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Code of the Prison:
Inmate Culture and Post-Prison Outcomes in an Era of Mass Incarceration

By

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Doctor of Philosophy

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An abstract of

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Abstract

Code of the Prison: Inmate Culture and Post-Prison Outcomes in an Era of Mass

Incarceration

By

Jessica M. Grosholz

This dissertation examines the influence of inmate culture on post-prison outcomes, including housing, employment, and recidivism. Using semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 40 formerly incarcerated men, I connect the current recidivism research with the inmate culture literature. Due to several punitive criminal justice policies introduced in the past three decades (e.g., mandatory minimums, truth-in-sentencing, and three-strikes laws), I first examine the nature of the inmate culture today. Results indicate that while the informal rules of the prison (i.e., the inmate code) are similar to the informal rules of the street (i.e., the street code), the deprivations associated with prison intensify the culture – there is a lack of choice when it comes to following the rules. Next, I investigate whether an adoption of the inmate code negatively influences post-prison outcomes. I find that those participants who are still abiding by the inmate code post-prison had a harder time finding employment and housing than those who "shed" the code prior to their release from prison. Additionally, those who adopt the inmate code post-release have reoffended since their last stint in prison. I conclude with the limitations of this research as well as a discussion of the contributions this study makes for current recidivism and criminological research.

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CHAPTER ONE

Defining the Problem of Mass Incarceration and Recidivism

Mass incarceration and recidivism have long been major topics of interest for criminologists and the general public. In 1970 there were roughly 196,000 individuals in state and federal custody (Petersilia 2003). By 2012 that number had increased by more than 650 percent to over 1.5 million (Carson and Golinelli 2013). A major consequence of increasing incarceration is that record numbers of inmates are being released from prison each year. In 2012, almost 640,000 prisoners returned to communities throughout the country (Carson and Golinelli 2013). Of those released, research suggests that 67.8 percent will be arrested within three years of release and 76.6 percent will be arrested within five years of release (Durose, Cooper, and Snyder 2014). Over half (55.1 percent) will be back in prison within five years (Durose et al. 2014). Currently, recidivism research focuses on the structural barriers to a successful reentry (i.e., no housing, no employment, weakened ties to conventional others). Far less attention has been paid to the role of inmate culture in reoffending even though this culture emphasizes inmate loyalty, toughness, violence as a means of self-protection and survival, and a reluctance to snitch. An internalization of this culture and its informal rules should make a successful reintegration into society more difficult for formerly incarcerated individuals. This study addresses this gap in the literature by examining the inmate culture in prison today and the role it plays in post-prison outcomes, including housing, employment, and reoffending.

Currently, recidivism research claims that formerly incarcerated persons reoffend because they are high on certain causes of crime. They are strained, they associate with criminal others, they lack bonds to conventional society, and they are low in self-control. While incarcerated, prison does little to address these causes of crime and, often times, makes them worse. For instance, ties with family and friends are weakened especially as inmates are incarcerated for increasingly longer periods of time (Austin and Hardyman 2004). Likewise, without rehabilitation and job training in prison, inmates return to neighborhoods without the skills necessary to obtain stable employment (Reiman 2007; Visher and Travis 2003). Ex-inmates also reoffend because they experience additional problems conducive to crime upon release. For example, formerly incarcerated individuals frequently return to neighborhoods high in poverty, social disorganization, and crime. These neighborhoods are marked by a lack of social services and a weak job market, both of which make reoffending more likely (Fruedenberg, Wilets, Greene, and Richie 1998; Kubrin and Stewart 2006; Marbley and Ferguson 2005).

While these aforementioned causes of recidivism are supported by extensive research, it is imperative to also recognize that while in prison inmates may learn values, beliefs, and skills that may make reintegration into society more difficult. Being surrounded by criminal others, who may endorse the inmate culture, allows inmates to assimilate into the same culture and continue offending upon release. Prisons are "social learning environment[s] in which criminal orientations [and values] are potentially reinforced" (Nagin, Cullen, and Jonson 2009: 126). Despite this clear acknowledgement, the role of inmate culture has not been considered in contemporary recidivism studies. Yet, the internalization of the inmate culture while in prison should affect reoffending

once released by increasing one's disposition for crime and the likelihood of association with other criminals post prison. It should also reduce legitimate opportunities and ties to conventional others. In other words, an adoption of the inmate culture should influence post-prison outcomes, such as, but not limited to, reoffending, employment, and housing.

Inmate culture research reached its heyday between the 1950s and the 1970s, then declined dramatically, but has recently begun to reappear in the criminological literature (see Mears, Stewart, Siennick, and Simons 2013). The inmate culture in prison consists of a set of norms and values that govern inmate behavior. The inmate code, an element of the inmate culture, is the set of informal rules inmates abide by in prison. Specifically, the inmate code emphasizes inmate loyalty, toughness, violence, and a reluctance to snitch (Irwin 1980; Petersilia 2003, 2005; Thomas, Petersen, and Zingraff 1978; Trammell 2011; Wacquant 2001).

The inmate culture involves a collective adherence to a set of informal rules that tend to challenge the rules of the institution and stems from two sources: the deprivations associated with prison and the experiences inmates have prior to their incarceration. The deprivation model, initially put forth by Gresham Sykes (1958), suggests that in order to cope with the pains of imprisonment, inmates develop an adversarial culture. For example, they cope with a lack of security in prison by endorsing the use of violence as a means of self-protection. The culture that develops, then, is an adaptation to the strains of prison. In contrast, the importation model argues that the inmate culture reflects values and beliefs held by inmates prior to their incarceration, which are values in conflict with those of mainstream society (Clear and Sumter 2002; Slosar 1978). The content of the inmate culture, then, is influenced by factors external to prison. While these models

tended to be viewed as mutually exclusive, recent studies have begun to highlight their interrelated nature (see Akers, Hayner, and Gruninger 1974; Hunt, Reigel, Morales, and Waldorf 1993; Parisi 1982; Thomas, Petersen, and Zingraff 1978; Winfree, Newbold, and Tubb III 2002). These studies indicate that both internal and external factors have an influence on the inmate culture. Inmates cope with the strains of prison by responding in ways similar to the street.

Despite the relative stability in the inmate code prior to the 1970s, there is reason to believe that after this time the inmate culture might have changed. For instance, significant punitive changes occurred in correctional policies during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. The introduction of mandatory minimums, truth-in-sentencing policies, and three-strikes laws, for example, have increased the number of individuals behind bars; in particular, juveniles in adult prisons who are more likely to want peer acceptance and have a preoccupation with toughness (Bartollas, Miller, and Dinitz 1976; Bosworth 2010). Additionally these policies have increased the amount of time individuals spend in prison. Prisoners released in 2009 spent nine months, or 36 percent, longer in prison than those inmates released in 1990 (Pew Center on the States 2012). The size and composition of the inmate population has also shifted because of these policies. Greater numbers of poor, inner city, drug involved, and gang-affiliated youth who tend to embrace the code of the street are being sent to prison.

Recent changes in the prison environment and prison policies may have impacted the inmate culture. The influx of young, gang-affiliated prisoners who are serving longer sentences should increase the adherence to the inmate code. With more inmates adopting the inmate code, the rules may be more strongly enforced; thus, making the inmate

culture more hostile than the street culture. Additionally, in punitive prisons, where the deprivations or "pains of imprisonment" (Sykes 1958) are more severe, more inmates should be internalizing the inmate code. While this study does not directly test the effect of these policy changes on inmate culture, it is imperative to recognize that the inmate culture might have changed as a result.

Regardless of whether or not the culture has changed, an inmate's assimilation into the inmate culture should negatively influence his life post-release. An increased level of prisonization should increase the inmate's disposition to crime and reduce his ties to conventional others and institutions. Once released, this high adherence to the inmate culture should also reduce legitimate opportunities and increase his association with criminal others. Despite an acknowledgement that prisons are hotbeds of criminal values (Nagin et al. 2009), current recidivism research fails to account for the role of inmate culture in reoffending; little is known about the consequences of the internalization of the inmate code post-release (Zingraff 1975). In an environment as harsh and repressive as prison, which tends to suppress the development of moral behavior and promote hedonistic values, it is not surprising that inmates must adapt to the culture in order to survive. By extension, the adoption of criminal values at odds with those of conventional society while in prison should reduce an inmate's likelihood of a successful reentry back into society.

As Visher and Travis (2003) suggest, "ex-prisoners are changed in some way by their time in prison. However, existing research has not attempted to estimate how these experiences might affect the process of reintegration or the relative impact of experiences in prison on post-release outcomes" (96). By only examining a few, albeit important,

factors, which have been shown to play a role in recidivism, current criminological research fails to paint a full picture of why formerly incarcerated individuals reoffend. As such, this study explores the nature of inmate culture within prison today and examines the role this culture plays in life post-release and, in particular, in recidivism.

Research Questions

This study aims to answer two main research questions. First, what is the inmate culture in prison today? What are the informal rules that the inmates must follow while they are incarcerated? Within this question, I ask: Is this culture a result of the deprivations associated with prison or is it imported from the outside? How does this culture compare to the street code as articulated by Elijah Anderson (1999)? Second, I ask: How does an adherence to the inmate culture influence an inmate's post-prison outcomes, in particular, housing, employment, and reoffending? By focusing on the role of the inmate culture in post-prison behaviors, this project brings attention to an aspect of prison life that deserves to be considered in current recidivism studies.

Organization of the Dissertation

In Chapter 2, I lay out the current research on recidivism. Here I indicate that inmates reoffend when they are released from prison for various reasons. First, they are high on certain causes of crime – they are strained, they associate with criminal others, they lack bonds to conventional society, and they are low in self-control. Second, prison

does little to address these causes of crime. They still associate with criminal others and their ties with conventional society are further weakened and, often times, severed. There is also little to no rehabilitation or job training in prison. Third, formerly incarcerated individuals experience additional problems conducive to crime upon release from prison. They leave prison with a criminal label and, often times, return to highly disadvantaged neighborhoods, both of which make returning to crime a likely possibility.

In Chapter 3, I examine the research on inmate culture. I show how the inmate culture is formed through either importation or deprivations. I discuss how the inmate culture compares to the street culture as presented in Anderson's (1999) *Code of the Street*. I also explore the process of prisonization, or an inmate's adoption of the inmate culture. I highlight several factors that increase an inmate's prisonization. Lastly, I show how an adherence to the inmate code should make reoffending more likely.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the research design and methods I used to study inmate culture and post-prison outcomes. I employed a qualitative research design and conducted 40 in-depth, semi-structured interviews with formerly incarcerated men currently living in or near Atlanta, Georgia who have spent more than one year in either state or federal prisons.[1] In this chapter I describe my research design, the sample of formerly incarcerated men, recruitment strategies, interview instruments, and data

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[1] The role of inmate culture in women's prisons is still an open question. Because men comprise the majority of prisoners in the United States and the relationship between culture and recidivism has yet to be explored, I decided to begin first by studying the effect that inmate culture has on reoffending behaviors for formerly incarcerated men.

analysis strategies. I conclude this chapter with a brief discussion on confidentiality, limitations, and ethics.

In Chapter 5, I describe the findings on the inmate culture. Because prison has become a transient, heterogeneous environment in which violence thrives, inmates abide by three main informal rules in order to survive their time in prison. First, I discuss the use of violence if an inmate is challenged or disrespected by another inmate. Second, I highlight the in-group loyalty that exists between inmates. Third, I reveal that inmates must mind their own business in prison. They cannot snitch and they must deal with the harsh environment with little to no complaint. In this chapter, I also examine the role of importation and deprivation in the development of the inmate culture. Here I compare the inmate code to Anderson's (1999) street code. The results reveal that the inmate code is not different from the street code – the informal rules that individuals in both environments follow are the same. However, the results show that there is more pressure to conform to the inmate culture and abide by the inmate code in prison than on the street – the culture is more intense in prison than on the street.

In Chapter 6, I explore the role of inmate culture in post-prison behaviors. First, I discuss the participant's adoption of the inmate code while they were incarcerated as well as their adherence to the informal rules post-prison. None of the participants escaped a mild adherence to the informal rules in prison. Most had some adherence to the inmate code while a few strongly internalized the inmate culture. From there, I illustrate how an inmate's adoption of the inmate culture affects his post-prison experiences with housing, employment, and reoffending. The results indicate that those who either had a strong adoption of the inmate code while in prison or who are still internalizing the inmate code

despite being out of prison are facing difficulties with housing and employment; they cannot find stable and secure housing and they cannot find a job. Additionally, these individuals have reoffended since their last stint in prison.

In Chapter 7 I review the key findings from Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. I also show the contributions that this dissertation provides for both corrections and recidivism research. In the end, I argue that both structure and culture interact to influence an individual's post-prison outcomes and highlight that inmate culture should be examined when researching recidivism. I also discuss several policy recommendations such as continued prison programming and required transitional housing. Lastly, I suggest possible avenues for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

Causes of Recidivism

Prison is meant to deter would-be offenders, incapacitate current offenders, and prevent future offending of those who experience the severity of prison. Despite its intentions, prison does not always have the deterrent effect one would imagine. Nagin et al. (2009) conducted a meta-analysis to assess the impact of imprisonment on recidivism which yielded conflicting results. Some studies suggest that prison decreases recidivism, others find that prison has no effect, and some discover that prison actually increases recidivism (Nagin et al. 2009). More recently, Cullen, Jonson, and Nagin (2011) find that prisons do not have a specific deterrent effect. While many individuals do desist from crime (see Laub and Sampson 2001), research suggests that reoffending is a real possibility for ex-inmates. Among a 1994 cohort of released inmates, Lynch and Sabol (2001) found that 68 percent of those released from prison had been rearrested and 52 percent were back in prison within three years of being released. Using a cohort of inmates released in 2005 from 30 states, Durose et al. (2014) similarly found that over two-thirds of released inmates were rearrested within three years of release, over three-quarters were rearrested within five years of release, and over half were back in prison within five years.

Current recidivism research claims that ex-inmates reoffend because of various static and dynamic reasons.[2] Gender, age, race, criminal history, and crime type all influence whether or not a formerly incarcerated individual will reoffend (Cottle, Lee, and Heilbrun 2001; Dowden and Andrews 1999; Gendreau, Little, and Goggin 1996; Langan and Levin 2002). Additionally, ex-inmates reoffend because they are high on certain causes of crime – they are strained, they associate with criminal others, they lack bonds to conventional society, and they are low in self-control (Agnew 1992, 2006; Laub, Nagin, and Sampson 1998; Mulder, Brand, Bullens, and van Marle 20112011; Sampson and Laub 1993). While in prison, these causes of crime are not addressed and are, often times, made worse (Austin and Hardyman 2004; Mitchell and Mackenzie 2006; Moore et al. 1978; Petersilia 2003; Sampson and Laub 1993). Formerly incarcerated individuals also experience additional problems conducive to crime upon release (e.g., homelessness, unemployment), thereby making an inmate's chances of success once released unlikely (Bernburg and Krohn 2003; Kubrin and Stewart 2006; Uggen, Manza, and Behrens 2003). In what follows I first examine the static reasons as to why an ex-inmate is likely to reoffend. Then, I highlight the dynamic explanations for recidivism. I conclude this chapter with a brief discussion of the role of culture in recidivism.

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[2] Andrews and Bonta (1994) identify two categories of risk factors that predict recidivism – static and dynamic. Static factors are parts of the offender's past that cannot be changed such as gender, age, race, criminal history, and crime type. Dynamic risk factors represent the criminogenic needs of offenders that result in recidivism and are more appropriate foci for treatment.

Static Factors Influencing Recidivism

Of all the inmates who are released in a year, not everyone has the same risk of returning to prison. Recidivism risks depend on several static factors. In particular, males, African Americans, younger prisoners, those with a greater prior record, and those with convictions for property or drug crimes are more likely to reoffend (Dowden and Andrews 1999; Cottle, Lee, and Heilbrun 2001; Gendreau et al. 1996; Langan and Levin 2002). Each will be discussed in turn.

Gender

Beyond being the strongest predictor of offending, gender is a significant predictor of reoffending (Gendreau et al. 1996; Langan and Levin 2002; Meredith 2011). Using the same 1994 cohort as Lynch and Sabol (2001), Langan and Levin (2002) find that men are more likely to be rearrested (68.4 percent vs. 57.6 percent) as well as more likely to be reconvicted (47.6 percent vs. 39.9 percent) and returned to prison than woman (53.0 percent vs. 39.4 percent). A meta-analysis of 131 studies finds gender to be a significant predictor of recidivism ($r = .10$) (Gendreau et al. 1996). A 2012 study conducted by the Florida Department of Corrections (DOC) followed Florida inmates who were released from 2003 to 2010. They also find that female recidivism rates are much lower than male recidivism rates. In particular, three years after release the male recidivism rate was 34 percent while the female rate was only 19 percent.

To explain such gender differences in recidivism rates, Benda (2005) examined gender differences in the life-course theory of recidivism. He finds that men and women reoffend for different reasons. Specifically, men are more likely to return to prison

because of criminal peer associations and aggressive feelings, both of which should become more pronounced in prison with an adoption of the inmate code. Women are likely to recidivate because of childhood and recent sexual and physical abuse, living with a criminal partner, adverse feelings, and drug use (Benda 2005). While gender is a significant predictor of recidivism, it is not the only demographic predictor of reoffending.

Race

Blacks have a higher recidivism risk than whites (Gendreau et al. 1996; Langan and Levin 2002; Meredith 2011). According to Langan and Levin (2002), blacks are more likely to be rearrested than whites (72.9 percent vs. 62.7 percent). They are more likely to be reconvicted than whites (51.1 percent vs. 43.3 percent). They are also more likely to return to prison than whites (54.2 percent vs. 49.9 percent). Gendreau et al. (1996) also finds that race is a significant predictor of recidivism – blacks are more likely to recidivate than whites ($r = .13$). The aforementioned Florida DOC study (2012) also finds that blacks have a higher likelihood of recidivism than non-blacks (37 percent vs. 27 percent). In an examination of 1,515 formerly incarcerated individuals, Wehrman (2010) finds that blacks had a greater risk of recidivism than whites controlling for age, education, gender, criminal history, and substance abuse. Wehrman (2010) argues that even after accounting for differences in other factors such as education, marriage, and neighborhood, race remained a significant predictor of recidivism. He suggests that discrimination may account for the remaining effects of race on recidivism. Blacks are also more likely to adopt the inmate code (Goodstein and MacKenzie 1984), which may explain some of the lingering race effects.

Age

In general, recidivism rates decline as age increases. According to Langan and Levin (2002), the younger an inmate is when he or she is released from prison, the higher the rate of recidivism. They find that over 80 percent of those under the age of 18 were rearrested compared to only 45.3 percent of those aged 45 or older. In their meta-analysis, Gendreau et al. (1996) find that younger age was positively correlated with recidivism ($r = .15$). A 2004 federal study on recidivism conducted by the *United States Sentencing Commission* also finds that age is predictive of recidivism. They find that the recidivism rate was 35.5 percent for all offenders under the age of 21 compared to a recidivism rate of 9.5 percent for offenders over the age of 50.

While age is a significant predictor of recidivism, it is also a key factor in explaining desistance from crime. Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argue that crime declines with age for all offenders. In a sense, then, they suggest that the age-crime curve is invariant across time, space, and context (see also Hirschi and Gottfredson 1983). This perspective, however, does not attribute the link between age and desistance to life-course events or institutional influences (Laub and Sampson 2001). Sweeten, Piquero, and Steinberg (2013) find that the relationship between age and crime is largely explained (69 percent) by various developmental changes such as less exposure to antisocial peers, less strain, impulse control, and a decrease in the perceived rewards of crime. It is also possible the inmate code could explain the relationship between age and

crime, such that as one ages, the less he adheres to the norms of the inmate culture. This may be due to the fact that older individuals are often deferred to and protected by the code as is the case in the street culture (Anderson 1999). Because they are protected by the code, they no longer need to abide by it in order to survive.

Criminal History

A formerly incarcerated individual's criminal history also has an influence on his or her likelihood of reoffending. Langan and Levin (2002) reveal that inmates with one prior arrest have a 40.6 percent rearrest rate. Inmates with two prior arrests have a rearrest rate of 47.5 percent. With three prior arrests, the rearrest rate goes up to 55.2 percent. Langan and Levin (2002) find that as the additional number of prior arrests increase, so, too, does the likelihood of reoffending – 82.1 percent of released prisoners with more than 15 prior arrests were rearrested.

In addition to the number of prior arrests, Langan and Levin (2002) examine the effect of a prior prison sentence on the likelihood of reoffending. They find that those who had been in prison at least once before had a greater likelihood of rearrest compared to those who had only been to prison one time before (73.5 percent vs. 63.8 percent). Gendreau et al. (1996) also find that criminal history is a significant predictor of recidivism ($r = .17$). The 2012 Florida DOC Study similarly finds that for each additional prison sentence served, a formerly incarcerated individual's likelihood of recidivating increases by 33.1 percent. Research also suggests that the longer an inmate is in prison, the stronger his adherence to the inmate code (Clemmer 1940; Garabedian 1963; Wheeler

1961). Thus, the relationship between criminal history and recidivism could be explained in part by the inmate's level of adoption of the inmate code.

Crime Type

Crime type also appears to matter for recidivism risks, although this factor has been less researched. Langan and Levin (2002) find that released property offenders have higher recidivism rates than violent, drug, or public-order crimes. Specifically, 73.8 percent of property offenders are rearrested within three years compared to 61.7 percent of violent offenders, 66.7 percent of drug offenders, and 62.2 percent of public order offenders (Langan and Levin 2002). Unlike Langan and Levin (2002), Spohn and Holleran (2002) find that recidivism rates were higher for drug offenders than for other types of offenders. They find that drug offenders who spent time in prison were more likely to be arrested and charged with a new crime; "after four years, drug offenders sentenced to prison were about five to six times more likely than any of the three types of probationers to be rearrested and charged; their recidivism rate also was about three times greater than the rates for nondrug offenders sentenced to prison and for drug-involved offenders sentenced to prison" (Spohn and Holleran 2002: 346). Spohn and Holleran (2002) argue that the benefits associated with using or selling drugs may outweigh the costs associated with imprisonment. As a result, prison does not have a deterrent effect for drug offenders as it might for other types of offenders. It is not entirely clear, however, why prison would have different post-prison effects based on crime type.

In sum, research suggests that various static factors influence a formerly incarcerated individual's likelihood of recidivating. Age, gender, race, criminal history, and crime type are all significantly related to recidivism. However, these factors are not the only predictors of whether or not an individual will reoffend. Current recidivism research also highlights various dynamic explanations for recidivism. In what follows, I show that ex-inmates reoffend because they are high on certain causes of crime, prison does little to address these causes of crime, and they experience additional problems conducive to crime upon release from prison.

Dynamic Factors Influencing Recidivism

High on Causes of Crime

Formerly incarcerated individuals reoffend because they are high on certain causes of crime, which prison does little to reduce; in some cases, prison may actually worsen the leading causes of crime. They are strained. They associate with criminal others. They lack bonds to conventional society. And they are low in self-control. Each will be discussed in turn.

Strain. Strain theorists from Merton (1938) to Agnew (1992) argue that strains in society affect people's behavior. Specifically, Merton (1938) argues that crime occurs when there is an inability to achieve culturally defined goals like economic success through legitimate avenues such as work. Merton (1938) says that certain individuals, particularly those in the lower class, have a harder time achieving their goals through socially

acceptable ways. Some individuals, then, begin to "innovate" or engage in crime in order to deal with the inability to achieve a positive goal. By acknowledging that certain individuals have blocked opportunities, or that society unfairly distributes legitimate means to achieve success, Merton's (1938) strain theory helps to explain the existence of high crime areas and the overrepresentation of crime in the lower classes.

As a contemporary, more micro reformulation of the classic strain theory put forth by Merton (1938), Agnew (1992) explains why individuals are pressured into crime. Agnew (1992) posits that individuals engage in crime because they experience strains or "events or conditions that are disliked by individuals" (Agnew 1992, 2006: 4).[3] Agnew (2002) focuses on a range of strains, not simply the inability to achieve economic success. Those strains that are most likely to lead to crime before prison, in prison, and post-prison include, but are not limited to, parental rejection, child abuse and neglect, abusive peer relationships, unemployment, marital problems, criminal victimization, homelessness, living in economically deprived neighborhoods, and racial or gender discrimination (Agnew 1992; Baron 2004; Listwan, Sullivan, Agnew, Cullen, and Colvin 2013; Metraux and Culhane 2004).

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[3] These strains can either be objective or subjective, experienced, anticipated, or vicarious. Objective strains refer to those disliked by most people whereas subjective strains are those disliked by the individuals being examined (Agnew 2006). Experienced strains refer to those directly experienced by the individual. Anticipated strain refers to the expectation that current or new strains will be experienced in the future. Vicarious strain refers to those strains experienced by those close to the individual (Agnew 2006).

As a result of these strains, individuals face a range of negative emotions (e.g., anger, frustration, and depression), which create pressure for corrective action. Individuals engage in crime as a way to reduce or escape from the strain, to seek revenge against the source of the strain, or to alleviate the negative emotions associated with the strain (Agnew 2006). But, not all strains cause crime. Those most likely to cause crime are high in magnitude, unjust, associated with low social control, and create incentive to engage in crime (Agnew 2006). As Agnew (2006) argues, strains with these characteristics "increase the likelihood of crime because they are more likely to elicit negative emotions, reduce the ability to engage in legal coping, contribute to negative emotionality and low constraint, reduce social control, and foster the social learning of crime" (82). Regardless of the types of strain experienced, not all individuals respond to strain with crime. People can cope with strain in either legal or illegal ways depending on a host of factors (Agnew 2006). Criminal coping is more likely when individuals have poor coping skills, they associate with criminal others and have beliefs favorable towards crime, the costs of criminal coping are low, they are predisposed to crime, important areas of life are involved, they have few conventional social supports, and low levels of social control (Agnew 1992, 2006; Cullen and Agnew 2006).

Strain theories, whether put forth by Merton (1938) or Agnew (1992), also argue that prisons create strains conducive to crime and may make previously experienced strains worse. These prison-based strains include rejection by family members, marital problems, supervision that is excessive and/or harsh, verbal and physical abuse by peers, victimization, discrimination, and the failure to achieve goals such as autonomy, status/respect, and money (Agnew 1992, 2001, 2006). Experiencing these strains while in

prison could lead to increased inmate misconduct and violence among inmates (Cochran 2012; Morris, Carriaga, Diamond, Piquero, and Piquero 2012; Tasca, Griffin, and Rodriguez 2010). Prisons, in particular, exacerbate racial discriminations, which could lead to increased inmate misconduct (Alexander 2010). Morris et al. (2012) examine the extent to which prison-based strains influence inmate misconduct. Using longitudinal data from a sample of inmates, they find that environmental strain is positively associated with violent prison misconduct, with the magnitude of the effect varying across inmate trajectories.[4] For instance, the effect of environmental strain is strongest from the chronic class of offenders (β = .192), followed by the delayed-onset group of offenders (β = .133), and is weakest for the early-onset limited offenders (β = .120) (Morris et al. 2012). Tasca et al. (2010) use interview data from 95 male juvenile inmates and find that the strain of being threatened with a weapon significantly influenced inmate violent misconduct. Specifically, inmates who had been threatened with a weapon while in prison were 6.19 times more likely to assault another inmate (Tasca et al. 2010).

While particular strains do influence inmate misconduct in prison, it is also likely that these prison-based strains will influence reoffending behaviors post-prison. Essentially, prisons are marked by extreme stress, which, according to Johnson and Toch (1982), can "contaminate programs, undermine adjustment efforts, and leave a residue of

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[4] The Environmental Strain measure was composed of the following five prison-specific characteristics: (1) the proportion of inmates in the unit who were confirmed prison gang members, (2) the proportion of inmates classified to high-security custody, (3) the unit's maximum inmate capacity, (4) the proportion of inmates convicted of a violent offense, and (5) a prison gang composition index that reflected the balance of different prison gangs within each unit (Morris et al. 2012: 197).

bitterness and resentment among inmates" (20). For instance, while in prison, inmates

may be further rejected from their family as well as from their significant other. If this

rejection continues when an inmate is released from prison, his chances of recidivating

increase (Sampson and Laub 1993). Listwan et al. (2013) find that strains in prison do, in

fact, increase the likelihood of recidivism. Specifically, a negative prison environment

and experiencing direct victimization in prison are significantly related to recidivism –

inmates who experience direct victimization have a 32 percent greater chance of

returning to prison (Listwan et al. 2013).

Formerly incarcerated individuals also experience additional strains when they are

released from prison. Without rehabilitation or training programs in prison, inmates face

the extreme strain of unemployment and possible homelessness, which Agnew (1992;

2006) argues are two of the strains most likely to lead to crime, or in this case,

reoffending. Various studies have supported the link between unemployment and

reoffending as well as homelessness and recidivism (Metraux and Culhane 2004;

Petersilia 2003). Using a cohort of 48,424 inmates who were released from New York

State prisons from 1995 to 1998, Metraux and Culhane (2004) find that shelter use

significantly influenced the likelihood of recidivism – 42 percent of those who entered

homeless shelters were back in prison within two years.

