in Puerto Rico who had previous experience working with forensic populations and/or experience addressing personality disorders and violence in the island. Since psychopathy is an extremely understudied topic in Puerto Rico, interviewing psychologists who have extensive experience working in forensic settings seems to be a useful technique. Understanding their perspective on psychopathy and its significance to the criminal justice in the island could be a first step towards, not only expanding the literature on psychopathy and culture in general but

providing a new perspective from which the rise in crime in Puerto Rico can be evaluated as well.

The goal for this study was to obtain at least ten to fifteen licensed psychologists to participate in the interview process. Since Puerto Rico is a relatively small island and the number of psychologists who work in forensic settings and possess training specific to this area appears to be low, the author believes that this number of participants is enough to obtain useful preliminary information to address the topic in question. Furthermore, Guest et al. (2006) indicated that when conducting qualitative research involving purposive samples it can result quite difficult to preestablish a number of participants that is useful enough to reach saturation. In other words, how can we predetermine that no new information or topics will arise during the data collection process? In their highly cited study, Guest et al. (2006) attempted to address this issue by evaluating data collected from a study where sixty in-depth interviews were conducted. While the authors were not attempting to analyze and discuss the context of the data *per se*, they aimed to help answer the question of “how many?”. At the end of their analysis, the authors found that as little as twelve interviews are sufficient to reach saturation during the data collection process (Guest et al., 2006). This is particularly true in research where a high level of homogeneity is apparent among participants; we can assume that similarity within the sample would often yield similarity in their responses and experiences in relation to the topic under study (p. 76).

While the number of sampled individuals and the findings of this study may not be generalizable to all licensed psychologists in Puerto Rico, it is with no question that it still provides valuable information in relation to a topic that has not been addressed in the Puerto

Rican context. In fact, Romney et al. (1986) noted that it is not necessary to have an enormous sample in order to obtain sufficient information in studies that are qualitative in nature. The authors explained that when “cultural competence” (p. 317) is apparent, a small sample is enough to help us understand the topic under study. The term “cultural competence” refers to the degree of expertise that participants possess about a certain topic (Romney et al., 1986: 316). When interviewing psychologists that have expertise regarding the study of violence in Puerto Rico, a range of ten to fifteen participants is therefore enough to reach saturation due to cultural competence. The present study may be a first step in guiding the “why?”, the “how?” and the “what?” that is often so relevant to qualitative research (Lune & Berg, 2017). Why is psychopathy important to explore in Puerto Rico? How can this phenomenon be possibly having an influence in rising violence rates in the island? What is preventing the study of this topic and what can be done about it? These are some questions that this study seeks to answer.

In relation to possible threats to internal validity, this study was based on preliminary information gathered from professionals to help establish directions for future research. Interviews were conducted with licensed psychologists who have knowledge of research procedures. Since the data collected was in relation to their own professional opinions in a conversation that can be catalogued as one between colleagues, there is little probability of untruthfulness in their accounts.

Sampling Strategy

The sampling strategy chosen to recruit participants for this study was the chain referral sampling technique. Being a nonprobability sampling method, Johnson (2014) defines the chain referral technique as an approach in which sampled respondents recruited initially provide

referrals to other individuals who might meet the inclusion criteria for a specific empirical study.

The inclusion criteria proposed for the study in question consisted of three main characteristics:

- 1) Be operating as a licensed psychologist in Puerto Rico.
- 2) Have previous experience working with incarcerated populations.
- 3) Have experience evaluating personality disorders and its relation to violence.

This simple but specific set of criteria ensures that the data collected came from a suitable population that have understanding of psychology and its relevance when attempting to study criminal behavior.

For this project, initial participants were contacted by email through the University of Puerto Rico – Carolina and Ponce campuses. The University of Puerto Rico (UPR) is the only public university system in the island, and with eleven campuses available, it is considered by many residents of the island to be the best university system in Puerto Rico. Furthermore, the Carolina and Ponce campuses are the only institutions in Puerto Rico that offer a full undergraduate program that combines forensic psychology and criminal justice. Courses within these programs are taught by psychologists who have experience working as forensic psychologists and addressing issues related to violence and criminal behavior, particularly in Puerto Rico.

To contact possible study participants, the author accessed public catalogs for both of these programs in these institutions and identified two initial contacts that could provide additional referrals for this study. In total, thirty individuals who met the inclusion criteria were identified through the chain referral technique. These potential participants were contacted by email and asked to participate in the interviews. Out of those contacted, thirteen initially

responded to the inquiry and agreed to participate in the study. The other seventeen potential participants did not respond to the inquiry. Out of the thirteen participants that agreed to take part on the study, only ten attended to the scheduled meetings. The remaining three individuals who did not attend to the scheduled meetings were followed up but for unknown reasons did not respond to the inquiry, therefore were disqualified for participation in the study. Psychologists interviewed for this study had more than fifteen years of experience working in correctional settings in Puerto Rico, as well as extensive experience evaluating personality disorders and violent behavior. One participant had fifty years of combined experience working for prisons in the United States and Puerto Rico and currently in private practice providing services as expert witness for both prosecutors and defense attorneys.