While two of the most prominent post-prison strains, homelessness and

unemployment are not the only strains that formerly incarcerated individuals experience

when they are released from prison. Ackerman and Sacks (2012) used General Strain

Theory to assess recidivism among registered sex offenders. They argue that formerly

incarcerated sex offenders experience the unique strain of having to register as a sex

offender. They find that recidivism is more likely among those reporting higher levels of strain (e.g., difficulty securing and maintaining housing, employment, personal relationships, and vigilantism against them) (β = .19). As all of these studies suggest, formerly incarcerated individuals experience strain both in and out of prison. Without the necessary coping mechanisms, strained ex-inmates are more likely to return to crime. In the end, prison is a stressful situation more recently marked by conflict and violence and a lack of rehabilitation or training programs. These severe deprivations and frustrations lead to a "serious attack on the [inmate's] personality" (Sykes 1958: 64), which makes his or her reentry much more difficult.

Social Learning. Social learning theories argue that individual's learn crime and model criminal behavior from their friends, family, peers, and others (Akers 1985, 1998). These others may model criminal behavior, which may then be imitated, reinforce criminal behavior, and teach beliefs favorable to crime. This learning, reinforcement, and modeling are amplified in prison. That is, inmates are more often exposed to beliefs favorable to crime, exposed to criminal models, and reinforced for crime – given that they primarily interact with other offenders. As Maruna and Toch (2005) argue, prison "consist[s] of opportunities for peer reinforcement of antisocial norms and behavior patterns among younger offenders" (153). Ultimately, prison facilitates the development of social ties and networks with criminal others that may continue upon release (Moore et al. 1978). Moore (1996) finds that these criminal connections fostered in prison encourage ex-inmates to return to a life of crime.

Social learning theory posits that if an ex-inmate maintains ties with his or her criminal peers post-prison, then he or she is more likely to reoffend. The following

studies suggest that this is true, especially for juvenile offenders. Benda and Tollett (1999) find that peers strongly influence criminal activity during adolescence; having peers present at the time of the criminal activity significantly increases the odds that an individual will return to the Division of Youth Services. Another study, examining recidivism among 728 serious juvenile offenders, finds that involvement with deviant or criminal peers is a significant risk factor for recidivism (Mulder et al. 2011). These studies suggest that criminal connections and the positive reinforcement from deviant peers makes reoffending more likely to occur. If an inmate strongly adheres to the inmate code, then he is more likely to associate with criminal others. These connections should, then, increase the likelihood that he reoffends post-release.

Social Bonds. Social bond theory argues that crime occurs when a person's bond to conventional society is weak or broken (Hirshi 1969). These bonds include attachment, commitment, involvement, and belief. Attachment refers to an individual's bonds with significant others (i.e. family and/or friends). Commitment signifies the investment an individual has in conventional society, such as school and work. Involvement simply implies the time spent in conventional activities; the more time spent in conventional activities, the less time one has to engage in crime. Belief refers to the moral beliefs concerning the laws and rules of society. Hirschi (1969) argues that an individual's relationships, commitments, and beliefs influence one's involvement in crime. If these relationships and commitments are strong and beliefs are geared towards conformity, then one is less likely to be involved in crime As a result, individuals who have little education, no employment, and weak ties to conventional others are less bonded to mainstream society. They are, in a sense, free to offend.

Social bond theory argues that individuals reoffend because they lack social bonds and while they are incarcerated for increasingly longer periods of time these bonds continue to deteriorate. Specifically, long periods of time spent in prison decrease an offender's ties to both family and friends (Austin and Hardyman 2004). Additionally, Visher, Debus-Sherrill, and Yahner (2011) find that reestablishing ties or connections to employers prior to an inmate's release from prison improve an individual's employment outcomes post-prison. This suggests that if connections or bonds to possible employers are cut while an individual is incarcerated, then they will have a harder time finding employment when they are released from prison. As Sampson and Laub (1993) find after re-examining data originally collected by Sheldon and Eleanor Gluek, spending time in prison weakens conventional social bonds and increases recidivism.

Strong ties between prisoners and their families or close friends have a positive impact on a successful reintegration (Visher and Travis 2003). In fact, prisoners who had more family contact either through mail, visits, or family prison programs had lower levels of recidivism and greater post-release success (Adams and Fischer 1976; Holt and Miller 1972; Howser, Grossman, and Macdonald 1983; Laub et al.1998). Research also suggests that ex-offenders who assume conventional roles within their families when they return are less likely to recidivate (Clarke and Crum 1985; Curtis and Schulman 1984; Hairston 1987, 1988). Martinez and Christian (2009) conducted in-depth interviews with both formerly incarcerated men, living with family members and in halfway houses, and their family members to examine the role of informal social support on recidivism. They find that inmates who lived with family received more informational support (i.e. providing information about community resources and services) whereas inmates who

lived in a halfway house reported receiving more instrumental support (i.e. assisting with transportation, helping with household chores and child care, etc.) (Martinez and Christian 2009). Many studies have also suggested that positive social ties with family lower the risk for recidivism by helping to facilitate employment (Berg and Huebner 2011; Glaser 1964; Visher, Debus, and Yahner 2008). Ultimately, the family acts as a "buffering agent" (Irwin 1970) and an employment network for the recently released prisoner, so that he or she does not return to society without some sort of safety net.

Despite an acknowledgement that strong ties to conventional others and institutions are negatively related to recidivism, inmates are not provided with the technical or educational training in prison necessary to resume roles in conventional activities post-release. As Petersilia (2003) shows, fewer than half of all inmates are involved in an educational program while incarcerated and less than one-third of inmates take part in any sort of vocational training. With little involvement in prison programming, many ex-offenders leave prison and return to neighborhoods with reduced prospects for stable employment and decent pay (Visher and Travis 2003). Ex-inmates, then, return home without a commitment to conventional institutions (e.g., work and education) and have a harder time finding employment due to a lack of marketable skills. The Urban Institute's *Returning Home* studies in Maryland, Illinois, Ohio, and Texas finds that inmates who took part in job training or educational programs are less likely to return to prison (La Vigne, Brooks, and Shollenberger 2007). Nally, Lockwood, Knutson, and Ho (2012) also examine the relationship between involvement in educational programming and recidivism among a study group and comparison group of Indiana inmates. They find that an inmate who did not take part in educational programming

while in prison is 3.7 times more likely to recidivate than an offender who did participate in educational programming.

It follows, then, that inmates who leave prison without taking part in correctional programming to increase their education or job skills are further alienated from conventional institutions and are freer to offend. If they are able to gain employment through their social networks, however, they are less likely to return to prison since having a job creates a sense of self-worth and an investment in the future (Nelson, Deess, and Allen 1999). Those inmates who do participate in job-training programs or hold jobs while in prison have better employment outcomes once released, and are less likely to return to crime (Visher et al. 2008). Ultimately, with decreased participation in prison programs, whether educational or vocational and a subsequent lack of investment in conventional society, recidivism rates are likely to increase (Government Accounting Office 2001; Petersilia 2003).

While the aforementioned studies focus almost entirely on attachment and commitment, beliefs also matter for social bond theory and are especially important for this study. One's moral beliefs about the law and rules of society should influence whether or not one reoffends such that those who do not believe in the law or rules of society will be more likely to reoffend. Rocque, Bierie, Posick, and MacKenzie (2013) examine how social bonds impact criminal behavior. In particular, they focus on how beliefs influence recidivism. They find that improvements in social beliefs while incarcerated do not significantly predict recidivism. But, the level of prosocial beliefs *when released* from prison is significantly related to recidivism – more prosocial beliefs at release leads to lower recidivism (Rocque et al. 2013). This suggests that if an inmate

leaves prison still adhering to the inmate code, which emphasizes negative beliefs regarding the law and authority, then he will be more likely to reoffend.

Self-Control. While Hirschi (1969) is concerned with external factors or social bonds that keep an individual from offending, Gottfredson and Hirschi's (1990) self-control theory is interested in internal controls. Self-control theory assumes that individuals are self-interested and naturally inclined to offend. As a result, individuals must learn to exercise self-control, which is learned through early childhood socialization. Those who are low in self-control are impulsive, self-centered, attracted to risky activities, and irritable (Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990). Self-control theory posits that individuals engage in crime because they are low in self-control. Since Gottfredson and Hirschi (1990) argue self-control is established early in childhood and remains relatively stable thereafter, incarceration should not have a general or specific deterrent effect on inmates. Other studies show, however, that levels of self-control vary beyond childhood (Hay and Forrest 2006; Hay, Meldrum, Forrest & Ciarvolo 2010; Turner & Piquero 2002; Winfree, Taylor, He, & Esbensen 2006).

Levels of self-control may also be influenced by context. Mitchell and Mackenzie (2006) conducted a randomized experimental evaluation of the Herman L. Toulson Correctional Boot Camp, Maryland's only correctional boot camp for adult offenders, to investigate the stability and resiliency of self-control among incarcerated individuals. They find that self-control tended to decrease between program entry and program exit. This could be due to the fact that, as Mitchell and Mackenzie (2006) suggest, "imprisonment increased self-centeredness, preference for simple tasks, and problems controlling one's temper" (445). As one's self-control decreases, then, his likelihood of

reoffending increases. Langton (2006) finds that low self-control among parolees is significantly and positively related to parole failure ($\beta = .015$, $p = .012$). Individuals reoffend after being in prison, then, because their self-control remains low or may even become lower while in prison.

Experience Additional Problems Conducive to Crime upon Release

Individuals do not only reoffend because they are high on certain causes of crime and prison does little to address these causes. Formerly incarcerated individuals are also likely to reoffend because they often experience additional problems conducive to crime upon release. They are now officially labeled as a criminal and they often return to highly disadvantaged neighborhoods. Each will be discussed in turn.

Labels. Labeling theory posits that there is nothing inherently deviant about certain behaviors. Instead, society comes to label certain behaviors as criminal or deviant (Becker 1963). As such, labeling theory focuses on the social (i.e. family and friends) and institutional (i.e. criminal justice system) responses to an individual who engages in crime. These forms of social control stigmatize individuals, which lead to secondary deviance (Lemert 1951, 1972), and come to ensnare them in a life of crime through an internalization of a criminal identification (Becker 1963). Labeling theorists argue that social reactions by the criminal justice system create criminals. As Cullen and Agnew (2006) suggest, "once stigmatized as a 'criminal,' the person loses conventional social relationships...is forced to associate mainly with other criminals – whether in prison or on the streets...and as an 'ex-offender' is denied opportunities for employment...the

labeled person is constrained to pursue a life in crime" (267). Once an individual is
incarcerated, then, they are more likely to reoffend not only because of his or her criminal
identification, but also because this label alters his or her personal relationships.

Ultimately, mass incarceration has led to more inmates leaving prison with a
criminal label. The harsh sanctions associated with correctional policies have actually led
to increased recidivism (Cullen et al. 2011; Gendreau, Goggin, Cullen, and Andrews
2000; Nagin et al. 2009), especially for drug offenders (Spohn and Holleran 2002).
Hagan and Palloni (1990), who studied self-reported delinquency after a conviction for
youth in London, find that a conviction before the age of 15 significantly increases the
likelihood of criminal involvement at ages 16-17, 18-19, and 21-22. Using panel data
from the Rochester Youth Development Study, Bernburg and Krohn (2003) find that
police intervention is significantly related to increased serious crime in early adulthood;
"police intervention in youth increases the predicted number of crime events at ages 19-
20 by a factor of 1.63 ($e^{1.67}$)" (1304). Spohn and Holleran (2002), who studied 1,077
offenders who were sentenced to either probation or prison, find that offenders sentenced
to prison have higher recidivism rates than those who are given probation ($\beta = .79$, p <
.05). More recently, Chiricos, Barrick, Bales, and Bontrager (2007) examined
reconviction data for 95,919 adult men and women who had either been adjudicated or
had adjudication withheld under Florida law. They find that having been convicted of a
felony increases the odds of recidivism by 17 percent compared to those who had
adjudication withheld. Similarly, Cid (2009) finds that, among 483 offenders sentenced
by the Criminal Courts of Barcelona, a prison sentence significantly increases the

probability of recidivism compared to those with a suspended criminal sentence ($\beta =$ 1.079, p = .015).

This criminal identification not only promotes further criminal behavior by the individual, but it also causes formerly incarcerated individuals to have difficulty finding employment and stable housing upon release (Bernburg and Krohn 2003; Pager 2003; Pager, Western, and Sugie 2009; Uggen et al. 2003). Bernberg and Krohn (2003) find that official intervention is positively and significantly related to periods of non-employment in adulthood. Using 33 semi-structured interviews with convicted felons, Uggen et al. (2003) show that the stigma of a felony conviction hinders one's ability to find employment. This criminal label, they suggest, "creates obstacles to assuming adult roles" (Uggen et al. 2003: 283), which could lead to continued offending. In other words, the label affects one's ability to create ties to conventional society and, ultimately, desist from crime.

While these studies suggest that prison or any involvement in the criminal justice system appears to be criminogenic, it is possible that there is more to reoffending than just the official label. In other words, there might be something about the prison experience that is influencing these individual's propensity to reoffend. The inmate culture that develops inside prison might be influencing reoffending behaviors in addition to the criminal label. In the end, as more inmates are entering prison as a result of punitive sentencing policies, more individuals are returning to society with a criminal label; a label that makes finding housing and employment more difficult and reoffending more likely.

Social Disorganization. Shaw and McKay (1942) argue that low socioeconomic status, residential mobility, and ethnic heterogeneity lead to neighborhood disorganization, which accounts for the high rates of crime in certain communities. Social disorganization is defined as the inability of a community to realize its common values and exercise effective social controls (Kornhauser 1978). Recently, research in this area has focused on collective efficacy – the mutual trust and shared willingness of neighbors to intervene in informal social control efforts (Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls 1997). In short, the structural characteristics of a neighborhood influence its level of collective efficacy with those low in collective efficacy having higher crime rates. Sampson et al. (1997) find that collective efficacy affects local crime rates over and above the effects of other neighborhood characteristics. In neighborhoods where a high percentage of men leave communities already high in crime to entering prison, the crime rate has actually been shown to increase (Clear 2007). Thus, removing offenders from certain communities does not have the intended general deterrent effect. Instead, this "coercive mobility" destabilizes the social networks that promote informal social control and collective efficacy (Clear 2007; Clear, Rose, Waring, and Scully 2003; Rose and Clear 2003). These high crime areas have limited resources and programs, which influences one's offending prior to prison, and also hinders one's chances of success upon release (Haines 1990; Kubrin and Stewart 2006; Ritchie 2001; Travis, Solomon, and Waul 2001).

The neighborhood to which an ex-inmate returns may also increase recidivism. That is, prisoners experience problems conducive to crime upon release and these problems are more likely in certain types of communities. Structural features of a neighborhood like high poverty, unemployment and inequality are shown to encourage

crime, regardless of who offends (Sampson 2002). In order to avoid reoffending, most

suggest that released prisoners should not return to the neighborhoods in which they were

arrested and reconnect with old friends (Martin 2008). This is not always possible,

however, and prisoners are more likely to return to neighborhoods high in poverty, social

disorganization, and crime (Clear et al. 2003; Lynch and Sabol 2001; Travis et al. 2001),

most likely the neighborhoods where they lived prior to incarceration.

Returning to a neighborhood with social services and a strong job market

decreases the probability of reoffending (Fruedenberg et al. 1998; Kim et al. 1997;

Kubrin and Stewart 2006; Marbley and Ferguson 2005). These neighborhood resources

are often lacking in the more socially disorganized neighborhoods to which ex-inmates

return. Studies have found that a variety of community services influence reoffending,

including housing availability, employment, health care services, and drug and/or alcohol

treatment (Haines 1990; Kubrin and Stewart 2006; Ritchie 2001; Travis et al. 2001). A

2006 study by Kubrin and Stewart finds that prisoners who return to disadvantaged

communities, measured by the level of concentrated affluence relative to concentrated

poverty, recidivate more, while those who return to more affluent communities recidivate

less. Additionally, neighborhood characteristics, like high poverty and high crime, can

also influence factors that help or hinder successful reintegration such as finding

affordable housing and a steady job (Kubrin and Stewart 2006). While Kubrin and

Stewart (2006) highlight the significant effects of neighborhood on recidivism, Wehram

(2010) did not find this same significant result. Instead, Wehram (2010) finds that

concentrated disadvantage, as measured by the percent non-White, percent of single

parents, percent unemployed, percent below the poverty line, and the percent of families

on public assistance, is not significantly related to recidivism. Despite this conflicting finding, the community to which an ex-offender returns should influence his or her likelihood of reoffending either due to the lack of resources and services, the high levels of inequality and poverty, the lack of informal social controls, and low levels of collective efficacy. In the end, prisoners experience additional problems that reinforce or worsen the leading causes of crime upon release and these problems may be more pronounced in the neighborhoods to which ex-inmates are most likely to return.

Conclusion

In short, current recidivism research centers on the idea that inmates enter prison high on certain causes of crime. They are strained, they associate with criminal others, which increases the social learning of crime, they lack bonds to conventional society, and they are low in self-control. Despite this, prison does little to address these causes of crime and, often times, makes these causes worse. That is, without effective rehabilitation, educational or job training programs, inmates leave prison with a greater chance of reoffending. Lastly, formerly incarcerated individuals often experience additional problems conducive to crime upon release; they return to neighborhoods high in crime with an enhanced criminal identification, increased strains, and weakened social bonds. These problems reinforce or worsen the leading causes of crime. While I ask questions during the interview about the causes of recidivism to begin to disentangle the influence of the aforementioned causes of recidivism from that of the inmate culture, I

ask especially pointed questions about the effect of culture on reoffending. These questions will be discussed in Chapter 4.

Much of the research on recidivism has focused on the effect of static and dynamic factors on reoffending. For instance, an inmate loses ties to conventional others and institutions and they also lose job and education skills while in prison that make reoffending a real possibility. Current research, however, does not examine the effect of culture on recidivism. In prison, inmates may gain values, beliefs, and skills that will make reintegration into society more difficult. Internalizing the inmate culture both in and after prison should make reoffending a likely possibility. An adoption of the inmate culture while in prison should also affect the aforementioned factors that influence recidivism. In particular, an inmate who strongly internalizes the inmate code might sever ties with family and friends because of his reliance on violence, association with criminal others, and opposition to authority. If those social ties are severely weakened or even broken, it becomes more difficult for an ex-inmate to find stable housing and employment upon release. Facing those significant strains post-release, as a result of an adherence to the inmate code, should make reoffending more likely.

Ultimately, the harsh experience of prison life and the adoption of the inmate culture can and should influence an individual's ability to be successful once released. It is likely, then, that the adoption of the inmate culture would affect post-prison outcomes, including housing, employment, and, in particular, reoffending. In Chapter 3, I review the inmate culture literature. I provide information on development of the inmate culture, the factors that influence the degree to which an inmate adopts the inmate culture, and, tying

Chapters 2 and 3 together, show how the inmate culture should affect post-prison

behaviors.

CHAPTER THREE

Inmate Culture and Prisonization

Culture, often implicit, is a form of sense making that highlights the rules and

resources which individuals strategically use to inform their lives (Bourdieu 1990;

DiMaggio 1997; Sewell 1992; Swidler 1986). Norms, which are one element of culture,

reflect the way individuals are expected to behave within a particular setting (Peterson

1979). As Howard Becker (1963) argues, individuals in society form groups and

subcultures in order to create their own set of rules and norms. Individuals develop rules

in accordance with the realities of their own everyday life (Becker 1963). Within prison,

the culture that develops, then, is a way for inmates and prison officials to make sense of

their environment; it is the norms that they use or the behaviors they follow in order to

survive the day to day behind bars.

Just as there is a culture among individuals in the free world, a separate culture

exists within prison (Dobbs and Waid 2004). While there are various subcultures in

prison, scholars argue that there are two dominant cultures within a prison. The first is the

administrative or formal culture and second is the inmate or informal culture (Wellford 1967). The administrative culture centers around several key norms: inmates disclose information about other inmate's deviant behavior, support the treatment objective of the facility, work diligently at each job assignment, and refrain from forming close relationships with other inmates (Wellford 1967). The inmate culture, by contrast, centers around a very different set of norms: loyalty to other inmates, toughness, and a reluctance to snitch (Irwin 1980; Petersilia 2003, 2005; Thomas, Petersen, and Zingraff 1978; Trammell 2011; Wacquant 2001). According to Wellford (1967), the administrative and inmate cultures tend to be mutually exclusive and oppositional. As a result, adherence to the inmate culture means a rejection of the administrative culture. And it follows, then, that an internalization of the inmate culture, which supports behaviors in conflict with the administration, would not be beneficial for a successful transition back into society. In this chapter I will first examine the inmate code – a major element of the inmate culture. Then, I will discuss how the inmate culture as a whole develops in prison. Next, I will show that not all inmates fully immerse themselves within the inmate culture and adopt the inmate code. In this section, I will highlight the factors that influence an inmate's adherence to the inmate code. Last, I will explore how an internalization of the inmate code might affect post-prison outcomes, in particular, reoffending.

The Inmate Code

The inmate culture is the customs, beliefs, norms, and behaviors of those in prison. A major part of the inmate culture is the inmate code.[5] The inmate code, then, is the informal rules that inmates follow within the inmate culture. Or, put differently, the inmate code is the behavioral expression of the inmate culture. Specifically, the inmate code is marked by an increased emphasis on violence and toughness, a reluctance to snitch, and loyalty to other inmates rather than prison officials (Heffernan 1972; Irwin 1980; Johnson 1976; Petersilia 2005; Thomas, Petersen, and Zingraff 1978; Trammell 2011; Wacquant 2001). As Ohlin (1956) says, the inmate code:

> represents an organization of criminal values in clear cut opposition to the values of conventional society. The main tenet of this code forbids any type of supportive or nonexploitative liaison with prison officials. It seeks to confer status and prestige on those inmates who stand clearly in opposition to the administration…These criminal beliefs and attitudes place a high premium on physical violence and strength, on exploitative sex relations, and predatory attitudes toward money and property. They place a strong emphasis on in-group loyalty and solidarity and on aggressive and exploitative relations with conventionally oriented out-groups…If the code is not actively promoted by the majority of inmates in the prison system of the United States, it is at least respected and deferred to by them. Deviations from the code entail consequences in the form of the imposition of informal sanctions (29).

More recently, Winfree, Newbold, and Tubb III (2002) examined the inmate culture in New Mexico and New Zealand to determine the pervasiveness of the norms of the culture. They find that collaboration with authorities is prohibited and there is a high respect for violence among inmates across the world. Trammell (2009) interviewed formerly incarcerated men to examine the inmate code in California prisons. She, too,

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[5] I use the terms "inmate code" and "inmate culture" interchangeably in this study because the code reflects the culture; the inmate code is a particularly salient element of the inmate culture.

finds that the code is a set of rules that help regulate inmate behavior in which inmates "act tough, keep to [themselves], and defy the institution" (Trammel 2009: 768). In all, the inmate code is marked by an increased emphasis on violence and toughness, a reluctance to snitch, and loyalty to other inmates rather than prison officials (Irwin 1980; Petersilia 2005; Thomas, Petersen, and Zingraff 1978; Trammell 2011; Wacquant 2001).

Origins of the Inmate Culture

According to the extant literature, the inmate culture stems from one of two sources. The first model suggests that the inmate culture originates within the prison itself and the experiences inmates have inside. The second framework argues that the inmate culture is an accumulation of experiences inmates have prior to incarceration. Each model will be discussed in turn.

Deprivation Model

The deprivation model was initially put forth by Sykes (1958) to explain the deprivations associated with imprisonment. That is, when inmates enter prison they are exposed to experiences that reinforce their rejected status – "they are stripped of personal possessions, individual decision-making prerogatives, many legal rights, and, in short, deprived of their identity as individuals" (Thomas 1975: 485). The deprivations associated with incarceration include the deprivation of heterosexual relationships,

security, material possessions, liberty, and autonomy (Goffman 1961; McCorkle and

Korn 1954; Sykes 1958; Sykes and Messinger 1960). In order to cope with these

deprivations, the inmate learns that his most supportive relationships will be with other

inmates.

This closed-system model suggests that inmate behavior, and the culture that

develops, is an adaptation to the strains of prison (Blevins, Listwan, Cullen, and Jonson

2010). For instance, inmates cope with the deprivation of security by using or threatening

violence if another inmate challenges them; violence becomes a means of self-protection

for inmates in prison. Even though homosexual relationships in prison are not endorsed

by all inmates, some may deal with the deprivation of heterosexual relationships by

developing relationships with other inmates. Because of the deprivation of material

possessions in prison, inmates come to hold their few belongings in high regard. Stealing

another inmate's property in prison, then, becomes a major sign of disrespect and, often,

leads to violent retaliation. Likewise, lacking autonomy and liberty in prison might lead

to the development of underground markets as well as a heightened in-group loyalty in

prison. In other words, because inmates cannot control their own actions and do not have

independence while in prison, they form close ties with other inmates in opposition of

those who do control their behaviors. In essence, the deprivation model suggests that the

values and norms of the outside world do not apply behind bars and, as a result, a new

value system develops.

Importation Model

In contrast to the deprivation model, supporters of the importation model argue that the inmate culture reflects values and behaviors held by inmates prior to confinement, which are values in opposition to those of the dominant mainstream culture (Clear and Sumter 2002; Slosar 1978). As Irwin and Cressey (1962) argue, "the '[inmate] code' – don't inform on or exploit another inmate, don't lose your head, be weak or be a sucker, etc. – is also part of the criminal code, existing outside prison" (144). In other words, the content of the inmate culture is influenced by factors external to the immediate situation.

Elements of the inmate culture are clearly found in the value system of disadvantaged inner city communities. Anderson's (1999) seminal ethnography *Code of the Street* argues that a "code of the street" is present in inner-city neighborhoods. The "code of the street" refers to a "set of informal rules governing interpersonal public behavior, including violence. The rules prescribe both proper comportment and the proper way to respond if challenged" (Anderson 1999: 33). While most inner-city residents do not adopt the values of this code, it puts all young men in the community under constant pressure to use violence if the situation demands, particularly if treated in a disrespectful manner. That is, the culture shapes the behavior of most, if not all, community residents. As a result, inmate culture comes to value similar norms and behaviors found among offenders on the outside (i.e., violence, loyalty to one's group, no snitching, etc.). The inmate culture, then, is not a reaction to the deprivations of imprisonment, but is a reflection of experiences prior to incarceration (Goodstein and Wright 1989; Slosar 1978; Wacquant 2001).

Integrated Model

While these two models have been viewed as mutually exclusive, scholars have begun to argue that both frameworks have merit (Akers, Hayner, and Gruninger 1974, 1977; Hunt, Reigel, Morales, and Waldorf 1993; Parisi 1982; Pollock 1997; Thomas et al. 1978; Winfree et al. 2002). In an attempt to determine which perspective better accounts for the inmate culture, Akers et al. (1977) compared seven prisons in the United States, Mexico, England, West Germany, and Spain. They find that both sets of variables (internal and external) are vital in the formation and nature of the inmate culture. Specifically, the type of institution (custodial vs. treatment) influences the development of the inmate culture. In particular, the inmate culture is more hostile in custodial prisons (Akers et al. 1977), perhaps due to the fact that the deprivations are greatest in punishment-oriented facilities. Akers et al. (1977) also find that pre-prison factors influence the development of the inmate culture and an inmate's immersion in the culture.

Due to the salience of both sets of factors, Akers et al. (1977) argue for a more integrative model of inmate culture. They, along with Thomas (1970), suggest that "the existence of collective solutions in the inmate culture and social structure is based on the common problems of adjustment to the institution, while the content of those solutions and the tendency to become prisonized are imported from the larger society" (Akers et al. 1977: 548). In other words, inmates must find solutions to the deprivations associated with prison. Those solutions, however, tend to be imported from the outside. Using in-depth interviews with 39 formerly incarcerated men, Hunt et al. (1993) also find the links between prison and street are complex. With a focus on California prison gangs, they find that some prison gangs originated in the neighborhoods whereas other gangs began

within the institution (Hunt et al. 1993). In the end, the inmate culture and, subsequently the inmate code, are influenced by both the prison environment and the street.

These studies suggest that the inmate code is not simply the result of importation. In order to fully understand the nature and origin of the inmate culture, it is crucial to consider the factors that inmates bring into the prison as well as the socialization that occurs within the environment (Dobbs and Waid 2004). Because research has begun to show that the inmate culture stems from the deprivations associated with prison and the outside, it follows that some inmates learn the code on the inside and become more committed to it while they are incarcerated. In other words, both sets of factors affect an inmate's adaptation to prison and his adherence to the inmate culture.

In order to investigate the influence of external and internal factors on the development of the inmate culture, I ask participants to compare the street code and the inmate code. This will allow me to begin to disentangle the relationship between the street culture and the inmate culture. In other words, I will be able to show where my research lies in this debate – do the inmates import the culture from the street, does it arise as a result of the deprivations in prison, or do both frameworks play a role. In what follows, I show that an inmate's assimilation into the inmate culture is contingent on both sets of factors, regardless of how the culture originates.

Prisonization

DiMaggio (1997) argues "the cultures into which people are socialized leave much opportunity for choice and variation" (265). Just because an individual is in prison does not mean they are fully socialized into the inmate culture. Likewise, some inmates may become even more socialized to the inmate culture while they are incarcerated due to the deprivations associated with prison. However the inmate culture develops – importation vs. deprivation, inmates differentially assimilate into the inmate culture as a result of several factors (Clemmer 1940). That is, not all inmates internalize the inmate code to the same degree. When individuals enter prison, they have to, in a sense, adapt to their new environment. This process, known as prisonization, refers to "the taking on in greater or lesser degree of the folkways, mores, customs, and general culture of the penitentiary" (Clemmer 1940: 299). In a sense, then, prisonization refers to the extent to which inmates adopt or internalize the inmate culture, specifically the inmate code. Clemmer (1940) argues that prisons have a huge impact on inmates and that no inmate could remain completely unprisonized.