Out of the ten participants, four were females and six were males. All of them previously worked for the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation of Puerto Rico, but only six of them currently worked for the agency attending both juveniles and adults. The remaining four participants currently work in private practice both as college professors and providing services to the general population on how to manage drug addiction, temperament control and conduct disorders among children and juveniles. Eight of the participants obtained their education and psychology license in Puerto Rico. From the remaining two, one obtained their doctoral degree in Mexico and then proceed to take their licensure to practice in Puerto Rico, and the other obtained their doctoral degree in California and subsequently their license to practice in Puerto Rico.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection process for this study was achieved through semi-structured and informal interviews conducted via MS Teams or by phone, according to the preference of participants. A semi-structured interview consists of a specific set of predetermined questions designed to address a certain topic but allows the researcher to further explore other themes that may arise during the interview process (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). This technique gives participants the opportunity to talk freely about their perspectives and professional opinion on the subject without being limited to a specific set of answers that do not allow for further explanations.

The interviews lasted no more than eighty minutes and were designed to address the knowledge of participants in relation to the psychopathic personality disorder, their professional opinion on how this condition may manifest in the island and how to address it, its relevance to the Puerto Rican criminal justice system and what can be done or what issues are present when trying to advance research regarding psychopathy in Puerto Rico (see Appendix D). These questions also aimed to further examine Maysonet-Gonzalez's (2007) findings where psychologists in Puerto Rico indicated not being prepared to diagnose possible psychopathic individuals and described the need for evaluating the presence of this phenomenon in the island. The meetings were arranged at a date and time that worked best for each participant during late February and early March of 2021. In addition, since Spanish is the first spoken language in Puerto Rico, the interview process was conducted in Spanish and then translated to English by the researcher for the preparation of this report.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) in charge of approving this study categorized this project as meeting the criteria for minimal review and did not require a signed informed consent. For this reason, informed consent was obtained verbally once the interview process took place. Participants were informed about what the study consisted in, the topics that were going to be discussed and advised that they could refrain from the interview at any moment if they were feeling tired or bored during the process. In addition, participants were informed that their voices were going to be recorded with a personal voice recording device to make the data analysis process easier. However, their names and the institutions that they worked for were not tape recorded in order to ensure confidentiality.

With this explained, three of the participants that were interviewed for the study in question indicated not feeling comfortable with their voice being recorded for this project. Therefore, specific themes that arose during the interview process were written down and compared to the other recorded interviews that were transcribed verbatim using a personal computer.

Data for this study was analyzed utilizing a conventional content analysis technique. As defined by Hsieh and Shannon (2005), the conventional content analysis method in qualitative research involves the development of categories derived from the data gathered throughout the data collection process. As Hsieh and Shannon (2005) explained, this technique is useful in situations where the literature regarding a specific topic appears to be limited, which is the case of the study of psychopathy in Puerto Rico. Throughout this process, codes and common themes were derived from the data which provided enough useful and insightful information to conclude the study. Such themes are further discussed in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of this research project was to address the possibility of a high prevalence of psychopathy in Puerto Rico and the importance of understanding this issue within the criminal justice context of Puerto Rico. In addition, it was discussed how can we advance the literature regarding psychopathy in Puerto Rico and the possibilities of standardizing the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R), the “gold standard” for measuring psychopathy, in the island and its usefulness to help us advance psychopathy research in Puerto Rico.

However, while these topics were discussed, some common themes arose during the interviews that are an important part of a bigger picture that create great difficulties when conducting research aimed at Puerto Rico’s criminal justice system and the study of violence in general.

Antisocial Personality Disorder vs Psychopathy

A common debate that is always found in the literature regarding psychopathy is the “confusion” between the American Psychiatric Association’s (APA) definition of Antisocial Personality Disorder (ASPD) (see Appendix B) and the definition of the psychopathic personality disorder proposed by psychiatrist Robert Hare (1999; 2003) (see Appendix C). Some scholars in the field argue that both ASPD and psychopathy are terms that refer to the same type of personality disorder, but that psychopathy is a more severe manifestation of ASPD. Others suggest that psychopathy is a completely different diagnosis that has more serious consequences and less positive rehabilitative outcomes than ASPD (Hare, 1999). The main difference between ASPD and psychopathy, according to Hare (1999), is that ASPD appears to direct its focus

primarily to antisocial behaviors and previous criminal history while the psychopathic personality disorder can be best understood as a cluster of “socially deviant behaviors and personality traits” (p. 25). Furthermore, research on psychopathy has found evidence suggesting that individuals diagnosed with psychopathic personality disorder also meet the criteria for ASPD diagnosis, but the opposite was not always true (see Patrick, 2018). In other words, individuals, particularly offenders, who are categorized as suffering from ASPD does not always show signs of psychopathy.

When asked to clarify their position on this debate, the majority of respondents (nine out of ten) indicated that they view psychopathy as an extreme manifestation of ASPD. It is important to note that they also indicated that because of their academic formation in clinical psychology, they are required to use the APA guidelines and measures for diagnostic efforts and these guidelines do not include psychopathy as a separate disorder. However, the only respondent, who has almost fifty years of experience in the field and has also previously worked in prisons in the United States, that considered these two conditions to be “totally different” noted that ASPD is a “trash can diagnosis” where a majority of criminals can easily fill into this category. Psychopathy, as explained by this respondent, consists of a severe personality disorder with serious and negative rehabilitative outcomes, whereas ASPD is a more “manageable” disorder. But because psychologists must adhere to APA guidelines to perform diagnostic duties, it fails for other diagnostics to be considered that are not necessarily present in the fifth edition of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5). In fact, the development of the PCL-R was based on the premise that psychopathy is a different personality disorder and rather than rely on the DSM-5 specific set of criteria, the items included on the PCL-R were

open-ended with provided illustrative examples instead of an established set of requirements (Widiger & Crego, 2018).

From this information, it can be argued that the DSM-5's lack of recognition of psychopathy as a separate phenomenon can contribute to misdiagnosis in correctional settings, which in turn have particular implications for the criminal justice system, as offenders are often assigned to treatment programs inside prisons that may result ineffective if assignments were not based on correct assessments in the first place. This is true even when there is research evidence that have found comorbidity between ASPD and psychopathy, as there were offenders diagnosed with ASPD who did not met the criteria for a psychopathy diagnosis (Hare, 2003; Neumann et al., 2015).

However, unlike Maysonet-Gonzalez's (2007) findings that showed that the psychologists interviewed felt they were not trained enough to recognize manifestations of psychopathy, nine out of ten psychologists interviewed for the present study indicated they felt confident in recognizing indicators of a psychopathic personality. Their confidence in doing so came from a personal interest in the topic, rather than being exposed to the topic through academic training. They also made the clarification that, despite their professional opinion on the subject, they still must adhere to the DSM-5 guidelines for diagnostic efforts, which do not include psychopathy as a personality disorder.

Juvenile Delinquency, Drug Trafficking and Domestic Violence

In a more specific level, respondents were asked if they ever came in contact with an individual who they suspected had psychopathic tendencies and asked to specify how they managed their interventions with that individual. Out of the ten respondents, four of them

confidently indicated they have had previous interactions with individuals they deemed as being psychopathic; one of them even mentioned they have encountered at least twenty individuals inside the prisons of Puerto Rico that they confidently believe have psychopathic personality disorder. The rest of them indicated they have met people over the course of their professional lives that were “different, maliciously different” and that these individuals often took advantage of other prisoners who appeared to be “weak of character”. One of the respondents mentioned that interacting with these individuals gave them “chills.” The respondent also indicated that they did not count with a diagnostic measure to properly identify this disorder, apart from their own “clinical eye” and that the individual was passed down from “hand to hand” in correctional settings because of the difficulty in managing and providing services to the individual. It was also mentioned by the respondent that it would have been beneficial to have access to a diagnostic tool that would help them properly identify such individuals in order to understand “what we are dealing with and provide appropriate services and assessments.” Another respondent even suggested that they have recommended for this type of individual to be put with other inmates who “have similar personalities”. This respondent added:

In relation to services, I can only provide and recommend what I have available and what has been previously approved within our scope of training. But I have previously provided services to inmates who I know are going to take advantage of the weaker ones. These people must be put with others who are similar to them. They might not like it, they usually do not get along well, but it is better to have them together than having them going around manipulating other inmates. This is what I have seen happening, that is why

I usually recommend it. Now, if the prison staff follow my recommendations or not, that is another issue.

Furthermore, an important topic that arose during all of the interviews conducted for this study was the continuous spike of violence in Puerto Rico, particularly in the form of juvenile delinquency, and cases of domestic and gender violence, apart from drug trafficking related crimes that often characterize criminality in Puerto Rico. A common misconception of the so-called “criminal psychopath” is that these individuals usually commit extremely violent crimes, like “serial killing” (Hare, 1999). However, all the respondents indicated how attention to this issue is not being considered in crimes related to juveniles, drug trafficking and domestic violence. One respondent who currently works in juvenile correctional institutions noted the dramatic rise in violent offenses committed by juveniles and how these youths also hold positions of power inside drug trafficking rings. This is particularly troubling because all the respondents noted the difficulties of rehabilitating adult offenders, specially if they show signs of psychopathic personality disorder, for which rehabilitative outcomes have been cause for concern within the criminal justice and mental health systems alike (DeLisi, 2009; Patrick, 2018). But because psychopathy is not recognized as a disorder by the DSM-5, the lack of understanding surrounding the disorder and research production on the island combined with ASPD’s requirement that subjects must be eighteen years or older in order to be diagnosed as suffering from ASPD, it is difficult to provide appropriate services to this population of juveniles who, according to respondents, respond better to rehabilitative efforts. One respondent noted:

I do not know how he did it, but I evaluated a young man who committed murder and confessed to two more...he was just turning eighteen years old, and he managed to have a

plea deal that he will be out of prison when he turns twenty-one. The guy was also involved in drug trafficking from a very early age. How can we be sure that he is not going to be out committing more violent crimes? What was most surprising to me was the fact that he did not show any sign of remorse for what he did, you know? This problem exists, and it is present here in Puerto Rico more that I would like to admit, but it is often ignored by the criminal justice system, and people like you and me, interested in the topic, can only do so much to bring attention to the problem.