Stemming from Clemmer's (1940) seminal work, prison scholars have long studied the role of numerous factors that influence an inmate's assimilation into the inmate culture. The degree of prisonization is affected by both pre-prison and prison-based factors including race and home environment (Goodstein and Mackenzie 1984), an adherence to a criminal subculture prior to prison (Jacobs 1974), the length of time incarcerated (Clemmer 1940; Garabedian 1963; Wheeler 1961), organizational characteristics (Berk 1966; Grusky 1959; Street 1965; Thomas and Zingraff 1976), ties with other inmates (Clemmer 1940; Thomas and Foster 1972; Wheeler 1961), the phase of the institutional career (Garabedian 1963; Wheeler 1961), inmate social role

adaptations (Cloward 1960; Garabedian 1963; Schrag1961; Sykes and Messinger 1960), and post-release life expectations (Thomas and Foster 1972; Wheeler 1961). All of these factors will be discussed in turn.

Pre-Prison Factors Influencing Prisonization

Race and home environment (i.e., rural vs. urban) have an effect on an inmate's prisonization. With a sample of 1,618 inmates in five correctional institutions, Goodstein and MacKenzie (1984) find that blacks have higher levels of prisonization compared to whites. But, when they control for education, prosocial commitment, and home city, the racial differences in prisonization go away (Goodstein and MacKenzie 1984). They also find that urban inmates, regardless of race, are more highly prisonized than rural prisoners (Goodstein and MacKenzie 1984). These findings suggest that both race and home environment play a role in an inmate's internalization of the inmate culture.

Jacobs (1974) examined the role of pre-prison experiences on prisonization by investigating the social organization of a maximum security prison in 1972, and finds that inmate culture is in part imported into the prison. Within prison "gang members remained oriented toward the same membership group and leadership hierarchy as they did before having been committed to prison" (Jacobs 1974: 408). Jacobs (1974) finds that how inmates behave in prison and adapt to prison reflects how they related to each other prior to prison as street gang members. This suggests that an internalization of the inmate culture is a product of the communities and cultures inmates are a part of prior to incarceration. Ultimately, those inmates who are deeply embedded in a criminal lifestyle or criminal subculture prior to prison are more likely to become prisonized than those

who were not. This may be due to the fact that these individuals are already privy to the informal rules of the inmate culture. As a result, there is less of a learning curve when it comes to assimilating into the inmate culture. To assess one's adherence to the street culture prior to prison, I ask participants to describe their life prior to prison. While I start out rather generally, I do prober further and ask more in-depth questions about their early involvement with crime, violence, and the "street life."

Prison-Based Factors Influencing Prisonization

In addition to pre-prison factors that influence an inmate's degree of prisonization, research has found that factors inherent to the prison experience also influence a prisoner's adherence to the inmate culture. In particular, the organizational goals of the prison impact the level of prisonization (Akers et al. 1977; Berk 1966; Grusky 1959; Street 1965; Thomas and Zingraff 1976). Grusky (1959), Street (1965), and Berk (1966) find that there is a different choice in leaders among the inmate group depending on the type of prison. That is, in treatment-oriented facilities, the inmate culture centers around the most cooperative, not the most hostile, inmates. The opposite is true of custodially-oriented prisons in which the strains and deprivations associated with confinement are heightened (Berk 1966; Grusky 1959). It follows, then, that the inmate code should be more adhered to by inmates in custodial-oriented prisons if the more hostile inmates are in charge and the deprivations are greater. Similarly, Street (1965) finds differences in inmate behaviors depending on the organizational goals of the prison, such that the custodial inmate culture emphasizes behaviors consistent with custodial goals of punishment and control; behaviors similar to the inmate code. These studies suggest, then, that the inmate culture and an inmate's level of assimilation into

this culture vary by type of prison. Specifically, there is less prisonization among inmates in treatment-oriented prisons than among those in custodial-oriented facilities.

Similarly, Thomas and Zingraff (1976) argue that the organization or structure of the prison creates different levels of alienation, which, in turn, affects the level of prisonization. Using data from 276 juvenile males who were institutionalized in a custodial-oriented facility, Thomas and Zingraff (1976) find that alienation is higher in custodial-oriented institutions because inmates are isolated at the bottom of the organizational structure. As a result, they have little control over their daily lives. This lack of control "alienate[s] a significant portion of the inmate population, and…produces high levels of prisonization" (Thomas and Zingraff 1976: 110). In order to assess the organizational goals of the prison(s) each participant spent time in, I ask participants whether the institution was focused on rehabilitation or punishment. Those who spend time in punishment-oriented facilities should be more prisonized than those who feel as though the prison they spent time in was treatment-oriented.

Prisonization also varies by an inmate's phase of confinement. While Clemmer (1940) assumes that prisonization increases throughout an inmate's institutional career, such that the longer one spends in prison the more prisonized they become, Wheeler (1961) argues that inmates undergo fundamental changes as they prepare for release. As such, he classifies inmates according to the phase of their confinement. Wheeler (1961) finds a U-shaped distribution, which suggests that inmates are differentially attached to the inmate culture depending on the phase of his or her institutional career. For instance, inmates who have just entered prison and those who are expected to return home soon are more attached to conventional, mainstream culture; "these inmates appear to shed the

[inmate] culture before they leave [prison], such that there are almost as many conforming inmates at time of release as at time of entrance into the system" (Wheeler 1961: 706).[6] Since all of my participants were out of prison at the time of their interview, this factor does not play a role in my study.

Research also shows that prisoner roles influence prisonization (Schrag 1944, 1959, 1961; Sykes 1958; Sykes and Messinger 1960). Schrag (1961) and Garabedian (1963) argue that, while the names may change, one of the major role sets in prison consists of the *square John*, *right guy*, *outlaw*, and *ding*. According to Schrag (1961) and Garabedian (1963), *dings* are those inmates who do not fit into the other roles and, as a result, they are isolated from both staff and inmate contacts. *Right guys* tend to have an extensive criminal career, they are not involved in treatment programs, and are isolated from the staff. *Square Johns* have had little involvement in crime, they actively take part in treatment programs, and have consistent contact with the staff. Both *right guys* and *square Johns* are group-oriented and tend to minimize their own interests for the group (Garabedian 1963; Schrag 1961). *Outlaws* are preoccupied with violence and, as a result, are isolated from both staff and inmates. Unlike, *right guys* and *square Johns*, *outlaws* are self-oriented such that personal interests are the most important (Garabedian 1963;

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[6] This relationship remained when total length of sentence was controlled since it would be expected that those with longer sentences are more likely to be included within the middle phase of institutional career and those with shorter sentences are more likely to be overrepresented in the final period (Wheeler 1961: 706).

Schrag 1961). Based on these social roles, *right guys* and *outlaws* should be more prisonized than *square Johns* or *dings*.

Thomas and Foster (1973) argue that both pre-prison and extra-prison experiences influence social role adaptations while incarcerated. Social role adaptation refers to whether an inmate chooses prosocial or antisocial responses to certain pressures from within and outside the prison. They hypothesize that social class, age of first criminal involvement, degree of contact with friends and family, and post-prison expectations should determine whether or not an inmate endorses a prosocial or antisocial adaption while in prison (Thomas and Foster 1973). Using survey data from 276 inmates housed in a maximum-security prison, Thomas and Foster (1973) find that pre-prison variables are weak predictors of specific social role adaptations (see Garabedian 1963 or Schrag 1961 for specific social roles), but they are good predictors of general social role adaptation (i.e. prosocial vs. antisocial). Extra-prison factors (i.e., social class, gender, age of first criminal involvement, etc.) are good predictors of specific social role adaptations, but are even better predictors of general roles types. Thomas and Foster (1973) conclude that "isolation and negative anticipations about the future may, therefore, be viewed as significant determinants of the adaptations made by prison inmates despite the fact that they do not originate within the structure of the prison" (232-233). Unlike Sykes (1958), Sykes and Messinger (1960), and Garabedian (1963), Thomas and Foster (1973) show that factors external to the prison experience exert a direct influence on social role adaptations, which, in turn, influence the degree of prisonization.

Other research also shows an independent relationship between post-prison expectations and prisonization. That is, post-prison expectations can directly influence an

inmate's adherence to the inmate culture (Thomas 1977a; Thomas 1977b; Thomas and Foster 1972, 1973; Zingraff 1975; Thomas et al. 1978). In a 1972 study surveying 276 adult male felons, Thomas and Foster find that the worse an inmate's post-release expectations, the greater the negative effects of incarceration, or the greater the level of prisonization.[7] Similarly, in a study involving in-depth interviews of 239 inmates in a maximum security federal prison, Thomas et al. (1978) find that prisonization is greater among those inmates with negative post-prison expectations, which emphasizes the idea that imprisonment is so stigmatizing that reintegration into conventional roles within the family, work, and society is viewed as unlikely by the inmate.

Taken together, these studies suggest that pre-prison and prison-based factors influence an inmate's degree of prisonization. In particular, an inmate is more likely to become prisonized if they adhered to a criminal subculture prior to prison (Jacobs 1974). Inmates are also more likely to be prisonized in custodial-oriented, or punishment-oriented, prisons (Berk 1966; Grusky 1959; Street 1965; Thomas and Zingraff 1976). Likewise, an inmate is less prisonized when he first enters prison and when he is about to be released (Garabedian 1963; Wheeler 1961). An inmate's role in prison also influences his level of prisonization (Cloward 1960; Garabedian 1963; Schrag 1944, 1954, 1961; Sykes 1958; Sykes and Messinger 1960; Thomas and Foster 1973). Lastly, post-release

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[7] An inmate's post-prison expectations was measured using an 11-item Likert scale with items such as "nobody on the outside cares whether I live or die anymore;" "I'm afraid to face the people I knew on the street when I get out;", and "I think people will give me a fair chance when I get out of here as long as I stay out of trouble." (Thomas and Foster 1972: 238).

expectations that indicate a negative future outlook suggest an increased level of prisonization (Thomas and Foster 1972; Thomas et al. 1978; Wheeler 1961). While I ask in-depth questions on each of these factors during the interviews to gauge each participant's level of prisonization, I also gather information about each individual's adherence to the inmate code both in prison and upon release from prison. This allows me to explore the effect of prisonization on post-prison outcomes. An increased level of prisonization, or an increased adherence to the inmate code, should negatively influence an inmate's life post-prison.

Contemporary Criminal Justice Policies and Inmate Culture

Despite the plethora of research on inmate culture and prisonization from the 1950s through the 1970s, major changes in criminal justice policies during the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s may have altered the inmate culture in contemporary prisons. Beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s, sentencing and correctional policies shifted towards punishment as a primary objective. There was a renewed focus on deterring would-be offenders, punishing those who offend, and incapacitating those in society who posed the greatest threat to prevent future crimes. This more punitive approach brought about new methods of policing (e.g., hot spots policing and community policing), changes in the court system (e.g., mandatory sentences, sentencing guidelines, abolition of discretionary parole boards, and the implementation of mandatory parole) and

intermediate sanctions (e.g., Intensive Supervision Programs). Community supervision, probation and parole went from helping and counseling offenders to risk management and surveillance. This tough-on-crime attitude meant a reduced focus on rehabilitation and training. The abolition of discretionary parole and the implementation of three sentencing policies, of which Georgia was at the forefront, were particularly important for changing the composition of contemporary U.S. prisons. As Garland (2001) notes, these changes in crime and criminal justice in America after the 1970s resulted from changes in society. In particular, society's faith in rehabilitation was lost because of the 1974 Martinson Report. Additionally, trends in modernity (e.g., changing family structures, car ownership, increases in mass media, etc.) and new political agendas led to increases in the crime rate (Garland 2001). These societal changes forever changed the landscape of the criminal justice system in the United States.

During the "Golden Era" (Tonry 1999) of American corrections, discretionary parole was used to determine when offenders were ready to leave prison. Hughes, Wilson and Beck (2001) show that in 1977, 72 percent of U.S. prisoners were released on discretionary parole. After 1977, the use of discretionary parole began to decline and in 2000 only 24 percent of prisoners were released by discretionary boards (Hughes et al. 2001). Additionally, by 2002, 16 states had abolished discretionary release, 18 had severely restricted the parole board's authority, and 16 states maintained parole boards with full discretionary power (Petersilia 2003; Travis 2005).

Mandatory minimums, truth-in-sentencing, and three-strikes policies were also enacted to limit discretion by judges and parole boards, and effectively reduced the use of parole at both the state and federal level. These policies were meant to not only punish

and incapacitate offenders, but also to deter would-be offenders. Mandatory minimums ensure that for specific crimes, individuals would serve a set amount of time. Truth-in-sentencing laws require offenders to serve most (usually 85 percent) or their entire court-mandated sentence before being eligible for parole. Three-strikes laws, which aim to incapacitate dangerous, repeat offenders, require increased penalties for second offenses and life in prison for third time offenders (Kovandzic, Sloan, and Vieraitis 2004).

While the tough-on-crime policies were intended to reduce crime through deterrence and incapacitation (Nagin, Cullen, and Jonson 2009), there is little evidence to suggest that prisons reduce recidivism (Cullen, Jonson, and Nagin 2011; Gendreau, Goggin, Cullen, and Andrews 2000; Kovandzic et al. 2004; Nagin et al. 2009). Gendreau et al. (2000) find that incarceration results in a seven percent increase in recidivism compared to a community sanction. Jonson (2010) similarly finds that a custodial sanction increases recidivism by 14 percent compared to noncustodial sanctions. Cullen et al. (2011) conclude that prisons do not have a specific deterrent effect. Additionally, Cullen et al. (2011) suggest that, while the evidence is very limited, it is likely that low-risk offenders are most likely to recidivate due to incarceration. Imprisoning low-risk offenders with those who are deeply entrenched in a criminal career can cause these individuals to "manifest attitudes, relationships, and traits associated with recidivism" (Cullen et al. 2011: 60S). The evidence suggests that prisons may have a criminogenic effect on those incarcerated and mass incarceration may actually make society less safe (Cullen et al. 2011). However, it should be noted that these punitive policies may have a general deterrent effect, deterring potential offenders, and an incapacitation effect, reducing crime by removing offenders from the street (see Cullen and Jonson 2012).

These sentencing policies that were implemented in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s have fundamentally altered U.S. prisons. They have disproportionately increased the number of people behind bars; with a more than 650 percent increase from 1970 to 2012 (Carson and Golinelli 2013; Petersilia 2003). This increasing incarceration rate was especially pronounced for drug offenders and African Americans. Specifically, nine percent of prison admissions in 1981 were for drug crimes as compared to 30 percent in 1996 (Austin and Irwin 2001; Travis 2005). Similarly, the rate of incarceration for African Americans in 2000 was more than 26 times the rate in 1983 (Travis 2005). The rate of incarceration for African Americans declined by almost 10 percent from 2000 to 2009, however (Mauer 2013). During this same time period, the rate of incarceration for whites increased by only 8.5 percent (Mauer 2013). The number of offenders under the age of 18 in state prisons also doubled from 1985 to 1997 (Strom 2000). In 2012, 13.5 percent of state and federal prisons were under the age of 25 (Carson and Golinelli 2012). The number of gang members in American prisons has also been increasing since the 1980s (Decker 2003; Knox 1999; Ruddell, Decker, and Egley 2006; Wells, Minor, Angel, Carter, and Cox 2002; Winterdyk and Ruddell 2010). A study by the National Gang Crime Research Center reports that gang membership within state prisons increased from 9.4 percent in 1991 to 24.7 percent in 1999 (Knox 1999). Winterdyk and Ruddell (2010) also find that 19.1 percent of inmates were thought to be gang members in 2009. These punitive policies also resulted in inmates being incarcerated for longer periods of time from an average of 22 months in 1990 to 29 months in 1999 (Hughes et al. 2001).

In addition to changes in criminal justice policies, the prison environment itself has changed as a result of various "penal harm" initiatives like decreased prison

programming and eliminating inmate privileges. For instance, there is less of an emphasis on rehabilitation with a marked decrease in educational, vocational, and technical programs offered to inmates (Petersilia 2003). In New Jersey, for instance, 34 percent of inmates participated in programs in 1997, while less than 10 percent participated in 2001 (Petersilia 2003). Visher and Travis (2003) also show that from 1991 to 1997 participation in educational programs decreased from 43 percent to 35 percent, job training from 31 percent to 27 percent, and substance abuse treatment dropped from 25 percent to 10 percent. In fact, in 2007, 50 percent of state inmates did not participate in any rehabilitation or training program (Grattet, Petersilia, Lin, and Beckman 2009). Inmates also receive fewer privileges than they did in the past. For example, weight-lifting equipment has been removed from many institutions, cigarettes are now banned, and phone calls are severely restricted and limited. In some cases, inmates are only allowed to call individuals who are on a pre-approved list. The cutbacks and even elimination of some privileges may lead to increased tensions, an increased adherence to the inmate code, and eventual uproar among the inmates.

While this study does not directly examine the impact of these changes on the nature of the inmate culture, it is imperative to recognize that because of these changes, the inmate culture may have changed as a result. Hunt et al. (1993) argue that recent changes in prison life have altered the inmate culture. In particular, an increase in gangs, changes in the demographics of the prison population, and new prison policies have increased the amount of turmoil inmates experience while they are incarcerated. The younger inmates in prison, described as the "Pepsi generation," have "something to prove – how tough and macho and strong they are. This is their whole attitude. Very extreme

power trip and machismo…there is very little remorse" (Hunt et al. 1993: 405, Case 16).

Prison is now marked by increased fragmentation, disorganization, and danger, which

causes the clear dividing line between inmates and authorities to weaken or disintegrate

(Hunt et al. 1993). This suggests, then, that inmate loyalty may not be as salient a rule in

prison as it was in the past. Winfree et al. (2002) argue, however, that both prisons and

their populations have changed, but the inmate culture has remained relatively stable.

Because of the "penal harm," "get tough" movement and the various changes that

have occurred in prison life, the inmate culture may be more hostile or aggressive. In

other words, over-crowding, an increase in younger, gang-affiliated prisoners, and a loss

of privileges all contribute to a more antagonistic inmate culture. Prison has become a

more dangerous environment. Research has shown that the deprivations in prison

contribute to the development of the inmate culture. As criminal justice policies have

become more punitive in recent years, it seems that the severe deprivations in

contemporary prisons may cause the inmate culture to be more heightened and more

enforced. In this precarious environment, inmates learn that they must immerse

themselves within the inmate culture and adopt the inmate code in order to do their time

as easily as possible. In this punitive, deprivation-rich environment, inmates are more

likely to adhere to the inmate code in order to survive.

Inmate Culture, Prisonization, and Its Influence on Recidivism

An inmate's assimilation into the inmate culture, or level of prisonization should

influence whether or not an ex-inmate reoffends once released. As was discussed earlier,

the inmate culture is not simply a matter of importation. Some inmates may experience a change in values as a result of the deprivations associated with prison. The deprivations in prison cause some inmates who had not adhered to a criminal subculture prior to prison to begin to adopt the inmate code, which values toughness, violence, inmate loyalty, and a reluctance to snitch. Or the prison environment may cause those who adhered to a criminal subculture prior to prison to more strongly adhere to the code while they are incarcerated. While few studies have explicitly examined the role of inmate culture in reoffending (see Goodstein 1979), there has been extensive research on the impact of the "code of the street" on offending (Agnew 1994; Baron, Kennedy, and Forde 2001; Brezina, Agnew, Cullen, and Wright 2004; Felson, Liska, South, and McNulty 1994; Heimer 1997; Stewart and Simons 2010). Using data from the first three waves of the National Youth Survey, Brezina et al. (2004) find that code-related beliefs are significantly related to future violent behavior ($\beta = 087$, $p < .05$), controlling for other factors such as, but not limited to, race, family structure, age, previous criminal involvement, parental involvement, and peer aggression.[8] Similarly, Baron et al. (2001) argue that homelessness creates an environment in which violent attitudes are learned and supported. Homeless youth who hold attitudes favorable towards violence are more likely to use violence to settle disputes (Baron et al. 2001).

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[8] Code-related beliefs is a variable composed of three indicators: (1) it's sometimes necessary to get into a fight to uphold your honor or put someone in his or her place; (2) it's all right to beat up others who call you names; and (3) it's all right to beat up others if they started the fight (Brezina et al. 2004: 316).

I argued earlier that the inmate code and the street code are similar. Therefore, if the street code is influencing offending behaviors, it follows that the inmate code should also influence offending behaviors post-prison, net of other factors shown to influence reoffending. If an inmate leaves prison with a favorable attitude towards violence and an oppositional view of authority, then he should be more likely to reoffend. In prison, an inmate learns to react with violence over the smallest slights. If he internalizes that belief – if that response becomes almost a habit – then when he is released from prison, it is likely that he may resort to violence to settle disputes. Baron et al. (2001) argue, "in highly aversive environments, [like prison], aggressive regulative rules…may evolve from the reasonable expectation that physical aggression is necessary for personal safety because of the dangerousness of the situation." (763). If an individual's behaviors in prison are socially rewarded and supported, then it is likely he will take those violent, antagonistic attitudes with him when he is released from prison, thus, making reoffending more likely.

In addition to the inmate code possibly having a direct effect on subsequent offending, the code may also have an indirect effect on recidivism. Most importantly, the code emphasizes loyalty to other inmates. Recall from Chapter 2 that an association with criminal others increases the likelihood of reoffending (Akers 1985, 1998; Benda and Tollett 1999; Moore 1996; Mulder et al. 2011). Thus, by solidifying one's relationship with other inmates and maintaining ties with criminal others post-prison, it seems likely that a highly prisonized inmate will return to crime when he is released from prison. The values inherent in the inmate code may also weaken or break an inmate's bonds to conventional society. For instance, relying on violence to settle disputes may make one

less likely to find a job. It may also cause prosocial family and friends to distance themselves from the inmate. Research shows that a lack of bonds to conventional society significantly influences recidivism (Sampson and Laub 1993). Therefore, without these societal ties, the more prisonized an inmate is, the more likely he is to reoffend upon release from prison.

Nagin et al. (2009) argue that prisons are institutions marked by "cultural values supportive of crime that [are] transmitted through daily interactions. It is thus a social learning environment in which criminal orientations are potentially reinforced" (126). Research highlights the fact that little is known about the consequences of the internalization of the inmate code (Zingraff 1975). Despite this clear acknowledgement, current recidivism research fails to account for the role of inmate culture in recidivism. The adoption of cultural values in opposition to conventional society while in prison should reduce an inmate's likelihood of a successful reentry back into society.

Various studies have attempted to examine the effect of prisonization on one's success post-release (Thomas 1977b; Thomas and Foster 1973; Zingraff 1975). However, the consequences measured in these studies (e.g., attitudes in opposition to the prison system, attitudes that favor relationships with other inmates, and the development of a heightened criminal identification) do not in fact measure negative post-prison behaviors. Instead, these studies simply measure attitudes inherent in the inmate code. Irwin and Cressey (1962) suggest that:

> the men oriented to legitimate subcultures should have a low recidivism rate, while the highest recidivism rate should be found among participants in the convict subculture. The hardcore members of this subculture are being trained in manipulation, duplicity, and exploitation, they are not sure they can make it on the

outside, and even when they are on the outside they continue to use convicts as a reference groups (154).

Irwin and Cressey (1962) acknowledged the potential effect of culture on recidivism more than five decades ago. However, no current studies have examined this relationship. This study begins to explore the influence of inmate culture on concrete post-prison outcomes including housing, employment, and reoffending behaviors, which more clearly reflect negative post-prison consequences.

As Visher and Travis (2003) suggest, "undoubtably, ex-prisoners are changed in some way by their time in prison. However, existing research has not attempted to estimate how these experiences might affect the process of reintegration or the relative impact of experiences in prison on postrelease outcomes" (96). Because prisons rehabilitate some inmates while breeding criminality in others (Clemmer 1951), it becomes imperative to understand the underlying process or processes behind reoffending. As such, this study first examines the nature of inmate culture within prisons today and second, explores the potential influence of this culture on post-release outcomes, in particular, housing, employment, and reoffending behaviors. In Chapter 4, I describe the methods I used in this study.

CHAPTER FOUR

Methodology

Research Design

Since there is no research examining the relationship between culture and

recidivism, this study is exploratory in nature. Qualitative methods allow researchers to

investigate an area of study that has been under-researched (Hesse-Biber and Leavy

2011). To begin to understand the relationship between inmate culture, incarceration, and

recidivism, I conducted a qualitative study utilizing semi-structured, in-depth interviews. This qualitative approach allows researchers to examine how certain people come to understand their particular experiences (Corbin and Strauss 2008; Lofland, Snow, Anderson, and Lofland 2006; Miles and Huberman 1994; Rubin and Rubin 2005). In my case, in-depth interviews focus on the meanings individuals attach to their own personal incarceration experiences and they help to examine how these prison experiences affect behaviors post-prison (Lofland et al. 2006; Maxwell 2005; Miles and Huberman 1994; Rubin and Rubin 2005; Strauss and Corbin 2008; Weiss 1994). In order to understand how formerly incarcerated males dealt with their prison sentence, or sentences in many cases, and to assess the relationship between incarceration, inmate culture, and recidivism, in-depth, semi-structured interviews allowed me to get the "fullest, most detailed description possible" (Weiss 1994: 9).

In this chapter, I outline the specific qualitative methodologies that I used. First, I describe the study setting as well as the recruitment and sampling procedures I used for the 40 semi-structured, in-depth interviews I conducted.[9] I also provide an overview of the in-depth interview guide. Next, I explain the methods I used to analyze the data. I then discuss how I handled the confidentiality of the data. Lastly, I consider the limitations and ethical issues related to this research.

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[9] It was suggested that I also conduct in-depth interviews with prison officials and Department of Corrections employees. I completed 4 such interviews and did not find the information gathered to be useful for this study. When I asked questions about how they perceived the prison experience for inmates, most said they could not answer that question because they did not personally experience prison.

Setting, Recruitment, and Sample

Setting

In addition to its convenience, this study took place in Georgia for a variety of other, more appropriate reasons. During the 1990s, Georgia introduced some of the toughest repeat offender laws in the nation. For instance, Georgia Senate Bill 144, passed in 1994, states that "anyone convicted of any of seven serious violent felonies ('seven deadly sins') must serve a minimum of ten years in prison without parole. Anyone convicted of a second of the seven serious violent felonies must receive a mandatory sentence of life without parole ('two strikes and you're out')" (Welsh 2008: 2). These "tough on crime" laws increased the prison population and the amount of time inmates spend behind bars (Welsh 2008). At year-end 2007, Georgia ranked first in the nation with one in 13 individuals under some form of correctional supervision (e.g., probation, parole, prison, and jail) per capita; in 1982, however, only one in 37 adults were under correctional control (Pew Center on the States 2009).When examining the total number of inmates, Georgia ranked 4th in prison populations with a total of 55,944 inmates, behind only California, Texas, and Florida in 2011 (Carson and Sabol 2012). Georgia also has the third fastest growing prison population in the country (Welsh 2008). Additionally, the Georgia Department of Corrections spent almost $1.1 billion on prison costs in 2010, more than doubling since 1991 (Henrichson and Delany 2012; Welsh 2008). Lastly, of the almost 19,000 inmates who were released from Georgia prisons in 2004, 34.8 percent were back in prison by 2007 (Pew Center on the States 2011). While

the recidivism rates in Georgia are lower than the national average, Georgia inmates are still reoffending at a high rate, which allows for an investigation into why this is the case.

Due to the punitive criminal justice policies in place in Georgia since the 1990s, Georgia was an ideal location to study the effect of prison on post-prison behaviors. Recall from Chapter 3 that an inmate is more likely to adopt the inmate code when he is housed in a punishment-oriented facility. Since the introduction of the aforementioned punitive policies in Georgia, most prisons would classify as punishment-oriented. As a result, then, it is likely that inmates who spent time in Georgia prisons would be more likely to adopt or internalize the inmate code. While this may either limit the variation in prisonization or overestimate the adoption of the inmate code, it is important to note that not all of my participants spent time in Georgia prisons. Because I am attempting to understand the relationship between inmate culture and post-prison behaviors, it is imperative to find inmates who internalize the inmate code. Therefore, using Georgia as the study setting is ideal.

Additionally, prisonization is shown to increase as time in prison increases. As inmates are spending more time behind bars in Georgia because of the state's punitive criminal justice policies, it is likely that Georgia inmates would be more likely to follow the inmate code. Moreover, many participants described a lack of hope among inmates who are sentenced to a significant amount of time in prison. There appears to be no light at the end of the tunnel for inmates with lengthy sentences. As Wilson highlights, "there's no death penalty for killing an inmate. So they have nothing to live for." As Jim similarly notes, "when a person's in that mind state they will hurt you, you know. They will actually kill you." In essence, then, they have nothing to lose and will engage in violence

at all costs. These lengthy sentences given out in Georgia, then, may be contributing to an increased adherence to the inmate code – especially using violence in response to challenges.

Recruitment

Because of the nature of the sample, I used several avenues for recruitment. First, access to this population was made possible through formal gatekeepers, or individuals who connected me to suitable participants (Denzin and Lincoln 1994; Lofland et al. 2006; Seidman 2006).[10] I worked with Andrew (pseudonym), a former Georgia Department of Corrections employee to aid in my recruitment. As a gatekeeper, Andrew not only put me in contact with individuals directly involved in prisoner reentry in Atlanta, but he also invited me to attend formerly incarcerated persons meetings that he went to.[11] This group ran bi-monthly meetings, which were attended by both formerly incarcerated individuals and service providers who work directly with this underserved population.