Furthermore, another responded who had personal interest in the topic and is up to date in the psychopathy literature indicated that they also provide psychological services to children who come from problematic households. This respondent described an interaction that they had with a four-year-old boy:

I cannot give you too many details about this case, but I had a desperate mother who contacted me because her son was creating problems at school and at home. The boy was just four years old, and he was already defying teachers, bullied other kids and talked back when teachers called him out on his behavior. At home he was also very defiant with his mother, the most dramatic thing he did that prompted his mom to call me was that she found him killing some lizards and acting very curious around the process. He also tried waking his mother up several times by hitting her with a broom stick. When I saw the boy, he appeared to be very sweet and calm, and at home there were not signs of an unstable family life. However, I noticed that his mother was a little bit too permissive with the boy, that needed to change. You see? These types of cases are the ones that we must act fast before the boy reaches adolescence and adulthood and maybe end up being

a criminal. In recent years I am seeing that criminals appear to be younger and more violent. This issue needs to be addressed and we need to focus on the early signs of these problematic behaviors. But it is difficult, we need more resources and willingness from the system to treat this as an urgent problem.

Respondents noted the significant impact that drug trafficking has on the island, particularly among young individuals. While the issue of drug related violence has other venues from which can be explored, it was mentioned during the interviews that juveniles are taking positions of power within these criminal organizations and are often committing more drug related crimes that appear to grow “messier and more violent each day”. One respondent added that drug related violence in Puerto Rico used to “have a code.” As it has been mentioned throughout this writing, research productivity in Puerto Rico is substantially low, and when studying violence in Puerto Rico one has to rely on outdated studies, government statistics and news reports. In a news report published by Primera Hora in 2012, it was described how the “code of the street” in Puerto Rico was not how it used to be some fifteen years ago. These unwritten rules were simple: (1) gang members must avoid the death of innocents, (2) children, women and the elderly were untouchable, (3) torture is prohibited, and most important of all (4) family was sacred; family members must not fall victims of retaliation (Primera Hora, 2012). This timeline aligns with the changes documented by Monge (2020). In his book *Historias de Caserío*, Monge (2020) detailed the changing patterns of drug trafficking leadership in Puerto Rico during the 90s, where adolescents were given positions of power inside these criminal organizations because of the extreme violence these youngsters were capable of committing, an issue that is still present in Puerto Rico. This extreme violence related to drug trafficking is

something that can possibly be explored in the realms of psychopathy. In fact, Reid (2011) noted that research should explore if specific types of criminal activities result more appealing to psychopathic individuals by “interacting with their interpersonal and behavioral traits facilitating their success” (p. 15). This possibility can be explored in relation to drug trafficking in Puerto Rico. If there is, in fact, a strong prevalence of psychopathy in Puerto Rico, do individuals gain positions of power in drug trafficking organizations because it allows them to act out their psychopathic tendencies? This possibility was suggested to respondents and nine of them agreed that it would be interesting to explore and only one respondent indicated that this would bring more stigma to young offenders that usually come from troubled backgrounds and areas where drug trafficking organizations tend to operate. Furthermore, all respondents noted the barriers that are present when attempting to produce research in Puerto Rico. Such barriers will be discussed later in this section.

Another topic that was mentioned by respondents was the issue of domestic violence that is happening across the island. As recent as January 24 of this year, Governor of Puerto Rico, Pedro R. Pierluisi, announced a State of Emergency over the crisis of gender violence in Puerto Rico (La Fortaleza, 2021). Respondents suggested, again, that we must look at other types of crimes being committed rather than focus on the most extreme cases of violence that media coverage usually tend to pay attention to. Even the literature suggests that research has started to shift their focus and study domestic abuse using psychopathy measures and categorize domestic abusers as a subtype of individuals with psychopathic tendencies. In these studies, evidence indicated that psychopathy measures, such as PCL-R, positively predicted risk of violence among domestic abusers (Spidel et al., 2007; Swogger et al. 2007; Cunha et al., 2021). With the

rising number of domestic abuse victims, respondents suggested that the inclusion of the psychopathy literature would be useful in properly assessing domestic abusers. A respondent with substantial experience in the field suggested that the system needs to be mindful of how “seductive and manipulative these people can be” and added:

If we do not understand the issue, if psychologists and social workers alike are not trained in this area, we might fall to their manipulation. You have no idea of all the cases that I have seen where these abusers manipulate the system, they bring food to shelters for domestic abuse victims, they become extremely friendly and charming with social workers and end up having access to their spouses and children, even when there is a pending case against them. And people fall for this, it is unreal. The system falls for this! But there are no studies done about this here and we have to work with what we have available; and trying to suggest studies to test the validity of the PCL-R in Puerto Rico? Forget about it, it is not going to happen. I do not think relying solely on the PCL-R would be useful here, but it can be implemented as a complementary tool, but still, it is not going to happen. The system does not care.

The PCL-R as a Complementary Tool

Given the substantial empirical support for the predictive validity of the PCL-R in relation to violent behavior and criminal recidivism among psychopathic offenders (see Patrick, 2018), standardizing the use of the PCL-R in Puerto Rico was suggested to respondents. The entirety of respondents indicated the usefulness of training psychologists in the psychopathy literature, including psychologists of all areas since it was noted that psychopathic individuals are “found in all aspects of society, they are not always in prison”. Three of the respondents

indicated having access to the PCL-R due to personal interest in the topic and they often use their knowledge of the literature to be mindful of this issue when providing services to individuals, even if they do not administer the PCL-R perse. However, they indicated a need for studying and understanding this disorder in academic settings, to ensure that everyone working within the mental health system had at least knowledge of the possibility of the condition in Puerto Rico, even if the prevalence is not high. However, two respondents suggested the creation of a culturalized and individualized tool to understand psychopathy in Puerto Rico and variations of the disorder present in the island. A responded noted:

The PCL-R does not cover the *dynamics* of the disorder and we need to understand these dynamics. One needs to be subtle in their approach to psychopathy and not rely solely in a measure that does not cover the processes of cultural influence on criminal behavior. My approach would be to include the psychopathy literature in the academic development of these professionals, but to try and conduct empirical studies to measure the prevalence of psychopathy in Puerto Rico would be almost impossible. You will not gain access to the population you need for this study, starting with the fact that Puerto Rico is a very small island, the prevalence of the disorder, in full manifestation, I do not think is that high to warrant such urgency in the eyes of the criminal justice system.

Barriers: Geography, Economy and Corruption

When discussing what has been and what could be possible barriers to study psychopathy in Puerto Rico, important issues were raised that could arguably be part of a larger scale problem of corruption in the island. In addition, issues involving the geography of the island and its economic crisis, which is also influenced by corruption, were posed as indicative of current

barriers that create difficulties in the development of empirical studies about psychopathy in Puerto Rico.

In terms of geography, respondents noted the size of Puerto Rico as a barrier to conduct studies using incarcerated individuals as a sample, particularly because “everyone knows everyone” and it would be “almost impossible to ensure that we protect the identity of these people”. Respondents agreed on the risk posed for victims and family members that were related to offenders. As an example, a respondent commented:

I have done case studies involving serious violent offenders and when I have tried to present these findings in academic settings, even without getting into too many details, everyone knew who I was talking about. So, doing these studies and trying to distribute our findings within government agencies where the media ultimately might be involved, I consider that it is not fair to victims and family members who have nothing to do with what these individuals did. The best approach is to just discuss cases, provide training to these professionals who are ethically bound to not discuss the cases outside professional settings and just be aware of what we can do as psychologists without counting with the government support.

This ties to other issue raised over the course of the interviews: financial barriers. Because, according to the respondents, there is not a research culture present in Puerto Rico, particularly within the social sciences and criminology, soliciting financial resources from government agencies is extremely difficult, specifically resources to conduct research involving prisoners. “If they do not care about public universities losing their funding, they are not going to care about research development involving the criminal justice system”, one respondent

commented. Even if permission is obtained to conduct this type of research, much of the funding usually comes from the researcher's own pocket, a factor that does not incentivize research developments, according to respondents. They proposed as a solution to solicit funding from the Puerto Rican Association of Psychologists to provide training to psychologists and include the psychopathy literature in their academic formation in general but counting on research development to study the prevalence of this disorder in Puerto Rico is something that is not possible in the foreseeable future.

Another troubling argument, if not the most, is the level of political and government corruption in Puerto Rico. In fact, several studies have addressed corruption as a central problem involved in many other important areas in the island: economic crisis, natural disasters and even the Covid-19 pandemic (Villanueva, 2019; Osoria, 2020; Smutzer, 2020; Osoria, 2021). The criminal justice system is no exception. As it was mentioned several times by the respondents, and supported by empirical evidence (Hare, 1999; Hall & Benning, 2006; Patrick, 2018), psychopathic individuals can be found in all aspects of society, even holding important positions in different agencies. In Puerto Rico, private and public agencies collaborate and require funding from one another to provide services. One of the most experienced scholars interviewed for this study mentioned two important figures in the study of violence in Puerto Rico; these two persons attempted to conduct studies addressing violence among a sample of male and female juvenile offenders. According to the respondent, the results were shocking and revealing of a violence crisis going on in the island, however, since the study was funded by a private institution that managed these juveniles, publication was not permitted. "They covered this issue because if this

was published, it meant they were not doing their job. They would lose funding”, the respondent added.

Corrupted people are present in the criminal justice system, according to all the respondents from their own experience working in the system. “They cover one another, bringing attention to this problem would not benefit them at all”, some of them argued. Another respondent added: “I would not trust any of the so-called official statistics that are published. Not even by private entities because they are still influenced by the government. We may never know the scope of the problem. We cannot change this system”.