I began attending these meetings in August 2012 and have spent close to 80 hours working with this group in order to develop the relationship necessary to successfully

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[10] A gatekeeper is someone in a position to allow or provide access to others for interviewing (Miller and Bell 2002).

[11] I originally began attending two different formerly incarcerated persons groups. These two groups used to be one larger group, but because of internal differences between some of the group members, the group split up. It became apparent very quickly that the group members followed one of the leaders and not the other. While I attended both meetings, I recruited solely from the more well attended meeting. I continued attending the other group's meetings, so as to not burn a potential referral bridge.

recruit participants. The purpose of this formerly incarcerated persons group is to "share insights from people who have been impacted and experienced incarceration and those who have made the transition from prison life to community life with varying degrees of success" (Formerly Incarcerated Persons Group Mission Statement). The first meeting of the month focuses on support for formerly incarcerated individuals. The second meeting of every month allows various organizations to come and discuss the services they can provide for formerly incarcerated individuals. Those individuals who attend these meetings tend to be those who are not reoffending, have found employment, and are generally leading successful, pro-social lives. Because of this bias, I made sure that my initial participants referred me to individuals who were not attending these meetings, thus, increasing the likelihood that I would interview individuals who might be having difficulties post-prison. In the end, only six of the participants in this study were attending these formerly incarcerated persons meetings with regularity (i.e., at least once a month).[12]

By immersing myself into my participant's territory, instead of merely inviting them into my space, I developed the trust necessary to increase the reliability and validity of my data. Once I obtained Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval in November 2012, I began circulating written materials that explained the study in more depth (see Appendix A for these recruitment materials). I also spoke to the group at their various meetings explaining in more depth the purpose of the study. My first interview took place in January 2013, five months after I initially began attending these meetings. The

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[12] More recently, however, some of these individuals are no longer attending the meetings.

relationships that I cultivated at these meetings also increased the amount of referrals I

received from group members, which enabled me to engage in purposive snowball

sampling to reach participants who were not attending these meetings (Bernard 2002a;

Flick 2007; Maxwell 2005; Weiss 1994). This process allowed me to gather a range of

views and prison experiences. Additionally, I recruited participants who had spent at least

one cumulative year in prison because studies have found that those who have been in

prison for less than six months tend to be less prisonized (Wheeler 1961).

The interviews took place between January 2013 and August 2013. The

interviews lasted an average of one hour and 18 minutes with the shortest interview being

28 minutes and the longest interview being almost three hours. Because of safety

concerns, these face-to-face interviews took place in public spaces, including, but not

limited to fast food restaurants, public libraries, and coffee shops. I also met some of the

men at drug/alcohol treatment centers and transitional homes run by various non-profit

organizations. Participants were compensated for their time with a $25 Kroger gift card.

Sample

The overall recruitment strategy and interviews led to a diverse sample. Table 1

shows the demographic information on each participant as well as his criminal history.

The study's sample consists of 40 formerly incarcerated males who are currently residing

in or near Atlanta, Georgia. The men ranged in age from 34 years old to 67 years old,

with the average age being close to 50. While this is older than expected, it is not

completely surprising given the rather punitive sentences that have been recently

introduced. As a result, individuals are serving longer prison sentences and are, thus,

released at an older age. Ninety percent of the participants were African Americans, eight percent were White, and two percent were Hispanic. I was not expecting my sample to be varied by race because, in Atlanta, 92 percent of individuals leaving prison and returning to the city of Atlanta are black (Rich, Owens, Haspel, and Engel 2008). Seventy-five percent of the sample had a high school degree or less while 25 percent had completed some college or higher prior to their time in prison. Eighty-three percent of the men spent time in state prisons whereas 10 percent spent time in federal prison and seven percent did time in both state and federal prisons. Because the U.S. criminal justice system has become a revolving door, it was not surprising that 77 percent of the participants had been in prison two or more times. This means that 23 percent of the men in this study had done only one stint in prison. The total cumulative years that the participants spent in prison also varied greatly. The total time in prison ranged from two years to 37 years. Participants have also been out of prison for a range of years. One participant has been out of prison since 1990 while several others had just been released in early 2013.

The men's crimes also varied. Several participants committed violent crimes such as armed robbery, aggravated assault, murder, and aggravated child molestation. Others committed various drug crimes like trafficking methamphetamine, possession of a controlled substance, and the direct sale to an undercover officer. Additional participants engaged in property and white-collar crimes such as theft by taking, theft by receiving, burglary, and bank fraud. Ninety-five percent of the participants had engaged in various different types of crimes throughout their lives. Lastly, 25 percent of the participants had reoffended since their last prison sentence. It is important to note, however, that 77 percent of the men in this study had done multiple stints in prison. This means that, while

they may not have reoffended since they were most recently released from prison, they had reoffended in the past, which led to their subsequent return to prison.

[Insert Table 1 here]

Interview Instrument

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews create rich data (Biklen and Casella 2007) and allow respondents to disclose complex, detailed information about their personal incarceration experiences (Kvale 2007; Rubin and Rubin 2005). Since the formerly incarcerated population can be considered a "hidden population" (Heckarthon 1997), in-depth interviews gave me access to a place that I did not have entrée (Weiss 1994). As Weiss (1994) argues, "through interviewing we can learn about places we have not been and could not go and about settings in which we have not lived…we can also, by interviewing, learn about settings that would otherwise be closed to us" (1). In other words, the semi-structured, in-depth interviews with formerly incarcerated men gave me a richer and more complete understanding of a social institution that I was not a part of. And because research examining criminal involvement is a sensitive topic, in-depth interviews allowed me to go beyond the surface and instead begin to understand the process behind incarceration, culture, and reoffending. I completed two pilot focus groups with 7 formerly incarcerated males. While this data is not included in this study, the information from these focus groups informed the final interview guide that I used for the 40 semi-structured, in-depth interviews (see Appendix B for the focus group interview guide).

Because this study was exploratory in nature, the interview was semi-structured. This means that my interviews were not fixed across all interviews. Instead, they were guided by certain topics or questions that allowed me the flexibility to ask follow-up questions while at the same time providing the participants with the same general topics (Bernard 2002b; Rubin and Rubin 2005). This guided discussion allows participants to bring up other issues that were relevant to their prison experience and life before and after incarceration (Hennink, Hutter, and Bailey 2011) Using open-ended questions is appropriate for an exploratory study because there is not a lot of empirical work on the current nature of inmate culture and the effect this culture might have on post-prison behaviors. The interviews explored a variety of topics, but tended to follow a narrative approach. In other words, the participants began by discussing their childhood and their life growing up and continued all the way to their current status. For the formerly incarcerated persons interview guide see Appendix C.

Pre-Prison Experiences

I began each interview by asking the participant to describe to me what life was like growing up. From there, I was able to probe further on a variety of topics. These included when and where they were born, where they grew up, their home life, their education, their childhood friends, employment experiences, and their involvement with the criminal justice system. This portion of the interview highlighted the factors that led to their initial involvement in crime such as an association with delinquent peers, a lack of social bonds to various institutions such as education and work, and an increase in strains throughout their lives.

Prison Experiences

The second part of the interview focused on the participant's personal prison experiences and tended to be the most time-consuming of each participant's interview.[13] In this section we discussed various topics, including, but not limited to their daily activities, the nature of inmate culture, the role of violence and religion, their relationships with family, friends, other inmates, and prison officials (e.g., correctional officers, wardens, etc.), gangs, snitching, and their expectations for life post-release. In this section I began to disentangle if and how inmate culture compares to street culture. I asked each participant about the informal rules that inmates follow in prison. I also specifically asked how the informal rules of prison compare to the informal rules of the street. This question addressed the importation versus deprivation debate in the inmate culture literature.

Here I was also able to get a sense of the extent to which the participant became prisonized or internalized the inmate culture while they were incarcerated. I asked questions that specifically addressed the factors that influence prisonization as was discussed in Chapter 3. In particular, I asked participants whether they thought the prisons in which they spent time in were either punishment-oriented or treatment-oriented. I also asked who they associated with most frequently in prison. This question highlights whether or not the participant formed close ties with other inmates – a

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[13] If a participant served time in several prisons, I tried to focus on just the most recent prison term, but most participants wanted to discuss all of their experiences. When discussing the inmate code and one's adherence to the culture, I tried to focus the discussion on the most recent prison experience.

predictor of increased prisonization. While I did not specifically ask each participant whether they agreed with the elements of the inmate code, the discussion surrounding the inmate code tended to disclose whether or not the participant followed the inmate code. Additionally, I inquired about each participant's expectations for life post-release – did they expect to find housing, did they expect to find employment, did they expect to return to the same neighborhood and the same friends, etc. because negative post-release expectations are associated with increased prisonization.

Post-Prison Experiences

The third and final part of the interview focuses on the participant's post-prison experiences. Here I asked detailed questions about issues they have faced upon release such as housing and employment. We also discussed the neighborhood(s) they returned to, who they have spent time with since they have been home, and whether or not they have reoffended. Perhaps one of the most important questions in this study that I asked was whether or not they felt as if the inmate code had left prison with them – were they still abiding by the informal rules of the prison on the outside. I also asked each participant why they had reoffended in the past or are currently reoffending. When I asked this question, I also inquired whether an adherence to the inmate code influenced their post-prison behaviors.

So the interview did not end on questions specifically focused on the interviewee's reoffending behavior, which may increase the participant's level of anxiety, I concluded each interview with a few general, thought-provoking questions. I asked the participants what their biggest obstacle has been since they have been out of prison.

Answers to this question tended to be things such as finding a job, finding stable housing, drugs and/or alcohol, and personal relationships. I also asked whether they felt that being an ex-inmate caused them to have a harder time being accepted back into society. The answers to this question varied. Some said no and others responded yes. I ended the interview by asking each participant to give one piece of advice to someone who was just about to be released from prison. This question allowed the participant to reflect on their own experience in prison and discuss the advice they wished they had received prior to their release from prison.

Analysis

To analyze the interview data, I used verbatim transcription of both the respondent and the interviewer. I also included speech fillers, laughter, and inflection as much as I was able to since all may provide additional meaning and context that might not otherwise be available (Hennink et al. 2011). Information in the transcripts is de-identified in order to maintain the respondent's anonymity and confidentiality. Once the transcripts were de-identified, they were coded line-by-line using MaxQDA, which is a qualitative data software analysis program that facilitates coding and allows for the creation of subcodes within codes as well as comparisons between codes.

In my analysis I have both inductive and deductive codes. The deductive codes come directly from the literature on inmate culture, prisonization, and recidivism, which

guided my interview topics. These deductive codes include such topics as home life growing up, education, gang ties, informal rules of the prison, prison programming, post-release expectations, reasons for reoffending, and reasons for desistance. For each of these codes, I have subcodes that more fully allow me to understand the participant's prison experience as well as their post-prison experiences. For instance, these subcodes allow me to identify the specific informal rules of the prison as perceived by the individual as well as their personal reasons for reoffending or desisting from crime.

The inductive codes stemmed from the in-depth interviews themselves. These are codes that emerged during the analysis that were not evident or anticipated from the extant literature on inmate culture and recidivism. For example, when discussing the focus of the prisons in which the participants spent time, many of the participants talked about "warehousing." The past research on inmate culture and prisonization simply discussed prisons that were punishment-oriented versus treatment-oriented. My participants, however, described prisons as simply warehousing inmates with little to no focus on rehabilitation. Because this idea had not been a major theme in the past research on inmate culture, the subcode "warehousing" captures these responses under "prison objectives." It is likely, then, that both punishment-oriented and warehouse-oriented prisons increase an inmate's adherence to the inmate code because both lack any focus on rehabilitation. The inductive codes were created after completing two rounds of coding on about one-quarter of the interviews. During this coding, I made note of emerging themes in the data (Hennink et al. 2011). After this initial coding, I revised the codebook and finished coding the remaining interviews. Additional recurring, relevant themes (i.e., repeated across many interviews) have been included in the analysis.

After coding, I made note of various themes that emerged. These themes allowed me to determine what warranted further analysis (Corbin and Strauss 2008). The themes that emerge provide a more in-depth understanding of what the inmate culture and the inmate code mean to the participants and how they use these concepts to give meaning to their incarceration experiences. Some of the themes that emerged around prisonization include responding to even minor provocations with violence, distrust of authority figures, and minding one's own business. After creating a general description of the major concepts or themes in this study, I began comparisons to highlight patterns that exist in the data across different types of formerly incarcerated individuals. In particular, I compared the prison and post-prison experiences of those who strongly adhered to the inmate code versus those who only slightly adopted the code. If the inmate code is influencing post-prison behaviors, then I expect that those who more strongly adhere to the code both in and out of prison will have more difficulties finding housing and employment. In addition, they will likely reoffend post-prison. The results in Chapters 5 and 6 stem from these comparisons.

Confidentiality of Data

One of the most important ethical issues for qualitative research is protecting the privacy and confidentiality of the participants (Binik, Mah, and Keisler 1999; Kvale 2007; Robson; Weiss 1994). This was especially true for this study because of the potentially incriminating and illegal behaviors that many of the participants have done or are currently involved in. I took several steps to ensure the confidentiality of my

participant's information. First, I am the only person with access to each participant's name and other identifying information. I assigned pseudonyms to each of the individuals and removed all identifying information from their interviews. This included the names of family members, the prisons they spent time in, and the names of specific locations where they lived. I do not provide any identifying information in the analyses. I also de-identify the name of the organization and individuals that assisted me with recruitment.

I submitted a description of my research and confidentiality protocols to Emory University's IRB for review in September 2012. This study was "expedited" and given IRB approval on November 2nd, 2012.[14] I also obtained a waiver of documentation of informed consent from the IRB. This allowed the respondents to provide verbal, rather than written consent, so their names or any other identifiable information were not attached to any documentation. Because I could not assume literacy among the participants, I began each interview by reading through the consent form with them. This form contained information on the risks and benefits of participation, the confidentiality procedures, and their ability to withdrawal from the study at any time. A copy of the consent form and the script for oral consent can be found in Appendix D and Appendix E, respectively.

I destroyed all contact information, mainly phone numbers, immediately following the interviews. While several participants wished to remain in contact with me after the interview, I would not take their personal email addresses or phone numbers.

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[14] According to Emory University's IRB, expedited review means that this research involves no more than minimal risk.

Instead I reminded them that they had my email address, which was listed on the

information sheet I provided to them prior to the interview. Several participants told me

that I did not need to de-identify their personal information, that they were very willing to

discuss their past and their current situation, but I informed them that I was doing this to

ensure their legal protection and that I was required to do so by the IRB. I kept all

interview transcripts on a password-protected computer as well as a password-protected

hard drive, which was stored separately. While confidentiality tends to have little impact

on a respondent's willingness to disclose information (Kalichman, Brosig, and

Kalichman 1994), it is paramount to protect the participant's identity as well as the

content of the information they provide (Rosenfeld and Green 2009). Ultimately, I took

several steps to ensure each participant's confidentiality.

Limitations

Despite my efforts to create a sample that reflects the varied experiences of the

formerly incarcerated population, the analyses presented in this study are limited in a

couple of important ways. First, the participants were relatively racially homogeneous

(i.e. 90 percent African American). However, based on the racial composition of Georgia

prisons and the Atlanta metro area, this was not unexpected (see Rich et al. 2008).

Because race impacts prisonization (see Goodstein and Mackenzie 1984), this study may

exaggerate the level of adoption of the inmate code. Additionally, African Americans

often face greater barriers to a successful reentry (see Pager 2003; Pager et al. 2009).

Because of this, the results may confound the internalization of the inmate code with

other reentry problems. In order to combat this issue, I ask specifically pointed questions about the influence of the inmate code on post-prison behaviors. Second, the participants were older in age than I was expecting. The average age of the interviewees was almost 50 years old compared to the average age of those released from Georgia prisons in 2012, which was 36 years old. This increases the likelihood that participants will be aging out of crime and, therefore, the inmate code will not have an effect on their post-prison behaviors.

Additionally, because of the qualitative nature of this study, I cannot isolate the effect of the inmate culture on post-prison outcomes. Many factors that influence post-prison outcomes are also related to the adoption of the inmate code, which makes it difficult to determine how much of an influence the inmate code is having on reoffending behaviors. For instance, a stronger adherence to the inmate code should weaken or sever ties with family and friends. But, research shows that a lack of social bonds increases the likelihood of recidivism (Sampson and Laub 1993). If the culture is having an effect on post-prison outcomes, I would expect participants to discuss the specific influence of the code on their behaviors separate from other recidivism predictors. Despite these limitations, I do have variation on the key concepts – prisonization, reoffending, employment difficulties, and housing difficulties – which will be discussed in Chapter 6. This variation allows me to look for certain themes among my participants and explore whether or not inmate culture appears to have an influence on post-prison outcomes.

Ethics

Because discussing past and, in several cases current, criminal behavior may be a sensitive and difficult topic to disclose, I began the interview with relatively neutral topics (e.g., when and where were they born, what was their early childhood like, etc.) before asking somewhat difficult questions (e.g., what crimes have you committed, are you currently reoffending, etc.). According to Weiss (1994), this is an appropriate strategy to use when trying to get participant's to disclose information about sensitive or, in this case, illegal behaviors. Despite a concern that participant's would not be willing to disclose information about their criminal involvement, I do believe the interviewees were truthful in their accounts because of the steps I took to maintain their confidentiality as well as the months I spent with the group prior to the initial interviews. It is also necessary to recognize, however, that respondents are less likely to take part in research if it might jeopardize their freedom (Weiss 1994). That being said, respondents may also make their responses seem more positive, which is more likely when asked about opinions, attitudes, values, or beliefs (Weiss 1994).

I was also aware that being a young, white, female researcher interviewing formerly incarcerated males could be especially tricky. Gurney (1991) argues that being a female researcher can make access to the population easier since females tend to be perceived as warmer and less threatening, but the research may be less valid and reliable because women may not be taken as seriously as men. Despite this, however, she found that gender was not a particular hindrance in short-term research (Gurney 1991).[15] I do

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[15] Short-term research is research in which the researcher enters and exits the setting relatively quickly. Short-term research can last from a few minutes to a few days. As a result, then, short-term research and the relationship between interviewee and interviewer tends to be superficial because the "time spent

not feel that my gender, race, or age negatively influenced my data. Instead, the

participants seemed more likely to disclose difficult information. As Thomas notes while

recounting a serious and dangerous situation from his youth, "…I never even told my

grandmother about it. You're only maybe the third person in my lifetime that I shared

that experience [with]." This reveals that, regardless of my position, the interviewees felt

comfortable enough to disclose painful events from not only their childhood, but their

current life situations as well.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have laid out the methods and recruitment strategies I used to

create the data for this study. I also discussed my analytical approach as well as the

limitations of the data. Lastly, I examined the ethical issues associated with this research,

in general, and with this study in particular. In Chapter 5, I examine the current nature of

the inmate culture in prison. I focus on the inmate code and the various informal rules

that inmates follow while in prison. I also compare the inmate culture to the street

culture, which addresses the importation versus deprivation debate. In Chapter 6, I

examine the relationship between inmate culture and post-prison outcomes. In particular,

I highlight how an adoption of the inmate code influences employment, housing, and

reoffending.

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together is focused almost exclusively on the business at hand…there is relatively little time for the

relationship to change or evolve (Gurney 1991: 378).

CHAPTER FIVE

Inmate Culture in an Era of Mass Incarceration

"[Inmate culture is] …the unwritten rules and regulations of how you handle yourself as an inmate"
-Alvin

"Inmate culture…that would mean minding your own business. Uh, not being, not allowing yourself to be disrespected. Uh, not disrespecting anyone else. Carrying yourself in the type of way where other people wouldn't wanna try to take advantage of you; putting on a mask."
-Adam

I began this dissertation with two questions. First, what are the informal rules of the inmate culture in prison? Second, how does this culture influence formerly

incarcerated men's post-prison behavior? In this chapter, I address the first research question highlighting what inmate culture means to formerly incarcerated men as well as what the informal rules are, or the inmate code, which these men had to abide by in prison in order to survive. These data shed light on the current prison experience.

Recall from Chapter 3 that previous research has highlighted three key features of the inmate code. First, it values physical violence and strength, especially if an inmate is disrespected or challenged. Second, the culture places a strong emphasis on inmate loyalty. Third, it forbids any type of supportive or non-exploitative liaison with prison officials (Irwin 1980; Ohlin 1956; Petersilia 2005; Thomas et al. 1978; Trammell 2011; Wacquant 2001). Even with significant changes in correctional policies during the past several decades, my findings suggest the informal rules that inmates must follow in order to survive in prison remain relatively consistent with the rules from the 1970s. Inmates must use violence to maintain their status in prison, be loyal to other inmates, and mind their own business. I will discuss each of these elements in turn.

Use of Violence

In order to understand the nature of the inmate code in prison today, I asked each participant what the informal rules are that inmates abide by while they are incarcerated. After this general question, I probed further about the use of violence and the role violence plays in prison. Additionally, I asked each participant if they think violence has increased within prison and why. Consistent with Trammell (2011), close to 70 percent of the sample indicate that inmates must use, or at least threaten, violence in order to

maintain their status in prison. This indicates that there is some variation in the inmate culture. However, most of the variation is found among the different security levels. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the higher security prisons tended to be those institutions where violence was the norm and "like entertainment" (Malcolm).

The interviews highlight a number of reasons for the necessity of violence. First, violence is a necessary means of responding to disrespect. Second, they must use violence due to a lack of intervention from prison authorities. Finally, the presence of various group affiliations,[16] younger inmates, and contraband has brought about an increase in the use, and perceived necessity, of violence.

Response to Disrespect

Disrespect involves a disregard for an individual that indicates they are not worthy of consideration. On the street, where respect is constantly being negotiated, being disrespected is a "virtual slap in the face" (Anderson 1999: 34). As Sennett (2003: 34) notes, "in places where resources are scare and approval from the outside world is lacking, social honor is fragile; it needs to be reasserted each day." Prison is clearly an institution where resources are scarce and there is little approval from those on the outside. As a result, respect is given a high premium. Edgar, O'Donnell, and Martin (2003) argue that respect is especially important in prison because an inmate has little

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[16] These group affiliations were referred to as gangs, cliques or religious units. Those who referred to a group as a clique tended to be those who had served time in prison many years ago. Some subjects also referred to religious groups, particularly Muslims, as gangs. The subjects who made this reference tended to be those who did not follow Islam.

else to his or her name. As Anderson (1999) argues, minor slights that would be ignored by most people are taken as serious breaches in prison. Carter highlights this when he says, inmates get "in fight[s] over the stupidest shit." For instance, Alvin notes that he got into a fight with another inmate because they were "arguing over what to watch on tv." He also saw a guy get stabbed in the neck because he was on the phone too long. In most cases, deciding what to watch on television or using the phone would not warrant a fight. In prison, however, this is viewed as being disrespected. Likewise, Marcus notes that "just staring in general causes problems." In the free world, staring does not typically result in harm. In prison, one takes staring as a challenge.

Inmates often respond to affronts with aggression and hostility; "that's how respect is gotten" (Keith). The following exchange with Frank illustrates the necessity of violent responses to disrespect:

> Interviewer: Is there a rule that if you're disrespected or threatened that you need to use violence?

> Frank: Not that you need to, you're *going* to.

> Interviewer: You do. Okay.

> Frank: Yeah, yeah, that's, oh yeah, that's, yeah, depending on how severe the disrespect is. If you cut in line, if you cut in front of me in line or something like that then, yeah, I'm supposed to say something to you, you know, according to that way of thinking.

Here Frank highlights the belief by most inmates that if another inmate challenges or disrespects you, you are expected to respond; you are supposed to react in such a way that it sends a message to other inmates that you are not someone to be messed with. In prison, as another inmate, Carter, notes, "if somebody step to you, be ready to fight;" you

have to maintain an "attitude where you try me, I'm a kill you." Similarly, Alex reveals, "if you get disrespected then you supposed to straighten your business. You know what I mean? Let them know, well bro, he ain't gonna treat me like that or you ain't just gonna handle me how you think you gonna handle me or whatever." Darren also states, "disrespect will get your whole head chopped off." As these passages show, violence is an acceptable, and often times, required response to being challenged or disrespected.

According to the participants, if they do not counter with violence when disrespected, they will likely be preyed upon either by being forced to give up any money or valuable goods they may receive from their families and/or friends or through homosexual advances. Seth reveals that "there's an expectation of 'don't let that guy push you around' because once one does it they all start nipping around at you. And it's like you got to nip it in the bud immediately." As Jonathan similarly notes when explaining the role of violence in prison, "if you show fear then you are likely being preyed upon. You have guys there that just don't have what you have and they will just take it. Not far as your belongings, but you." Jonathan highlights the fact that by not responding to disrespect, inmates open themselves up to various types of victimization (e.g., sexual, property, and violence) in the future. In the following conversation, Carter says that "once you in the door, when they try you, if you don't fight then you open prey to any and everybody, white or black." He also describes how your first impression in prison sets the tone for the rest of your stay:

> Carter: I'm talking about like you know if I wasn't with the crew first day before I got them wondering…it either gonna be like they'll accept you quick. Cut on my shank or shit on my dick. Like that. You don't comply, they'll rape you. If you don't comply they'll kill you. So you either gonna do one of two things. You gonna fight or you gonna fuck….If you don't fight, everybody on the compound

gonna try to punk you out…Know what I'm saying? Next thing you gonna be washing somebody's dirty drawers. That's how it goes.

Interviewer: There [are] consequences to not developing the reputation, the right type of reputation at the beginning

Carter: There is consequences. Either you gonna keep your manhood or you just, or you just might as well say you ready to give up your manhood.

This exchange with Carter reveals that an inmate's reputation is determined upon arriving at the institution. Violence, then, becomes a means to set one's reputation, which becomes necessary to protect oneself from violence in the future. In the end, when an inmate enters prison and is challenged, he has to make a choice – he must either respond with violence or become a victim for the rest of his prison sentence.

The Role of Prison Officials

While inmates use violence to respond to disrespect and develop their reputation, inmates also use violence because of the lack of intervention by prison authorities. Prisons are, theoretically, the most controlled institution in society. However, the interviewees suggest that there is not a lot of control within the four walls of the prison. Jeremy notes that prison officials tend to not get involved when disputes between inmates occur "because you have, you have one correctional officer and a cell block with 500 guys. What can he do?" Prison authorities know that they are outnumbered, so if they get involved, it is likely that they will become a victim. As Larry notes, "they just want to stay alive. That's all they're [prison officials] concerned about. They're not concerned about us killing each other. As long as we're not stabbing them, they cool. Don't matter what we do to each other." Because of their lack of involvement, prison officials may actually be contributing to the use of violence in prison. Marcus reveals:

Interviewer: So if you're disrespected you're supposed to use violence?

Marcus: You're not supposed to. You're supposed to let an officer know. And in turn they'll let you know what's going on. And they'll take it from there.

Interviewer: Is that how it usually happens?

Marcus: Uh, for the most part we handle it. When we enter the dorm we handle it ourselves. We didn't too much put those people into our business.

This exchange suggests that inmates are aware of the distinction between the actual rules and the perceived rules in prison. They know they should tell an officer when something happens. But, they also believe that prison officials do not step in to curb the violence that occurs behind bars. As a result, they handle affronts themselves and, often times, fight back.

When asked how prison authorities handle violence in prison, Eugene notes, "most of the time it's ignored…they don't want to get involved." Jonathan similarly discloses the following:

[I] sat back and watched it, two guys beat themselves to a pulp and then they [prison officials] intervene. I've seen where they have jumped in and tried to stop it before it really got bloody or someone got killed. But normally in the prison system before a guard can get there, if they out to kill you, they can kill you. You know what I'm saying? How they react to it? Um, sometimes they sit around and laugh about it. Talk about it, you know. Especially if you one of the ones that disrespectful and don't, you know, follow the rules then they say alright they gonna get it coming. And I've known cases where other guards actually set it up, allow it to happen just because someone might, might be disrespectful to them.

Similar to Anderson (1999), the reliance on violence develops in part because the police cannot be relied upon for protection. Since they cannot count on the prison officials to handle the conflicts that arise in prison, the inmates turn to themselves for protection and solutions. In the end, then, this lack of control by prison officials may actually be

increasing the amount of violence in prison. Prison officials do not get involved when they should and, sometimes, even encourage the violence among inmates. In a sense, then, prison authorities may actually be endorsing and legitimating the use of violence in prison.

Perceived Increase in Violence Behind Bars

In addition to the lack of involvement by authorities, the participants also suggest that the informal rule regarding the use of violence in prison has become more ingrained due to three specific and somewhat interrelated reasons – gangs, juveniles, and contraband. Each will be discussed in turn.

Gangs.[17] Thomas says that gangs "practically control…most Georgia prisons." Because of this control, violence has seemingly increased. As Ralph notes:

> gangs is everything. It's everything. It's the only way of life in there. They're taken over…If you Google right now how many deaths in the past two months, how many gang-related incidents in the past month, just through this month alone, I guarantee you it'll be almost half of what the whole year of like say 2009 and 2010 were. You know, since 2011, it's just, I don't know what's going on.

Similarly, David says that he was taking classes that he did not need or even want to take simply because he wanted to get away from the violence in the dorm he says resulted from the increase in gangs behind bars. Leonard also notes, "Man, some of the violence up in there…what causes that is there's so many gangs up in there. There's a lot of gangs

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[17] I use gangs here to refer to gangs, cliques, and/or religious groups.

up in there." According to Abe, the presence of gangs in prison is related to levels of violence because the gangs "are really running the prison…you've got the Bloods and the Crips. There's just so much violence…these cats are not playing." These exchanges reveal that the inmates feel the use of violence in prison has become more ingrained as an informal rule because of the perceived increase in gangs behind bars and, in particular, gangs members who legitimate the use of violence to settle disputes.

Gangs have not only contributed to the violence behind bars, but inmates may actually be joining gangs or remaining affiliated as a means of both survival and protection from all of the violence in prison. So, while gangs contribute to the violence, they are also seen as a means of security from the violence. Wilson describes, "there's a lot that go in there and hook up with gangs for survival because there's no way. That may be because of their physical stature. It may be because of their sexual orientation, so they immediately gravitate to protection." Similarly, Walter remarks:

> Violence could be out of fear then anger, but most of it's fear because this is why you get your gang population in prison and other places because people join gangs for different reasons, but a lot of 'em join gangs out of fear. Fear of being, you know, taken advantage of, you know, as an individual, you know. Or being raped. Or even killed. So they try to get under the umbrella or the protection of a gang.

The following exchange with Marcus also highlights the belief that inmates join gangs to protect themselves from the violence:

> Interviewer: Why do you think gangs exist in prison?

> Marcus: Because it came, well people bring it in from the street. And, you know, when you come in and regardless of your ethnicity, what neighborhood, whatever, if you know that such and such is in a gang and ya'll are in the same, you rep the

same thing, you gonna flock to them for protection…It's more better, it's kinda, the numbers are stronger when you're with people of that gang.

Interviewer: Okay. So it offers some sort of protection.

Marcus: Yea.

Because of the dangerous nature of prison today, Walter and Marcus disclose that inmates join gangs because they are afraid of doing their time alone. Joining a gang allows them to feel protected; if another inmate messes them with, the other gang members will come to their aid.

Frequently described as a gang by the interviewees, inmates often turn to Islam as another way to protect themselves in prison. As George says, "it's similar to the gang thing because if you mess with one Muslim you done messed with all of 'em. So, they know if you Muslim not to mess with you…Guys join Muslim, Islam, for protection…Christianity, nah, they look too soft." Like George, David notes that he "saw a lot of White guys try to join the Muslims or hang out with Blacks just so that they could fit in or so that they could like they're under their protection." David and George highlight the fact that if inmates want to be guaranteed protection while they are incarcerated, they need to become a part of some group. For some individuals that group is a gang and for others that group is a religious affiliation. Regardless of the group, both ultimately serve the same purpose. The following exchange with Oscar, a Muslim, reveals how he handled the prison violence:

Oscar: I'm Muslim, so I hung out with Muslims. The thing about prison life I think it's the same anywhere, you clique up with who you are because those who have nobody to clique up with, they're victims. They become victims.

Interviewer: So, you need to be part of a group in order to survive?

Oscar: Yea. If you want to be wise about it, yea…So, everybody joins a group.

Interviewer: So, you joined the Muslims. Well, you were already…

Oscar: I was Muslim, so I just went with what my thing was.

Interviewer: Okay. And they provided the protection that you needed?

Oscar: …the Muslim society within prison had already established a certain rapport with the different affiliations within prison and with authorities with what they were about. With Muslims there were no problems. If there were problems, then they knew that if they didn't handle it then there was gonna be some even worse problems.

Oscar again emphasizes the idea that individuals rely on group affiliations as a means of protection from violence. While Muslims tend to have a more favorable reputation amongst the authorities, if problems do arise and are not handled by the officials, the Muslims will handle it themselves in ways similar to gang behavior.

In the end, the participants in this study disclose the fact that an inmate will not be able to survive their time in prison unless they are a part of some group. Because this has become such a norm in recent years, it is possible that gang or group affiliation in prison has become a new aspect of the inmate code. Inmates clique up for protection, as a way to do their time in prison as easily as possible. As Frank discloses, "that gang stuff in prison now…in the next two to three years, if you not Muslim, Bloods, Crips, GD, or some kinda gang affiliation you is not gonna make it in prison." Similarly, Jeremy notes, "…in Georgia [prisons] you can't live unless you're in a gang. You have to be a part of something." Inmates come to prison and either join gangs or remain affiliated as a means of protection and survival. Stewart, Schreck, and Simons (2006) find that those who adopt the code of the street have a greater chance of being victimized, suggesting that as

one's "investment in the street culture increases, so too does the risk of violence and victimization because it places [individuals] in social groups in which violence is highly valued" (446). Unintentionally, then, inmates who clique up in prison are contributing to the very thing they are seeking protection from; they want protection from violence, yet, as a gang member, they are expected to use violence.

Juveniles. As was discussed in Chapter 4, Georgia introduced incredibly punitive criminal justice policies in the 1990s (Welsh 2008). These policies not only increased the amount of time inmates are spending in prison, but they have also increased the number of gang-affiliated juveniles who are being sentenced to serve time in adult prisons (Welsh 2008). As a result, several participants also felt that in recent years as the number of youth in prison increased, so too did the level of violence behind bars. The following exchange highlights this belief:

> Interviewer: Did the amount of violence increase while you were in prison?
>
> Eugene: Yes.
>
> Interviewer: Why do you think it increased?
>
> Eugene: More of the younger generation was coming in. The, what they call, thugs. And you can't tell them nothing. They already know all of it, you know. They're at that age where they just, they're not gonna listen anyway, so.

As Matt also notes:

> the younger [crowd] that I observed was that, you know, you've got these young kids coming in, and then you've got these older cats like us. We were getting money or whatever, get some groceries, $50 worth of groceries, you know. [The younger generation] willing to kill, they willing to stick and possibly kill over $50 worth of groceries, you know, because they not getting nothing from the streets.

Abe also believes that the young men coming into prison have contributed to the increase in violence. He states, "it's not really safe now…there's just so much going on because of the younger generation. They're ruthless, you know? They're heartless." Matt and Abe highlight the belief by many that the youth who are being sentenced to prison today are playing a part in the rise in violence behind bars.

Recently, the courts are giving out very severe sentences to young offenders, so when they arrive in prison, the participants in this study believe they have nothing to lose; there is no light at the end of the tunnel for these individuals. As David highlights, "the last three years were the scariest of my incarceration. They're giving out life sentences to 16 and 17 year olds and they don't have a care in the world. They get to prison there's no respect. They will treat you the way they think, they don't care…They have nothing to lose." Daniel also explains the rise in violence resulting from out-of-control youth when he says:

> I think it was in 19…let me think, let me think…uh, 94, 95 when I first seen the first 17 year old come up in there, and it just blew everybody's mind to see him. Now, it's just like, now, that's just the way now, so you know you got these wild kids coming in, trying to acting out, and now all they thinking about is punishment, you know. You got the gangs, and all kinds of crazy stuff going on in there.

Daniel notes that juveniles have become almost a norm in prison today. Juveniles and gangs, he says, have contributed to the violence behind bars.

Contraband

In addition to juveniles and gangs adding to the violence in prison, many of the participants discussed how contraband also contributes to this violence. Contraband in

prison is considered anything that an inmate is not allowed to possess while he is

incarcerated. This includes items such as cigarettes, cell phones, drugs, and alcohol.[18] It

became apparent as I was completing these interviews that anything someone can get on

the street, inmates can get in prison – it just costs a lot more. Because of the exorbitant,

disproportionate costs of some contraband (e.g., almost $500 in prison for a cell phone

that costs $20 at a store), inmates will go to great lengths, in most cases violence, to

maintain possession of their valuable goods.

Cigarettes. When I asked George why inmates use violence in prison, he notes

that inmates are scared, "so they join gangs and then they five, six of em jump on guys,

stick guys up, you know, taking their store goods, phone, cigarettes from guys." When

the Georgia Department of Corrections removes items from the commissary or makes

certain things illegal, the men do what they need to do to get what they want; often times

stealing from other inmates. The following exchange with Jim highlights the profound

effect contraband can have on the behavior of inmates:

> When they took the cigarettes out, oh, I already knew it was gonna blow up. I
> knew it was gonna be a lot of killings because you got people, you know, that
> nicotine affects your nervous system. So, you ain't, you can't get it and, and I see
> how people snap just for not being able to smoke one, one day. So now we talking
> about, you gonna take cigarettes. I was like no this thing is gonna blow up. And I
> am so glad I'm getting out. I got out June. They enacted that policy, uh, January
> 1st, 2010. And it's been murder and mayhem ever since.

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[18] While drugs and alcohol are considered contraband in prison, it did not appear as if these illegal

substances were actually contributing to the violence in prison. Several men admitted to using drugs and/or

alcohol in prison, but they did not suggest that drugs and alcohol were a factor in the daily violence.

Jim emphasizes the fact that contraband, particularly cigarettes, is contributing to the rise

in violence in prison. Similarly, Ralph says:

> I've seen a dude, they threw a cigarette on the floor, in the hallway, and they standing around. This is how [it] starts. Throw a cigarette on the floor. Cigarettes are like $5 for one cigarette. A dude saw it, picked it up. They grabbed him, tied him up, and stripped him down into nothing but his boxers. First, they made him stand in the toilet for I don't know how many hours – till they got tired of beating him up. They were beating him up, making him stand in the toilet, burnt him with cigarettes, just because he picked a cigarette up off the floor, you know.

In this passage, Ralph draws attention to the fact that inmates use contraband to initiate

violence. The cigarette was used to lure an unsuspecting inmate into a violent encounter.

Cell Phones. Similar to cigarettes contributing to the violence in prison, most

participants saw the introduction of cell phones behind bars as another factor behind the

almost daily violence. Jack discloses that he talks to current inmates and Department of

Corrections employees who "mention that it [is] drugs and cell phones, the two of the

biggest problems that they have." As Wallace similarly reveals, "a cell phone will get you

killed [in prison]." Jim suggests that this violence associated with cell phones is a result

of "young idiots that can't think in the first place, so somebody tell them let's go rob this

guy for his cell phone. They, they have nothing to operate on up here, so they're gonna

go do it. They gonna go stab the guy up and take the phone." It is also a big deal if an

inmate loses another inmates cell phone. As Jason notes, if "you lose somebody's cell

phone, you in trouble. You got to come up with some monies, some ass, or something."

Because cell phones cost so much money in prison, inmates are willing to go to great

lengths to make sure they remain in their possession.

In the end, it is still an informal rule to use violence in prison in response to a challenge or disrespect. This norm has become more ingrained and enforced as an informal rule for several distinct reasons. First, inmates believe prison authorities do little to protect them while they are doing their time; as a result they are left to their own devices to solve problems, which often times means violence. Next, a presumed increase in gangs and juveniles by the participants has also led to an increased use of violence by prisoners. Lastly, contraband, like cell phones and cigarettes, contributes to the use of violence in prison because stealing contraband is considered a major sign of disrespect by inmates – "stealing will get you hurt [in prison]" (Reginald).

Group Loyalty

In order to assess the amount of group loyalty among inmates, I asked each participant what the relationship was like between inmates and prison officials. I also asked if there was an "us versus them" mentality in prison. I specifically asked each participant if they interacted frequently with prison authorities. Answers to this question underscore the participant's adherence to one of the informal rules of the inmate code. Similar to the first informal rule, almost 70 percent of the participants made note of the fact that inmates should remain loyal to each other or their particular group (e.g., gang, clique, religion) instead of siding with prison officials or authorities. Again, there was variation in responses to this rule based on prison type. Similar to the use of violence, in lower security prisons the relationship between inmates and authorities did not appear to be as oppositional.

Subjects did highlight a distinct us-versus-them mentality in prison. Even though

inmate loyalty was an element of the inmate code in earlier research, several participants

note that the relationship between inmates and prison officials began to change or

become more oppositional during the 1990s when the prison system in Georgia changed

from the Department of Offender Rehabilitation to the Department of Corrections. When

the prison system changed from one of rehabilitation to one geared towards punishment

and warehousing, the divide between inmates and prison officials seemed to become

more ingrained. This change in the system has led to a deeper in-group loyalty. George

underscores this idea when he states, "It's we against them. It's them against us." Ralph

makes this distinction even clearer when he says:

> there is no relationship. No, it's like 'f' you. For real…like no love at all. I don't
> care about you. You're nothing. Like you can die right now, I wouldn't care.
> That's like on both ways, you know. And 9 outta 10 if two inmates fighting and
> the police try to break it up somebody's about to jump in and jump on the police.
> These are people who are never getting out and they hate authority, you know.

Ralph emphasizes the belief that inmates and guards are not supposed to have a

relationship or even interact in prison; there is a very clear in-group loyalty according to

him. Marvin also notes, "loyalty, that's what it all generates around…that's what it was

all generated, or how loyal you is to your own little clique." Here Marvin begins to

highlight a tiered system when it comes to group loyalty. That is, an inmate is loyal to

other inmates over the guards. But, within inmates, he is more loyal to his group than to

inmates of another group.

Based on the above statements, which imply a drastic division between inmates

and guards, one would not expect inmates to report any positive interactions between the

two parties. During the interviews, however, several men mentioned that they did interact with prison officials quite regularly while they were incarcerated. A superficial, "buddy-buddy" (Jeremy) relationship does exist, then, when both parties can benefit. In other words, an inmate can interact with the guards in a limited fashion, so long as the inmate (and guard) stands to gain from the interaction and it does not place members of his gang/clique/group at risk. For instance, Seth notes, "the guards would get you anything you wanted really. Um, one cop got caught. He was selling packs of cigarettes $200 a pack. And, you know, he's getting a little tiny federal paycheck and he can turn a carton of cigarettes into like a thousand bucks." This example shows, while most times inmates and officials do not interact, when they do it is for their mutual benefit – inmates receive contraband and officials receive money. Additionally, inmates may use the authorities to help them get released earlier. As Alex describes, he interacted with prison authorities because he was "trying to see if [he] could get out of [his] situation quicker." He was working with the authorities in the hopes that he would be released sooner rather than later.

Based on the information provided by the participants, it became clear that limited interaction with prison authorities is acceptable, so long as it does not work against other inmates or the group. That is, it is an informal rule that inmates will side with other inmates or their particular group when the situation demands it. However, prison officials are not considered enemies at all times and under all contexts. Limited interaction is okay, but when an inmate becomes too close to a correctional officer or a warden, or begins to appear to cooperate with the authorities other inmates begin to question his

motives. This leads to the next element of the inmate code – the importance of minding one's own business.

Minding One's Own Business

Minding your own business is the near universal "rule of the jungle" (Jonathan). By minding their own business, inmates cannot snitch and they must endure hardships and a lack of privacy without complaint. Each of these norms will be discussed in further detail.

Endure Hardships without Complaint

While in prison inmates encounter situations that most individuals would not be able to handle. They witness killings, rapes, and other violence almost daily. However, if they want to do their time as easily as possible they have to endure these harsh conditions with little objection. Complaining can easily make an individual prey in prison. Carter emphasizes this rule:

> What you see, you don't see. See no evil, see no evil, hear no evil, say no evil. That plays a big part down there…Cause you see somebody getting fucked right there in the bathroom. Or you might be on the top bunk like I was. I hear somebody up under me fucking in their bunk every night. Bed rocking. Got to lay in my bed at night like I don't hear. You got to sit next to motherfucker taking a shit. The toilet like, toilet right there, you got like 20 of 'em down in a row. You sitting right next to somebody. Ain't no walls or nothing. You sitting next to somebody taking a crap, holding a conversation with somebody. You know what I'm saying? You in the shower with about 60 folks. You know what I mean? I ain't used to taking no shower with no 60 other men. Living in the same dorm with 60 other men that's snoring and farting and keeping you up at night. But you know you gotta learn to mind [your own business], you gotta learn to adjust…very quickly.

Carter's experience was echoed by many of the participants. An inmate has to pretend as if he does not notice the sex occurring in the bunk either above or below him. He has to act as if the does not care that he is sharing a bathroom with many other men. In the end, an inmate has to appear unfazed by the conditions he faces in prison. He has to mind his own business and adapt.

No Snitching

One way inmates know that other inmates are dealing with the hardships of prison without complaint is by the lack of snitching behind bars. Inmates cannot snitch, or tell on another inmate, in prison. Almost all of the study participants mentioned this informal rule – no snitching – during their interviews. As Ted notes, snitching is one rule of the inmate code that "everyone values." Jonathan says, in prison you "see and don't see, hear and don't hear." Likewise, Ted notes, "if you see a stabbing, you ain't seen nothing, you know. If you see a rape, you ain't seen nothing." For those inmates who do not abide by this near unanimous rule in prison, the consequences are dire.

Consequences of Snitching. Snitching while incarcerated highlights the inter-related nature of the informal rules of the prison. Snitching, which inmates often view as an act of disrespect, leads to violence. For instance, if an inmate does not mind their own business and snitches while in prison, severe consequences, even death, often result; snitching "will get your head filled with sticks" (Marvin). As Wilson says, "snitching will get you killed in the Georgia penal system. Out here you might get called a snitch.

Telling on someone in that system can possibly cost you your life." Bruce seconds this idea when he says snitching is "a no-no. That's a death sentence. I mean in a real prison that is a death sentence." Here Bruce highlights how the inmate code varies by prison type. He refers to a "real prison" to mean a maximum security, level five camp. It is in these types of prisons that the rules are most enforced and followed by the inmates. Similarly, Jason discloses that if someone is caught snitching "they'll find your ass with your tongue cut out. Find your ass with your head split open, brains laying out. They'll find you getting your asshole sewed up." These powerful exchanges show the deeply engrained consequences of snitching. Inmates, especially those in maximum-security prisons, do not play around when it comes to snitching. If one is confirmed or even believed to be a snitch, the other inmates will deal them with accordingly. This means severe violence and, often, death.

The brutal consequences of snitching have become even more pronounced in prison due to the extremely high prevalence of cell phones behind bars. Even though they cost inmates an inordinate amount of money, cell phones have created a network among inmates between prisons that did not exist in the past. Larry notes the role of cell phones in the following exchange:

> If you [snitch], you better be real careful and make sure they get you transferred. See, that's the thing about the cell phone, you can't move. You can't win. Cause if you go from GeorgiaPrison1 to GeorgiaPrison2 and somebody just left over here before and they're over here now, so they're gonna call me, 'hey I'm at GeorgiaPrison2 now.' 'Okay, well, how you doing?' 'I'm alright, bro. What's going on over there?' And he's gonna tell me what's going on. I'm a get his phone number. Alright well they ship you over there cause you snitched on me. Guess what? I'm gonna call him…See that's part of the thing about cell phones…you may be transferred to another prison, but someone at that prison you were first at knows someone over there.

Because inmates get transferred quite frequently for various reasons, it is almost a guarantee that the one who was snitched on knows someone in the prison the snitcher will be transferred to. With the use of cell phones in prison, then, all an inmate has to do is pick up the phone and order a hit. George notes that if an inmate snitches he will "pull you up on GDC.com. [He will] send a text over the whole prison, all the gangs, all over the state of Georgia. So we got a picture of you. Wherever he show up, smash on site. That's the word they use – smash. So wherever you go, they gonna get you." Bobby also mentions that "with the gangs and the cell phones, people snitch on…in the past if you snitch on me and you get transferred, you kinda got away. But, now with the cell phones, I just call to the camp you went to and 'yo this dude snitched on me, get him,' you know." Ralph describes the role of cell phones in dealing with snitches in detail. Ralph says:

> [cell phones have created] a major network. And then like if somebody puts a hit out on you and just say I'm the one who's gonna take the hit, they gonna give me a knife and a phone. And when I do what I do, I gotta take a picture and send it to 'em, you know. And that's like how all the hits are getting, like, put out on people. People are getting paid by, like, taking pictures of their hits.

Ralph reveals that not only do cell phones establish networks between prisons and inmates, but they also create a form of proof that the job was taken care of properly. Before an inmate had to take the word of another inmate that the hit was undertaken; now, they simply send a picture via text.

Because minding one's own business appears to be a near universal rule, other inmates often hold snitches in low regard. Alex says that, "being a snitch is the worst

thing you can be in prison. I mean like that's almost worse than like child molesting and all that junk there." Charles also notes that, "there's only one thing in the prison system lower than a snitch and that's a child molester. Trust me. You do not want to be labeled as a snitch because if you're not in protective custody, you better have eyes in the back of your head." In the end, snitching is not allowed in prison. There are severe consequences associated with snitching, including, but not limited to violence, death, and being viewed as an outcast. In prison, being a pariah is not something one wants. If an inmate wishes to survive his time behind bars, then he must learn to adapt, adjust, and mind his own business.

Variations in Inmate Culture and Street Culture

Variation in Inmate Culture Across Prisons

While the same informal rules of prison were discussed by most participants, there did appear to be some variation in the enforcement of these rules based on prison security level (e.g., maximum vs. medium vs. minimum). According to the participants, many of whom had spent time in various types of prisons, it became clear that the informal rules operate at a higher level as the security level increases. In other words, it becomes almost a requirement to follow the rules in a maximum security prison. Jonathan notes that snitching "didn't play out in maximum security. But in like A custody camps [minimum-security], right, they would tell…It played out some, but not so much in maximum security that it did in lower." Similarly, Oscar says that:

> it seemed like the level of prison life that I was in, medium security in the state, medium security in the feds, there are a lot more snitching at that level because there were a lot, people were a lot less willing to give out consequences for who

they thought were snitching because they were either getting too close to leaving…or they had spent so many years working down on their custody level that they didn't want to go back up. So there were less consequences. But, I believe in the medium-high and high security facilities if they knew you were snitching, man, you had problems.

Both Jonathan and Oscar highlight the fact that inmates are not supposed to snitch while they are in prison; however, this rule appears to be less enforced and comes with fewer consequences in minimum- and medium-security level prisons. Lerman (2009) finds similar prison variations. In particular, she finds that placement in a higher security prison increases the criminality among inmates, especially those with minimal criminal history (Lerman 2009: 168). This lends support to the idea that in higher security prisons, the informal rules must be adhered to by all inmates. Even those inmates who did not have an extensive criminal history prior to prison may become more criminal post-prison as they more strongly adopt the inmate code in more secure prisons.

Ultimately, the variations between prisons are not in the content of the culture, but rather in the perceived severity of the rules and the consequences for violating them. Ralph suggests:

[the rules are] pretty much the same, but when you go to these minimum, medium security, the culture kinda gets watered down cause a lot of those guys are trying to go home. So, there's a lot of snitching. There's a lot of like probably cooperating more with, uh, with the staff or whatever because, I mean those guys have like…two, three years, you know.

According to Ralph, then, the inmate culture is "watered down" in lower security level prisons because they have such little time to do. They do not want to add more time to their sentence because they either get caught fighting or they do not follow the formal

rules of the prison. In the end, the informal rules of the prison are "the same anywhere you go," (Darren) but the particular prison influences the enforcement of these rules. I now turn to the similarities and differences between the inmate culture and the street culture outside of the prison walls.

Inmate Culture vs. Street Culture

There has long been a debate in the inmate culture literature on whether the inmates import the culture from the street or if it arises as a result of the deprivations associated with prison. My findings suggest that the importation and deprivation models are not mutually exclusive as they tended to be viewed in the past. Instead, both internal and external factors influence the development of the inmate culture. Based on the information provided by the participants, I argue that the inmate code is not different from the street code; the rules are the same. The culture that develops, however, is more extreme because of the prison context. In other words, the rules are imported from the street, but the deprivations in prison intensify the culture on the inside. In this section, I first show how the inmate culture is largely imported from, and resembles, the street culture. Then I explain how the deprivations inside prison amplify the culture.

Importation of the Street Culture into the Inmate Culture

The informal rules that inmates must abide by in prison are comparable to Anderson's (1999) code of the street in a number of ways. In his ethnographic study of inner-city life in Philadelphia, Anderson (1999) notes that the street code organizes community life and comes to value several informal rules used to negotiate respect. Similar to the rules described by the participants in this study, the code of the street does

not allow snitching. It also does not allow one to back down if he or she is challenged or disrespected. Instead, they must respond with violence. Like prison, similar circumstances give rise to the street code. For instance, high levels of violence and a lack of intervention by the police or authorities lead individuals in the inner city to find ways to protect themselves. In the end, the street code becomes a cultural adaptation to their particular situation (Anderson 1999). By following the code of the street, individuals living in the inner city garner respect; "a form of social capital that is very valuable when various other forms of capital have been denied or are unavailable" (Anderson 1999: 66). In prison, like the inner-city streets, inmates are still denied access to numerous forms of capital, such as, but not limited to money and education. In order to cope with these deprivations or strains, inmates follow the same informal rules from the street. In fact, I argue that the inmate code is an adaptation of the street code, suited to the particularities of prison.

In prison, like the street, several informal rules are followed. These rules allow for inmates to, in a sense, deal with their situation. Because inmates are limited in what they have access to, they use the inmate code to earn respect and status in a relatively deprived environment. As Jack highlights:

> the things that you're exposed to in the streets, a lot of times they take 'em into prison, you know. The values that you end up having prior to becoming incarcerated, you tend to take them into the prison. And, you know, I think prison's just a microcosm of what's out there.

Similarly, Jonathan notes that "a lot of the rules that you believe, that you learn in the streets, are carried into the prison system." The formerly incarcerated men in this study highlight the fact that the inmate code today reflects the street code – they do not leave

their past lives at the door when they enter prison. According to Jeremy, "the same rules that apply in prison, apply out here." In both environments individuals are not allowed to snitch, they must remain loyal to their own group (i.e., other inmates in prison and gang members or friends on the street), and they should use violence to respond to any signs of disrespect. This finding adds to the more contemporary criminological literature which highlights the fact that cultural beliefs in prison are in fact being imported behind bars (Harer and Steffensmeier 1996; Mears et al. 2013). Prisons have come to reflect the street. Due to the "pains of imprisonment," however, the culture on the inside is more enforced than it is on the outside.

Deprivation and the Intensification of the Street Code inside Prisons

While the informal rules of prison appear to be imported from the street, the inmate culture is more strongly enforced in prison, especially maximum security prisons, than the street culture because of the deprivations associated with prison. While the rules are similar to the outside, the lack of autonomy, heterosexual relationships, and security make the inmate culture more hostile and aggressive than the street culture. As a result, prison alters the way these men act in three major ways. First, prison puts constraints on mobility. Second, prison limits the amount of choice an inmate has. And, third, prison alters the use of criminal facilitators (e.g., guns) in interactions in prison. These constraints, or deprivations, change how individuals behave within a specific environment, even though they are still following the same rules. Jonathan discloses that the rules are "more enforced in the prison system than in the hood." In prison, the pressure to abide by the rules is more intense than on the street; prison heightens the values of the street.

Constraints on Mobility and Choice. With regards to mobility, inmates are no longer able to move around as freely as they could on the street. As Reginald says, "prison is a little more serious because in the streets you can hide. You can't hide in prison. Things travel in prison faster than they travel on the street. Same rules apply, you just have nowhere to go." And Adam notes, "on the streets you can move when you wanna move. In prison you can't." The inmate culture, then, creates an environment in which personal choice is no longer an option. As Jack notes, "it's a closed environment. You know, you really not at liberty to move back and forth as you like, you know. Certain freedoms are taken away from you, you know." Because of these constraints, it becomes harder for inmates to escape notice or escape sanctions. If they do not respond to challenges with at least the threat of violence they are likely to be preyed upon. If they do not mind their own business in prison they are also likely to be victimized. Constraints on mobility and choice, then, force individuals to follow the code. Inmates cannot walk away from a situation. If a situation rises, they need to address it and, in most cases, it must be addressed with violence.

One of the major criticisms levied at subcultural theories of crime is that they are too deterministic; there is no acknowledgement of personal choice and agency (see Kornhauser 1978). This study suggests that prison may be the perfect environment to study the effect of culture on behavior – inmates have little choice in how they behave; if they want to survive, they follow the code. The following exchange with Carter reveals the lack of agency in prison:

> Carter: On the streets they have a choice. They can either go to the police or handle it theyself and take that chance of getting locked back up.

Interviewer: So, there's a choice element on the street that does not exist in prison?

Carter: Right.

Similarly, Darren describes his own lack of choice in prison:

Interviewer: And, so, you used violence a lot in prison then until you got older?

Darren: I had to…At least I thought I had to…Because it's like this see cause I'm light, bright with green eyes. Don't make me soft…That's that attitude I had to have.

Interviewer: The air you had to portray, you had to carry.

Darren: There was no choice. I didn't think that it was no choice.

Here we begin to see that in order to survive in prison inmates have no choice but to follow the inmate code. As Jim highlights, not only do inmates have to abide by the code, but "it's to the point now where it's so large that, you know, you got the young guys going in, they may not wanna be in a gang, but they really ain't got a choice, you know, cause the gang is gonna, they run it. So you don't really have a choice." Larry agrees with Jim and notes, "you got no choice [in prison]. You gonna get in one of 'em. You, you, you got no choice pretty much…See out here [outside of prison] I got a choice. I don't like to be around no gangs. You see what I'm saying? So, I, I choose not to do it." By having no choice but to join a gang (or a group) in prison, one has no choice but to use violence as well because gangs are often associated with the use of violence behind bars. Prison, ultimately, creates an environment in which individuals are limited in their agency. If they want to adapt and adjust to prison life, they must abide by the code.