On a pessimistic note, the respondents noted the extreme lengths of difficulties that it would entail to develop empirical studies about this issue in the island. To study the prevalence of psychopathy in Puerto Rico and its significance to the criminal justice system would require that the criminal justice system agreed on the implementation of the PCL-R in Puerto Rican prisons to evaluate its validity, something that it may be “impossible” to do, according to the participants of this study. In order to bring light to the possible presence of psychopathy in Puerto Rico, at least among prisoners, it was suggested by participants the distribution of the psychopathy literature in academic settings, and it would take for personal interest in the topic among forensic psychologists to educate themselves on the usage and administration of the PCL-R.

CHAPTER 6

POLICY RELEVANCE AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Several empirical studies support the notion that psychopathy represents an important issue for criminal justice policy making and agree on the predictive effectiveness of psychopathy measures in relation to risk for criminal recidivism (Hare, 1999; 2003; DeLisi, 2009; Patrick, 2018). Ignoring the possible presence of psychopathy in Puerto Rico would mean that individuals inside prisons who might have psychopathic tendencies go without receiving the proper intervention strategies they require. In addition, if the problem is not addressed, both the mental health and the criminal justice systems face the risk of implementing ineffective protective measures regarding these individuals who possess a higher risk for criminal recidivism (Hare, 2003).

It is without a question that there is a continuous debate about what psychopathy is and what can be done about it. Nevertheless, scholars seem to have reach the consensus that psychopathy can result in dangerous behavior causing harm to others (Hare, 1999; Polaschek, 2015; Patrick, 2018). The main problem surrounding this personality disorder is the question of treatability. According to Polaschek and Skeem (2018), research on treatment effectiveness among psychopathic individuals is quite limited and has yielded mixed results. The authors described a few reasons for this. First, most influential scholars on psychopathy, like psychiatrist Hervey Cleckley, deemed this phenomenon almost untreatable and previous research studies have found negative outcomes in relation to treatment effectiveness (p. 710). In fact, Polaschek and Skeem (2018) noted that previous empirical studies suggest that treatments strategies, such as group therapy, appears to give psychopathic individuals the ability to better *imitate* prosocial

behaviors and values, but not necessarily internalize them. These studies mentioned by the authors are quite outdated, however the believe that group therapy only enhances the abilities of the psychopathic individual was something that was mentioned by participants during the interview process for the present study, suggesting support for the current pessimistic believe that “psychopaths often do not change”. Another issue surrounding research on treatability is the heavy reliance on popular psychopathy measures, such as the PCL-R. It has been found that the PCL-R, while useful in predicting future criminal behavior and identifying the presence of psychopathy, often ignore important factors in relation to heterogeneity among offenders, such as anxiety levels, depression, and impulsivity (Polaschek & Skeem, 2018). As one respondent noted during the interview process, the PCL-R has shown to be a useful tool in relation to measuring psychopathy and risk for criminal recidivism but mental health professionals working for the criminal justice system should not rely solely on this risk assessment tool, but rather integrate it in their diagnostic efforts and use it as a complimentary tool to better understand how this phenomenon is manifested under the Puerto Rican cultural context. In fact, a few respondents indicated the possibility of developing a “culturalized” risk assessment tool to measure psychopathy, specifically in Puerto Rico.

However, throughout this study it was described the little research productivity in Puerto Rico, particularly in the field of the social sciences. While monetary problems appear to play an important role in the production of new research projects in Puerto Rico, participants in the study indicated that the negativity and stigma surrounding the phrase “psychopathic individual” also plays a role in the lack of research development. In fact, a respondent noted that they attempted to conduct a study some ten years ago using the PCL-R on a sample of offenders in a maximum-

security prison in Puerto Rico. However, the researcher was met with several “roadblocks” that prevented them from conducting the study. The respondent noted that the prejudicial connotations that this phenomenon often carries was a big concern for members of the IRB, so the study was never conducted. In fact, these kinds of “ethical concerns” were also documented by Edens et al. (2018). The authors noted all kinds of problems when attempting to justify the implementation of psychopathy assessment tools in the legal context. Firstly, professionals working for the mental health and criminal justice system must have in mind that these psychopathy measures were developed in controlled and “non adversarial” environments, where examiners obtained “extensive training”, a term that one could argue is highly subjective (p.736). Furthermore, data used for these studies are more optimal than data used in “real-world” circumstances.

Edens et al. (2018) also indicated the importance of understanding who is actually qualified to make psychopathy assessments. Many scholars interested in researching psychopathy, Hare (1999) advises, must have extensive training in the topic and be up to date in the literature. But what exactly constitutes said training is another debate that goes “beyond the issue of psychopathy itself” (Edens et al., 2018: 743). In fact, the authors explained that the ethical code for psychologists specified by the APA have several factors that constitute competence in a specific area, such as extensive education, training, and experience, but there are no specific thresholds as to what constitutes “extensive” (p. 743).