Constraints on Criminal Facilitators. Prison also puts constraints on the choice of criminal facilitators, or the objects that aid an offender in committing a crime. The use of violence is the same on the street and in prison, but the tool one is more likely to use to commit violence changes depending on the context. On the street, for instance, you have the ability to use a gun to settle disputes. In prison, theoretically, you do not. As Alex says there "are more tactics and avenues on the street that you can use. It's less when you're locked up. You ain't got no guns. You ain't got too many knives or shanks or whatever." Daniel also notes that "you got shanks, you got, you know, you got knives, or whatever you got to survive. You know. Everybody carry them now. You know. That's they weapon, you know." While constraints on criminal facilitators should decrease the amount of lethal violence behind bars, these constraints should also increase the amount of physical violence that occurs in prison. Instead of using a gun to settle disputes, inmates must physically fight in order to garner the respect they seek. Similar to Anderson (1999), the constraints in prison, like the constraints in the inner-city, alter the avenues inmates have for respect. Physical strength, toughness, and violence tend to increase the amount of respect an inmate has – "the one who gets the most respect is the one who is highest on the totem pole" (Frank). And to be the highest on the "totem pole" one has to be violent.

In order to cope with these strains of prison, inmates learn that they *must* use violence to respond to disrespect and they need to rely on other inmates for support. Both sets of factors, then, have an effect on an inmate's adaptation to prison and his adherence to the inmate culture, which Aaron discusses when he says:

the inside is reflecting the outside city culture. So when a guy is getting in there, cliquing up with that same type of thing, you know. They have the gang guys that they was with in the free world, that they establish this same thing and the same culture inside. The only difference is because on the free world you have freedom to go do certain things; you have freedom of women and freedom to club. Then when you get inside, that's what they get so angry, it's because that's taken away. Then of course they have certain powerful positions that now they subject to somebody telling them when to go to sleep, when to go to work, when to get up, when to go eat, and they rebel against it. And most of 'em are young people that's been given 30, 40, 50, life sentences…with no hope.

This finding complements the recent work by Mears et al. (2013) that suggests the cultural beliefs in prison, which are similar to the street, are amplified by certain internal factors such as the lack of family support. In other words, the prison environment intensifies the street code.

Even though they are following similar rules, the prison environment alters the way these men behave. Their mobility and choices are limited when they are deciding how to respond to various situations. Instead of being able to walk away when someone disrespects or threatens them, an inmate must respond. That disrespect needs to be addressed right then and there. Seth notes that if you disrespect someone in prison, "the expectation is that you're gonna get your ass whooped." If an inmate does not respond, "people would view [him] as being soft…So, then, that would leave it open for someone else to try [him]. You know and that, that is, that's basically a rule. If someone disrespects you, you're supposed to take care of him" (Jeremy). Similarly, the limited access to criminal facilitators, in particular, guns, changes the way inmates behave in prison. How these constraints alter an inmate's behavior was summed up quite nicely by Kevin who said "prison is no different than being on the street. The only difference is you

don't have any weapons as far as a gun and you can't run from this side of town to the

next side of town."

Deprivations and Code-Switching

Not all inmates bring the street culture into prison with them. However, the

deprivations associated with prison lead to them adopting the culture once inside. Similar

to Anderson (1999), some inmates code-switch in order to survive their time in prison.

Oscar was a participant who did not adhere to the street culture prior to prison. As a

result, he was someone who code-switched while in prison. He says, "it's the mask you

have to wear. See I wore that for a while myself. I mean a humble, meek, easy-going guy.

I find myself carrying this air and attitude like, yea, I'm a head buster." Adam, Alex, and

Wilson were all aware of people who put on a façade in order to make it through their

prison stints as easily as possible. Adam notes that some inmates code-switch so that

other inmates would not take advantage of them. He says an inmate has to carry himself

"in the type of way where other people wouldn't try to take advantage of [him]." Alex

says, "you tend to be like who you need to be, do what you need to do to get out your

situation." And, as Wilson bluntly states, "there's a lot who put on a mask to survive."

Lacy (2007) describes this process as "script-switching." She says that individuals in this

position take on a whole new set of social roles as the situation demands. These passages

reveal that due to the deprivations in prison, some inmates code-switch, or script-switch,

in order to do their time as easily as possible. The participants in this study who put on a

mask while in prison tended to be those who were less prisonized than other inmates –

they did not adhere to a street culture prior to prison, they had more positive post-release

life expectations, they remained in contact with family, and they tended to spend their

time in prison alone rather than in a group. These results will be discussed in more depth in Chapter 6.

Conclusion

My results indicate that inmates follow three informal rules similar to the street code when they are incarcerated in order to survive their time. They use violence if they are disrespected, they have a distinct in-group loyalty, and they mind their own business. Inmates know that severe consequences may result if they do not conform to this code. I argue that these results provide insight into the debate regarding importation and deprivation. My findings show that the inmate culture arises through both processes. For certain inmates who adhered to the street culture, they import this culture inside the prison walls with them and find that the culture is largely similar. Once inside, however, the deprivations of prison intensify the culture. Furthermore, for those inmates who did not abide by the street culture on the outside, the deprivations of prison prompt them to abide by the inmate culture while in prison in order to survive their time.

It is possible, then, that adhering to the inmate code while in prison may make transitioning back into society more difficult. In other words, maintaining a mindset in which one responds to situations with violence and does not cooperate with authorities will, more than likely, negatively influence one's post-prison behaviors. Additionally, because of the amount of time individuals are spending in prison as a result of increased punitive criminal justice policies, the intensification of the culture on the inside may transition back out with the inmate and make him more violent and less trustworthy. If

this is the case, then, even those who did not adhere to the street code prior to prison may be likely to reoffend upon release.[19]

The following chapter addresses how an adherence to this inmate code influences an inmate's post-release behavior. In particular, I will focus on housing, employment, and reoffending. I will show how prisonization may influence post-prison outcomes and begin to untangle the idea that an internalization of the inmate code may lead to more difficulties upon release.

CHAPTER SIX

The Inmate Culture and Post-Prison Outcomes

"It's hard to shake that prison mentality."
-George

"I still carry the same behaviors with me. I still [keep] the mask on."
-Adam

"In the past, I have brought those, those jailhouse stuff with me out to the street."
-Jeremy

One of the main goals of this dissertation is to capture a more complete picture as to why individuals who have spent time in prison have difficulties with housing,

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[19] Fifteen, or 38 percent, of the participants in this study did not adhere to the street code prior to prison.

employment, and often reoffend after they have been released. In Chapter 5, I discussed

the current nature of the inmate culture and highlighted the similarities between the

inmate code, or the informal rules of the culture, and the street code. I also introduced the

idea that an internalization of the inmate culture while in prison could have a negative

influence an inmate's life experiences post-prison. In this chapter, I begin to unravel the

influence of the inmate culture on post-prison outcomes, including housing, employment,

and reoffending behaviors. I explore the degree of prisonization, or adoption of the

inmate culture, among the participants both during and after prison. Here, I provide a

distinction between two groups of inmates – those who had some adoption of the inmate

code and those who strongly internalized the rules. Unsurprisingly, no one escaped at

least mild adherence to the code of the prison. Using this information, I then examine the

two groups' experiences with housing, employment, and reoffending post-release.

Prisonization among Formerly Incarcerated Participants

Recall from Chapter 5 that the majority of the participants knew the informal

rules of the prison – use or threaten violence if disrespected, do not snitch, mind your

own business, and remain loyal to other inmates. As the participants revealed, they have

to know the rules in order to survive – knowledge of the inmate code is a "survival tactic"

in prison (Darren). Despite this, not all of the participants fully internalized or accepted

the code in prison. When an inmate enters prison he must adapt quickly to his new

environment. The degree to which he adapts is referred to as prisonization or the process

of taking on the culture of the prison (Clemmer 1940). Clemmer (1940) argues that not

all inmates internalize the inmate culture to the same degree – some inmates are highly

prisonized while others are only slightly prisonized. The assumption of Clemmer's (1940) concept of prisonization is that the more prisonized an inmate is, the more he has internalized or adopted the inmate culture. Prison scholars find that the degree of prisonization is affected by various internal and external factors. Specifically, an inmate is more likely to become prisonized if he adhered to a criminal subcultural prior to prison (Jacobs 1974), spent a long time in prison (Garabedian 1963; Wheeler 1961), formed close ties with other inmates (Thomas and Foster 1972; Wheeler 1961), spent time in punishment-oriented prisons (Berk 1966; Grusky 1959; Street 1965), had negative post-release life chance expectations (Thomas and Foster 1972; Wheeler 1961), and is black and from an urban environment (Goodstein and MacKenzie 1984).

To assess my subject's internalization of the inmate culture, I used answers to specific interview questions that assessed each participant's adherence to the inmate code. This more direct measure of prisonization indicates the degree to which the participant adopted the informal rules of the prison – using or threatening violence if disrespected, inmate loyalty, no snitching, and minding one's own business. During the interviews, I asked participants about the informal rules that inmates follow in prison. While asking these questions, I probed about each participant's acceptance of the code. I specifically asked about their involvement with violence, their relationships with prison officials, and their view of snitching. While I did not specifically ask each participant about his own adherence to the rules, the discussion on the inmate code reflects whether or not the participant supported, abided, or internalized the inmate code. Statements supporting these informal rules will be examined in the next section. Those who internalized the inmate culture while in prison should be more likely to justify their use of

violence and subsequent time in solitary confinement, associate with inmates who were engaging in similar behaviors than those who did not internalize the rules, and be adamant against snitching. I also asked participants if they felt like the informal rules of the prison, or the inmate code, left prison with them – were they still following the informal rules of the prison. This question rests on the assumption that those who are more highly prisonized should be more likely to take the inmate code with them when they are released and is paramount to begin to understand the relationship between culture and recidivism. Table 2 shows the adoption of the inmate culture during and after prison for each participant.

[Insert Table 2 here]

As one can see from Table 2, there appears to be variation among the level of adoption of the inmate code during and after prison. None of the participants had no adoption of the inmate code. This is mainly due to the fact that once an inmate is behind bars, he has to have a minimum awareness of the inmate code if he wants to survive his time; "survival is the very nature of the prison system" (Jeremy). Prison is "all about how you handle the situation while you're there. It's all about how you handle and carry yourself…it's all part of your survival while you're there" (Carter). Because of this "survival mode" in prison, all of the participants in this study had at least some adoption of the code.

With regards to levels of prisonization among the participants, 15 percent strongly adopted the inmate code while in prison compared to 85 percent who only had some internalization of the code. Additionally, close to half of the participants felt as if the

inmate code left prison with them; they were still abiding by the informal rules of the prison. Both types of adoption of the inmate code will be discussed in more detail below.

Some Adoption in Prison

The participants with "some adoption" of the code while in prison tended to fall into one of two categories – code-switchers and identity changers.

Code-Switchers. Similar to Anderson's (1999) distinction between decent and street orientations found among those living in the inner-city, it became apparent that there are two types of inmates – "decent" and "prison." Because "decent" inmates must be able to handle themselves in a prison-oriented environment, they learn to code-switch. Code-switchers in prison are those who know the rules of the prison, but only use them in particular situations. Engaging in violence is not a routine activity as it appears to be for those who strongly adopt the code. While not a code-switcher, Abe was aware of inmates who did in fact code-switch while they were incarcerated. As he states, code-switchers are those "who are doing this for the situation and they hope…you can get rid of the mask before you leave." Shedding that mask when an inmate is released from prison should make their reintegration easier compared to those who strongly internalized the inmate code. As will be discussed later, however, shedding that mask can be a more difficult process than an inmate realizes when they are getting ready to leave prison.

Marvin, a code-switcher, says that inmates in prison, including himself, are in survival mode; they have "this certain exterior, this certain hardcode shell. You know, I'm coming in here. I'm coming in here to do my time. I'm not taking no crap from you. You know, I'm not feeling you. I'm not your friend. I came in here by myself. I'm

leaving by myself." Even though he was in prison for a violent crime (aggravated

assault), Marvin highlights the fact that violent individuals are not violent all the time;

being violent is not an inherent part of their identity. In prison, code-switchers know that

if they want to survive in prison they need to put up this hard façade; if they are

challenged or disrespected, they have to at least act like they will respond with violence.

Oscar, who was in prison for bank fraud and theft by deception, was a participant who

clearly code-switched. He notes:

> it's the mask you have to wear because, see I wore that for a while myself. I mean a humble, meek, easy going guy. I find myself carrying this air and attitude like, yea, I'm a head buster. But, you know, you're in this setting that…[you] just watch each other…So, you watch and you say 'okay. I have to build this wall. I have to carry this air of potential violent outburst and hopefully he will leave me alone.' And then usually nothing happens. But, when they do push you, you have to say, 'well do I really wanna do this cause this is not me'.

Oscar highlights the fact that in prison, even if you are not a violent person, you have to

give the impression that you are not one to be messed with, that you will fight back. By

observing the situation, Oscar was able to decide which interactions warranted a violent

response and which did not.

Another participant who code-switched in prison was Carter. Because his mother

worked several jobs to "keep a roof up over [their] heads and food in the house," Carter

and his brothers took to the streets. Even as a child, Carter knew that breaking into

people's homes and raiding their refrigerators was wrong, but it was a means of survival

for him and his siblings. In prison, Carter knew he had to do whatever he had to do in

order to survive; he had an image to uphold in prison. He had to "keep this mean, rough,

uh, attitude where you try me, I'm a kill you." If he did not maintain this attitude, he says

he would have gotten "turned out…[or] fucked." Ultimately, if an inmate does not follow the informal rules when they are required, he will likely become prey for other inmates.

Identity Changers. Identity changers are those who came into prison either strongly adopting the inmate code or as code-switchers, but an event occurs during their prison term that changes their outlook. These events tended to be finding religion, the death of a family member, or education. Prior to prison, Daniel was heavily involved in the drug game and the street life. He was sentenced in 1990 to life in prison for armed robbery and aggravated assault. Despite this charge and the amount of time he was supposed to serve, Daniel made a change in prison. He clearly notes, "I was…at one time I was, you know, I was selling weed, doing that, you know, I was hustling [in prison]…I ran a store. I had all that going on. But, then…I redirected my life to God…in 1998 when I was at GeorgiaPrison3." Daniel, who is now a reverend, is similar to other participants who found religion. He was able to remember exactly when he made a change in prison – when his outlook shifted from being immersed in the code to "trying to make it good in life."

Walter is another inmate who had an identity shift in prison. Walter grew up in New York City in a working-class family. Even though his home environment was very nurturing, the street life was more alluring to him. At 14 years old, he had joined a gang and later became a gang leader. Even though he joined the military at age 17, he still remained oriented towards the street. Walter eventually received six life sentences in prison for armed robbery and bank robbery. Walter was ultimately released from prison in 2000 after experiencing a change in his overall outlook on life. As he says:

two years into the bit my mother passed away and my wife divorced me on Thursday. My moms died the following Tuesday. So in the span of 5 days, you know, it was the greatest crisis of my life. And that's when everything came to fruition as to where I should be in life…I made a conscious decision to put down the pistols and I picked up the Bible.

Despite being a notorious bank robber who did time in both federal and state prisons, Walter strongly internalized the inmate code prior to these events. The death of his mother and the end of his relationship caused him to not only rethink what he had done with his life, but to also make a change for the better.

Jack, another identity changer, spent 26 years in prison for murder. Prior to prison, Jack grew up in Atlanta with both parents and loved school. He lived in a neighborhood where everyone knew everyone and "if somebody in the community saw you conducting yourself in a way they knew your parents would disapprove of, they would chastise you." After returning from the Air Force in 1968, he served a total of 26 years in prison for armed robbery, aggravated assault, and murder. He did not get serious about religion and education until he "got locked down in 1972 in GeorgiaPrison4 for a murder case. And I stayed on administrative segregation for 5 years. And, so, during the time that I was on administrative segregation was really when I began to just wanna read something that attributed life to something other than man." As a result of this perspective shift, Jack:

became somebody who fell in love with, with books, with reading. [He] fashioned [himself] then as being a reader. [He] went from reading Marx's *Communist Manifesto*. I read Joseph Lennon. I think I was mad and bitter, you know. And I read a lot of Mao Zedong from China. Read a lot of psychology…Karl Young. Erich Fromm.

Jack's experience in prison highlights the role of education and religion in transforming an inmate's outlook on life. These particular events that occur when one is locked up can have lasting positive effects on an inmate's post-prison outcomes, which will be discussed shortly.

Strong Adoption in Prison

Compared to code-switchers, those who strongly adopted the inmate code did not make a conscious decision to follow the inmate code. Instead, it appeared as if the "strong adopters" internalized the informal rules of the prison. The inmate code appeared to become a part of their identity. Those who strongly internalized the informal rules of the prison appeared to be more likely to associate with "convicts," "gang-bangers", and the "wilder element." They were also the ones who approved of the violence they took part in and subsequently spent more time in solitary confinement.

Darren grew up in the suburbs of Atlanta and was raised by a single mother. He was constantly getting in trouble in school and eventually dropped out in the 11th grade. Prior to leaving school, however, he was arrested on 16 counts of armed robbery. He was convicted on two of those counts and served 23 months in juvenile detention. Since then he has cycled in and out of the criminal justice system. As he notes, once you start doing time "it's worse than drugs." In a sense, prison becomes hard to quit. Darren has spent over half his life in prison. He is 45 years old and was most recently released from prison in 2009 after serving five years for robbery by force. In prison, Darren strongly adopted the inmate code. He says in prison he "hung out with [inmates] that was trying to have money. I hung with dudes that were…thugs…you're gonna hang with somebody that you

know's gonna ride with you. Somebody ain't gonna leave you hanging." Instead of hanging by himself, as those with less adherence of the code would do, Darren makes it clear that he associated with other offenders as both a means of protection and support. It also appeared as though Darren approved of his violent behavior while he was in prison; "you don't walk away…you invite the trouble because you have something to prove." Here we see a distinct difference between code-switchers and strong adopters. Strong adopters appear to invite the trouble whereas code-switchers try to avoid trouble. Those who strongly adhere to the inmate code endorse the use of violence as was the case with Darren.

Wallace also strongly adopted the inmate code in prison. Like Darren, he grew up in the suburbs of Atlanta. His early life was spent living with his alcoholic mother and three siblings. He was eventually raised by his grandmother. When his grandmother passed away when he was 18 years old, he turned to the streets. Wallace has served a total of six years in prison for a variety of charges including auto theft, shoplifting, weapons offenses, and drug charges. He was most recently released in 2009. Like Darren, Wallace also said he "hung out with all the thugs" and that going to the hole "became a routine thing." In 50 months, Wallace had 52 disciplinary reports (DRs). When it came to relationships with prison officials, Wallace drew a clear line in the sand when we spoke. As he spoke about the warden he notes, "I want to just kill him, you know…You've got to look at him every morning, when the warden come through the kitchen or wherever that he is with a big smile on his face…I just keep looking at [him] like…straight through [him]." Wallace makes it clear that he did associate with prison authorities and often fantasized about using violence against them.

Malcolm grew up in the projects in South Georgia with a single mother and five siblings. Even though he never joined a gang growing up, he began selling drugs at the age of 12. As he notes, he "became a statistic before he was even an adult." Before he even had a license he was trafficking cocaine every week from Atlanta, Georgia to Miami, Florida. He was most recently released from prison in 2005 after serving eight years for selling cocaine. In prison, Malcolm strongly adhered to the inmate code. He says that his pride was his worst enemy when he was in prison. He was constantly trying to earn respect among the other inmates. He would "wile out" in prison in order to get the most status. As a result, he had "over three, four hundred DR's. [He] did the majority of [his] time in segregation. Out of eight years, [he] probably did two years in population and the other six in the hole." As with the other participants who strongly adopted the inmate code, Malcolm did not have good relationships with prison authorities. He viewed them as "peace breakers" in the prison. Malcolm clearly discloses that he strongly opposed prison officials and, unlike code-switchers, he endorsed the use of violence in prison at any time for whatever reason.

Unlike any of the other participants in this study, Bruce grew up in the foster care system. He left school in the 3rd grade and was constantly trying to be the center of attention among his group of friends. Bruce was first arrested at the age of 10 for running away and was first convicted of a felony at the age of 14 for burglary. He has been to prison on six separate occasions for burglary, armed robbery, aggravated assault, shoplifting, and making terroristic threats. In total, he has spent over 25 years in the Georgia prison system. Bruce strongly internalized the inmate code while in prison and hung with people that "had the same set of values that [he] had." Bruce refused to snitch

in prison and he endorsed the use of violence because it "is the number one factor for survival." Bruce obviously justified his use of violence in prison and even says he was "proud of the fact" that he "averaged 7 DRs a day" and even "spent six years in a six by eight cell on disciplinary segregation." Bruce strongly abided by the inmate code and, as a result, he spent most of his time in prison in solitary confinement. As can be seen by who these men associated with in prison, their approval of violence, and the significant time they spent in "the hole," strongly adopting the inmate code while in prison can lead to many negative prison and post-prison outcomes.

Adoption After Prison

In order to gauge each participant's endorsement of the inmate code post-prison, I specifically asked them if they felt like the inmate code left prison with them. I asked them if they were still following the informal rules of the prison post-release. The answers to whether or not the inmate code left prison with the participants highlight the fact that even without the pressures of prison, some of the formerly incarcerated men are still abiding by the informal rules of the prison. All but three of the identity changers left the inmate code in prison. Joseph says, "I left them behind…number one I didn't have my guard up like I did in prison…once I was out of prison, I left all that behind." Jack similarly notes, "I wanted to become a different human being, you know. I wanted to get away from, you know, some of the things that I had allowed to become a part of me. You know, the values that I had allowed to become my values." Because these inmates had made a clear change in their identity and outlook while in prison, they had no intentions of abiding by the inmate code post-prison.

On the other hand, those who are still following the inmate code tended to be those who strongly internalized the code in prison as well as those who code-switched in prison. All of those who strongly adopted the inmate code in prison expected the informal rules to leave prison with them. The inmate code was a part of their identity. Wallace notes that when he left prison he was constantly on guard, ready to snap at any moment. He would "look at everybody, make sure nobody is going to sneak up on [him]." George also says that the informal rules left prison with him. He reveals that where he is living now they told him "if you see a guy doing something tell on him. And I told him I ain't gonna do that. Somebody else might tell on him, but I'm not gonna do it." While this may be due to the fact that all of the strong adopters were knowledgeable of the street code prior to prison,[20] it is important to note that all of the strong adopters specifically mentioned that the inmate code in particular left prison with them.

The code-switchers, however, tended to vary in whether or not the inmate code left prison with them. Some of the participants felt that the informal rules would not leave with them, but have since realized that the code has actually remained a part of them – they are still abiding by the rules. For instance, Carter says:

> Did I expect it to leave with me? No. But it did. It did leave with me for the simple fact that…I had to learn how to adjust. Plus, you know, work on my anger. On the street that didn't do no damn good. I brought that same mentality to the streets.

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[20] Only three of the six strong adopters described themselves as being heavily immersed in the street culture prior to prison.

Carter, a code-switcher in prison, suggests that he continues to react with anger and violence, even though he is aware that this will not allow him to be successful post-release. Similarly, Adam, also a code-switcher, notes that the "inmate culture part, I didn't expect it, I never thought about it, but it came with me." While Adam is more abstract in his discussion than Carter, he still makes it clear that even though he is no longer in prison, the inmate code has remained a part of him. As the following exchange shows, Jonathan, a code-switcher, was not expecting the inmate code to come with him upon release:

> Interviewer: Did you expect those informal rules or that code to leave prison with you?
>
> Jonathan: Hmm. Did I expect it to? No. But it did.
>
> Interviewer: How do you know that it did?
>
> Jonathan: Cause I have problems telling on people…If someone should steal or rob someone without a life being taken, then, you know, it's not my business. But, then again that's wrong. Let me admit. I realize they're wrong because if they steal from one they'll steal from you as soon as they get the opportunity. But, yes, a lot of it left with me. I had to break that cycle. And I had to reprogram my thinking.

Even though he did not expect the code to come with him when he left prison, Jonathan realized that when he got home the rules were still a part of him. Recently, however, he has attempted to change his thinking. It became apparent that some code-switchers in prison did not expect the inmate code to remain a part of them when they left prison.

Some code-switchers, however, knew right away that the inmate code had left prison with them. Reginald notes:

> I planned to take some of the things that I learned, things that the older dudes told me like 'this is how you do it.' I just knew I was going to try and do it a whole different way. I never planned to stop doing what I was doing [in prison].

Frank also says that the inmate culture went with him when he left prison – "it's who I am. It's a part of me." After spending so much time in one environment, even those who did not strongly internalize the code are still being influenced by it post-prison. If the informal rules of the prison did leave with these participants, as is suggested by the interview data, then reintegrating back into society should be a more difficult process. In what follows, I discuss three important post-prison outcomes that influence a successful reentry: housing, employment, and reoffending. Here I show how one's internalization of the inmate culture affects his post-prison experiences.

Prisonization and Post-Prison Outcomes

Housing

Finding housing is a very important issue for most inmates who are about to be released from prison. If an inmate is released on parole this becomes even more important because he must parole out to a specific address, which has to be cleared by the Department of Corrections. If the address is found to be unsuitable, an inmate's release is delayed.[21] During the interviews I asked the participants to describe the process they went

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[21] An address can be unsuitable for a variety of reasons according to the participants. For instance, George's mother's address was denied because she was receiving government assistance. George also notes that inmates cannot parole out to neighborhoods known to be drug areas.

through to find housing upon release, and whether they found the process difficult. Table 3 unpacks the relationship between adoption of the inmate code and housing.

[Insert Table 3 here]

When it comes to finding housing post-release, Table 3 shows that 28 percent of the participants felt as though this process was difficult. Seventy-three percent of the participants, on the other hand, felt they had an easy time finding housing post-prison. Table 3 also reveals that those who had a stronger adoption of the inmate code in prison tended to have more difficulty finding housing when they were released from prison. It also became apparent that those who were still adhering to the informal rules of the prison tended to also have difficulty finding housing upon release. Those who left the inmate code in prison unanimously had an easier time finding housing. Likewise, those who had an identity change in prison appeared to have an easy time finding housing. This may be due to the fact that those who experienced an identity shift in prison were more likely to not only leave the inmate code behind them, but to also maintain ties with their family who are essential to securing housing post-release.

Easy to Find Housing. Participants who either made an identity change in prison or who have not continued to internalize the inmate code after prison have had an easier time finding housing since they were released. As Jack clearly states, "when I got out the, the first time and second time, I had family. I had good family. The second time I got out I had married a young lady out of Madison, Georgia. And, so my brother…he came and picked me up from the transitional center in Augusta and I stayed with her for a while."

Jack experienced an identity shift in prison and as a result he began to distance himself

from the informal rules of the prison. Because of this shift he began to reestablish the ties

to his family and friends that had been severed during his earlier years in prison.

Consequently, he had an easy time finding housing when he was released. Kevin also

notes that finding housing was not difficult for him when he was released from prison

because he returned to his mother's home. Here we see that having the support of family

when one is released from prison can make finding housing a much easier process. It

appears as though the less prisonized an inmate is, the better his connections are to

prosocial family and friends. As previous studies have found, maintaining or

reestablishing these ties to conventional others should make one's reintegration smoother

and more successful (Adams and Fischer 1976; Laub et al. 1998; Visher and Travis

2003).

Difficult to Find Housing. For those participants who had a difficult time finding

housing when they were released from prison, it appears as though they either strongly

adopted the inmate code or were more likely to internalize the inmate code post-prison.

Carter said that he returned to the streets when he was released. According to him:

> I had to get it how I live. I ain't got no family, nobody here. So, it just me, me,
> myself, and my world. That's why I had to do what I had to do. So it's like
> everybody wasn't holding a noose on my head. Ain't nobody wouldn't give me
> nothing.

Carter reveals the difficulty some formerly incarcerated individuals have when it comes

to housing. Because he could not find housing and he did not have family who could help

him, he inevitably had to return to the street. When asked what has been his biggest

obstacle since he has been out of prison, Marcus notes, "coping with society, with a

society that doesn't love me…not having transportation. Not having money…not having housing." Marcus discloses that there are many obstacles when an inmate is released from prison, one of which is housing. As he highlights in our discussion, he "didn't expect to be homeless" when he left prison.

As several participants reveal, even though they have spent many years in prison for the crimes they have committed, the real punishment does not begin until they are released. Ralph says that going to prison tends to be easier than leaving. Coming out is the punishment, "it's the worst thing that could happen. Now the punishment begins because every door is closed." Jason also reveals that he returned to his sister's home when he was released, but she had him "moved outta her house by the police." Here Jason highlights the unpredictability and instability of housing when one is released from prison. Leonard also notes that finding housing has been especially difficult these past three years because all of his relatives had died and his friends were either gone or passed away. Similarly, Matt says that when he was most recently released from prison he had a hard time finding a place to live because he "lost everything. [His] mom died. [His] grandma died. [His] father died." Because individuals with a stronger adoption of the inmate code tend to be those who severed ties with family, it is not surprising that those who felt as if the informal rules of the prison would leave with them were more likely to have difficulty finding housing upon release. It became apparent that those who easily found housing had the help of their family. Without this support system, in addition to an adherence to the inmate code, the participants had a more difficult time finding and securing housing when they returned to society.