In relation to what has been found through the interviews for the present study, some respondents acknowledge having access to the most common risk assessment instrument for psychopathy: the PCL-R. Hare (1998) admitted having concerns regarding the misuse of this

clinical measure, particularly because virtually anyone with interest in the topic can purchase the PCL-R, including psychologists who do not necessarily understand how to go about its use. In fact, one participant commented that they have attempted to administer the test to some of their clients “out of curiosity”. The problem with this is that it can bias the clinician in their opinion or process of administering other standardized risk assessment tools in a specific context. The PCL-R comes with a manual that provides detailed instructions as to how to administer the test and indicates that at least two raters must evaluate the individual (Hare, 1998). Also, it can be considered unethical to administer a clinical test in a context where such test has never been clinically applied before.

Contrary to what Maysonet-Gonzalez (2007) found in her investigation, it appears that an interest in the topic is growing in Puerto Rico and professionals in the mental health system are starting to be proactive in obtaining more information about psychopathy acknowledging the importance of studying this topic in Puerto Rico. With the present study I argued that we cannot begin the conversation of standardizing the use of the PCL-R in Puerto Rico or even study psychopathy in the island if the people who is going to study it the most do not have training in the topic first.

As it has been explained throughout the present study, the lack of research productivity in Puerto Rico plays an important role in our virtually absent understanding of psychopathy. I propose that a first step in attempting to study this phenomenon, and possibly other issues within the field of social sciences, is to enhance a research culture in the island. In fact, Lewis and Simmons (2010) wrote about the problems surrounding research development in Caribbean countries and noted that one of the disadvantages that this region has is that it does not count

with a sound “intellectual culture” (p. 337) needed to sustain a productive research community. The authors suggest this is in part due to the colonial history of these countries, where ideas and expertise are often “imported” (p. 340). One could argue that a similar problem occurs in Puerto Rico, where there is a tendency to integrate practices from the United States.

Lewis and Simmons (2010) proposed that in order to advance research development in Caribbean countries, universities must take the role of leading such development. Higher education institutions in this region should aim to establish an academic community that can communicate with other researchers internationally and apply international trends to problems that are locally relevant (p. 338). The latter suggestion falls in line with the goals for the present study: to evaluate the role of psychopathy in violence in Puerto Rico. Participants in the study acknowledge that psychopathy is quite an interesting topic that often creates shared interests among mental health professionals. The creation of a training program in psychopathy could be a first step in advancing research in the topic and how it applies to Puerto Rico. In fact, Robert Hare developed a training program in psychopathy and the application of the PCL-R measures, and to date it is the only program available that provides continuing education credits in such an area. The Puerto Rican Psychological Association (PRPA) offers several courses as continuing education credits and, according to some participants, the topics are often not interesting enough. Respondents suggested that offering the PCL-R training program as an interesting alternative could be an incentive to promote future research in the area. Such a program is also cost-effective, as it is offered online, and attendees are not paying the “hidden fees” associated with traveling to in-person workshops.

It would take for a future study to evaluate if the implementation of a training program involving psychopathy would be useful in advancing knowledge involving the topic and how it manifests in Puerto Rico. It was also suggested by some of the participants that creating a group of trained psychologists who evaluate their own cases where they suspect psychopathy is involved would be a possible venue to understand the prevalence of this issue. Providing a case study forum where psychologists can share and discuss their cases would be beneficial as an agreement can be reached as to how to proceed with these individuals in correctional settings and what recommendations can be made to the criminal justice system in relation to their placement inside prisons, management, assignment to rehabilitative programs and possible conditional release decisions.

APPENDIX A

CLECKLEY'S (1964) CLINICAL PROFILE OF THE PSYCHOPATH

- Intelligence and Superficial Charm
- Absence of Delusions and Signs of Irrational Thinking
- Absence of Nervousness or Neurotic Manifestations
- Unreliability
- Untruthfulness
- Lack of Remorse or Shame
- Inadequately Motivated Antisocial Behavior
- Poor Judgment and Failure to Learn from Experience
- Pathologic Egocentricity and Incapacity for Love
- General Poverty in Major Affective Reactions
- Specific Loss of Insight
- Unresponsiveness in General Interpersonal Relations
- Fantastic and Uninviting Behavior with Drink and sometimes without
- Suicide Rarely Carried Out
- Sex Life Impersonal, Trivial and Poorly Integrated
- Failure to Follow Any Life Plan

APPENDIX B

DSM-5 CRITERIA FOR ANTISOCIAL PERSONALITY DISORDER (AMERICAN PSYCHIATRIC ASSOCIATION, 2013)

A. Significant impairments in personality functioning manifested by:

- 1) Impairments in self-functioning (a or b):
 - a) **Identity:** egocentrism; self-esteem derived from personal gain, power, or pleasure.
 - b) **Self-direction:** goal setting based on personal gratification; absence of prosocial internal standards associated with failure to conform to lawful or culturally normative ethical behavior.
- 2) Impairments in interpersonal functioning (a or b):
 - a) **Empathy:** lack of concern for feelings, needs, or suffering of others; lack of remorse after hurting or mistreating others.
 - b) **Intimacy:** incapacity for mutually intimate relationships, as exploitation is a primary means of relating to others, including by deceit and coercion; use of dominance or intimidation to control others.