With a focus on housing, this study draws attention to the role that an adoption of the inmate code plays in an individual's post-prison experiences. Those who either strongly adopted the inmate code or code-switched while they were in prison appeared to have more difficulty finding housing when they were released from prison. This may be due to the fact that an adherence to the inmate code severs ties with prosocial others. If an inmate comes to value his relationships with other offenders and endorses the use of violence to settle disputes, it is likely that his family and friends will distance themselves and possibly end the relationship. Oscar, who did not have difficulty finding housing, highlights how the inmate code may influence post-prison housing experiences when he says:

> I know of other offenders that left prison and then went to, had to go to another, what they call, halfway house or whatever, and just go to another facility that operated on rules similar to prison and it wasn't a good thing. You know one of the things I think people who go to prison develop is a degree of resentment towards authority, [which is] even more intense…when they get outta prison.

In other words, the inmate code is affecting certain people's experiences when they get out. Their opposition to authority, which is an element of the inmate code, causes some formerly incarcerated individuals to have difficulties finding housing when they return home. Because ex-inmates had been living under the prison's rules for an extended period of time, they return to society wanting to be able to follow their own guidelines. For many, however, this is not the case and they must instead seek shelter at halfway houses or other transitional centers. Similar themes emerged when the formerly incarcerated men talked about their experiences with employment.

Employment

Like housing, employment is also a big part of a formerly incarcerated person's success upon release. Studies show that those who are able to find a job when released from prison are less likely to reoffend (Petersilia 2003; Travis 2005). However, finding employment is, often times, more difficult than finding housing because of the stigma associated with hiring a formerly incarcerated person (Pager 2003; Pager et al. 2009). Similar to housing, I asked each participant to describe the process by which they tried to find a job. I specifically asked them whether finding employment was easy or difficult. Once again the results reveal a pattern similar to the one seen with housing. Those who were still adopting the inmate code post-prison, who tended to be code-switchers and strong adopters, had more difficulty finding employment or were simply not looking for a job when they were released from prison. Table 4 shows the relationship between adoption of the inmate code and employment. Forty percent of the participants had a difficult time finding employment upon release from prison. Only forty-five of the participants had an easy time finding employment post-prison. Eight percent were also not looking for a job after their last stint in prison.

[Insert Table 4 here]

Easy to Find Employment. Of the men who were either identity changers or who did not feel as if the inmate code left prison with them, most were able to find a job after being released from prison. As Jack notes, "I was [able to find a job] because I had become serious about redirecting my life." Jack highlights the fact that, while he was in prison, he knew he needed to change the current path of his life – this meant finding a job

when he got out. And, subsequently, this job could help redirect his future life. Wilfred

notes that it was not difficult to find employment when he was released from prison. As

he states, "I've been working since I got out of prison…You've just got to want it. It's

out there." Wilfred highlights that there are plenty of jobs available for formerly

incarcerated individuals. Like other identity changers, Wilfred notes that the individual

has to be willing to change and find that job. Along similar lines, Wilson also reveals that

finding employment was not difficult. He says:

> it's a matter of doing what's necessary and not only paying your bills and your
> financial situation, but to keep yourself straight…it's just a matter of with this
> recession or whatever they want to call it…you just have to be patient and take
> what you can get until the right thing comes along.

Lastly, Bobby highlights the ease at which he was able to find employment following his

incarceration. Even though he had been sent to prison for murder, Bobby "had a job with

full benefits three days after [his] release." These interactions highlight the fact that an

identity change in prison as well as leaving the inmate code at the prison doors can make

finding employment easier. Once they change their outlook, identity changers begin to

focus on their success post-release. This ease of finding a job for identity changers, then,

may be due to the fact that identity changers reestablish prosocial bonds to society prior

to their release. They know the importance of finding a job and begin reaching out to

potential employers and family members who can help them secure employment while

they are still in prison.

Difficult to Find Employment. Participants who either code-switched or strongly

adopted the inmate code both during and after prison have had a difficult time finding a

job after being released from prison. Carter says he was not able to find a job after being

released from prison. As a result, he "had to do what [he] had to do," which often resulted in a return to crime. Wallace, who strongly adopted the inmate code and believed the informal rules left prison with him, ran into many roadblocks when it came to employment. He notes:

> I really gave up looking for a job. I was like, ain't nobody gonna hire me nowhere. Who's gonna hire me? That's where I was heading, you know? Who is going to hire me? You know, as soon as they look at my record and check my background, be like, oh, no, don't worry about it, you know…We're not hiring. No.

Marvin, a code-switcher, also had difficulties when it came to finding a job when he was released from prison. He says "I can't get no job down here because of, quote unquote, my record. So, you know what I'm saying? I did what I thought I knew best. And, you know, that was putting a pistol back in my hand. Not robbing anybody, but keep me from getting robbed." Because he could not find a job, Marvin resorted to the behaviors he knew he could be successful with. Similarly, George indicates that he has had difficulty finding employment. He says, "regardless of my situation, I…wanted to do right. But, you know, it's the prison thing. It, you know, my past behavior…put me in a situation to where really nobody wanna give me a job." Here, as with housing, those who came to internalize the norms of the prison and returned to society adhering to those rules had a more difficult time when it came to finding employment; most remained unemployed for many months, even years.

While qualitative data cannot determine whether an adherence to the inmate code has a direct influence on housing and employment, it is significant to note that those who more strongly adopted the code in prison and were still following the informal rules post-

prison have had a harder time upon release. It is possible that an internalization of the inmate code is simply correlated with other factors known to affect housing and employment. For instance, half of those who had a strong adoption of the inmate code adhered to a criminal subculture prior to prison and they did not remain in contact with family while in prison. This last factor is particularly significant for post-release success. Both housing and employment difficulties also highlight that fact that inmates return to society with an ex-felon label attached to them. According to numerous studies, this criminal identification causes formerly incarcerated individuals to have difficulty finding employment and stable housing when they are released (Pager 2003; Pager et al. 2009; Uggen et al. 2003). Future quantitative studies and more extensive qualitative research will be able to further disentangle the relationship between inmate culture and post-prison outcomes.

Reoffending

During the last part of the interview, I asked respondents whether or not they had reoffended since they were most recently released from prison. Results suggest that 25 percent of the participants have reoffended. When examining the number of stints individuals spent in prison, results show that 77 percent of the participants had been incarcerated two or more times, thus, implying that they had reoffended at some point in the past. When I asked the participants why they were either currently reoffending and/or had reoffended in the past, many suggested very traditional reasons for reoffending. They had no money, they did not have a job, they did not have a positive support system, and they returned to the same environment (i.e., same neighborhood and same friends). Each

of these reasons for reoffending (e.g., strains, lack of social bonds, environment, and deviant peers) will be discussed in turn.

Strains. Agnew (1992) argues that without effective coping mechanisms individuals turn to crime in order to alleviate the strains they are experiencing. When inmates are released from prison they are subjected to many of the specific strains Agnew argues lead to crime – homelessness and a lack of employment in particular. As a result, many of the formerly incarcerated men in this study were either currently reoffending or had reoffended in the past. Carter highlights this idea when he says:

> I reoffended, I reoffended in the past because I felt like I didn't have no choice…They wouldn't try to give a brother a job. And when I did go try to get a job they was always putting me down cause they felt like 'oh he's an ex-con. He's a felon.' The first word they go looking for is your, your criminal history. And when they see all them felonies they don't wanna give nobody a job. So what they leave for me to do?...I had to do what I had to do to survive. I'm a eat one way or another.

Carter was experiencing strain and in order to alleviate that stress he returned to crime after he was released from prison. Carter clearly shows how experiencing strain can lead one to engage in crime. Similarly, Adam notes that he reoffended in the past because he was "trying to put money in [his] pockets." Like Adam, George notes how the need for money led to his return to crime after prison. He states, "I've got 9 kids, ma'm, 8 grandbabies. And it's hard to accept this being broke…they won't let me get food stamps. Hardly find a job. You know what I'm saying? So, basically I fell back. That don't mean I'm supposed to be selling drugs, but I had to go back to my environment." George is beginning to reveal that not having a job and ultimately being the breadwinner is causing him to return to crime in order to be able to provide. Anderson (1999) similarly notes that

without stable and gainful employment, men try to prove themselves in other ways.

While Anderson (1999) says that young men will engage in casual sex to prove their

manhood, it appears as if the participants in this study return to crime in order to show

their manhood. Without being able to find a job and subsequently make money, the

participants in this study continued to engage in crime.

Lack of Social Bonds. Hirschi (1969) argues that an individual will engage in

crime when his or her bonds to conventional society are weak or broken. As various

studies have shown, strong ties between an inmate and his or her family have led to

greater post-release success (Adams and Fischer 1976; Visher and Travis 2003; Laub et

al. 1998). It follows, then, that if the bonds between an inmate and his family are

weakened while he is incarcerated, he will be more likely to return to crime. As Seth

notes, people reoffend because "they don't have the support." Similarly, David says that

people reoffend because of their "poor support system." Lastly, Keith argues that inmates

reoffend after they've been released from prison because of their "lack of support."

Without a "buffering agent" (Irwin 1970), an inmate returns to society without the

support necessary for a successful reintegration. As a result, they are more likely to return

to crime.

Environment and Deviant Peers. [22] Research suggests that inmates are likely to

return to neighborhoods high in poverty, social disorganization, and crime, which are

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[22] While the environment an inmate returns to and the friends he associates with when he is released are
two distinct reasons for reoffending, I discuss them together in this section because most participants
mentioned these factors together.

most likely the neighborhoods they lived prior to their incarceration (Clear et al. 2003;

Lynch and Sabol 2001; Travis et al. 2001). If they return to these disadvantaged

neighborhoods, they are likely to return to crime (Kubrin and Stewart 2006; Mears et al.

2008; Morenoff and Harding 2011). Similarly, if individuals return to the same friends

they associated with prior to prison, they are more likely to return to crime, especially if

those individuals are still engaging in crime (Akers 2009). Adam notes that he has

reoffended in the past because he "just kept hanging with the same people." Similarly,

George says the he returned to crime because he was back in the "same neighborhood,

[with the] same people." Carter reveals that he has reoffended in the past because he just

kept going back to "the hood." Lastly, Jeremy argues that he reoffended because "[he]

always returned to the same guys. Hang out at the same corners, selling the same drugs."

Ultimately, formerly incarcerated individuals are likely to return to crime because they

return to neighborhoods high in crime and they continue to associate with criminal others.

While strains, a lack of ties to family, a disadvantaged neighborhood, and deviant peers

all contribute to an ex-inmate's reoffending behaviors, these were not the only reasons

given as to why one has either reoffended in the past or is currently reoffending. Several

participants mentioned the role of the inmate culture or the "prison mentality" in their

reoffending behaviors.

Inmate Culture. There has been no extensive research on the role of inmate

culture in reoffending. Despite this shortcoming there is still reason to believe that culture

should influence recidivism. If an inmate internalizes the inmate code while he is in

prison and then continues to adopt the informal rules when he leaves prison, he should be

more likely to return to crime after being released from prison because of the reliance on

violence to settle disputes and a resistance to authority. Table 5 shows the relationship between the adoption of the inmate code and current reoffending behaviors.[23] A pattern similar to that found with housing and employment emerged.

[Insert Table 5 here]

Table 5 shows that the participants who have reoffended since their last prison stint appeared to strongly adopt the inmate code while they were in prison. Additionally, some of the code-switchers who felt as if the informal rules of prison had left prison with them are also reoffending. None of the identity changers are currently reoffending. This could be due to the fact that they were not abiding by the informal rules of the prison post-prison. It is important to note that all of the reoffenders felt as those the inmate code left prison with them.

George, a strong adopter, reveals that "they feeding us back out in society with this animal mentality. So basically, I fell back. That don't mean I'm supposed to be selling drugs, but I had to go back to my environment. It's hard to shake that prison mentality." While causality cannot be assumed, George believes that that prison mentality is influencing his criminal involvement. Reginald notes that the prison

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[23] I use the term "current" to refer to any reoffending since they were most recently released from prison. For some participants this could have been many years ago. For others they may have reoffended just the other day. Nonetheless, for purposes of this analysis, I am only interested in whether or not they have reoffended since their last prison stint.

mentality made him "quicker to react" post-prison. Additionally, the close ties he formed with other inmates and the intense in-group loyalty that characterizes the inmate code provided him with new connections when he was released from prison. These connections allowed him to continue selling drugs. As he says, he was able to "take this show on the road" and sell drugs in other parts of the northeast. Similarly, Wallace, another strong adopter, notes that he is currently reoffending because he had "picked up that prison mentality…[he] had been in that culture so long, and I come out, man it was like, I didn't know how to talk. I didn't know how to talk to people because I had this prison mentality." Wallace indicates that because he spent six total years in prison he has internalized the inmate culture; it has become a part of him, which led to his current criminal involvement. Lastly, Adam, a code-switcher, notes that he is currently selling drugs and stealing because he "still carr[ies] the same behaviors with [him]. [He] still [keeps] the mask on." Adam is very well aware of the fact that the inmate code has left prison with him. The informal rules of prison are influencing his post-prison behaviors, including his current criminal offending.

While not everyone has reoffended since their last stint in prison, several participants recognized the influence of the inmate culture on other's post-prison behaviors. In particular, Jonathan notes, "if you live with that [prison] mentality…when someone offends you, the first thing you gonna do is defend yourself." Similar to prison, if an individual is disrespected on the outside, he has no choice but to defend himself. Wilson explains the role of inmate culture on reoffending when he says that individuals reoffend because "they've been indoctrinated into this system." They come to internalize the informal rules of the prison and take those with them when they leave. As a result,

they continue to offend. Lastly, while Walter had an identity shift during his last stint in prison, he notes that he reoffended after his first prison stay because "[prison further] reinforced who I was, a tough guy." Here Walter highlights the interrelated nature of the street culture and the inmate culture. He discusses the fact that he was a "tough guy" on the street, but prison further strengthened this identity, which led to his eventual return to prison for bank robbery and armed robbery.

The results in this chapter suggest that an adoption of the inmate code appears to have an effect on post-prison outcomes, including housing, employment, and reoffending. The men in this study did recognize, or at least believe, that their post-release behaviors, particularly reoffending, were influenced by the inmate culture. Even though these men were no longer experiencing the pressure of prison, they still made reference to the belief that they were abiding by the same informal rules of the prison when they returned home. As Charles says, "they have been in there so long this is all they know." Here Charles highlights the fact that offenders are serving long sentences in prison as a result of recent criminal justice policies. These long sentences result in inmates who know no other way of life – all they know are the rules of the prison. As Jeremy notes, "in the past, I have brought those, those jailhouse stuff with me out to the street." Jeremy is very clearly disclosing that he brought the inmate culture out of prison with him. It is possible, then, that this culture influenced his past reoffending behaviors. Similarly, Marcus says that his temper is much shorter than it was prior to prison; "say the wrong thing, I'm ready to blow. I think more violently than non-violently." Marcus clearly perceives that the prison environment has influenced how he responds to situations since he was released. Instead of responding to situations calmly and peacefully, he now reacts violently. If the inmate

culture leaves prison with formerly incarcerated individuals, then it is likely that they will end up back behind bars. There is something, then, about the prison experience that formerly incarcerated men perceive as affecting their behavior outside of prison.

Specifically, the inmate culture emphasizes behaviors that are in conflict with mainstream society. If inmates are released from prison having adhered to these norms for an extended period of time or if they are still abiding by the inmate code post-prison, it seems less likely that they will be able to successfully transition back into society. The men in this study, particularly strong adopters and code-switchers, do believe that the inmate culture continues to influence their behavior after they are released. It is important to also note, though, that not finding housing or a job can lead to reoffending. So, even though some of the code-switchers were not reoffending at the time of their interview, they may end up reoffending in the future.

Conclusion

While I cannot separate culture from structure in this study, nor did I set out to, after these interviews it became apparent that culture matters for post-release behaviors. As Ralph clearly expresses:

> there's definitely a culture. And that culture is like embraced rather than [rejected], you know. I don't know what you would do cause you need the culture inside to survive. But, it just becomes habit forming to the point where, like, even now I've been out going on two years and I'm still trying to shake off some of the residue.

Ralph suggests that while in prison the inmate culture becomes a habit that is hard to break when one is released from prison; it becomes hard to shed the informal rules of prison, the rules one has been abiding by for a significant amount of time. As a result, the norms of the inmate culture continue to affect the participant's post-prison outcomes: housing, employment, and reoffending.

The results show that strong adopters and code-switchers tended to have more difficulties when it came to securing housing and finding employment. Those who brought the inmate code out with them post-prison also appeared to be more likely to reoffend. Even if the inmate culture is not actually influencing their behavior, the men in this study believe that it is. It matters in the minds of those who have experienced or who were immersed within this culture. The inmate culture, then, becomes a way for formerly incarcerated individuals to understand their own behaviors, attitudes, and, in some cases, their willingness to reoffend. Whether inmate culture, specifically, is actually predicting recidivism is an empirical question that should be further investigated in future quantitative studies. In Chapter 7 I turn to a more in-depth discussion of the results from Chapter 5 and Chapter 6. I also discuss several policy recommendations, the limitations of this study, and avenues for future research.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion: Culture Matters

"If you bring that type of attitude out of prison, I don't give a fuck, before you know it you'll end up right back in that revolving door."
-Malcolm

This study explores the role of culture in post-prison outcomes. Because little

research has studied the influence of culture on recidivism, a qualitative research design

was essential. In the end, I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with 40

formerly incarcerated men currently living in or near Atlanta, Georgia to examine the influence of culture on housing, employment, and reoffending. The data provide in-depth information on what the inmate culture is like in prison today and how an adoption of this culture influences behavior outside of the penitentiary. In this final chapter, I begin with a summary of the key findings. I then address the theoretical implications for criminology and recidivism research. I conclude with the key limitations of the study and highlight the avenues for future study.

Summary of Findings and Theoretical Implications

Past research on inmate culture tended to delineate two frameworks for the development of the inmate culture. More recent research, however, has supported an integrated framework. The importation model and the deprivation paradigm both have merit when it comes to understanding how the inmate culture arises (Akers et al. 1974, 1977; Hunt et al. 1993; Irwin and Cressey 1962; Winfree et al. 2002). The first key finding from this dissertation supports an integrated model of inmate culture. That is, the inmate culture originates from both importation and deprivation. The informal rules of the inmate culture are imported from the street culture. But, the deprivations in prison alter the inmate culture – the code is more enforced in prison than it is on the street. There is a lack of choice in prison compared to the street.

The results indicate that the inmate code is comprised of three major informal rules – (1) use or threaten violence if you are disrespected, (2) remain loyal to inmates over authorities, and (3) mind your own business. These rules reflect both the past

literature on inmate culture and the research on the "code of the street." Fine (2012) argues that once cultures are institutionalized they tend to remain stable unless they are subjected to new circumstances or external shocks. One can argue that the United States corrections industry experienced a major shock to its system with the introduction of several punitive criminal justice policies. These policies not only significantly increased the number of individuals behind bars, but they fundamentally altered the composition of United States prisons. Despite this, however, the inmate culture appears to be institutionalized – the rules have not changed much since these policies were introduced. The only thing that appears to have changed is the heightened awareness and enforcement of the code.

When it comes to variations in the inmate culture, the results also reveal that the culture appears to vary by prison type. The variations between prisons are not in the content of the culture – the rules are the same, but the rules are more enforced in higher security prisons. There are also more severe consequences for violating the rules in maximum security prisons. Fine (2012) again argues that culture is local. Small groups have the ability to organize social life and use their power to define rights and privileges (Fine 2012: 1). Individuals create meaning and order in the world by working with those closest to them. Groups, such as inmates within a particular prison, work within a localized environment that ultimately shapes the culture that develops. This is why the culture appears to be "watered down" (Ralph) in less secure prisons. The inmates respond to their distinct environment forming its own idioculture, or the "system of knowledge, beliefs, behavior, and customs shared by members of an interacting group" (Fine 2012: 36).

The second key finding from this dissertation is that an adoption of the inmate code appears to affect formerly incarcerated individual's ability to find stable housing and employment. An internalization of the inmate code also influences one's likelihood of reoffending post-prison. Several past studies have indicated that the inmate culture should have a negative influence on behaviors post-prison (see Irwin and Cressey 1962; Lerman 2009; Nagin et al. 2009; Visher and Travis 2003). Despite this declaration, no studies have attempted to study the role of culture in post-prison outcomes. It appears as though adhering to the inmate code, which values violence, hostility towards authority figures, and a reluctance to snitch, disrupts the major relationships and connections one needs when released from prison. By internalizing the inmate code, inmates sever ties with family and friends who are instrumental in helping them find housing and employment post-prison. Additionally, learning to respond to signs of disrespect with violence does not make one employable and may continue to weaken relationships with conventional, prosocial others.

Those inmates who experience an identity shift in prison fare the best post-prison. Almost all of the identity changers had an easy time finding housing and employment post-release. Similarly, none of the identity changers have reoffended since they were last released from prison. While some of the changes in outlook resulted from the loss of a family member or close relative, inmates did have changes in their perspectives as a result of finding religion and furthering their education. This suggests, then, that prison programs, particularly education and religion, should not be cut from correctional budgets. As Jonathan notes, "when I was sitting up there just playing cards and doing detail, I learned how to become a better criminal…I'm not gonna do that anymore. Hell,

I'm gonna get smarter. I'm gonna get wiser when I commit a crime." Bobby similarly says, "prison is a college…you can go in there as a petty thief and by the time you leave you'll know how to rob a bank." By providing inmates with services, programs, or classes, there is a greater chance that they will distance themselves from other offenders and ultimately have a positive shift in their overall attitudes. Recent changes in criminal justice policies have occurred in various states, including Georgia, that could be indirectly aiding an inmate's identity shift while in prison. For instance, Georgia established the Special Council on Criminal Justice Reform for Georgians in 2011. This reform is meant to provide the services and support necessary for inmates to succeed when they are eventually released from prison (Boggs and Worthy 2014).

If an inmate does not experience an identity shift in prison, it appears to be more likely that they will take the inmate code with them when they are released from prison. Because of this, it makes sense to also require transitional housing before one returns home. Jim says that "anybody that has done a lot of time, [I] do think they need to go through the transitional period." Ralph also suggests that "they need to make anybody who did over five, six years to go to the transitional center…You can get some counselors in there that deprogram and you get people learning how to deal with society again." Transitional housing, or a halfway house, allows inmates who are close to the end of their sentence live in a structured and regulated environment. While a transitional housing environment allows inmates to work and visit with family members, it may also allow inmates to distance themselves from the harsh prison environment in which the inmate code thrives. Spending the last few months of a prison sentence in transitional

housing may enable "code-switchers" or "strong adopters" to shed the inmate culture before they return to the free world.

There has been extensive research over the years on the reasons an individual desists from crime – even those that have spent time in prison (see Laub and Sampson 2001). This research finds that several factors are associated with desistance from crime in adulthood. These include age, social bonds, rational choice, and peers. For instance, individuals mature or age out of crime, they experience changes in social bonds (e.g., work, marriage, etc.), the costs begin to outweigh the benefits, and they begin to associate with noncriminal others (Clarke and Cornish 1985; Cornish and Clarke 1986; Glueck and Glueck 1974; Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990; Sampson and Laub 1993; Warr 1993).

While the participants in this study did mention these various reasons for their desistance from crime, several revealed that they had stopped engaging in crime because they had a change in their values and attitudes. In particular, Kevin notes that he's "not with that lifestyle anymore." Thomas also says that he "used to feel like it was mandatory that he respond to any slight…whether real or imagined." Despite this type of attitude, he stopped offending because he had "reorient[ed his] value system." For Omar, individuals desist from crime simply because their values change. Maruna (2001) argues that individuals stop engaging in crime because of various identity changes. This research lends support to his arguments. Those formerly incarcerated men who experienced an identity shift in prison have not reoffended since they were most recently released. In order for desistance to occur, there has to be an "identity deconstruction" (Maruna 2001). Having this deconstruction occur in prison allows an inmate to, in a sense, shed his

adherence on the inmate code and ultimately decreases his likelihood of reoffending when he is eventually released.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study begins to highlight the apparent link between culture and post-prison outcomes. It appears as though an adherence to the inmate culture leads to more negative post-prison behaviors. There are, however, obvious limitations to this study in terms of the sample and prisonization measure that warrant caution when interpreting the findings. First, my sample consists of formerly incarcerated men currently living in or near Atlanta, Georgia. Most of the participants in this study did their time in Georgia prisons, but, not all prisons are the same and not all states have the same criminal justice policies. As such, the findings may not be generalizable to all formerly incarcerated men. Future research should continue to explore this topic with ex-inmates who did their time in other state's correctional facilities. These studies could help to determine if the findings differ based on the punitive nature of the criminal justice policies in particular states.

Additionally, as noted in Chapter 4, over ninety percent of my sample is African American. Because research shows that African Americans have higher levels of prisonization (Goodstein and MacKenzie 1984), this study may overestimate the level of adoption of the inmate code. The average age of the participants in this study was also higher than the average age of those inmates released from Georgia prisons in 2012 (50 years old vs. 36 years old, respectively). Because of the older sample in this study, the participants may not have reoffended post-prison simply for the fact that they had aged

out of crime. Because of the issues with the final sample, the findings may not be generalizable. In spite of this limitation, future research should continue to explore this topic with a more varied – both racially and in age – and geographically representative sample to determine if an adoption of the inmate code negatively influences post-prison outcomes for all ex-inmates.

Another limitation was the sole use of formerly incarcerated men for this study. This was a critical decision that I made because a study examining the influence of culture on recidivism had not been done before. Men comprise the majority of inmates in prison today. As a result, I felt it was necessary to begin to unravel the relationship between culture and recidivism with the largest population first. Because of the specific target population in this study, the results cannot be generalized to female inmates. Even though there has been a disproportionate increase in women in prison (Mauer 2013), past research finds that inmate culture, which is more salient for men than women, varies by sex (Ward and Kassebaum 1965; Wilson 1986). Future research, then, should study female ex-inmates to begin to understand the nature of inmate culture in women's prisons and the effect this culture has on their post-prison outcomes.

Another limitation of this study is the measure of prisonization employed. While I gathered information on all of the factors influencing prisonization, I employed a more direct measure of adoption of the inmate code. In particular, I allowed the discussion around the inmate code to determine whether or not each participant weakly or strongly internalized the inmate code. Future research should ask a more direct question regarding each respondent's level of prisonization. Studies should simply ask whether or not they adhered to the informal rules of the prison.

Lastly, because this is a qualitative study, I cannot isolate the effect of culture on post-prison outcomes. It is possible that the results here indicate a spurious relationship between culture and recidivism. Or that an adherence to the inmate code reflects an indirect effect on reoffending behaviors. For instance, the effect of inmate culture on recidivism may be conditioned by the influence of the inmate code on social bonds. While I cannot be sure of the actual influence that culture has on reoffending, the results do indicate that those who were still abiding by the inmate code post-prison experienced significant difficulties when it came to housing and employment. They were also still engaging in crime. Future recidivism studies, then, need to include quantitative measures on code-related beliefs in and after prison to determine if culture has an independent and significant effect on reoffending.

Conclusion

Incarcerating individuals in punitive prisons with more criminal peers may cause them to internalize antisocial attitudes and behaviors. As Lerman (2009) argues and this study supports, internalizing the inmate code "may result in detachment from prosocial networks, a further deterioration of adherence to social and legal norms, and ultimately a greater likelihood of recidivism following release" (170). Inmates who continue to adopt the inmate code when they leave prison appear to "still carry the same behaviors" with them (Adam). As Malcolm clearly conveys, "if you bring that type of attitude out of prison…before you know it you'll end up right back in that revolving door." Adopting or internalizing the inmate code does not bode well for the success of formerly incarcerated

men. Those who continue to abide by the informal rules of the inmate culture post-prison have a harder time finding housing and employment, and they are likely to reoffend. It is only with future quantitative research and more extensive qualitative studies that criminologists will begin to unravel the apparent link between culture and recidivism.

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TABLES

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Formerly Incarcerated Interviewees

Interview #	Name	Age	Race	Education	Major Crimes[24]	# of Stints	Total Years	Prison Type	Year Released	Reoffended Since Last Stint?
1	*Daniel*	50	Black	HS	Armed Robbery, Aggravated Assault	1	19.5	State	2010	No
2	*Larry*	40	White	7th grade	Drug Trafficking	10	18	State	2013	No
3	*Ralph*	37	Black	Some College	Armed Robbery, Aggravated Assault	2	16	State	2011	No
4	*Jim*	36	Black	11th grade	Armed Robbery, Aggravated Assault	1	13.3	State	2009	No
5	*Walter*	67	Black	College	Bank Robbery, Armed Robbery	2	26	Federal & State	2000	No
6	*Thomas*	60	Black	11th grade	Murder, Aggravated Assault	2	37	State	2012	No
7	*Ted*	46	Black	7th grade	Armed Robbery, Auto Theft	1	28	State	2013	No
8	*Bobby*	41	Black	12th grade	Murder, Armed Robbery	1	20	State	2009	No
9	*Wilfred*	43	Black	11th grade	Burglary, Aggravated Assault	1	10	State	2002	No
10	*Oscar*	52	Black	Some College	Bank Fraud, Theft by Deception	5	4	Federal & State	2005	No

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[24] This is not an exhaustive list of each participant's criminal involvement. Many participants had numerous charges and were involved in various types of crime.

This lends support to a generalist perspective of criminal behavior (see Gottfredson and Hirschi 1990).

Interview #	Name	Age	Race	Education	Major Crimes	# of Stints	Total Years	Prison Type	Year Released	Reoffended Since Last Stint?
11	*Marvin*	45	Black	10th grade	Aggravated Assault	4	6	State	2012	No
12	*Matt*	47	Black	HS	Identity Theft, Theft by Taking	5	9	Federal	2011	No
13	*Wilson*	60	Black	College	Bad Checks, Theft by Taking	2	5	State	2013	No
14	*Keith*	65	Black	Some College	Arson	1	9	Federal	2005	No
15	*Leonard*	55	Black	12th grade	Selling Drugs, Burglary	3	10	State	2008	No
16	*Kevin*	43	Black	10th grade	Selling Drugs, Auto Theft	2	18	State	2010	No
17	*Donald*	57	Black	HS	Theft by Receiving, Burglary	2	2	State	2000	No
18	*Aaron*	52	Black	Some College	Theft by Deception, Grand Theft	2	7	Federal	2001	No
19	*David*	46	White	Some College	Aggravated Child Molestation	2	23	State	2011	No
20	*Abe*	50	Black	HS	Drug Possession, Forgery	2	6	State	2013	No
21	*Alvin*	51	Black	Some College	Drug Sale to Undercover Officer	1	5	State	1990	No
22	*Joseph*	58	Black	9th grade	Aggravated Sexual Battery	1	12	State	2012	No
23	*Darren*	55	Black	11th grade	Theft by Taking, Theft by Receiving	"many"	28	State	2009	Yes
24	*Wallace*	44	Black	9th grade	Auto Theft, Shoplifting	5	6	State	2009	Yes
25	*Jeremy*	45	Black	7th grade	Drug Sale to Officer	6	15	State	2013	No

Interview #	Name	Age	Race	Education	Major Crimes	# of Stints	Total Years	Prison Type	Year Released	Reoffended Since Last Stint?
26	*Frank*	51	Black	9th grade	Bank Fraud, Armed Robbery	5	27	Federal & State	2007	No
27	*George*	47	Black	11th grade	Drug Possession, Robbery	7	11	State	2013	Yes
28	*Jonathan*	59	Black	Some College	Aggravated Assault, Drug Possession	12	12	State	2000	No
29	*Alex*	38	Black	10th grade	Drug Possession, Theft by Receiving	2	2	State	2003	Yes
30	*Malcolm*	40	Black	8th grade	Drug Possession	1	8	State	2001	Yes
31	*Adam*	35	Black	12th grade	Drug Possession, Burglary	3	4	State	2001	Yes
32	*Carter*	46	Black	12th grade	Drug Possession, Aggravated Assault	3	10	State	2007	No
33	*Jason*	48	Black	8th grade	Armed Robbery, Shoplifting	5	7	State	unknown	Yes
34	*Seth*	34	White	HS	Drug Trafficking	2	5	Federal	2007	Yes
35	*Jack*	67	Black	HS	Murder, Armed Robbery	2	26	State	2007	No
36	*Charles*	52	Black	Some College	Drug Sale to Undercover Officer	2	4	State	2000	No
37	*Marcus*	39	Black	HS	Aggravated Sodomy, Statutory Rape	2	10	State	2012	No
38	*Bruce*	52	Hispanic	3rd grade	Aggravated Assault, Armed Robbery	6	25	State	2006	Yes
39	*Eugene*	46	Black	7th grade	Burglary, Habitual Offender DUI	2	6	State	2013	No
40	*Reginald*	39	Black	10th grade	Armed Robbery, Drug Possession	2	6	State	1996	Yes

Table 2: Adoption of Inmate Code During and After Prison

Participant Name	Adoption in Prison	Adoption After Prison
Abe[25]	Some	No
David	Some – Identity Changer	No
Donald	Some – Identity Changer	No
Daniel	Some – Identity Changer	No
Larry	Some – Identity Changer	No
Bobby	Some – Identity Changer	No
Jim	Some – Identity Changer	No
Walter	Some – Identity Changer	No
Thomas	Some – Identity Changer	No
Wilfred	Some – Identity Changer	No
Wilson	Some – Identity Changer	No
Keith	Some – Identity Changer	No
Aaron	Some – Identity Changer	No
Jack	Some – Identity Changer	No
Charles	Some – Identity Changer	No
Ted	Some – Identity Changer	No
Joseph	Some – Identity Changer	No
Eugene	Some – Identity Changer	Yes
Ralph	Some – Identity Changer	Yes
Matt	Some – Identity Changer	Yes
Oscar	Some – Code-Switcher	No
Kevin	Some – Code-Switcher	No
Frank	Some – Code-Switcher	No
Alvin	Some – Code-Switcher	No
Marvin	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes
Leonard	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes
Jeremy	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes
Jonathan	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes
Alex	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes
Adam	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes
Carter	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes
Seth	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes
Marcus	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes
Reginald	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes
Darren	Strong	Yes
Wallace	Strong	Yes
George	Strong	Yes
Jason	Strong	Yes
Bruce	Strong	Yes
Malcolm	Strong	Yes

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[25] Abe is only listed as having "some" adoption of the inmate code in prison because he did not undergo an identity change while he was incarcerated nor did he code-switch while he was in prison. He was 43 when he was first sentenced to prison and he did not associate with other inmates; he kept mainly to himself. Additionally, even though he was aware of the no snitching rule in prison, he had never witnessed the consequences. He was also unaware that inmates should respond with violence if they are disrespected.

Table 3: Adoption of Inmate Code and Housing

Participant Name	Adoption in Prison	Adoption After Prison	Housing
Abe	Some	No	Easy
David	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy[26]
Donald	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Daniel	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Larry	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Walter	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Thomas	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Bobby	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Wilfred	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Wilson	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Keith	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Aaron	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Jack	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Charles	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Ted	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Joseph	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Jim	Some – Identity Changer	No	Difficult
Eugene	Some – Identity Changer	Yes	Easy
Ralph	Some – Identity Changer	Yes	Difficult
Matt	Some – Identity Changer	Yes	Difficult
Oscar	Some – Code-Switcher	No	Easy
Kevin	Some – Code-Switcher	No	Easy
Frank	Some – Code-Switcher	No	Easy
Alvin	Some – Code-Switcher	No	Easy
Jonathan	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Easy
Alex	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Easy
Adam	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Easy
Seth	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Easy
Jeremy	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Easy
Reginald	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Easy
Carter	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Difficult
Marcus	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Difficult
Leonard	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Difficult
Marvin	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Difficult
Darren	Strong	Yes	Easy
Wallace	Strong	Yes	Easy
George	Strong	Yes	Difficult
Jason	Strong	Yes	Difficult
Bruce	Strong	Yes	Difficult
Malcolm	Strong	Yes	Difficult

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[26] David says that finding an apartment was difficult because of his sex offender status. But, he was able to find housing easily through an individual renter who had rented to another person with the same criminal history. This previous individual had set a "good example," so the renter was willing to rent an apartment to David.

Table 4: Adoption of Inmate Code and Employment

Participant Name	Adoption in Prison	Adoption After Prison	Employment
Abe	Some	No	Disabled[27]
Thomas	Some – Identity Changer	No	Disabled
David	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Donald	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Daniel	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Larry	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Walter	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Wilfred	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Bobby	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Wilson	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Aaron	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Jack	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Charles	Some – Identity Changer	No	Easy
Keith	Some – Identity Changer	No	Difficult
Joseph	Some – Identity Changer	No	Difficult
Ted	Some – Identity Changer	No	Not Looking
Eugene	Some – Identity Changer	Yes	Disabled
Matt	Some – Identity Changer	Yes	Easy
Ralph	Some – Identity Changer	Yes	Difficult
Kevin	Some – Code-Switcher	No	Easy
Alvin	Some – Code-Switcher	No	Easy
Oscar	Some – Code-Switcher	No	Difficult
Frank	Some – Code-Switcher	No	Difficult
Seth	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Easy
Jeremy	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Easy
Reginald	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Easy
Jonathan	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Difficult
Alex	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Difficult
Carter	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Difficult
Marcus	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Difficult
Marvin	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Difficult
Leonard	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Difficult
Adam	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Not Looking
Wallace	Strong	Yes	Difficult
George	Strong	Yes	Difficult
Jason	Strong	Yes	Difficult
Bruce	Strong	Yes	Difficult
Malcolm	Strong	Yes	Difficult
Darren	Strong	Yes	Not Looking

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[27] Abe, Thomas, and Eugene were not looking for employment when they were released from prison because they were disabled.

Table 5: Adoption of Inmate Code and Current Reoffending Behavior

Participant Name	Adoption in Prison	Adoption After Prison	Current Reoffending
Abe	Some	No	No
David	Some – Identity Changer	No	No
Donald	Some – Identity Changer	No	No
Daniel	Some – Identity Changer	No	No
Larry	Some – Identity Changer	No	No
Jim	Some – Identity Changer	No	No
Walter	Some – Identity Changer	No	No
Thomas	Some – Identity Changer	No	No
Wilfred	Some – Identity Changer	No	No
Bobby	Some – Identity Changer	No	No
Wilson	Some – Identity Changer	No	No
Keith	Some – Identity Changer	No	No
Aaron	Some – Identity Changer	No	No
Jack	Some – Identity Changer	No	No
Charles	Some – Identity Changer	No	No
Ted	Some – Identity Changer	No	No
Joseph	Some – Identity Changer	No	No
Eugene	Some – Identity Changer	Yes	No
Ralph	Some – Identity Changer	Yes	No
Matt	Some – Identity Changer	Yes	No
Oscar	Some – Code-Switcher	No	No
Kevin	Some – Code-Switcher	No	No
Frank	Some – Code-Switcher	No	No
Alvin	Some – Code-Switcher	No	No
Marvin	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	No
Leonard	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	No
Jeremy	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	No
Jonathan	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	No
Carter	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	No
Marcus	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	No
Alex	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Yes
Adam	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Yes
Seth	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Yes
Reginald	Some – Code-Switcher	Yes	Yes
Darren	Strong	Yes	Yes
Wallace	Strong	Yes	Yes
George	Strong	Yes	Yes
Jason	Strong	Yes	Yes
Bruce	Strong	Yes	Yes
Malcolm	Strong	Yes	Yes

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Sample Recruitment Materials

Prison Experiences Interview

Have you ever been incarcerated? Have you been home for at least 6 months? A new study being conducted by a sociology doctoral student would like to find out about your experiences while in prison and your life after prison.

- **Incarcerated for at least 1 year**
- **Male**
- **Currently living in the Atlanta metro area**
- **1 to 2 hour individual interview**
- **$25 incentive for your time**
- **Completely confidential, anonymous, and private**

Contact person: Jessica Grosholz, PhD (c)

470-428-1045 or jessica.grosholz@emory.edu

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Appendix B: Focus Group Interview Guide

INTERVIEW GUIDE – FOCUS GROUPS

A. Background & Pre-Prison Experiences

1. Please tell me a little about your background.
  PROBE: Where did you grow up?
  PROBE: Where are you currently living?
  PROBE: How old are you?
  PROBE: What is the highest level of education completed?
  PROBE: How many times have you been in prison?
  PROBE: How old were you when you first went to prison?
  PROBE: How long did you spend in prison for your most recent conviction?

2. What was your life like when you were younger?
  PROBE: What was the neighborhood you grew up in like?
  PROBE: What were your friends like?
  PROBE: What did you and your friends do when you were together?
  PROBE: What was your family life like?

B. Prison Experiences

3. Can you explain to me what you do on a daily basis while you are in prison?

4. Is violence a big part of life within prison? Is violence respected by other inmates inside prison?
  PROBE: How much violence is there within prison?
  PROBE: Why do you think inmates use violence in prison?
  PROBE: Do inmates use violence in order to protect themselves?
  PROBE: Do inmates use violence as a way to gain status among the other inmates?

5. Is it ok for inmates to side with the prison authorities?
  PROBE: If no, why not?
  PROBE: If yes, is this only under certain circumstances or is it ok at all times?

6. Are inmates ever allowed to snitch on other inmates?

      PROBE: If yes, under what circumstances?

7. Are gangs a big part of prisons today?

      PROBE: How much influence do gangs have on the inmates?

      PROBE: How are the gangs organized? Are the gangs based on race and/or ethnic background?

8. Is religion a big part of prison today?

      PROBE: Is there a lot of religious programming in prison?

      PROBE: Does religion provide a way to cope with being in prison?

9. Do you think the amount of violence, the numbers of gangs, and the role of religion is similar across all prisons?

      PROBE: If yes, why do you think the behaviors and groups are the same?

      PROBE: If no, how do you think it varies?

10. Do you think racial or ethnic conflict is a big problem in prison today? Do you think this is a big cause of violence within prison?

      PROBE: If so, how was this conflict handled by the prison officials? By other inmates?

      PROBE: If not, why do you think it is not a problem?

11. Do you think there are enough programs offered to inmates in prison?

      PROBE: If yes, what programs did you participate in?

      PROBE: If no, what programs are lacking? What types of programs do you think prisons need more of? Why do they need more programs?

12. What is the relationship between inmates and prison authorities (i.e. wardens, correctional officers) like?

13. When you hear the term "inmate culture", what does this phrase mean to you?

C. Post-Prison Experiences

14. Please talk to me about your experience of returning home.

PROBE: Was finding housing difficult? If yes, why? If no, why not?

PROBE: Was finding employment difficult? If yes, why? If no, why not?

PROBE: Did you return home to family (i.e. parents, spouses, children)? If so, who? Did your family provide the support you were looking for when you returned home?

PROBE: Who do you hang out with now that you are home? Are these the same friends you had before you went to prison? Do they provide the support necessary to remain out of prison?

15. Please tell me about the neighborhood you returned to when you left prison.

PROBE: Is there a lot of crime in this neighborhood? Is there a lot of poverty?

PROBE: Is there a lot of police presence?

PROBE: Do the neighbors know each other?

PROBE: Does this neighborhood have services in place to help ex-inmates? If so, what are these services? Have you used any of these services?

16. What has been your biggest obstacle since you've been out of prison?

PROBE: How have you handled this challenge?

17. Why do you think formerly incarcerated persons reoffend after returning home?

PROBE: Trying to make ends meet?

PROBE: Return to friends who are engaging in crime?

PROBE: Result of drugs and alcohol?

PROBE: The values they internalized while in prison?

17. If someone you know is about to be released from prison, what advice would you give him?

18. Finally, is there anything that we talked about that you would like to go back to?

PROBE: Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix C: Formerly Incarcerated Person Interview Guide

<u>INTERVIEW GUIDE – FORMER INMATES</u>

A. Pre-Prison Experiences
1. Please talk to me about your childhood. What was life like growing up?
   a. PROBE: When were you born?

   b. PROBE: Where did you live?
      i. PROBE: What was the neighborhood like?
      ii. PROBE: Did you know your neighbors?
      iii. PROBE: Was there a lot of crime?
      iv. PROBE: Was there a lot of poverty?

   c. PROBE: What was your home life like?
      i. PROBE: Who did you live with?
      ii. PROBE: Were our parents married, divorced, etc.?
      iii. PROBE: Did your parents or guardians monitor your behavior?
      iv. PROBE: Were you punished often?
      v. PROBE: What type of relationship did you have with your parents or guardians?
      vi. PROBE: Did your parents know your friends?

   d. PROBE: What was school like?
      i. What was the highest level of education you completed?
      ii. Would you have liked to have more education? If so, why?

   e. PROBE: Who did you hang out? What were your friends like?
      i. PROBE: Were your friends involved in criminal or delinquent behavior?
         1. If yes, what types of behaviors were they most involved in?
         2. If yes, why did your friends engage in these behaviors?
         3. If no, why do you think your friends chose not to engage in criminal or delinquent behaviors?

      ii. PROBE: What behaviors, values, or beliefs were most respected among your friends? How did you get status in your group?
         1. Was violence respected among your friends?
         2. Was toughness respected among your friends?
         3. Did you and/or your friends ever cooperate with authorities?

       f.   PROBE: Did you have any job(s) growing up?
           i.   PROBE: What was the job?
          ii.   PROBE: Was it a good-paying job?
         iii.   PROBE: What were your job responsibilities?
         iv.   PROBE: Did you have a job before you went to prison?

2. Talk to me about your initial involvement with the criminal justice system.
    a.   PROBE: How old were you when you were first arrested?
       i.   What was this offense?

    b.   PROBE: How old were you when you were first convicted of a misdemeanor? A felony?
       i.   What was this offense?

    c.   PROBE: How old were you when you were first sent to prison?
       i.   What was this offense?

    d.   PROBE: How many times have you been to prison?

    e.   PROBE: How old were you when you were sent to prison for our most recent conviction?
       i.   What was this most recent offense?

    f.   PROBE: How long were you in prison for your most recent conviction?
       i.   When were you most recently released from prison?

    g.   PROBE: How much total time have you spent in prison over the years?

B. Prison Experiences

3. What prisons have you spent time at?
    a.   PROBE: Were these prisons focused on rehabilitation or punishment?
    b.   PROBE: What do you think were the main objectives of the prison(s)?

4. What was your daily routine in prison?
    a.   PROBE: Who did you hang out with? Why did you hang out with these particular people?

    b.   PROBE: Were you a part of a detail? What detail(s)?

    c.   PROBE: Were you involved in any inmate groups such as political or religious groups?

      d. PROBE: Did you take part in any daily programming that was offered at the prison?
- i. If yes, what types of programs?
  1. Do you think they were effective?
  2. How long were you involved in these programs?
  3. Did you participate in these programs in the beginning of your time in prison or towards the end of your confinement?
- ii. If no, why did you not take part in any of the available programs?

      e. PROBE: Were there a lot of programs offered in the prison you were most recently incarcerated in?
- i. If so, were they rehabilitation programs? Educational programs? Job-training programs?
- ii. If no, what types of programs do you think the prison needed more of?

      f. PROBE: Did you remain in contact with family or friends while you were in prison?
- i. Was this contact through in person visits or through letters?

5. What role does violence play in prison?
   a. PROBE: Is violence a big problem in prison today?

   b. PROBE: Is violence used as a way to gain status or respect among other inmates?

   c. PROBE: Is violence used to intimidate other inmates?

   d. PROBE: Is violence used to get what you need or want (i.e. cell phones, drugs, money)?

   e. PROBE: How do prison authorities handle violence in prison?

   f. PROBE: Did the amount of violence increase while you were in prison?
      - i. If yes, why do you think the level of violence increased?
      - ii. If no, why do you think the level of violence did not increase?

6. Are gangs a big problem in prison?
   a. PROBE: Why do you think gangs exist in prison?

   b. PROBE: How do prison authorities handle gangs in prison?

   c. PROBE: Were you a member of a gang when you were in prison?
      - i. If yes, why were you in a gang?

        ii.   If no, why were you not a member of a gang?

7. Talk to me about snitching.
    a. PROBE: Is snitching allowed in prison?

    b. PROBE: What happens if an inmate snitches?

    c. PROBE: Is snitching allowed under certain circumstances?
        i. If yes, what are these circumstances?

8. What is the relationship like between inmates and prison authorities (i.e. correctional officers and wardens)?
    a. PROBE: Are inmates ever allowed to work together with prison authorities?
        i. If yes, under what circumstances?
        ii. If no, why not? What happens if they do?

    b. PROBE: Is it always an "us vs. them" mentality?
    c. PROBE: Did you interact frequently with these prison authorities?

    d. PROBE: Was this a good relationship or a strained relationship? Can you provide examples of how this was either a good relationship or a strained relationship?

9. Was there racial or ethnic conflict in the prison you were most recently incarcerated in?
    a. PROBE: If so, how was this conflict handled by the prison officials? By other inmates?

10. What role does religion play in prison?
    a. PROBE: Was there a lot of religious programming? Did you participate in any of this type of programming?

    b. PROBE: Do inmates use religion as a way to cope with being in prison?

11. Is there a set of informal rules, or a code, that inmates abide by while in prison?
    a. PROBE: If yes, what are these rules?

    b. PROBE: Are these informal rules similar across prisons?
        i. If no, how are they different?
            1. Do they vary by security level?
        ii. If yes, why do you think the rules are the same?

    c. PROBE: Are these informal rules followed by all inmates?
        i. If no, what types of inmates follow these rules?

1. Do only gang-affiliated inmates follow these rules?
2. Do certain religious affiliations follow these rules?

    d. PROBE: Are these informal rules similar to informal rules from the street?
        i. If no, how are they different?

12. If I mention the term "inmate culture", what does this mean to you?

13. Prior to your release from prison, what did you expect your experiences to be like when you got home?
    a. PROBE: That is, did you have positive or negative expectations?

    b. PROBE: Did you expect to hang out with the same friends as before?

    c. PROBE: Did you expect to live on your own, with your family, or with your friends?

    d. PROBE: Did you expect to have a job?

    e. PROBE: Did you expect to fall back into some of the same behaviors that landed you in prison?

14. Do you think the informal rules, or the code, of the prison came with you when you were released?
    a. PROBE: If yes, how do you know this?

    b. PROBE: If no, how were you able to separate yourself from these values and beliefs?

C. Post-Prison Experiences

15. When you were most recently released from prison, did you "max out" or were you released on probation or parole?
    a. PROBE: Are you still under supervision?

    b. PROBE: If not on probation or parole anymore, how long were you under supervision?

    c. PROBE: For either group, how often did you/do you see your parole officer? Are these contacts face to face or is the contact through mail, e-mail or phone?

16. When you were released from prison, did you return to your own home? A relative's home? A friend's home? Homeless shelter? No home? Or were you released to a community treatment center or halfway house as part of your probation or parole?
    a. PROBE: Was finding housing a difficult experience? If so, how? If no, what made it easy?

17. Where did you return to upon your release from prison?
    a. PROBE: If Atlanta, what neighborhood?

    b. PROBE: Is this neighborhood close to your family?
        i. If yes, do you think being close to them has made your return home easier?
        ii. If no, do you think being away from them has made our return home more difficult?

    c. PROBE: Is there a lot of crime in this neighborhood?

    d. PROBE: Do you know your neighbors?

    e. PROBE: Is there a lot of poverty in your neighborhood?

    f. PROBE: Does this neighborhood have services in place for formerly incarcerated individuals? For instance, services to help you find a job, to find housing, to find healthcare? If so, what are these services? Have you used any of these services?

18. When you were released from prison, did you find a job?
    a. PROBE: If yes, what type of job did you find? How long have you had this job? Was it an easy experience finding this job? Did you experience any problems?
    b. PROBE: How long did it take you to find employment?

    c. PROBE: If not, have employers discussed with you their reasons for not hiring you? If so, what were their reasons? If they did not tell you, what do you think were their reasons?

    d. PROBE: If you did not find a job, have you been actively searching for job?

19. Since you've been home, who have you been hanging out with? Who are your friends?
    a. PROBE: Are these the same friends you had before you went to prison?

    b. PROBE: Did these friends approve of your criminal behavior before you went to prison?

c. PROBE: If you do not have the same friends as before, why did you choose to distance yourself from those friends?

d. PROBE: Have these friends provided the support you think you need to remain out of prison?
   i. If yes, what have they done?
   ii. If no, what have they been doing wrong?

e. Do you have children?
   i. If yes, did you remain in contact with them while you were in prison?
   ii. Have you seen them since you've been home?

f. Were you in a relationship before you left for prison? Are you still in a relationship?
   i. If yes, did you remain in contact with them while you were in prison? Has he or she helped you out since you've been home? For example, has he or she helped you find a job, find housing, or has he or she simply just been there for you by providing support?

20. Since you've been home from prison, have you used drugs and/or alcohol?
   a. PROBE: If yes, did you use drugs and/or alcohol prior to prison? Do you think using drugs and/or alcohol has influenced your experiences since you've been home? If so, how?

21. Have you reoffended since you were released from prison?
   a. PROBE: If yes, was this crime a property, violent or drug crime?

   b. PROBE: Was the crime a felony or a misdemeanor?

   c. PROBE: Were you arrested?

22. Have you had a probation or parole violation since you were released from prison?
   a. PROBE: If so, what was the violation?

   b. PROBE: Why did you violate your probation or parole?

23. **ASK ONLY IF THE RESPONDENT HAS REOFFENDED SINCE BEING RELEASED**. Why did you reoffend?
   a. PROBE: Did you need money? Were you stressed or strained? If so, in what ways?

   b. PROBE: Were your peers engaging in the same behavior?

      c. PROBE: Was this criminal behavior respected, approved, or encouraged by your friends?

24. Why do you think others reoffend?

25. Do you think being an ex-inmate causes you to have a harder time being accepted back into society now that you are out of prison?
    a. PROBE: In other words, have you had a harder time finding employment, finding housing, not engaging in crime, etc. because of you are an ex-offender?

26. What has been your biggest obstacle since you've been out of prison?
    a. PROBE: How have you handled this challenge?

27. If you could change anything about what's happened since you got out, what would you change and why?

28. If you were going to give advice to someone who was just about to be released from prison, what would you tell them?

29. Finally, is there anything that we talked about that you would like to go back to?
    a. PROBE: Do you have any questions for me?

Appendix D: Consent Form

Information about the Study

Title: An Exploratory Examination of Inmate Culture and Its Role in Post-Prison Outcomes, Including Recidivism
Principal Investigator: Jessica M. Grosholz, PhD (c)
Co-Investigator: Dr. Robert Agnew

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE
You are being invited to participate in a research study on the influence of prison experiences on life experiences post-prison. This form is designed to tell you everything you need to think about before you decide to agree to be in the study or not to be in the study. You are being asked to participate because you have spent at least one year in a state or federal prison. I am asking you to participate in a one-time interview in order to gather information on the prison experience and the influence this experience has had on your experiences post-prison. Approximately 40 people will be interviewed for this research study. This study is being conducted for my doctoral dissertation under the direction of Dr. Robert Agnew.

PROCEDURE
If you agree to participate, I will interview you for about one to two hours at a mutually agreed upon location. The questions will be about your experiences prior to prison, your experiences in prison, and your experiences post-prison. I will tape record the interview with your consent. These voice recordings will be transcribed and immediately destroyed.

RISKS
There is a risk of breach of confidentiality in this study. We will be discussing reoffending behaviors, which could lead to consequences such as arrest or incarceration. However, having a waiver of documentation of informed consent will minimize the risk of breach of confidentiality.

Certain offices and people other than the researchers may look at the study records. Government agencies and Emory employees overseeing proper study conduct may look at the study records. These offices include the Emory Institutional Review Board and the Emory Office of Research Compliance. Study funders may also look at the study records. Emory will keep any research records we create private to the extent we are required to do so by law. A study number rather than your name will be used on study records wherever possible. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results.

BENEFITS
Taking part in this research study may not benefit you personally. The information you provide, however, will add to our knowledge about prison, prison experiences, and the influence these experiences have on behavior post-prison.

COMPENSATION
You will be offered $25.00 for your participation in this interview.

CONFIDENTIALITY
To protect your privacy, all of the information that you will provide during the interview will be confidential. Information from the study will be de-identified. Your name will not be used in any publications about the project. You will not be personally identified in any report or publication of this study or its results. I will keep all records that I produce private to the extent I am required to do so by law.

Electronic taped audio files from each taped interview will be stored on the principle investigator's password-protected personal computer. The records of the interview will be maintained throughout the conduct of the study. The digital records will be destroyed after the completion of the project by deleting them from the password-protected computer. All documents created from the interview will be shredded after the end of the project.

CONTACT PERSONS
If you have any questions, I invite you to ask them now. If you have any questions about the study later, you may contact me at jessica.grosholz@emory.edu or 470-428-1045. You may also contact my advisor, Dr. Robert Agnew, at bagnew@emory.edu.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this study, you may contact the Emory University Institutional Review Board at 404-712-0720 or toll free at 1-877-503-9797, which oversees the protection of human research participants.

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL
Participation in this research is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, or refuse to answer any questions that you do not want to answer. If you decide to be in this study and change your mind, you may withdrawal at any time. Your participation or non-participation will have no negative repercussions.

I will give you a copy of this form to keep.

Do you have any questions?

Appendix E: Script for Oral Consent

Script for Oral Consent – Formerly Incarcerated Interview

Hello, my name is Jessica Grosholz. Thank you for your time today. This interview is for my dissertation research for a doctoral degree at Emory University, under the direction of Dr. Robert Agnew. You are being invited to participate in a research study on the influence of prison experiences on life experiences post-prison. You are being asked to participate because you have spent at least one year in a state or federal prison. I am asking you to participate in a one-time interview in order to gather information on your prison experience and how these experiences have influenced your behavior post-prison. The information you share with me will add to our knowledge about prison, prison experiences, and the effect these experiences have on behavior post-prison. This interview will take about 1 to 2 hours of your time.

There is a risk of breach of confidentiality. We will be discussing reoffending behaviors, which could lead to additional consequences such as arrest or incarceration. However, having a waiver of documentation of informed consent will minimize the risk of breach of confidentiality.

I will not link your name to anything you say either in the transcript of this interview or in the text of my dissertation or any other publications. In order to minimize this risk of a breach of confidentiality, a study number rather than your name will be used on study records wherever possible. Your name and other facts that might point to you will not appear when we present this study or publish its results.

You will be paid $25.00 for your participation.

Participation is voluntary. If you decide not to participate, there will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can, of course, decline to answer any question as well as to stop participating at any time, without any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

If you have any additional questions concerning this research or your participation in it, please feel free to contact me, my dissertation advisor or our university research office at any time. All contact information is provided on the information sheet.

I would like to make a tape recording of our discussion, so that I can have an accurate record of the information that you provide to me. I will transcribe that recording by hand, and will keep the transcripts confidential and securely in my possession. I will erase the tape after I transcribe it.

Do you have any questions about this research? Do you agree to participate? Do you agree to have our discussion recorded?

If so, let's begin…