B. Pathological personality traits in the following domains:

- 1) Antagonism, characterized by:
 - a) **Manipulativeness:** frequent use of subterfuge to influence or control others; use of seduction, charm, glibness, or ingratiation to achieve one's ends.
 - b) **Deceitfulness:** dishonesty and fraudulence; misrepresentation of self; embellishment or fabrication when relating events.

- c) **Callousness:** lack of concern for feelings or problems of others; lack of guilt or remorse about the negative or harmful effects of one's actions on others; aggression; sadism.
- d) **Hostility:** persistent or frequent angry feelings; anger or irritability in response to minor slights and insults; mean, nasty, or vengeful behavior.

2) Disinhibition, characterized by:

- a) **Irresponsibility:** disregard for – and failure to honor – financial and other obligations or commitments; lack of respect for – and lack of follow through on – agreements and promises.
- b) **Impulsivity:** acting on the spur of the moment in response to immediate stimuli; acting on a momentary basis without a plan or consideration of outcomes; difficulty establishing and following plans.
- c) **Risk taking:** engagement in dangerous, risky, and potentially self-damaging activities, unnecessarily and without regard for consequences; boredom proneness and thoughtless initiation of activities to counter boredom; lack of concern for one's limitations and denial of the reality of personal danger.

C. The impairments in personality functioning and the individual's personality trait expression are relatively stable across time and consistent across situations.

D. The impairments in personality functioning and the individual's personality trait expression are not better understood as normative for the individual's developmental stage or sociocultural environment.

- E. The impairments in personality functioning and the individual's personality trait expression are not solely due to the direct physiological effects of a substance (e. g., a drug abuse, medication) or a general medical condition (e. g., severe head trauma).**
- F. The individual is at least age 18 years.**

APPENDIX C

HARE'S (2003) PSYCHOPATHY CHECKLIST-REVISED

Factor 1

Interpersonal

- Glibness/superficial charm
- Grandiose sense of self-worth
- Pathological lying
- Conning/manipulative

Affective

- Lack of remorse or guilt
- Shallow affect
- Callous/Lack of empathy
- Failure to accept responsibility

Factor 2

Lifestyle

- Need for stimulation
- Parasitic lifestyle
- No realistic, long-term goal
- Impulsivity
- Irresponsibility

Antisocial

- Poor behavioral controls
- Early behavioral problems
- Juvenile delinquency
- Revoke of conditional release
- Criminal versatility

There are two additional items that are not specific to any factor but are considered in the general score of the PCL-R:

- Promiscuous sexual behavior
- Many short-term marital relations

APPENDIX D

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- 1) In which area of psychology are you specialized in?
- 2) How many years of experience do you have in the field of psychology?
- 3) In your years of experience, have you come across the literature on psychopathic personality disorder?
- 4) (If yes), What can you tell me about this disorder? (If no), Do you know anything about this disorder?
- 5) What can you tell me about antisocial personality disorder?
- 6) Do you believe that antisocial personality disorder and psychopathy are two different disorders? Explain.
- 7) Do you believe you possess sufficient training to identify and manage an individual with psychopathic personality disorder?
- 8) Do you believe psychologists in Puerto Rico possess sufficient training to identify and manage an individual with psychopathic personality disorder? Explain.
- 9) If you were to come across an individual who presents symptoms of psychopathy, which assessment tool would you use to diagnose the condition? Explain.
- 10) Have you come across the Psychopathy Checklist-Revised (PCL-R)? (If yes) What can you tell me about it? (If not) Do you know what this tool is?
- 11) There is limited literature regarding the prevalence of psychopathy in Puerto Rico, why do you think that is?
- 12) Do you consider this lack of research to be an issue that needs to be addressed? Explain.

- 13) Do you consider that the PCL-R should be standardized in Puerto Rico? Explain.
- 14) When working in forensic settings, have you come across individuals who appear to show symptoms of psychopathy? (If yes, proceed to question 15. If no, proceed to question 18).
- 15) How are you going about dealing with these individuals? (Discuss possible treatment strategies to prevent risk for recidivism).
- 16) How is it like working with these individuals?
- 17) Do you know of any possible cases in Puerto Rico involving psychopathic individuals?
- 18) Do you believe that the disorder may exist in Puerto Rico? Explain.
- 19) Do you consider to be necessary the development of empirical studies and training programs addressing psychopathy in Puerto Rico? (If yes, proceed to question 20. If no, ask the participant to explain why?)
- 20) How can we go about this process? (For example, create more academic training opportunities in this area, etc.)

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Naschaly N. Gonzalez Montalvo was born in Manati, Puerto Rico. After graduating from high school in 2013, she went on to obtain her bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice, majoring in Forensic Psychology from the University of Puerto Rico at Carolina where she graduated in 2019. In August of that same year, Naschaly moved to Denton, Texas to begin her graduate studies in Criminology at The University of Texas at Dallas.

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ACADEMIC WRITING

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PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Criminology Graduate Student Association, 2020

Member